

13 WAYS TO MODERNIZE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN CANADA

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# STRATEGIES FOR A NEW WORLD OF WORK

REPORT FROM THE EXPERT PANEL ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

The opinions and interpretations in this publication/report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.  
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Canada 

## 13 WAYS TO MODERNIZE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN CANADA: STRATEGIES FOR A NEW WORLD OF WORK

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# Letter from the Panel

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## THE WORLD OF WORK HAS CHANGED.

A wave of technology, globalization and new management models has created employment challenges that threaten the prosperity of our young people. Indigenous youth, new immigrants, young people living in poverty, those who identify as LGBTQ2+, young people with disabilities, racialized youth and youth in rural/remote communities face particularly high barriers to personal, social and economic success. Some youth, especially those who have gone through intergenerational trauma, need to heal as part of considering seeking a job.

Despite accumulating skills and making efforts to find work, many young people are struggling. They must navigate job seeking and hiring processes that can be impersonal, unresponsive and biased. A tangled web of well-intentioned youth employ-

ment programs and services often adds confusion. Some employers who face economic uncertainty—both for-profit and non-profit—are wary of hiring and investing in “kids” who may not work out. Educational institutions aren’t uniformly preparing students for the jobs of the future. Our policy makers lack the data on labour markets and intervention outcomes to build proactive, long-lasting solutions.

As one employer put it, we are having **“A QUIET CRISIS”**—one with potentially devastating consequences in the years to come if we don’t take comprehensive action.

Fortunately, it’s not all doom and gloom. The numbers indicate that Canada is doing better than most countries when it comes to youth participation in the workplace. But when we contrast our youth today with young workers a

generation ago, precarious and uncertain trends emerge. The young people who will contribute to Canada’s social safety net need the opportunities and support to adapt as the world of work evolves.

In our discussions across the country, we learned that people recognize the scope of the challenge, and that there are many interesting approaches to helping young people succeed. We need to simplify the system and implement innovative practices to effectively and efficiently enable young people to choose and earn a living—especially the most vulnerable.

Our panel understands what it feels like to face a profoundly different, less linear employment trajectory than did our parents, teachers and employers when they began their adult lives. Our report captures the barriers to youth

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employment, but it is focused on providing practical and important solutions.

We thank the hundreds of organizations and individuals who met with us and provided their valuable insights in writing. We also thank the members of Employment and Social Development Canada Secretariat who supported our efforts as we set out to listen, learn and make practical, thoughtful recommendations for change.

We believe in a vision of a collaborative ecosystem with the full participation of our youth. We know the impact they will create will be tremendous. Working together, we will find better ways to put the skills of young Canadians to work, and benefit from their contributions to a stronger economy and more equal society.

*Bedran*

*KUBUK*

*Paulina Cameron*

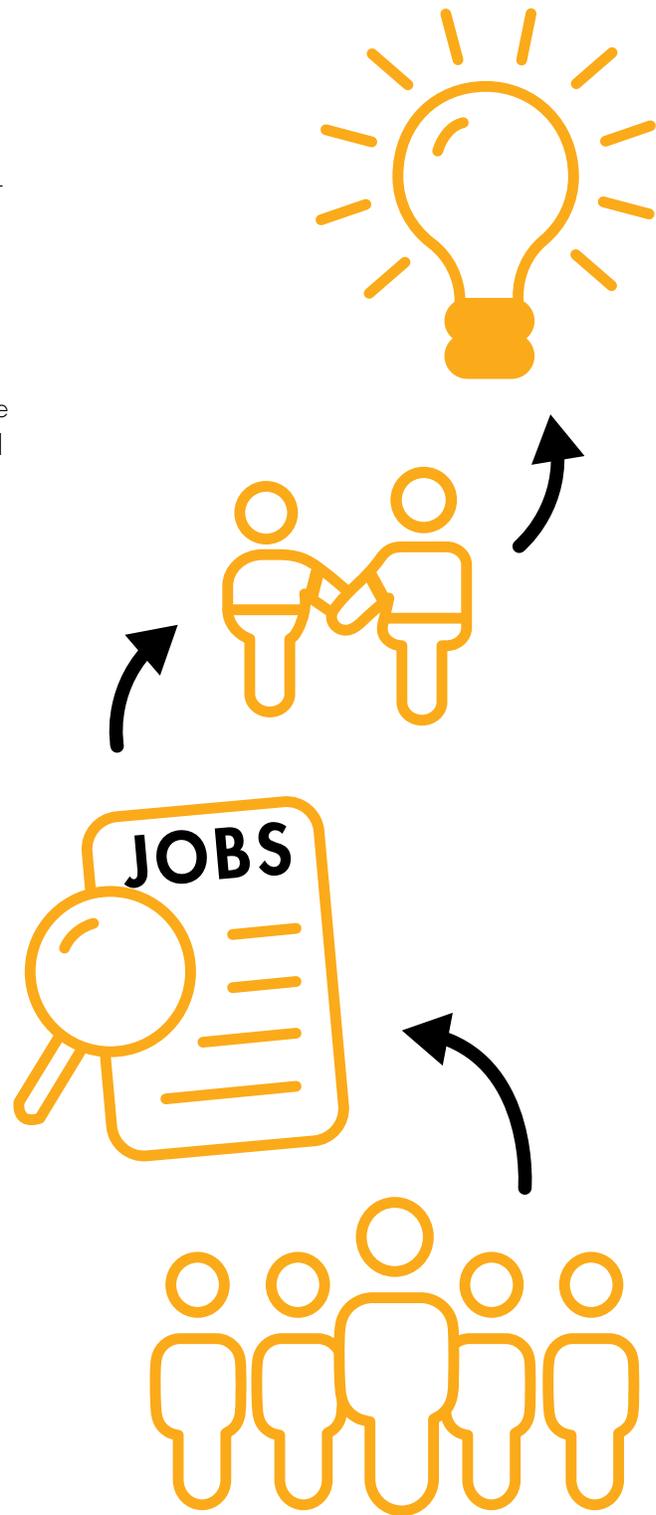
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# Executive summary

We depend on our young people to build and support the economy for the next generation. When changes to the nature of work and social conditions make it difficult for them to gain a solid foothold, the very foundation of our society is threatened.

On the surface, there may not appear to be a problem when it comes to the labour market participation of Canada's youth, a population of 6.8 million people between the ages of 15 and 29. Among the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, Canadian youth are more likely to be employed than their peers. At the same time, the labour landscape is being redefined at a dizzying pace. New and emerging technologies, demographic change and globalization are profoundly changing the way work gets done, and what the jobs of the future will require of our youngest workers.

## A new world of work

Canadians are better educated than ever, and the number of highly skilled jobs has grown at a faster rate than jobs which require lower levels of skill and education.

The shift away from manufacturing to service and knowledge economies means there is a greater emphasis on "soft" skills like problem solving, communication, interpersonal skills and critical thinking. Our educational institutions are struggling to keep up to date with the pace of change, and students feel like they are behind or unprepared for the job market when they graduate.

Today, as younger Canadians finish school, begin to work, look for homes and start families, they are "squeezed" by stagnant incomes, high costs, less time and mounting debts. They are more likely to be stuck in temporary or "precarious" jobs than in the past—translating into a delay in their ability to fully participate in society—and are at risk for reduced lifetime earnings and savings.

## Some young people struggle more than others in the labour market

By virtue of their age, young people lack the work experience to have easy transitions into the labour market. Youth are also the most vulnerable to economic shocks: they are often the **"LAST IN, FIRST OUT."**

While some challenges are common to all young people, some face additional barriers and could be described as vulnerable. Young people who have completed post-secondary studies have the highest rate of employment, while the employment rates of their peers who have not completed high school are significantly lower. Even with high school or post-secondary education, there can be employment gaps for young recent immigrants, or youth who have a disability. The challenges faced by Indigenous youth are particularly difficult. Some young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) are at risk of becoming excluded from society.

## Programs and interventions abound

Numerous programs and support mechanisms are available across Canada to help young people. However, demand isn't always meeting supply. Navigating systems to identify the right support often requires a significant investment of time and expertise from all participants.

Employment support mechanisms often involve the collaboration of governments, employers, unions, educational/training institutions and community-based organizations. There is little coordination among these bodies, as well as overlaps and gaps in programming. Prominent among the "hub" models is the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy (YES), which assists young people between the ages of 15 and 30 to gain the information, skills and work experience they need to secure a meaningful, sustainable source of income.

## Innovative practices

There is a growing awareness of the value of focused programs led by employers, or through partnerships among the private sector, not-for-profit entities and educational institutions, that consciously seek to support, coach and guide young people. Among many notable examples of this sort in Canada and abroad are initiatives that use digital platforms to smooth the matching process between job seekers and employers; models that treat the employer like a customer; cohort-based programming that integrates peer mentorship; programs that target and train vulnerable youth through holistic life projects;

programs that offer cultural connections for Indigenous youth in the workplace and society to create welcoming and inclusive spaces; and initiatives that support young people who want to explore entrepreneurship.

## Unpacking the barriers

The barriers to employment integration and a successful career—however youth choose to define this success—are summarized in these categories:

- **UNINFORMED**, which highlights difficulties youth face navigating the labour market, the lack of pertinent labour market information for youth and good data on employment for policy makers
- **UNDERRATED**, which explores the role of employers' attitudes about and towards Canada's young people
- **UNCERTAIN**, which exposes the challenges associated with precarious work and the unknown jobs of the future
- **UNDERPREPARED**, which deals with skills and basic needs of young people as they enter this new world of work
- **UNACCEPTED**, which reminds us that discrimination still exists in our workplaces
- **UNDER-RESOURCED**, which speaks to the need to provide Indigenous youth with adequate resources to lead and positively impact their communities

## The way forward: recommendations

All stakeholders with a role to play in youth employment must be involved in helping young people overcome these barriers. Employers have a role in training and developing young workers. Small and medium-sized enterprises play an especially important role by offering local and early work experience for youth. Non-profits offer challenging and meaningful work experience for young people. Labour organizations support better and safer working conditions for young workers in an evolving work environment. Educational institutions challenge and prepare youth for the jobs of tomorrow. Service providers adapt to the specific needs of the young people they serve and share best practices. Governments support the most vulnerable and create opportunities. With the right resources, youth, in turn, do the hard work of accumulating and adapting their skills to find work that fits their values and ambitions.

## Government of Canada's leadership

The Government of Canada's role in leading any transformation of the youth employment system is critical. We heard in our consultations that the Government should view budgeting and policy decisions through an intergenerational lens, offer a clear vision of employment outcomes for young Canadians and "walk the talk." The Government of Canada must also do more to support those who need it most, especially Indigenous youth and youth with disabilities.

## THESE ARE OUR RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:



### INVEST IN THE MOST VULNERABLE

**1. ENHANCE YES:** We recommend that the Government of Canada enhance YES to target those who need it most, and make it less onerous for employers and service providers. The Skills Link component should adopt a laser focus on providing wrap-around services to those at risk; Canada Summer Jobs should evolve to Canada Youth Jobs; and entrepreneurship should be promoted and supported as a valid career option for youth. We recommend that the Government of Canada also pilot youth employment innovation funding and partner with the new organization, recommended by the Advisory Council on Economic Growth and proposed in Budget 2017, which will invest in new and innovative skills development approaches.

**2. FOCUS ON INDIGENOUS YOUTH:** The time has come to remove the profound barriers Indigenous youth face and provide these young people with equal opportunities. We specifically recommend that the Government create urban Indigenous healing and employment hubs; invest in basic and education infrastructure; develop distance education training; create an alumni fund to enable mentorship; and invest in entrepreneurial Indigenous youth.



### STREAMLINE AND SIMPLIFY PROGRAMMING

**3. RETHINK THE DELIVERY OF YOUTH PROGRAMMING:** The Government of Canada should examine the feasibility of devolving federal youth employment programming to the provinces and territories, with the proviso that the recommendations for enhancing YES be respected by their governments. We call on the Government to publicly report on its findings within 12 months.

**4. EMBRACE CIVIC TECHNOLOGY:** Although Job Bank was updated recently, we heard that with improvements it could better serve youth in navigating their employment pathways. To develop options to improve Job Bank, we recommend using the civic technology model to engage young thinkers interested in better understanding and finding solutions to civic challenges through technology, design and public participation.



### WALK THE TALK

**5. HIRE MORE YOUNG PEOPLE:** We propose that the Government of Canada set goals for and report on the proportion of new hires who are between the ages of 18 and 29, with efforts devoted to hiring youth in rural and remote areas, given that the Government is a large employer in these areas. In addition, we propose that the Government of Canada explore whether it could increase youth hiring through procurement.



### ENGAGE EMPLOYERS

**6. CONVENE A CHAMPIONS TABLE:** The Government of Canada should convene and sponsor a multi-sectoral roundtable of employers to establish a hiring goal or challenge, including a special focus on vulnerable youth.

**7. ENCOURAGE MENTORSHIP:** Inspired by the success of corporate mentoring partnerships led by other orders of government, we propose that the Government of Canada create a structure to partner with employers via the Champions Table and create more meaningful mentorship opportunities for vulnerable youth.

## MODERNIZE SUPPORTS

**8. UPDATE CANADA'S LABOUR STANDARDS:** To address the precarious reality of work for young people, we recommend amending the Canada Labour Code Part III to increase job standards, rights and security for non-standard positions; regulate temporary placement agencies; eliminate unpaid internships; and promote respect for labour rights.

**9. BROADEN EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE (EI) ELIGIBILITY:** We propose that the Government explore modernizing EI to increase eligibility for young workers, taking into consideration the realities of non-standard work. This could include reducing eligibility requirements, adopting the same eligibility requirements in all parts of Canada and including "return to school" as a valid job separation reason for young workers.

**10. EXPAND THE DEFINITION OF SKILLS:** We recommend that the Government of Canada complement the comprehensive listing of essential skills on the Job Bank with a holistic definition of the skills and competencies needed for a constantly evolving workplace.

**11. DEVELOP ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS FOR YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS:** We propose that the Government include young entrepreneurs in trade missions; expand intergenerational mentorship initiatives; create a mechanism allowing entrepreneurs under 18 to be directors of their own corporations; and make the cost of membership-based accelerators and incubators tax deductible. We also recommend tailored supports for young immigrant entrepreneurs.

## MEASURE AND REFINE

**12. GET BETTER DATA:** We recommend that key youth employment statistics be redesigned to ensure that they accurately represent the unique dynamics of employment for youth; that the monthly Labour Force Survey be expanded to include a focus on vulnerable and NEET youth; that a youth category be added to the Statistics Canada website; and that outcome-based factors be collected for program evaluation.

**13. FOSTER CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:** We propose that an advisory committee be established to govern YES and provide continual, strategic advice on program design and best practices from service providers and stakeholders. We recommend this advisory committee work in collaboration with a new organization, recommended by the Advisory Council on Economic Growth.

## CONCLUSION

We call on the Government of Canada, which brought our panel together, to demonstrate continued progress in making our recommendations a reality. With the momentum developed by engaging participants in the youth employment ecosystem, ongoing dialogue is an attainable goal.



# Context

## The value of hiring youth

As the Canadian economy becomes more knowledge-based and demands greater innovation and creativity, the business case for hiring young people grows stronger. Arguments supporting diversity in the workplace in terms of varying backgrounds, experiences and thinking apply: Young people are uniquely equipped to help employers handle the pace of change in this new world of work. The value of youth is a strategic business discussion that must be held in every boardroom across the country.

## The case for hiring youth

Young people are the leaders of today and are already contributing to our economy. We depend on their ability to grow and support the economy for the next generation, to care for the previous one and to participate in shaping our society. When changes to the nature of work and social conditions make it difficult for young people to gain a solid foothold in the labour market, the very foundation of our society is threatened. If young Canadians are unable to find secure, full-time employment, how will they ever earn enough money to pay for housing, have a family and raise their own children? Who will fund health care for our aging population?

On the surface, there doesn't appear to be a big problem when it comes to the labour market participation of Canada's 15- to 29-year-olds, a population of 6.8 million people. Among the OECD countries, Canadian youth<sup>1</sup> are more likely to be employed than their peers in all the G7 countries. Of note, the rate of unemployment for youth aged 15 to 24 in Canada has been, on average, more than twice that of older workers (25+) since 1953, but since 1990, the gap has been growing.<sup>2</sup>

## The new world of work

At the same time, new and emerging technologies—in addition to globalization, demographic change and new ways of working—are profoundly changing the way work gets done. The labour market is poised to undergo major changes, including the automation of knowledge tasks, robotics, 3D printing, big data, cloud computing, the internet of things, artificial machine intelligence, advances in energy storage and production...the list goes on.<sup>3</sup> The lives of young people will continue to be transformed by this technology, and their ability to prepare for and adapt to change will impact their level of engagement with the labour market.



<sup>1</sup> Defined here as 15–24 for comparison to OECD countries.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/161205/dq161205a-eng.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.gallup.com/businessjournal/203957/american-workplace-changing-dizzying-pace.aspx>

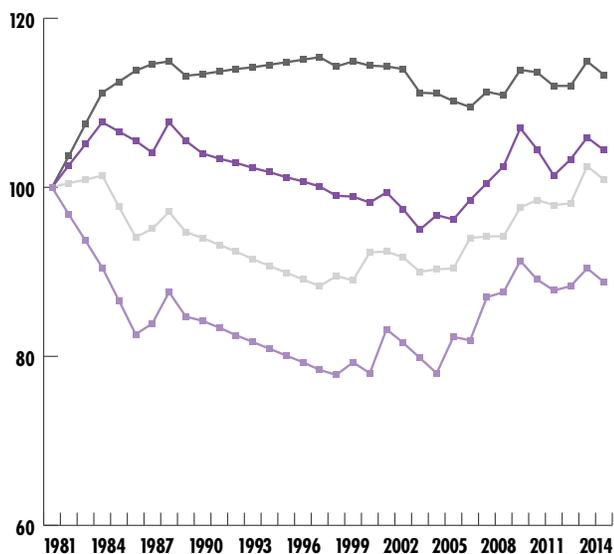
Canadians are better educated than ever and the vast majority of them hold a high school diploma.<sup>4</sup> More young people are undertaking post-secondary studies as well. In 2011, 68% of young people aged 25 to 29 held a post-secondary degree or diploma, including trade certificates, compared to 43% who had earned a diploma in 1981.<sup>5</sup>

In addition, the number of highly skilled jobs has grown at a faster rate than jobs which require lower levels of skill and education.<sup>6</sup> Despite rising education levels, however, median real wages were lower in 2014 than they were in the early 1980s for both young men and young women (17–24).<sup>7</sup>

|                       | <b>PARTICIPATION RATE (%) – 2015</b> | <b>EMPLOYMENT RATE (%) – 2015</b> | <b>LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT RATE* (%) - 2015</b> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>CANADA</b>         | <b>64.2</b>                          | <b>55.8</b>                       | <b>5.1</b>                                     |
| <b>FRANCE</b>         | 36.9                                 | 27.8                              | 28.8   |
| <b>GERMANY</b>        | 48.8                                 | 45.3                              | 22.5   |
| <b>ITALY</b>          | 29                                   | 17.3                              | 55.7   |
| <b>JAPAN</b>          | 43                                   | 40.7                              | 25   |
| <b>UNITED KINGDOM</b> | 62                                   | 52.5                              | 21.9   |
| <b>UNITED STATES</b>  | 55                                   | 48.6                              | 11.4   |
| <b>G7 AVERAGE</b>     | 50.5                                 | 44                                | 20.8   |
| <b>OECD AVERAGE</b>   | <b>47.1</b>                          | <b>40.5</b>                       | <b>19.8</b>                                    |

**SOURCE:** OECD, Ages 15 to 24, Annual Labour Force Statistics (2015). \*Share of unemployed persons (15 to 24) who have been unemployed for one year and longer.

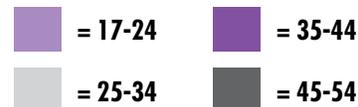
### MEDIAN REAL HOURLY WAGES OF MEN IN FULL-TIME JOBS, 1981 TO 2014 (1981=100)



The numbers for the years 1982 and 1983 are based on interpolations computed from 1981 and 1984. The numbers for the year 1985 are based on interpolations computed from 1984 and 1986. The numbers for the years 1991 to 1996 are based on interpolations computed from 1990 and 1997.

**SOURCE:** <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/161205/dq161205a-eng.pdf>. Updated from Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series, 11F0019M, No. 347, March 2013; Census of Population, Labour Force Survey, 1981 Survey of Work History, 1984 Survey of Union Membership, Labour Market Activity Survey, 1986 to 1990

#### LEGEND:



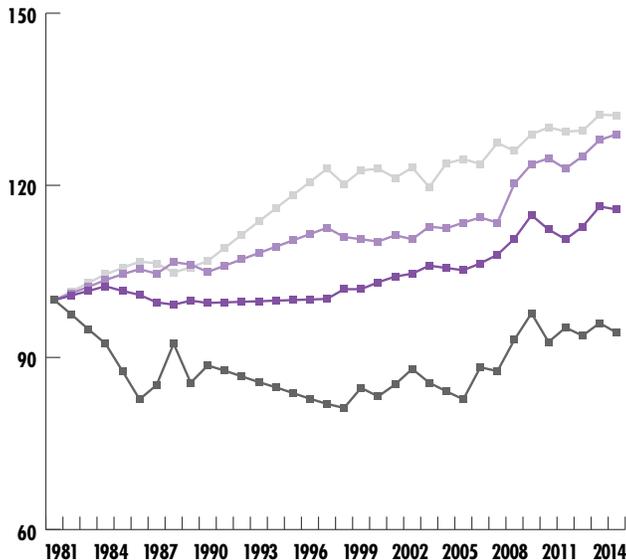
<sup>4</sup> <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-006-x/2013001/article/11847-eng.htm>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-006-x/2013001/article/11847-eng.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Canadian Occupational Projections System 2015 Projections: Job Openings 2015–2024 <http://occupations.esdc.gc.ca/sppc-cops/1.3bd.2t.1ils@eng.jsp>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/161205/dq161205a-eng.pdf>

## MEDIAN REAL HOURLY WAGES OF WOMEN IN FULL-TIME JOBS, 1981 TO 2014 (1981=100)



The numbers for the years 1982 and 1983 are based on interpolations computed from 1981 and 1984. The numbers for the year 1985 are based on interpolations computed from 1984 and 1986. The numbers for the years 1991 to 1996 are based on interpolations computed from 1990 and 1997.

**SOURCE:** <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/161205/dq161205a-eng.pdf>. Updated from Analytical Studies Branch Research Paper Series, 11F0019M, No. 347, March 2013; Census of Population, Labour Force Survey, 1981 Survey of Work History, 1984 Survey of Union Membership, Labour Market Activity Survey, 1986 to 1990

### LEGEND:



Today's young workers will spend more on schooling and have more credentials, but will have lower net wealth than their parents did in the early 1980s.<sup>8</sup> It's not due to laziness: full-time students are more involved in the labour market today than were their counterparts in the mid-1970s.<sup>9</sup> In spite of their workforce involvement, approximately 50% of university students take on loans, and graduates who take on loans are on **AVERAGE ALMOST \$27,000 IN DEBT.**<sup>10</sup>

As younger Canadians finish school and begin to work, they are "squeezed" by stagnant incomes, high costs, less time and significant debt.<sup>11</sup> Young people are living at home longer and delaying major life events.<sup>12</sup>

While the youth unemployment rate is comparable to levels observed during the mid-1970s, the degree to which young Canadians hold full-time jobs or permanent jobs has changed markedly. Of all young individuals who are not full-time students, proportionately fewer are now employed full-time (i.e. in jobs

that involve at least 30 work hours per week) than were four decades ago. Among those who are employed full-time, proportionately more hold temporary jobs.<sup>13</sup>

Insecure employment or precarious work isn't limited to temporary jobs—it can take the form of involuntary part-time or contractual work with no or partial benefits, and no future. If health and safety training and tools are not provided, this type of work can also be characterized as unsafe.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-631-x/11-631-x2016002-eng.htm>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-631-x/11-631-x2016002-eng.htm>

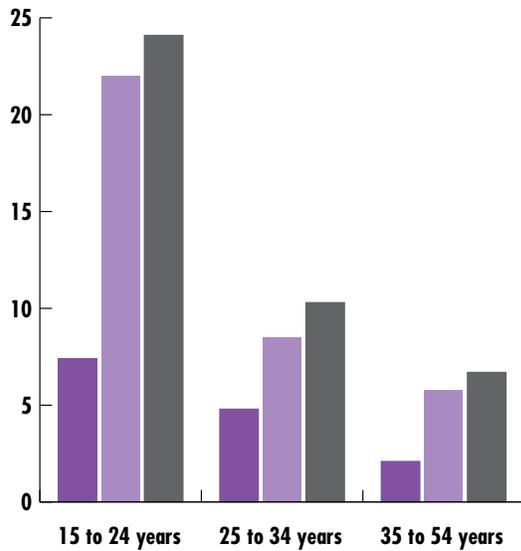
<sup>10</sup> [http://www.cusc-ccreu.ca/CUSC\\_2015\\_Graduating\\_Master%20Report\\_English.pdf](http://www.cusc-ccreu.ca/CUSC_2015_Graduating_Master%20Report_English.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Kershaw, Paul. 2015. "Population Aging, Generational Equity and the Middle-Class." Vancouver, BC: Generation Squeeze.

<sup>12</sup> <http://documents.clc-ctc.ca/sep/YoungWorkersinCanada-ResearchPaper2016-8-04-EN.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-631-x/11-631-x2016002-eng.htm>

### PERCENTAGE OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES WORKING IN TEMPORARY JOBS, 1989 TO 2014 (STUDENTS EXCLUDED) – MEN

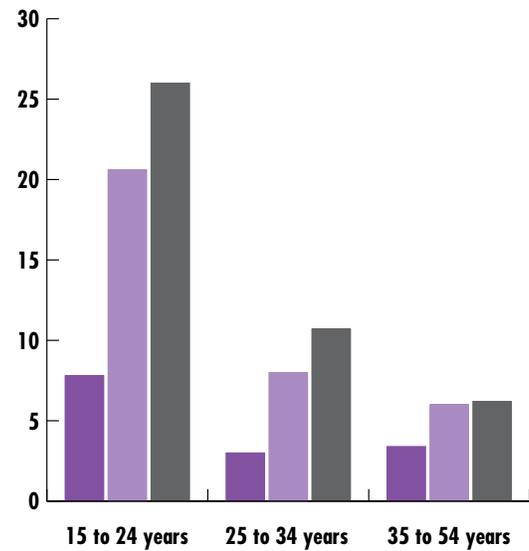


**SOURCE:** <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-631-x/11-631-x2016002-eng.htm>. Updated from Insights on Canadian Society, 75-006X, July 2013; 1989 General Social Survey; Labour Force Survey.

#### LEGEND:



### PERCENTAGE OF FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES WORKING IN TEMPORARY JOBS, 1989 TO 2014 (STUDENTS EXCLUDED) – WOMEN



**SOURCE:** <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-631-x/11-631-x2016002-eng.htm>. Updated from Insights on Canadian Society, 75-006X, July 2013; 1989 General Social Survey; Labour Force Survey.

By some accounts, more than one in five people with a degree are in the precarious work cluster.<sup>14</sup> When youth get stuck in this form of employment, their integration into society as economic contributors is delayed, and the potential for lifetime earnings and savings is reduced.

## Work culture is changing

An OECD study<sup>15</sup> reports that the shift away from manufacturing to service and knowledge economies has led to a greater emphasis on soft skills. But the world of work hasn't changed only in terms of sector importance; it has

undergone stylistic shifts as well. During the past few decades, telecommuting, open office plans, cultural awareness and the notion of corporate social responsibility have transformed the way people work together.

Given the pace of technological change in almost every facet of the economy, employers seek people who

<sup>14</sup> <https://pepsouwt.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/its-more-than-poverty-feb-2013.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.oecd.org/innovation/research/1842070.pdf>

are ready and able to embrace ongoing learning. To achieve the productivity levels they require to compete as they adopt new technologies and innovate, employers need their employees to continue to develop capabilities in evolving areas long after they graduate.

Cultural changes have also impacted the way young people value traditional demarcations of success, like climbing the corporate ladder. In our consultations, we heard that young people value work-life balance, opportunities to telework, access to childcare and family leave. Forward-thinking employers are adapting their employment practices to better accommodate the needs of young workers and improve recruitment, engagement and retention.

## The gig economy

For reasons of lifestyle and flexibility, some individuals may decide to work in the growing “gig” economy or add “side-hustler” to their résumé and make it a long-term choice. This is not necessarily a bad thing, as young people need experience, and “gigging” might help them get their foot in the door.

Regardless of their motivation, youth at all levels of education are more likely to work in jobs that are temporary by nature than the older population.<sup>16</sup> For young people who make the choice to freelance and have support, it can be positive. When it isn’t a choice and

they don’t have support, it can be a big problem.

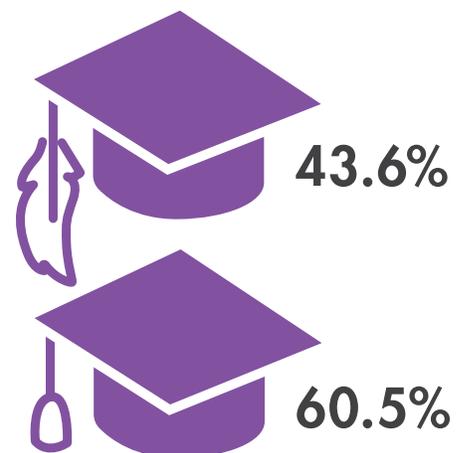
Some young people are exploring entrepreneurship. They have innovative ideas which they believe can be monetized, and are choosing this path over traditional work. While the popularity of TV shows *Dragons’ Den* and *Shark Tank* has brought the concept of entrepreneurship to the dinner table, it remains underdeveloped as a source of employment for young people. Entrepreneurship in the 15 to 29 age group was both low and volatile between 2000 and 2012, but rising through 2012-2016.<sup>17</sup> Individuals in this age category also accounted for the smallest proportion of independent workers with employees.<sup>18</sup>

## SOME YOUTH STRUGGLE MORE THAN OTHERS IN THE LABOUR MARKET

Regardless of economic conditions, youth are at greater risk of unemployment compared to the general population. Many young people are entering the labour market for the first time and lack work experience. They also are

more likely to be laid off during an economic downturn, a phenomenon often termed “last in, first out.” While some challenges are common to all young people, some face additional barriers and could be described as vulnerable. In a job market that increasingly requires higher levels of education to compete, **YOUTH WITH LESS EDUCATION** particularly struggle. In 2015, youth (15–29) with less than a high school diploma had an employment rate of 53.9%, significantly lower than youth who completed post-secondary education (86.2%).<sup>19</sup>

Indigenous youth are increasingly completing high school, attending post-secondary education and taking leadership roles in their communities. However, overall, **INDIGENOUS YOUTH** (15–29) have poorer employment rates than their non-Indigenous peers (43.6% versus 60.5%). Indigenous youth living on reserve fare even worse.<sup>20</sup>



<sup>16</sup> <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/161205/dq161205a-eng.htm>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.futurpreneur.ca/en/annual-reviews/> Note: Futurpreneur Annual Reviews 2012 through to 2016 show increases each year

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.bdc.ca/en/Documents/other/BDC\\_INDEX\\_ENT\\_ACTIVITY\\_EN.pdf](https://www.bdc.ca/en/Documents/other/BDC_INDEX_ENT_ACTIVITY_EN.pdf)

<sup>19</sup> Note: These data are based on an average of eight months during the school year and do not include current students. The employment rate is the proportion of all youth who have a job.

<sup>20</sup> Statistics Canada, National Household Survey (2011)

Indigenous youth can struggle to access education and find employment due to the intersection of a number of issues. The intergenerational trauma of colonization and discrimination, combined with a lack of infrastructure in remote communities, contributes to profound challenges. Many reserves and remote communities face high dropout and suicide rates and lack facilities to enable youth to heal and develop the skills they need to flourish. A significant number of young students must leave their remote communities to pursue post-secondary studies in urban centres. Without the proper resources, such transitions are often extremely difficult, sometimes leading to depression, mental health problems and even homelessness.

While labour market outcomes for immigrant youth improve with time spent in Canada and many benefit from having family support for longer, **RECENT IMMIGRANT YOUTH** (15–29) (those in Canada for five years or less) still tend to struggle in the labour market relative to their Canadian-born peers. For example, in 2011, the proportion of very recent immigrant youth who were employed was 48.9%, significantly lower than youth born in Canada (61%).<sup>21</sup>

Finally, **YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES** can struggle more in finding and keeping employment relative to their peers who do not experience a disability. In 2012, approximately 44% of youth with a disability (15–24) expressed that they experienced at least one barrier to employment and had an employment rate of 32%, compared to 51.9% for youth without disabilities. Youth with more severe and mental/psychological disabilities have even higher rates of unemployment.<sup>22</sup>

Among youth having difficulties in the labour market, some may end up “not in education, employment or training” (NEET). Young people who are NEET may be at risk of becoming isolated. Some may find themselves in low income or lacking the necessary skills to re-enter the labour market.<sup>23</sup> Youth who are more likely to struggle in the labour market

overall, including Indigenous and recent immigrant youth, are more likely to be NEET. Among 24- to 35-year-old youth with disabilities, approximately 40% were classified as NEET in 2012. In 2015, 860,000 young Canadians were defined as NEET, representing 12.6% of the youth population.<sup>24</sup> Of this number, 427,000 were entirely absent from the labour force and did not want to work. Researchers have outlined the potential reasons for these youth to be out of the labour force<sup>25</sup>, but because the Labour Force Survey doesn't ask these questions, there are no definite answers.

<sup>21</sup> Statistics Canada, National Household Survey (2011)

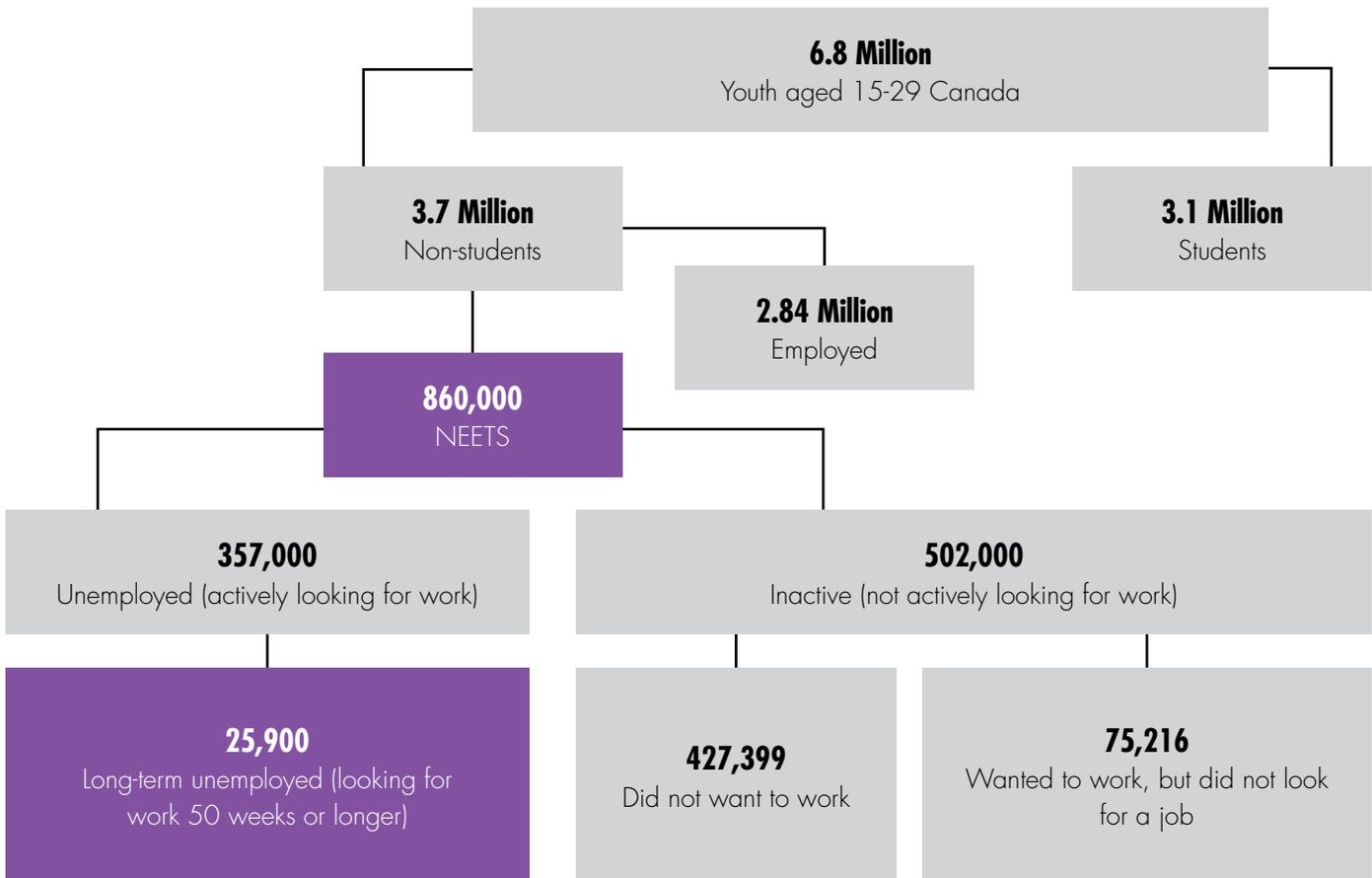
<sup>22</sup> Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability (2012)

<sup>23</sup> <https://data.oecd.org/youthinac/youth-not-in-education-or-employment-neet.htm>

<sup>24</sup> Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey. Annual estimate based on an average of January, February and March.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-001-x/2012002/article/11675-eng.pdf>

## THE LANDSCAPE OF CANADIAN YOUTH EMPLOYMENT



**SOURCE:** Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (2015). Annual estimate based on an average of January, February and March (2015).

Among the G7 countries with the most recent and comparable OECD data (2015), Canada had the second-lowest NEET rate.<sup>26</sup> While we compare well internationally, Canada's NEET rate rose 1.5 percentage points during the 2008 recession and has remained elevated since.

## PROGRAMS AND INTERVENTIONS AROUND

Numerous programs and support mechanisms are available across Canada to help young people make job and career transitions. However, supply isn't always meeting demand. This mismatch plays out in the labour market with, for example, small and medium-sized businesses having difficulty finding good workers while thousands of young people are in need of jobs.

<sup>26</sup> <https://data.oecd.org/youthinac/youth-not-in-employment-education-or-training-neet.htm>

Employment support mechanisms often involve the collaboration of governments, employers, unions, educational/training institutions and community-based organizations. Prominent among the “hub” initiatives is the Government of Canada’s Youth Employment Strategy (YES), the purpose of which is to assist young people between the ages of 15 and 30 in gaining the information, skills and work experience they need to successfully transition into the labour market.

YES delivers three discrete programs:

- **SKILLS LINK** provides a range of job preparation supports for young people who face more barriers to employment than others.
- **CAREER FOCUS** provides career information and subsidized internships for post-secondary graduates.
- **SUMMER WORK EXPERIENCE** provides wage subsidies to employers hiring students in the summer months.

Employment support programs are also provided to young people by provinces and territories; these often reflect regional priorities such as particular sub-groups of youth and specific sectors or occupations.

## A complicated web of supports

Navigating the system to identify the right support is complex and often requires a significant investment of time and expertise for all participants. Many of the policy levers connected to youth employment are provincial or territorial, complicating youth mobility, and programs are frequently available only to

youth who meet very specific age/income/education criteria for short bursts of time. These rigid requirements mean that employers may be challenged to invest time and resources in accessing young workers through employment programs.

## Innovative practices

There is growing awareness of the value of focused programs led by employers or through partnerships among the private sector, not-for-profit entities and educational institutions that consciously seek to support, coach and guide young people and train and employ vulnerable youth.

Many notable examples of innovative practices in Canada and abroad can be grouped by the barriers they address:

## Uninformed

- Support for young people who want to explore and discover the possibilities of entrepreneurship (e.g. Fab Labs Nation, Montréal; TNBT, Vancouver; Simon Fraser University’s paid entrepreneurship co-op, Burnaby; SHAD)
- Connecting entrepreneurs to early-stage companies (e.g. Adopt Inc., Quebec; Concordia University’s District 3 Innovation Center, Montréal)
- Facilitating matching between job seekers and employers via digital platforms and treating the employer “like a customer” (e.g. Magnet, Toronto; Career Edge, Canada; Social Capital Partners, Toronto)

- Mobile meeting points for young job seekers and local businesses to connect (e.g. Roulo-Boulo, Montréal)

## Underrated

- Recognizing companies that support young workers (e.g. U.K.’s Youth Friendly Badge and the Youth Friendly Charter programs)
- Municipal initiatives that connect young people directly to business leaders for coaching and interviews (e.g. City of Toronto’s Partnership to Advance Youth Employment/PAYE)
- Employer- and industry-led initiatives that target and train vulnerable youth (e.g. NPower Canada, Toronto; 100,000 Opportunities Initiative, U.S.)
- Local business clusters created by subsidiaries of international companies to support young entrepreneurs (e.g. BleuBlancTech, Montréal)

## Uncertain

- Educational programming or campaigns on worker rights, health and safety conducted by unions and non-profit organizations (e.g. The Know Your Rights Workshop, Canada; Au bas de l’Échelle, Montréal)
- Experimenting with basic income pilots that could provide predictable income support while youth search for jobs or as young entrepreneurs invest in the risk of self-employment (e.g. Ontario’s basic income pilot; YCombinator, U.S.)

- Post-secondary-led transition support such as work-integrated learning, co-op, paid internships that ease the transition from school to work (e.g. Ryerson ADaPT, Toronto)
- Targeted skills training for unemployed youth (e.g. Generation Initiative, multiple countries; YearUp, U.S.; NextWork, Denmark)

## Underprepared

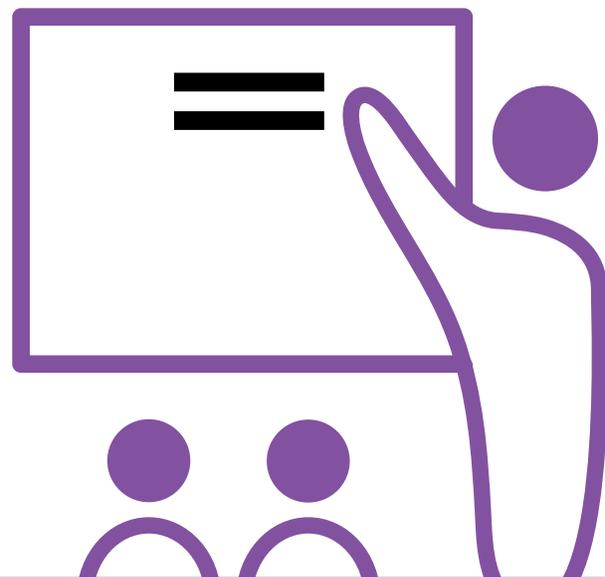
- Collaborative programming bringing applied entrepreneurial skills and mindset education into high schools (e.g. YELL Canada)
- Career-oriented network-building and mentorship programs (e.g. CivicAction Escalator, Toronto; Calgary Connector Program; GradusOne, Vancouver; Intégration Jeunesse du Québec, Montréal)
- Organizations bridging the gap for students to build their professional networks through experiential learning (e.g. Riipen)
- Cohort and peer-based learning support that can amplify learning through shared networks and resources that are critical to finding a good job (e.g. RADIUS Fellowship, Vancouver)

## Unaccepted

- Reinforced personal guidance on professional and other life needs, with local and holistic implementation of employment projects (e.g. Créneau Carrefours Jeunesse and Autism Without Limits, Quebec; Garantie Jeunesse, France)
- Digital interventions such as a secure cloud to help at-risk youth store their IDs (e.g. Reconnect—le nuage solidaire, Quebec)
- Partnerships between social economy enterprises and service providers for vulnerable youth to receive training, guidance and experience linked with local business needs (e.g. Collectif des entreprises d'insertion du Québec)

## Under-resourced

- Providing cultural connections for Indigenous youth in the workplace and society to create inclusive spaces (e.g. Nunavut Sivuniksavut, Canada; Redfox Healthy Living Society, Vancouver and Surrey; BladeRunners; The AborigiNal Computer Education through Storytelling (ANCESTOR) program, B.C.)
- Creating networks of Indigenous job seekers and employers (e.g. Working Warriors, Winnipeg)
- Supporting high school completion among Indigenous youth while creating closer links between training and employment through experiential learning in various fields (e.g. Youth Fusion, Québec)



# Our approach

## Stakeholders speak

*"We do students a disservice by suggesting that career paths are linear."* Co-op administrator, B.C.

*"When we design programs for vulnerable youth that we know ahead of time will not meet their needs, then the fault is actually ours... not theirs."* Youth employment service, St. John's

*"Employers are not a consumer of the labour market, they are a participant."* Public sector worker, Yukon

*"Youth employment problems are not due to a labour shortage, but to recruitment difficulties."* Professor, Quebec

*"A job is not success. Employability is success. Employability is about resilience."* Youth employment service worker, B.C.

*"Even though I may have had the appropriate skills for a job opportunity, post-secondary was the only way to get past those blocks."* Recent university grad, Halifax

*"The biggest challenge is too much information; you are in competition with hundreds if not thousands of others. Your resume is checked in 1 minute."* Economic researcher, Calgary

As an expert panel, we were asked to assess the barriers young people encounter in their job searches, and to examine innovative practices used by governments, non-governmental organizations and employers to improve labour market performance.

We started our process by combing through data to seek the answers to some key questions. How many youth in Canada are unemployed? Which young people in Canada are most likely to struggle to find work? What programs already exist for youth who need help, across Canada and around the world?

With a basic understanding of the issues in hand, we met in person or by phone or video chat with hundreds of people who have a stake in youth employment.

We spoke to 358 organizations in locations across the country, including **VICTORIA, VANCOUVER, CALGARY, EDMONTON, REGINA, WINNIPEG, TORONTO, OTTAWA, MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC, RIMOUSKI, SHERBROOKE, HALIFAX, CHARLOTTETOWN, ST. JOHN'S, NUNAVIK, EYYOU ISTCHEE, NANAIMO, KELOWNA, KAMLOOPS, PRINCE GEORGE, PRINCE RUPERT AND WHITEHORSE.**

We also connected with young Canadians through our Facebook page, Twitter and an online survey. Through a separate survey, we asked employers and service providers to let us know how they are supporting youth employment.

Finally, we held roundtable discussions in **MONCTON, MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC, TORONTO, WINNIPEG, CALGARY, EDMONTON AND VANCOUVER.**

# Unpacking the barriers

We heard during our consultations that successful transitions to employment mean learning to adapt and accumulate skills and strategies that set the foundation for decades of steady engagement with the labour market. Alternatively, unsuccessful transitions can result in on-again, off-again employment and social challenges.

The barriers standing between these two outcomes can be grouped into these areas.

## UN-INFORMED

Young people need access to the what, where and how of work in a digestible and familiar format: mobile-friendly, concentrated, concise and immediate.

Youth don't care which level of government or youth employment services "owns" the process, as long as they can access accurate information about

industry projections, mobility implications, specific training requirements and where and how to get help. Eliminating duplicated services may allow governments to re-direct funds to programs that are demonstrably effective.

Even if information is accessible to young people, they need help to navigate the system: not only through one-on-one advocates, but also through role models and individuals who can offer personal support, as well as expose them to a broader range of possibilities, including entrepreneurship. In remote or rural areas where career choices appear limited to teacher, nurse or tradesperson, how do you learn what a green tech or e-commerce worker does?

Young people aren't alone in being uninformed. A lack of data about the work experiences of young people—searchable by age and demographic group—is a barrier for governments and organizations seeking to provide the necessary supports.

## UNDERRATED

While the role of the employer is crucial to solving the youth employment problem, a perception exists across Canada that employers are reluctant to hire young people. Myths about young people abound (e.g. uncommitted, entitled, lazy) and can prevent some employers from even considering hiring youth. Employers often value specific occupational experience or Canadian educational certification.

Youth advocates suggest that some employers don't understand the value proposition. Including today's young people in the workforce is essential for innovation and creativity, which translate to productivity and competitiveness.

In our consultations, we heard that entry-level positions in the non-profit sector are often being filled by young volunteers. On a related note, there are many reports of young people missing out on job opportunities early in their careers because they cannot afford to

work for free. We heard that although unpaid internships are illegal in most provinces, the Canada Labour Code is ambiguous on this and needs to catch up.

## UNCERTAIN

In a lacklustre economy, risk-averse employers may cut costs by offering part-time or contract roles instead of investing in full-time employees. These companies, and often the temporary placement agencies they use to engage workers, may actually hire more people. The downside is that those jobs often have no benefits, minimal training, low wages and an uncertain future. That becomes a barrier for young people, especially “serial contractors”—employees in all but name, and without a safety net.

If youth are to succeed, they need a work environment that respects and values the financial security and the mental and physical health of its workforce. Only one in five Canadian employees received safety training in their first year of employment with a new employer<sup>27</sup>—a concerning statistic in the context of temporary, contract and non-union jobs. Young people are less likely to be members of unions than other age groups, with the unionization

rates dropping significantly for young people aged 17-24 between 1981 and 2014.<sup>28</sup>

The gig economy can provide useful experience and a starting point to enter the labour market, but for young people needing to repay student loans and plan and save for the future, there are many negatives, including lower wages, unsafe workplaces, stress-related mental health issues and EI ineligibility. Among youth who contribute to EI, 54% were eligible to receive benefits compared to 82% for contributors aged 25 to 44.<sup>29</sup> Although non-standard and precarious work exists across the country, eligibility for EI varies depending on where one lives. Even if young workers are EI-eligible, the gig work pattern may only entitle them to short-term, low-level benefits.

Young people who want to pursue entrepreneurship as a career can face parallel challenges in managing uncertainty. By virtue of being young, they also struggle with access to capital and networks to help them build viable businesses.

## UNDER- PREPARED

We heard that employment is not just about getting a job, it’s about long-term employability. For youth to be employable long-term, they must possess the necessary transferable skills and competencies that will take them through dynamic careers.

A 2015 global McKinsey study found that only 34% of employers think that youth are prepared for the workplace.<sup>30</sup> A 2013 survey conducted by Pathways to Education found that more than half of Canadians (54%) believe youth are not even moderately prepared to meet the needs of the emerging job market.<sup>31</sup> There are, however, studies that suggest the opposite. For example, in 2016 the Business Council of Canada conducted a survey of private-sector employers. Two-thirds of employers surveyed believe that new graduates are prepared to join the workforce.<sup>32</sup>

To obtain a job, and to succeed and grow in that job, young people need skills like financial literacy, critical thinking, collaboration and the ability to network. But what about the youth experiencing homelessness who doesn’t have a Social Insurance Number or an

<sup>27</sup> <http://documents.clc-ctc.ca/sep/YoungWorkersinCanada-ResearchPaper2016-8-04-EN.pdf>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2015005-eng.htm>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/161116/t003b-eng.htm>

<sup>30</sup> <http://mckinseysociety.com/education-to-employment/report/>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.pathwaystoeducation.ca/majority-canadians-say-youth-are-unprepared-job-market>

<sup>32</sup> [thebusinesscouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Developing-Canadas-Future-Workforce.pdf](https://www.thebusinesscouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Developing-Canadas-Future-Workforce.pdf)

address? How can young people prepare for work in remote areas without Internet access or transportation? How can a young person with disabilities who is continually passed up for opportunities develop skills?

Preparedness is a continuum often related to the age of the youth in question. The 15–29 cohort is not a homogeneous demographic, and people with different realities and goals need different levels of recognition (i.e. formal certification versus skills learned from informal experiences and situations).

Being prepared also means knowing how and to whom to market yourself—having the vocabulary to talk about your skills, and explain to potential employers how your experience and qualifications are relevant to the job for which you are applying. Having a social network for support, coaching and job leads is a critical factor of success in landing secure work. Vulnerable youth often lack such networks, as well as basic information about their rights in work.

Learning to seek out face-to-face contact and counselling is also an important element of preparedness. It is a paradox of digitization that social capital becomes more important to creating networks and obtaining employment.

Schools, governments and social services have a role to play in ensuring

that all young people have what they need to find a meaningful and secure source of income—whether their goal is to work at a restaurant, a tech support desk or a law office.

## UNACCEPTED

A significant barrier for some youth is discrimination.

Consultations have shown that Canada’s diversity is not reflected in the culture of its workplaces and in the programs offered to support employment. In the Panel’s online survey for youth, 12% of respondents said that discrimination made it difficult for them to get a good job.

Systemic and indirect discrimination creates real barriers—not only to gaining employment, but to advancement in the workplace. “Unaccepted” youth who face discrimination often include Indigenous youth, recent immigrant youth, LBGTQ2+, those who have disabilities, those with mental illnesses, racialized youth, those with criminal backgrounds and youth experiencing homelessness. For example, a respondent identifying as Indigenous noted feeling like they have to work twice as hard in interviews and the workplace to get the same recognition as others.

One survey respondent described feeling like a problem for their employer once they disclosed their mental illness. Another respondent described leaving two jobs due to workplace harassment and homophobia.

Although discrimination is not limited to youth, for young people it can result in scarring—enduring damage to an individual’s economic situation—and have long-term implications for labour market attachment. Helping these young people recognize their skills and overcome their vulnerabilities with positive experiences that provide a solid foundation of knowledge, confidence and work experience within a supportive social environment is an investment not only in them, but in our country’s future.

## UNDER-RESOURCED

As the fastest-growing segment of the population in Canada, Indigenous young people possess enormous potential, whether in the world of business, technology or community work. The Panel saw firsthand that Indigenous youth are making vital contributions to commercial and community initiatives across the country. From tech start-ups to vineyards, you can find

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Indigenous-owned and operated businesses that are employing young people from their communities.

However, the Panel also heard that for some Indigenous young people, it can still feel like the deck is stacked against them. The intergenerational trauma of colonization and discrimination affects them from an early age, long before they think about the workplace, and they continue to face a disproportionate number of barriers to training, education and employment compared to the non-Indigenous population. The issues are complex and varied across the country, with youth in remote or northern areas facing different challenges than those in urban areas. Similarly, the challenges for a young Métis worker are different than those for a young Inuk worker.

We heard concerns about gaps in education funding in particular for First Nations youth living on reserve compared to the rest of the population. We also heard that for Inuit youth, high dropout rates are a big challenge that creates barriers to developing important skills.

Often, Indigenous youth must travel away from family and personal supports for a variety of reasons, including the lack of resources in their home communities or to pursue their studies in other towns or urban centres. Without the proper resources—integration,

networking or job searches—these difficult transitions can sometimes lead to depression, mental health problems or even homelessness. Our discussions therefore highlighted the need for better education infrastructure within communities and better supports and resources for those who do leave.

We also heard about barriers related to the legacy of colonization. Racism and discrimination are major barriers to finding work, leading some to hide their cultural identity or change their names on their résumé. Some youth in care struggle to work on their self-esteem and learn about their cultural identity, while others may lack the resources for healing when, for example, they have a crisis or are transitioning out of prison. We heard that healing is a pre-condition to getting back into the workforce. For those who want to stay in their communities, we heard about the lack of resources for building and growing businesses.



# The way forward: our recommendations

The mandate of our panel was to explore the challenges young Canadians experience in finding and keeping meaningful employment. Across the country, we unanimously heard: We all want secure and stable incomes for our youth to contribute fully to the labour market and ensure quality of life.

In discussions on the policy opportunities for youth employment, we were struck by how many of the key policy levers are provincial. We heard about the need for responsive, forward-thinking curriculum in the K–12 system, about work opportunities integrated with learning during post-secondary education and about social assistance reform and basic income pilots. We encourage provincial and territorial governments to consider how the barriers and solutions identified in this report can be applied to their programs and initiatives.

That being said, all the participants in the youth employment ecosystem have roles to play in providing the necessary support:

- **LARGE BUSINESSES** train and develop young workers
- **SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES** offer unique local and early work experiences
- **NON-PROFITS** hire and support vulnerable youth
- **LABOUR** supports better and safer working conditions in changing workplaces
- **SERVICE PROVIDERS** adapt to best serve their clients
- **EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS** challenge and prepare youth
- **YOUTH** do the hard work of accumulating and adapting the skills they need
- **GOVERNMENTS** support the most vulnerable and create opportunities

We are encouraged by the number of innovative practices we see. The Government of Canada can make a tremendous impact in the youth employment space by elevating these best practices and implementing the recommendations outlined below.

## Government of Canada leadership

The Government of Canada's role in leading this ecosystem is critical. We heard in our consultations that the federal government should articulate a clearer vision of employment outcomes for young Canadians and then, as leaders, should be seen to "walk the talk."

We heard that young people feel as if governments make decisions without considering how present-day trade-offs may affect the younger generation. We

applaud the Government's efforts to consider how Budget 2017 measures impact individuals through the Gender Statement. We would encourage the Government to include a similar analysis for young Canadians in Budget 2018. By viewing policy analysis and budget decisions through an intergenerational lens, the Government would demonstrate that youth are a priority group and invite more mindfulness of the future.

Based on our consultations with stakeholders, we recommend that the Government of Canada take the following actions to overcome the barriers to youth employment.

## INVEST IN THE MOST VULNERABLE

### 1. Enhance YES

We support the additional investment of \$395.5 million to the Government of Canada's Youth Employment Strategy (YES), proposed in Budget 2017. We recommend that YES be enhanced to support those who need it most. The Skills Link component should focus on providing wrap-around services to those most at risk; Canada Summer Jobs should be about more than just summer jobs; and entrepreneurship must be

promoted as a valid career option for youth. We encourage the Government to ensure these services are available to youth in rural and remote communities.

Our specific recommendations for enhancing YES:

#### A. EMPLOY A CASE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR SKILLS LINK:

We heard that current Skills Link priorities focus too much on "job-ready youth" and not enough on the most vulnerable youth who need intensive wrap-around supports. We recommend prioritizing serving youth with the greatest support needs (e.g. NEET youth, those who are racialized, have disabilities or mental health issues, are living in poverty or have experienced childhood trauma) through a client-centered approach using a case management process and a continuum of supports tailored to meet their complex, varied and evolving needs. To deliver this service, it is important for Skills Link to offer multi-year funding to those organizations that actively support youth before, during and after the job search process. It is also important that the Government consider additional outcome metrics such as cost-per-employed-day.<sup>33</sup>

#### B. EVOLVE THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA'S SUMMER WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS, INCLUDING CANADA SUMMER JOBS:

We heard that the current model of Canada's summer work experience programs

including Canada Summer Jobs doesn't reflect the reality of how youth organize their time in work and education, and that many youth who are not in post-secondary studies would benefit from accessing these placements throughout the calendar year. We also heard that employers, especially small and medium-sized enterprises and non-profits, would like the flexibility to offer placements at different times during the year. We recommend changing the name to Canada Youth Jobs and opening the program to all youth, including those studying full-time, part-time or not at all, and include part-time jobs. The program should be accessible throughout the year and offer youth and employers greater flexibility in choosing the duration and hours of the work placement.

As part of the revamped Canada Youth Jobs program, we recommend a pilot program in which youth can apply for jobs they choose and offer employers a YES-funded wage subsidy.

#### C. CREATE A YES ENTREPRENEUR FUND

targeted to vulnerable youth without access to capital, including those in rural and remote areas, so that they can apply for funding of their business ventures. This new branch of YES would have tailored supports for young entrepreneurs based on their age. For 15- to 18-year-olds, the fund would offer special support to organizations that deliver education

<sup>33</sup> <https://hbr.org/2017/02/a-better-metric-for-the-value-of-a-worker-training-program>

that develops entrepreneurial skills and mindsets and provide seed funding to vulnerable youth who are part of an incubator or accelerator program in their school or community. For 18- to 29-year-olds, this fund would support part-time as well as full-time entrepreneurs and offer support for youth to pre-test their business ideas.

#### **D. PILOT A YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INNOVATION FUND.**

We heard that some innovative youth employment interventions may not fit the current parameters, so we suggest a new category to facilitate ongoing innovation—such as a cloud system to store IDs for youth (e.g. youth experiencing homelessness). The Panel also recommends that this innovation fund partner with the new organization proposed in Budget 2017, recommended by the Advisory Council on Economic Growth, which will invest in innovative approaches to skills development.

#### **E. MAKE IT EASIER FOR EMPLOYERS:**

We heard that employers wanting to participate in YES can be discouraged by processing times of six to nine months. We recommend that all departments delivering YES programming make a service commitment to process applications within three months.

**F. CREATE A “YOUTH EMPLOYMENT CONCIERGE”** that youth and service providers could utilize for enhanced navigation of the system, modelled after the “Innovation Advisors” of the National Research Council of Canada.<sup>34</sup>

**G. SIGN MULTI-YEAR AGREEMENTS:** We heard that annual YES agreements are an administrative burden and take precious resources away from organizations, so we suggest rewarding high-performing, strong partners with multi-year agreements.

## **2. Focus on Indigenous youth**

Almost 400,000 Indigenous youth will be of age to enter the labour market in the coming decade.<sup>35</sup> In this context, the federal government has an important role to play, working with provincial, territorial, municipal, international and, above all, Indigenous governments and communities to capitalize on the potential of the next generation of Indigenous leaders, whether they live in rural and remote communities, in urban centres or in Canada’s north.

The time has come to work in partnership with Indigenous communities and youth so that they have the resources they need to overcome the profound barriers they face. In part this means recognizing that there is a broad spectrum of challenges that need to

be taken into consideration and that a one-size-fits-all approach will not work for a population that is diverse in terms of culture, language and lived experiences.

We were pleased to see that the proposed investments in Budget 2017 for education, skills development and training opportunities for Indigenous Canadians were aligned with what we heard during our consultations.

We recommend that the Government of Canada take the following specific actions in partnership with Indigenous communities and Indigenous youth:

#### **A. CREATE URBAN INDIGENOUS HEALING AND EMPLOYMENT HUBS**

for Indigenous youth who must leave their communities for post-secondary education and employment. These hubs can bring together leading Indigenous organizations already doing impactful work, and offer support for trauma, transition, residency, networking, soft skills training, career development, funding, peer-to-peer support and connecting with Elders. The hubs can also facilitate the rehabilitation of the incarcerated Indigenous population. If this can be accomplished through the Budget 2017 proposal to increase investments for the Urban Indigenous strategy, we would be supportive of that approach.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/eng/irap/concierge/>

<sup>35</sup> <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.cfm#a6>

- B. CONTINUE TO INVEST IN BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE** in communities for clean water, safety and adequate housing as well as socially and culturally safe spaces to address some of the main barriers to education and employment for Indigenous youth.
- C. CONTINUE TO INVEST IN EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH HIGH-SPEED INTERNET** access and satellites that will enable accessible training and employment in various sectors, not only technical fields. Young people living in rural and remote areas will benefit greatly in confidence and job-readiness by having these tailored, experiential learning resources provided on-site in their communities, exposing them to options in and outside their communities.
- D. DEVELOP DISTANCE EDUCATION TRAINING** in partnership with Indigenous communities and Canadian universities so that Indigenous youth can engage in post-secondary studies while staying in their communities. To support them step-by-step in the process, appoint post-secondary training counsellors—in consultation with the communities and local leaders—in remote Indigenous northern communities. These counsellors should be based in the computer lab of the communities' high schools to supervise and help undergraduates complete their distance education training. These investments will also benefit youth living in rural communities.
- E. CREATE AN INDIGENOUS ALUMNI FUND** to cover travel expenses for Indigenous role models to visit their communities at least once a year, allowing them to become mentors and share their experiences with high school students.
- F. SUPPORT ENTREPRENEUR-MINDED INDIGENOUS YOUTH** who want to launch businesses in different fields, including traditional activities and social economy initiatives which are aligned with Indigenous values. This can be done through micro-grants from the new YES entrepreneur fund (see recommendation 1C).
- G. DELIVER INDIGENOUS LABOUR MARKET PROGRAMMING THROUGH MULTI-YEAR FUNDING AGREEMENTS** with organizations that work directly with Indigenous youth. With this reliable and long-term funding, organizations will be able to improve their services and implement the recommendations. It will enable them to share best practices and run urban hubs, alumni liaisons, forums and partnerships collaboratively and with a long-term vision.

## STREAMLINE & SIMPLIFY PROGRAMMING

### 3. Rethink the delivery of youth employment programming

The Government of Canada, with its oversight of labour market information, has both an opportunity and an obligation to play a leadership role in ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of employment programs. The Panel recommends that the Government of Canada immediately adopt the changes to its Youth Employment Strategy recommended in the preceding section (See recommendation 1). We believe these incremental recommendations will have an immediate and positive impact on youth employment.

We also believe there is room to continue rethinking youth employment programming more broadly, and to clarify the roles and responsibilities of various participants in the system, including all governments.

In our consultations, it was frequently reinforced that the majority of policy levers in the youth employment space are concentrated provincially and territorially in the K-12 education system, post-secondary institutions and social assistance agencies.

The Panel recommends that the Government of Canada, in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments through the Forum of Labour Market Ministers, examine the feasibility of devolving federal youth employment programming to provincial and territorial governments, as long as the fundamental program improvement recommendations outlined in the “Enhance YES” section are respected. The Panel calls on the Government to publicly report on its findings in 12 months.

We make this recommendation in light of:

- overlaps and gaps in provincial, territorial and federal programming;
- difficulty navigating the system for all users; and
- the need for regional context to be considered in program delivery.

In the future, if devolution is pursued and the Government of Canada no longer delivers youth programming, we strongly advise the Government of Canada to consider governance and oversight mechanisms that will allow it to determine and scale best practices across provinces and territories, and ensure consistency of quality and impact of outcomes. We recommend this be done in partnership with a cross-sectoral Youth Employment Advisory Committee (see recommendation 13).

## 4. Embrace civic technology

In our consultations, we heard about the complexities of navigating the youth employment system. Civic technology involves governments using technology

to facilitate meaningful public participation in problem solving, policy development and designing initiatives. A community of young thinkers interested in finding solutions to civic challenges through technology, design or other means would be uniquely qualified to streamline the navigation of the youth employment system. Forms and applications need to be digitized, and better information is needed for sharing across orders of government and service providers.

Civic technology could also be employed to modernize the Job Bank infrastructure, and to adopt best-in-class human resource practices that protect vulnerable youth from being screened out during the matching process. We encourage the Government to recognize the value of digitizing all job information.

## WALK THE TALK

### 5. Hire more young people

We heard that the Government of Canada, as a direct employer of youth, could do more to hire people aged 18–29. The Public Service Commission reports on this through its open data portal, sharing application and hiring information on tenure, age of new hires and employment equity groups. We believe a stretch goal should be established and reported upon regarding the proportion of new hires who are

between the ages of 18–29, including vulnerable youth. This could inspire other major employers to set similar goals and report on their progress. Given the presence of the Government of Canada in remote and rural communities as an employer, this goal should include efforts to hire young people in rural and remote communities.

We encourage the Government to explore how it could increase youth hiring through procurement, reporting back to the Advisory Council in 12 months on whether this could be an effective tool for increasing youth employment (see recommendation 13).

## ENGAGE EMPLOYERS

### 6. Convene a champions’ table

Employers told us that they often feel disconnected from the youth employment system, as they are considered an end-point and are not a participant in the system. We cannot make progress on hiring youth unless a broad range of employers comes to the table. We recommend that the Government of Canada invite a roundtable of employers from the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors to establish a corporate hiring goal/challenge that includes a special focus on vulnerable and NEET youth, inspired by the “100,000 Opportunities Initiative” in the United States. Champions table participants should also be encouraged to take action to

reduce discrimination, ensure inclusion and report on the progress of their overall efforts annually.

## 7. Encourage mentorship

We heard that young people value opportunities to receive mentorship from leaders outside their networks. While we are hesitant to suggest formalizing informal relationships or introducing red tape such as job-related funding to companies with a mentorship component, we have been inspired by corporate partnerships that are government-led. We think that the Government of Canada could create a structure in which it partners with employers via the champions table and creates more meaningful mentorship opportunities for vulnerable youth.

### MODERNIZE SUPPORTS

## 8. Update Canada's labour standards

The Panel heard frequently that the pace of change and the new realities of technology, work-life balance and non-linear careers must be better

reflected in the Government's policies. The Government of Canada should recognize the changing nature of work and extend protection and benefits to non-standard young workers, who are very often in precarious conditions. Encouragingly, the areas discussed in Budget 2017 and the Prime Minister's Mandate Letter to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour<sup>36</sup> echo many of the issues raised in our consultations across Canada. To address the precarious reality of work for young people, we recommend the following specific refinements to the *Canada Labour Code*<sup>37</sup>:

- A.** Amend the *Canada Labour Code* Part III to increase job standards, rights and security for non-standard positions so that they are treated equitably with respect to permanent, full-time employees doing the same tasks.
- B.** Regulate temporary placement agencies to ensure they assume joint responsibility with employers for all sums owed to employees.
- C.** Eliminate unpaid internships except those that are part of an academic or community program; the Advisory Committee should review the results of this policy in two years to determine whether there are any unintended consequences.
- D.** Create the right to allow workers to formally request flexible work arrangements from their employers.
- E.** Promote employer and worker respect for labour rights and health and safety conditions via education in high schools for teen workers;

information campaigns for young adults on rights and how to exercise them; and stronger sanctions for repeat violations of worker rights by the same employer.

## 9. Broaden Employment Insurance eligibility

During our consultations, we heard from a few groups that they would like to see the implementation of the 2015 campaign proposal to offer a 12-month break on EI premiums. We more frequently heard from stakeholders that reforms to EI aimed at improving outcomes for youth would support non-standard workers struggling to adjust to the new world of work.

We heard that the EI system was not adequately supporting young and nonstandard workers. Young people in non-standard employment struggle to meet eligibility requirements, and young people are unlikely to qualify for EI when they are transitioning frequently between school and work. In addition, regional eligibility requirements ignore the reality that non-standard and precarious work exists all across Canada. We propose that the Government modernize EI to better serve young Canadians in a new world of work. We support the Government's Budget 2017 proposal to allow claimants to pursue self-funded training and maintain their EI

<sup>36</sup> <http://pm.gc.ca/eng/minister-employment-workforce-development-and-labour-mandate-letter>

<sup>37</sup> Canada Labour Code (and related regulations) applies only to the federally regulated private sector (e.g. industries such as banking, telecommunications and inter-provincial and international air, rail and maritime transportation). In total, this is estimated to include 904,000 workers (about 6% of the Canadian workforce) and 18,300 employers.

status. However, this reform could be expanded to also help young people who leave work to go to school. In order to do this, the Government should examine how the following could increase eligibility for young workers, while maintaining a reasonable cost for employees and employers:

- A. Lower eligibility requirements.
- B. Replace regional divisions based on unemployment rate and adopt the same eligibility in all parts of Canada.
- C. Include “return to school” as a valid job separation reason.

We also recommend that the Government examine enhancing other forms of income security for young people in precarious work, like the Working Income Tax Benefit (WITB), which has a high level of take-up by young people. This could also include considering how the WITB could be automatically integrated with EI for young workers aged 18–29 years.

## 10. Expand the definition of skills

We recommend that the Government of Canada offer a holistic definition of the skills and competencies needed for a constantly evolving workplace (e.g. the World Economic Forum’s 21<sup>st</sup> Century Job Skills;<sup>38</sup> Foundation for Young Australians New Work Mindset<sup>39</sup> Skills; and P21 Framework for 21<sup>st</sup>

Century Learning<sup>40</sup>) to complement the comprehensive list of essential skills<sup>41</sup> already provided on the Job Bank website. In articulating a definition of globally accepted attributes needed for the modern workplace, the outcomes of youth employment programs can become more defined and consistent, while allowing for design flexibility.

This holistic definition can provide guidance in identifying transferable skills from employment or informal educational experiences for more vulnerable youth, as well as from foreign certification for young immigrants. It would also allow for YES service providers and other innovative programs deliverers to align their metrics with these defined skill outcomes and would provide clarity for employers.

## 11. Additional supports for young entrepreneurs

### A. SUPPORT INITIATIVES DEMONSTRATING THAT ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS A VIABLE CAREER PATH by:

- ensuring that 15% of participants in all international trade missions led by governments are youth entrepreneurs;
- creating a mechanism so that 15- to 18-year-olds can be directors of their own companies;
- expanding effective intergenerational mentorship initiatives; and

- making the cost of membership-based entrepreneurial organizations tax deductible, similar to deductions allowed for unions or professional memberships.

### B. INVEST IN AND SUPPORT THE EDUCATION OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND AN ENTREPRENEURSHIP MINDSET FOR YOUTH, particularly youth aged 15–18. Work with organizations that establish cross-sectoral partnerships in connecting youth to their communities and business owners, and that provide youth with an integrated and applied entrepreneurial skill set. Entrepreneurship is about more than starting a business. We know that teaching young people the entrepreneurial mindset at an early age will encourage curiosity and equip them with transferable skills such as problem solving and leadership, which will serve them in workplaces, in their own business endeavours and in creating impact in their communities.

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- ### C. SUPPORT IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURS by reducing the immigration process waiting time for start-up visas to a maximum of six weeks for youth who are part of an accredited incubator program. Also, fund clusters led by subsidiaries of foreign companies to help immigrant entrepreneurs during their transition to or in Canada.

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/03/21st-century-skills-future-jobs-students/>

<sup>39</sup> <https://www.fya.org.au/report/the-new-work-mindset-report/>

<sup>40</sup> <http://www.p21.org/about-us/p21-framework>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/essential-skills/profiles.html>

## MEASURE AND REFINE

### 12. Get better data

To identify youth as a priority demographic, we need to gather, share and evaluate more relevant data. We heard that this requires considering the different realities of youth in the 15–29 age range. Currently, Statistics Canada reports on youth unemployment with the age range 15–24. This age range includes young people who are supposed to be in high school and excludes youth who may be transitioning out of school and into the labour force. By including young people 15–17 in the youth unemployment rate, for example, there is the potential to misdiagnose issues and recommend inappropriate interventions like focusing on increasing employment rather than ensuring they are successful in high school. Given these challenges, we recommend that the Government examine the age groups it uses to define key youth employment indicators it reports on. We also recommend that the Government consider investments in longitudinal surveys like the Youth in Transition Survey and the Survey on Labour and Income Dynamics, which will help researchers and policy makers better understand how young people navigate transitions.

To close significant data gaps in surveys and mitigate the need to compare “mismatched” information (i.e. data

that is based on different definitions of youth and time periods), we propose that the monthly Labour Force Survey be expanded to include a focus on vulnerable youth. Survey questions should be added to more accurately determine the number of NEET youth, specifically those who are not looking for work.

We also recommend that the Statistics Canada website add “Youth” to the “Statistics by Subject” list (accessed through “Browse by Subject” on the home page). The creation of a centralized hub of youth data, including labour market information, would eliminate the need to mix and match, and ensure that real-time information is available and publicly accessible.

In determining the metrics of success for youth employment, we believe that program participation is unproductive when viewed in isolation. We recommend including outcome-based factors like wage growth, job quality, cost-per-employed and job tenure, as well as collecting longitudinal data for program evaluation.

We noted in consultations that the collection of Social Insurance Numbers (SINs) enables evaluators to build comparison groups and improve evaluation results through incremental impact analysis. Currently, however, Employment and Social Development Canada is the only department that collects SINs. It is recommended that all YES departments collect SIN data for incremental program impact analysis.

### 13. Foster continuous improvement

We heard that opportunities to provide strategic feedback on youth employment programming are too infrequent, and that YES would benefit from more consistent and clear feedback loops.

We recommend the Government of Canada convene the cross-sectoral Youth Employment Advisory Committee (referenced in recommendation 3) to provide continual, strategic advice on program design and leading practices from service providers and stakeholders. Our vision is that this committee would be multi-sectoral and include representatives from the non-profit, for-profit, educational, service provider and labour sectors, as well as from the Prime Minister’s Youth Council. It should report to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour and the Minister of Youth.

This committee would focus on YES governance and would be responsible for:

- providing strategic advice and feedback on program design and delivery;
- evaluating program outcomes to ensure accountability;
- experimenting as a “think tank” with new ideas and approaches to address complex challenges facing youth;
- identifying innovative best practices; and
- holding the Government to account for the recommendations in this report.



# Concluding thoughts

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We have researched the subject of youth employment, consulted with stakeholders across the country and listened to their ideas. Foremost among the lessons we learned are these indisputable facts:

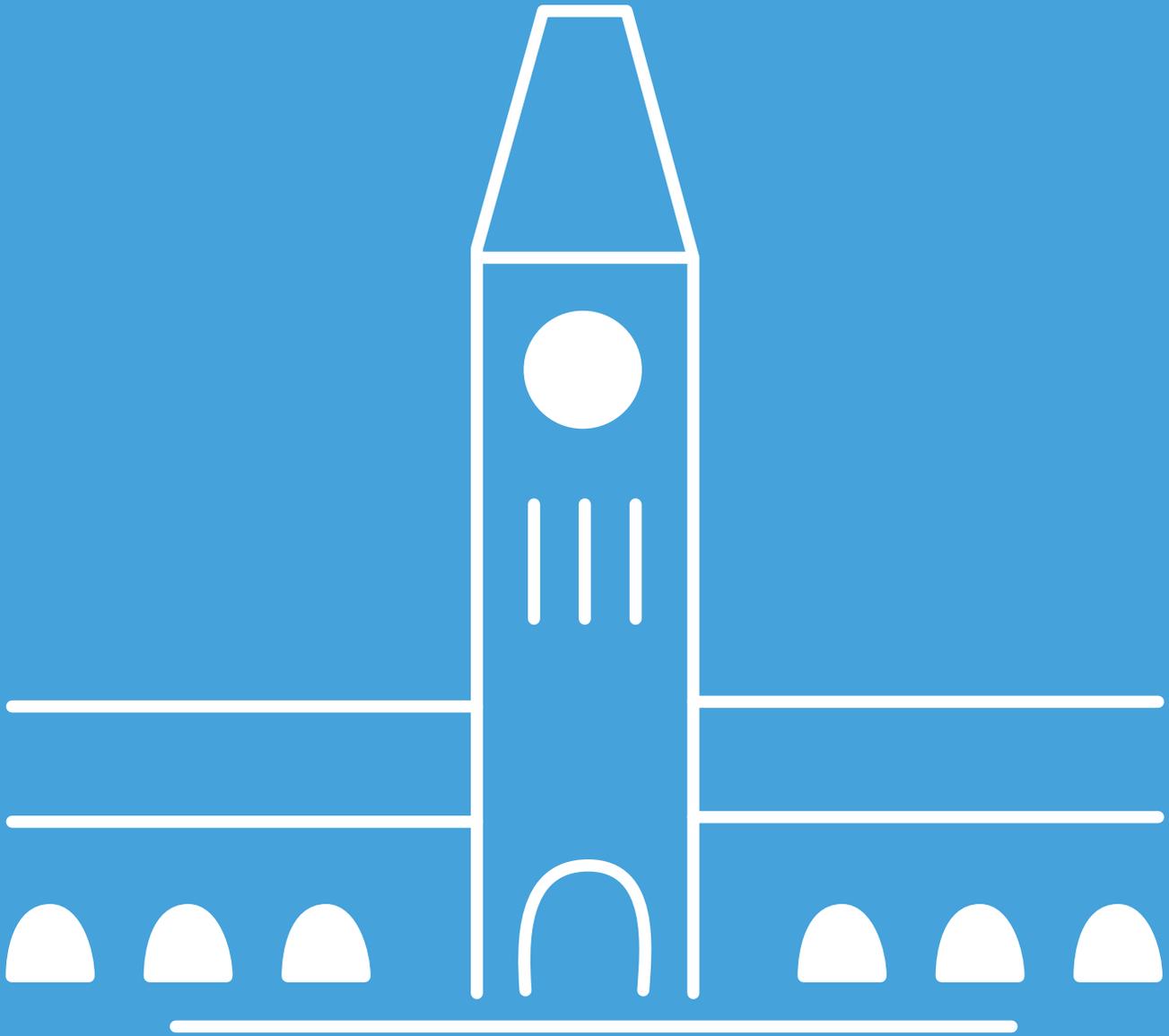
- The world of work is transforming rapidly.
- Young people must adapt and innovate to finance a secure future.
- The support we provide them must also evolve.

The two words we heard repeatedly in our consultations were “flexibility” and “fluidity.” To help our young people gain a solid foothold in the labour market, we need to teach them how to apply for a job and to adapt their soft and hard skills in a variety of circumstances over a lifetime. The support system also needs to be nimble and flexible enough to meet youth where they are.

Some of the next job opportunities may not even exist today—they might be in the natural resource sector, or in the digital economy or they may be created by young entrepreneurs. Making the transition from one job to another through choice or necessity is becoming the new normal.

We call on the Government of Canada, which brought our panel together, to demonstrate continued progress on making our recommendations a reality. With the momentum developed by engaging participants in the youth employment ecosystem, ongoing dialogue should be an attainable goal.

Young people want to work. They want to gain independence and contribute to society. It's our job, as government, employers, educational institutions, unions and support services—all partners in the future of Canada—to make it happen.



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| Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association                    | British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)         | Career Edge  |
| Argentina's National Research Centre                             | Business Council of Canada                              | Career Education Empowerment (CEE) Centre for Young Black Professionals                        |
| Assembly of First Nations  | Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC)               | Careers: The Next Generation   |
| Assembly of First Nations Youth Council                          | Business/Higher Education Roundtable (BHER)             | Carleton University  |
| Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs                                      | C.D. Howe Institute                                     | Carrefour jeunesse-emploi (CJE) Montréal Centre-Ville  |
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| Athabasca University   | Calgary Economic Development                            | Centre d'Études sur les transitions et l'apprentissage (CERTA)                                 |
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| Champions Career Centre   | EU Youth Strategy   | Headspace  |
| Chebucto Connections  | EY Canada   | Higher Education Strategy Associates   |
| Choices for Youth   | FABLabs: Digital Badges   | Hireup Youth   |
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| Deloitte Future of Canada Centre  | Generation Initiative   | Junior Achievement   |
| DHR International   | Generation Squeeze  | Keyano College   |
| Diplômatic  | George Brown College  | KPMG   |
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| Eagle's Nest Aboriginal Youth Resource & Recreation Centre                                  | Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Skills and Training Policy, Workforce Development      | Long View Systems  |
| East Prince Youth Development Centre  | Government of Northwest Territories, Career Development and Training                            | Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre Inc.   |
| ECHO  | Government of Nova Scotia, Labour and Advanced Education  | Magnet   |
| École de technologie supérieure   | Government of Nunavut, Department of Family Services  | Manitoba Department of Education & Training – Workforce Development            |
| Edmonton Economic Development Corporation   | Government of Ontario, Advanced Education and Skills Development                                | Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc.   |
| Educate!  | Government of Ontario, Highly Skilled Workforce Division  | Manitoba Metis Federation Inc.   |
| Education Yukon   |   | MaRS   |
| Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany  |   | Marymound  |
| Emploi-Quebec   |   | Maytree  |
| Employment Income Security Working Group  |   | McGill University  |
| Enactus Canada  |   | McGill University First Peoples' House (Maison des Premiers Peuples de McGill) |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| McMurray Métis  | PEI Youth Futures Council  | Saint Mary's University                         |
| Me to We  | Perpetual Energy   | Samasource Digital Basics                       |
| Meet Me @ the Bell Tower (AYO)  | Phoenix Youth  | Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies   |
| Metcalf Foundation  | Polytechnics Canada  | Saskatchewan Polytechnic                        |
| Metro   | PostMedia  | SDS Consulting                                  |
| Millennial Dream  | Power Corporation of Canada  | Secure Energy                                   |
| Minerva Foundation  | Primco Dene  | SHAD  |
| Mitacs  | Prime Minister's Youth Council   | Siemens Canada                                  |
| Mobyliis  | PwC Canada   | Simon Fraser University                         |
| Montreal International  | Quartier de l'Innovation   | Social Capital Partners                         |
| Morneau Shapell   | Quebec Film and Television Bureau (BCTQ)   | Social Development Corporation                  |
| Mount Royal University  | (Bureau du Cinema et de la Télévision du Québec (BCTQ))                          | (Société de Développement Social)               |
| Mount Saint Vincent University  | Quebec Film and Television Council   | Sociallight Media                               |
| Mowat Centre  | Quebec Manufacturer and Exporters (MEQ)  | South Island Division of Family Practice        |
| Nanaimo Youth Services Association (NYSA)                                 | Quebec's Taskforce on Student Success  | Southern Alberta Institute of Technology        |
| National Association of Indigenous Workers (NAIW)                         | QUEST program  | SpencerCreo Foundation                          |
| National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS)             | RADIUS SFU   | Star Internship Program (PEI)                   |
| Native Women's Association of Canada                                      | Raise Your Flag  | Starbucks                                       |
| Ndinawe maaganag  | Rangle.io  | Statistics Canada                               |
| New Era Immigration   | RBC  | Stone Olafson                                   |
| Newcomers Employment and Education Development Services Inc. (N.E.E.D.S.) | RBC Capital Markets  | TalentEgg                                       |
| Next City   | ReachAbility   | TD Canada Trust                                 |
| NextWork (Denmark)  | Reconnect (Le nuage solidaire)   | TD Economics                                    |
| North End Community Renewal Corporation (NECRC)                           | Redfox Health Living Society   | TD Securities                                   |
| North End Youth   | Regina Labour Market Management Committee  | Ted Rogers School of Management                 |
| Northern Alberta Institute of Technology                                  | Registered Apprenticeship Program  | Teen Resource Centre                            |
| Nova Scotia Community College, Adult Learning Program                     | Regroupement des Auberges du Cœur du Québec                                      | TELUQ (Télé-université)                         |
| Npower  | Regroupement des centres d'amitiés autochtones du Québec                         | The Bridge Youth & Family Services Society      |
| Nunavut Sivuniksavut  | Regroupement des Organismes Communautaires Autonomes Jeunesse du Québec (ROCAJQ) | The Conference Board of Canada                  |
| Objectif Emploi   | Réseau des carrefours jeunesse-emploi du Québec (RCJEQ)                          | The Leadership Store                            |
| Observatoire Jeunes et Société  | Réseau pour la Stratégie Urbaine de la Communauté Autochtone Montréalaise        | The Livelihood Institute                        |
| Ontario Chamber of Commerce   | ReSourceYYC  | The Next Big Thing                              |
| Ontario Disabilities Employment Network                                   | Restaurants Canada   | Toronto Youth Cabinet                           |
| Ontario Disability Network  | Retail Council of Canada   | Tribal Chiefs Employment and Training           |
| Ontario Federation of Labour  | Riipen   | Tungasuwingat Inuit                             |
| Ontario Restaurant Hotel and Motel Association                            | Rockefeller Foundation   | UFA Co-operative Limited                        |
| Ontario Trillium Foundation   | ROUJO-BOULO (Job Bus)  | Unified Aboriginal Youth Collective             |
| Open Door Group   | Ryerson University   | Unifor  |
| Oshki-Pimanche-O-Win Education & Training Institute                       | Sacred Fire Productions  | United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) |
| Pathways to Education (Spryfield)   | (Productions Les Feux Sacrés)  | United Steelworkers                             |
| Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada  | SAFE Workers of Tomorrow   | United Way of Calgary                           |
| PAYE (Partnership to Advance Youth Employment) at the City of Toronto     | Saint John Human Development Council   | United Way Toronto and York Region              |
|   |  | Université de Montréal                          |
|   |  | Université de Sherbrooke                        |
|   |  | Université du Québec à Rimouski (UQAR)          |
|   |  | Université du Québec, à Montréal (UQAM)         |

Université Laval  
 Universities Canada  
 University of Alberta  
 University of Alberta Student Union  
 University of British Columbia, Arts Coop Program  
 University of British Columbia, Economics  
 University of Calgary  
 University of Calgary Student Union  
 University of Lethbridge  
 University of Ottawa  
 University of Prince Edward Island  
 University of the Fraser Valley  
 University of Toronto  
 University of Victoria  
 University of Waterloo, Youth and Innovation Research Project  
 Urban Workers Project  
 VanCity  
 Vancouver Community College  
 Vancouver Island University  
 Venture for Canada  
 Verbed Inc.  
 Victoria Self-Employment Service Providers  
 Vinetta Project  
 Virgin Mobile  
 Virgin Unite  
 Voices: Manitoba's Youth in Care Network  
 Waypoints  
 Wellesley Institute  
 West Air Sheet Metal  
 Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce  
 Winnipeg Labour Market Management Committee  
 Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council  
 Women Building Futures  
 WORKshift Canada  
 Ycombinator  
 Year Up  
 YELL  
 YMCA of Quebec  
 York University  
 Young Builders Group - Edmonton Construction Association  
 Young Entrepreneurship Leadership Launchpad  
 Youth Business Foundation  
 Youth Employment Services  
 Youth Employment UK (Youth Friendly Charter)  
 Youth Fusion  
 (Fusion Jeunesse)  
 Youth Futures Council  
 Youth Program Quality Initiative  
 Youth WORKS  
 Yukon College  
 YWCA Metro Vancouver

# Panel members



## Vasiliki (Vass) Bednar, Chair

(Toronto, Ontario)

Currently a Senior Policy Associate at Airbnb, Vasiliki (Vass) Bednar was an Action Canada Fellow and the Associate Director of the Cities research program at the University of Toronto's Martin Prosperity Institute at the Rotman School of Management.

Vass holds her Master of Public Policy from the University of Toronto's School of Public Policy & Governance and is a graduate of McMaster University's Arts & Science program, where she earned the President's Medal for Leadership.



## Robyn Bews

(Calgary, Alberta)

Robyn is the Executive Director of WORKshift at Calgary Economic Development, Canada's first regional telework project that has grown into a national not-for-profit and the de facto brand for all things related to flexible work in Canada. She also leads the Talent Hub, which seeks to find employment opportunities for Calgary's world-class talent.

Robyn has advised hundreds of organizations around the world and is the co-author of Workshift, a book supporting organizations and their leaders to successfully adopt flexible cultures. She has a commerce degree from Acadia University and worked previously at TELUS Communications and the United Nations.



## Paulina Cameron

(Vancouver, British Columbia)

Paulina serves as the Regional Director for BC & Yukon at Futurpreneur Canada, and a visiting professor at the Simon Fraser Beedie School of Business. In 2008, she helped found Young Women in Business, Canada's largest non-profit providing personal and leadership development of millennial women. Previously, Paulina was with KPMG in audit and management consulting, obtaining the CPA, CA designation.

Paulina was awarded the Vancouver Board of Trade's inaugural Wendy McDonald Award, the International Alliance for Women Top 100 Award in Washington D.C., and the KPMG National Leadership Award, and was a finalist for the YWCA's Women of Distinction Awards in the Young Woman of Distinction category.



## Michael Redhead Champagne

(North End, Winnipeg, Manitoba)

Michael is the founder of AYO! (Aboriginal Youth Opportunities). He served as president of the North End Community Renewal Corporation, was a board member for the Circle of Life Thunderbird House and is currently on the board for Marymound Inc. His committee work includes United Way of Winnipeg's Council for Indigenous Relations and he is an advisor to the Garden of Compassion initiative. Michael was recognized as the 2016 Canadian Red Cross Young Humanitarian of the Year and in TIME Magazine as a Next Generation Leader. In 2016, Michael served on the Bank of Canada's bank note advisory committee. He received a Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Achievement Award and has been recognized as a CBC Manitoba Future 40 leader, a Manitoba Hero and a Future Leader of Manitoba.



## Sonya Gulati

(Toronto, Ontario)

Sonya Gulati, MA, MBA, is a manager in KPMG's Management Consulting practice, where she is a strategic advisor on economic and policy issues and large-scale public sector transformation. She specializes in evidence-based analytics, research, program and public policy design, corporate strategy and strategic planning. She has held successively senior roles in economics and strategy with TD—in Canada and the U.S.—and in the public sector with the Ontario Ministry of Finance and Employment and Social Development Canada. She is an experienced facilitator and thoughtful when it comes to effectively engaging stakeholders. Over the course of her career, she has authored or co-authored nearly 150 publicly available research and public policy reports.

Sonya holds an Honours Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Toronto, a Masters of Arts degree in Economics from McMaster University and a Masters of Business Administration from the Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto.



## María Eugenia Longo

(Québec, Quebec)

María Eugenia is a professor at the Institut national de la recherche scientifique, Urbanisation Culture Société, in Québec, and director of the Observatoire Jeunes et Société. She is also a member of the International Sociological Association and secretary of its research committee RC30 Sociology of Work. She has taught, researched and published extensively on the topic of young people in Quebec, France and Argentina. She is currently coordinating a research project on precarious work among youth in Quebec, France and Argentina (*Jeunes précaires et politiques publiques : convergences et divergences autour de l'emploi au Québec, en France et en Argentine*). She is also co-leading a project on social norms and career aspirations—(Réussir sa vie. Normes sociales et aspirations socio-professionnelles dans un monde en mutation).

Maria holds a post-doctorate from Université de Sherbrooke in Canada, and a Doctorate in Sociology and Social Sciences from AixMarseille University in France and Universidad de Buenos Aires in Argentina.



## Gabriel Bran Lopez

(Montréal, Quebec)

Gabriel is an entrepreneur and the former President of Jeune Chambre de commerce de Montréal, the largest youth chamber in the world. In 2009, he founded Youth Fusion, a charity that works to lower dropout rates, employs over 200 people in Quebec and Ontario, and engages weekly with over 13,000 at-risk youth.

Gabriel sits on the boards of Concordia University, the Bombardier Foundation, Québec-Cinema and the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal, and was formerly on the board of Ox-fam-Québec. A Special Advisor to the Minister of Culture for the renewal of Quebec's cultural policy, and a member of the Committee on Economy and Innovation, he has received multiple awards. Gabriel graduated from Concordia University in Communication Studies.



## Adrianna MacKenzie

(Halifax, Nova Scotia)

Adrianna MacKenzie is the Program Director for Pathways to Education in Spryfield, Nova Scotia. She has worked in the field of community youth development for 16 years, including with HeartWood Centre for Community Youth Development and as an independent consultant. Adrianna has helped to develop systems change management processes for provincial government departments, and facilitated training sessions for building the capacity of youth-serving organizations.

Adrianna previously sat as president of the board of directors for the Gordon Foundation for Children and Youth. She earned a BA in Criminology from Saint Mary's University and a BEd from Acadia University.



