Improving the School-to-Work Transitions of Youth in Canada: A Scoping Review

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CCDF FCDC

CCDF gratefully acknowledges the support and contributions of the Advisory Committee:

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- Madeleine Barker, Director, Development Programs, RBC Royal Bank of Canada
- Barbara Bowen, Manager, Special Programs, Manitoba Aerospace HR Council
- Judy Doidge, Director, Partnerships, Social Capital Partnerships
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- Kelly Hoey, Executive Director, Halton Industry-Education Council
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- Sophia Zhang, Strategy Lead, 10 Thousand Coffees
- Tom Zizys, Innovation Fellow, Metcalf Foundation

About the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF)
CCDF is a non-profit organization that works to advance career education, career services and the capacity of the profession to respond with empathy and skill to their students, clients and stakeholders in an ever-changing work environment. CCDF is a nationally and internationally recognized leader in the field of career development and works on a range of projects and specializes in areas of:
- Applied Research: Creating an evidence-base for the outcomes of career development interventions and policies;
- Policy Consultation: Bringing policy makers and service providers together to develop policy that is attuned to the realities of service provision in the field;
- Training: Developing and delivering training courses for a range of practitioners aligned to the competencies set out in the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners;
- Resource Development: Making career products that respond to client and practitioner needs;
- Service Capacity Building: Working with diverse partners to enrich and strengthen career services and to integrate career, community, economic and workforce development.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Context

In Canada, the youth unemployment rate doubles the adult rate. The rate of underemployment has grown in the last 20 years and currently 30% of youth with jobs in Canada are underemployed. Employed youth under 30 are increasingly working in precarious work or non-permanent jobs (i.e., jobs that are temporary, contract, part-time, low paid and low skilled). The number of 15-29 years olds working in these conditions has nearly doubled from 6.9% in 1997 to 11.6% in 2011 (Foster, 2012). Canada has the greatest proportion of degree holders earning poverty-rate incomes within member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). According to the OECD, 18% of Canadian university graduates are working in jobs where they earn at or below the poverty line (OECD, Education at a Glance, 2014). In a recent survey of Canadian Millennials, 43% of 30-33 year olds remain reliant on their parents for financial support and 29% of those aged 25-29 still live with their parents (Carrick, 2014). Underemployment is not just impacting the ability of Canadian youth to finance the milestones of adulthood; it is impacting their mental health as well. Recent studies have found a rise in stress and anxiety disorders among Canada's youth. In a national survey of youth aged 18-24, nearly 90% reported feeling uncomfortable levels of stress (Sun Life, 2012). When asked why they were feeling so stressed, 86% in this age group attributed the stress to underemployment (Sun Life, 2012). Many are turning to the mental health system for formalized supports. From 2013 to 2014, an Ontario-based mental health facility reported a 371% increase in youth presenting with anxiety disorders, 158% increase in mood disorders and 150% increase in youth with suicidality and emotional dysregulation (Royal Ottawa Mental Health Centre, 2014). Other research in the area of mental health suggests that this may be reflective of a more widespread trend.

The social, psychological and economic costs of underemployment and the rise of poorly paid precarious work are significantly impacting young Canadians and the Canadian economy. As an indicator of the impact of poor transitions, the Chamber of Commerce, a national body representing business nationally, stated in its report, *A Battle We Can't Afford to Lose* (2014), that improving the pathways for youth from education to employment is one of national importance, if not, a national emergency.

The Scoping Review

In the fall of 2015, The Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) undertook this scoping review to examine how to support better school-to-work transitions for youth – those

who had left school prior to graduation, who went directly to the labour market after high school graduation and those who had graduated from a PSE program. The main objectives of this project were to identify what is needed to improve school-to-work transitions of Canadian youth and identify research/programming/policy gaps for future project considerations.

CCDF's undertook four main methods of inquiry to build this scoping review:

- The formation of a 12-member cross-sectoral Advisory Committee (AC) of key stakeholder representatives who advised both on the development of the project and provided input on the research, potential hypotheses, literature sources, and key informant contacts;
- A literature scan of Canadian and international research related to school-to-work transitions;
- A survey of stakeholders (n=141) to identify the main factors contributing to poor school-to-work transitions of Canadian youth, promising practice and the identification of champions working to create bridges for better transitions for a range of youth; and
- Interviews of 11 key informants that served as a final check on the findings from the other methods of inquiry listed above.

Full reports for the literature scan, survey and interviews are available on the CCDF website, www.ccdf.ca.

Findings

Improving transitions from school-to-work is a complex problem. The research conducted for this scoping review suggests that the problem is largely a systemic one; not one that can be simply narrowed to the need for a specific program, more robust services for particular target populations of youth or stronger engagement of specific stakeholder groups. We found that no province has successfully enacted a comprehensive school-to-work transition strategy. Student access to transition support is spotty at best and no active system exists to support Canadian youth in their school-to-work transitions. Canada continues to take a hodgepodge approach and implementation suffers. We found in this scoping review that:

- Promising policies, programs and tools exist, but are generally not effectively implemented, resourced, or utilized;
- Current funding models either prescribe the integration of these programs/curricula with no new funding to support implementation or have difficult application processes that put community-based providers at financial risk and/or at-risk of programming lapses or closures;
- Implementation is too often limited to a minority of students; and,

- There are programming, tools, practices and policies available but implementation, execution and awareness factors get in the way of providing the support needed.

For Canada to move beyond the current situation, the literature cited in this review and the key informants (surveyed or interviewed) suggested:

- The creation of an overarching framework developed with key stakeholders that delineates stakeholder roles, effective policies and implementation requirements;
- Bringing career education into the curriculum far earlier and seeing it as a central part of education, not an "add-on" to the curriculum;
- Assessing for interventions and supports needs to happen far earlier and have proactive evidence-based measures for those who require these supports;
- The development of an awareness campaign focused on the cost of poor transition that includes the voices of youth, telling their stories of this lived experience, challenging pervasive stereotypes that undermine youth employment and collecting their solutions to improve transitions;
- The establishment of a labour market information system that promotes the collection and sharing of timely, accurate data and tools, and supports to help stakeholders make career sense of it;
- Research on promising practices, namely demand-led strategies, workforce development approaches, education-industry partnerships, mini-systems approaches, and social innovation methods, to understand what has impact and what is scalable;
- The creation of an evaluation culture that promotes solid and sustainable implementation strategies and encourages stakeholders to play their parts, play them well, and adjust as the need and the system evolves;
- An examination of how funding processes and procedures impact implementation; and,
- The identification and resourcing of intermediaries to serve as conveners, brokers and assistants to schools and employers engaged in building pathways to the labour market.

Next Steps

The research for this scoping review pointed to important research, programming and policy gaps that would support a better understanding of the challenges facing Canada's youth and would support improvements in practice and transition supports. It struck us that there were a number of initiatives that could be developed, which we hope the research and development

community considers. For CCDF, we hope to pursue two initiatives stemming from this research:

1. The first is delving deeper into the experience of youth. What is the transition from school-to-work like? What are the main issues? Where are youth getting stuck? Where are they finding opportunity? And, most importantly, what do youth see as the solutions?

2. The predominant recommendation found from conducting the scoping review is the need to move from research to enacting the systemic change through an overarching national school-to-work strategy. As such, most who provided input to this scoping review believed that the next phase should primarily focus on stimulating a national dialogue on the issue to truly understand what is happening, what is at stake and the collective development of a national strategy on school-to-work transitions. "It's time," one informant said, "for the rubber to hit the road!"

CCDF is actively seeking partners and collaborator for both initiatives.

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METHODOLOGY

In October 2015, the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF), with the support of an anonymous donor, undertook a scoping research project to examine how to support better school-to-work transitions for youth – those who had left school prior to graduation, who went directly to the labour market after high school graduation and those who had graduated from a PSE program. The main objectives of this project were to identify what is needed to improve school-to-work transitions of Canadian youth and identify research/programming/policy gaps for future project considerations.

To do this, CCDF undertook four main methods of inquiry. CCDF:

- Assembled a 12-member cross-sectoral Advisory Committee[1] (AC) of key stakeholder representatives to advise on the development of the project and provide input on the scope of the research, potential hypotheses, research and literature sources, and key informant contact suggestions;
- Conducted a literature scan of over 80 sources and meta-analyses to explore Canadian and international employer-education research related to youth that mapped the literature and identified key concepts, best practices, gaps in the research, and types and sources of evidence;
- Surveyed a wide variety of stakeholders (n=141) to identify the main factors contributing to poor school-to-work transitions of Canadian youth, champions working in the field, promising practice suggestions, and resource, tool, program and policy gaps; and,
- Interviewed 11 key informants identified via the AC, survey data and CCDF's network to serve as a final check on the findings of the other research conducted and to gather more input on the systemic, implementation and execution issues getting in the way of effective school-to-work transitions.

What follows is a summary of the findings from each research method of inquiry:

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[1] The Advisory Committee for this project is made up of 12 members with expertise in the area of school-to-work transitions. The Advisory Committee members are: Sarah Anson-Cartwright, Director, Skills and Immigration Policies, The Canadian Chamber of Commerce; Madeleine Barker, Director, Development Programs, RBC Royal Bank of Canada; Barbara Bowen, Manager, Special Programs, Manitoba Aerospace HR Council; Judy Doidge, Director, Partnerships, Social Capital Partnerships; José Domene, Canada Research Chair in School-to-Work Transitions at the University of New Brunswick; Kelly Hoey, Executive Director, Halton Industry-Education Council; Trish Hennessy, Founder and Director, Ontario Office, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives; Riz Ibrahim, Executive Director, The Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling; Ryan Land, Manager of Corporate Affairs, Vale Canada Ltd.; Sophia Zhang, Strategy Lead, 10 Thousand Coffees; Tom Zizys, Innovation Fellow, Metcalf Foundation. One member requested to remain anonymous.

SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

Advisory Committee Input

The project began by asking the Advisory Committee (AC) to provide input on:

- The research scope and hypothesis;
- Mapping the system;
- Sources of literature and programs, policies and practices targeted at improving transitions;
- Possible levers of change; and,
- Key informant contacts.

All committee members were given an input form (Appendix A: Advisory Committee Information Gathering Form) in early November, 2015 and given approximately two weeks to respond. All but one member provided input.

A teleconference was held prior to sending the AC the form. At the teleconference, the CCDF team overviewed its hypothesis that challenges/barriers to school-to-work transitions were largely systemic. Overall, the AC agreed with this assessment although they encouraged the research team to also examine gaps in programming and resources for specific populations. In their comments on the form, the AC primarily referred to specific systemic challenges they saw for youth making school-to-work transitions. They also provided input on what they thought was needed to improve the situation, contributed to the development of an initial systems map and put forward research ideas for moving forward with the next phase of research.

In terms of challenges in the system, the AC felt that:

- Although educators are a critical support to successful school-to-work transitions, they did not have the work history (i.e. work experience outside of the education sector) or the training required to be effective career educators;
- There needs to be a re-articulation of the role of education in contributing to student preparedness for the labour market;
- Employers need to be far more involved and increase training for new hires. Members referred to change in focus of Human Resources departments from training to workforce streamlining as a barrier to transition and wondered if this was leading to the loss of employer capacity to on-board and train;
- Buy-in from all stakeholders would be a key challenge in making systemic change;
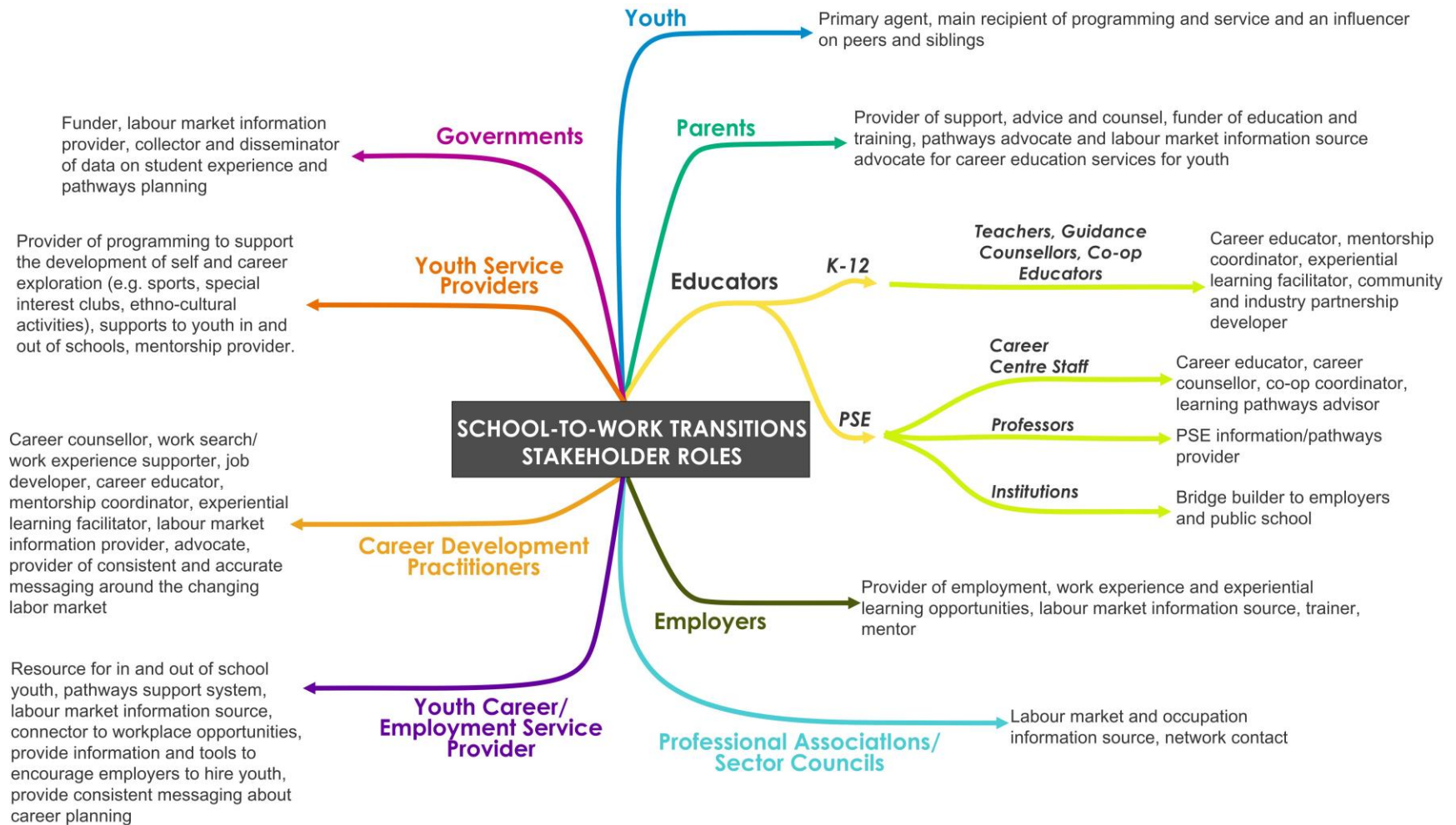
- The lack of funding or the erratic nature of funding programs has a significant impact in the ability of service organizations and education institutions to have impact;

- Biased perspectives (e.g. stereotypes of Gen Y) impede everything from the exploration of career options to hiring;

- There is a need to find ways to scale best practices and to push an evaluation culture across all programing so that a comparison of outcomes can be made.

In terms of what is needed to support systemic change, the AC recommended:

- A national school-to-work strategy;

- Meaningful collaboration on a "cradle to careers" workforce development continuum that treats career development as co-curricular within the core subject areas (rather than elective, extra-curricular or optional);

- A gathering of multiple stakeholders to participate in the design and execution of the solution;

- Practical scalable solutions;

- A clear mission and definition of success with frequent measurement and assessment;

- Access to consistent funding;

- An increase in local partnerships between secondary, PSE and employers to ensure that education meets demands of the market;

- The provision of more and earlier career education and planning in public schools; and,

- A bridging mechanism to support and engage students with the labour market in their communities.

As part of scoping the transition support "system," the AC was asked to list the key stakeholders that are and/or should be involved in the system. The key stakeholder groups identified by the AC included youth, parents, employers, public school educators, PSE instructors/professors, career development practitioners, public schools, PSE institutions, youth organizations (including ethno-cultural organizations and service clubs), youth career/employment services. The AC was also asked to describe possible roles for each stakeholder on their list. What follows is a map summarizing their responses:

School-to-Work Stakeholders and their Roles in the Transition Support System

Youth — Primary agent, main recipient of programming and service and an influencer on peers and siblings

Parents — Provider of support, advice and counsel, funder of education and training, pathways advocate and labour market information source advocate for career education services for youth

Governments — Funder, labour market information provider, collector and disseminator of data on student experience and pathways planning

Youth Service Providers — Provider of programming to support the development of self and career exploration (e.g. sports, special interest clubs, ethno-cultural activities), supports to youth in and out of schools, mentorship provider.

Career Development Practitioners — Career counsellor, work search/ work experience supporter, job developer, career educator, mentorship coordinator, experiential learning facilitator, labour market information provider, advocate, provider of consistent and accurate messaging around the changing labor market

Youth Career/ Employment Service Provider — Resource for in and out of school youth, pathways support system, labour market information source, connector to workplace opportunities, provide information and tools to encourage employers to hire youth, provide consistent messaging about career planning

SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITIONS STAKEHOLDER ROLES

Educators

K-12 — **Teachers, Guidance Counsellors, Co-op Educators** — Career educator, mentorship coordinator, experiential learning facilitator, community and industry partnership developer

PSE — **Career Centre Staff** — Career educator, career counsellor, co-op coordinator, learning pathways advisor

Professors — PSE information/pathways provider

Institutions — Bridge builder to employers and public school

Employers — Provider of employment, work experience and experiential learning opportunities, labour market information source, trainer, mentor

Professional Associations/ Sector Councils — Labour market and occupation information source, network contact

Finally, the AC was asked to contribute research ideas and directions they felt were needed to address this issue. Most felt that research in this field needs to look at both internal (personal) and external (systems) issues affecting transition. Members stated that both internal and external factors are being significantly impacted by changes in the labour market and business practices (e.g. the financialization of business). In keeping with this, one member suggested giving consideration of the definition of school-to-work transitions and delineating the success indicators that define when the transition to work is complete (e.g. are we looking at just obtaining any job or decent work?).

When members were asked about the need to focus on a particular group of youth, most members felt that it is not an issue that belongs to a particular group of youth although some youth may be more impacted than others. What is new to the issue, many stated, is that poor school-to-work transition outcomes are part of a wider group of youth (e.g. university graduates) than in the past, and we need to understand why that is and what the impact is on the traditional "at-risk" groups. AC members cautioned that it is important to remember that the barriers and opportunities in the system are different for different groups of youth. AC members thought that one way of approaching the issue of target audience was not by focussing on a particular group of youth but looking at a particular point in time when programming or lack thereof can influence the outcome of school-to-work pathways for youth.

In addition to their reflection on target audience, the AC proposed a number of possible research topics and methods for improving the outcomes of school-to-work transitions including:

- **Outcomes-Based Research**: Look at the outcomes of school-based career education, how awareness of work options and career pathways supports effective transitions and how learning choices and access/exposure to work opportunities improves transition outcomes.
- **Building a Systems Map:** The AC saw this as a significant challenge because the issue is there is no system in Canada to map. The AC suggested looking at mini-systems (i.e. local systems) that are working and mapping them. One member suggested mapping the stakeholders and their needs. All agreed that there needs to be a map that includes an articulation of the ideal or possible roles in the system.
- **Reframe the Problem:** Look at it as developing a system of training excellence. How would we develop such a system; what kinds of collaboration are needed among stakeholders; what partnerships, programming and policies are needed to move in this direction; what is the role for intermediaries in bridging the supply and demand sides and what are the promising practices in this regard nationally and internationally?

- **Focus on What is Working:**
  - Use an appreciative inquiry research method to look at what is working and why, and tailor policy and programming to this. Does this yield more wins?
  - Look globally for what is working in other countries.
- **Identify Transitions Supports:** How do we ensure that individuals have the wrap-around supports they need to make school-to-work transitions? How do we assess individuals for this? What are best practices in this regard?
- **Get the Demand-Side On-Side:**
  - Understand the reasons why some employers are not engaging in better workplace practices and supporting youth in transition. Examine strategies and practices that truly engage employers as partners; what activities and approaches can nudge or motivate employers to open their doors to youth of varying education backgrounds? What models or examples are there of employers being actively part of local school-to-work transitions systems; why did they decide to get involved and what could encourage others to do the same?;
  - Identify sectors for transferability to sectors in demand – e.g. A Manitoba-based mining company recruits from those who have experience at McDonald's because they know that those young people will be well trained in areas that are needed in the mining sector (e.g. safety, experience working on a production line, teamwork, critical thinking, etc.).
  - Look at innovative employer-led approaches to training youth that can encourage other employers to do more of it – e.g. Introduce new models of apprenticeship that move away from the traditional approach (i.e. pairing a journeyperson to an apprentice) to a model that undertakes the training organization wide.
  - Evaluate local public/private partnerships (i.e. mini systems) to examine how these practices support transition to the local labour market.
  - Conduct research on the benefits and challenges of Community Benefit Agreements.[2]
- **Scalability**: Examine how to scale best practice initiatives.

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[2] Community Benefit Agreements are citizen-led initiatives that can "seek a negotiated agreements with a developer or a local government for a project-specific set of benefits, such as local hiring" or hiring workers from specific backgrounds (ie. low income, youth, etc.) (Broadbent and Bravo, 2014, Maytree website). CBAs can also stipulate elements to advance community interest such as mixed-income housing requirements or living wage ordinances (Ibid). "CBAs are legally enforceable documents" (Ibid.).

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- **Research into the Cost of Poor Transitions and a Better Understand the Experience:**
  Research the actual economic costs associated with poor transitions to get the attention of policy makers and employers. Gather and bring the voice of youth to the forefront of the issue. Using an ethnographical approach, report on realities of the school-to-work experience and delineate from young people's perspectives their needs and solutions to the problem.

With these suggestions and the information gathered from the AC, CCDF proceeded to explore the literature and to develop a survey to further investigate research directions needed to address the issues and challenges of school-to-work transitions.

Literature Scan

The purpose of the literature scan, achieved through exploring Canadian and international employer-education research related to youth, was to identify key concepts, best practices, gaps in the research, and the types and sources of evidence related to school-to-work transitions. Eighty-three Canadian and international sources, including literature reviews and international meta-analyses, were reviewed. Programming aimed at supporting school-to-work transitions was examined, but less thoroughly.

Of the sources scanned, six themes emerged:

A Broad Picture of School-to-Work Transitions in Canada
The research captured under this theme included literature on the state of youth unemployment and underemployment, projected labour shortages, skill gaps and skill mismatches, recommended policy frameworks, and national strategies for improving the transition from education to employment.

In sum, it is clear from the literature that young people in Canada are having a difficult time making the transition from school to work. Sources point to increases in underemployment, precarious/non-permanent work, poverty rates among graduates, reliance of parents for income and housing and mental health concerns as being some of the indicators that youth in transition are struggling. Their struggles are juxtaposed with the potential in Canada for high labour shortages. Some researchers project profound labour shortages in Canada, with one source estimating about 2 million workers short by 2031.

There are many sources indicating that more and broader efforts need to be made to support youth in transition. In the literature, we found that although career education and career development tools/resources/programming exist to support transitions post-graduation, they are not well-formed, accessed or coordinated. Many sources point to the absence of a national school-to-work or education and training strategy and argue that such a mechanism is needed to improve student outcomes.

Labour Market Conditions Impacting School-to-Work Transitions
The literature points to a number of profound changes underway in the labour market that have the potential to grow in scale and will have significant impacts on the future of work for young people. Some of these changes with potential impacts found in the literature include increased automation across all sectors, reducing the need for workers in both high and low skill areas; increased levels of stress and anxiety in the workplace as workers attempt to cope with the rise in precarious work/serial contracts; the explosion of the gig economy and its impacts on worker benefits and rights and the increased importance of workplace training as employees need to constantly update their skills.

School-to-Work Transitions Internationally

International research indicates that countries around the world share many of the same challenges as Canada in supporting youth employment. Much of this literature examines the current state of youth unemployment and underemployment around the world, school-to-work trends, obstacles and/or barriers for youth and broad implications for future research looking to improve youth transitions from school to work. Some of the issues and recommendations noted in these sources include:

- the transition from school-to-work is less clear for youth than in the past;
- academic learning must be combined with vocational/applied learning to prepare young people for today's world of work; and
- programs that support school-to-work transitions must be tailored to the needs of both youth and employers.

Generation Y: Internal and External Factors Impacting Work and Their Careers

Many sources considered the internal and external factors that affect young people's school-to-work transitions. Research examining the internal factors studied the impact of hope, attitude, parenting style and work values on employment outcomes. The research revealed that attitudes and behaviours of employers and young people play a role in compounding (e.g. perceptions of the work ethics of young people) and addressing (e.g. feeling good about the type of work they are doing) joblessness and skills shortages. As well, sources indicated that it is critical for career development practitioners, educators and parents to promote hope in their students, clients and children, as youth perceptions of hope significantly predict academic performance and vocational identity.

Strategies for Improving School-to-Work Transitions

The literature scan revealed that there are a number of initiatives attempting to address and improve school-to-work transitions in Canada. The literature scan provided an overview of the programming available and looked at what approaches were taken broadly to support youth in transition including initiatives for vulnerable or at-risk youth, career development, vocational education and training, workforce development, education-employer partnerships, demand-led and entrepreneurship strategies.

The question of the scalability and equity of programming was found across the literature. In our review of this literature we noted an absence of policies and initiatives aimed at changing the cultural perspective and systemic, or lack thereof, approach to transitions. The literature we reviewed assumed, falsely, a cultural milieu in which:

- Youth are invested in their career development, that they see work as something that can be meaningful and a source of pride, that they see themselves as agents in their career development rather than at the mercy of the system;

- Parents support youth in making career decisions from a range of options that don't necessarily include university education;

- Teachers see connecting youth to future career options as a vital part of their role;

- Employers want to actively invest and partner with schools in skills training, that they actively seek to hire and nurture young talent rather than see it as an investment risk.

Policies to Support School-to-Work Transitions

The literature referred to a number of policies, both pan-Canadian and provincially/territorially based, that touched on aspects of improving school-to-work transition outcomes for young people. Perhaps the most exciting Canadian initiative focussed on transition is the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET)'s Future in Focus, released in June 2015. This policy framework is the first of its kind in Canada and the first to have more than one province collaborating on its implementation. It focuses on:

- The provision of professional development to career education staff;

- Integrating career education early;

- Focusing on consistent and sustainable implementation;

- Engaging key stakeholders; and

- Evaluating for quality assurance and improvement.

Future in Focus has been adopted by the four Atlantic Provinces; all of which have integrated elements of the framework in public school curricula and programming. This is an important start and represents an opportunity in terms of expanding the framework's scope to engage other key stakeholders (post-secondary, employer, career development profession, community) and to widen its scope from regional to national.

Recommendations

It is clear from the literature that there is a need to improve the school-to-work transitions and the quality of the labour market attachment of youth in Canada. Taken together, the research points to the following best practice indicators that can be used to support better youth employment outcomes in Canada:

A National Coordinated School-to-Work Policy Framework

The research consistently points to the need to develop an overarching framework in collaboration with key stakeholders that articulates stakeholder roles, effective policies and implementation requirements.

Implementation

The literature scan demonstrates that Canada has a plethora of past and present programs and pilot projects targeted at improving school-to-work transitions. However, it does not have a strong track record for sustained implementation of these programs. What is needed is an implementation and evaluation plan that encourages stakeholders to play their parts, play them well, and adjust as the need and the system evolves.

The Labour Market Information System

Canada lacks a labour market information system in which information is shared actively among jurisdictions and educational institutions. The research points to the need for a federally coordinated labour market information system that shares information between jurisdictions and educational institutions to better support young people in making informed career decisions. In addition to access to current and comprehensive labour market information, the literature suggests that end-users also need support in making career sense of that information.

Career Education

The research indicates that career education is a proven intervention that supports better school-to-work outcomes; yet it remains sidelined in the curriculum in most provinces. Educators charged with teaching compulsory courses or integrating the material into the curriculum have limited to no training in career development. In the literature, we found strong recommendations for both pre-service and professional development to support teachers in integrating career education and development in the classroom.

School-to Work System

The research shows that youth in countries with strong vocational education and training systems do better, even in difficult economic times. Demand-led strategies and workforce development approaches to education and training include active engagement (from intake to post-hire) of employers and are showing promise in improving employment outcomes for young people. Further research could explore what is needed to create an integrated system in which employers and education are working together to ensure positive outcomes in young people's school-to-work transitions.

Key Informant Survey

The purpose of the survey was to consult with a wide variety of stakeholders (youth 15-30 years of age, employers, educators, career development practitioners, parents) to:

- Identify stakeholders' insight into the main factors contributing to poor school-to-work transitions of Canadian youth;
- Collect input on a range of research needs and suggestions;
- Gather promising practice suggestions and resource, tool, program and policy gaps; and
- Identify champions working in the field.

The survey was made up of 14 largely open-ended questions (Appendix B: Survey Questions). Broadly, the questions asked respondents to describe:

- What they thought were the key reasons/root causes for why youth are struggling to make school-to-work transitions,
- What was stopping employers from hiring youth,
- Which youth they thought were having more difficulty in their transition and why,
- What would be a better response than the current one,
- The key barriers to transition,
- Opportunities for change and how to scale these opportunities for wider impact, and
- What research they thought is needed to improve the situation.

Respondents were also asked to list "champions," tools, programs and policies that were helping to support school-to-work transitions in Canada.

CCDF sent out a request for response to almost 300 contacts on Dec. 4, 2015. Our goal was to get 50 responses in total. This was surpassed significantly at the time of the survey's close on Dec. 13, 2015 with a total of 141 respondents.

The survey results concluded that there is a general feeling across all survey respondents that youth need more support to be better positioned to transition from school to work in Canada. Being work-ready was a chief concern among most respondents. Most felt that youth were ill-prepared for the realities of the transition and had either not enough skills or not the right skills to find work. Increasing their exposure to and experience of the workplace was an overarching solution mentioned by the respondents.

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Respondents indicated that some youth were more likely to have difficulty transitioning from school to work than others. Vulnerable and marginalized groups were referenced as being more likely to face challenges. Youth with few skills or work-readiness/pre-employability issues were also referenced as being likely to have difficulty, and more youth respondents than all other respondents felt this to be the case. Hiring bias and stereotypes across all youth were seen as having significant impact on making the transition.

Preparation for youth (those likely to be more impacted or not) was seen as a key ingredient in changing and improving the road to employment for all youth. Career education and work-integrated learning were mentioned by respondents as the key levers of change to improve transitions. Having a more concrete idea of what employers are looking for in young hires was also suggested. Comments about the need for a paradigm shift in education that emphasizes the application of learning and having a better understanding of the changes taking place in the world of work were made by a number of respondents. The need for stakeholder collaboration was also a key ingredient suggested by respondents to improve the situation.

Respondents mentioned the need for:

- A national school-to-work strategy;
- Firsthand accounts from youth of the experience of moving from education to employment. To this idea, one respondent said, "We need to know from youth how bad it really is;" and
- An inventory and evidence-based research on existing programs to know what is working and what is not and how to scale of the best.

We suspect that survey fatigue played a role in the reduced number of respondents answering the questions about champions, tools, programs and policies. It is worth noting that respondents struggled to name actual programs, policies and tools beyond generalizations (e.g. job shadowing, work experience, dual credit, mandatory volunteering) and to state whether these interventions were effective. This may indicate that stakeholders do not know the supports available, which may also indicate a need for further awareness building and marketing of these tools, programs and policies.

Key Informant Interviews

The key informant interviews served as a final check on the findings of the research conducted to this point in the project. Contacts for the key informant interviews were gathered from the project's Advisory Committee, the survey respondents, the literature scan and the Project Team's own network. Eleven key informants, with varying professional portfolios and experience, were interviewed[3].

Interviewees were provided with a description of the project, a set of questions (Appendix C: Key Informant Interview Questions) and the following premises, which were based on the findings from the research conducted to this point:

1. Youth transition issues are not primarily the result of poor or non-existent policy, programs or resources. Rather, issues occur because of poor execution of available policy, programs and resources and/or limited availability of policy, programs and resources in certain areas. In other words, it appears as if the central tools needed to support transitions exist and, for the most part, are available.

2. A significant precursor to poor execution is the lack of perceived accountability among all stakeholder groups. Educators, employers, social service providers, parents and youth may not know their roles, may not wish to perform the requirements of their roles, or may not see themselves as having a role in school-to-work transitions. In many cases, each seems to look to others to blame for the transition issues.

Although many of the key informants agreed that implementation was a key issue, most (64%) felt it was not necessarily the only issue impacting on poor school-to-work transitions of youth. Those who somewhat agreed or disagreed with our premises said that, in their opinion, there continued to be a need for different resources, programs and policies in many areas of the country where existing resources, programs and policies were not well suited to meet individual needs. Although many interviewees qualified their response to the initial question in this way, all interviewees returned to systemic and execution issues repeatedly throughout the interviews more often than mentioning specific programs, resources and policy requirements missing from the school-to-work landscape.

Overall, the issues raised in the key informant interviews were divided into two themes:

1. Systemic and execution issues getting in the way of effective school-to-work transitions; and

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[3] A full list of the interviewees is included in the Improving the School-to-Work Transitions of Youth in Canada: Key Informant Interview Report.

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2.   Systemic and execution changes needed to support better transitions.

Systemic and execution issues getting in the way of effective school-to-work transitions

Whether or not they initially agreed with the premise that systemic and execution issues are getting in the way of effective school-to-work transitions, several key informants highlighted problems at this level. The systemic and execution issues they raised included the following:

- Young people are not getting the career development supports they need to make informed career decisions.

- Career education, resources, programs and policies are not equally available or effective for all students, even when great curriculum/resources/programs/policies exist.

- The funding process is a source of frustration to community-based organizations delivering employment services, and contributes to gaps in service for youth.

Systemic and execution changes needed to support better transitions

It was clear from the key informant interviews that there are a number of systemic and execution issues getting in the way of young people's school-to-work transitions. Key informants said that Canada needs:

- Stakeholders to work collaboratively to better support school-to-work transitions.
- Clearly defined roles for the stakeholders with motivation to act on the role.
- Leadership to make it happen: A national dialogue to create a framework around school-to-work transitions and career development in Canada.

Research Direction(s) for Phase 2

Key informants were also asked for their perspective on possible research questions for the next phase of research and if, in their opinion, the focus of research should be on a particular target audience or if the focus should be on systems issues. Responses to this focused on the following main recommendations:

1. Research on Youth Experience of School-to-Work Transitions
   - Examine how race, class and ethnicity impact on transition success
   - Conduct ethnographical research of youth to fully understand what is getting in the way of young people's transitions. The research would identify gaps in policy and programming around youth transitions and explore what is needed to support to the whole person.
   - Look at how pathways from high school impact on transition focussing on all high school students -- those who leave prior to graduation, those who end their

formal schooling at grade 12, those who continue on to post-secondary and those who go into apprenticeship.

2. Implementation and Execution Factors

- Examine the role implementation of programs, policies and resources plays in contributing to successful school-to-work transitions outcomes.

- Examine how funding processes and procedures impact implementation.

3. Strategies for Successful Transitions

- Develop a national school-to-work strategy that articulates how stakeholders can work collaboratively on improving education to employment outcomes. Interviewees suggested including national and international models.

- Look outside the field for models of social change that can be adapted to support strategies to improve transitions from school to work.

- Examine the impacts that workforce development and education-industry partnership models are having or could have in this field.

SCOPING REVIEW FINDINGS

Improving transitions from school to work is a complex problem. At the core, this scoping review suggests that the problem is largely a systemic one; not one that can be simply narrowed to the need for a specific program, more robust services for particular target populations of youth or stronger engagement of specific stakeholder groups. Nancy Hoffman, noted innovator in education, scholar, activist and co-lead on the influential Pathways to Prosperity Project with the Harvard Graduate School of Education, states that:

> ...until high school educators, supported by policy makers, begin to take the career readiness part of their mission as seriously as they do college readiness, teens will continue to experience leaving school as a sudden shock, like being tossed into cold, turbulent waters knowing only the theory of how to swim"
> (Let's Get Real, 2015, p. 6).

She adds that "...as long as schools and employers fail to address the youth employment crisis, [...] young people will struggle just to keep their heads above water, much less establish themselves in the adult world" (Ibid.).

These perspectives were also echoed by youth in our survey. A third of the youth surveyed said that the root cause of their school-to-work transition struggles is that they are ill-prepared. Almost 56% of employers surveyed held the same view as youth. The readiness created by career education was mentioned by all stakeholders (youth, career development practitioners, employers, educators, policy-makers, parents) as the key to supporting better school-to-work transitions.

Survey responses and key informant interviews also highlighted the need for employers to forge a new social contract with their current and future workforce. We heard that employers need to be part of the solution in supporting better school-to-work transitions. One key informant said, "...it's time for them to step up and identify the skills they need and help develop these with schools at the public and post-secondary levels." Other informants also mentioned the need for employers to increase their internal efforts to orient and train new employees.

In the literature scan and through the survey, we found an abundance of research, resources, and policies trying to tackle these issues. We also found a significant absence of reliable execution. There is notable inconsistent and limited delivery of policies, programs and resources. There is widespread inequity across the "system." There are pockets of excellence in which local champions tease out provincial and community-based funding to place a greater emphasis on supporting school-to-work transitions. The Council of Atlantic Ministers of

Education and Training (CAMET) has developed a 5-year strategy to strengthen career education in the public system based on international best practice and building on existing local strengths. The framework contains guidelines to support implementation, and some provinces, notably Prince Edward Island, are already investing in implementation. This is an important start and represents an opportunity in terms of expanding its scope to engage other key stakeholders (youth, post-secondary institutions, employers, the career development profession, community organizations and governments) and to widen its scope from regional to national.

Yet, as it currently stands, no province has successfully enacted a comprehensive school-to-work transition strategy. Student access to transition support is spotty at best and no active system exists to support Canadian youth in their school-to-work transitions; Canada continues to take a hodgepodge approach and implementation suffers. We saw that:

- Promising policies, programs and tools exist, but are generally not effectively implemented, resourced, or utilized;

- Current funding models either prescribe the integration of these programs/curricula with no new funding to support implementation or have arduous application processes that put community-based providers at financial risk and/or at-risk of programming lapses or closures; and

- Implementation is too often limited to a minority of students.

There are programming, tools, practices and policies available but implementation, execution and awareness factors get in the way of providing the support needed. For example:

- We were told many times in the scoping review that career education curriculum in schools is available in many jurisdictions, but it is implemented poorly and inequitably across schools. It is frequently delivered by educators who are inadequately trained. As such, the impact of these courses has been limited and there is a clear lack of student engagement in their career development. Poorly delivered courses can be more harmful than no course at all. We also found that career education is too often marginalized from mainstream academic priorities.

- Key informants and the literature stated that the current financialization of business practices may be a critical barrier to hiring youth. Effective onboarding and training is at risk for the sake of perceived expediency.

- There is more than enough information to let parents know of alternate career pathways besides university education, yet they either ignore these pathways for their own children, or have no idea that this information exists.

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- Youth have a remarkable array of online, live and print resources available to them; their use of these resources is very limited.
- Post-secondary institutions have a varied approach to transitions, with some virtually ignoring the question of transition.

A key informant interviewee said, "It will take the engagement of all stakeholders to get us out of this mess." For Canada to move beyond the current situation, we found in this scoping review the need:

- For an overarching framework developed with key stakeholders that delineates stakeholder roles, effective policies and implementation requirements;
- To bring career education into the curriculum far earlier and see it as a central part of education, not an "add-on" to the curriculum;
- For better and earlier assessments for intervention and supports that have evidence-based measures that affirm potential impact;
- For an awareness campaign focused on the cost of poor transition that includes the voices of youth, telling their stories of this lived experience and challenging pervasive stereotypes that undermine youth employment;
- For a labour market information system that promotes the collection and sharing of timely, accurate data and tools and supports to help stakeholders make career sense of it;
- For research on promising practices, namely demand-led strategies, workforce development approaches, education-industry partnerships, mini-systems approaches, and social innovation methods, to understand what has impact and what is scalable;
- For an evaluation culture that promotes solid and sustainable implementation strategies and encourages stakeholders to play their parts, play them well, and adjust as the need and the system evolves;
- For an examination of how funding processes and procedures impact implementation; and,
- To identify and resource intermediaries to serve as conveners, brokers and assistants to schools and employers engaged in building pathways to the labour market.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from this scoping review that no single approach will improve school-to-work transitions in Canada. It is an issue that cuts across multiple stakeholders and requires a variety of efforts to address the diversity of needs across youth making the transition whether they have left school before graduation, graduated from high school and gone to work, or are transitioning to the labour market after having graduated from a post-secondary program. No single policy, government department, organisation or program can solve the increasingly complex social problem of youth un/underemployment.

We identified through this scoping review a number of research, awareness, policy and programs gaps, but we read and were told that the overarching primary problem is the lack of a coordinated response across multiple stakeholders and a map that provides guidelines for addressing the issues locally, provincially/territorially and nationally. To have impact, actors within the system need to have a framework based on best practice, implementation strategies that work, leaders and intermediaries that will ensure accountability, and an evaluation strategy that not only measures impact but supports development and growth.

Across almost 20 years of research in this field in Canada, a clear emergent recommendation continually made is the development of a national school-to-work transition strategy. As one interviewee commented, "…it's like a dog's breakfast out there…there seems to be a multitude of programs, but there's a lack of coordination. We need a national framework." This, we found in this scoping review, is one of the core missing pieces that continues to diminish the impact and return on investments in research, policy, programs and tools. To this point, we also found that no matter the stakeholder, a core recommendation was that the strategy needs to be developed with the active engagement of stakeholder groups. For people to take ownership of the issue, they need to be involved in the development of the strategy. There needs to be the involvement the full range of stakeholders, including youth, educators and employers and groups such as parents, career development professionals, social service agencies, the mental health system, workforce development groups, social change researchers, governments, Chambers of Commerce and unions. To begin to address this issue effectively, the literature referred to and key informants argued that we need to break through siloed thinking and bring all stakeholders, and their resources and knowledge, together on a national level under a common agenda to define roles and co-design a plan for moving forward in a way that builds national cohesion while supporting regional/local tailoring.

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Next Steps

The research for this scoping review pointed to important research, programming and policy gaps that would support a better understanding of the challenges facing Canada's youth and would support improvements in practice and transitions support. It struck us that there were a number of initiatives that could be developed to which we hope that the research and development community considers. For CCDF, we hope to move forward two initiatives stemming from this research:

1. The first is delving deeper into the experience of youth. What is the transition from school-to-work like? What are the main issues? Where are youth getting stuck? Where are they finding opportunity? And, most importantly, what do youth see as the solutions?

2. The second initiative CCDF is working to move forward on is the predominant recommendation found from conducting the scoping review. Many stakeholders surveyed or interviewed expressed the need to move from research to enacting the systemic change through an overarching strategy. As such, most who provided input to this scoping review believed that the next phase should primarily focus on stimulating a national dialogue on the issue to truly understand what is happening, what is at stake and the collective development of a national strategy on school-to-work transitions. "It's time," one informant said, "for the rubber to hit the road!"

CCDF is actively seeking partners and collaborators for these initatives.

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APPENDIX A: ADVISORY COMMITTEE INFORMATION GATHERING FORM

Please fill out this form. Fill in as much as you can. We have attempted to ask questions that draw information from everyone in the group. Do not be concerned if for whatever reason you are unable to respond to a particular question or section of this form.

We hope that these questions allow you to contribute to the research design as fully as possible, but in these questions we may have missed an important element from your perspective. There is a spot at the end of this form for you to provide any information, sources, ideas that you think we should consider in designing this research project.

Thank you so much for your time in filling this out!

Section 1: Research Scope and Hypothesis

1. During the first teleconference, CCDF outlined its goal to design a research project that looks at strategies to improve school-to-work transitions -- looking particularly at practices that in content and in implementation address systemic conditions preventing youth from transitioning to work and finding decent work opportunities. Please let us know your thoughts on this direction. What would you add or change to it?

2. From your perspective, should we be focussing on a particular group of youth rather than focussing broadly on all youth? If so, who should we focus on and why?

3. When thinking about youth broadly (no defined target group) in their school-to-work transitions, is there a common element (e.g. work exposure opportunities) that we could be looking at more closely that could lead us to better understand what conditions prevent youth from transitioning to work?

4. If you were designing the research project examining how to improve school-to-work transitions for youth, what would be your approach?

Section 2: Mapping the System

1. Do you know of any national or provincial policy frameworks to support school-to-work transitions? If so, what are they?

2. Which of the above policy frameworks are working in your opinion?

3. What are the existing networks in the system?

4. What are the constraints in the system?

5. What are the opportunities?

6. CCDF has identified the following key stakeholder groups. Please review, check off those that you **agree** are the <u>key</u> stakeholders and add any that we have missed. For those you have checked, please describe their role in the system, the other stakeholder groups they connect with and how they are doing this.

Stakeholder Groups	Role	What Other Stakeholder Groups Does this Group Connect with?	How?
☐ Youth		☐ Youth	
		☐ Parents	
		☐ Employers	
		☐ Public School Educators	
		☐ PSE Instructors/Professors	
		☐ Career Development Practitioners	
		☐ Government	
		☐ Public Schools	
		☐ PSE Institutions	
		☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils	
		☐ Youth Organizations	
		☐ Youth Career/Employment Services	
		☐ Other:	
☐ Parents		☐ Youth	
		☐ Parents	
		☐ Employers	
		☐ Public School Educators	
		☐ PSE Instructors/Professors	
		☐ Career Development Practitioners	
		☐ Government	
		☐ Public Schools	
		☐ PSE Institutions	

Stakeholder Groups	Role	What Other Stakeholder Groups Does this Group Connect with?	How?
		☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils	
		☐ Youth Organizations	
		☐ Youth Career/Employer Services	
		☐ Other:	
☐ Funders		☐ Youth	
		☐ Parents	
		☐ Employers	
		☐ Public School Educators	
		☐ PSE Instructors/Professors	
		☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils	
		☐ Career Development Practitioners	
		☐ Government	
		☐ Public Schools	
		☐ PSE Institutions	
		☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils	
		☐ Youth Organizations	
		☐ Youth Career/Employer Services	
		☐ Other:	
☐ Employers		☐ Youth	
		☐ Parents	
		☐ Employers	
		☐ Public School Educators	
		☐ PSE Instructors/Professors	
		☐ Career Development Practitioners	
		☐ Government	

Stakeholder Groups	Role	What Other Stakeholder Groups Does this Group Connect with?	How?
		☐ Public Schools	
		☐ PSE Institutions	
		☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils	
		☐ Youth Organizations	
		☐ Youth Career/Employer Services	
		☐ Other:	
☐ Labour Market Developers/Intermediaries (e.g. Education-Industry Councils, Workforce Planning Boards		☐ Youth	
		☐ Parents	
		☐ Employers	
		☐ Public Schools	
		☐ PSE Institutions	
		☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils	
		☐ Youth Organizations	
		☐ Youth Career/Employer Services	
		☐ Other:	
☐ Public School Educators		☐ Youth	
		☐ Parents	
		☐ Employers	
		☐ Public School Educators	
		☐ PSE Instructors/Professors	
		☐ Career Development Practitioners	
		☐ Government	
		☐ Public Schools	
		☐ PSE Institutions	
		☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils	
		☐ Youth Organizations	
		☐ Youth Career/Employer	

Stakeholder Groups	Role	What Other Stakeholder Groups Does this Group Connect with?	How?
		Services	
		☐ Other:	
☐ PSE Instructors/Professors		☐ Youth	
		☐ Parents	
		☐ Employers	
		☐ Public School Educators	
		☐ PSE Instructors/Professors	
		☐ Career Development Practitioners	
		☐ Government	
		☐ Public Schools	
		☐ PSE Institutions	
		☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils	
		☐ Youth Organizations	
		☐ Youth Career/Employer Services	
		☐ Other:	
☐ Career Development Practitioners		☐ Youth	
		☐ Parents	
		☐ Employers	
		☐ Public School Educators	
		☐ PSE Instructors/Professors	
		☐ Career Development Practitioners	
		☐ Government	
		☐ Public Schools	
		☐ PSE Institutions	
		☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils	
		☐ Youth Organizations	
		☐ Youth Career/Employer Services	

Stakeholder Groups	Role	What Other Stakeholder Groups Does this Group Connect with?	How?
		☐ Other:	
☐ Governments		☐ Youth	
		☐ Parents	
		☐ Employers	
		☐ Public School Educators	
		☐ PSE Instructors/Professors	
		☐ Career Development Practitioners	
		☐ Government	
		☐ Public Schools	
		☐ PSE Institutions	
		☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils	
		☐ Youth Organizations	
		☐ Youth Career/Employer Services	
		☐ Other:	
☐ Public Schools		☐ Youth	
		☐ Parents	
		☐ Employers	
		☐ Public School Educators	
		☐ PSE Instructors/Professors	
		☐ Career Development Practitioners	
		☐ Government	
		☐ Public Schools	
		☐ PSE Institutions	
		☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils	
		☐ Youth Organizations	
		☐ Youth Career/Employer Services	
		☐ Other:	

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Stakeholder Groups	Role	What Other Stakeholder Groups Does this Group Connect with?	How?
☐ PSE institutions		☐ Youth	
		☐ Parents	
		☐ Employers	
		☐ Public School Educators	
		☐ PSE Instructors/Professors	
		☐ Career Development Practitioners	
		☐ Government	
		☐ Public Schools	
		☐ PSE Institutions	
		☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils	
		☐ Youth Organizations	
		☐ Youth Career/Employer Services	
		☐ Other:	
☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils		☐ Youth	
		☐ Parents	
		☐ Employers	
		☐ Public School Educators	
		☐ PSE Instructors/Professors	
		☐ Career Development Practitioners	
		☐ Government	
		☐ Public Schools	
		☐ PSE Institutions	
		☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils	
		☐ Youth Organizations	
		☐ Youth Career/Employer Services	
		☐ Other:	

Stakeholder Groups	Role	What Other Stakeholder Groups Does this Group Connect with?	How?
☐ Youth Organizations		☐ Youth	
		☐ Parents	
		☐ Employers	
		☐ Public School Educators	
		☐ PSE Instructors/Professors	
		☐ Career Development Practitioners	
		☐ Government	
		☐ Public Schools	
		☐ PSE Institutions	
		☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils	
		☐ Youth Organizations	
		☐ Youth Career/Employer Services	
		☐ Other:	
☐ Youth Career/Employment Services		☐ Youth	
		☐ Parents	
		☐ Employers	
		☐ Public School Educators	
		☐ PSE Instructors/Professors	
		☐ Career Development Practitioners	
		☐ Government	
		☐ Public Schools	
		☐ PSE Institutions	
		☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils	
		☐ Youth Organizations	
		☐ Youth Career/Employer Services	

Stakeholder Groups	Role	What Other Stakeholder Groups Does this Group Connect with?	How?
		☐ Other:	
☐ Other(s):		☐ Youth	
		☐ Parents	
		☐ Employers	
		☐ Public School Educators	
		☐ PSE Instructors/ Professors	
		☐ Career Development Practitioners	
		☐ Government	
		☐ Public Schools	
		☐ PSE Institutions	
		☐ Professional Associations/Sector Councils	
		☐ Youth Organizations	
		☐ Youth Career/Employer Services	
		☐ Other:	

Section 3: Literature and Program/Initiative Review

1. What sources would you suggest that we consult in our literature scan? Please list below:

2. What are the program, policies and practices that you know are successfully supporting youth in transition to work for different youth populations: school leavers, secondary-school graduates, PSE leavers and PSE graduates? What is the evidence-base for each one you list? Who can we contact to learn more?

Name of the Initiative	Program, policy or practice (check the one that applies)	Evidence of Impact	Contact for the initiative (please provide name, organization and email and/or phone number)
	☐ Program ☐ Policy ☐ Practice		
	☐ Program ☐ Policy ☐ Practice		
	☐ Program ☐ Policy ☐ Practice		
	☐ Program ☐ Policy ☐ Practice		
	☐ Program ☐ Policy ☐ Practice		
	☐ Program ☐ Policy ☐ Practice		
	☐ Program ☐ Policy ☐ Practice		

3. What, in your opinion, are the common principles/elements for successful programs, policies and practices?

4. What, in your opinion, is preventing best practice from being scaled?

Section 4: Levers of Change

1. In your experience, what are the top 5-10 factors that push stakeholders away from supporting youth in their school-to-work transitions?
2. In your experience, what are the top 5-10 factors that pull stakeholders towards supporting good/effective school-to-work transitions?

Section 5: Key Informant Contacts

Please provide contact information for any stakeholder groups listed below. We are interested in 3 types of informants: Those who represent the stakeholder group broadly, those who are a stakeholder or working on the front-lines with these groups and, finally, those who research or critique the group (e.g. a journalist or academic that looks at helicopter parenting). We will be using this list for the survey. Please provide as much contact information as possible.

This list of stakeholder groups matches the one in Section 2 above to which you may have added. Please add any group that you listed above to this list as well and provide if possible contacts for this added group.

Stakeholder Groups in School-to-Work Transitions	Who Represents this Group? (E.g. Canadian Chamber of Commerce represents Employers in Canada)	Who Works on the Front-Line with this Group? (E.g. A Youth Service Worker works directly with youth)	Who researches/analyzes this group? (E.g. An Academic or Journalist that researches and writes about parents)
Parents	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:
Youth Career/Employment Serving Agencies	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:
Funders	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:
Employers	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:
Career Education Teachers/Guidance Counsellors	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:
PSE Institutions	Name:	Name:	Name:

Stakeholder Groups in School-to-Work Transitions	Who Represents this Group? (E.g. Canadian Chamber of Commerce represents Employers in Canada)	Who Works on the Front-Line with this Group? (E.g. A Youth Service Worker works directly with youth)	Who researches/analyzes this group? (E.g. An Academic or Journalist that researches and writes about parents)
	Organization: Email: Phone:	Organization: Email: Phone:	Organization: Email: Phone:
Governments (Policy Makers)	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:
Professional Associations or Sector Councils	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:
Career Development Practitioners	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:
Youth Organizations	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:
Youth	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:
Labour Market Developers/Intermediaries	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:
Public School Educators	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:
PSE Instructors/Professors	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:
Other Stakeholder Group:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:

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Stakeholder Groups in School-to-Work Transitions	Who Represents this Group? (E.g. Canadian Chamber of Commerce represents Employers in Canada)	Who Works on the Front-Line with this Group? (E.g. A Youth Service Worker works directly with youth)	Who researches/analyzes this group? (E.g. An Academic or Journalist that researches and writes about parents)
Other Stakeholder Group:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:
Other Stakeholder Group:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:	Name: Organization: Email: Phone:

Section 6: What Did We Miss?

We've tried to capture your knowledge and input on this subject, but no doubt we've missed asking something. Please use the space below to provide us with anything you think that we missed or are missing with regards to the subject of improving the labour market outcomes for youth in Canada.

APPENDIX B: SURVEY QUESTIONS

The School-to-Work Transitions Project
Key Informant Survey
December 2015

The Canadian Career Development Foundation is designing a research project aimed at enhancing efforts to improve school-to-work transitions, unemployment and underemployment for Canadian youth. You are being asked to contribute your input because you are a key stakeholder.

Please note, by school-to-work transitions, we mean ALL pathways from education to the labour market for high school leavers, high school graduates, post-secondary education (PSE) leavers and PSE graduates.

The survey has 14 questions and will take about 20-30 minutes to complete. Your answers will be kept strictly confidential.

If you are among the first 50 to complete the survey, you will be eligible for a $10.00 gift certificate from Walmart. The Canadian Career Development Foundation is supporting Syrian Refugees coming to Canada through staff donations. You may want to contribute to this campaign as well. If you are one of the first 50 respondents, you may choose to donate your gift card. Simply click on "Yes I want to donate my card" when prompted. Otherwise, provide us with your contact information.

This survey is available until Sunday, December 13, 2015.

Thank you.

Donnalee Bell
Project Lead
d.bell@ccdf.ca

1) **Are you a/an … (select all that apply) Young person between 15 and 29 years of age**

☐ Public School (Elementary and High School) Educator

☐ Public School (Elementary and High School) Administrator

☐ Career Educator/Guidance Counsellor

☐ Post-Secondary Instructor/Professor

☐ Post-Secondary Administrator

☐ Post-Secondary Career Centre Staff Member

☐ Employer

☐ Supervisor/Manager within an Organization

☐ Youth Career/Employer Service Provider

☐ Policy Maker/Government Representative

☐ Professional Association/Sector Council

☐ Youth Organization Representative

☐ Researcher

☐ Parent

☐ Other, please specify… _____

(If Young person between 15 and 29 years of age is selected, then)

a) **How old are you**

☐ 15-19 years old

☐ 20-25 years old

☐ 26-29 years old

(If Career Educator/Guidance Counsellor is selected, then)

b) **Where do you work as a Career Educator/Guidance Counsellor?**

☐ In the public school system

☐ In private practice

2) I live in ...

☐ Alberta

☐ British Columbia

☐ Manitoba

☐ New Brunswick

☐ Newfoundland and Labrador

☐ Northwest Territories

☐ Nova Scotia

☐ Nunavut

☐ Ontario

☐ Prince Edward Island

☐ Quebec

☐ Saskatchewan

☐ Yukon

3a) Why are youth struggling with their school-to-work transitions?

| |
| |

3b) What, in your opinion, is/are the root cause(s)?

| |
| |

3c) What stops employers from hiring youth more readily?

| |
| |

4) Are some youth more impacted than others in their school-to-work transition?

     ☐ Yes (if yes then complete 4a and 4b)

     ☐ No (if no then skip to question complete 5).

4a) Which ones are more impacted?

4b) In what ways are they impacted?

5) What would be a better response to school-to-work transitions than the current one (feel free to describe your understanding of the current response)?

6) What are the barriers in the system preventing youth from seeing/seizing opportunities and employers from hiring/developing youth?

7) What are the opportunities for change (e.g. attitudes and behaviours, stable funding, incentives, political will, skills and knowledge, etc.)?

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8) How best could these opportunities be scaled for wider impact?

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9) What do you think is needed to support youth in transition to the labour market?

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10) What don't we know about this issue that we need to find out?

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10a) What is the most important research question to start tackling this issue?

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Champions, Resources, Programs and Policies

The next four questions ask for your input on the people, organizations, resources, programs and policies that you know are helping youth have smoother school-to-work transitions.

11) Do you know any CHAMPIONS (people or organizations) who/that are impacting the efficiency of school-to-work transitions in their communities (including international sources)?

☐ Yes (if yes then complete 11a)

☐ No (if no then skip to question 12).

11a) Please provide the following contact information for these champions.

	School-to-work Champion (name)	Organization	Mailing Address	Email	Telephone #
#1					
#2					
#3					
#4					
#5					

12) Please list the TOOLS and RESOURCES you are currently using or know about that support your/a young person's school-to-work transition (including international examples)? If you do not know any, please continue to the next page.

	Tool/ Resource	Is it effective?	Why or why not?	What is the evidence to its efficacy?
#1		☐ Yes ☐ No		
#2		☐ Yes ☐ No		
#3		☐ Yes ☐ No		
#4		☐ Yes ☐ No		
#5		☐ Yes ☐ No		

13) **Please list the PROGRAMS you currently participate in or know about that work to support your/a young person's school-to-work transition (including international examples)? If you do not know any, please continue to the next page.**

	Program name	Is it effective?	Why or why not?	What is the evidence to its efficacy?
#1		☐ Yes ☐ No		
#2		☐ Yes ☐ No		
#3		☐ Yes ☐ No		
#4		☐ Yes ☐ No		
#5		☐ Yes ☐ No		

14) Please list the POLICIES you currently know about that are targeted towards improving your/a young person's school-to-work transition (including international examples)? If you do not know any, please continue to the next page.

	Program name	Is it effective?	Why or why not?	What is the evidence to its efficacy?
#1		☐ Yes ☐ No		
#2		☐ Yes ☐ No		
#3		☐ Yes ☐ No		
#4		☐ Yes ☐ No		
#5		☐ Yes ☐ No		

The first 50 stakeholders to complete this survey will be eligible for a $10 gift card from Walmart. If you are one of the first 50 stakeholders to COMPLETE this survey, what would you like to do with the $10 gift card?

☐ I would like to donate my gift card to a Syrian refugee family coming to Canada

☐ Please send the gift card to the following address:

Name:

Email:

Mailing address:

A report on this survey will be available in the New Year. If you are interested in receiving a copy please provide your email address:

Thank you for your time. It is greatly appreciated,
Please click on the SUBMIT button below to finish survey.

APPENDIX C: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL AND QUESTIONS

Preamble

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. We are studying youth transitions from school-to-work, post-secondary education-to-work, unemployment-to-work and underemployment-to-better employment. Our investigations thus far have pointed to a plethora of policies, programs and resources to address transitions, but an absence of reliable execution or consistent and wide delivery of these policies, programs and resources.

In other words, there is a lot available (perhaps more readily available in some provinces/territories than others), but it is not effectively implemented, resourced, or utilized, or implementation is limited in terms of the numbers that have access to these programs, tools and resources.

The players in the system have what they need to play their part. There is no over-arching framework, however, that encourages them to play their parts, play their parts well, or adjust their parts as other players adjust theirs.

Premises

1. Youth transition issues are not primarily the result of poor or non-existent policy, programs or resources. Rather, issues occur because of poor execution of available policy, programs and resources and/or limited availability of policy, programs and resources in certain areas. In other words, it appears as if the central tools needed to support transitions exist and, for the most part, are available.

2. A significant precursor to poor execution is the lack of perceived accountability among all stakeholder groups. Educators, employers, social service providers, parents and youth may not know their roles, may not wish to perform the requirements of their roles, or may not see themselves as having a role in school-to-work transitions. In many cases, each seems to look to others to blame for the transition issues.

Questions

1. First, I'd like to ask for your immediate impression of our preliminary findings; that execution is the main issue, and it is an issue because of lack of engagement and accountability by the involved stakeholders. How does this fit with your experience?

Ask the following if the "execution and accountability" concept lines up with the informant's view:

2. How can we, as a country, get the various players to take responsibility for their part of youth transitions, and then actually do their part effectively? In other words, what is needed to change the various players' engagement and investment in youth transition issues?

3. What instances or contexts have you seen in which various stakeholders worked together to deliver policy, programs or resources successfully? How did they mobilize the group to work towards a common issue or cause? (Please don't restrict yourself to the youth employment issue when thinking about these)? What made these different than the norm?

4. What are the key elements needed to successfully engage/mobilize all stakeholders to implement policy, programs and resources? Where/with whom would you start? What would you do next to change Canada's overall approach?

5. What barriers to engagement/mobilization would be overcome by the elements/steps you've just described, and what barriers would remain?

6. What else do you think we need to know that will help us determine the next best action or inquiry to make progress on this issue? (Go to #11)

Ask the following if the informant disagrees with the premise:

7. If the delivery of policy, programs or resources is not the primary issue, what do you see the main factor or factors at play?

8. How is this factor a problem? (How are these factors a problem?)

9. Where have you seen this factor/these factors you just described working successfully? In which contexts or jurisdictions?

10. Given your understanding of the cause(s) of transition difficulties, what would you recommend in terms of a next step and/or further research?

Ask the following of all informants:

11. Who else do you know who would be particularly well suited to discuss this issue with us?

12. Assuming this project carries on into Phase 2, and we explore the issues we've just discussed, who should be the primary audience of the Phase 2 results/product? Who should we target?

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