Improving the School-to-Work Transitions of Youth in Canada: Key Informant Survey

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

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About the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF)
CCDF is a non-profit organization that works to advance career services and the capacity of the profession to respond with empathy and skill to their 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 services, 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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BACKGROUND

This survey report is part of a research design project undertaken by the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF). The objectives of this phase of the project were to examine efforts to improve school-to-work, unemployment-to-employment, and underemployment-to-better employment of Canadian youth and identify research/programming/policy gaps for future project considerations.

The survey was one of four main activities undertaken in the project:

1. Prior to the development of the survey, CCDF assembled a cross-sectoral Advisory Committee of key stakeholder representatives[1] 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 suggestions;
2. CCDF then conducted a literature scan of Canadian and international research related to the school-to-work transitions of youth that mapped the literature and identified key concepts, best practices, gaps in the research, and types and sources of evidence.
3. The survey was developed and distributed.
4. A series of key informant interviews were conducted.

A final project report will be published in the spring of 2016 that summarizes the research.

The purpose of the survey was to consult with a wide variety of stakeholders (see Findings Section A: Respondent Profile) to:

• Identify stakeholders' insight into the main factors contributing to poor school-to-work transitions of Canadian youth;
• Promising practice suggestions and resource, tool, program and policy gaps; and
• Identify champions working in the field.

The survey (see Appendix A) was made up of 14 largely open-ended questions. We developed the survey in this manner to allow a greater freedom in response. We recognized that this

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[1] The Advisory Committee includes: Riz Ibrahim, Executive Director, The Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling, Tom Zizys, Innovation Fellow, Metcalf Foundation, José Domene, Canada Research Chair in School to Work Transitions, University of New Brunswick, Madeleine Barker, Director, RBC Career Launch Program, Sarah Anson-Cartwright, The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Barbara Bowen, MB Aerospace HR Council, Judy Doidge, Social Capital Partnerships, Kelly Hoey, Halton Industry-Education Council, Ryan Land, Vale, Sophia Zhang, 10 Thousand Coffees, Trish Hennessy, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. One member requested to remain anonymous.

might have risked a significant non-completion rate because the survey required more writing and would take longer than typical surveys. We found this not to be the case.

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.

FINDINGS

A. RESPONDENT PROFILE

In total, 141 respondents completed the survey. For the purpose of analysis, respondents were categorized into 5 groups:

- **Group 1: Youth**
  - Including young people between 15 and 30 years of age.
- **Group 2: Employers**
  - Including Supervisor/Manager within an organization, employer and professional association/sector council.
- **Group 3: Educators**
  - Including Post-Secondary Instructor/Professor, Researcher, Public School (Elementary High School) educator, Post-Secondary Administrator, Public School (Elementary High School Administrator).
- **Group 4: Career Development Practitioners (CDP)**
  - Including Youth Career/Employer Service Provider, Career Educator/ Guidance Counsellor, Post-Secondary Career Centre Staff Member.
- **Group 5: Others**

Of the 141 respondents, there were 26 who could be categorized into more than one group. These 26 respondents were removed, leaving 115 respondents for the data analysis.

As shown in Table 1 the majority of respondents were from Group 1 – Youth (38.3%). Overall, the majority (67.9%) of the 115 responses came from Central or Eastern Canada. Northern Canada had the lowest percentage of responses (see Figure 1a).

Figure 1b provides a summary of where the responses originated from within each group. As shown, the majority of:

- Young people were from Eastern Canada (84.1%);
- Employers and Career Development Practitioners were from Central Canada (61.1% and 53.8% respectively); and
- Educators were from Northern Canada (40.0%).

Table 1: Respondent Profile

(a) Number of respondents who belonged to only one group

	Number in group (n)	Percentage (n/115)
Group 1 - Youth	44	38.3
Group 2 - Employers	18	15.7
Group 3 - Educators	15	13.0
Group 4 - Career Development Practitioners	26	22.6
Group 5 - Other	12	10.4
Total	115	100.0

(b) Respondents who belonged to more than one group (n=26)

Groups	n
1+2	3
1+2+3+4+5	1
1+2+5	1
1+3	4
1+3+5	2
1+4+5	1
2+3	2
2+3+4	1
2+3+4+5	1
2+5	2
3+4	4
3+4+5	1
3+5	2
4+5	1
Total	26

Figure 1: Location of Respondents

(a) Overall
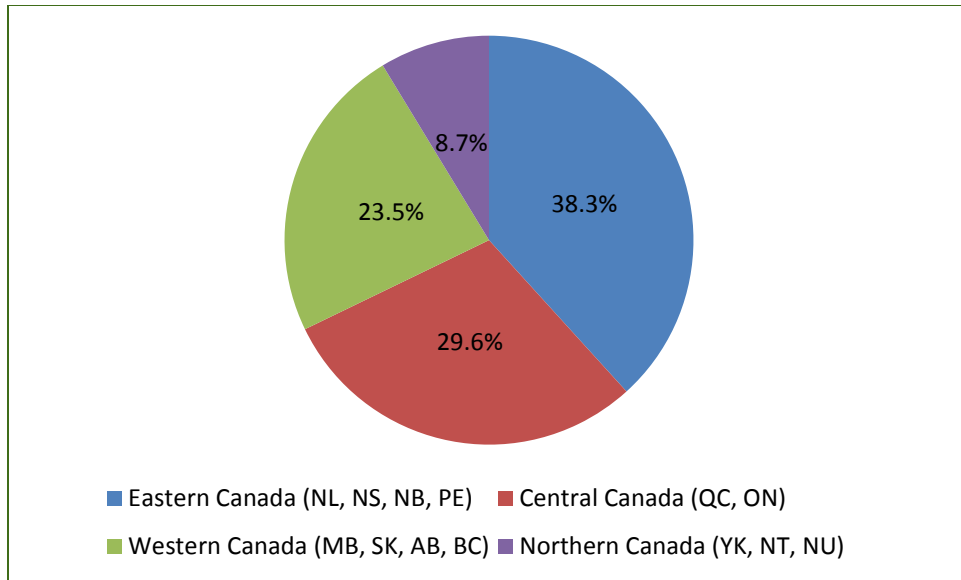
(b) By group
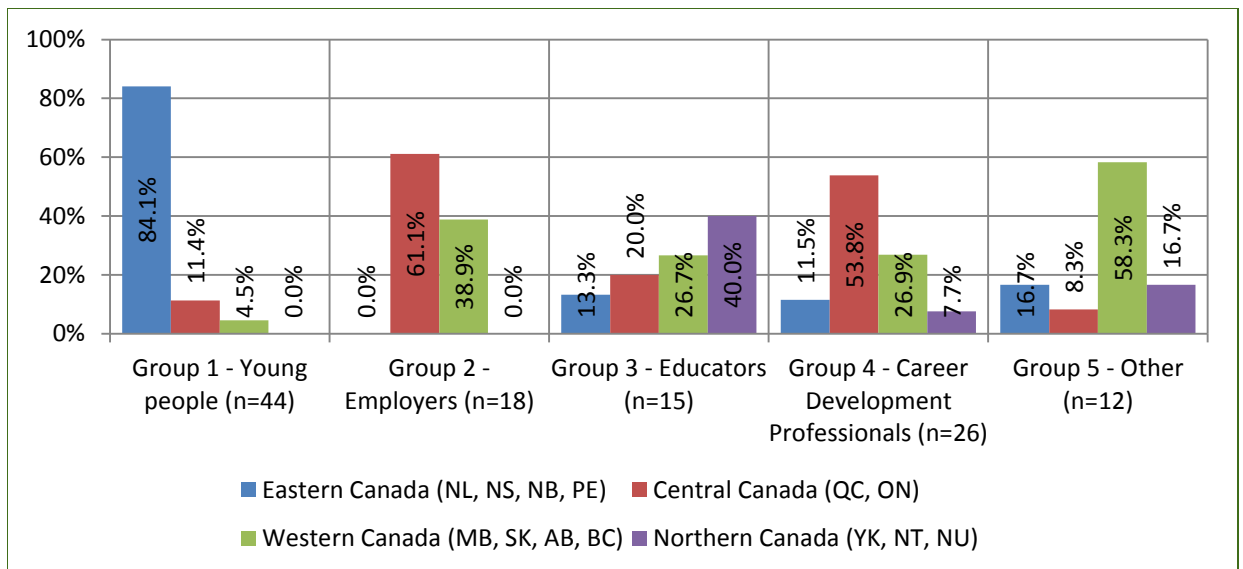
B. OPEN ENDED QUESTIONS

This section provides the coding scheme and summary tables. In many cases, the same response could have been grouped into different categories. A summary of responses is provided for each question in table format, followed by a table that shows the percentage of the response by group.

(1a) Why are youth struggling with their school-to-work transitions?

The response to this question across all groups looked at transition preparation issues of youth including work readiness, experience, expectations and career management skills. For youth, their top two reasons for struggling were being ill-prepared and not having the skills needed for the transition from education to employment. Employers largely agreed in terms of skill deficits of youth but they, like educators, career development practitioners, and others (e.g. parents and policy-makers) saw the main cause as being career education related.

Table 2: Summary of Responses Question 1a

Category	Description	Total number of responses
No hands on experience	• Catch 22: Students cannot find work because employers are looking for people with work experience.	11
Not prepared	• Students are not prepared to make this transition. • Youth and employers have unrealistic expectations of the work environment. • Certain career/education pathways are valued/devalued (e.g. university vs. apprenticeship)	23
Lack of relevant employment opportunities	• Not enough jobs available • Lack of meaningful work • Available jobs do not match education levels	11
Lack of career education	• Not enough time spent on career education/ exploration/ planning in the school setting • Need current labour market information	31
Poor career management/workplace Essential Skills	• Students have not developed the work readiness or career management skills to plan for their future/enter the workforce • School does not prepare them for the real world	31
Other		26
Not answered/don't know		4

Table 3: Percentage of Summary of Responses by Group to Question 1a

	Gr 1: YP (n=44)	Gr 2: Employers (n=18)	Gr 3: Educators (n=15)	Gr 4: CDP (n=26)	Gr 5: Other (n=12)	Total (n=115)
No hands on experience	6.8%	16.7%	0.0%	19.2%	0.0%	9.6%
Not prepared	20.5%	16.7%	13.3%	26.9%	16.7%	20.0%
Lack of relevant employment opportunities	18.2%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%	9.6%
Lack of career education	2.3%	33.3%	40.0%	42.3%	58.3%	27.0%
Poor career management/workplace Essential Skills	27.3%	44.4%	33.3%	15.4%	16.7%	27.0%
Other	29.5%	11.1%	26.7%	19.2%	16.7%	22.6%
Not answered/ don't know	4.5%	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	8.3%	3.5%

(1b) What, in your opinion, is/are the root cause(s)?

As with Question 1a, a majority of all respondents said that the root cause of the problem was the lack of preparation of young people for the transition. Their responses focussed on the need for more applied learning and work integrated learning opportunities in schools. Employers, career development practitioners and others (e.g. parents and policy-makers) also saw the need for career education and labour market and career information to support greater awareness of the multitude of career options and types of career pathways available to youth.

Table 4: Summary of Responses Question 1b

Category	Description	Total number of responses
No experience	• Students cannot find work because employers are looking for people with experience. • Catch 22	6
Not prepared	• School does not prepare students for the transitions • Need applied learning • Need to know how to be successful in the workplace • Need hands on experience (co-op programs, etc.)	43
Career education	• Not enough information on careers/possible choices/types of work/career pathways • Post-secondary is not the only route to a career	34
No jobs	• Lack of available jobs • Not enough jobs	4

Work readiness/pre-employability issues	• Mental health/social-economic status/poverty	10
Other		18
Not answered/don't know		4

Table 5: Percentage of Summary of Responses by Group to Question 1b

	Gr 1: YP (n=44)	Gr 2: Employers (n=18)	Gr 3: Educators (n=15)	Gr 4: CDP (n=26)	Gr 5: Other (n=12)	Total (n=115)
No experience	6.8%	5.6%	0.0%	7.7%	0.0%	5.2%
Not prepared	34.1%	55.6%	53.3%	26.9%	25.0%	37.4%
Career education	18.2%	22.2%	13.3%	53.8%	50.0%	29.6%
No jobs	0.0%	5.6%	6.7%	3.8%	8.3%	3.5%
Work readiness/pre-employability issues	6.8%	5.6%	6.7%	11.5%	16.7%	8.7%
Other	22.7%	11.1%	26.7%	3.8%	8.3%	15.7%
Not answered/don't know	6.8%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	3.5%

(1c) What stops employers from hiring youth more readily?

Lack of experience and not having the required training were the most common responses to this question. The comments focussed predominantly on the lack of applied learning or experience in the workplace as what stops employers from hiring youth. A high percentage of youth (20.5%), employers (33.3%) and career development practitioners (30.8%) said that negative stereotypes of youth were a common contributing factor that results in youth not being hired. No educator saw stereotypes as an issue in regards to hiring youth.

Table 6: Summary of Responses Question 1c

Category	Description	Total number of responses
Lack of experience	• Youth have limited work experience • Employer preference for more experience/older workers	53
Stereotypes	• Negative stereotypes of youth	25
Poor training	• Young people do not have the required training or skills set • Do not have 'soft skills'/employability skills	31

Employer issues	• Don't want to hire/train young people because of funding, resources, and/or time	6
Other		23
Not answered/don't know		2

Table 7: Percentage of Summary of Responses by Group to Question 1c

	Gr 1: YP (n=44)	Gr 2: Employers (n=18)	Gr 3: Educators (n=15)	Gr 4: CDP (n=26)	Gr 5: Other (n=12)	Total (n=115)
Lack experience	56.8%	27.8%	46.7%	42.3%	33.3%	45.2%
Stereotypes	20.5%	33.3%	0.0%	30.8%	16.7%	21.7%
Poor training	15.9%	38.9%	46.7%	26.9%	25.0%	27.0%
Employer issues	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	5.2%
Other	20.5%	16.7%	26.7%	19.2%	16.7%	20.0%
Not answered/don't know	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	8.3%	1.7%

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

Overall, 86.1% (or 99) of the 115 respondents felt some youth were more impacted than others by this transition.

Table 8: Group Responses to Question 2

		Gr 1: YP (n=44)	Gr 2: Employers (n=18)	Gr 3: Educators (n=15)	Gr 4: CDP (n=26)	Gr 5: Other (n=12)	Total (n=115)
YES	Number who said yes	31	17	13	26	12	99
	Percentage	70.5%	94.4%	86.7%	100.0%	100.0%	86.1%
NO		29.5%	5.6%	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%	13.9%

NOTE: The percentages reported in tables 2a and 2b are based on the number of respondents who felt some youth were more impacted than others.

(2a) Which ones are more impacted?

Respondents indicated that marginalized groups are more impacted in transitioning from education to employment. Specific groups indicated by the survey respondents included youth with mental illness, youth with learning and/or physical disabilities, LGBTQ youth, Indigenous youth, youth in care, those who leave school prior to graduation and visible

minorities. In addition to indicating these specific groups of youth, a significant number of responses focussed on youth who lack skills, experience, work readiness and maturity as also being significantly impacted. Responses about skill capacity and experience came mostly from employers (41.2%) and responses around work readiness issues such as maturity and motivation came mostly from youth (35.5%).

Table 9: Summary of Responses to Question 2a

Category	Description	Total number of responses
Vulnerable youth	• Circumstances – in care/those who leave school prior to graduation	14
Marginalized groups	• Disadvantaged groups (visible minorities/ Indigenous/LGBTQ)	22
Disabilities	• Learning/mental health/physical disabilities	20
Poorly skilled	• No skills/experience	23
No support	• No parent/family support	18
Work Readiness/Pre-employability	• Unmotivated, immature, lazy, poor self-esteem/confidence, lack of transportation	14
Other		18
Not answered/don't know		7

Table 10: Percentage of Summary of Responses by Group to Question 2a

	Gr 1: YP (n=31)	Gr 2: Employers (n=17)	Gr 3: Educators (n=13)	Gr 4: CDP (n=26)	Gr 5: Other (n=12)	Total (n=99)
Troubled youth	9.7%	23.5%	0.0%	19.2%	16.7%	14.1%
Marginalized groups	6.5%	29.4%	23.1%	26.9%	41.7%	22.2%
Disabilities	6.5%	29.4%	15.4%	30.8%	25.0%	20.2%
Poorly skilled	6.5%	41.2%	30.8%	26.9%	25.0%	23.2%
No support	9.7%	17.6%	23.1%	23.1%	25.0%	18.2%
Work Readiness/Pre-employability	35.5%	5.9%	0.0%	7.7%	0.0%	14.1%
Other	19.4%	11.8%	23.1%	19.2%	16.7%	18.2%
Not answered/don't know	9.7%	5.9%	15.4%	0.0%	8.3%	7.1%

(2b) In what ways are they impacted?

All stakeholders felt strongly that youth they identified in Question 2a would have less ability to develop their careers than other youth. In this regard, comments from respondents suggested that these particular youth would lack strong networks, have limited access to career education programming, and tend to leave school early. As a result, respondents said that these youth may have poorer career management skills than youth as a whole and that there may be fewer jobs to which these particular youth would have access. Very few respondents and no youth or employer respondents felt that stereotypes of these particular youth were an impact. Youth felt that work readiness issues (motivation, lack of supports, coping skills, self-esteem) were more of an impact for the identified youth groups whereas employers, educators, career development practitioners and other respondents felt that their career development (career exploration, job training, networking) was more impacted.

Table 11: Summary of Response to Question 2b

Category	Description	Total number of responses
Career development	• Need more career exploration/job training opportunities/networking	33
Job availability	• More difficult to find work	24
Stereotypes	• Deal with negative stereotypes/labeled	5
Work Readiness/Pre-employability	• Loss of interest/motivation, lack of support, stress management, inability to cope with change, self-esteem and confidence	30
Other		14
Not answered/don't know		7

Table 12: Percentage of Summary of Responses by Group to Question 2b

	Gr 1: YP (n=31)	Gr 2: Employers (n=17)	Gr 3: Educators (n=13)	Gr 4: CDP (n=26)	Gr 5: Other (n=12)	Total (n=99)
Career development	3.2%	52.9%	30.8%	50.0%	50.0%	33.3%
Job availability	32.3%	29.4%	7.7%	26.9%	8.3%	24.2%
Stereotypes	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%	3.8%	16.7%	5.1%
Work Readiness/Pre-employability	22.6%	35.3%	23.1%	38.5%	33.3%	30.3%
Other	32.3%	5.9%	15.4%	0.0%	8.3%	14.1%
Not answered/don't know	9.7%	5.9%	15.4%	0.0%	8.3%	7.1%

(3) 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)?

The main theme that emerged across all respondents was the need to provide youth with more experiential learning opportunities to explore a variety of careers and to apply their learning in school in workplace settings. Employers, educators, career development practitioners and other stakeholders felt a need for greater collaboration between business, education and governments to improve the response to school-to-work transitions. No youth respondent felt this was an issue.

Table 13: Summary of Response to Question 3

Category	Description	Total number of responses
Career exploration	• Help youth gain real world experience through hands on programs, like co-op and job shadowing programs	73
Collaboration	• Collaboration/planning and programming developed through partnerships (employers, schools, governments)	10
Other		15
Not answered/don't know		22

Table 14: Percentage of Summary of Responses by Group to Question 3

	Gr 1: YP (n=44)	Gr 2: Employers (n=18)	Gr 3: Educators (n=15)	Gr 4: CDP (n=26)	Gr 5: Other (n=12)	Total (n=115)
Career exploration	59.1%	72.2%	46.7%	73.1%	66.7%	63.5%
Collaboration	0.0%	16.7%	26.7%	7.7%	8.3%	8.7%
Other	15.9%	16.7%	13.3%	11.5%	0.0%	13.0%
Not answered/don't know	25.0%	5.6%	20.0%	15.4%	25.0%	19.1%

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

Career preparation was a main theme in the responses to this question. The lack of career management skills was one issue threaded throughout the comments related to career

preparation. Also pervasive was the idea that youth are not aware of the significant changes in the way people look for work. From social media use to online hiring systems, respondents felt that the way youth are coached or not coached to look for work was an impediment to getting their "foot in the door." There were also several comments about employers needing to take more responsibility for support transitions of youth or, at the very least, provide information on what employers need in terms of staffing.

Related to system change, a number of respondents felt that the way we approach education is an outdated model and there is a need to change the education system to support students to respond to a highly changeable labour market.

Having few or not the right skills was another main theme in response to this question and although not mentioned as often as career preparation and skills training, a number of respondents felt that there are many employers who simply do not seek to recruit youth. Some of these respondents felt that there is a bias against hiring youth based on stereotypes. Others felt that employers who see youth as a perceived hiring risk may have this perception because of the drive toward "just-in-time" or "up-and-ready" staff and/or not having the resources or competence to properly orient new staff.

Table 15: Summary of Response to Question 4

Category	Description	Total number of responses
Career preparation	• Youth need support/mentors/positive role models/career education	33
No skills	• Little to No skills/experience/need training	32
Employers who don't hire youth	• Employers hold negative stereotypes of youth/ • Risk to hire young people • Costs related to training inexperienced youth	15
School	• Too much school work	7
No jobs	• Few/no jobs available	9
Other		28
Not answered/don't know		8

Table 16: Percentage of Summary of Responses by Group to Question 4

	Gr 1: YP (n=44)	Gr 2: Employers (n=18)	Gr 3: Educators (n=15)	Gr 4: CDP (n=26)	Gr 5: Other (n=12)	Total (n=115)
Career preparation	18.2%	44.4%	20.0%	46.2%	58.3%	33.0%
No skills	36.4%	50.0%	13.3%	15.4%	8.3%	27.8%
Employers who don't hire youth	11.4%	16.7%	20.0%	15.4%	0.0%	13.0%
School	11.4%	0.0%	6.7%	3.8%	0.0%	6.1%
No jobs	4.5%	5.6%	20.0%	7.7%	8.3%	7.8%
Other	22.7%	16.7%	46.7%	19.2%	25.0%	24.3%
Not answered/don't know	4.5%	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%	16.7%	7.0%

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

A majority of responses felt that career education needs to move from the periphery to the centre of the curriculum and options for workplace learning needs to be more readily available across the grades and throughout PSE. Several comments focussed on the need for a paradigm shift in education to more readily integrate applied learning opportunities and relate them to career pathways. There were comments about the need for more stable funding of career education programming in and outside of schools and employer incentives to be more actively involved in the school-to-work transitions of youth.

Collaboration amongst stakeholders was also a theme for all groups except youth. There were comments about connecting teachers and employers to support better transitions, working with federal and provincial/territorial governments to legislate career services for all Canadians and developing a national labour force development strategy that would include supports for school-to-work transitions.

Table 17: Summary of Response to Question 5

Category	Description	Total number of responses
Collaboration	• Collaboration/planning and programming developed through partnerships (employers, schools, governments)	14
Career education/systems issues	• Need more programs for career exploration, job shadowing, career awareness, career pathways • Need for different approaches to education that	52

	connect learning to application in the "real world"	
	• Stable funding for programming	
	• Give young people the chance to gain experience	
	• Learn actual employment skills while in school	
Attitudes	• Young people must change their attitudes towards work	9

Incentives	• Provide incentives to encourage
	  ○ employers to hire
	  ○ Students to have work experience
		12

Other		18
Not answered/don't know		10

Table 18: Percentage of Summary of Responses by Group to Question 5

	Gr 1: YP (n=44)	Gr 2: Employers (n=18)	Gr 3: Educators (n=15)	Gr 4: CDP (n=26)	Gr 5: Other (n=12)	Total (n=115)
Collaboration	0.0%	22.2%	26.7%	19.2%	8.3%	12.2%
Career education/ systems issues	45.5%	50.0%	13.3%	57.7%	50.0%	45.2%
Attitudes	11.4%	5.6%	6.7%	3.8%	8.3%	7.8%
Incentives	4.5%	11.1%	13.3%	19.2%	8.3%	10.4%
Other	22.7%	5.6%	20.0%	3.8%	25.0%	15.7%
Not answered/don't know	15.9%	0.0%	13.3%	3.8%	0.0%	8.7%

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

Many respondents (25.2%) thought that improved access to career exploration programming would help to scale impact. These responses focussed on promoting more widespread implementation of evidence-based local career education/exploration/work experience initiatives, supporting more engagement with the business community, and finding innovative strategies to bring career exploration activities to a wider audience of youth (e.g. virtual co-ops).

Almost 17% of respondents thought that there was a need for a national school-to-work strategy.

Table 19: Summary of Response to Question 6

Category	Description	Total number of responses
National	• Need for a national, government level strategy	19
Career exploration	• Providing more career exploration programs • Ensure students learn skills that can be used in an employment setting (employment skills, soft skills, etc.) • Ensure youth know about programs.	29
Incentives	• Provide incentives to encourage • employers to hire • Students to work	7
Other		21
Not answered/don't know		45

Table 20: Percentage of Summary of Responses by Group to Question 6

	Gr 1: YP (n=44)	Gr 2: Employers (n=18)	Gr 3: Educators (n=15)	Gr 4: CDP (n=26)	Gr 5: Other (n=12)	Total (n=115)
National	4.5%	38.9%	13.3%	23.1%	16.7%	16.5%
Career exploration	20.5%	16.7%	13.3%	42.3%	33.3%	25.2%
Incentives	0.0%	0.0%	20.0%	15.4%	0.0%	6.1%
Other	27.3%	5.6%	26.7%	11.5%	8.3%	18.3%
Not answered/don't know	50.0%	38.9%	40.0%	19.2%	41.7%	39.1%

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

Respondents offered a wide variety of suggestions to this question such as encouraging youth to work harder in school, employer incentives to hire youth, temporary housing solutions, and encouraging employers to be more empathic of youth in transition. Improved career education programming was a dominant theme among stakeholders (60%). A few (3.5%) mentioned the need for collaboration/partnerships among stakeholders.

Table 21: Summary of Response to Question 7

Category	Description	Total number of responses
Career exploration	• Career exploration programs, mentoring, • Ensure students learn skills that can used in an employment setting (employment skills, soft skills, etc) • Provide labour market information • Provide young people with the skills needed to enter the workforce	69
Collaboration	• More partnerships among stakeholders	4
Other		26
Not answered/don't know		15

Table 22: Percentage of Summary of Responses by Group to Question 7

	Gr 1: YP (n=44)	Gr 2: Employers (n=18)	Gr 3: Educators (n=15)	Gr 4: CDP (n=26)	Gr 5: Other (n=12)	Total (n=115)
Career exploration	50.0%	77.8%	60.0%	61.5%	66.7%	60.0%
Collaboration	0.0%	0.0%	13.3%	3.8%	8.3%	3.5%
Other	27.3%	11.1%	33.3%	26.9%	0.0%	22.6%
Not answered/don't know	22.7%	11.1%	0.0%	7.7%	8.3%	13.0%

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

Ninety (78.3%) respondents answered this question. The primary response across all respondent groupings was the need to know more about the transition experience of youth. How long it takes, best ways to tap into their interests and passions, how they feel about their transition, how to engage them in career development, and the impacts of transitions on marginalized youth were some of the suggestions for further research.

Table 23: Summary of Response to Question 8

Category	Description	Total number of responses
Transition Experience	• What the experience of youth in transition is like (how youth feel about it, how long it will take, etc.) • What the long-term impact will be • Experiences of marginalized youth	32
What Employers Want	• The skills they need • Hiring practices	11
Promising/best practice	• Evidence-based research • Implementation impacts • Graduate outcomes • ROI	7
Role of Schools	• Teacher training in career development • Attitudes of educators about their role in supporting transition	4
Other		36

Table 24: Percentage of Summary of Responses by Group to Question 8

	Gr 1: YP (n=44)	Gr 2: Employers (n=18)	Gr 3: Educators (n=15)	Gr 4: CDP (n=26)	Gr 5: Other (n=12)	Total (n=115)
Transition Experience	15.9%	38.8%	26.6%	34.6%	41.7%	27.8%
What Employers Want	15.9%	5.6%	13.4%	0.0%	41.7%	9.6%
Promising/best practice	4.5%	16.7%	13.4%	0.0%	0.0%	6.2%
Role of Schools	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	15.4%	0.0%	3.4%
Other	36.4%	16.7%	26.6%	30.8%	8.3%	31.3%
Not answered/don't know	27.3%	22.2%	20.0%	19.2%	8.3%	21.7%

(9) What is the most important research question to start tackling this issue?

Eighty (69.5%) respondents answered this question. As with Question 8, a majority of respondents posed research questions that would examine the experiences of youth in transition. This was followed by a number of questions concerning the evidence-base of policies and programming with questions such as what is working well and why?

Table 25: Summary of Response to Question 9

Category	Description	Total number of responses
Transition Experience	• What is the experience of youth in transition? How are they looking for work? What are the barriers? • What youth having the most difficulties and why? • What are the needs of youth during transition? • How to increase work experience and exposure of youth in general and for marginalized youth? • What motivates youth? • Use PSE data to analyze graduate transitions.	28
Evidence-based Practice	• What works best and when does it work best? • What makes a program successful? • What does success look like? • What are the levers of change in this field?	15
Demand-side Research	• What do employers need to hire youth? • Which employers are working with education to support youth transition to the workplace? What prompts them to do this? • What are best practice examples that provide employers with incentives to hire and retain youth?	12
Education	• How do we take a more applied approach to learning? • How do we foster motivation and confidence in schools? • How do we help teachers see their role in connecting learning to student futures?	7
Other		18

Table 26: Percentage of Summary of Responses by Group to Question 9

	Gr 1: YP (n=44)	Gr 2: Employers (n=18)	Gr 3: Educators (n=15)	Gr 4: CDP (n=26)	Gr 5: Other (n=12)	Total (n=115)
Transition Experience	18.1%	27.8%	20.0%	30.8%	33.3%	24.3%
Evidence-based Practice	6.8%	16.7%	13.3%	15.4%	25.0%	13.0%
Demand-side Research	11.5%	11.0%	20.0%	3.8%	8.3%	10.4%
Education	9.1%	0.0%	6.8%	3.8%	8.3%	6.1%
Other	18.1%	27.8%	13.3%	7.7%	8.3%	15.7%
Not answered/don't know	36.4%	16.7%	26.6%	38.5%	16.8%	30.5%

C. CHAMPIONS

Thirty-six (31.3%) of the 115 respondents stated they knew champions who were impacting the efficacy of school-to-work transitions in their communities. Of these, 24 respondents listed and provided additional information on at least one champion they knew. Champions came from a range of different organizations such as post-secondary institutions, career development organizations, employers, non-profits, sector/industry/workforce development organizations, public schools and government. Predominately, champions came from post-secondary institutions and career development organizations.

Table 27: Number of Respondents Who Named a Champion

	Number who know a champion	Provide information on at least one champion
Group 1 - Young people	5	2
Group 2 - Employers	9	5
Group 3 - Educators	5	3
Group 4 - Career Development Professionals	10	8
Group 5 - Other	7	6
Total	36	24

D. TOOLS

Participants were asked to list tools and resources that they are either currently using or know about that support their or a young person's school-to-work transition. They were also asked to comment or share information about the tool's or resource's efficacy. Forty-seven respondents listed at least one tool they used or knew about. Career Development Practitioners listed the most and employers listed the least.

There may have been some confusion about what was meant by tools and resources as many of the "tools and resources" listed were more program and policy focussed. For example, answers included references to computer training, employer incentives, job placements and practicum placements. Also, more often than not respondents did not name the tool or resource directly. They listed "workshop," "job placements," "employment services," "books," and "workplace safety" as resources or tools they knew about. This kind of response went across all respondent groups. Of the named resources and tools, Career Cruising was the most often cited.

Most individuals who listed tools and resources indicated that they were effective in supporting young people's school-to-work transitions. When asked why these tools and resources were effective, many pointed to elements of experiential learning that resulted in positive impact: "paid to learn," "hands-on, early career exposure," "engaging exploration," "building skills specific to their field," "real world experience," "allows students to get a feel for their work environments," "job experience," and "allows you to get experience in a professional workplace." Only nine indicated that the tools and resources they listed were ineffective. Some of the reasons cited for the tools and resources not being effective include "students have no knowledge of the program," "not evaluated," "not enough learning about employment transition," "limited enrolment," and "does not tackle the barriers that people face."

We asked respondents to provide supporting evidence of the efficacy of the tools and resources. Most participants were not able to point to reports and/or evaluative data. Rather, they cited anecdotal or observational reasons for determining it to be effective. Their answers included: "word of mouth," "students commenting it was useful," "they got lots of funding," "they come back to tell me it was eye opening," "individuals who see it for the first time are excited about the information available," and "it's good because of the way it is."

Table 28: Respondents Who Listed a Tool or Resource and the Efficacy of the Tool.

	Number who listed a tool	Number of tools listed*	Number than were not effective
Group 1 - Young people	14	26	3
Group 2 - Employers	4	7	0
Group 3 - Educators	6	13	2
Group 4 - Career Development Professionals	18	63	5
Group 5 - Other	5	20	2
Total	**47**	**129**	**12**

Note – This does not mean there were 129 separate tools listed. Rather there was some degree of repetition in the tools listed.

E. PROGRAMS

Similar to the question about tools and resources (see Section D), respondents were ask to list programs that they knew about that supported youth school-to-work transitions and to comment on or provide evidence about the program's impact. Thirty-eight respondents listed at least one program they participated in or know about that works to support a young person's school-to-work transition. We asked for national and international examples. Career development practitioners listed the most programs and educators listed the least.

Some of the "programs" listed are not actually programs per se – e.g. part-time jobs, work integrated learning, Essential Skills. Most of the actual programs listed included work experience or elements of work integrated learning (both paid and un-paid). Youth Job Connect (Ontario) and Skills Link were the programs cited most often.

Programs that included work experience or exposure were more likely to be deemed effective by the respondents. Much of the evidence to the program's efficacy provided by the respondents was anecdotal. Comments about the impact of a program included that it "allowed me to gain experience," "had job placements," "gets them in the labour market," "job shadow program helps them learn," "teaches jobs," "experience for people who have none," and "provides work experience to youth."

Table 29: Respondents Who Listed a Tool or Resource and the Efficacy of the Tool

	Number who listed a program	Number of programs listed*	Number than were not effective
Group 1 - Young people	12	18	0
Group 2 - Employers	8	16	0
Group 3 - Educators	6	7	0
Group 4 - Career Development Professionals	9	26	0
Group 5 - Other	3	9	0
Total	38	76	0

Note – This does not necessarily mean there were 76 separate programs listed.

F. POLICY

Sixteen respondents listed at least one policy they knew that is targeted towards improving their/a young person's school-to-work transition. Similar to the respondent answers to the questions about programs, resources and tools, respondents were unclear of what was being referred to when asked to list a policy. As such, programs, tools and resources were listed as policies (e.g. WHMIS training, PEI Public Internship Program). Of the six young people who listed policies targeted towards improving school-to-work transitions, two cited the policy around mandatory volunteer hours and one pointed to Norway's free college initiative as an effective policy.

Of the policies that were deemed not effective, respondents stated that they did not know or that it was too soon to tell. Only two of eight individuals who identified themselves as policy makers/government representatives listed policies, and only one spoke to why the policy they listed was effective and provided supporting evidence.

	Number who listed a policy	Number of policies listed*	Number than were not effective
Group 1 - Young people	6	6	1
Group 2 – Employers	2	2	0
Group 3 – Educators	1	3	2
Group 4 - Career Development Professionals	3	5	0
Group 5 – Other	4	8	4
Total	16	24	7

Note – This does not necessarily mean there were 24 separate policies listed.

CONCLUSION

There is a general feeling across all survey respondents that youth need more support to be better positioned to transition from school to work. Being work-ready was a chief concern among 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.

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.

In terms of what is needed moving forward, 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 increase the 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.

APPENDIX A: 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.)?**

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.