



WORK WORLD WE WANT

FEBRUARY 2018

Youth across Canada feel unprepared to enter the workforce. Youth identified several reasons for this unpreparedness: schools not offering relevant education, geographic isolation from services, and lack of awareness and/or access to the proper supports to prepare them for their future careers.

Finding solutions to issues youth face when seeking employment are complex and will require a multi-faceted problem-solving approach. We all have a responsibility to ensure that youth find ways to contribute meaningfully to their communities, and this includes a responsibility from employers of young people to recognize the privilege that is involved in employing young people. For many young people, their first job experience is critical for ensuring long-term employment success.



Work World We Want Theme Group

SUMMARY

Our recommendations were generated to provide creative solutions to employment issues facing youth across the country. Discrimination, nepotism, unlawful and unethical workplace practices are still realities that young people face in finding and maintaining employment in Canada. The #CanadaWeWant is one in which all young people have the supports they need to find employment,

and live in an economy that values their contribution in the work force. The Work World We Want is one in which employers support their young employees to be successful, and one in which young people, regardless of their identity or geographic location, have the opportunity to gain experience prior to having their first job.



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**The Student
Commission**
Centre of Excellence for
Youth Engagement

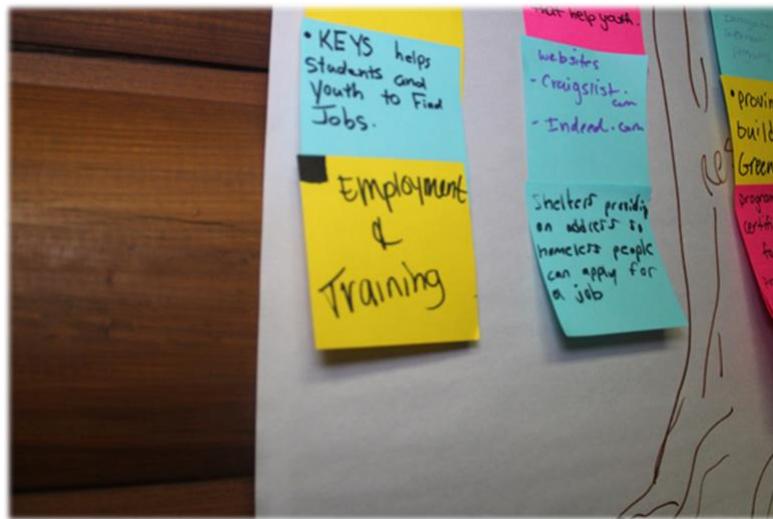
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Acknowledgments

Thank you first to the courageous young people who traveled from coast to coast to coast to build the #CanadaWeWant so we can have the #CanadaWeNeed.

With representatives from First Nation, Métis and Inuit communities from across the country, we humbly gathered on the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee, the Ojibway/Chippewas, the Anishinabek, and currently the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation. We were also surrounded by Indigenous communities: to the North were the Chippewas of Georgina Island; to the East are the Mississaugas of Scugog Island; and to the West are the Chippewas of Kettle and Stoney Point. Through Indigenous-led ceremony, acknowledgement and respect, we recognized the enduring presence of Indigenous Peoples on this land, and were very grateful to have the opportunity to use it as a meeting place, and a space for knowledge sharing.

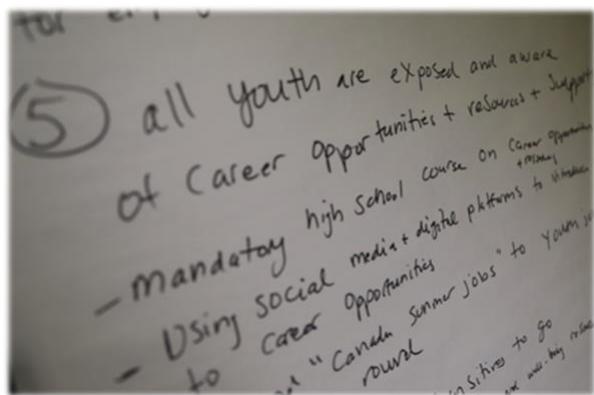
Thank you to YMCA Cedar Glen, The Students Commission of Canada, Sharing the Stories Research and Evaluation Platform, Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, RBC Foundation, UNICEF Canada, the Government of Canada and the many other funders of the #CanadaWeWant Conference 2018, and all of the organizers, elders, adult allies, facilitators, and most of all the wonderful youth participants. Thank you to The Students Commission Conference Planning Committee for their hard work. Thank you to the federal government representatives and policymakers that attended the Conference and will continue to support the development of A Youth Policy for Canada.



"I hope to make a splash with our group recommendations"

Executive Summary

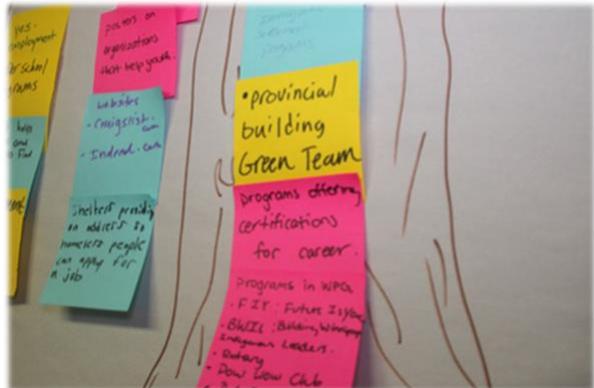
Young people in Canada feel great anxiety about transitioning into the “adult-world” of work and career. This need not be the case, and in fact, limiting the amount of anxiety that is so often involved with discussions of career choices, is a vital and overarching component of our recommendations. Young people should be provided with opportunities to develop their experience and skills-sets, as well as be equipped with the knowledge they need to advocate for themselves in the workplace, such as an awareness of their workers’ rights. The Work World We Want is one in which young people have meaningful employment experiences where they are supported to be successful.



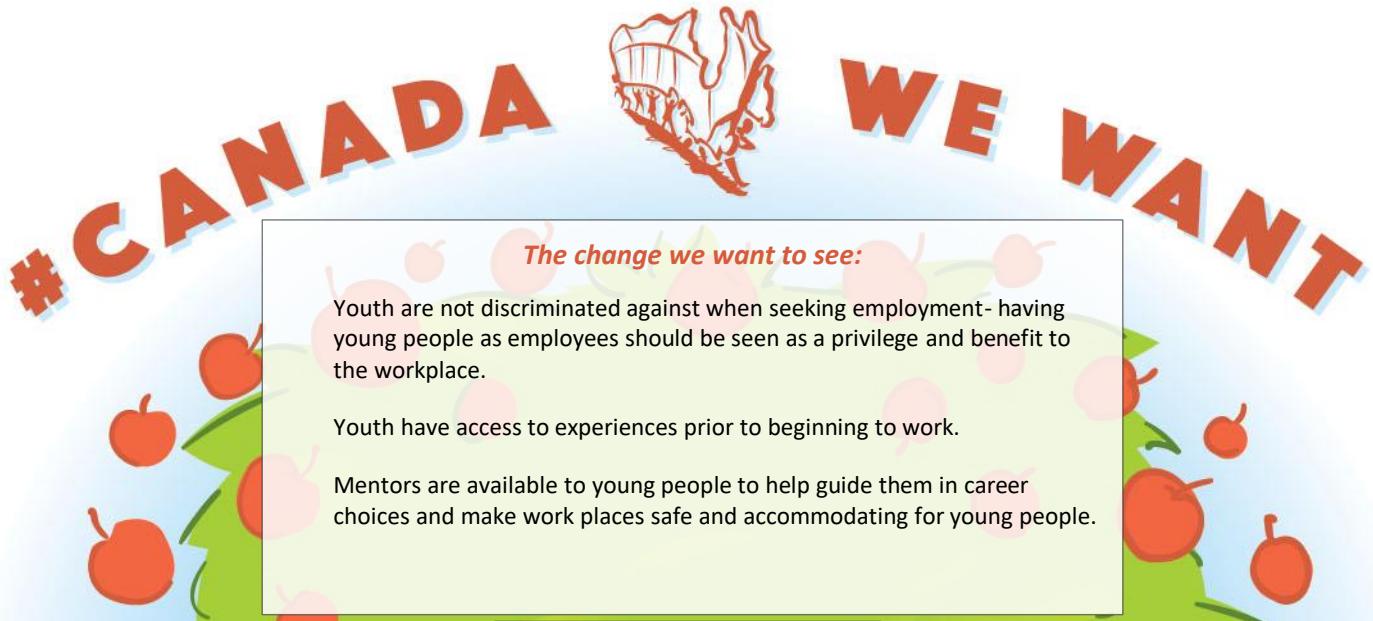
"I hope our voice creates a better employment system"

"It's discouraging to learn about employment inequalities"





"What I learned today was that in the employment system, it is really hard for a youth to find a job"



The change we want to see:

Youth are not discriminated against when seeking employment- having young people as employees should be seen as a privilege and benefit to the workplace.

Youth have access to experiences prior to beginning to work.

Mentors are available to young people to help guide them in career choices and make work places safe and accommodating for young people.

The way we want to get there (Activities):

Increasing hands-on opportunities for career exploration, especially for remote and isolated communities.

The way we want to get there (Activities):

Employers expectations are realistic and accommodate youth needs (i.e. School schedules)

All young people understand their rights in the work-place.

The way we want to get there (Activities):

Living wage is utilized rather than a minimum wage. Young people's work is valued.

What we need to get there (Resources):

Hands-on Training Programs

Child care Services

Living Wage mandated through legislation

The way we want to get there (Resources):

Meaningful Career Exploration classes imbedded in all secondary school curriculums.

Career and Employment centers are accessible in all communities.

What are the values and the principles to ground our recommendations?

Equity and Fairness

Truth and Reconciliation

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

What are the values and the principles to ground our recommendations?

Opportunities and education for all young people, regardless of geographical location or identity.

Our Recommendations

Recommendation 1: All youth will have had a variety of experiences prior to their first job

- Youth must have 120 hours of mandatory “experience” for high school credit with a variety of options and flexibility. These experiences can and should include job shadowing, exchanges, volunteering, sharing of culture, hosting someone with another community etc.
- 60 hours of these experiences must incorporate job skills/training for high school credits, apprenticeships and placements in prospective employers.
- For the completed 120 hours, youth will receive a monetary incentive that will go towards their post-secondary education/training/supplies.

Recommendation 2: All youth understand their workplace legal rights, benefits and know about resources and supports in the workplace available to them

- A mandatory high school course on workers’ legal rights and responsibilities of the employer is taught in high school at the age of 15.
- All youth take a mandatory, easy to understand, workshop/online course about their rights, safety procedures and employee benefits prior to employment.
- A rights document must be signed by the employers and employees to ensure each party understands their rights.
- Employers must take a mandatory course on workers’ legal rights and rights of a child.
- An independent governing body must be created to investigate that employers are meeting the rights of workers and evaluate the employers by giving them a grade that is made public.
- This independent body can also act as a resource for employees to complain to when they are experiencing issues at work.

Recommendation 3: No youth is discriminated against based on their gender, location, disability, sexual orientation, clothing style, race, ethnicity, or religion

- The workplace must be accessible to people with different religious and cultural beliefs as well as health and wellness needs.
- Employers must take a workshop/course on cultural safety to enhance their cultural understanding.
- Public/private companies and institutions must incorporate diversity quotas to ensure the workplace reflects our diverse society.

Recommendation 4: Youth must be assigned a mentor to train and support them and help set realistic expectations upon being hired for the first time

- Mentors must:
 - Be approachable;
 - Be empathetic;
 - Be non-discriminatory;
 - Ensure youth mentees are and feel safe at work;
 - Help youth develop/apply proper skill sets to the job.
- Companies/institutions should have mentorships programs where they provide youth mentorship by assigning someone with experience as the youth's mentor for employers.
- Employers must be provided with resources on youth-friendliness so workplaces are accessible for youth. This will help support their success and attainment of meaningful employment experience.

Recommendation 5: All youth are exposed and aware of career opportunities and have proper resources and supports to enhance their careers

- There must be mandatory secondary school courses on career opportunities, CV writing and financial literacy.
- Youth must be exposed to opportunities and resources through digital platforms such as webinars and skype.
- The “Canada Summer Jobs” (CSJ) program must be expanded to youth jobs all year around.
- Career days must be incorporated into each city to expose youth to various opportunities.
- All employers must provide health and well-being resources in the community to youth.
- Funding must be increased for existing programs that provide experiences to youth especially in rural communities.

Recommendation 6: Wages and salaries are equitable to the living wage standard to the city

- As part of their first job, youth will get taxed less in order to live closer to the living wage.
- Minimum wage must be changed to match the living wage of postal codes rather than the province.

Conclusion

Young Canadians need more support in career planning, in having a positive first work/employment experience and need to feel valued in their employment. Employers of youth in our communities need to be aware of the responsibility that employing youth entails. According to research (?) “getting that first job can be crucial, as it helps to set young people up for further successes. Expanding a conversation about how to get them there is only the first step.” (www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/finding-opportunities-opportunity-youth)