



Recommendations from the Youth Unemployment Forum

Held on December 5th, 2017

April, 2018



ABOUT YES

YES (Youth Employment Services) is a not-for-profit charity whose mission is to enrich the community by providing English-language job search and self-employment services to Quebecers. Our dedicated team of employment counsellors and business coaches see over 4,000 people per year at our downtown Montreal location and remotely. We work with our partners in the regions to provide coaches who can offer English-language business support.

Increasing numbers of youth from all backgrounds are confronting underemployment, unemployment and barriers to employment. YES is providing them with unique, timely and accessible job search and self-employment program options including career and employment counselling, business and artist coaching, workshops, conferences, networking events, as well as mentorship opportunities.

YES uses a community development approach; building partnerships, attracting and cultivating volunteers and creating networks. Our support services respond to the real and ongoing needs of our clients and our community.

©2018, Youth Employment Services
666 Sherbrooke St. West, Suite 700
Montreal, Quebec, H3A 1E7
Tel: 514-878-9788 ext. 310
E-mail: info@yesmontreal.ca



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Quebec and indeed across Canada we are confronting the many and varied challenges of a rapidly evolving labour market. New technologies are developing at a rate that is challenging our institutions; globalization is bringing increasing unpredictability to economic systems; traditional management models are being disrupted by the growing sharing and gig economies.

Youth may have adapted quickly to high-tech society, however it would be disastrous to assume they will adjust as easily to the trials of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Today's youth need innovative supports to help them to survive in and capitalize on the complexities of the future economy.

While Québec youth have never been more highly educated or bilingual, young job seekers and employers alike are frustrated. Not enough has been done to curb the outmigration of educated youth nor to create an equitable environment for underrepresented populations. It hardly matters that jobs may be available, if youth are not here or not able to connect with them.

This is why, with support from Canadian Heritage, on December 5th, 2017 YES convened a day-long forum bringing together multiple sectors from throughout the province of Quebec, to develop a deeper understanding of the unique employment barriers faced by Quebec's Official Language Minority Community (OLMC) youth.

The community forum project "Youth Unemployment: It's Everyone's Issue" was developed as a direct response to YES' recent groundwork on the subject of youth unemployment, specifically:

"Community Talks" (2015-16):

A multimedia community engagement project that exposed tough realities from the perspectives of employers and youth from the English-Speaking Community of Quebec (ESCQ).

"Regional Needs Assessment" (2017)

A study conducted by YES in partnership with six regional community organizations that revealed inadequate English-language employment services, as well as other regional challenges.

As its name implies, "Youth Unemployment: It's Everyone's Issue" reflects our determination that finding effective solutions to youth unemployment involves harmonizing our efforts both within and between sectors. Creating a space for multiple perspectives was integral to the project's design and the forum's agenda:

- Individuals representing unemployed/underemployed youth, employers, government, regional partners, and educational institutions assumed leading roles in shaping the agenda as members of a dynamic Steering Committee.
- Dr. Jack Jedwab of the Association of Canadian Studies delivered a comprehensive Keynote Presentation, providing the unifying standpoint of ESC youth unemployment statistics, and clarifying the role of mentorship as an important part of the solution.
- The Panel of Experts discussion, facilitated by James Hughes of The McConnell Family Foundation, placed education and social service professionals alongside youth representatives and corporate Human Resources. Their combined, nuanced perspectives solicited a thoughtful Q + A session with attendees from various backgrounds.

- In the spirit of inclusiveness and collaboration, we strove to make the forum widely available to all. For those who could not attend the event in person, especially those in the regions, conference video was shared along with a feedback questionnaire ensuring a maximum number of voices represented in this report.

This recommendations report seeks to sensitize the greater Quebec community to the employment issues confronting ESC youth, while at the same time offering concrete ideas for progressing this situation through a variety of strategies.

Ultimately we hope to create more (equitable) economic opportunities for English-speaking youth, to reduce the out-migration of “the best and brightest” youth from Quebec’s labour force and economy, and to ensure no one is left out of the equation. This is a key socioeconomic concern for the ESCQ, and for everyone concerned with achieving a vital and resilient Quebec economy.

Key Recommendations:

1. Increase access to language training in Canada’s two official languages.
2. Invest in strategies ensuring that all stakeholders participate in soft skills development for today’s youth.
3. Give newcomers to the province more flexibility in accessing language-appropriate services in Canada’s two official languages.
4. Better prepare all youth to succeed in the changing workforce through continuous upskilling and retraining.
5. Identify targeted strategies to eliminate systemic bias and foster an environment of inclusion and equality in the workforce.
6. Acknowledge the shared responsibility for adaptation, holistically reconstituting employer-employee relationship models.
7. Increase resources for community organizations providing critical preventative and reintegration services.

SITUATION

Amidst the steep challenges of Canada's rapidly evolving labour market, Quebec's youth are underprepared to find and maintain a place for themselves within the complex future economy. The rise in the gig economy, unrealistic job expectations, and a widening skills mismatch are creating the 'perfect storm' for youth and for employers who continue to struggle with labour shortages. Jobs are available, but there are not enough skilled workers to fill the positions, as many of the province's best and brightest talent continue to leave Quebec behind (7,000 people per year of mostly youth aged 25-34).¹

This past December 2017, provincial unemployment rates reached historical lows of 6.1%.² However, YES chose this moment to call to attention to a problem: rates were not the same for all of the province's youth. The 2016 census reflected disparities amongst Quebec's linguistic communities with unemployment rates of 10% for Allophones, 8% for Anglophones and 6% for Francophones.³ These figures are of concern for language minorities.

The goal of YES' Youth Unemployment Forum was to ensure that recommendations were created that could influence further policy development, inform educators and employers, and guide service providers. To support this objective, the Steering Committee identified significant Barriers to Employment for Quebec's English-speaking youth which formed the basis for the Forum's interactive dialogue sessions.

While some of the Barriers to Employment are shared by youth on a national scale, the ones summarized here pose particular hardships for Quebec's official language minority youth.

The major barriers causing underemployment and unemployment amongst Quebec's English-speaking youth⁴ pertain to:

- Language skills gaps
- Soft skills gaps
- Challenges facing newcomers
- Youth lacking practical experience
- Underrepresented populations
- Employer-employee expectations
- Mental health and employment

1 Benjamin Shingler, "Thousands are still leaving Quebec for other provinces. Here's where they're going," CBC,

2 Emploi Québec, *Bulletin sur le marché du travail au Québec Année 2017*,

3 Marion Scott, "Quebec anglos, allophones more likely to be poor than francos: study," Montreal Gazette,

4 Top barriers as identified by YES' Youth Unemployment Forum Steering Committee.

METHODOLOGY

I. YES' Preliminary Groundwork

In recent years YES has laid extensive groundwork examining employment issues amongst English-speaking youth.

Community Talks, 2015-16

For this project YES solicited feedback on the realities of navigating Quebec's English-language job market from Official Language Minority Community (OLMC) youth and employers who hire English-speaking youth.

Over 500 participants shared their experiences by video (through video booths and by online submission) and through surveys circulated to YES' province-wide network of volunteers, businesses, existing and past clients, educational institutions, regional partners, and to Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) members representing 48 community organizations.

Some key findings:

- 79% of youth respondents considered leaving Quebec for employment.
- 69% of youth respondents considered themselves to be underemployed.

For more details on the Community Talks project, see APPENDIX A.

Employment in the Quebec Regions: Needs Assessment Study, 2017

This study was conducted in partnership with community organizations located in seven Quebec regions: Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Capitale-Nationale, Chaudière-Appalaches, Estrie, Montérégie, Côte-Nord and Abitibi-Témiscamingue and sought to inform the development of timely, evidence-based English-language employment services and career supports in the regions.

Phase one of the study examined the varying socioeconomic conditions of the different regions, and documented the conditions for economic growth and prosperity for English-speaking youth compared to French-speaking youth. Phase two included inventorying nearly 300 local job search and employment-related services (particularly English-language ones), as well as collecting secondary data on access to/satisfaction with English-language employment services. The third phase provided information on the needs of English-speaking job seekers in the regions through two surveys: Community Talks Youth Employment (2015/16) and the Regional Employment Services Survey (2016/17).

Some key findings:

- A trend shows "English-speakers are worse-off socioeconomically than their French-speaking counterparts, and these differences are amplified in the regions."
- English-speakers in the regions suffer from both very limited access to employment service providers and a high level of dissatisfaction with the available services.

For more details on the Community Talks project, see APPENDIX B.

By gathering this key feedback from across the province, YES took an important step forward in illustrating the high costs of youth unemployment on government, educational institutions, community organizations, employers and families, identifying that *everyone* has a role to play in the retention and health of OLMC youth.

II. Multisector Steering Committee

Building on the recent employment data that was generated by the Community Talks project and the Regional Needs Assessment study, YES identified a need to progress the issue of economic integration for ESCQ youth amongst the issue's key stakeholders, using a collaborative approach to career development for collective impact.

A Steering Committee was formed and tasked with identifying the major obstacles to employment for ESCQ youth. To guarantee the inclusion of a diverse set of youth employment-related perspectives, the committee was comprised of representatives of unemployed and underemployed youth, employers, community organizations, regional partners and educational institutions.

Members of the Steering Committee drew from their respective frontline experiences in the field of employment and, through a process of voting, they generated a list of the most relevant issues. The final set of seven Barriers to Employment formed a major reference point for developing the community forum project entitled 'Youth Unemployment: It's Everyone's Issue'.

For a list of the Barriers to Employment see the section Barriers to Employment.
For a list of Steering Committee members see Appendix C.

III. Youth Unemployment Forum

The Steering Committee for the forum project 'Youth Unemployment: It's Everyone's Issue' engaged stakeholders from multiple sectors throughout Quebec in open dialogue regarding the issues and solutions on ESCQ youth unemployment.

Multiple perspectives were merged into every aspect of the project: inter-sectoral dialogue was emphasized in the Keynote and Expert Panel presentations, as well as the interactive Breakout Sessions.

With over 100 people in attendance, each component of the forum helped to generate evidence for the employment barriers as well as an accurate picture of how the community may resolve them through collaborative action.

More details on each component of the forum are provided in the appendices to this report as follows:

APPENDIX D Forum Agenda

APPENDIX E Keynote Presentation

APPENDIX F Expert Panel

APPENDIX G Breakout Sessions

APPENDIX H Regional Participation

APPENDIX I Feedback

APPENDIX J Participants List

BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT

The following barriers were identified as priority issues facing English-speaking youth. More details on each barrier—as well as recommendations for action—are provided in the following section of this report.

Language Skills Gap

English-speaking youth are at a disadvantage when it comes to job prospects in Quebec.

Soft Skills Gap

The skills gap is a key driver of unemployment and underemployment in Quebec.

Challenges Facing Newcomers

Quebec is a difficult place for recent immigrants to find work, with an unemployment rate that is consistently higher than other provinces.

Education: Preparing Youth with Practical Experience

Recent graduates are veering off track, unprepared to enter the Quebec workforce—a lack of experiential learning opportunities is weakening their chances.

Underrepresented Populations

Entering the labour force presents added layers of difficulty for those with little access to upgrading their skills.

Employer-Employee Expectations

Quebec youth are facing deepening trends toward temporary and contract work, as well as unnecessary discrepancies regarding job and salary expectations and work environment.

Mental Health and Employment

Quebec's English-speaking youth—particularly the unemployed and students—are displaying high levels of psychological distress related to joblessness.

LANGUAGE SKILLS GAPS

Compared with Quebec French speakers, ESCQ youth are highly educated and highly bilingual, and still linguistic insecurity gets in their way.

For example, Quebec's ESC is 17% more likely than all other Canadians to hold a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree,⁵ yet this group shows the highest level of unemployment amongst Canada's four language collectivities.⁶

The ESCQ and its youth are working hard to integrate into the provincial economy, as shown in the continued increase in their already high rates of English/French bilingualism. Recent data confirms that 71% of English-speaking Quebecers speak both official languages, compared to 40% of Quebec's Francophones.⁷ Despite their efforts, Quebec Anglophones are more likely to be unemployed and more likely to live in poverty.⁸

The French-language barrier was identified at the Forum as the single greatest obstacle to employment confronting young English-speakers in Quebec, which is reflected in higher youth unemployment rates for Allophones and Anglophones.⁹

Recommendation:

Increase access to language training in Canada's two official languages.

1. Make language training accessible through informal initiatives, at work, in the community and in school.

To achieve economic equality, all residents of Quebec should be able to access second-language training—no one should be impeded by their economic situation. English-language community groups see French second-language training programs as an urgent need of Quebec's unemployed and underemployed youths and adults (and even community groups themselves).¹⁰

English-speaking and Allophone youth who are employed need more functional workplace language supports, such as 'language buddies', to help facilitate essential social and linguistic integration. Increased proficiency in workplace French will make mid-management advancement a real possibility for the nearly one million Quebec residents whose First Official Language is English.¹¹

Many students choose to live and study in Quebec so that they can learn French, yet this proves to be a difficult task for youth who are carrying out full time studies. The Forum also supported the recommendations published by the Association for Canadian Studies in its study, *Push-Pull Factors Related to Student Retention and Integration in Québec*:

- Improving access to French-language instruction for English-speaking students;
- Develop/improve foreign credential recognition program for newcomers;
- Make getting permanent residency after studies easier for international students.¹²

5 Canadian Heritage, *A Portrait of the English-speaking Communities in Québec*,

6 YES, "Employment in the Québec Regions," 6.

7 Marian Scott, "Census 2016: English is making gains in Quebec" *Montreal Gazette*,

8 Marian Scott, "Quebec anglos, allophones more likely to be poor than francos: study" *Montreal Gazette*,

9 Ibid.

10 Philip Authier, "Anglos have a long list of grievances, Quebec document reveals on eve of Montreal forum," *Montreal Gazette*,

11 Marian Scott, "Quebec anglos, allophones more likely to be poor than francos: study," *Montreal Gazette*,

12 Association for Canadian Studies, *Push-Pull Factors Related to Student Retention and Integration in Québec*,

2. Job postings in French and English detailing language proficiency requirements.

Confronted with the intimidating prospect of navigating the French-speaking job market, non-native French speakers have an added layer of difficulty to their job search. Job postings are problematic because phrases such as ‘Bilingual’ or ‘Fluent in French’ do not fully explain the level of proficiency needed, nor the degree to which an employer is willing to train.

Providing a more encouraging atmosphere for young job seekers is key to engaging them, and the job posting is a starting point. In many cases it is the first contact between employers and potential new hires. Presenting job postings into Canada’s two official languages is a clear indication of a culture of inclusivity, and it benefits employers by widening their ‘net’ of potential skilled candidates. Further, clearer language requirements will help remove the guesswork and lowers the intimidation factor for job seekers. These measures will especially benefit Allophones—as their first language learned was neither French nor English, they often face a double language barrier.

3. Ongoing dialogue and collaborations to keep ESCQ youth unemployment in focus.

Promising community initiatives are creating a better understanding of specific issues within ESCQ youth employment; community partnerships aimed at promoting youth retention and economic prosperity are successes to be built upon. However, continued progress will only be achieved if the momentum is kept up.

“I like decision makers and front line workers at the same table,” was one participant’s feedback at the YES’ Youth Unemployment Forum. Another commented, “...needs to be done continuously all year round.” By making space for multiple perspectives at public forums and inter-sectoral consultations we can continually reaffirm our shared responsibility for confronting service gaps to enhance job prospects for youth.

SOFT SKILLS GAPS

Canada's Expert Panel on Youth Employment outlines the nature of soft skills: "The shift away from manufacturing to service and knowledge economies means there is a greater emphasis on "soft" skills like problem solving, communication, interpersonal skills and critical thinking."¹³

Is Quebec producing enough skilled graduates to sustain its economic and social well-being? Employers in the province have indicated serious soft and essential skills gaps are stopping them from hiring youth. While employers, educators and government do not always agree on whose responsible for this training, it is obvious that a workable solution is going to require the collaboration of all three sectors.

The Conference Board of Canada suggests that employers could implement more relevant workplace training programs to complement post-secondary education¹⁴—but employers should not be expected to do this without support.

Recommendation:

Invest in strategies ensuring that all stakeholders participate in soft skills development for today's youth.

1. Provide employers—especially first employers—with incentives and strategies for taking on more responsibility for soft skills training.

Compared with technical skills, investing in soft skills is generally perceived as a more complex, longer term commitment, and why many employers have avoided offering this type of training. Nevertheless, employers are well-positioned to help reduce skills gaps and related labour shortages.

Financial incentives are essential, especially for small businesses. Also, companies need other forms of support to navigate the multitude of training-related choices (how much to invest, in-house versus external suppliers, formal/non-formal/informal delivery, etc.) in measurable ways that support employees.

2. Enable early and ongoing access to mentorship in both official languages.

The Forum emphasized the importance of a variety of mentor relationships in addressing skills gaps as a form of social development suitable to every sector and life stage. Positively influencing youth through early access to mentor-mentee bonds was seen as a way of creating a solid foundation for skills development, while at the same time encouraging constant upskilling. Informal mentorships can encourage youth to build confidence in their second language by establishing and working towards language goals in a trusted environment. Multigenerational mentorships will contribute to reducing generational skills gaps. Short term mentorship experiences, such as YES' Human Library online mentor matching service, can be especially rewarding for youth who are not interested in lengthy commitment or obligation.

13 Employment and Social Development Canada, *13 WAYS TO MODERNIZE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN CANADA: STRATEGIES FOR A NEW WORLD OF WORK*,

14 Craig Alexander and Matthew McKean, "The problem of youth unemployment: Predicting the changing future of work," *The Globe and Mail*,



3. Encourage youth to develop soft skills through committed service opportunities.

Volunteering is a widely accepted method for youth to develop career-related knowledge as well as interpersonal, communication, organizing, and technical skills. Young people should not have to make important educational and career-related choices without first having an understanding of their strengths and potential, and the available options suited to them. Youth can benefit from programs that offer early exposure to key soft skills development through volunteer experiences.

CHALLENGES FACING NEWCOMERS

Newcomers are not receiving adequate support to integrate in Quebec: for instance in 2015, the unemployment rate of recent immigrants in Quebec was 16.4%, compared to 10.1% in Ontario, the next highest provincial unemployment rate for newcomers.¹⁵ To protect the vitality of the French language, English-speaking newcomers are channeled into French-language services¹⁶ which is problematic: social services ought to be adapted to suit the needs of the people they are intended to serve.

Language proficiency testing presents further concerns. As reported to YES, often an immigrant's French skills are assessed by the government at 'advanced intermediate' level, while in practice they cannot land a job in French. Despite the francisation program offered by the Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion (MIDI) promoting immigrants' socio-professional integration,¹⁷ fewer than one in 10 adult students who enroll in the program become proficient enough to work or do postsecondary studies in French.¹⁸

Recommendation:

Give newcomers to the province more flexibility in accessing language-appropriate services in Canada's two official languages.

1. Increase access to English-language employment services.

English-language employment services are necessary because people are more comfortable accessing health and social services in their native language. Where that is not possible, they should be able to access employment and other social services in English if that is their First Official Language Spoken (FOLS). Such language-appropriate services are not to be looked at as a replacement for, but as a *complement* to French-language services, and an important part of a comprehensive, human-centered approach to integrating newcomers.

2. Support for community programs providing informal language training.

A holistic integration strategy for newcomers to Quebec requires flexible options for learning French. Take, for instance, English-speaking newcomers who come to YES for English-language employment supports. They understand the economic benefits of learning French, however they are more comfortable accessing support in their stronger language. In looking at how best to support a newcomer, it makes sense to offer informal French-language training where they feel most comfortable. To complement the English-language job search supports, YES offers a French for Job Seekers course that focuses on building confidence communicating with employers, among other French-language job-related skills.

15 Statistics Canada, *Labour Force Survey CANSIM table 282-0102: Labour force characteristics by immigrant status of population aged 25 to 54, by province*, (2015)

16 FOLS is itself a problematic categorization that divides the entire population into francophones and Anglophones, depending on the official language they speak best—even if they are not fluent in either language.

17 "Francization Partners," *Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion*, <http://www.immigration-quebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/partners/francization-partners/index.html>. Accessed March 15, 2018.

18 Robert Everett-Green, "Francisation failure stokes language fears in Quebec," *The Globe and Mail*,

3. Put the focus on skills and competencies, rather than credentials.

It can be disheartening, expensive and time-consuming for newcomers attempting to have their foreign credentials recognized in order to qualify for “skills appropriate” work in their field.¹⁹ As the Employer’s Guide to Hiring Immigrants says, it is a process that only gets more complicated as the level of clearance required increases.²⁰ Even when their target industry is already an established and regulated profession in Quebec, they often encounters additional hurdles (such as rigorous French-language testing) that prevent them from registering as a member of a professional body and from practicing legally in Quebec. Professional orders should take a leading role in helping to shape career paths and industries by promoting a faster and more accommodating process of recognition of foreign experience.

4. Make it easier for foreign students to work in Quebec.

How many of Quebec’s 37,911 international students²¹ will leave the province directly after graduation, because they do not have the correct supports to help them succeed in the Quebec workforce? There was a 19% increase in international students in Quebec in 2018.²² We should capitalize on this increase by reviewing the ‘Quebec experience program – Quebec Graduate’, which can be made much more welcoming and user-friendly for foreign students. In their current form, the guidelines and paperwork are enough to intimidate students from countries who would typically speak English, not French, as a second language. The program’s webpage presents users with confusing conditions and language requirements, lengthy and verbose forms that are only available in French, and it is not clear where prospective applicants could go for help completing the forms. Then there is the cost: over \$700 per applicant.

5. Initiatives expanding newcomers’ networks through mentorship.

Combating isolation can be simple through one-on-one human relationships, which is why matching newcomers with a buddy or mentor—someone who immigrated 10 years earlier, for example—makes sense. Other benefits of mentorship programs for newcomers were identified at the Forum:

- Sharing of industry insights, expertise and language
- Help to explore multiple possibilities and career paths,
- Provide the encouragement needed to be successful in job search
- Network building
- Goal-setting

Any of the various types of mentorship relationships would be workable: junior/senior, peer to peer, reverse mentoring (wherein a junior person with expertise in a specific area is matched with a senior person). What is key is the transfer of encouragement and information between trusted associates to give newcomers an understanding of how things *really* work in Quebec. With the right knowledge and support, they can develop their skills and strategies appropriately.

¹⁹ Hire Immigrants Ottawa, “Employer’s Guide to Integrating Immigrants in the Workplace,”

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Dan Spector, “Anglos react to Leger poll on relations with francophones,” *Global News*,

²² Institut de la statistique du Québec, “Québec Handy Numbers,” (2018)

YOUTH LACKING PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Across Canada, underprepared graduates are veering off track, with only 44 percent of youth and 34 percent of employers feeling that youth are adequately prepared for the workforce (compared to 83 percent of education providers).²³ Youth, unclear of their career paths, do not know what jobs are available or realistic for them. Quebec's youth are more educated than ever before, but the skills mismatch suggests they are somehow less employable.

What role do educational institutions have to play in providing students with the appropriate tools for advancing as active participants in the future economy? What support must be given to them by other sectors? Experiential learning opportunities are a key factor in enabling smooth transitions through 'on-the-job' learning. More support is needed for experiential learning in the form of government-funded paid internships, and employers who are willing to pay up-front salary costs and give time to supervise and mentor youth.²⁴ This is ever more important for English-speaking youth in the Quebec regions, as they have even fewer opportunities.

Recommendation:

Better prepare all youth to succeed in the changing workforce through continuous upskilling and retraining.

1. Arm students with timely and appropriate information.

In order to be prepared to enter the labour force, youth require knowledge and guidance of the opportunities that exist.²⁵ Career counsellors need to be trained to address the changing market and be given tools to stay abreast of these changes so that they can guide their students. By working with employment service organizations, schools can access timelier labour market data to pass on to students in accessible, easy-to-digest formats. This knowledge, paired with experiential supports such as job shadowing and co-op placements, should be available before, during, and after studies.²⁶

2. Standardize competency testing.

Quebec's students and young job seekers today are struggling in the absence of a single frame of reference for testing official language skills.²⁷ The Forum called for standardized official language competency testing across government and educational institutions that would acknowledge and accommodate Quebec's changing demographics, and in particular, the fast-growing populations of non-official language speakers who require adaptive training systems that are sensitive to their needs.^{28 29}

3. More dialogue on vocational training in Quebec.

A career in the trades is much more than a poor alternative to a university degree. Vocational education training can make the school-to-work transition smoother, and can lead to higher paying jobs. Canadian men with an apprenticeship certificate earned \$72,955 in 2015—7% more than

²³ Universities Canada, "Equipping Canada's Youth for the Future,"

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Creig Lamb and Sarah Doyle, "Future-proof: Preparing young Canadians for the future of work," *The Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship*,

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, "Frequently Asked Questions,"

²⁸ Institut de la statistique du Québec, "Québec Handy Numbers," (2018)

²⁹ Institut de la statistique du Québec, "Québec Handy Numbers," (2010)

men with a college diploma.³⁰ In Quebec, educational programs culminating in a Diploma of Vocational Studies that are widely available in French-language CEGEPs must be made available in English.

Educators have a responsibility to encourage more young women to look at the trades, and to act along with all sectors to reduce gender pay gaps. The 'gender earnings ratio' continues to be lower for women with an apprenticeship certificate than for women with a Bachelor's degree (women who apprenticed to become an electrician earned 82% of their similarly-educated male counterparts; for welders the ratio falls to 67% and for carpenters 65%).³¹

4. Second-language work experience for high school-aged youth.

The Forum noted the need for programs that engage equally those youth who are in school and those who are not. Allowing more youth to access paid work placements will give them the experience and the resources they need to develop. They can gain valuable content for their CVs, build networks, and enhance their personal and professional skills (confidence, self-esteem, communication skills to name a few). Job shadowing is another form of experience that can help youth to 'try on' a career. These initiatives, combined with hiring targets for Anglophone/Allophone youth, will give them a path to critical French-language job experience needed for integrating in Quebec.

Increased support for employers offering paid internships and co-op placements and increased funding for the collection, analysis and dissemination of labour market information between sectors, to inform students' paths, and to ensure that educators, employers, community services and governments are making informed decisions.³²

5. Give youth access to entrepreneurial skills development.

Exploring the dynamic world of entrepreneurship as a real career option offers youth many benefits. Beyond learning transferable skills such as collaboration and critical thinking, entrepreneurship is about drawing from one's values to develop resources to solve problems—a promising match for young people today who want a job that supports their beliefs and allows them to contribute. Resilient youth who can move on quickly from setbacks will be more likely to succeed in the growing gig economy.

The 'Semaine des entrepreneurs à l'école' is an innovative in-school event that is raising awareness of the importance of developing an entrepreneurial culture among young people. We need more initiatives like this that effectively engage English-speaking youth.

6. Engage youth in meaningful volunteer experiences.

A lack of experiential learning opportunities severely limits youths' chances and considering the skills gap, it is clear that theoretical knowledge and academic experience alone are not enough. With Quebec's baby boomers leaving an increasingly technological labour market, it is more imperative than ever that youth in the province gain hands-on experience. Fostering an appreciation for community service is important, and it can start from early childhood. Children and youth have a natural desire to help and to learn. While doing so, they do not even realize that they are developing: basic soft skills, transferable skills that will serve them later in their careers, networks, etc. We need more English-language programs and activities that nurture this intrinsic will for gathering and supporting one another.

30 Statistics Canada, *Does education pay? A comparison of earnings by level of education in Canada and its provinces and territories*,

31 Ibid.

32 Universities Canada, "Equipping Canada's Youth for the Future,"

UNDERREPRESENTED POPULATIONS

Equal access to employment is an ongoing issue for the English-speaking community of Quebec and its subgroups. Visible minority groups are an example, as they tend to display higher proportions of unemployed³³ (noting that 25% of Quebec's Mother Tongue Anglophones under age 17 belong to a visible minority).³⁴

Quebec's Equal Employment Opportunity Programs (EEOPs) do not go far enough to protect its citizens. The lack of diverse representation within Quebec's public bodies, for example, indicates that civil servant jobs with Quebec are still out of reach for many target groups, regardless of their qualifications.³⁵ Where youth are concerned, the EEOPs should be expanded and made more functional, to provide concrete integration supports for those who need it most: young mothers, 'youth in protection', Aboriginal youth, LGBTQ+ youth, low-income youth, youth from rural communities, and certainly those youth who face accumulated social, cultural or economic barriers to employment.

Recommendation:

Identify targeted strategies to eliminate systemic bias and foster an environment of inclusion and equality in the workforce.

1. Public and private sector commitment to collective impact.

Action is needed to expand EEOPs in order to achieve increased representation of target groups at all levels of public and private administrations. For example, currently the Equal Access to Employment in Public Bodies Act is applicable only to departments that employ 100 or more persons—this number should be reduced. Citizen-involvement in the process of reviewing the programs will be key to achieving progress. Furthermore, data collection and analysis, and more importantly solid accountability procedures, will be the force that moves public and private bodies to reduce and eventually eliminate all biases in hiring.

2. Develop a database for sharing inclusive hiring practices.

A Quebec-wide Database on Inclusive Hiring can generate real progress for underrepresented populations. First, the information collected would form a part of the critical evidence base needed to demand action. At the same time, it would allow people to come together for ongoing dialogue. Consultations might take the form of a round table gathering of representatives of employment services and youth organizations, human rights and human resources professionals, public and private employers, and job seekers to facilitate sharing of best practices, networking, and connecting individuals with culturally appropriate resources.

Recognition for Equal Opportunity Employment leaders, both public and private, are also important. The Forum supported the idea of a project honouring employers with awards and prizes for demonstrating inclusive hiring practices, and saw this as way of promoting public awareness.

33 Joanne Pocock, "Building Youth Resiliency and Community Vitality within Montreal's English Language Population,"

34 Marian Scott, "Quebec anglos, allophones more likely to be poor than francos: study" *Montreal Gazette*,

35 Allison Hanes, "Allison Hanes: Promises to anglos must be realized before election," *Montreal Gazette*,

3. The regions as integral to youth unemployment conversations.

Employment service providers in the Quebec regions are often under-considered in provincial conversations on youth unemployment, and clearly, solutions generated in an urban setting do not always address region-specific needs. This does not help to combat a perceived lack of job opportunities in the regions.

In its 2017 Needs Assessment Study, YES found that only 38% of regional youth job seekers surveyed were aware of any English-language job search support services available in their region.³⁶ Regional employment service providers require special attention and supports in order to reach out and connect English-speaking youth with stimulating job search supports like internships, mentorship, networking, and timely labour market information.

³⁶ YES, "Employment in the Québec Regions," 18.

EMPLOYER-EMPLOYEE EXPECTATIONS

Human and technological changes are enabling more employment mobility within the Quebec's labour market, and this is disrupting traditional employer-employee relationships. The gig economy and job-hopping are impacting both employers' willingness to invest in employees, and employees' thresholds of loyalty. Frustrated employers may overlook the unique characteristics of Gen Y, attributing misunderstandings to 'entitled Millennials'. Many Gen Y employees entering career jobs feel misled: they have an awareness of their own transferable and analytical skills and, as a result, hierarchical structures seem unfair and unreasonable. They are impatient to contribute meaningfully; and more and more they are demanding that employers provide them with a reciprocal relationship wherein they can advance professionally.

Recommendation:

Acknowledge the shared responsibility for adaptation, holistically reconstituting employer-employee relationship models.

1. Work environments adapting to change.

Employers of all sizes must examine how to prepare their organizations for the higher mobility workforce. One strategy would be to offset training costs by tightening up onboarding procedures. Additionally, employers can do more to attract and retain skilled workers by accommodating the values of Gen Y employees. As Canada's Public Policy Forum suggests, they may try "being open to new ideas, providing face time to employees to demonstrate they are listened to and valued, and demonstrating that with hard work come opportunities to advance by being willing to promote them to higher level positions."³⁷

2. Programs fostering resourceful, resilient youth.

If employers have adjustments to make, so do young job seekers. They are the ones who will be responsible for living in the economy they are helping to shape. Youth should take advantage of employment and entrepreneurship supports available to them, to constantly enhance their skills and expand their resources. This is how they will create solid networks, opportunities, safety nets, and resilience that will enable them to deal with all of the uncertainties of the future economy. Experts at the Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship confirm this idea;

"The future of work will increasingly require a labour force equipped with entrepreneurial skills to adapt to technological change and challenge the status quo. Youth should be introduced from an early age to entrepreneurial thinking, including acceptance of risk, failure and uncertainty."³⁸

³⁷ Public Policy Forum, "Employment Challenges for Youth in a Changing Economy," Public Policy Forum,

³⁸ Creig Lamb and Sarah Doyle, "Future-proof: Preparing young Canadians for the future of work," *The Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship*,

3. Support for gap-bridging services.

Quebec's employment service organizations are working to close gaps in understanding, by informing both employers and employees on organizational culture and other job market realities.

- As connectors, they provide youth with meaningful first work experiences in their fields and supply employers with skilled young workers;
- As educators and trainers, they offer youth skills and strategies for navigating the job market;
- As counsellors and coaches provide encouraging alternatives (employment programs, part-time or temporary work, peer support) to youth who face difficulties breaking into their particular sector.

By their nature, employment services have a wide ranging view of the labour market. Their collaboration with other sectors on complementary community initiatives is key to overcoming skills mismatches and labour shortages.

MENTAL HEALTH AND EMPLOYMENT

Youth who experience difficulties integrating into the labour force can be saddled with serious repercussions. Socio-emotional ‘scarring’ and related symptoms of poor mental health—social isolation, low self-esteem and lessened ability to cope with stress—can lead to a potentially dangerous cycle of unemployment.³⁹ It was in response to many young job seekers presenting similar signs of distress that YES launched its peer-to-peer support groups⁴⁰ for unemployed and underemployed youth displaying anxiety, psychological distress and situational depression linked to joblessness.⁴¹

As the age group most likely to experience mental health issues,⁴² youth require holistic services to reinforce their skills and knowledge of resources and to prevent them from excessive stress. Yet youth in the English-speaking community have been falling through the cracks—the challenges of penetrating the job market compounded by a lack of accessible English-language mental health supports.⁴³

Recommendation:

Increase resources for community organizations providing critical preventative and reintegration services.

1. Mental health training for youth service organizations.

The Forum established mental health as a youth issue and identified the undeniable link between mental illness and unemployment. It was widely recognised that youth need better frontline preventative mental health services and supports to overcome social isolation while they navigate the tough transition to finding employment.

The request for more preventative measures is consistent with YES’ observations of high levels of psychological stress among unemployed English-speaking youth job seekers. English-language community organizations, including employment services, should be better resourced (through staff training) to be able to identify signs of mental illness. This will increase their capability to route clients to appropriate supports: to therapeutic interventions such as YES’ Focus Groups, or to clinical healthcare providers in the community.

2. Invest in initiatives promoting individual agency.

Young English-speakers and Allophones often need to bring family or friends with them to translate as they access provincial government services, limiting their agency (or their capacity to act independently). Such imposed limitations feed directly into cycles of vulnerability and dependence on the ‘system’.

In light of current pressures on the healthcare system (aging population), we need more initiatives that give individuals the freedom to make healthy choices for themselves. For example, an active offer of service indicates to non-Francophones that they are valued members of society with equal rights and opportunities. Enhancing active offer for young job seekers might take the form of

39 Joanne Pocock, “*Building Youth Resiliency and Community Vitality within Montreal’s English Language Population*,”

40 Supported by a psychotherapist and career counsellor, the peer-led groups offer a space for young job seekers who are overwhelmed. The groups are known as ‘Focus Groups’ rather than ‘Support Groups’ to provide a normalizing context.

41 A condition related to stressful life events, situational depression can generate behavioural symptoms that resemble those of clinical depression.

42 Youth aged 15-24 are the most likely to experience mental illness (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health).

43 André Forget, “Mental health care a challenge for Quebec’s Anglos,” *Anglican Journal*,

liaison agents from both the healthcare system and employment services who are mandated to work together to address the obstacles preventing individuals from accessing social services.

3. Vulnerable groups require more follow up.

Vulnerable populations in Quebec's English-speaking community include Aboriginal youth, visible minority youth, LGBTQ+ youth, homeless youth, youth in poverty, youth in the Department of Youth Protection, and newcomer youth. These underrepresented groups are already at a greater risk of increased stress and isolation. They need more attention and early intervention so that mental health issues do not negatively impact their long term employability. Many have experienced traumas and require ongoing support to integrate socially and be stable, before they can hope to find and maintain satisfying jobs. More programs recognizing the critical importance of mental health care must be made available to those who are most at-risk.

Closing Remarks

“This is not just a youth problem or a blame-the-millennials phenomenon. Youth unemployment, underemployment and underutilization undermines their own ability, and Canada's, to plan for the future.”⁴⁴

-The Problem of Youth Unemployment

This report aims to sensitize the greater Quebec community to the employment issues confronting youth in Quebec's English-speaking community, while at the same time offering concrete ideas for progressing the situation through policy and curriculum development.

The identified Barriers to Employment and their corresponding recommendations and initiatives represent the collaborative wisdom and efforts of multiple sectors, and they are published here with the aim to influence further policy development, to inform educators and employers, and to guide service providers.

Such harmonized community initiatives will lead to a greater presence of viable career options for English-speaking youth—employment opportunities that are essential to youth retention and to preserving and strengthening the vitality of the English-speaking minority communities and to Quebec as a whole.

This document will be distributed in hard copy to forum participants and additional community stakeholders including employment service providers, educational institutions, employers, government, media, and community organizations. It is also available on YES' website at www.yesmontreal.ca.

⁴⁴ Craig Alexander and Matthew McKean, “The problem of youth unemployment: Predicting the changing future of work,” *The Globe and Mail*,

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APPENDIX A – Community Talks

In 2015, YES broadened the conversation about what it's like to navigate Quebec's job market, by providing a multimedia platform for over 500 hundred people from across the province.

Participants included both Official Language Minority Community (OLMC) youth and employers who hire English-speaking youth—in total, 535 people gave input on ESCQ employment issues.

Participants were encouraged to share their experiences through video booths. One video booth for recording feedback was installed in YES' downtown Montreal centre, and one travelling video booth was hosted in turn by eight partners in the Quebec regions. A total of 107 youth created videos via video booths or by online submission.

Surveys were conducted to gain additional insights: one English-language survey for youth, and one survey in both French and English for employers who hire English-speaking youth. Both were circulated to YES' province-wide network, which includes volunteers, businesses, existing and past clients, educational institutions, regional partners, and to Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) members representing 48 community organizations. A total of 428 youth and employers answered the surveys.

The following questions are a sample from video booth questions:

1. What is your ideal job? (Your answer could include one or more of the following: your ideal position, job duties, work environment, schedule, relationship with your manager, salary, etc.)
2. Tell us about your experience looking for work in Quebec (and please specify the town where you are located).
3. In your experience, what skills are employers looking for these days in employees?

In addition to documenting and sharing the voices of young people across Quebec through a series of 25 short clips that were filmed in our video booths, YES interviewed several employers, employment experts and youth and developed a 17-minute documentary which highlights the employment experiences of youth in Quebec and gives a sense of what employment services providers and companies are seeing.

'Youth Voices: Community Talks Employment,' had its public debut on March 31st 2016 at the Cineplex Scotiabank Theatre. The screening was accompanied by a panel discussion that facilitated inter-sectorial dialogue amongst the panel and audience members, which were comprised of government representatives, employers, unemployed and underemployed youth, community/non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and local media. The documentary is available to view online at: <http://bit.ly/yesyouthvoices>.

Some feedback from the video snippets, as well as some key survey findings are worth noting:

- 79% of youth respondents considered leaving Quebec for employment.
- 69% of youth respondents considered themselves to be underemployed.



Youth Interviewee, Youth Voices documentary:

"I had thought that if I had done well at school and if I had done all the "right internships" at all the right places then I was all set. Couldn't be further from the truth. I started off studying a major in Biology with a minor in Chemistry and then I switched to Economics. Today I'm doing IT recruiting. When I first graduated it took me about 6 months to find a job."

Employer interviewee, Youth Voices documentary:

"This ongoing challenge that someone goes to university and what they learned in university doesn't necessarily prepare them for the workforce, is a constant, constant one we hear..."

APPENDIX B – Regional Needs Assessment

The 'Employment in the Quebec Regions: Needs Assessment Study' was released in 2017 by YES, and was conducted in partnership with community organizations located in the following seven Quebec regions: Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Capitale-Nationale, Chaudière-Appalaches, Estrie, Montérégie, Côte-Nord and Abitibi-Témiscamingue. The objective of the report is to inform the development of timely, evidence-based English-language employment services and career supports in the regions,⁴⁵ and to increase awareness of English-language employment services and supports available to job seekers in the regions.

Phase one of the study examined the varying socioeconomic conditions of the different regions, and documented the relative conditions for economic growth and prosperity for English-speaking youth compared to French-speaking youth. A general trend was shown, that "English-speakers are worse-off socioeconomically than their French-speaking counterparts, and these differences are amplified in the regions."⁴⁶

Phase two of the study included inventorying nearly 300 local job search and employment-related services (particularly English-language ones), as well as collecting secondary data on access to/satisfaction with English-language employment services. The data showed that English-speakers in the regions suffer from both very limited access to employment service providers and a high level of dissatisfaction with the available services.⁴⁷

The third phase of the study provided information on the needs of English-speaking job seekers in the regions through two surveys: Community Talks Youth Employment (2015/16) and the Regional Employment Services Survey (2016/17). Survey data showed that "97% of regional youth job seekers consider youth unemployment to be an issue of concern for the Quebec economy, 86% of job seekers surveyed found it difficult to find a job in their specific field, and 96% found it difficult to find a job in their specific region."⁴⁸

Key Findings from the Regions

- The overall unemployment rate among Quebec's English-speaking youth is 13.7 percent, compared to 9.4 percent for French-speaking youth;
- In some areas, such as Côte-Nord, the unemployment rate is 32.2 percent for English-speakers, compared with 11.1 percent for French-speaking youth;
- Despite having higher levels of university education than the French-speaking majority, English-speaking Quebecers still have higher unemployment rates.⁴⁹

The top barriers to employment (as identified in the Community Talks Youth Employment survey) are provided here, followed by nine recommendations for community organizations, educational institutions and government agencies serving English-speaking job seekers in the Quebec regions. The recommendations take the form of actionable items for addressing the higher youth unemployment rates faced by English-speakers in the Quebec regions.

Regional Key Barriers

1. **Language** – I am not fluent in one or both official languages (English/French).
(47% of respondents)

45 Ultimately leading to increased economic opportunities and stability for English-speaking youth (aged 16-35) in Québec.

46 YES, "Employment in the Québec Regions: Needs Assessment Study," (report presented to Canadian Heritage, 2017), 3.

7 YES, "Employment in the Québec Regions," 3.

48 YES, "Employment in the Québec Regions," 3-4.

9 Ibid.

2. **Competition** – I'm competing with lots of people for jobs.
(40% of respondents)
3. **Economy** – There are not a lot of jobs available out there.
(37% of respondents)
4. **Job Market** – Available jobs do not provide stable employment (only contract work or part-time or seasonal work is available).
(27% of respondents)
5. **Experience** – I cannot get experience in the field that I am interested in/trained in.
(23% of respondents)

Regional Recommendations

- Increase access to on-line job search programs and services for the English-speaking community living in the regions of Quebec.
- Develop trainings and/or workshops for entering or re-entering the labour market and/or career change (professional reorientation). These were the top two areas of support needed as identified by survey respondents.
- Ensure that English-speaking job seekers are up-to-date in computer/software use (100% of Community Talks Youth Employment Survey respondents saw this as important for today's job market).
- Offer more opportunities for paid internships so English-speakers can gain first-time work experience.
- Offer free or low-cost French-language training to English-speaking job seekers in the Quebec regions. Language was the #1 barrier to employment in the Community Talks Survey.
- Increase awareness of English-language employment services in the regions of Quebec through new and existing networks, opportunities for discussion and word-of-mouth, marketing, social media and the Internet. Only 38% of survey respondents were aware of any English-language job search support services available in their region.
- Future research should provide a better understanding (at a provincial level) of the local employment needs and opportunities available to English-speakers living in the Quebec regions.
- Stronger links between educational institutions and the local business community should be developed to identify labour market gaps or trends to assist with career planning for youth.
- Employment and other training programs need to be developed that represent the unique needs and challenges for each community in Quebec.

The Employment in the Quebec Regions: Needs Assessment Study was developed with the help of Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA), Megantic Community Development Corporation (MCDCC), North Shore Community Alliance (NSCA), Townshippers' Association, Voice of English-speaking Quebec (VEQ), and Neighbours Regional Association of Rouyn-Noranda.

This research study was funded by Canadian Heritage's Development of Official Languages Communities Program, Cooperation with the Community Sector.

APPENDIX C – Steering Committee

To guarantee the inclusion of a diverse set of youth employment-related perspectives, the Youth Forum Steering Committee was made up of the following representatives of unemployed and underemployed youth, employers, community organizations, regional partners and educational institutions:

Cathy Brown

Executive Director, Committee for Anglophone Social Action (CASA)

Jennifer Cooke

Coordonnatrice au développement des talents, ROCAJQ

Pino Di Ioia

Co-Founder, moozoo juices/ CEO, BeaverTails Pastry

Meghan Drennan

Mentorship Coordinator/Administrative Assistant, YES Montreal

Debbie Horrocks

Project Director, Community Learning Centre (CLC) Initiative

Rachel Hunting

Executive Director, Townshippers' Association

Annalise Iten

Job Search Program Director, YES Montreal

Christopher Lockhart

Executive Director at Tyndale St-Georges

Tiffany Maliaric-Buchanan

Youth Representative, YES Client

Laura Mitchell

Director, Student Success Centre, Concordia University

Pirooz Moayeri

Youth Representative, YES Client

Kasia Tomasinska

Skills Link Program Manager, YES Montreal

APPENDIX D – Forum Agenda

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 8:15 | Registration and Continental Breakfast |
| 9:15 | Words of Welcome |
| 9:30 | <p>Youth Voices: Community Talks Documentary</p> <p>The Community Talks Employment Project was the precursor to the 2017 Youth Forum: Unemployment its Everyone's Issue. Community Talks documented the voices of young people around Quebec who were struggling with unemployment. Since everyone experiences the path to employment differently, we wanted to know first-hand how youth feel about the current job market in Quebec.</p> |
| 10:00 | <p>Keynote: Dr. Jack Jedwab</p> <p>The Landscape of Youth Employment in Quebec</p> |
| 10:45 | Coffee Break |
| 11:00 | <p>Panel of Experts: Moderated by James Hughes</p> <p>Our Panel of Experts include: Jennifer Cooke, Hans Heisinger, Rachel Hunting, Annalise Iten, Kiraz Johannsen, Amanda Keller, Malcolm Lewis Richmond, Alison Pearce, Andrea Taylor.</p> |
| 12:30 | Lunch |
| 1:30 | <p>Thematic Breakout Groups /</p> <p>Creation of Policy Recommendations</p> |
| 3:15 | Coffee Break |
| 3:30 | Breakout Group Findings and Recommendations |
| 4:30 | Closing Remarks |

APPENDIX E – Keynote Presentation

The Forum's keynote address was given by Dr. Jack Jedwab, President of the Association for Canadian Studies. His presentation, 'Barriers and Opportunities for Youth (UN) Employment, it's Everyone's issue' provided an overview of the current and future economic barriers and opportunities for Quebec's English-speaking youth.

Sharing highlights from the 2016 census, Dr. Jedwab pointed out Quebec's shrinking number of youth aged 15-24, and acknowledged the following related economic challenges: renewal of the labour force, knowledge transfer, job retention, continuing education and labour productivity.

In addition to barriers to get *into* a job, Quebec youth also struggle with barriers once they are in the workplace.⁵⁰ First and foremost young English-speaking workers face a language barrier (in that they do not speak French). Other barriers included favouritism; insufficient level of schooling and/or value of specific degree in job market; no advancement opportunities in the workplace/small size of the company; one's family situation; gender discrimination; lack of experience; and finally, lack of seniority.

Inasmuch as he demonstrated the steep obstacles confronting ESCQ youth, Dr. Jedwab also provided proven strategies for unemployed and underemployed youth to improve their chances of success in finding and sustaining work.

He referred to the benefits of exposure through mentorship and networking (both in the job market and the workplace) as a way of proactively identifying and improving important technical and soft skills such as: teamwork, adaptability, verbal and non-verbal communication, organizational skills, confidence, social codes, navigating corporate culture and sector expectations, as well as mental health and stress management.

50 'Barriers and Opportunities for Youth (UN) Employment, it's Everyone's issue' Keynote Presentation prepared by the Association of Canadian Studies, 2017.

APPENDIX F – Expert Panel

Too often community organizations work in isolated ‘silos’ without knowledge of what other groups are doing or the issues they are facing in their efforts to improve economic integration and retention for the ESCQ. By including a wealth of perspectives from those engaged with the issues, the Youth Forum panel facilitated dialogue, knowledge sharing and exchanging of best practices in English-language employment services for youth in Quebec.

Panel Moderator - James Hughes Senior Fellow, McConnell Foundation

Jennifer Cooke

Talent Development Coordinator, Regroupement des organismes communautaires autonomes jeunesse du Quebec

Hans Heisinger

Executive Director, Carrefour jeunesse-emploi Notre-Dame-de-Grâce

Rachel Hunting

Executive Director, Townshippers’ Association

Annalise Iten

Director of Job Search, YES Montreal

Kiraz Johannsen

Psychotherapist, Vanier College

Amanda Keller

Founder, C.A.R.E. Jeunesse/Case Manager Agence Ometz

Malcolm Lewis-Richmond

President, Youth 4 Youth Quebec

Alison Pearce

Human Resources Coordinator, Lufa Farms

Andrea Taylor

Coordinator of Next Generation Skills, Concordia University



“

Anglophone youth, and members of many cultural communities, are negatively branded—often just by their name. It is a huge hurdle to overcome, especially for regional youth who have much less opportunity.

”

APPENDIX G – Breakout Sessions

Upon arriving at the forum, participants (including presenters) identified three barriers to employment that they were interested in discussing at a roundtable session. They were assigned to Breakout Session tables according to their preference, allowing them to contribute their professional and personal experience to the discussion and generation of ideas.

The tables were assigned the objective of reviewing and clarifying one issue that had been identified by the Steering Committee as a significant barrier to youth employment in Quebec; for example, Barriers for Underrepresented Populations. With a focus on the Anglophone and Allophone community, each table was tasked, ultimately, with creating one or more policy recommendations in response to the given barrier.

Guidelines included the following steps:

1. Identify and clarify the assigned topic (15 minutes)
 - How accurate are these statements
 - Are there any nuances, clarifications or additions needed?
2. Check relevant background and context (15 minutes)
 - Identify the groups most affected by this barrier?
 - Is the barrier circumstantial, situational or institutional?
 - Does this barrier affect all youth the same way?
 - Who are the key players (individuals, organizations, groups) who may be able to influence this situation and create significant change?
3. Identify best practices (15 minutes)
 - What methods or approaches are you seeing / experiencing in the field that are effective?
 - How can these best practices be built on?
 - Where are the relevant players and/ or resources located?
4. Identify alternatives/additional solutions (15 minutes)
 - What additional or alternative approaches might be effective in helping youth overcome this barrier?
5. Form your policy recommendation (30 minutes)
 - In 5 to 10 sentences – what is the policy change/recommendation that your table would like to make to help empower youth to overcome this barrier?

The table discussions, facilitated by YES staff, were especially productive because of the participation of representatives from across multiple sectors, who were able to contribute their unique perspectives from ‘on the ground’. The tables’ ideas, consensus, and recommendations were captured by scribes and used to inform this report.

APPENDIX H – Regional Participation

As YES demonstrated in its 2017 needs assessment study, the regions of Quebec have their own distinct socioeconomic profiles; they also have particular concerns regarding employment and services, where young English-speaking job seekers are concerned. It was therefore essential that YES' Youth Unemployment Forum engage active participation on behalf of the regions.

Regional perspectives were contributed by participants of the Steering Committee and Expert Panel, as well as by attendees. After the conference, in the preparation of its official recommendations, YES followed up with partners in the region, sharing video footage of the conference (including the Keynote and Expert Panel presentations) along with a survey intended to gauge regional priorities and perspectives on the issues presented at the forum. The survey, which also provided space for long form responses, included the following six questions:

Youth Forum Regional Survey Questions

1. Please indicate if you are a youth or specify the type of organization or institution you work in.
2. What region are you located in?
3. Of the topics listed, please choose the top (3) that you feel most impact youth in your regions.
4. What best practices are you seeing in your region that are most effective in helping English-speaking youth overcome these barriers?
5. What gaps are you seeing in your region impacting English-speaking youth?
6. For each barrier, please provide 5 to 10 sentences on recommendations or changes to policy that will help English-speaking youth in your region overcome these barriers?

Respondents were primarily in the community/non-profit or education field, and came primarily from Estrie and Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine regions. Collectively, they identified the following issues as the ones most impacting youth in the regions:

- Barriers Affecting Underrepresented Populations
- Education: Opportunities, or a lack thereof, for practical experience while studying
- Education: Preparing Post-Secondary Students to Enter the Workforce
- Skills Gap: Language
- Skills Gap: Soft Skills

Respondents' long form responses to questions #4, #5 and #6 were carefully considered in the establishment of our recommendations.

APPENDIX I – Feedback

YES drew on all of the above-mentioned sources in developing this report, and more specifically, in drafting our recommendations for affecting concrete change in ESCQ Youth Unemployment.

An additional source of data was the participant evaluation forms that were collected at the completion of the Forum. Participants were asked: “What do you think were the 3 most important issues addressed at the forum?” The responses were grouped into thematic categories and they are presented here in the order of most-mentioned to least-mentioned:

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Language | 2. Barriers identified | 3. Mental health |
| 4. Mentors/experiential learning | 5. Newcomers | 6. Education |
| 7. Employers | 8. Soft skills | 9. Networking |

All of these issues, plus any additional issues that were mentioned (such as Regional/Rural; Inequity; Minorities/Marginalized youth) were included in the establishment of the recommendations in the following section.

APPENDIX J – Participant List

YES thanks the following representatives of community organizations, educational institutions, employers, government, media and regional partners for their participation at the Forum. Considerable effort has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the listings and information shown and we regret any errors or omissions.

Leslie (Laszlo) Acs

Executive Director
La Passerelle - Centre de
transition de carrière

Fernanda Amaro

Director of Administration and
Personnel
Youth Employment Services

Elizabeth Araujo

Business Coach
Youth Employment Services

Brian Armstrong

Youth Coordinator
Youth Employment Services

Jonathon Ayalon

Employment Specialist/
Business Development
Agence Ometz

AbdulRahman Bensalim

Youth Representative

Clarence Bayne

Director
Institute for Community
Entrepreneurship and
Development (ICED)

Nahka Bertrand

Youth Civic Engagement
Coordinator
National Association of
Friendship Centres

Julie Blais

Program Coordinator
Canadian Council on
Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW)

Catherine Brisindi

Director of Marketing
Youth Employment Services

Cathy Brown

Executive Director
Committee for Anglophone
Social Action (CASA)

Jessica Brown

Youth Representative

Raymond Busbridge

Chief Mentor
Youth Employment Services

Cristina Casola

Program Coordinator
Agence Ometz

Mario Clarke

Entrepreneurship Program
Director
Youth Employment Services

Linda Collard

Career Coach and Facilitator
La Passerelle - Centre de
transition de carrière

Scott Conrod

Advisory Council Member
Youth Employment Services

Jennifer Cooke

Talent Development Coordinator
Regroupement des organismes
communautaires autonomes
jeunesse du Québec (ROCAJQ)

David Cox

News Reporter
Metro TC Media

Alrick Crawford

Employment Coordinator
Tyndale St-Georges Community
Centre

Buse Dalyanoglu

Senior Employee Relations
Volt Workforce Solutions

Christopher De Marco

Youth Representative

Pino Di Ioia

Co-Founder, moozoo juices/
CEO, BeaverTails Pastry

Sterling Downey

City Councillor
Ville de Montréal

Erin Draper

Career Counsellor
Youth Employment Services

Meghan Drennan

Mentorship Coordinator
Youth Employment Services

Anne Dupont-Huot

Youth Worker
CJE NDG

Ellen Englert

Career Counsellor
Youth Employment Services

Ekaterina Fatkulova

Accueil & youth programming
Carrefour jeunesse emploi

William Floch

Assistant Secretary
Secrétariat aux relations avec
les Québécois d'expression
anglaise

Lise L. Gagné

Executive Director
AIM CROIT
International Association of
Machinists - Centre for
Administering Rehabilitation and
Employment Services

Fatiha Gatre Guemiri

Executive Director
REISA (The East Island Network
for English Language Service)

Valerie Girard

Advisor
Canadian Heritage

Maria-Gracia Girardi

Head of Mentoring and Peer-
Helper Services
YMCA Montreal

Hans Heisinger
Executive Director
CJE NDG

Nina Hermes
Case Manager/Employment
Specialist
Agence Ometz

Sherry Hollinger
Financial Officer
Youth Employment Services

Debbie Horrocks
Project Director
CLC Initiative at Leading English
Education and Resource
Network (LEARN)

Kurt Houghton
Business Coach
Youth Employment Services

James Hughes
Executive Lead, Government
and Partner Relations
The J.W. McConnell Family
Foundation

Rachel Hunting
Executive Director
Townshippers' Association

Annalise Iten
Director of Job Search
Youth Employment Services

Fred Jansen
Fundraising Manager
Youth Employment Services

Jack Jedwab
President
Association for Canadian
Studies (ACS)

Kiraz Johannsen
Psychotherapist
Vanier College

David Johnston
Commissioner's Representative
Office of the Commissioner of
Official Languages

Amanda Keller
Founder, C.A.R.E. Jeunesse
Case Manager, Agence Ometz

Ruchy Khurana
Business Coach
Youth Employment Services

Nina Kim
Project Manager
Community Economic
Development and Employability
Corporation (CEDEC)

Eva Koumaglo
Youth Representative

Davina Kuang
Employment Counsellor
L'ÉTAPE

Melanie Lallouz
Employment Specialist
Agence Ometz

Natalie Lang
Employment Counsellor
Agence Ometz

Daniel Légaré
Marketing Coordinator
Youth Employment Services

Margo Legault
Executive Director
Literacy Québec

Malcolm Lewis-Richmond
President, Y4Y Quebec
Youth Representative

Lois Liverman
Director Employment and
Business
Agence Ometz

Christopher Lockhart
Executive Director
Tyndale St-Georges Community
Centre

Claudia Maiolo
Coordinator
REISA

Tiffany Malinaric-Buchanan
Youth Representative

Doaa Mansour
Project Coordinator
Advancing Women in STEM
Youth Employment Services

Angie Marquis
Youth Programs Coordinator/
Associate Director
Teatohnhi'saktha

Wesley McCoy
Events and Special Projects
Coordinator
Youth Employment Services

Karen MacDonald
News Director
Global News Montreal

Dave McKenzie
Founder and Coordinator
Community Service Initiative at
John Molson School of Business
Concordia University

Chelsea McVetty
Employment Officer/
Student Advocate
Vanier College

Bliss Meus
HR Consultant
Public Service Commission of
Canada

Laura Mitchell
Director, Student Success
Centre
Concordia University

Pirooz Moayeri
Youth Representative

Lucie Morillon
Bilingual Content &
Communications Coordinator
Canadian Education and
Research Institute for
Counselling (CERIC)

Olivia Morin
Guidance Counsellor
Vanier College

Ina Muntean-Bors
Youth Representative

Joyce Myers
Employment Counsellor
Côte-des-Neiges Job Search
Centre

Nam Nguyen
Cast Member, Cineplex
Entertainment
Youth Representative

Jamie Nicholls
Mayor
Town of Hudson

Lorraine O'Donnell

Coordinator-Researcher
Quebec English-Speaking
Community Research Network
(QUESCREN)

Valerie Ouellet

Employment Counsellor
AIM CROIT

Arash Parvaneh

Operation Manager,
Teleperformance
Youth Representative

Alison Pearce

Human Resource Coordinator
Lufa Farms

Dominique Pirola

Talent Advisor
SAP

Jonathan Platt

Intern
CJE NDG

Austin Rikely-Krindle

Councilor
Town of Hudson

Aurelia Roman

Research Evaluation Consultant
LEARN

Andre Rousseau

General Manager
Cible Retour à l'Emploi

Andrea Satin

Counsellor - Work Study
Program
Vanier College

Jonathon Seifert

Treasurer, Y4Y Quebec
Youth Representative

Matthew Shaw

Career Counsellor
Youth Employment Services

Nerline Simon

Employment Counsellor
AIM CROIT

Mariana Stabillé

Administrative Assistant
Youth Employment Services

Samantha Star

Program Director
Literacy Unlimited

Kenny Streule

Associate Director
MainLine Theatre

Naj Sumar

Education and Engagement
Coordinator
Sustainable Concordia
Youth Representative

Murielle Swift

HR Advisor
Public Service Commission of
Canada

Kathleen Synotte

Employment Counsellor
AIM CROIT

Robert Taliano

Manager
Career and Planning Services
Coordinator

Andrea Taylor

Program Coordinator
Next Generation Skills
Concordia University

Robert Therriault

Business Coach
Youth Employment Service

Kasia Tomasinska

Skills Link Program Manager
Youth Employment Services

Lynn Travers

Secretary
Advisory Board on English
Education (ABEE)

Rossy Tshibangu

Employment Counsellor
AIM CROIT

Iris Unger

Executive Director
Youth Employment Services

Ruben Antonio Uran

Employment Counsellor
AIM CROIT

Jan Villaluz

Youth Representative

Graham Weeks

Guide
Le Train des Mots

Lynn Worrell

Youth Worker
CJE NDG

Marc Wrobel

Graphic Designer
Youth Employment Services

Cherine Zananiri

Vice President of the Board
Youth Employment Services



yesmontreal.ca

514-878-9788

666 Sherbrooke St. West, Suite 700
Montreal, Quebec H3A 1E7

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