

BUILD BACK BETTER:

Expanding Green Jobs for Youth Post-Pandemic



Canadian Council for Youth Prosperity
Conseil Canadien pour la Réussite des Jeunes



May 2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all the people who took the time to speak with me about this research, such as Nate Gerber, Brennan Strandberg-Salmon, and Chris White (among countless others), as well as interview participants Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood, Meghan Hach, Sarah Casorso, Dawn Carr, Steve S.J. Lee, Caroline Cloutier, and Jessica Kakhevicius. I'm extremely grateful for the mentorship and support I received from Natalie Brown, Victoria Dvorsky, and Milan Kona-Mancini, who all went above and beyond to help me formulate my research topic, find interview participants, network with environmental professionals, and brainstorm ways to maximize the impact of this report. I would like to acknowledge the whole CCYP team, but especially Lina Pulido and Chris Duff for providing me with the opportunity to conduct this research, and produce an advocacy report on a subject so close to my heart. Lastly, I would like to thank my parents Lynn Skotnitsky and Jaime Guzman for their unwavering support during this pandemic, and their continued encouragement of my environmental career. I'm only able to speak on these issues because of your belief in me and the causes I care about.

A word from **Lina Pulido, Project Officer, the CCYP Fellowship Program**

The intention of the fellowship program was to provide a cohort of young people with a platform to conduct research, connect with, and advocate within the spaces that they were already operating in. This approach led us to four fantastic people, each of whom had a clear intention to make change. This being the first cohort of our Fellowship Program, was an excellent opportunity to learn from the Fellows. I have had the privilege of being with them (virtually) throughout the entire process beginning November 2020. I have seen them create their research plans, execute their focus groups, interview and connect with experts in their field, and provide insight into the spaces they move in, that I truly believe is needed.

This would not have been possible without the help and support of our internal CCYP team as well as the partners that we have had, and have made along the way. I want to thank Howard Tam and Nate Gerber from Think Fresh group for their support in creating a well-rounded approach to advocacy, and the people that spoke and presented on a variety of topics including Scott Leon from the Wellesley Institute, Mariam Guled from Eva's Initiatives for Homeless Youth, Nika Lennox from Future Majority, and Amanda Noble from Covenant House. I hope everyone reading these reports comes away aware, inspired, and knowing that these young people are making noise and actively working to push for the change they want to see.

Sponsors & Funders



RBC Future Launch



Canadian Council for Youth Prosperity
Conseil Canadien pour la Réussite des Jeunes

The Canadian Council for Youth Prosperity is a non-profit organization supporting youth workforce development in Canada. We are a cross-sector, collaborative table of highly-skilled community and corporate leaders improving the sector through engagement, coordinated activities, research, and advocacy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	2
About the CCYP Fellowship Program	2
About the Author	4
Introduction	5
Background	8
• COVID-19's Impact on Youth	8
• What Defines a Green Job?	9
• Why Green Jobs for Youth?	10
• Canada's COVID-19 Response	12
• Canada's Environmental Employment Programs for Youth	12
Interview and Survey Methodology	14
Theme 1: Successes and Weaknesses of the Federally Funded Green Job Programs for Youth	16
Theme 2: Equity Concerns in the Green Sector	22
Theme 3: Youth Engagement	26
Conclusion	30
Recommendations for Government	31
Calls to Action	31
References	32
Appendices	35
• Appendix 1: Interview Questions	35
• Appendix 2: Survey Questions	36
• Appendix 3: Planning and Fundings Challenges	36



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sabrina Guzman Skotnitsky is a twenty three year old climate justice and youth empowerment advocate residing in Vancouver, BC on the unceded Coast Salish territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh peoples. As a bisexual woman with mixed Mexican and European descent, intersectionality is an important focus in her work. She is a researcher and artist, and has been active in environmental and social justice movements since she was fourteen years old. Sabrina is passionate about a green recovery from COVID-19 and a just transition to a low-carbon economy for Canada. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Honours in International Development Studies with a Minor in Political Science from Dalhousie University.



PHOTO CREDIT: DIVYA KAUR



INTRODUCTION

It is May 2020, two months into the global pandemic and I have just graduated (virtually) from my undergraduate degree at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia on unceded Mi'kmaq territory. I have no convocation ceremony to look forward to, no job opportunities lined up; my family's visit from Vancouver has been cancelled, and I'm confined to my one bedroom apartment in Halifax as nearly the whole country is in lockdown. I just finished my one year position as Director of the **Dalhousie Student Union Sustainability Office (DSUSO)** and eight intense months writing my honours thesis about the climate justice movement in Mi'kma'ki. It all felt so anti-climatic, and I was unclear what the longer term impact all my hard work would have, if any. All the activism I had been participating in was put on pause as public gatherings were banned and everyone was coping with their new day-to-day realities. Despite applying to what felt like hundreds of positions, I remained unemployed and anxious for three months, borrowing money to pay rent. Fortunately I ended up landing two jobs around the same time, one of which was a **Canada Summer Job (CSJ)** with the **Nova Scotia Environmental Network (NSEN)**. Working full time at minimum wage, (at that time NS had the

lowest minimum wage in Canada) I was relieved to at least be working, and doing something that I was passionate about. Unfortunately the CSJ funding was only for two months, and although NSEN wanted to keep me on they didn't have the funding without government assistance. They asked me to look into the various federally funded green job programs for youth, to see if I was eligible for any of them, and if they could use the wage subsidies to rehire me. As a person with a BA, I immediately noticed how STEM skill requirements (science, technology, engineering and math) dominated these programs, and for a few different reasons we could not use any of the funding streams to keep me working for NSEN.

I first heard about the **Canadian Council for Youth Prosperity (CCYP)** about a month later. Opening up the application for their Fellowship Program, one of the questions stood out to me: **What type of change are you looking to create in the youth workforce development ecosystem?** Immediately I reflect on my lived experience as a social sciences graduate navigating the environmental field, recalling the federally funded green job programs for youth. I think about how climate change seems to have taken a backseat to healthcare and

the economy as political priorities during this pandemic. My friends and peers come to mind, all of us young people struggling to make ends meet, and launch our careers during this health crisis mounted on top of the racial justice crisis mounted on top of the climate crisis. What if I could do something about all these issues which seem to be hitting youth like me all at the same time?

I share my story with you to help you understand how important green jobs for youth are, especially right now. For the purpose of this report, I use the Canadian definition of youth, people aged 15 – 30, while recognizing that this definition is somewhat arbitrary and many people who fall outside those ages share common struggles and are in similar phases of their life. It is also important to acknowledge that while we share many common life experiences and challenges, youth are not monolithic. There is a great diversity of youth who call Canada home, and they face unique barriers and have different opportunities depending on a number of socioeconomic factors, which I elaborate on throughout this report. That being said, there are many commonalities among young people that I think are crucial to highlight. Many youth

right now feel hopeless about their futures; they are inheriting a climate crisis and now likely an economic recession due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We are passionate but scared, and we need support from the government and other facets of society now more than ever.

Canada needs to expand its support of the green sector, including a broader practical definition of green jobs, and invest in youth employment programs which fund non-STEM related positions in environmental organizations. These are jobs which are also essential for environmental organizations to accomplish their missions, such as fundraising, communications, research, membership, policy analysis, management etc. I personally have worked for numerous environmental nonprofits doing the above roles which supported work such as conservation, food security, sustainable transportation, and climate action. I learned that it is not just the biologists, engineers, and chemists that make a difference; it's also everyone working behind the scenes to spread awareness, raise money, get petition signatures, pass by-laws, and get community buy-in on environmental projects. If the federal government continues to overly focus on funding



Youth have been disproportionately hit by the COVID-19 crisis and we will be the most hit by climate change impacts in the future.

The following report consists of three main components: a literature review to provide important background information, expert interviews, and a youth survey.



clean-technology and STEM positions, they will exclude many youth from opportunities to have green jobs in these other areas that would aid our economic and ecological recovery.

This report includes an assessment of the existing federally-funded environmental employment programs for youth, but also synthesizes youth perspectives about green jobs more generally, gauging barriers, potential supports, and how accessible youth perceive the environmental field. There is a strong equity focus, and I weave in commentary on patterns of elitism and privilege in the environmental field, and how government green job programs for young people may be able to lower barriers to entry for marginalized youth. In the interviews I speak to representatives from federal departments and agencies, and non-profit organizations with environmental or social justice aims. This rich qualitative data is then synthesized with the quantitative and qualitative data I received from the 263 youth across Canada who responded to my Green Jobs survey.

I conclude the report with areas of future research, recommendations for government, and calls to action for you, the reader. As illustrated in the opening story I shared with you, this report is not only informed by the literature, interviews and survey data but also by my personal lived experiences, and those of many of my friends and fellow young people.

A central underlying principle of this research is that youth are the experts on our own lives.

No matter the education they have received or specific life experiences they have had, the input youth have given to this report is treated with the same merit as the peer-reviewed scholarly sources. As I will restate throughout this report, youth have been disproportionately hit by the COVID-19 crisis and we will be the most hit by climate change impacts in the future. **We have the most at stake, but also have the potential to gain the most from environmental employment policies and actions taken by the government now.** Thank you in advance for coming on this journey with me, and supporting youth in our call to **build back better.**

BACKGROUND

COVID-19 Impacts on Youth



It's important to begin by highlighting how the closures, restrictions and other economic implications of COVID-19 have disproportionately hit young people in order to understand why youth are having more trouble recovering than other segments of the population. Since 1976, Canada's youth unemployment rate has consistently averaged around 14%; however at the height of the first wave of the pandemic in May 2020 it reached an all time high of 29% (Trading Economics, 2020). **We also cannot ignore that the inequality in COVID-19 impacts is coded by race and socioeconomic status (Opportunity For All Youth 2021, 5).** Within the category of youth, marginalized communities were hit even harder, such as Indigenous, racialized, disabled and rural young people who typically face greater barriers to employment. In August 2020, the unemployment rate for youth not in school who identified as a visible minority was 28%, compared to 16% for non-visible minority youth (Statistics Canada, 2020). As this statistic indicates, many youth in Canada lost their jobs, but many are also not in school: what Statistics Canada refers to as the "NEET rate": the percentage of youth who are Not in Employment, Education or Training. Before the pandemic the NEET rate for young Canadians (15 - 29) was at 12% and by April 2020, it had reached 24%, the highest rate measured in the past 20 years (Statistics Canada, 2020).

Accommodation and food, retail trade and information, and culture and recreation are the three largest sectors employing youth in Canada (CCYP, 2020, 10). That includes not only bars, restaurants and hotels, but also food delivery and grocery stores, many of which we now consider essential businesses. These three are arguably the most-people facing and at-risk sectors, and consequently those hardest hit by COVID-19 restrictions. If you look at the accommodation and food services industry alone, youth make up 53% of all employees (CCYP, 2020, 2). By March 2020 youth employment in that industry took a staggering drop down 40% compared

to pre-pandemic levels (CCYP, 2020, 2). As I wrote in an article for the Nova Scotia Advocate, many people forget that not all youth have family support and the privilege of staying home during the pandemic. Many young people need to work to support themselves, even if that means in low-paying positions with high COVID-19 exposure risk. So while many youth were laid off during the pandemic, they still remain over-represented in high contact roles such as grocery store cashiers, delivery application couriers, and Uber drivers, among others.

What Defines a Green Job?

If you were to do a quick Google search asking the question “what is a green job?”, you would find hundreds of potential definitions, many of which contradict each other. I began my research trying to nail down one, and in the process discovered just how varied the environmental field is, and how this definition is ever-evolving. Throughout this entire research process, the most recurring theme was in relation to the nature of green jobs, both the lack of standard definitions and the limited scope of the most commonly used definition which overly relies on STEM. I asked all the interview participants and the survey respondents to define green or low-carbon work in their own words and as you might suspect, their answers also diverged. The majority of youth survey responses reflected the narrow, traditional definition of green jobs, those relating to environmental impacts, carbon footprints, carbon emission reduction, pollution reduction, energy/resource efficiency and STEM. Interview participant Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood, of the **Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA)**, however wants us to focus less on if the work reduces carbon emissions, and more on if the job is compatible with a low carbon economy and society.

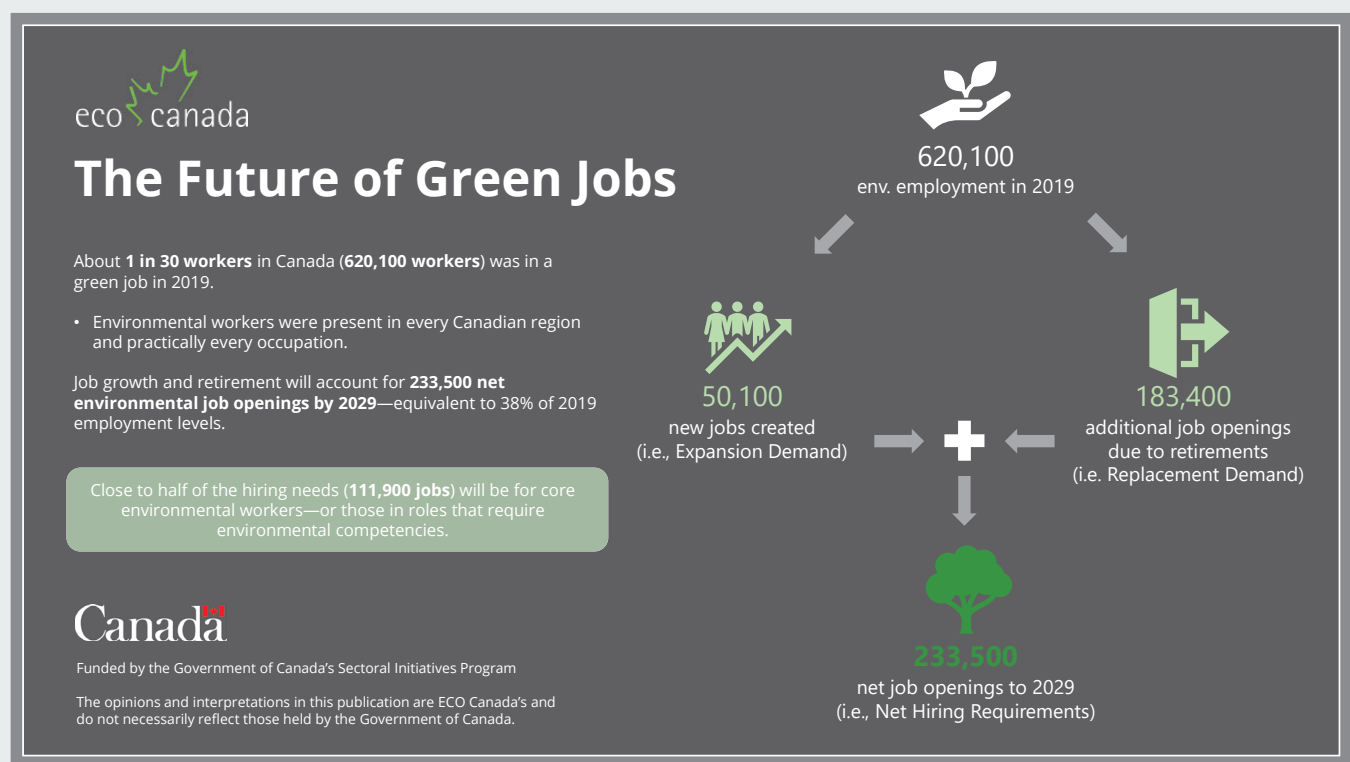
As youth survey respondents put it, green jobs are those “that would/could exist in a perfectly sustainable society”, and “green jobs are careers that focus on the creation of a more sustainable and just future for all”. In their view this includes not only environmental scientists, engineers and clean energy specialists, but progressive politicians, urban planners, and community organizers. This brings me to my argument that green jobs also include non-STEM positions within environmental organizations which contribute to making the more direct ecological benefits possible. The environmental workforce in fact includes all those “directly employed within the environmental goods and services sector, regardless of occupation, and those requiring specialized environmental competencies (or core workers), regardless of industry employer” (ECO Canada, 2020, 10). Therefore green jobs include both jobs which directly and **indirectly** help the environment.

Green jobs are careers that focus on the creation of a more sustainable and just future for all.



Why Green Jobs for Youth?

You may ask, why prioritize green jobs for youth when any job is better than none in this time of high youth unemployment? I argue that by incorporating environmental and employment goals we can effectively address multiple challenges at once. Since April 2020, many civil society organizations have been calling for a green and just recovery from COVID-19 that prioritizes climate action as well as economic recovery. Their call has been backed up by numerous reports which show how “green recovery measures are proven to create jobs and spur economic growth, which will contribute to the creation of a low-carbon economy where workers and communities can thrive” (Corkal, Gabs and Cosbey, 2020, iii). Social justice aims can also be met with these policies, given they address the needs of those most hard hit by the pandemic, including youth, migrants, women and BIPOC communities (Just Recovery For All, 2020). We actually stand to lose more than we stand to gain by not incorporating these considerations into recovery policy, as “environmentally targeted stimulus can create as many jobs and as much growth as neutral or environmentally harmful measures” (Corkal, Gabs and Cosbey, 2020, 2). This is an opportunity to address equity, climate, and youth unemployment issues simultaneously.




The Environmental Career Organization of Canada (ECO Canada)’s Labour Market Outlook report estimates that 30% of the current environmental workforce is expected to retire by 2030. This translates into 183,400 jobs (see below – December 2020).

Nearly 250,000 Canadians were consulted in the creation of the most recent Federal Sustainable Development Strategy (FSDS) for 2019 – 2022. Two themes in their feedback resonate with this research: 1) Canadians are “calling for innovative solutions, green jobs, and a clear transition plan” and 2) “Canadians need support and training to fully participate in and benefit from the opportunities presented by the green economy” (ECCC, 2019, 2–3). Contrary to arguments that transitioning away from fossil fuels will cause massive job loss, “ultimately there will be somewhat more jobs in a low-carbon economy” and the real “challenge for Canada is positioning ourselves to capture our share of those jobs” (Pittis, 2019). I agree with this point and would argue that Canada has the resources and brainpower to make this shift, but political will and the prioritization of investments is the major hurdle. For example, the FSDS and Canada’s most recent climate plan “Health Environment, Health Economy” overly focus on transitioning fossil fuel workers and supporting the creation of STEM and trades jobs, with little mention of youth and other kinds of green employment. A change in approach is urgent not only because of the climate and youth unemployment crisis, but because the next ten years will see the large-scale retirement of environmental professionals.

That means that 233,500 new environmental workers will need to be hired by then to compensate for those jobs as well as new job growth in the sector (ECO Canada, 2020, 2). This includes both STEM and non-STEM occupations in the green sector.

So what is preventing youth from entering the green field?

Project Learning Tree Canada, the delivery organization for the Green Jobs in Green Spaces program identifies **three key challenges**:

- 
- 1 Youth don’t know what a green job is;
 - 2 They don’t see themselves in a green job and
 - 3 They don’t know how to get a green job” (Topping & Chiarella, 2021)

Brennan Strandberg-Salmon’s story illustrates these challenges: in high school “the career fairs, work experience and career-planning programs focused on traditional options — students could aspire to be teachers, doctors, lawyers, tradespeople and so on. I couldn’t find information on green jobs — a field that includes interdisciplinary careers within business, non-profit organizations and government, jobs that genuinely contribute to a more sustainable world. My main takeaway? Pursuing “green jobs” wasn’t a common, or even viable, career path” (Brennan Strandberg-Salmon, 2020). Unfortunately his experience is not unique: I felt the same way, and as we will discuss in the thematic discussion below, many youth across Canada also resonate with this.

Canada's COVID-19 Responses

While Canada has rolled out various supports throughout the pandemic to support people who lost work as a direct result, including the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and the Canadian Emergency Student Benefit (CESB), there is much more that needs to be done to address youth unemployment. CERB gives “financial support to employed and self-employed Canadians who are directly affected by COVID-19” and the CESB was later introduced to support students who were left out of that due to the work hour requirements (Service Canada, 2021). In April 2020 the federal government pledged more support for the annual Canada Summer Jobs (CSJ) program, promising to help create up to 70,000 jobs for youth (Office of the Prime Minister, 2020). It’s significant to note that international students were excluded from CERB and CESB, and are not eligible to be hired under the CSJ program. In June 2020, the Minister of Natural Resources Seamus O’Regan announced “\$15.8 million to create green jobs and training opportunities for Canadian youth in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) in the energy, forestry, mining, earth sciences and clean technology sectors” (Natural Resources Canada, 2020). These jobs will be supported by the Science and Technology Internship Program (STIP), explained below.

Canada's Environmental Employment Programs for Youth

This brings me to the core of this report, Canada’s federally funded green job programs for young people. This suite of employment programs provides wage subsidies for organizations to be able to hire young people for short-term work placements in environmental roles. Most of these programs are funded through the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). While under the purview of ESDC, YESS is a horizontal initiative involving eleven federal departments and agencies (ESDC, 2020).

Departments include Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), Natural Resources Canada (NrCan), and Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada (ISED) among others. In the past few years, through the above departments, YESS has funded numerous green job programs for youth, including:

- the ECCC Science Horizons Internship (*delivered by ECO Canada*),
- the NrCan STIP: Science and Technology Internship program (*delivered by ECO Canada, Colleges and Institutes Canada, BioTalent, and Electricity HR*),
- the ISED Digital Skills for Youth program (*delivered by ECO Canada*),
- Green Jobs in Green Spaces program (*delivered by Project Learning Tree Canada*)
- and the SDG Impact Internship (*delivered by Colleges and Institutes Canada*)



All of the above delivery organizations hold contracts with ESDC where they agree to match a specific number of youth with work placements, and to coordinate employers to receive the youth and subsequent wage subsidies. The goals of these programs are multifold: help out smaller/medium sized organizations in Canada through subsidized labour; help youth gain valuable work experience and learning; and grow specific sectors in the Canadian economy by supporting hiring and training of new talent. As the names of these programs indicate, it is largely the natural resource and clean technology sectors which are targeted, as well as other sectors which benefit from youth with training in STEM. There are drawbacks to this narrow scope however, which I address in the thematic discussion below.

The goals of these programs are multifold: help out smaller/medium sized organizations in Canada through subsidized labour; help youth gain valuable work experience and learning; and grow specific sectors in the Canadian economy by supporting hiring and training of new talent.




INTERVIEW & SURVEY METHODOLOGY

When setting out to interview experts in this area, I looked for representatives from delivery organizations and other nonprofits who could speak on the issue of green jobs for youth. Using CCYP networks, my own contacts, cold emails, and LinkedIn requests I was able to arrange interviews with staff from the delivery organizations Project Learning Tree (PLT) Canada, CICan and ECO Canada, the department of Natural Resources (who administers the STIP), and three nonprofits, the Canadian Parks Council (a partner in the Green Jobs in Green Spaces program), Foundation for Environmental Stewardship (an employer/recipient of wage subsidies) and the Canadian Council for Policy Alternatives (policy analyst).

All seven interviews took place between January 22nd, 2021 and March 11th, 2021, and each participant was asked to go on record and be named in this study. All of the delivery partners answered the same sets of questions, and the questions were only tweaked slightly to be more applicable for the interviews with the employer, nonprofit policy analyst, and program partner. See Appendix 1 for a full list of interview questions. In chronological order, the interview participants were as follows:

- **Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood**, Senior Researcher (climate and international trade policy), Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, National office
- **Meghan Hach**, Manager of the Career Launcher Internships, Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan)
- **Jessica Kaknevicius**, Vice President of Education, Project Learning Tree (PLT) Canada
- **Sarah Casorso**, Senior Manager of Employment Programs and Human Resources, ECO Canada
- **Caroline Cloutier**, Senior Director of Natural Resources Canada (NrCan), through the Office of the Chief Scientist
- **Dawn Carr**, Executive Director, Canadian Parks Council
- **Steve S.J Lee**, Founder and former Executive Director, Foundation for Environmental Stewardship (FES)



The main themes were successes and weaknesses of federally funded green job programs for youth, equity concerns, and youth engagement.



The Youth Green Jobs survey was created to gain more of the youth perspective and complement the data provided by the interviews. It was created on Google Forms and circulated through CCYP's email newsletter, website and social media, as well as my personal social media channels. All of the interview participants were also emailed the survey and many of them circulated it within their networks and to youth who participated in their programs. The survey was live from March 12th to March 31st 2021, and was open to any youth (aged 15 – 30) residing in Canada, notwithstanding their immigration status, knowledge of green job programs, location in Canada or attainment of education. The survey was confidential, and a draw for Amazon gift cards was used as an incentive for youth participation. Two hundred and sixty three responses were received from young people across Canada with diverse ethnicity, ability, gender, and green jobs experience. To my surprise, just over half of the respondents had already participated in at least one green job program for youth, with the majority of those having participated in two or more.

All of the interviews were conducted using the Zoom application which generated video and audio recordings, and audio transcripts. I went through these and coded responses to questions into the themes explored below. Some themes did not come as a direct answer to a question, but was a common thought pattern interviewees had in reaction to the questions or the description I offered them of my research project and plans for the advocacy report. For the survey results, all of the quantitative data was analyzed in Google Sheets by response, and pivot tables were used to compare answers with demographic data. While the questions youth were asked regarding green job programs were quite different than those asked to interview participants, there were clear alignments in themes. **The main themes were successes and weaknesses of federally funded green job programs for youth, equity concerns, and youth engagement.** The limitations in the government and societal definition/approach to green jobs was a theme that crosses all of the above themes. See the appendix 1 and 2 at the end of the report for the full list of interview and survey questions.

STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES OF FEDERALLY FUNDED GREEN JOB PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH

Administration/Efficiency

Interview participants identified a tension between wanting the programs and funding to be more strategic, streamlined, and efficient, and maintaining the independence and autonomy that departments and delivery partners currently possess. Firstly, there is a high degree of complexity and confusion caused by the green job programs for youth having multiple streams of funding, funding partners, and delivery organizations. As you can see by looking at Figure 1: (Green Job Programs for Youth) all of the programs share the same funder (ESDC) and source of funding (YESS) but have different departments as funding partners/administrators and different delivery organizations.

Each delivery partner has the license to brand the program the way they want, which results in many different names of programs even when coming from the same original funds. For example, Natural Resources Canada administers the Science and Technology Internship Program (STIP) which goes by the following names depending on the delivery partner: Youth Employment in Natural Resources (ECO Canada), Natural Resources Internship (CICan), Canada Green Jobs Program (Electricity HR), and the Science and Technology Internship Program (BioTalent Canada). Meghan Hach of CICan finds that “it is complex for organizations like ourselves and other delivery partners who implement multiple programs because we’re constantly needing to differentiate and redirect employers based on what program they’re eligible for”. When I first started researching these programs this caused a lot of confusion, which was not cleared up until I conducted my interviews and learned that all of those programs came from the same STIP funding. It was hard to access information on these programs directly from the government webpages, and when I went to the delivery partner websites it was difficult to connect back to the appropriate funding program through ESDC. This is concerning because if you’re a youth and you naturally go to the government website to figure out what green job programs exist, you can’t find all the information you need in one place. To provide greater service to both youth and employers, ESDC should clarify the differences between the programs, as well as list all the delivery partners in one place.

A related topic was that each of the delivery partners have their own reporting and administrative systems, despite their employment programs being quite alike in structure and goals. This is in part because each department which administers green job programs for youth (ISED, NrCan, ECCC, and ESDC) requires delivery partners to collect different data on youth, and use different measurements of success. Jessica Kaknevicus of PLT Canada would appreciate “better guidance or collaboration around the development of simple Key Performance Indicators (KPI)” as that would support delivery partners’ reporting efforts. While centralizing programs could help with both the branding confusion

Figure 1:
Green Job Programs for Youth

Employment Program	Program is Funded By:	Wage Subsidy	Job Type/Definition	Requirements for Employees
ECO Canada Digital Skills for Youth https://www.eco.ca/employmentprograms/youth-placement/digital-skillsfor-youth/	Funding comes from ESDC's YESS, and is administered through Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED). ECO Canada is the delivery partner.	100% of salary up to \$25,000	Environmental jobs that require digital abilities. Examples of eligible roles include: Cleantech innovation and sustainable technology initiatives. Digital marketers aiming to promote environmental businesses. Developers that create apps or software related to environmental education. GHG specialists in charge of predictive modeling or the analysis of emissions. Drone operators that monitor remote well sites or wildlife corridors. GIS specialists that use software to analyze mapping data or databases that surround environmental monitoring. Analysts and IT specialists working with EHS data.	Interns must be Canadian citizens, permanent residents or persons who have been granted refugee status in Canada. They must be unemployed, underemployed or hold part-time employment. Postsecondary graduates across Canadian provinces are eligible as well as High School graduates in Territories. They must be between 15-30 years of age.
ECO Canada Science Horizons Internship https://www.eco.ca/employmentprograms/youth-placement/sciencehorizons-internship-program/	Funding comes from ESDC's YESS, and is administered through Environment and Climate Change Canada. ECO Canada is the delivery partner.	50% of salary up to \$15,000	Environmentally-related position in STEM (doesn't seem to give a more detailed definition)	Candidate: Currently unemployed or underemployed, Able to work in a full-time, permanent position within 30 days from application, 30 years of age or younger, Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or have refugee status. Intend to lead an environmental career in STEM or natural resources, Graduated from a recognized post-secondary institution with a 2 year diploma or 4 year degree.
ECO Canada Youth Employment in Natural Resources https://www.eco.ca/employmentprograms/youth-placement/naturalresources/	Funding comes from ESDC's YESS, and is administered through Natural Resources STIP program. ECO Canada is the delivery partner.	Cover up to 75% of a candidates wages to \$22,500 You could be eligible for funding up to \$30,000 for placements in Northern, Rural or Remote locations and/or to support youth facing barriers looking for work in the Natural Resources sector.	Full time position in STEM fields. Energy – Renewable and Non-Emitting Technologies, Electricity, Transmission and Distribution, Energy Efficiency. Forest sector – Forestry and Support Activities, Wood Product Manufacturing, Pulp and Paper Product Manufacturing, Minerals/Metals – Junior Mining, Senior Mining, Mining Supply and Services, Mine Reclamation and Closure, Mining Value from Waste, Earth Sciences – Environmental Assessment and Environmental Protection, Geology and Geoscience, Natural Hazards, Climate Change Adaptation	Be between the ages 15 – 30 as of the start of the placement. Be a Canadian Citizen, permanent resident, or person with refugee protection in Canada.
Career Launcher Impact SDG Internships https://careerlauncher.ca/impactinternships/	Funding comes from ESDC's YESS, the delivery partner is Colleges and Institutes Canada https://www.collegesinstitutes.ca Career Launcher is one of their programs.	Covering up to 100% of an intern's salary up to a maximum of \$10,000. The subsidy will be paid as a reimbursement upon receipt of financial documents such as paystubs showing CPP & EI contributions. The funding can also be used for skills-based special initiatives covering up to a maximum of \$750 per youth and \$10,000 per initiative.	Working on a minimum of three SDGs and that they would like to create an innovative, and responsive WIL opportunity for one or more youth. Internships, competitive projects, contests, innovation networks, social entrepreneurship boot camps, environmental or social audits, sandboxes, SDG hack-a-thons. Examples of activities: Organize a youth-led food drive, Educate others on healthy food, diversity and inclusion, importance of vaccinations, protective hygiene practices for a specific demographic, Plan and implement an energy or water conservation or 'buy local' campaign, Develop a campaign for alternatives to single occupancy vehicles, Audit local cycling and pedestrian infrastructure, Organize healthy outdoor activities that reduce air pollution while increasing physical activity, Create and implement activities to reduce land and water pollution, Develop and implement branding strategies, digital marketing tools, and/or social media campaigns on sustainable agriculture, Advocate for and plant trees in urban areas, Develop a business plan that offers sustainable products and services, Conduct research on ethical supply chains	Between the ages of 15-30, Canadian citizens, permanent residents or persons granted refugee status in Canada*, Legally allowed to work, not employees of the hiring employer prior to the start of their internship (does not apply to previous coop students or student interns)

and reporting issues, in turn improving effectiveness and efficiency of the green job programs for youth, interview participants also expressed some hesitancy.

Sarah Casorso of ECO Canada believes that if all these programs were grouped together, government departments and delivery partners would not have the same flexibility with their own departmental goals and the bigger objectives of their organizations. Meghan Hach echoes this – instead of ESDC telling the departments how to run these programs, right now the departments are able to “look at what their mission is as a department and find synergies with the Youth Employment

Employment Program	Program is Funded By:	Wage Subsidy	Job Type/Definition	Requirements for Employees
<p>Career Launcher Natural Resources Internship</p> <p>https://careerlauncher.ca/naturalresources/</p>	<p>Funding comes from ESDC's YESS, and is administered through Natural Resources STIP program. Colleges and Institutes Canada is the delivery partner.</p>	<p>Hire an intern for up to 8 months in a green job within a natural resources sector, and CICan will contribute up to 75% of the intern's salary and funding for training expenses, to a maximum of \$22,500. CICan will offer up to \$30,000 to employers who hire youth in Northern, rural and remote communities or Indigenous youth. The subsidy can cover intern training and up to 75% of their salary.</p>	<p>Meaningful work experience within a natural resource sector* that produce products or services that have an environmental benefit. In a science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) field or trades position. Examples of jobs that qualify: field technician forestry, land use planner who incorporates sustainability into designs, construction or trades worker that applies knowledge of standard construction techniques while completing green projects, air quality engineer, conservation officer, manufacturing production worker at a company that produce environmental goods</p>	<p>Between the ages of 15-30 (inclusive) at the start of the internship Canadian citizens, permanent residents or persons granted refugee status in Canada* Legally allowed to work according to the relevant provincial and Canadian legislation and regulations Available to work for at least six months. Not employees of the hiring employer prior to the start of their internship (does not apply to previous coop students or student interns, although this must be clearly indicated by the employer)</p>
<p>Electricity HR Canada Green Jobs Program</p> <p>https://electricityhr.ca/resources/greenjobs-program/</p>	<p>Funding comes from ESDC's YESS, and is administered through Natural Resources STIP program. Electricity HR is the delivery partner. https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/climatechange/canadas-green-future/green-jobs/87</p>	<p>EHRC provides 75% wage subsidies to a maximum of \$22,500 for employers hiring youth between the ages of 15 and 30. For those employers with placements in northern, rural and remote communities and youth furthest from employment, EHRC provides a 75% wage subsidy to a maximum of \$30,000.</p>	<p>For the purposes of this program, a green job is a job linked to the green economy in one of two ways: Positions that require environmental skills, knowledge, experience or competencies in order to produce environmentally beneficial products or services (e.g. land use planning, air quality engineers). Positions that may not require specialized environmental skills but result in an environmental benefit (e.g. trades or manufacturing related to renewable energy).</p>	<p>Be between the ages of 15 to 30 years as of the start of the placement. Be a Canadian citizen, permanent resident, or person with refugee protection in Canada. Be legally able to work in Canada according to relevant laws and regulations of the province or territory of residence. Not currently be enrolled as a full-time student in a post-secondary institution. Currently un- or under-employed.</p>
<p>BioTalent Canada Science and Technology Internship Program</p> <p>https://www.biotalent.ca/programs/green-jobs-science-andtechnology-internship-program/</p>	<p>Funding comes from ESDC's YESS, and is administered through Natural Resources STIP program. BioTalent Canada is the delivery partner.</p>	<p>The Science and Technology Internship Program – Green Jobs covers the cost of a new hire's salary by 75% to a maximum of \$22,500/yr and \$30,000/yr for youth furthest from employment.</p>	<p>Natural Resources include the fields of energy, forestry, and minerals and metals as well as earth sciences. To qualify as a natural resource STEM job related to the green economy, the position needs to fall in one of the two categories: Jobs that require environmental skills, knowledge, experience or competencies in order to produce products or services that have an environmental benefit. Examples include: Architects and land use planners who incorporate sustainability into designs, air quality engineers and conservation officers. Jobs that may not require specialized environmental skills but result in an environmental benefit.</p>	<p>Be between the ages 15 – 30 as of the start of the placement. Be a Canadian Citizen, permanent resident, or person with refugee protection in Canada.</p>
<p>Project Learning Tree Green Jobs in Green Spaces</p> <p>https://pltcanda.org/en/greenjobs/funding-for-employers/green-jobs-in-green-spaces/</p>	<p>Funding comes from ESDC's YESS. Project Learning Tree (PLT) Canada is the delivery partner</p>	<p>PLT Canada is offering funding for a 50% wage-match (including MERCs) up to a maximum of \$5,712 per youth for new hires. The remaining 50% of the youth's wages (paid by the employer) cannot be from another federal source. Funding will be provided up to 37.5 hours per week for a maximum of 20 weeks per job.</p>	<p>"Positions must be within the scope of a Green Job: A Green Job is one that supports naturebased solutions for a more sustainable planet. Green jobs are typically involved in, but not limited to, jobs in the forest and forest products sectors, natural resource management, conservation, environmental education, sustainable food systems, and/or address climate change & carbon sequestration, species maintenance & recovery, and water quality & quantity." Some examples of jobs they consider green jobs which are not technical/STEM focused: communications, Indigenous knowledge coordinator, community engagement, Indigenous relations, climate change researcher, climate change educator</p>	<p>Be between the ages of 15 – 30 as of the start of the placement.</p>

and Skills Strategy so that they can create economic opportunities for youth in their sector". In my opinion, the ideal scenario would be for government departments to work with the delivery partners to centralize programming and administrative systems as much as possible while still giving them a range of autonomy.

Flexibility/adaptability of programs

All of the delivery partners who participated in interviews (PLT, ECO Canada, CICan) and the administrator NrCan, spoke about the more recent flexibility and adaptability of the programs to better meet the needs of delivery partners, employers and youth. They feel as though ESDC and the other federal departments are doing a good job of listening to partners and using their input to shape programs. Some of the adaptations include the addition of wraparound services, the length of work placements, and the types of positions which can be funded, although I argue the latter still needs to be expanded.

Wraparound services in addition to work placements

One of the ways ESDC listened and implemented feedback from delivery partners was by adopting their recommendations to include wraparound services as fundamental components of the green job programs. Wraparound services include career counselling, mentorship, networking, and other services that help youth before and after work placements to develop their employable skills, identify their career goals, and make the necessary connections to be able to find work without government support. Previously, how these work experience programs would function is that a youth would get matched to an employer by the delivery partner organization, the employer would receive a partial wage subsidy from the government to employ youth, and then if the young person hired completes the full duration of the work placement it's considered a success. It was assumed that the young person would be able to find more jobs after that point on their own. However, as Meghan rightly points out: "if you're a youth that's facing barriers, it's not just because you create a wage subsidy or an internship opportunity that you're all of a sudden going to be employed. You need training, you need wraparound services, you need supports to get to that point".

**Do these jobs do more
than just a paycheck?**



Wraparound services attempt to address multiple barriers to employment experienced by people from marginalized backgrounds such as having little or no post-secondary education, facing racial or cultural discrimination in workplaces/hiring processes, reduced access to networking opportunities, and more (Abrams, 2018). Dawn Carr of the Canadian Parks Council believes that in program development, it is crucial to ask "do these jobs do more than just a paycheck?" Do they help support youth mental health, provide opportunities for them to consider where they take this job next, offer professional development opportunities like funding to participate in conferences, webinars, etc? These components are all really important for youth development and help them to grow networks and relationships in the environmental field. Recommendations from delivery partners, Employment Service Providers (ESPs), policy analysts, and others resulted in the addition of Skills to the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) in 2019. This was a big success as it signaled a mandated shift from primarily focussing on employment to including wraparound services, such as skill building, in all youth employment programming, including the green job programs for youth.

Length of Placement

Prior to the recent changes, the minimum lengths of placements had been a challenge for delivery partners, employers and youth alike. Most of the programs required work placements to be a minimum of six months which was too long for certain sectors such as natural resources. As Meghan Hach puts it, in the natural resources and conservation sectors hiring is often season specific:

“there’s not always a six month work opportunity, sometimes it is short term, especially if you’re in the North, sometimes it’s only two months”. So it is very important to ensure that the length of those internships is adapted to the realities of Northern and remote communities. Now placements can

be as short as 2-3 months which has helped massively in the economic recovery from COVID-19. Sarah Casorso agrees that “a strength of the program is being able to be a little bit more reactive and flexible to the current economy and employers’ hiring needs” given COVID-19’s economic impacts.

“A strength of the program is being able to be a little bit more reactive and flexible to the current economy and employers’ hiring needs.”



Types of Positions which can be Funded

In addition to the lengths of placements, another adaptation to COVID-19 was the creation of the SDG Impact Internship, delivered by Colleges and Institutes Canada (CICan). This program is unique for multiple reasons: it is the only green job program for youth that subsidizes 100% of wages, and it’s only job requirement is that the position somehow contributes to three or more Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a result, Meghan and her colleagues at CICan have witnessed a diversity of positions within the program which they have not seen in all of the years of their other programs. This is in less than a year of only funding 100 SDG internships compared to 1600 internships that CICan’s funded through all its other Career Launcher programs.

For many years both NrCan and Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) required youth to have degrees or be studying in the STEM field in order to be eligible for these wage subsidy programs. This excluded many young people without post-secondary education/background, or interest in STEM. Many employers are also excluded from wage subsidy programs because of these narrow definitions. For example Steve S.J. Lee’s organization, Foundation for Environmental Stewardship (FES), is focused on community organizing and sustainability education, so he finds that “the typical kind of STEM, clean tech, renewable energy, energy efficiency, installation, that doesn’t really apply to me and it is exclusionary to me”. After much lobbying from delivery partners

and other organizations, NRCan removed the education requirement, so youth don't even need to have graduated high school to be eligible. However, at the time these interviews were conducted, ECCC had yet to loosen that requirement. Their Science Horizons Internship program, delivered by ECO Canada, required that youth have a STEM degree or diploma, "intend to lead an environmental career in STEM or natural resources" and that the job is an "environmentally-related position in STEM" (ECO Canada, 2020). There have been changes made regarding more flexibility on the STEM focus since I conducted these interviews, however the details and impact of those changes has yet to be seen. As I will discuss in the equity section, the approach to green jobs and program requirements for these environmental employment programs still excludes many youth from participation.

Benefits for Employers

Although I have discussed numerous weaknesses of the federally funded green job programs for youth, it is worth restating the enormous benefits they provide to employers, in particular smaller organizations which are youth led. Steve S.J. Lee is a young entrepreneur and founder of the Foundation for Environmental Stewardship (FES) and its 3% Project. Steve spoke to students at hundreds of Canadian schools as part of the 3% Project tour, which also included an ongoing mentorship program led by climate educators who teach employable skills (3% Project, 2019).

He has employed 20 youth through wage subsidy programs, many of whom later joined the organization as full time staff. He strongly emphasizes that young entrepreneurs, smaller youth-led organizations, and nonprofits which are just getting projects started benefit tremendously from these wage subsidy programs. Steve is personally grateful for receiving funding because "I actually was homeless for 5 months when I was starting 3%. I had no place to go to, I went through sixty thousand dollars worth of debt to get the whole thing started, and the very first sorts of cash that ever came in was the wage subsidy program". His story is a powerful example of the impact of these green job programs on both youth and employers, and demonstrates that those are not two mutually exclusive categories.



EQUITY CONCERNS IN THE GREEN SECTOR

Elitism and Privilege in the Environmental Field

While the theme of equity touches on nearly all of the other themes and the background section, how systems of privilege operate in the environmental field deserves its own section. I don't know about you, but when I picture the average environmental worker, I see an upper-middle class white man in his 40s or 50s. According to an ECO Canada 2016 survey, only 24.7% of environmental professionals were women, 6.3% were Indigenous people (First Nations, Inuit and Metis) and 2.8% were recent immigrants (those in Canada less than five years). More recent studies see women's participation in the green workforce increasing, but Indigenous people still remain very underrepresented (ECO Canada, 2020, 20). Dawn Carr agrees that this is a very white sector, and if we are to be successful in our environmental goals as a country we need to ensure the workforce "actually resemble[s] the face of Canadians themselves, and right now, they do not". White people, men in particular, are over-represented on executive teams and boards of many environmental organizations, and Dawn agrees that many marginalized people working in those organizations don't see themselves in senior positions because of that.

Elitism exists in the environmental field for a few reasons, but I believe it mainly comes from the classic definition of green work which relies on high levels of education, particularly in the STEM fields. As one of the survey respondents commented "generally (and from my previous experience), if you don't have a degree or diploma, most won't be able to get a green job because they usually aren't offered to people who don't have an education". Access to education is influenced by numerous things, such as income, ethnicity and immigration status. However, rather than reverse these dynamics, Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood notes that the environmental field is still requiring more and more education, and fewer low skilled jobs are being created in the low-carbon economy. This is making it increasingly difficult for people who are already marginalized and face barriers to the labour market to get their foot in the door. Despite the aforementioned STEM requirement changes, many young people (including survey respondents but also youth I've spoken with over the years) continue to have the perception that they cannot be successful in the environmental field without a STEM degree. In the survey, the third and fourth most common barriers to entering the green field youth selected were "I don't have the right degree/accreditation" and "I am not good at/not trained in STEM". Short form responses continued along this theme, such as "lack of formal education in environmental and sustainable studies", and "I don't come from a traditional environmental background, which is usually where I see the requirements".

Top Four Barriers Youth Experience in Getting a Green Job



- I don't have experience in the green field
- I don't know anyone who works in the field
- I don't have the right degree/accreditation
- I am not good at/not trained in STEM

The youth survey also yielded a significant difference between gender and perceptions of the environmental field. Respondents who did not identify as cisgender men (cisgender women, non-binary people, and transgender men and women) were far more likely to perceive the environmental field as being moderately to extremely difficult to enter. While cisgender men were more likely to think it was not or only slightly difficult to enter the green field, they were less likely to be interested in pursuing an environmental career than women.

I would deduce that women are more interested in green work but not as confident they can have a green job, because of many factors such as the STEM emphasis, which have made the green field male dominated up to this point. As we know STEM fields have excluded women for many years, which correlates with most female environmental professionals working in non-STEM roles in environmental organizations, such as in public administration (ECO Canada, 2017, 25). When you look at the occupations which are poised for growth, such as retrofitting and renewable energy jobs, what many consider the 'classic green jobs', all of those professions are again dominated by Canadian born white men;

"So when we grow those industries, the benefits again flow disproportionately to some of the most privileged sectors of the workforce, so we need to think a bit more about how improving equity and diversity in the context of green employment has to be a choice, and it has to be a proactive policy choice, like the market's not going to do it" Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood

Restrictions on Youth who can be Placed in Programs

There are multiple restrictions on the types of youth who can be placed in these green jobs programs, and while the student and STEM requirements have shifted to be more inclusive, age range and immigration status criteria continue to exclude many young people. When PLT Canada started receiving funding it was very focused on the student audience. As Jessica says "it was a missed opportunity for government to support all these youth that either weren't in school [or] education was not their pathway" and was especially a challenge for those youth who face barriers to employment such as Indigenous youth, youth living with disability, or visible minorities. Changing the audience for these programs from students to youth aged 15 – 30 years old was an improvement, but this federal definition of youth is not without its drawbacks. Sarah Casorso sees many people

who miss that window of opportunity to receive valuable work experience due to their age. For example, “somebody might be 32 but they maybe took a couple years off to travel before they went to post-secondary, and just life circumstances have not made them follow the sort of typical path that the program expects people to” and as a result, they are left out. This is also a challenge for the employer: delivery organizations will be approached by employers who have great candidates but sometimes they will have to inform them that the candidate isn’t actually eligible solely based on their age.

Most programs also require youth to be either Canadian citizens, refugees or Permanent Residents, excluding international students and youth here on work visas. PLT Canada’s Green Jobs in Green Spaces program is the only one I know of which places newcomer youth, defined as those who have been in Canada for less than five years, whether or not that have refugee or permanent resident status. This means that the majority of green job programs exclude international students and youth on work visas, the same categories of youth who’ve been left out of COVID-19 response measures such as CERB, CESB and the CSJ program. The barriers that immigrants face in particular to the environmental field, the majority of whom are racialized, is a key reason why the environmental field continues to be overly dominated by white Canadian-born people. These all further reinforce Hadrian’s argument; if these environmental employment programs for youth are not challenging the greater patterns of elitism in the field, **“we’re not transforming the labour market here, we’re shifting the labour market in a little bit more of a green direction, which is good but we need more than that”**.

Steps Being Taken to address Equity concerns

While the program requirements still exclude many youth as described above, ESDC does have built in equity requirements across all of their programs, such as representation of women (underrepresented in the green field), youth with disabilities, Indigenous, and racialized youth. The quota system targets “50% participation by employment equity groups, with particular emphasis on recruiting from northern, rural and remote communities” (Natural Resources Canada, 2021). In addition to this quota, some delivery partners such as PLT Canada strive for gender parity. Jessica Kaknevicus emphasizes the significance of showing diverse youth in green job programs: “when you show diversity, people can see themselves in those positions and are more likely to search for those positions”. ECO Canada, Electricity HR and CICan have increased wage subsidies to hire from remote,

rural and Northern communities, particularly as those locations have barriers around digital access, cost of living and larger Indigenous populations. The higher wage subsidy is to incentivize employers to hire from those locations even when it is less convenient or more expensive due to higher minimum wages, transportation time to and from the job site, and energy prices among others.

Some of the other steps currently being taken by delivery partners to address the equity concerns discussed include involving marginalized communities and youth who face barriers to employment more directly in the program development, diversifying leadership roles within their organizations and building in flexibility around eligibility criteria for programs. Delivery partners emphasize going beyond the representation targets and looking at the best pathways to incorporate EDI in program development. For example ECO Canada and PLT work directly with Indigenous communities, companies and employers, and CICan works closely with organizations such as the National Education Association for Students with Disabilities (NEADS). PLT Canada has also hired more Indigenous staff members, and created a new position for a Diversity and Inclusion Manager. Beyond hiring, changing the organization culture is crucial. Dawn talks about the growing awareness of colonialism and racism in the conservation sector, and the policies that need to be put in place to enable marginalized voices to be heard more effectively. Across the environmental field there needs to be discussion on “how do we work more collaboratively together so that there is an open ethical and authentic space for everybody to have an equal voice?”

Need for training for employers on equity and inclusion in the workforce

Related to changing company culture, the delivery partners and Steve Lee identified an urgent need for more equity and inclusion training for employers, both related to hiring and managing diverse staff. Steve Lee spoke about how small organizations such as his do not have the HR staff and resources of larger organizations to be able to have training or roles dedicated to equity concerns. In general, as a small organization, even if they recognize the importance of equity, diversity and inclusion, if such initiatives cause “more headache and more time going into it, if it’s going to cause issues, then steer clear”.

For example, when he hired international students it created more administrative work on FES’ side because they struggled to understand all the different tax implications for someone who has a work visa but is not a resident. However, Steve continues, “if someone trained us and gave us the knowledge, then all that makes it less risky; now at least I can entertain learning how to do this”. PLT Canada is leading in this regard, and provides training on how to hire and support more diverse youth, how to create an inclusive environment, how to create mentorship opportunities and more.

“If someone trained us and gave us the knowledge, then all that makes it less risky; now at least I can entertain learning how to do this”.



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

How Youth are Currently Being Engaged

Youth are primarily engaged through surveys and questionnaires conducted by the delivery partners at the beginning, midpoint, and end of their work placements. Some programs also require youth to answer surveys a few weeks after completion of their work experiences to gauge where it has led them in their career/studies, but this is at most 12 weeks after the programs' end. Delivery partners generally consider whether youth complete the entirety of their placement, and the percentage of the participants who either return to studies or go on to full-time employment as key metrics. The latter does not have to be employment in the environmental field necessarily, any employment is considered a success. They still consider returning to school for up-skilling a success, which I find interesting because in my experience and those of many of my peers, youth often return to school because they aren't able to find a job or enter their chosen profession without more schooling to make them competitive hires.

Some programs also highly value the youth's perception/feelings towards their placement: did they enjoy working for the organization?, did they think it was a valuable learning experience?, and how did it affect their feelings towards green jobs? PLT Canada asks youth if they feel more knowledgeable about the environment after their position and if they said they do, that's also considered a measure of success. In a similar vein, CICan tracks youth and employer awareness of the SDGs and how that grows throughout the work experience. Skills development is another big indicator, and is not limited to environmental competencies: this includes report writing, team working and task management among others.

Pre-COVID, the other common way delivery partners and funders engaged youth was through in-person events such as pop ups at job fairs and conferences, and through online job boards. Of the organizations interviewed, CICan, PLT Canada, ECO Canada, and the Canadian Parks Council went a bit further to engage youth more directly in program development or recruitment, via a form of advisory council, youth network and/or mentorship program. For example, CICan has a Youth Advisory Committee which rotates every year and consults on the Career Launcher Internships, among their other programs. PLT Canada's Youth Network consists of youth who have gone through their employment programs, and serves to provide them mentorship and other career supports.

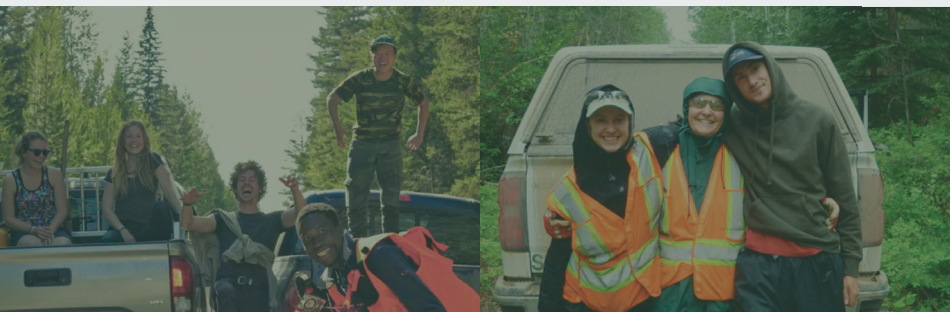


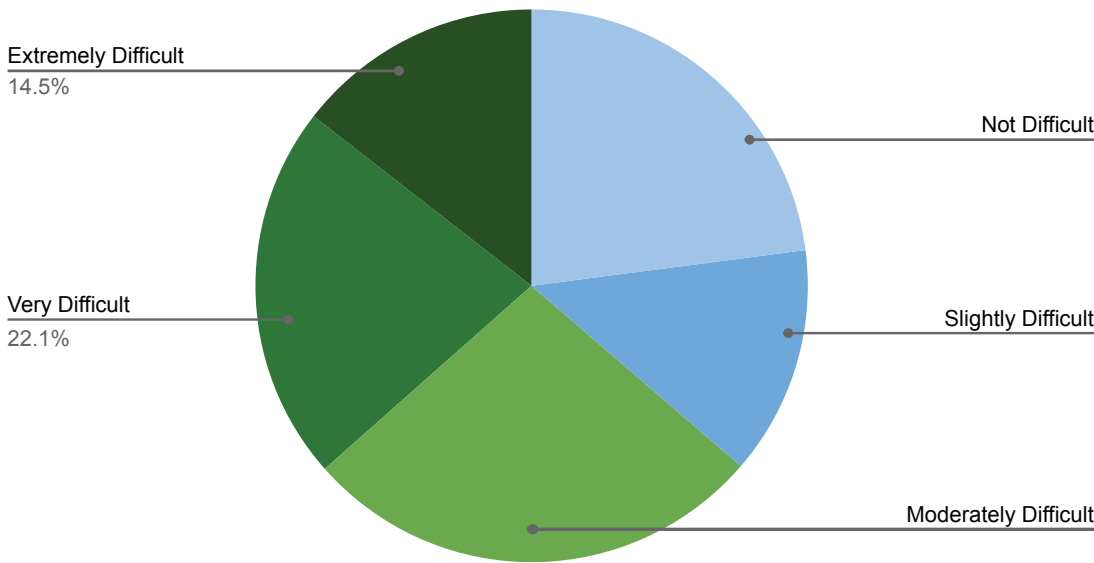
PHOTO CREDIT:
WWW.PLTCANADA.ORG

Ways to Engage and Support Youth Better in the Future

A key method for engaging youth better in federal green job programs would be tracking their progress and providing supports in a longer time period post-placement. When asked if their organizations track how the program has impacted youth in their career in the long term, most of the delivery partners interviewed as well as Caroline Cloutier from NRCan said they do not collect that data beyond a few weeks or months after the end of the work placement. As Sarah Casorso puts it “once somebody chooses to stop interacting with ECO and on different platforms then we kind of lose them”. Some of these programs such as the STIP have been running since 1997, and it would be amazing to find out where those youth participants are now, and how the program has impacted them in the long term. Dawn Carr shared how her first entry into the green field was as a Junior Ranger in Ontario, and “it was that government funded youth employment opportunity that changed the course of my career”.

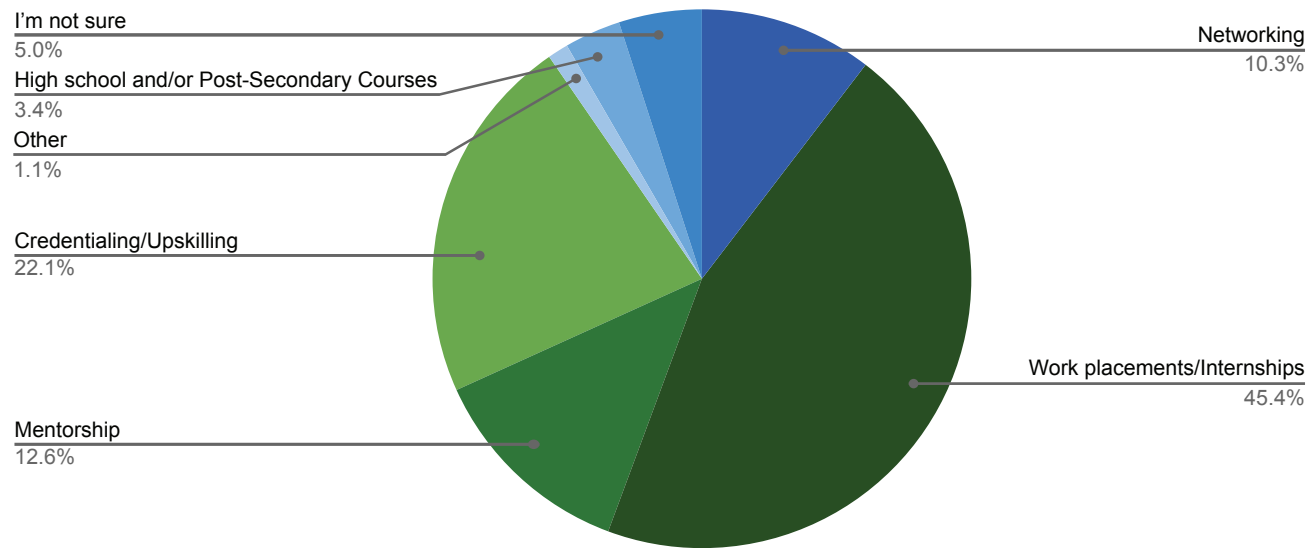
Dawn wants to hear the stories of youth participants profiled on multiple platforms “so that the importance of this kind of work reaches additional audiences”. Furthermore, keeping in contact with program alumni would give them the opportunity to provide invaluable input for future programming. In general, there is a need for youth to be engaged in the program development more tangibly, both in review of programs (which alumni could do quite well), but also in the creation of new ones. Because of the rushed nature in which many job programs for youth were created, in order to urgently respond to COVID-19 impacts, youth were not consulted in their creation at all. Dawn always comes back to the principle “nothing about us without us”, and thinks the government should take that to heart moving forward and include youth more directly, and I strongly agree.

Figure 2:
Have difficult do you perceive it is to enter the low-carbon/environmental field?



Again and again in my survey data, youth expressed how experience, either not having enough experience or the right type of experience, was a huge barrier for them in entering the environmental field, even if they did have an appropriate degree. As shown on Figure 2, when asked how difficult it was to enter the green field, 64% of the respondents ranked it moderately to extremely difficult. This rate might not be surprising if this was coming from only youth without any experience or knowledge of green jobs, but actually just over half of all respondents had already participated in at least one or more of the federally funded green job programs. When I compared participation with perceived difficulty, it became clear that having those work experiences increased youth’s belief in their ability to start environmental careers. Over 85% of young people who didn’t participate in the programs perceived it as moderately too extremely difficult to enter the green field versus only 42% of past program participants. When asked what kinds of supports would help them enter the environmental field, respondents overwhelmingly selected work placements/internships.

Figure 3:
What kind of supports of programs would help you get into the green field?



As you can see on Figure 3, credentialing/upskilling, mentorship and networking were the next most popular choices in terms of supports. Responses included promoting awareness of green careers earlier in youth’s lives – in high school, for instance – so that “appropriate credentials can be planned for proactively” and “having more post-secondary courses in the environmental field”. This relates to ECO Canada’s recommendation that learning institutions incorporate environmental topics into a broad range of curricula, as exposure to environmental competencies can increase the number of graduates qualified to and interested in pursuing green careers (ECO Canada, 2020, 18). It makes sense that networking and mentorship are also high priorities given that “I don’t know anyone who works in the environmental field” was the second prevailing choice regarding barriers on the survey.

This brings to mind PLT Canada's earlier point that youth have a hard time seeing themselves in green jobs, especially if they do not see anyone who looks like them represented in the field and if they don't know anyone personally who does low-carbon work. Youth, whom I have spoken with throughout the COVID-19 pandemic have also described how difficult it is to network in digital spaces, and how common it is to get ghosted by potential mentors and others they've reached out to for career help. Under this vein, PLT Canada should be recognized for their Green Mentor program, launched in March 2020, through which youth aged 18 – 30 are paired with professionals in the forest and conservation sector for six months (PLT Canada, 2021). It would be amazing to see this sort of initiative outside of these sectors, especially with mentors that have had less conventional career paths into the green field.

Besides education, one of the most important factors regarding a candidate entering the green field is their level of confidence that they have the necessary knowledge, experience and skills for the role or that those would be easy to acquire (ECO Canada, 2020, 16). While lack of experience was by far the biggest challenge youth highlighted, survey respondents also spoke about not having the proper skills. Canada-wide, new graduates entering the environmental workforce have a large skills gap, with not only employers but graduates themselves feeling like they are not 'job ready' (ECO Canada, 2021, 10). One survey respondent shared: "I have the background knowledge and experience, but I find it difficult to get hired due to my lack of skills in interviews and resume building". ECO Canada emphasizes that a broad range of knowledge and soft skills will be required more than ever in the environmental workforce as a quarter of the projected job openings in the next ten years will be in management positions. Managers are responsible for "systems thinking, the integration of knowledge, professional ethics, and strategic decision making in the management of environmental and social issues" (ECO Canada, 2020, 12). These are soft skills which are not traditionally associated with green work, especially not in the STEM, clean technology, and natural resource fields. Steve S.J. Lee finds that STEM graduates often don't have the soft skills which he needs for his organization, such as facilitation, networking, and business development. While arts/social science degrees often better equip youth with these skills, as discussed many youth do not have access to formal education and would very much benefit from soft skill building in their career journey, whether or not they intend to enter the green field.

"I have the background knowledge and experience, but I find it difficult to get hired due to my lack of skills in interviews and resume building".



CONCLUSION

The climate crisis necessitates a whole of society approach, where Canada strives to maximize the number of people in green jobs and/or working for green organizations. As a youth survey respondent poignantly remarks “climate action takes people at all levels, especially when considering social justice and how climate disasters disproportionately impact marginalized or vulnerable people”. If we want to address both the climate crisis and the youth unemployment crisis caused by COVID-19 in an effective and equitable way, we need to help many more youth enter the environmental field. The best way to do that is to lower the barriers which exclude youth from low-carbon work, especially barriers that disproportionately affect marginalized youth such as BIPOC, newcomers, people with disabilities, and those living in Northern/rural communities. As demonstrated in this report, many youth feel like green jobs are few and too limited to those with STEM backgrounds, which remains a major barrier. Furthermore, there are plenty of positions in green organizations which require people with non-STEM backgrounds, and which help the organization achieve their goals, but they are not being funded in green job programs, or even recognized as green jobs. **That is why my key recommendations to improve the federal environmental employment programs for youth are 1) that they diversify the positions which are classified as ‘green jobs’, 2) increase the volume of positions funded, and 3) remove any other requirements which exclude youth, such as on the basis of immigration status and education.**

When we talk about transitioning to a low-carbon economy, yes we need to transition current fossil fuel workers into green jobs, but we also need to ensure that youth entering the workforce for the first time are also given the opportunity to join the environmental field. Allowing greater numbers and more diverse youth to have learning experiences through work in the environmental field now can steer their entire career path in a greener direction. Work experience programs such as the federally funded green job programs I am assessing, can help with job readiness and enable young people to feel more confident as they start their careers. This is an opportunity for Canada to live up to our title as a climate leader, and to put young people at the heart of economic recovery plans from COVID-19.

Help us build back better, and pave the way forward into a climate just future.

Future Research

- Assessments of provincial environmental employment programs for youth
- Synthesis of best practices from other countries, specifically in regard to non-STEM related green job programs for youth
- Longitudinal studies on how/if green job programs benefit youth further on in their career

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT

- 1 Expand the volume of placements in as many programs as possible with continued wage subsidy preference for hiring youth from Indigenous, Northern and/or remote communities.
- 2 Increase the variety of positions which can be covered by the environmental employment programs for youth, with special attention to positions that do not require STEM competencies or education.
- 3 Renew Funding for the CIGan ImpACT SDG Internship Program.
- 4 Establish requirements for engagement of young people in the creation, monitoring and evaluation of federally-funded green job programs for youth.
- 5 Allow department and delivery partners to maintain flexibility/autonomy in the delivery of programs but mainstream the administrative work such as application forms and KPIs.
- 6 In the longer term, move towards eliminating the Canadian Citizen, Permanent Resident, or Refugee requirement from all green job programs for youth as they exclude many newcomers and contribute to the barriers they face in entering the green field.

CALLS TO ACTION FOR READERS OF THIS REPORT

- 1 Send this advocacy report to your Member of Parliament telling them why this is important to you as a constituent and why they should read it and take action.
- 2 Keep pressure on the federal government to enact a Just Transition Act, and expand green jobs programs for youth.
- 3 Talk to young people in your lives about their career aspirations and possibilities within the environmental field.

REFERENCES

Abrams, M. (2018, November 30). A life-wide approach to workforce development. Retrieved April 16, 2021, from <https://helpingnewcomerswork.ca/blog-post/a-life-wide-approach-to-workforce-development/>

Canadian Council for Youth Prosperity. (2020). Youth In Canada: A Profile (Issue brief No. 1). Retrieved November 30, 2020, from Canadian Council for Youth Prosperity website: https://441491a8-bbab-4bca-a287-4cfd5caae3c0.filesusr.com/ugd/a42adf_13fd9091edf3447289c541063bbeebf6.pdf

Canadian Council for Youth Prosperity. (2020). Youth Employment and the Pandemic (Issue brief No. 2). Retrieved December 12, 2020, from Canadian Council for Youth Prosperity website: https://441491a8-bbab-4bca-a287-4cfd5caae3c0.filesusr.com/ugd/a987a0_3b724cffaf2f4c28842961d08a9b03a6.pdf

Corkal, V., Gabs, P., & Cosbey, A. (2020, June 07). Green Strings: Principles and Conditions for a Green Recovery from COVID -18 in Canada (Rep.). Retrieved March 23, 2021, from International Institute for Sustainable Development website: <https://www.iisd.org/publications/green-strings-recovery-covid-19-canada>

ECO Canada. (2013). Profile of Canadian Environmental Employment. (23 - 27). Retrieved May 15, 2021, from Environmental Career Organization of Canada website: <https://www.eco.ca/ecoreports/pdf/2013-Profile-Canadian-Environmental-Employment-ECO-Canada.pdf>

ECO Canada. (2020). ECO Canada Employment Programs - Science Horizons Internship. Retrieved September 1, 2020, from <https://www.eco.ca/employment-programs/youth-placement/science-horizons-internship-program/>

ECO Canada. (2020, December). Environmental Labour Market Challenges and Opportunities in the Decade Ahead (Rep.). Retrieved January 15, 2021, from Environmental Careers Organization of Canada website: <https://www.eco.ca/research/report/environmental-labour-supply-outlook-report/>

ECO Canada. (2021, March). A Green Economic Recovery: Trends, Developments, and Opportunities for the Environmental Workforce (Rep.). Retrieved March 18, 2021, from Environmental Careers Organization of Canada website: [https://www.eco.ca/research/report/trends-developments-and-opportunities-for-the-environmental-workforce/?utm_source=Act-On_Software&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=march_newsletter&utm_term=Download the Report&utm_content=email&cm_mmc=Act-On Software_-_email_-_Summer co-op funding is now open!- _-Download the Report](https://www.eco.ca/research/report/trends-developments-and-opportunities-for-the-environmental-workforce/?utm_source=Act-On_Software&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=march_newsletter&utm_term=Download%20the%20Report&utm_content=email&cm_mmc=Act-On_Software_-_email_-_Summer%20co-op%20funding%20is%20now%20open!_-_Download%20the%20Report)

Employment and Social Development Canada. (2020, June 23). **BACKGROUND: The Canada Emergency Student Benefit**. Retrieved March 18, 2021, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2020/05/backgrounder-the-canada-emergency-student-benefit.html>

Employment and Social Development Canada (2020, February 10). **Youth Employment and Skills Strategy – Funding programs**. Retrieved December 01, 2020, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/funding/youth-employment-strategy.html>

Environment and Climate Change Canada. (2019). **Achieving a Sustainable Future: A Federal Sustainable Development Strategy for Canada 2019 to 2022**. i-128. Government of Canada. http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2020/eccc/En4-136-2019-1-eng.pdf

Environment and Climate Change Canada. (2020, December). **A Healthy Environment and a Healthy Economy: Canada's strengthened climate plan to create jobs and support people, communities and the planet**. Government of Canada. https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/eccc/documents/pdf/climate-change/climate-plan/healthy_environment_healthy_economy_plan.pdf

Just Recovery For All. (2020). **We demand a Just Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic**. Retrieved March 25, 2021, from <https://justrecoveryforall.ca/>

Natural Resources Canada. (2020, June 19). **Investing in the Future of Youth With Green Jobs in the Natural Resources Sectors**. Retrieved November 15, 2020, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/natural-resources-canada/news/2020/06/investing-in-the-future-of-youth-with-green-jobs-in-the-natural-resources-sectors.html>

Natural Resources Canada. (2021, January 06). **Green Jobs in Natural Resources**. Retrieved March 18, 2021, from <https://www.nrcan.gc.ca/climate-change/canadas-green-future/green-jobs/87>

Opportunity For All Youth. (2021, April 1). **Youth Employment in Canada: THE YOUTH INSIGHTS REPORT 2020 (Rep.)**. Retrieved April 1, 2021, from Opportunity For All Youth website: <https://www.opportunityforallyouth.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/01-04-2021-Youth-Insights-Report-FINAL.pdf>

Pittis, D. (2019, December 6). **Job killer or job creator? Experts predict a climate employment boom: Don Pittis**. CBC News. Retrieved December 1, 2020, from <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/employment-climate-economy-1.5384311>

Project Learning Tree Canada. (2021, January 12). **Mentorship for youth in the forest and conservation sector**. Retrieved May 5, 2021, from <https://pltcanada.org/en/green-jobs/mentorship-program-for-youth-in-forest-conservation/>

Service Canada. (2021, January 22). Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). Retrieved March 18, 2021, from <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application.html>

Statistics Canada. (2020). The Daily — Number of young Canadians NEET doubled this spring. [www150.statcan.gc.ca](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200924/dq200924c-eng.htm). Retrieved 10 January 2021, from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200924/dq200924c-eng.htm>.

Statistics Canada. (2020, August 04) Labour Force Survey, August 2020. Retrieved September 20th, 2020. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200904/dq200904a-eng.html>

Statistics Canada. (2020, November 06). Labour Force Survey, October 2020. Retrieved November 15, 2020, from <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/201106/dq201106a-eng.htm?HPA=1&indid=3587-2&indgeo=0>

Strandberg-Salmon, B. (2020, October 26). Green jobs for youth the key to pandemic recovery in Canada. Canada's National Observer. Retrieved November 25, 2020, from <https://www.nationalobserver.com/2020/10/26/opinion/green-jobs-youth-key-pandemic-recovery-canada>

Topping, T., & Chiarella, M. (2021, January 25). Green Jobs in Green Spaces Presentation. In Cannexus 2021. Retrieved March 23, 2021, from <https://cannexus21.gtr.pathable.com/meetings/virtual/MAPajk6yn246s48ja>

Trading Economics (2021). Canada Youth Unemployment Rate | 1976-2021 Data | 2022-2023 Forecast | Historical. [tradingeconomics.com](https://tradingeconomics.com/canada/youth-unemployment-rate). Retrieved 16 January 2021, from <https://tradingeconomics.com/canada/youth-unemployment-rate>

The Office of the Prime Minister. (2020, April 08). Changes to Canada Summer Jobs program to help businesses and young Canadians affected by COVID-19. Retrieved November 20, 2020, from <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/04/08/changes-canada-summer-jobs-program-help-businesses-and-young3%20Project>. (2019, August 21). About 3% Project. Retrieved May 15, 2021, from <https://3percentproject.com/about/>

APPENDIX 1

Interview Questions

- 1 What is your job title and role in your organization?
- 2 How do you define a green or low-carbon job?
- 3 What if anything do you think is missing from existing federally funded environmental employment programs for youth?
- 4 What do you think are the biggest strengths and weaknesses of the enviro employment programs you fund/run specifically?
- 5 How are youth being engaged in the creation of these employment programs? Are they engaged in monitoring and evaluation of the success of these programs?
- 6 What are the main equity considerations when it comes to helping youth get into the green sector?
- 7 How is success measured? How does the department know if this program helps youth get full-time/permanent jobs in the green sector?
- 8 Why are these environmental employment programs for youth funded under multiple different streams/departments? - would mainstreaming them or having them all under the direction of one department help or hurt?



APPENDIX 2

Survey Questions

- 1 How do you define a low-carbon or green job?
- 2 How interested are you in doing work that is low-carbon or positively affects the environment in some way? (1=Not Interested; 2=Slightly Interested; 3=Moderately Interested; 4=Very Interested; 5=Extremely Interested)
- 3 What barriers do you experience or would expect to face in getting a green job?
- 4 How difficult do you perceive it is to enter the low-carbon field?
(1=Not Difficult; 2= Slightly Difficult; 3=Moderately Difficult; 4=Very Difficult; 5=Extremely Difficult)
- 5 Are you aware of any existing environmental employment programs for youth?
[that are offered by the federal government]

Green Job Programs for Youth:

- ECO Canada Digital Skills for Youth Internship
- ECO Canada Science Horizons Internship
- ECO Canada Youth Employment in Natural Resources
- ImpACT SDG Internship
- Electricity HR Green Jobs Program
- Science and Technology Internship Program (STIP)
- Project Learning Tree Green Jobs in Green Spaces Program

- 6 Based off of the above program titles alone, would you perceive yourself to be eligible for any of these green job programs?
- 7 Have you participated in any of the programs listed? Select all that apply:
- 8 Had you heard of any of these programs before participating in this survey?
- 9 Have you ever considered work in the low-carbon or environmental field?
- 10 What kind of supports or programs would help you get into the green field?

Demographic Questions:

- 1 Do you identify as Black, Indigenous or a Person of Colour (choose all that apply)
- 2 How old are you?
- 3 Which best describes the place you live? (choose between rural, urban, remote or fill in response)
- 4 What is your immigration status? (choose all that apply)
- 5 Which best describes your gender?
- 6 Do you identify as a person with a disability, either visible or invisible?
- 7 Which province or territory are you located in? (If you have participated in one of the programs please indicate where your placement was, if not please indicate where you currently live.)

APPENDIX 3

Planning and Fundings Challenges

Planning/Funding Rounds

Similar to the length of placements, the timing of planning and funding rounds for the green jobs programs has a big impact on hiring and budgeting due to how it coincides with seasonal work, especially up North in natural resources and conservation sectors. Sarah Casorso and Meghan Hach both highlighted that the awarding of funding often came at inconvenient times which would cause them to miss key hiring periods. As Sarah puts it “the timing of when federal budgets are released or approved don’t necessarily line up with that of what the industry is doing for hiring”. The length of federal funding rounds also exacerbates this issue. For example, CICan has to reapply for funding every two years and there is always a gap when that happens. This meant that in 2020 all their Career Launcher programs ended on March 31st and they had to wait until June/July for their renewal, at which point a really important piece of the hiring season, especially for students and recent grads, had already passed. Ideally, Meghan and other interviewees would like to see their organizations funded for a round of five years so that they can more fully grow and build the program. This extra time would allow them to build meaningful partnerships with employers and other organizations, but as is “when you’re tied to really short timelines and constraints from the government sometimes you’re forced to just take the first come, first serve approach”.

Volume of Placements and Funding/Wage Subsidy Amounts

A related issue is the volume of placements and the funding amounts/percentage of wage subsidy provided by ESDC. For example the SDG Impact Internship has the most inclusive definition of green jobs and covers 100% of wages for youth hired but is only able to fund 100 work placements. While the lowest wage subsidy for all the programs I surveyed is still very sizable, (50% wage subsidy for the Science Horizons Internship and Green Jobs in Green Spaces Programs), Meghan Hach emphasizes that even a 30% contribution from the employers side is not doable for many. As you can see in Table 1. only the SDG Impact Internship and the Digital Skills for Youth program offer 100% wage subsidy currently, which has allowed them to fund organizations which are entirely volunteer run to have their first ever staff members. Even for programs that cover less, such as the STIP program which offers 75% wage subsidies, they are only offering 500 placements spread across the numerous delivery partners. Hadrian Mertins-Kirkwood emphasizes this issue of scale: 500 STEM internships is great but “we have tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of young people who need work”. This ties into one of my main arguments: the urgency of both the climate crisis and the youth unemployment crisis due to COVID-19 means we need to get as many young people into green jobs as we can.