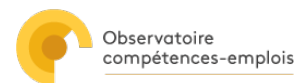




Employment in Quebec in 2030: Action Labs – Regional Summary



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Special thanks to workshop participants who contributed their expertise and time to help Canadians better prepare for the labour market of tomorrow.

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Project Overview

Employment in 2030 was an 18-month initiative that combined foresight research, expert opinion, and a machine learning algorithm to generate forecasts of skill demand and occupational growth in 2030. The project is summarized in the report *Ahead by a Decade*, released in spring 2020. The initial initiative was designed to fill gaps in labour market information (LMI) in Canada by providing forecasts tailored to labour market developments across the country.

Since the mandate of the Brookfield Institute is to conduct practical, applied research, Employment in 2030: (Action Labs) was designed to support the initial initiative. Its goal is to translate labour market forecasts (in addition to other LMI sources) into concrete solutions that could help workers prepare for their future. With funding from the Future Skills Center, this project was launched in the fall of 2020.

Given the diversity of the Canadian labour market and the experience of women workers across the country, this project aimed to provide region-specific solutions that could ideally be replicated and extended to other contexts.

To do this, we partnered with five organizations:

- + Yukon University (Whitehorse, Yukon);
- + RADIUS at Simon Fraser University (Vancouver, British Columbia);
- + Tech Manitoba (Winnipeg, Manitoba);
- + Observatoire compétences-emplois (Montreal, Quebec);
- + Newfoundland and Labrador Workforce Innovation Centre (Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador).

The following summary describes the Action Labs conducted in Quebec.



About Action Labs

Action Labs were conducted in three phases. **The first phase** explored the potential impacts of COVID-19 on the Canadian labour market and how these might affect current projections. This was done by conducting forward-looking research and asking a panel of national experts to comment on emerging trends and their potential impacts. The culmination of this phase was the publication of *Yesterday's Gone: Exploring the future of Canada's labour market in a post-COVID world.*

The second phase involved a series of human-centered conceptual workshops. In this phase, we conducted an initial review of existing LMI to identify a regional problem; conducted user interviews to better understand the current experience; and held two virtual workshops to translate the problem into possible solutions. The problem varied from region to region, and the Quebec Action Labs sought to help mid-career workers in lower-skilled jobs in the tourism, hospitality and recreation industry develop basic skills to improve their mobility in the future labour market.

The third and final phase focused on translating our process into LMI observations, which led to the production of a series of thoughts and ideas about how we might redesign LMI in the future to be more worker-centered. This information is summarized in *Ground Control to LMI: Making Labour Market Information Work for Workers.*



Action Labs Conducted in Quebec

Based on the broad research question “how can we find practical solutions that help Canadian workers acquire the core skills and abilities identified by the Forecast of Canadian Occupational Growth (FCOG) deemed essential for the future workplace”, we worked with the Observatoire compétences-emplois (OCE) and several Quebec labour market experts to identify a promising area of interest for the regional labour market in Quebec.



Defining Quebec’s Regional Issue

The Forecast of Canadian Occupational Growth (FCOG) regional analysis indicated that 33% of workers in the province are in occupations that are expected to change by 2030. Mid-career workers in lower-skilled occupations face many challenges in adjusting to the labour market and maintaining employment. For example, some of their skills may become obsolete and they need to acquire new skills to cope with changes in their respective industries. In addition, Quebec does not have a specific program to support mid-career workers. However, there are over 30 sectoral workforce committees in as many economic sectors. These committees implement a variety of practical solutions for skills development and recognition in voluntary companies, which correspond to each sector of activity. In addition, there are a dozen training mutuels in 10 economic activity sectors that offer various training programs to employees of small and medium-sized businesses who request them.



Regional Issue:
How can we help mid-career workers in lower-skilled jobs in the tourism, hospitality, and recreation industry develop basic skills to improve their mobility in the future labour market?

Understanding the Issue

In collaboration with OCE, the Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship (BII+E) interviewed three mid-career individuals working in the tourism, hospitality, and recreation industry to understand their perspectives on preparing for future jobs and skills. We distributed summaries of these interviews, in the form of short video edits, to all expert workshop participants to further our understanding of the issue. A number of key observations emerged from the interviews:

- + Mid-career workers prefer to stay in their industry because they are experienced, skilled and enjoy their jobs.
- + These workers plan to pursue academic studies in other fields.
- + They feel that the transferability of their skills is not necessarily evident to employers outside their field.
- + They find it difficult to access existing skills development or workforce programs, particularly training programs because:
 - these programs are only for people who are unemployed, not for people who are underemployed or looking to change industries or upgrade their skills;
 - the program schedules are not adapted to the users' schedules;
 - while employed, users are not eligible for most or all training programs.
- + Mid-career workers obtain program and labour market information passively through social media, or more actively from a trusted source (a newsletter from an organization they know and subscribe to, or an industry organization, or information received directly from a career counsellor or career management expert).
- + They feel that tourism is an undervalued sector, often perceived as an industry and a career that does not require skills. It is not constructive to view the industry in this way. It is a lifelong career for many residents, and one that requires



many skills and abilities. To arrive at solutions, it is important to value this work, the skills of the workers and the industry itself.

- + In an ideal world, training programs would offer financial support, remove barriers to participation (by offering different formats and time slots, childcare, etc.), and be tailored to the user, for example by being offered online or in person.

What is a living expert?

Every day we use our skills and experience to meet challenges. These skills and experience are part of our “expertise” and are the result of our experiences, education, and training. While we may all take a different approach to a challenge based on our expertise, problem solving is a shared human experience and a skill that we all need to practice every day. This project invited participants to contribute their expertise as experts to explore and suggest ideas in response to the regional problem.

Based on this information, BII+E facilitated a two-part workshop series with 11 participants in Quebec on May 20 and 27, 2021. Participants – career workers, guidance counsellors, teachers and trainers, employers, human resource professors, and labour market experts – brought a range of perspectives.

To better understand the issue, we asked all participants to consider the current experience of the people we serve - mid-career workers in the tourism, hospitality and recreation sectors. We asked participants to think about how these workers might respond to the issue: what might they “think



and feel,” “see,” “say and do,” “hear”? We also asked them to summarize, overall, the views that work in the workers’ favour and those that are causes of frustration. Here is a summary of what we heard:

Focus on Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI): Working closely with our partners at RADIUS at Simon Fraser University, we incorporated a JEDI approach into our workshop design. This included establishing a set of commitments and expectations for the community at the beginning of the workshop to ensure that each participant understood and committed to creating an environment of respect. This approach was particularly important given that our approach intentionally engaged a variety of participants, including “users” with lived experience of the problem. With this in mind, we also modified our overall language. We avoided suggesting that the challenges these workshops were intended to address would be “solved” and made it clear that a “solution” was not necessarily the goal of the workshop or a required contribution from participants.

What mid-career workers “think and feel”:

- + Fear of being too old for change
- + Uncertainty about what skills will be required and whether to change, improve or wait
- + Loss of meaning, grief, and difficulty imagining oneself in another field
- + Decreased self-confidence due to comparison with other workers

What mid-career workers “say and do”:

- + Constantly seeking job stability
- + Invest in continuing education
- + Ask for and receive help in dealing with information overload
- + Read articles and listen to podcasts to learn more about the job market and predictions of employment needs
- + Take stock of their transferable skills and enrich their profile

What mid-career workers “see”:

- + Social media advertising
- + High unemployment rate in their field
- + Distress of former managers or colleagues
- + Skills acquired that are not recognized in other industries



What mid-career workers “hear”:

- + That they need to get a real job
- + That they have to choose the jobs of the future when they don’t exist yet
- + That demand is insufficient in relation to supply

Overall, what works in favour of mid-career workers:

- + A large number of new opportunities available in the job market
- + Examples of people who have successfully retrained in another field
- + Resources to facilitate the transition (training programs and employment counsellors)
- + The knowledge and skills gained in the restaurant, hotel, and tourism industry could open new doors for them

Overall, what is most frustrating for mid-career workers:

- + Lack of motivation to retrain in a new field
- + Conflicting observations and information, including future employment studies
- + Being told that working in tourism is not a “real job”

- + Having to be as educated as possible and constantly enrolled in programs, which can result in wasted time or money



Solution Criteria

Based on our understanding of the issue, we asked workshop participants to develop a list of “must-have” criteria to use as inspiration for new ideas and solutions. Based on the discussions in the different groups, the following is a list of these criteria.

To be successful, any solution must:

- + Be quickly applicable, easy to access, simple to use; offer multiple modes of access; don't have too many criteria.
- + Be centralized, e.g. one-stop shop.
- + Be technological.
- + Be quick or flexible (time sensitive).
- + Provide visibility and access to help and advice.
- + Encourage the employer to actively participate in the measures.
- + Provide an income allowance to participants.
- + Facilitate entry into the workforce for immigrant populations.
- + Adopt a cross-sectoral and global perspective.
- + Make relationship skills development training available.

- + The message must be spread to everyone: employers, organizations, workers, etc.

Initial Ideas for Solutions

Using these criteria and their knowledge of the issue, participants identified the following ideas as possible solutions to support mid-career workers.

1. *Gamification* of training, skills, talents, and innate qualities with the recognition of the human as a whole to facilitate their mobility in the workforce.
2. Formal recognition of continuing education that meets the needs of labour mobility and that will allow workers to use the skills they have acquired wherever they choose.
3. A training account (personal).

Other ideas mentioned include:

- + Centralization of programs. One-stop shop. Simplification for interested parties.
- + Funding for organizations, training, and individuals that will support universal – and free – access.



- + Awareness campaign or training for companies to develop an organizational culture that allows employees to participate in non-specific skills training without fear of losing their job.
- + Financial incentive for companies to improve the retention, versatility, and competitiveness of their workforce in order to promote internal mobility.
- + Accountability of companies with regard to the trajectories of their employees.

Development and Improvement of Solutions

To further develop these ideas, participants developed a series of prototypes. Each group created a scenario describing how the solution would be used, allowing them to clarify their ideas and identify areas of improvement. The groups then explored other prototyping options, including conceptual mock-ups of an application and the components of a program. Based on this exercise, participants refined their solution and identified implementation paths.

1. Competence 360*

An application that recognizes the value of workers, regardless of their field or how they acquired their skills. This app highlights value-added and transferable skills. It also connects workers to the labour market.

The app would consist of three modules:

- + My Profile – information and videos through which the worker can introduce themselves.
- + Trainings – short trainings integrated directly into the app.
- + Employer Link – the app serves as a resource for employers.
 - The worker can contact employers or consult job opportunities in their field.
 - Employers can contact potential workers.

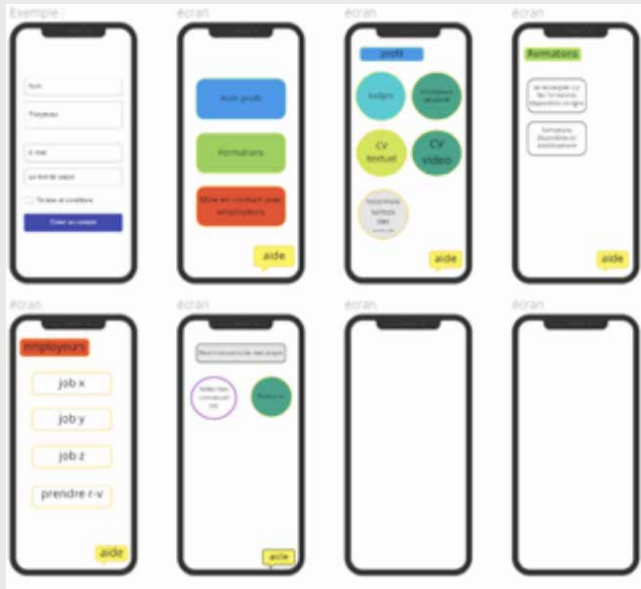
Other app components:

- + The green “help” button – this is a very important feature; the worker can get help at any time by reaching a real person or programs and resources.
- + Skills drop-down lists – users would easily click boxes and badges representing acquired skills,



which employers could recognize, that would be available.

- + The goal is to ensure that the app is used by as many stakeholders as possible.



What gap does this solution fill? Through Action Labs, workers in the tourism, hospitality, and recreation sectors told us that they already possess many of the core skills identified in the Forecast of Canadian Occupational Growth. This solution would help workers build on their transferable or core skills, regardless of their field or how they acquired those skills.

2. Recognition Portal

A portal for the recognition of skills acquired through continuing education and past experience. The portal assists in workforce mobility and allows individuals to use their skills where they want or need them. An essential component to the implementation of the portal would be an Advisory Board of mid-career individuals.

This web portal showcases the practical experience and small amount of training that people take throughout their lives, both on and off the job. This will allow workers to use and be recognized for the skills they have and to continue to learn new ones. It is important that certificates are formal and recognized.

Other components of the web portal:

- + Users can validate the training they have already done in the past.
- + A person can also search for training that is relevant to their situation and career.
- + The portal would identify skills applicable to different fields and allow workers to transition to different fields.



- + A variety of tests would be available to validate skills, including language skills, and to attest to achievements (from work-based learning), etc.
- + A sharing link would allow this information (accomplishments) to be sent to current or prospective employers.
- + Counselling services would help mid-career individuals identify skills that they can develop in their current job as well as those that could be validated.

What gap does this solution fill? Through Action Labs, workers in the tourism, hospitality, and recreation sectors told us that they are already training and upgrading their skills; however, this upgrading is not always recognized more broadly, particularly by employers. This solution would allow workers and employers to recognize training and certifications.

3. Individual Training Account

An individual account would be a sum of money available each year that can be accumulated over time. The amount accumulated in the training account could be allocated to upgrading, learning new skills, prior learning assessment, or (additional) funding for an internship. A universal model

could be piloted with the hospitality sector. This long-term and ongoing training account would be available to anyone of working age, including those in the workforce and those who are retired. A solution like this already exists in Singapore. The goal is to increase the autonomy and adaptability of the workforce so that they can be agile and resilient in the face of a changing labor market.



Other features of the training account:

- + Access to career support – this is someone who understands the worker’s needs and helps them anticipate and design future opportunities based on their knowledge of future labour market trends.
- + Flexibility – for example, a person who wants to return to school for three years can use this allowance.
- + With the training account, there is no need to go to a specific location to participate in training.

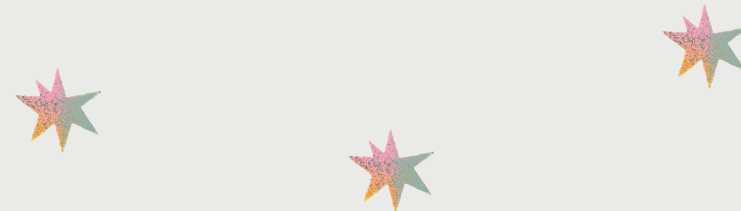
What gap does this solution fill? Through Action Labs, workers in the tourism, hospitality, and recreation sector told us that they needed the flexibility to continue to develop their skills and that they needed funding to explore options.

Next Steps

The solutions proposed here are based on an understanding of the current experience of mid-career workers in the tourism, hospitality, and recreation industries in Quebec. While the solutions are customized to support this type of worker, they are very broad in scope. Many of the solutions

focused on recognizing skills and abilities in order to use or develop them. Workshop participants noted that the three solutions overlap and could be combined into one solution.

There is interest in moving forward with all of the solutions identified, with 89% of participants indicating that they would like to continue working on their ideas. Participants suggested that the solutions be implemented through collaboration and funding from multiple levels of government (federal and provincial), and that they be led by the Ministry of Economy and Innovation. Participants also proposed the creation of an advisory board composed of mid-career workers to establish the vision for the web portal, application or training account so that the functionality matches the needs of workers and continuing education institutions. Finally, an environmental scan should be conducted as part of the next steps to leverage or enhance existing programs or services.



About the Regional Partner

The Observatoire compétences-emplois (OCE) is a research and knowledge transfer centre on training and workforce skills development. Created in 2010 by the UQAM, the OCE's mission is to provide food for thought and to support the actions of labour market and education stakeholders. The OCE is a living organization involved in both the academic and civil society communities. Our members are regularly invited to intervene at the regional, provincial and national levels as expert advisors.

Special Thanks

Thank you to Gillian Kranias and Monika Goodluck who joined the Action Labs team to lead the organization of the workshops held in Quebec.

Quick Links:

[Executive Summary](#)

[Ground Control to LMI](#)

[Employment in 2030 Action Labs](#)






The Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship (BII+E) is an independent and nonpartisan policy institute, housed within Ryerson University, that is dedicated to building a prosperous Canada where everyone has the opportunity to thrive in an inclusive, resilient economy. BII+E generates forward-looking insights and stimulates new thinking to advance actionable innovation policy in Canada.

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