



MALATEST



Future Skills Centre

Evaluation of Blue Door's Construct Program in Durham Region

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FSC is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to preparing Canadians for employment success. We believe Canadians should feel confident about the skills they have to succeed in a changing workforce. As a pan-Canadian community, we are collaborating to rigorously identify, test, measure, and share innovative approaches to assessing and developing the skills Canadians need to thrive in the days and years ahead. The Future Skills Centre was founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint ADE, and The Conference Board of Canada

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Executive Summary

Approximately 1-page executive summary including any evidence-based implications.

1. Background and Project Description

The skilled trades sector has been facing labour shortages across Canada, particularly since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ As part of its efforts to address this gap and to provide career opportunities to vulnerable populations, Blue Door launched its social enterprise initiative, Construct, in the Durham Region of Ontario. Construct provided eight weeks of skills training for people to enter the construction trades, including:

- Two weeks of in-class skills training, such as construction-related skills, safety, and certifications (such as hazardous materials, working at heights, first aid, health and safety);
- Six weeks of hands-on training experience with construction projects and attending worksites; and,
- Ongoing wraparound supports, such as transportation, counselling, housing, daycare, and meal allowances.

The Future Skills Centre (FSC) has invested \$1.2 million in support of this two-year project (2020-2022) to expand Construct into Durham Region.² FSC commissioned Malatest to conduct an independent evaluation of the project upon its completion. This document summarizes the evaluation's design, methods, results, and implications.

1.1 Project Need

To understand the context for Construct, this sub-section addresses the following questions:

- Why was this project needed?
- To what extent were these needs being addressed before project implementation? What was known about what needed to be improved or expanded?
- Which populations did this project aim to serve?

1.1.1 Need for Construct Project

Southern Ontario, including the Durham Region is currently facing a number of issues that are impacting the social and economic fabric of the region. There is a housing shortage due to low housing stock, high inflation, increased living costs, and population growth.³ The high demand for housing has also escalated the housing crisis in Ontario making housing unaffordable⁴ for a significant portion of the population.

¹ Statistics Canada (2022). Labour Shortage Trends in Canada. Retrieved from: [Labour shortage trends in Canada \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/28-263-x/2022001/article/00001-eng.htm).

² Construct began in York Region supported by provincial funding. Construct also receives funding from provincial and federal programs other than FSC to deliver the program in York and Peel regions, and in Durham following the FSC funding period.

³ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2022). *Canada's Housing Supply Shortages: Estimating what is needed to solve Canada's housing affordability crisis by 2030*. Retrieved from: <https://bluedoor.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/housing-shortages-canada-solving-affordability-crisis-en.pdf>

⁴ In 2021, costs for shelter in Ontario averaged 60% of disposable income compared to 40% in 2003. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2022). *Canada's Housing Supply Shortages: Estimating what is needed to solve Canada's housing affordability crisis by 2030*. Retrieved from: www.bluedoor.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/housing-shortages-canada-solving-affordability-crisis-en.pdf

Low-income earners and marginalized populations including youth, 2SLGBTQ+, women, Indigenous people, and those who identify as Black or persons of colour are disproportionately impacted by cost-of-living increases. Members of these groups are more likely to have low incomes, face food insecurity,⁵ and experience homelessness or are at greater risk of being homeless.⁶ According to a 2021 Statistics Canada report, 23% of single individuals, 17% of female single parent families, and 14% of Indigenous populations were low income compared to 8% of all Canadians.⁷ In addition, the following groups were more likely to experience poverty in 2021:

- Single individuals (22%) and lone parent families (16%) compared to 4% of two-parent families;
- Indigenous persons living off-reserve (31% vs. 7% of non-Indigenous population); and
- Visible minorities (25% vs. 16% of population not a visible minority).⁸

This housing shortage is further fuelled by the lack of skilled tradespeople in construction.⁹ The lack of skilled tradespeople is exacerbated by the rate of retirement among construction and maintenance workers,¹⁰ the high demand for housing, and the decreasing number of Ontarians with an apprenticeship certificate in the construction trade.¹¹ In addition, women, racialized groups, and immigrants continue to be underrepresented in the skilled trades, making up fewer than 20% of certified tradespeople in the construction trades.¹² The high demand for skilled trades workers in the construction industry is expected to continue for at least the next 10 years.

Given the demand for skilled construction workers, Construct aimed to provide marginalized groups an opportunity to receive skilled trades training in efforts to address the multiple social and economic issues encountered by these groups.

1.1.2 Need for Improvement or Expansion

Blue Door has been serving vulnerable populations in the York Region for over 40 years by providing shelter and support to those in need. During this time, the organization has identified that for housing to be sustainable and permanent, individuals must be provided the opportunity to pursue a career and earn a livable wage. Blue Door also learned that providing individuals with a job was no guarantee of

⁵ The Daily (May 2, 2023). *Canadian Income Survey, 2021*. Statistics Canada Retrieved from: www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/230502/dq230502a-eng.htm.

⁶ The Regional Municipality of York and United Way Greater Toronto, *I Count 2021: York Region's 2021 Homeless Count*, May 2022. Retrieved from: [I Count – York Region's 2021 Homeless Count Report \(unitedwaygt.org\)](https://www.unitedwaygt.org/reports/i-count-2021-york-region-s-2021-homeless-count-report)

⁷ The Daily (May 2, 2023). *Canadian Income Survey, 2021*. Statistics Canada Retrieved from: www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/230502/dq230502a-eng.htm.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Statistics Canada (2022). *Labour Shortage Trends in Canada*. Retrieved from: [Labour shortage trends in Canada \(statcan.gc.ca\)](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/28-661-x/2022001/article/00001-eng.htm)

¹⁰ Buildforce Canada. *2022-2023 Annual Report*. Ottawa, Ontario. Retrieved from: www.buildforce.ca/system/files/annual_reports/BF-AR2023_ENG-FINAL_JUN27.pdf

¹¹ The number of apprenticeship workers in construction trades has decreased by 4% since 2016. Statistics Canada (2022). "Canada leads the G7 for the most educated workforce, thanks to immigrants, young adults and a strong college sector, but is experiencing significant losses in apprenticeship certificate holders in key trades." *The Daily*. November 30. Statistics Canada catalogue no. 11-001-X. Retrieved from: www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/221130/dq221130a-eng.pdf?st=4B2s8kCm

¹² Ibid.

success. Individuals must receive training to develop the essential and technical skills required for the workplace to achieve more long-term economic security.

In addition, many of these individuals faced other barriers to finding and retaining employment such as access to transportation and childcare, housing and food insecurity, and physical and mental health issues including substance use. Blue Door realized that in addition to training, individuals needed to receive wraparound supports to address other barriers to employment. By offering wraparound supports in conjunction with skills training, participants could begin to build resilience, develop marketable skills, and earn a livable wage.

Although the Durham Region had local organizations such as YMCA Durham, Kids on Wheels, and Ontario Works that help marginalized groups find employment and provide housing and other supports, there was no one program that could train these individual while providing supports and helping them find employment in the construction trades.

Blue Door created Construct to help address the shortage of skilled trades workers by providing participants with essential and technical skills training, hands on experience, and wraparound supports. Construct was first launched in the York Region in 2020. Blue Door saw the opportunity to expand in other areas of the province that had a similar demand for skilled construction workers. As a result, Construct received funding from FSC to expand the program into the Durham Region.

1.1.3 Target Populations

Construct was made accessible to residents of the Durham Region in Ontario who were looking to explore a career in the construction industry, including:

- Youth,
- Women,
- Indigenous peoples,
- Immigrants,
- Newcomers and refugees,
- Veterans,
- Racialized peoples,
- Individuals from the 2SLGBTQ+ community,
- Persons with disabilities,
- Individuals without postsecondary education, and
- Individuals with essential skills gaps.

1.2 Theory of Change

As a social enterprise, Construct aimed to test the extent to which training approaches, social supports, and resources provided to individuals who face barriers to employment will increase their employability in the construction industry in Ontario. It was anticipated that graduates of the program would make a living wage, would achieve housing stability and would develop meaningful career paths.

The following sub-sections describe Construct's delivery model, resources and activities, anticipated outcomes, assumptions and contextual factors that may have affected success, and how Construct would achieve its goals.

A theory of change model for Construct can be found in Appendix C.

1.2.1 Construct's Delivery Model

Construct was modeled after established trades-based social employment enterprises¹³ across Canada. Construct aimed to help individuals gain long-term employment and financial stability through the provision of three main program components:

- Skills Training: In-class and on-the-job training to learn construction skills and work tolerance.
- Paid Training and Work Experience: Participants were paid during their in-class and on-the-job training. Staff also provide ongoing coaching and support on-the-job; and
- Wraparound Supports: Supports (such as providing transportation, counselling, or housing) were offered to help participants overcome employment barriers.

Construct provided a trainee portal where participants could sign up for the program, schedule in-person training sessions, register for virtual training sessions, and network with employers during the program and after graduation. Training sessions were limited to small cohorts of participants (maximum of eight per cohort).

1.2.2 Process

Construct noted several project activities in their work plan, including:

¹³ For example, Building Up and Impact Construction. Since launching in 2014, Building Up has helped 480 marginalized individuals (86% of graduates secure apprenticeships or full-time employment in construction). Retrieved from: <https://www.buildingup.ca>. Since launching in 2008, Impact construction has helped 236 youth in Newfoundland and Labrador receive supportive employment with 70% of program graduates securing employment or enrollment in post-secondary school. Retrieved from: <https://www.impactconstructionnl.com/social-impact>.

Figure 1. Construct Project Activities

Stakeholder Responsible	Activities
Blue Door	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified the need for Construct in the Durham Region. • Sourced Durham organizations with the potential to provide training, wraparound supports, and employment opportunities. • Hired three staff members (crew lead, lead hand and project manager) and a web developer. • Purchased cargo vans and office furniture. • Hired a contract evaluation consultant and develop evaluation framework. • Secured a training facility.
Construct Project Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversaw the development of promotional material that enabled Construct to engage with partners, employers, and potential program participants. • Conducted community outreach and secured partnerships for program delivery and wraparound supports. • Secured rental storage space for equipment. • Oversaw the set up of a Salesforce database and installation of required software. • Coordinated and oversaw the development of connections to employers and trades unions to support graduates ability to secure employment.
Construct Crew Lead and Lead Hand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversaw, supported, and coached participants during their on-the-job training and workplace experience.
Web Developer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Built an online trainee portal that provided participants access to virtual training, wraparound supports, and ongoing networking opportunities.
Stakeholders (unions, training providers, and community organizations)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided training, career counselling, on-the-job work experiences, employment opportunities, and wraparound supports. • Referred participants to Construct. • Championed and promoted Construct.

Source: Construct Work Plan.

1.2.3 Outcomes

Construct identified short- and intermediate-term outcomes for participants receiving training and for employers that hired program graduates.¹⁴ Longer term outcomes at the institutional or organizational level and at a broader systems level were also identified.

1.2.3.1 Participant Outcomes

Outcomes identified for Construct participants included:

Immediate outcomes:

- 80% graduation rate;

¹⁴ The funding proposal submitted by Blue Door to FSC included outcomes for employers, including: employers specifically hire Construct graduates; employers commit to hiring homeless individuals or those at risk of homelessness; and 80% of employers report reduced stigma and satisfaction with hires. However, employer outcomes were not tracked during the project's funding period and evaluators did not engage with employers for the Construct evaluation.

- 75% are satisfied with support and training received;
- 100% gain basic math, improved literacy, teamwork skills, and improved self-worth, confidence and accountability;
- 90% gain work experience relevant to their post-program employment; and
- 80% achieve the balance of education or credentials needed to decrease employment barriers (Certifications: Passive House, First Aid, WHMIS, Construct diploma).

Intermediate outcomes:

- Project graduates stay at the job for more than a year;
- 80% of graduates enter high-paying jobs or further education; and
- 75% report career stability and development.

1.2.3.2 Institutional Level Outcomes

At the institutional level, Construct sought to provide a sustainable program that:

- Addressed homelessness and housing instability,
- Reduced barriers to finding and sustaining employment for low income and marginalized populations, and
- Had graduates with high paying jobs and stable housing.

1.2.3.3 System Level Outcomes

As a social enterprise, Construct aimed to develop a standard of practice for other organizations to mirror and advocate for the expansion of Construct. Construct intended to create partnerships and develop a model that could be replicated in other communities in Ontario and eventually be adopted as a model for a social enterprise strategy to end homelessness across Canada.

1.2.4 Assumptions

Several initial assumptions were made about Construct that would help to ensure the program's success, including:

- Project partners and stakeholders would actively promote Construct to increase awareness of the services offered and refer prospective participants to the program.
- Project partners and stakeholders would have the capacity to deliver the in-class and on-the-job training.
- Participants would be motivated and committed to attending the eight-week program.
- The wraparound supports would help support participants transition from a life of instability (homelessness, transient, conflict with the law, lack of access to mental healthcare) to a sector that often places high physical and mental demands on its workers.

1.2.5 Contextual Factors

Several contextual factors impacted how the project was delivered:

- Fewer participants per training session and inability to provide physical in-class portion of training due to COVID-19 restrictions;
- Challenges ensuring participants had up-to-date vaccinations or proof of a COVID negative test;

- Lack of employment streams caused by employer's hiring freeze and shortage of construction projects as a result of COVID; and
- Health and economic barriers among participants, including mental health issues and precarious housing.

1.2.6 Articulating Success

Success for the Construct project was initially articulated through the following project objectives:

1. Deliver eight, eight-week cohorts of training sessions.
2. Deliver safe and supportive training by providing wraparound supports (such as wages, food, etc.) that enabled under- or unemployed individuals to participate in Construct and overcome barriers to employment.
3. Create an online trainee portal to reduce barriers to supports and training and increase Construct's capacity.
4. Connect graduates to well-paying careers in construction trades.
5. Improve recruitment of under-represented individuals in the trades, including women and individuals from BIPOC and 2SLGBTQ+ communities.
6. Evaluate Construct and share outcomes through a range of knowledge products.

2. Evaluation Goals

To assess the extent to which Construct achieved its intended outcomes, Blue Door collected participant demographic data such as age, gender identity and visible minority status and data to track changes in socioeconomic and health indicators. FSC commissioned Malatest to conduct an independent evaluation of Construct upon its completion. This section describes Construct's key stakeholders, the planned evaluation activities, and limitations impacting the evaluation results.

2.1 Program Key Stakeholders

Construct's key stakeholders consisted of three categories:

1. **Program participants** that received training and wraparound supports, including:
 - Youth and individuals without postsecondary education, little or no work history, and gaps in their essential skills;
 - Low income individuals;
 - Homeless individuals and those facing homelessness;
 - New immigrants including refugees; and
 - Racialized or other marginalized individuals.
2. **Project partners** that agreed to provide training, wraparound supports or recruit participants for the Construct project, including:
 - Trades unions that provided training, gave workshops, tours and hired program graduates including LiUNA Local 506 Training Center, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, and Local 598 of the Operative Plasterers' & Cement Masons' International Association.
 - Community organizations that offered additional training, employment support and wraparound supports, including Archbishop Anthony Meagher Continuing Education Center, Back Door Mission, YMCA Durham, Inspire Therapy, and Kids on Wheels; and
 - Recruitment partners including Durham Youth Services, Durham Region Unemployed Help Center, and Ontario Works Durham.
3. **Lead partner**, Blue Door,¹⁵ that administered the Construct project.

2.2 Purpose and Use of Evaluation

Several evaluation activities were planned to obtain feedback from stakeholders at various points throughout the project, including consultations with:

- Participants to help address their individual barriers to progress in their training and to determine how effective the project was in helping address these barriers;
- Network partners to determine which gaps in the program they could help address and obtain their perspectives on the extent to which the program achieved its intended outcomes; and,

¹⁵ Blue Door was founded in 1982 and is the largest emergency housing provider in York Region. Blue Door provides lifesaving support to children, youth, men, women, and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness. (www.bluedoor.ca).

- Project staff to understand the implementation challenges, how they were addressed and the extent to which the program achieved its intended outcomes.

Further details on the purpose and use of these activities by the project partners and various stakeholders are included below.

2.2.1 Planned Evaluation Activities for Construct

As indicated in Figure 2, Construct staff conducted intake interviews and post program surveys with project participants, and consulted with network partners during the project, while Malatest completed post-project evaluation activities.

Figure 2. Summary of Evaluation Activities

Planned activities	Intended use	Construct	Malatest
Intake surveys with participants	To assess participant eligibility, wraparound service needs, and collect demographic information (such as age gender, visible minority status, income) and status of employment, housing, involvement with criminal justice system, and general wellbeing.	✓	
Meetings and ad hoc discussions with Construct stakeholders	To further focus and adapt the training and wraparound services offered through Construct.	✓	
Follow up interviews with participants	To evaluate project effectiveness and satisfaction with the program, and collect post-program status of participant's employment, housing, involvement with criminal justice system, and general wellbeing.	✓	
Review quarterly and annual activity reports prepared by Blue Door for FSC	To learn about the progression and outcomes of the Construct project (including observed immediate outcomes, emerging intermediate outcomes, and potential longer-term outcomes).		✓
Interviews with Construct staff (n=1), program partners (n=2), and participants (n=4)	To assess the extent to which the program met its stated goals and any lessons learned (including key strengths and weaknesses that influenced outcomes).		✓
Analysis of Construct socioeconomic and health indicators collected pre- and post-program	To assess changes in participant outcomes as a result of the program.		✓

Planned activities	Intended use	Construct	Malatest
Comparative analysis of Construct program offered in other regions during the same time frame (March 2020 to March 2023)	To compare FSC funded participants with Construct participants in other regions funded by other government sources.		✓
Brief literature review	To provide context and background information on the need for the Construct project.		✓

2.2.2 Evaluation Limitations and Other Considerations

The results of this evaluation should be viewed in light of the following limitations:

Restrictions to Contacting Project Participants and Stakeholders: Since the Construct project did not include the potential use of a third-party evaluator in their agreements with their stakeholders, Construct staff sought permission from their stakeholders to send Malatest their contact information. This two-chain process caused inefficiencies, resulting in delays in data collection. While Malatest made efforts to collect as much primary data as possible, few of those contacted responded to the invitation. Others declined to participate altogether.

Lack of independently collected primary data: Malatest used primary data collected by Blue Door, as the low response to Malatest's invitations to participate in the Construct evaluation resulted in less first-hand information than anticipated. Data from program participants and network partners was limited, as only four participants and two network partners agreed to be interviewed.

Lack of data to assess employer outcomes: Although outcomes were identified for employers involved in Construct, no indicators relating to employer outcomes were tracked by Construct. As employers had not provided consent to be contacted by Malatest, outcomes for this stakeholder group could not be ascertained.

Lack of a comparison group: Participants that may have been referred to the Construct program but did not participate in or receive their services — or in other words, non-participants — were not accessible. Given that there was no comparison group in the evaluation, a comparison of participant versus non-participant outcomes limited the ability to conduct a more fulsome assessment of program outcomes in light of the indicators being studied. That said, several socioeconomic and health indicators were tracked pre- and post-program completion. Although this data was not collected independently by Malatest, it has been useful for measuring program outcomes.

Lack of generalizability: While the information gathered from the few stakeholders that were consulted can be reported with confidence, these perspectives may not reflect those of all stakeholders. The inability to collect primary data (due to consent restrictions noted previously) also restricted the ability to generalize the findings to all stakeholders.

Selection bias: Participation in data collection activities was voluntary. This may have resulted in a selection bias where those who hold particularly strong views about the topic (whether positive or negative) may have been more likely to participate in the evaluation than those who were neutral or had no opinion.

Project funding and scope: Although construct secured funding for a new training facility from another source, FSC-funding enabled Construct to recruit and train additional participants at this facility. As a result, although most participant outcomes were attributed to Construct, some outcomes (such as enhanced employability owing to high-quality training at this facility) were only partially attributed to FSC funding.

3. Evaluation Questions, Data Sources, and Indicators

The evaluation questions are detailed in this section. Evaluation questions were developed to assess Construct's implementation process, effectiveness, efficiency, and any causal attribution. A detailed table noting the sub-questions, indicators, data collection methods and data sources for each evaluation question can be found in Appendix D.

3.1 Implementation (Process)

The evaluation sought to learn about how the Construct program was implemented through the following questions:

- How did Construct staff engage with the different stakeholders?
- What worked well? And why?
- What challenges did you incur implementing Construct and how were they addressed?
 - Are these challenges more related to the design of the project, its implementation, or environmental factors?
 - For participants who did not get to sign up or who did not complete the project, what were their challenges?
 - For participants who completed, to what extent did the project help them overcome their challenges?
- What lessons can be drawn to be shared with other organizations in the skilled trades and homeless sectors?

3.2 Effectiveness (Outcomes)

The evaluation sought to learn about the extent to which outcomes of the intervention were achieved from the perspective of the project, its participants, and other key stakeholders through the following questions:

- How did Construct staff, participants and partners define success for the project and what benchmarks were used to measure success?
- What percentage of participants completed the training?
 - Of those who completed the training, how many got hired?
 - How long did they keep their job?
- For those who completed – how has this project helped them?
- How did the project impact employers?
- How did the project impact network partners?
- What were any potential longer-term outcomes for participants and other stakeholders?
- How did the services support these longer-term outcomes?
- What lessons can be shared with others in the sector?

3.3 Efficiency

The evaluation sought to learn about the extent to which resources were used or could have been more efficiently used to achieve the desired outcomes through the following questions:

- What worked well? And why?
- What challenges were incurred and how were they addressed?
- What were Blue Door's experiences working with FSC?

3.4 Causal Attribution

To determine the extent to which outcomes can be causally attributed to the Construct project, evidence was gathered from the following sources:

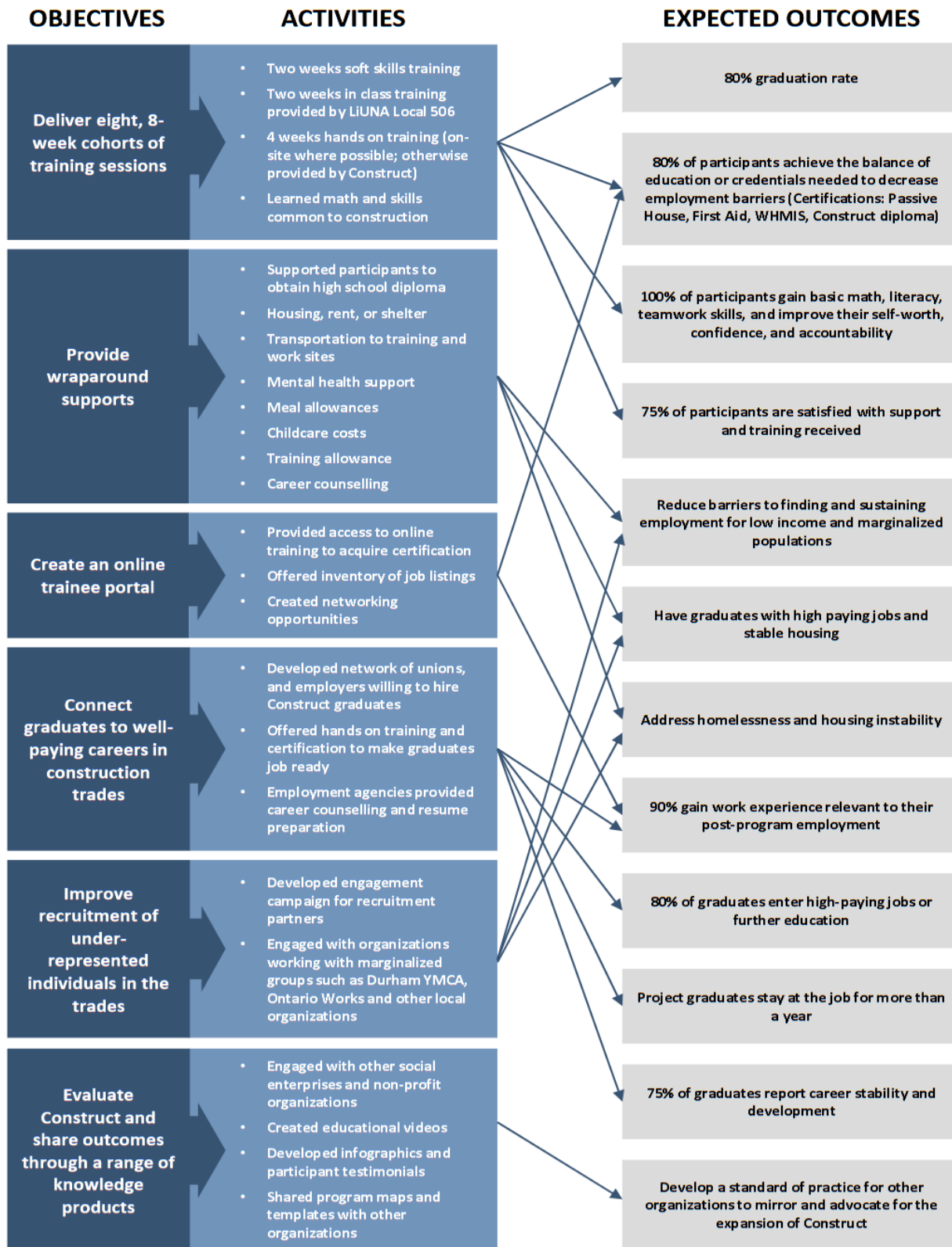
- Quarterly and annual project reports provided by Blue Door to FSC;
- Participant administrative data collected by Construct staff;
- Administrative data of the Construct program offered in other regions of Southern Ontario
- Interviews with Construct partners; and
- Interviews with Construct staff.

4. Evaluation Results

This section discusses the findings of the evaluation with respect to project implementation, effectiveness of achieving project outcomes, efficiency of project activities, and any causal attributions.

Figure **3** below outlines the program objectives, the activities completed to meet the objectives and the outcomes expected to be attained as a result of the activities:

Figure 3. Construct's Objectives, Activities, and Outcomes



The findings of the evaluation are discussed in the following sub-sections.

4.1 Project Implementation

The Construct program was successfully implemented in the Durham Region by remaining flexible to participant and stakeholder needs and to address challenges that impacted the delivery of the program.

Based on review of quarterly activities reporting by the Construct team, the program experienced some challenges to program implementation, which were addressed in part by making the following changes:

- Provided soft skills training prior to in-class and on-the-job training to better prepare participants to meet the expectations of the worksite and successfully complete the program;
- Adjusted program delivery due to COVID restrictions by restricting access due to vaccine policies, reducing the number of participants per cohort, implementing hybrid and online learning, and finding alternate opportunities for on-the-job training;
- Adjusted the program schedule due to staff turnover;
- Added a new training facility run by Construct to provide more hands-on training, build team camaraderie, and complete additional training activities; and
- Expanded opportunities for participants to gain work experience through a social enterprise model.

The adjustments made during project implementation along with other planned activities (see Section 1.2.2) helped Construct meet or partially meet their project objectives (see Section 1.2.6).

The following table outlines the objectives and the extent to which the objectives were met:

Figure 4. Construct's Objectives

Objective	Objective Met
1. Deliver eight, 8-week cohorts of training sessions.	Yes
2. Provide wraparound supports.	Yes
3. Create an online trainee portal.	Yes
4. Connect graduates to well-paying careers in construction trades.	Yes
5. Improve recruitment of under-represented individuals in the trades.	Yes
6. Evaluate Construct and share outcomes through a range of knowledge products.	Partially as evaluation activities were not conducted during the program funding period.

The extent to which program activities were executed as intended, including changes to mitigate challenges encountered during program implementation are discussed in detail below.

4.1.1 Deliver Training Sessions

Construct delivered training to 60 individuals over eight cohorts.

According to Construct's administrative data, 60 participants over eight cohorts received training between August 2021 and March 2023. As shown in Figure 5, Construct came close to meeting its estimated number of 64 participants; however, the number of participants trained per quarter varied. Due to COVID restrictions and the loss of program staff only three cohorts were trained during the first

year of the program. While no new participants were enrolled in the first few months of 2022, Construct trained five cohorts of participants in the second year of the program.

Figure 5. Targeted Vs. Actual Number of Participants

Quarter	Target # Participants	Actual # Participants
Jul-Sep 2021	8	5
Oct-Dec 2021	16	7
Jan-Mar 2022	8	0
Apr-Jun 2022	--*	8
Jul-Sep 2022	8	7
Oct-Dec 2022	16	17
Jan-Mar 2023	8	16
Estimated total	64	60

Source: Construct administrative data and Evidence Generation Plan.

*Targeted numbers were not provided for the quarter period of April 1 to June 30, 2022.

Recruitment efforts were supported by Construct's development of local partnerships to help raise awareness about the project. Partnerships were developed with Durham Youth Services, YMCA Durham, and Ontario Works Durham that ensured a steady stream of potential candidates to the program. According to Blue Door's quarterly report, Construct experienced steady interest and had a waitlist of potential participants by October 2022. Interviews with program staff also indicated that they had a waitlist of approximately 50 individuals for the Durham Construct program by the end of the FSC-funded period (Spring 2023).

While not all who applied were eligible for the program, Construct staff and program partners offered connections to alternative resources to assist individuals deemed not ready for the program.

Construct staff indicated that they consistently noticed program applicants were either not ready to commit to the program or did not meet the program's eligibility requirements. Construct staff noted that participants who were not ready to commit to the Construct program often had issues with substance use or struggled with homelessness. Where possible, Construct staff would refer these individuals to other Blue Door services and supports, asking them to come back to Construct at a later date.

Those who did not meet the eligibility criteria¹⁶ were referred to other alternative learning resources that would prepare them for future participation in Construct, if they remained interested. For example, Construct staff would have discussions with high schools to try to get youth into alternative learning programs where they could transition to Construct when they turned 18. For those needing essential math skills, Construct staff linked individuals to education centres for prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) that enabled them to earn high school credits based on life experience. These individuals could then re-apply to Construct providing they had the equivalent to grade 10 math.

¹⁶ Eligibility requirements for Construct included: Must be 18 years of age or older; not hold temporary status in Canada; and, have at least grade 10 math education.

Construct provided training in a variety of technical, soft, and essential life skills.

Construct participants acquired numerous technical, soft, and essential life skills along with the opportunity to earn several credentials, including certification in:

- First aid,
- Health and safety awareness,
- Working at heights, and
- Workplace hazardous materials.

Training in technical skills included how to safely use general tools of the construction trade, along with skills needed to complete carpentry work, demolition and basic plumbing (See Figure 6). While grade 10 math was the minimum requirement for admission into the program, many trades unions require the completion of grade 12 math. The foundational math skills training provided by the program meant that participants could earn high school credits during the program. In addition, math skills tutoring designed specifically for pre-apprentices and apprentices was available through a partnership with SkillPlan.¹⁷

Through engagement with employers and training partners, Construct staff learned that participants lacked many soft skills required to succeed on the work site or in the classroom. As a result, Construct staff became certified Soft Skills Solutions¹⁸ facilitators which enabled them to deliver soft skills training to program participants. Construct staff also indicated that many who are marginalized and have unstable housing may not have experience with everyday situations such as using a bank account, debit, or credit cards, basic health, wellness, and nutritional needs. Construct incorporated these essential skills into the training sessions and wraparound supports. Figure 6 details the technical, soft and essential skills participants gained or enhanced throughout the program.

¹⁷ SkillPlan provides tutoring services and training programs to pre-apprentices and apprentices. Retrieved from: <https://skillplan.ca/learn/tutoring/#>.

¹⁸ Soft Skills Solutions© is a training program developed by the Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Board. Organizations can train their staff to become Soft Skills Solutions© facilitators which allows them to deliver the training to individuals. Retrieved from: www.smwdb.com/soft-skills-solutions.

Figure 6. Skills Gained or Enhanced Through Construct

Technical Skills	Essential Skills*	Soft Skills
How to use a hammer, saws, drills, power tools and other general tools of the trade	Teamwork and working with others	Using appropriate body language
Safe use of tools including power tools	Problem solving	Adaptability
Carpentry work	Communication	Conflict resolution
Demolition skills	Document use	Accountability
Plumbing skills	Digital technology	Leadership
Trades-related math skills	Numeracy, including budgeting and basic accounting	Health and wellness, including mental health and nutrition
	Writing, including preparing resumes	Confidence and improved self worth
	Reading, including reading site plans	Interview preparation
	Continuous learning including certifications	

Source: Construct administrative and interview data.

* Employment and Social Development Canada defines nine essential skills for work, learning, and life. Retrieved from: www.sceau-rouge.ca/eng/trades/cabinetmakers/essential-skills.shtml

Providing soft skills training prior to in-class and on-the-job training better prepared Construct participants to meet the expectations of the worksite and successfully complete the program.

According to quarterly reports, Construct participants began the program with two weeks of technical skills training delivered by program partner LiUNA. This was followed by two weeks of soft skills training and four weeks of hands-on training. However, Construct staff indicated that feedback from their training partners revealed many of the Construct participants were struggling with fundamental expectations of the training such as attendance, teamwork, and communication. By delivering the soft skills training at the start of the program, staff indicated that they could better prepare participants for their training and identify those who required additional support as they moved through the technical training portion of the program.

Construct's new training facility allowed participants to receive more hands-on training, build team camaraderie, and complete additional training activities.

In late 2022, Construct secured their own training facility through a separate funding agreement. Construct staff indicated that the new facility allowed them to take on more projects for businesses and organizations that had hired Construct. The additional work allowed the program to provide more hands-on training for program participants, including those funded by FSC. For example, they could complete in-house carpentry work such as building chairs, furniture, cabinets, and toys.

Construct staff also noted that the facility allowed them to offer additional in-class training in conjunction with training provided by LiUNA. As a result, Construct was able to increase the number of participants per cohort. The facility was set up with computer workstations where participants could access the online portal and complete virtual training. In addition, two soundproof pods created a safe environment where participants could have conversations with Construct staff and colleagues.

Construct staff turnover presented challenges with keeping the program on schedule.

Construct experienced high staff turnover in late 2021 that temporarily impacted the scheduling of training sessions and the procurement of work opportunities for program participants. Construct staff noted that the impact on participants already enrolled in the program was minimal as they were able to offer virtual training and were taking in fewer participants due to COVID-related restrictions. However, the program did have to pause intake of new participants for a few months¹⁹ while Blue Door looked to hire a business manager and training coordinator for Construct.

COVID-related distancing meant fewer participants per cohort.

In 2021, COVID measures restricted LiUNA to a maximum of six participants per training session. Construct had originally received funding for eight participants per cohort, but due to COVID restrictions, fewer participants could be accommodated into the program during this time. This restriction, along with increasing demand for the program as a result of successful recruitment, meant that some participants were placed on a waitlist for access to the program.²⁰

4.1.2 Provide Wraparound Supports

The provision of wraparound supports was instrumental in helping Construct participants complete the program.

The use of wraparound supports are seen as best practice to address the needs of those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. According to the Homeless Hub, a web-based research library and information centre,²¹ the delivery of wraparound supports is considered a strengths-based intervention as it seeks to identify and address the needs of an individual and provide a holistic approach to providing support. It is especially beneficial for those with complex needs who experience multiple barriers to remaining housed.²²

Construct was able to develop a network of partners in the Durham Region that successfully recruited participants and provided wraparound supports. Construct staff noted that they actively engaged with organizations that were supporting local youth and other marginalized populations because these organizations best understood the needs and challenges facing those they served. During interviews with the project partners, it was highlighted that understanding the local context and working with local partners helped tailor support to the needs of local participants thus ensuring a greater chance for their success.

A client service coordinator met with each participant prior to training to better understand their unique challenges and barriers, allowing Construct to customize the support needed for each participant. In addition to supports previously mentioned such as math tutoring and PLAR assessments, other supports included:

- Support to obtain a high school diploma;
- Assistance with housing, rent, or shelter;

¹⁹ No new participants were enrolled in Construct between December 2021 and April 2022.

²⁰ No data were available as to the number of participants on the wait list.

²¹ www.homelesshub.ca/about-us

²² The Homeless Hub. Wraparound Delivery and Other Team-based Models. Retrieved from: <https://www.homelesshub.ca/solutions/systems-approach-homelessness/wrap-around-delivery-and-other-team-based-models>.

- Transportation to training and work sites;
- Mental health support;
- Meal allowances;
- Childcare costs;
- Training allowance (participants were paid a \$15 allowance per hour during their training); and,
- Six months of career counselling and support to find employment after graduation.

4.1.3 Create an Online Trainee Portal

The online trainee portal was beneficial to participants both during and after completing the program.

The online trainee portal was developed to provide virtual training and supports to current program participants and also remained available to former participants as a training resource, list of job opportunities, and source for supports.²³ According to Blue Door's quarterly reports, the trainee portal was created during the first year of FSC funding and was further enhanced during year two to include additional services and make the online training modules more engaging. For example, Construct hired a developer in the Spring of 2022 to add interactive content to the existing online training modules. Some of the features of the trainee portal included:

- Interactive training modules including online training for WHMIS and various workplace safety and awareness certifications,
- Information about trades and links to trade unions, training centres and trade schools,
- An announcement section for current participants including weekly scheduling calendars,
- One-on-one supports such as therapy, career counselling, and mentorship,
- Online library of trades-related articles and webinars, and
- Online job search tools, including job board with opportunities from employers willing to hire Construct grads.

While online learning was made available to participants, not all benefitted from this learning format.

During year one of the program, on-the-job training incorporated virtual learning due to COVID restrictions. For example, trades-related health and safety such as Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) certification was moved online. Construct staff noted that some participants, particularly those who struggled with in-person learning, found the online format challenging. Staff noted that they hired an organization to create a more interactive and engaging online training experience for participants and provided additional learning support help participants complete the virtual training.

While most participants had cell phones to access the online portal and virtual learning, this method was not ideal. Although space was made available for participants to use computers for virtual learning,

²³ Former participants could access the online training to acquire various certification related to the construction industry. They could also access the list of job postings and post messages for other participants and Construct staff.

this space was not available until the second year of the program when Construct acquired space for a new training facility.

4.1.4 Connect Graduates to Careers in Construction Trades

The development of a strong partner network of local unions, employers and organizations helped to connect program graduates to careers in construction-related trades.

Project reporting indicated that Construct staff had begun developing relationships with local trades unions, employers and employment agencies including YMCA Durham early in the program's pre-implementation phase. Construct staff continued to expand their network of construction trades and employment partners throughout the duration of the program to ensure that their graduates were provided support to find employment and connect to unions and employers. For example, in 2022 they held job fairs in partnership with ACCESS employment to help connect graduates and current program participants with construction-related trades employers. By mid-2022, Construct reported they had several²⁴ unionized and 21 private sector job opportunities listed on their portal that current and past participants could access.

In response to participant feedback, Construct staff looked to provide more on-site training once COVID restrictions had been lifted. This included providing participants with opportunities to go on-site with Construct's construction team to complete home renovation projects. Through Construct, participants had exposure to several construction-related trades including:

- Concrete finisher and precast concrete erector
- Electrician
- Floor covering installer
- General carpenter
- General construction labourer
- Hazardous material removal technician
- Heavy equipment operator
- Painter
- Plumber

Construct's social enterprise model expanded opportunities for participants to gain work experience.

As noted previously, Construct was set up as a social enterprise which meant that in addition to providing training to program participants, Construct also offered a range of construction and property services for hire. These services included home renovation, landscaping, site clean-up and demolition and general labour. In addition to developing relationships with unions and private construction employers in the Durham region, Construct could also offer participants localized employment opportunities through Construct's business model.²⁵ This was especially beneficial when private construction firms were hiring fewer workers due to economic impacts from the pandemic as it allowed the on-the-job training portion of the program to continue while following the necessary health and safety measures needed for COVID.

²⁴ Construct did not report how many unionized trades job opportunities were available.

²⁵ As a social enterprise, Construct provides construction and repair services to paying customers. This helps to support Construct training-related activities and provides on-the-job training to some program participants.

Impacts from COVID made finding on-the-job training opportunities challenging.

During the first year of the program, COVID restrictions limited the opportunities for on-the-job training and fewer employers were hiring Construct graduates. Construct staff noted that when on-the-job training had to be cancelled due to COVID restrictions, they looked for alternative ways to provide participants with hands on learning. For example, they partnered with other social enterprises to have program participants build Muskoka chairs, complete volunteer work, and help ready the new Construct training facility. While some program participants indicated that at times it felt like they were completing ‘make work’ type activities, they still learned new skills and were exposed to conditions similar to typical work sites.

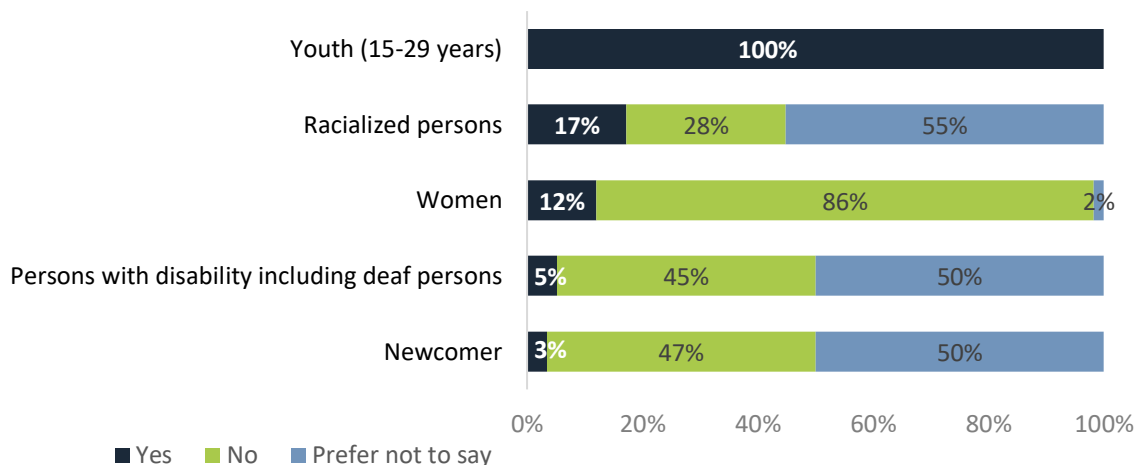
4.1.5 Improve Recruitment of Under-Represented Individuals in the Trades

The Construct program served youth in Durham. However, the extent to which other marginalized groups were served could not be fully assessed due to many participants not disclosing demographic information.

According to Construct’s administrative data, all program participants funded by FSC were youth. Program staff interviewed for the evaluation indicated that one of their challenges with collecting demographic data from their participants was a general reluctance to disclose such information. Program partners who specialized in serving marginalized populations also indicated that often individuals from these groups are reluctant to disclose details about themselves, including demographic information due to lack of trust in how this information might be used.

For example, Construct staff estimated that approximately 45% of participants were from a visible minority, but only a few identified as such on their intake form. This aligns with the administrative data which indicates only 17% of participants identified as racialized and 55% chose not to disclose whether or not they identified as being a racialized person. Likewise, half of program participants chose not to disclose whether they had a disability or were newcomers (Figure 7). In addition, those from the 2SLGBTQ+ community were not tracked for the program.

Figure 7. Participants Identifying as Belonging to a Marginalized Group



Source: Construct administrative data, n=58

Vaccine policies restricted access to the program for some in marginalized groups.

As per COVID regulations, Construct participants required proof of vaccination or negative test results to be permitted to in-class training and to work on job sites. However, vaccination rates were lower

among those in marginalized groups (such as those experiencing homelessness and low income groups) compared to the general population.²⁶ Additionally, those with no or low income could not afford to pay for testing and free testing meant long wait times to get results. Therefore, the main targets of the Construct program—including those from various equity seeking groups and those experiencing economic instability—were more likely to be excluded from the program because of these regulations.

4.1.6 Evaluate Construct and Share Knowledge Products

Construct developed several products to share learnings from the project and successfully promote Construct as a Social Enterprise by attracting partnerships and expanding the program to other regions in Ontario. However, there is no evidence that program evaluation activities were conducted until after the FSC-funded portion of Construct in the Durham Region had ended.

As a social enterprise, Construct aimed to develop a standard of practice for other organizations to mirror and advocate for Construct as a model for social enterprises. According to Construct staff, the program was intended to be replicated in other communities in Ontario and in other provinces. The program had begun in the York Region and FSC funding was used to expand Construct into the Durham Region.

To share learnings from the Construct project and to promote the program as a social enterprise, staff developed several products and participated in numerous knowledge mobilization activities including:

- Created educational videos to supplement promotion and awareness campaigns,
- Developed infographics and participant testimonials for posting on Blue Door and Construct websites and the trainee portal,
- Hosted and participated in workshops and roundtable discussions with other employment social enterprises to share best practices and discuss barriers to youth employment,
- Developed resources such as a program map and reporting templates to share with similar organizations looking to start an employment or trades-based social enterprise, and
- Engaged with non-profits and charities to explore partnership opportunities and the potential to franchise the model and expand Construct across Canada.

4.2 Project Effectiveness

The Construct program was effective in meeting most of the outcomes defined for the program, with targets exceeded for two immediate outcomes and one intermediate outcome; most institutional and system level outcomes were also met.

As shown in Figure 8, three of five immediate outcomes were met, with targets exceed for two of these outcomes, and the remaining two outcomes were partially met. Although the program met some of its intermediate and longer-term institutional and system level outcomes, not all outcomes could be assessed as key metrics associated with these outcomes were not tracked. Where possible, evidence from Construct staff, program partners and participants interviewed by the evaluator were used to help determine the effectiveness to which program outcomes were met.

²⁶ Public Health Ontario. *COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage in Ontario by Neighbourhood Diversity and Material Deprivation: December 14, 2020 to August 14, 2022*. Retrieved from: [COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage in Ontario by Neighbourhood Diversity and Material Deprivation: December 14, 2020 to August 14, 2022 \(publichealthontario.ca\)](https://publichealthontario.ca)

Figure 8. Extent Construct Outcomes were Met

Outcome	Extent Outcome was Met
Immediate Outcomes	
80% graduation rate	Yes, 97% graduated program
80% of participants achieve the balance of education or credentials needed to decrease employment barriers (Certifications: Passive House, First Aid, WHMIS, Construct diploma)	Yes, 97% received construct diploma; however, the number of other credentials obtained was not tracked by program
100% of participants gain basic math, literacy, and teamwork skills, and improve self-worth, confidence, and accountability	Yes, while each skill was not independently assessed, anecdotal evidence suggests this outcome was achieved
90% gain work experience relevant to their post-program employment	Partially, 72% of those employed post program were employed in a construction-related trade
75% of participants are satisfied with support and training received	Partially, satisfaction not measured by program; however, interviewed participants (n=4) expressed satisfaction with support and training they received
Intermediate Outcomes	
Project graduates stay at the job for more than a year	Unknown, employment not measured at one year mark
80% of graduates enter high-paying jobs or further education	Yes, 81% of graduates were employed or pursuing further education
75% of graduates report career stability and development	Unknown, career stability and development were not measured by program
Institutional Level Outcomes	
Address homelessness and housing instability	Yes, evidence of reduced risk of homelessness and improved housing stability immediately post program; however, unable to determine if housing stability was sustained long-term
Reduce barriers to finding and sustaining employment for low income and marginalized populations	Yes, evidence of program serving marginalized populations and 74% of graduates found employment
Have graduates with high paying jobs and stable housing	Unknown, income level or hourly wage not measured by program
System Level Outcomes	
As a social enterprise, develop a standard of practice for other organizations to mirror and advocate for the expansion of Construct	Yes, Construct successfully expanded into other regions in Southern Ontario and shared learnings with similar social enterprises and organizations looking to develop a social enterprise

The extent to which Construct effectively met its outcomes is discussed in detail below.

4.2.1 Meeting Immediate Outcomes

Construct effectively surpassed their target graduation rate. Construct's high graduation rate also meant that the Construct Diploma was awarded to all participants that completed the program.

According to Construct's administrative data, 58 out of the 60 participants accepted into the program went on to graduate from the program. This represented a 97% graduation rate which exceeded the targeted graduation rate of 80%. Construct staff indicated that their enrollment success could be attributed to their marketing and outreach efforts in the months prior to launching the training of their first cohort and continued efforts throughout the program. As Construct was new to the Durham Region, staff recognized that they had to build trust among their partners and show that the project was not intended to compete with local agencies but to further support the individuals local organizations served.

"The concept of the Construct project fit with what the [organization] was doing in the community; especially around support to find employment for youth and other disadvantaged groups."

– Construct Program Partner

Although the number of credentials obtained was not tracked by the program, Construct reports indicated that all participants who successfully completed the program received a Construct Diploma, suggesting that over 80% of participants achieved the balance of education or credentials needed to decrease employment barriers. In addition, participants had the opportunity to achieve certificates such as first aid, WHMIS, and working at heights. Construct staff noted that the online trainee portal was effective in helping participants acquire trades-related certifications. Participants interviewed agreed that the portal was useful, with one participant noting they intended to continue working towards attaining more certifications.

Evidence also indicates that close to 100% of participants gained basic math and teamwork skills, and improved their literacy, self-worth, confidence, and accountability.

Similarly, while the attainment of specific skills was not assessed or tracked for each participant, based on the graduation rate, evidence from Construct reports, and interviews with staff, partners and participants, close to 100% of participants gained basic math and teamwork skills, and improved their self-worth, confidence, and accountability.

"I can now go to a job site and visualize the beginning, middle and end. Whereas before, I would just do a specific job."

– Construct Graduate

Although 72% of those employed post-program were employed in a construction-related trade, Construct did fall short of its target to have 90% of participants with work experience relevant to their post-program employment.

Construct's target of having 90% of participants gain work experience relevant to their post-program employment was only partially met. Administrative data indicated that of those who were employed post-program, 72% were employed in a construction-related trade. While it is plausible that those not employed in construction-related trades used the skills they gained in training, this metric was not tracked.

Wraparound supports were crucial to the success of Construct's graduates.

According to Construct staff, the addition of a client service coordinator was essential to help participants receive the support they required. Frequent contact with program participants through the service coordinator ensured the wraparound supports could effectively address participant needs as they arose or changed throughout their tenure in the program.

Interviewed partners indicated that the flexibility of the program was crucial to allow for the provision of supports to address participants' specific needs. Providing wraparound supports contributed to the success of program participants as they were better equipped to focus on the training and become more job ready.

"You need flexibility in the funding to allow you to better support the needs of participants. Some need more support than others. This will better address the many barriers to being job ready, especially for youth and vulnerable populations."

– Construct Program Partner

Interviewed graduates were grateful for the wraparound supports they received and noted that the supports helped them to progress through the program without having to worry about whether they could afford to participate.

"It's paid. You're not bleeding money while you're in the program. They also provided support in the form of grocery gift cards."

– Construct Graduate

Program graduates and partners expressed satisfaction with the Construct program.

Although the exact proportions of participant satisfaction could not be determined, program participants who were interviewed indicated that they were satisfied with the variety of skills they learned and the support they received during the program.²⁷ One participant was grateful for the hands-on training but considered the program to be a refresher as they had previous construction experience. Another participant indicated they took advantage of the opportunity to acquire a number of certifications so they could be more favorably considered for full-time employment.

"It keeps you on your toes; the more tickets or certifications—such as working at heights, in confined spaces, on forklifts, on scaffolding—you have, the more you can do[...] It keeps things interesting when you have more [certifications]. I don't have the scaffolding or the crane stuff, but I have enough."

– Construct Graduate

Program partners interviewed indicated that Construct complimented the services they were offering their clients.

"The concept of the Construct project fit with what the [organization] was doing in the community; especially around support to find employment for youth and other disadvantaged groups."

– Construct Program Partner

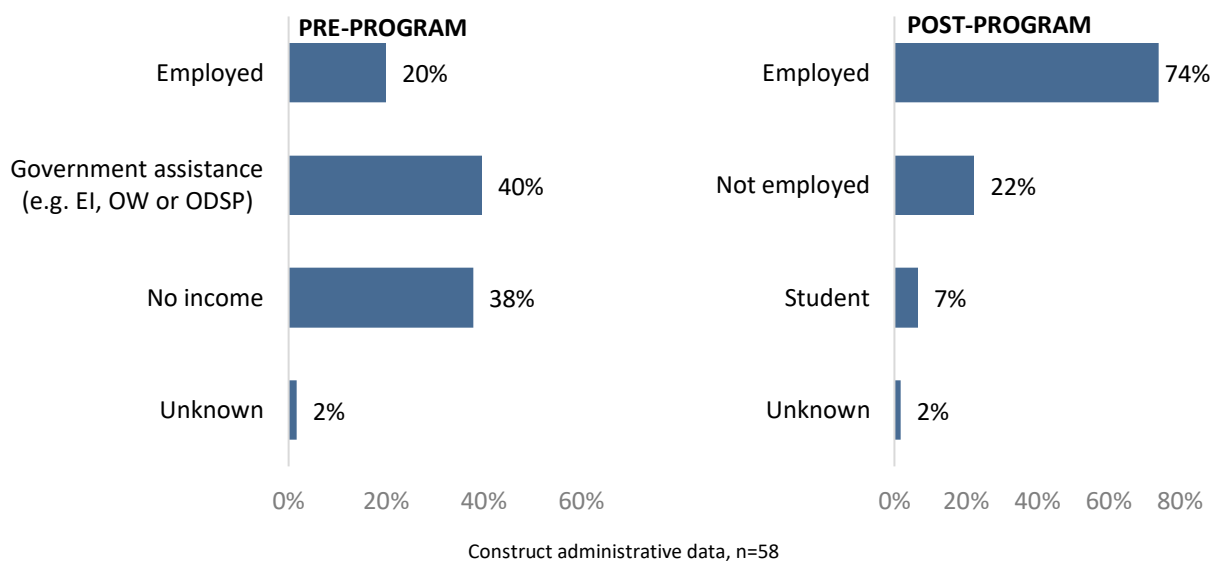
²⁷ The reader is reminded that only four Construct graduates were interviewed.

4.2.2 Meeting Intermediate Level Outcomes

Most graduates were either employed or pursuing further education, with close to three-quarters of graduates employed in the construction industry. However, the extent to which graduates were employed for more than one year after completing the program or indicated they had career stability were not measured by the program.

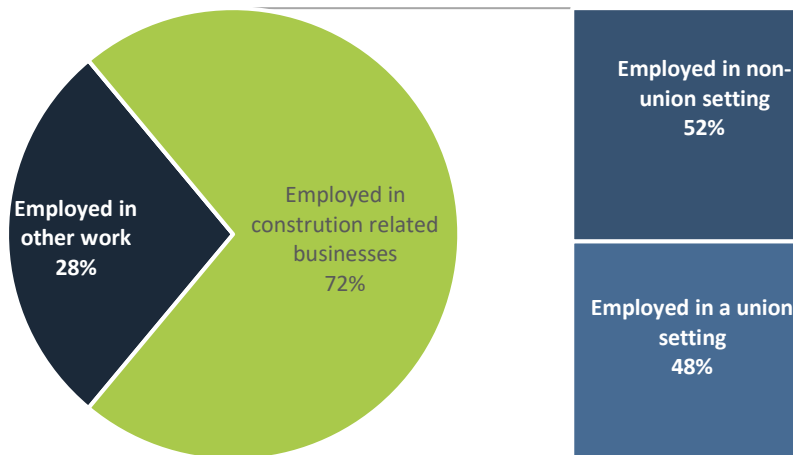
Construct appears to have been effective in helping graduates find employment and connecting them to high paying careers in the construction industry. Construct exceeded its target of 80% of graduates in high-paying jobs or further education, with 81% of graduates finding employment or pursuing further education. This compares to only 20% who were employed prior to enrolling in Construct (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Pre- and Post-Program Employment Status



Among the 43 graduates who obtained employment after graduation, 31 were employed in the construction industry (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Program Graduates Employed in Construction Versus Other Fields



Source: SOAR administrative data, n=43

Although working in a unionized environment was beneficial (15 graduates reported working in a unionized environment), it did not guarantee an apprenticeship. According to quarterly reports, several program partners such as YMCA Durham, LiUNA, and other trades unions helped Construct graduates connect with trades employers and write their union entrance exams; however, it was up to the employer to decide whether to take someone on as an apprentice. Interviews with program partners indicated that while Construct exposed participants to the construction industry and educated them on the apprenticeship process, the main focus of the training was on job readiness and not apprenticeships.

“It [Construct] educates them on the apprenticeship process. There is a lot of bad advice out there. The first step to becoming an apprentice is not the training; it is getting a job. Once you get the job and show the employer you are reliable, willing to work and can get along with people, then they make the decision to register someone as an apprentice. Any training done in advance of this is to make the individual marketable to the employer.”

– Construct Program Partner

Program participants acknowledged that Construct was intended to provide them with exposure to construction trades along with hands-on experience. Participants interviewed expressed satisfaction with their exposure to the trades, noting that it helped them progress towards a career in construction, make contacts in the trades, and gain work experience.

“It was a great program to help find what trade you might be interested in. Even if you know what you want to do, the program helps you make the contacts in that trade. There is no downside of doing it.”

– Construct Graduate

“They prepared us for work experience; going from them [Construct] to college was helpful. The college expects you to be able to use the tools; they expect you to have a little more experience with it.”

– Construct Graduate

4.2.3 Meeting Institutional Level Outcomes

Construct was effective in reducing barriers to finding and sustaining employment for low income and marginalized populations.

As noted previously, the majority of program participants had no income or relied on government support prior to enrolling in Construct (see Figure 9). In addition, those who were employed worked part-time or were in low wage jobs; for many, it was a combination of both, for instance, having part-time but low paying jobs. Construct supported more than three quarters of its graduates to find employment. Interviewed participants indicated that Construct gave them the skills and confidence to secure employment in a construction-related trade and pursue an apprenticeship. Construct staff and program partners described successful participants as those who were enthusiastic about learning a trade and were motivated to learn and overcome obstacles.

“The ideal candidate is someone who learns and grows over the course of the program. They are able to take the supports and move forward.”

– Construct Staff

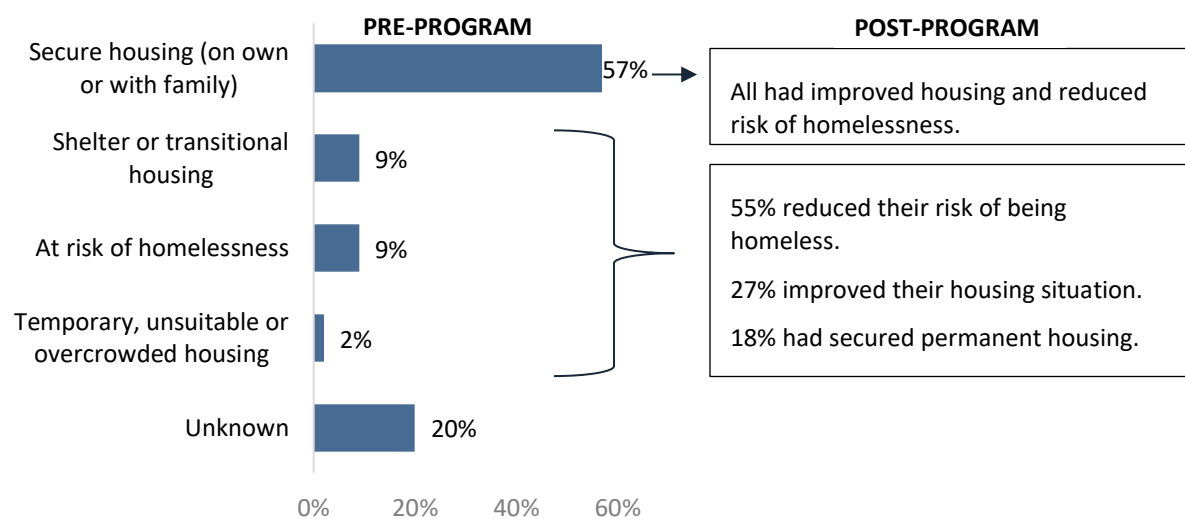
“The ones who were most successful were motivated. They’re committed to showing up for the training and on the job site, had an interest in construction and a willingness to learn.”

– Construct Program Partner

Construct improved housing, health, and other social outcomes for program participants.

Analysis of Construct administrative data suggests that the program was effective in attaining the intermediate outcome of addressing homelessness and increasing housing stability for some program participants. Although the majority (57%) of participants indicated that they had secure housing prior to enrolling in the program, these participants reported they had improved their housing situation post program or had further reduced their risk of homelessness (Figure 11). Prior to participation in Construct, 20% of participants indicated they were homeless or insecurely housed. After graduation, 55% of these individuals said they were less at-risk of being homeless, 27% had improved their housing situation, and 18% had secured permanent housing.

Figure 11. Pre- and Post-Program Housing Status



Construct administrative data, n=58

Administrative data analysis also identified improvements in health. While 40% of graduates reported no change in their health status, 26% reported improved health and only 3% indicated that their health had worsened compared to before they began the program. Administrative data analysis also found that there was less involvement in the criminal justice system. Of the nine Construct graduates who had been involved in the criminal justice system prior to enrollment in the program, five reported they had no or less involvement in the system.

4.2.4 Meeting System Level Outcomes

As a result of Construct's success in the York Region, Construct expanded into the Durham Region and Peel Region, effectively meeting its system level outcome of developing a standard of practice for other organizations to mirror and advocate for the further expansion of Construct.

Construct's expansion into the Durham Region was possible due to the funding provided by FSC. Based on their success in Durham, Construct was also successful in further expanding the program into the Peel Region in 2022. Construct created a partnership with Humber College to offer specialized training in drywall, flooring, tiling, and millwork. Interviewed staff reported that they took the lessons learned in the Durham Region expansion to secure recruitment and support partners in Peel Region. This involved developing trust with local organizations by explaining their shared goals of helping youth find employment and prevent homelessness. Their success in Durham Region was used as examples to encourage partnerships in Peel Region.

"Launching into Durham Region was only possible through the support of FSC, and its success led us to launch into Peel Region."

– Construct Staff

As noted previously, Construct's knowledge sharing activities included engaging with other social enterprises and organizations looking to set up their own social enterprise. Construct shared their business model and best practices, such as developing strong partner networks and keeping the program flexible to respond to participant and stakeholder needs and changing needs throughout program implementation. Written reports noted that their approach to developing Construct as a social enterprise included building a model that more holistically considered the participants needs and supports to help lift individuals out of poverty and homelessness.

Construct's success in helping address homelessness and supporting marginalized populations in the communities it serves has been recognized by several organizations bestowing the project with awards. In 2021, the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) awarded Blue Door their ONPHA Innovation Award in recognition of Construct's "innovative approach to addressing the housing needs of marginalized and vulnerable communities, including people experiencing homelessness, refugees, and new immigrants".²⁸ In 2022, Construct was awarded the Procure Excellence in Community Award for giving back to their local communities.²⁹ The Aurora Chamber of Commerce recognized Construct

²⁸ Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association webpage, 2021:ONPHA's Year in Review. Retrieved from: qc.onpha.on.ca/2021/12/2021-onphas-year-in-review/

²⁹ Procure is a software platform that acts as a collaboration hub to support the construction industry. Retrieved from: www.procure.com/jobsite/laying-the-groundwork-for-success

with its 2023 Non-Profit Award for “local businesses that have demonstrated a passion for excellence, a commitment to their community and a strong entrepreneurial spirit.”³⁰

4.3 Efficiency

As noted previously, the evaluator did not have access to Construct financial data or reports. As such, the assessment of efficiencies for the Construct program were based on activity reports submitted by Blue Door and interview data collected by the evaluator.

Construct efficiently delivered their program by increasing outreach activities to develop partnerships and reduce duplication of services.

Interviews with Construct staff indicated that they devoted much effort to outreach activities that developed a network of partners to help deliver the various aspects of the program. In this way, efficiencies were realized by not having a duplicate of services by partner organizations. For example, local YMCAs and employment agencies provided employment counselling, resume and interview preparation which allowed Construct to focus on providing construction-related skills training to participants. Similarly, Archbishop Anthony Meagher Continuing Education Center help participants strengthen their math skills and supported those needing previous learning assessments.

Other organizations such as Procore offered in-kind access to their online learning so participants could acquire construction-related certifications. By offering online access, participants could proceed through the certifications at their own pace and the two-week in class learning could focus on other construction skills not requiring certification and deliver a broader overview of numerous in demand construction trades how to apply for apprenticeships.

Efficiencies were also gained by securing flexible funding to fill in gaps not covered by other funders.

Senior Construct and Blue Door staff indicated they were diligent in pursuing multiple funding sources to ensure that Construct would thrive in each region where the program was delivered. By pursuing federal, provincial, municipal and private funding Construct ensured that the program could continue in the established regions after funding from one source had ended. By soliciting funding from individuals and private companies that often had less stringent criteria about how funds were used, Construct was able to supplement gaps in funding for services or equipment not covered by other funders.

4.4 Causal Attribution

The evaluation found that most employment, health, and social outcomes could be causally attributed to the Construct program.

Construct was successful in realizing positive employment, health and social outcomes for many of its graduates. Close to three quarters of graduates found employment, most in construction-related work. While post-program salaries were not tracked, hourly rates for construction workers can average between \$24 and \$29 per hour.³¹ This suggests that providing Construct graduates remain employed, they will be earning a high paying income as a skilled trades worker. Earning a higher income could provide Construct graduates with a living wage and the potential to attain more stable housing.

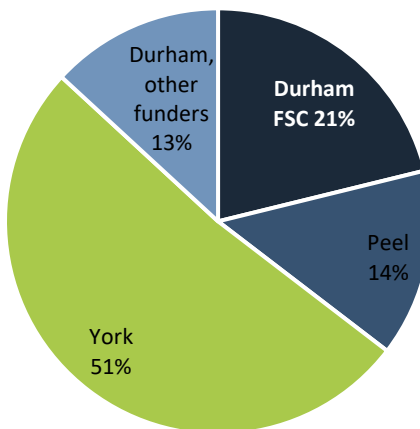
³⁰ Aurora Chamber of Commerce webpage, Business Excellence Celebration. Retrieved from: www.aurorachamber.on.ca/business-awards/

³¹ As reported on indeed. Retrieved from: ca.indeed.com/career/construction-laborer/salaries/Ontario

To support causal attribution of outcomes for Construct, administrative data across all three regions in which Construct operated were analyzed. As mentioned previously, Construct began in the York Region, expanded to the Durham Region with FSC funding, and then further expanded to the Peel Region. Administrative data from Construct's participants across all regions between September 14, 2020 and August 4, 2023 were analyzed to better understand the extent to which participant outcomes could be attributed to the project.

Among the 274 Construct participants who completed the program during the time frame of analysis,³² 51% were from York Region, 34% from Durham Region (21% funded by FSC, 13% funded by other sources), and 14% were from Peel Region (Figure 12). On average, Durham FSC-funded participants were younger and less diverse compared to participants across other regions. For example, while there was female representation across all regions, a greater proportion of Durham FSC-funded participants were male. In addition, all Durham FSC-funded participants were under the age of 30 years compared with a greater range of ages among the other regions. Similarly, Durham FSC-funded participants had fewer racialized persons, and newcomers with no representation from marginalized groups not previously mentioned (such as persons who were Indigenous or Francophone) (See Appendix C, Figure 14, Figure 15, and Figure 16 for further details).

Figure 12. Construct Participants by Region



Construct administrative data, n=274

Positive employment outcomes can be attributed to Construct with the majority of Construct participants across all regions employed in construction-related trades post program.

Analysis of pre- and post-program administrative data indicated that the majority of participants across all regions found employment after completing their program despite most having been unemployed prior to their participation in Construct (See Appendix C, Figure 17). A total of 62% of Durham FSC-funded participants found full time employment. Other regions had similar positive employment outcomes, with 79% of Peel, 62% of York, and 50% of Durham non-FSC funded participants that found full time employment (See Appendix C, Figure 18). Further, among those employed post-program, 74%

³² Of the 283 Construct participants between September 14, 2020 and August 4, 2023, only nine did not complete the program. Among those not completing the program, the majority were male (8 of 9), under the age of 30 (7 of 9), and from York (n=6) and Durham (n=3) regions.

of Durham FSC-funded participants were employed in construction-related trades. This compares to 59% of Peel, 71% of York and 85% of Durham non-FSC funded participants (See Appendix C, Figure 19).

Construct improved housing outcomes for most participants.

It appears that Construct was effective in improving housing outcomes for most program participants. Among those who were securely housed prior to their participation in the program (range of 51% to 56% across all regions³³; See Appendix C, Figure 20), all indicated they had made improvements to their housing situation. However, the greatest changes were among those not in secure housing pre-program:

- Of the 20% of Durham FSC-funded participants that were not in secure housing, 46% had improved their housing by moving from shelter to independent accommodation (8%), reducing their risk of homelessness (23%) or otherwise improving their housing situation (15%);
- Of the 31% of Peel participants that were not in secure housing, 77% had improved their housing by moving from shelter to independent accommodation (24%), reducing their risk of homelessness (35%) or otherwise improving their housing situation (18%); and
- Of the 14% of York participants that were not in secure housing, 70% had improved their housing by moving off the street (1%), moving from shelter to independent accommodation (6%), finding secure housing (3%), reducing their risk of homelessness (37%) or otherwise improving their housing situation (23%) (See Appendix C, Figure 21).³⁴

Some improvements were observed for health and other social indicators.

Improved health and other social outcomes were also observed among Construct participants across the regions. A greater proportion of non-FSC funded Durham participants (36%) reported improved health post program compared to 33% of Peel, 26% of Durham FSC-funded, and 23% of York Region participants (See Appendix C, Figure 22). Although relatively few participants reported they had been involved in the criminal justice system prior to the Construct program, most of these participants in Durham FSC-funded and all in Peel Region indicated they had experienced less involvement post program. This compares with most York and Durham non-FSC funded participants that indicated no changes to their involvement with the criminal justice system (See Appendix C, Figure 23).

Summary of evaluation results: The evaluation demonstrated Construct's scalability. It has been expanding into other regions of Ontario and has the potential to be adopted across Canada owing to its ability to provide consistent but adaptable services to different contexts and changing circumstances. Construct has also demonstrated their ability to raise capital and build strategic partnerships to help meet labour market needs while creating social impact.

³³ Excludes those in Durham Region funded by other programs as 75% preferred not to disclose their living situation pre-program.

³⁴ Excludes those in Durham Region funded by other programs as 75% preferred not to disclose their living situation pre-program.

5. Discussion and Implications

Summary: The evaluation demonstrated FSC's ability to support and assess the scalability of social enterprises that aim to fill labour market gaps in the skilled trades. The evaluation also resulted in lessons learned for organizations to enhance service delivery and measure social impact to become more attractive to funders.

FSC supported Construct's goals to address labour market needs in the construction sector while also creating social impact. These goals helped form the foundation of this evaluation. Specifically, scalability was assessed through the following criteria:³⁵

- **Expansion:** To what extent can an enterprise's model be replicated in different locations?
- **Adoption:** Which elements of the enterprise's model can be consistently adopted while remaining flexible to the labour market and social needs of the communities in which they are expanding?
- **Investment and partnership:** How can a social enterprise demonstrate their ability to raise capital and build strategic partnerships with other organizations to expand their reach?

By demonstrating how Construct has met these criteria, the evaluation also shed light on:

- The lessons learned for service delivery for Construct and other organizations similar to construct that FSC may fund in the future;
- How policies that encourage collaboration and alignment between governments, funders and service delivery organizations can enhance labour market and social impacts; and
- Implications for FSC, particularly as they relate to future evaluations and impact measurement.

5.1 Expansion

Geographic expansion of a social enterprise demonstrates scalability. For instance, having replicated two successful social enterprises—Building Up (in Toronto) and Choices for Youth's Impact Construction in Newfoundland and Labrador—Construct also expanded into three regions in Southern Ontario (York, Durham, and Peel). Beginning in York Region, Blue Door leveraged the partnerships established through 40 years of servicing the region to support their enterprise. The evaluation found that the expansion into Durham Region was successful. The Construct team then used their experiences from expanding into Durham Region to develop a model for expanding the program to Peel Region. Information gathered during interviews with Blue Door indicated that their executive team have developed Construct as a social franchise model and created a strategy to advocate for the expansion of similar programs across Canada.

5.2 Adoption

Providing wraparound supports and services that can be tailored to marginalized individuals entering the labour market can enhance the adoption and therefore the scalability of a social enterprise. For instance, two of the key factors that enhance Construct's successful adoption are:

³⁵ See [OECD's \(2016\) Policy Brief on Scaling the Impact of Social Enterprises](#).

- It provides a full suite of services including wraparound supports (such as transportation), soft skills training, technical training, and hands-on experience on worksites. Construct demonstrated that this suite of services can be adopted in different locations. They also emphasized that the most critical factor in their model's success was the provision of wraparound supports to remove barriers that would otherwise prevent participants from fully engaging in the learning material and showing up to worksites.
- Each of the services can be adapted to serve different communities or populations within communities by establishing partnerships with local organizations. Specifically, skilled trades learning material can be adapted to meet industry and employer needs, and wraparound supports can be adjusted depending on the needs identified by a community or specific population group. Given its flexibility, Construct also has the potential to expand to northern, rural and Indigenous communities but further evaluation may be needed to determine this level of scalability.

Construct staff noted that prior to delivering the program in a new community, they engaged with potential participants and partnered with organizations serving marginalized populations. The goal of these engagements was to better understand the challenges faced by marginalized members of the community and what supports were needed to help them succeed in the Construct program. Once the program had begun, Construct staff encouraged participants and partners to provide feedback on how the program could better support them.

As part of their knowledge sharing activities, the Construct team engaged with a number of community organizations to share resources and supports to assist these organizations in the development of their own social enterprise. Construct staff shared with these organizations factors that could help them establish a successful social enterprise model. This included:

- Engaging with the target population to identify their needs,
- Doing research to thoroughly understand the context for their needs and gaps in services,
- Learning what services are currently in place to serve the target population and how they can be leveraged to support the program,
- Developing a marketing campaign to raise awareness, recruit participants and attract partners, and
- Working to secure funding from multiple sources (discussed further below).

5.3 Investment and Partnership

Demonstrating the ability to successfully raise capital and build partnerships can enhance scalability and the potential for financial sustainability. In terms of investment, Construct's executive team designed Construct as a community-based social enterprise which enabled them to attract funding and support partners. In addition to the funding provided by FSC, Construct secured funding from a number of provincial and federal government departments along with private sector philanthropic organizations.³⁶

The Construct executive team also engaged with organizations known to support social enterprises and reached out to community organizations that were already servicing the target populations. Through

³⁶ The Construct website provides a list of funding partners: <https://constructgta.ca/>

trial and error, they learned to diversify their partnerships so they could ensure delivery of each component of the program. For example, they partnered with unions offering training programs to deliver the skills development portion of the program, and community organizations to act as recruiting sources and provide wraparound supports.

5.4 Lessons for Service Delivery

The evaluation demonstrated that organizations seeking to enhance their service delivery and expand into other regions should demonstrate several competencies. For instance, Construct demonstrated their ability to:

- Invest in human resources and capacity building within their enterprise (for instance, by enabling their staff to become certified facilitators of Soft Skills Solutions);
- understand the needs of program participants;
- develop relationships with local organizations to provide wraparound supports, deliver training, and help source opportunities for on-the-job training; and
- secure funding from multiple sources, such as different levels of government and the private sector; and
- measure the results of their program's activities and objectives.

Although Construct collected pre-and post-program data for several indicators such as employment, housing and health, it could have done more to:

- Assess participant and stakeholder satisfaction with the program and the longer-term effectiveness of the program. For example, surveys and interviews could have been conducted (ideally by an independent third-party) to gauge satisfaction with the program and feedback on how the program could be improved.
- Collect data on outcome indicators not only pre-program and immediately following the program, but also 3 to 6 months and one year or more post-program. This establishes a base line to compare results over time and better assess ultimate program goals.
- Explore the potential of technological integration or adoption. Any use of technology in an organization (such as digital learning and networking platforms) should be considered when considering expansion. For instance, the accessibility and adoption of Construct's online trainee portal warrants further study in northern, rural, and Indigenous communities.
- Build data collection tools within existing online platforms accessed by participants. For instance, building a panel of participants could help the enterprise measure social and economic impact over time and attract future funding.

5.5 Implications for FSC and other funding organizations

New funding organizations such as FSC should consider building the indicators of scalability and social impact into their funding policies and their evaluation activities. Aligning their funding and evaluation policies with Canadian policies that support social innovation³⁷ can help to attract funding for future skilled trades programs that also have a social mission. Funding Construct was a prime

³⁷ <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/social-innovation-social-finance.html>

example since the project demonstrated their ability to help address barriers related to housing, food insecurity and unemployment, while also addressing labour needs in the skilled trades sector.

As a social enterprise, Construct is working to address the issue of homelessness by providing training, hands-on work experience and support to marginalized populations experiencing or at risk of homelessness looking to enter construction-related skilled trades. As a testament to its success, the program has won two awards: the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association's Innovation Award for 2021 and the Procore Excellence in Community Award in 2022.³⁸

Social enterprises have been established across Canada in approximately the last 20 years and continue to grow.³⁹ A number of government programs, such as the Investment Readiness Program,⁴⁰ exist to help enhance social enterprises' access to financing. In 2021, two Federal policies (the Treasury Board's Directive on the Management of Procurement⁴¹ and Public Works and Government Services Canada's Policy on Social Procurement⁴²) were updated to better include and support social enterprises.⁴³

Funding organizations should work with potential projects to ensure third-party evaluations of participants and non-participants are included in privacy agreements in order to enhance impact measurement and potential funding opportunities. Given that third-party evaluators were not included in privacy agreements, project partners were unable to send sampling frames to Malatest. This barrier resulted in an indirect consent process which resulted in a low response from request to participate in the evaluation and limited the extent to which the achievement of program outcomes could be assessed. Additionally, funding organizations may wish to add a statement to application forms to stipulate that all applicants for a program including those that try to access but do not receive services (in other words, non-participants) may be contacted by third-party evaluators for research purposes. This change will help to gather counterfactual data and establish any causal attribution of outcomes to the program.

³⁸ Construct website. Retrieved from: <https://constructgta.ca/awards/>

³⁹ Buy Social Canada CCC Ltd. (2023). Buy with Impact: Social Procurement in Canada 2022 Report Social. Retrieved from: <https://www.buysocialcanada.com/wp-content/uploads/Buy-with-Impact-Social-Procurement-in-Canada-2022-Report.pdf>

⁴⁰ The Investment Readiness program is funded by the Government of Canada and is a "\$50 million grants and contributions program designed to support social purpose organizations (SPO's) as they contribute to solving pressing social, cultural and environmental challenges across Canada". Retrieved from: <https://irp-ppi.ca/en/about-the-program/>

⁴¹ <https://www.tbs-sct.canada.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=32692>

⁴² <https://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/app-acq/pas-posp-eng.html>

⁴³ Buy Social Canada CCC Ltd. (2023). Buy with Impact: Social Procurement in Canada 2022 Report Social. Retrieved from: <https://www.buysocialcanada.com/wp-content/uploads/Buy-with-Impact-Social-Procurement-in-Canada-2022-Report.pdf>

Appendix A: Data Collection Instruments

[Interview guides to be populated]

Appendix B: Communication Materials

[Communications materials to be populated]

Appendix C: Comparison of Construct Participants by Region

FSC funded Construct participants in Durham Region from August 2, 2021 to March 31, 2023, with the exception of one cohort funded by another program from November 1, 2021 to February 4, 2022. Other provincial and federal funding programs supported participants in York Region, Peel Region and those in Durham Region that entered the program after the FSC funding period. Figure 13 shows the various funders for Construct programs, the regions funded and the funding time period.

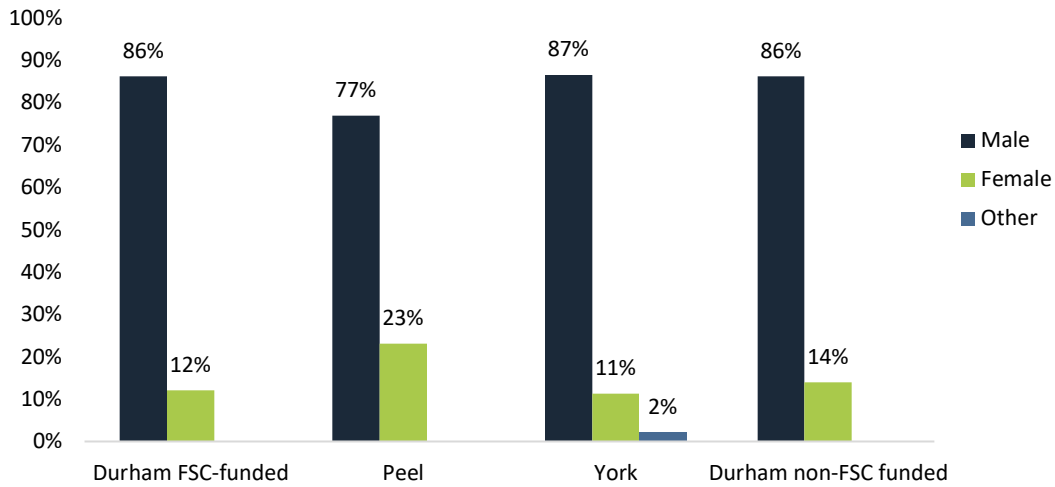
Figure 13. Construct Funding Streams and Regions

Funder	Region	Time Frame	% of Participants per Funder (n=283)
Former Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU)	York	September 14, 2020 – March 18 2022	18%
	Durham	November 1, 2021 – February 4, 2022	
Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS)	York	October, 2020 – May 23 2023	22%
	Durham	May 29 – July 21 2023	
FSC	Durham	August 2, 2021 – March 31, 2023	22%
Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD)	York	June 6, 2022 – August 4 2023	24%
	Durham	April 17 – July 7, 2023	
Ontario's Skills Development Fund (SDF)	Peel	May 30, 2022 – March 3, 2023	14%

Construct administrative data.

The majority of program participants were male; however women and those identifying as 'other' gender were represented in each region (Figure 14).

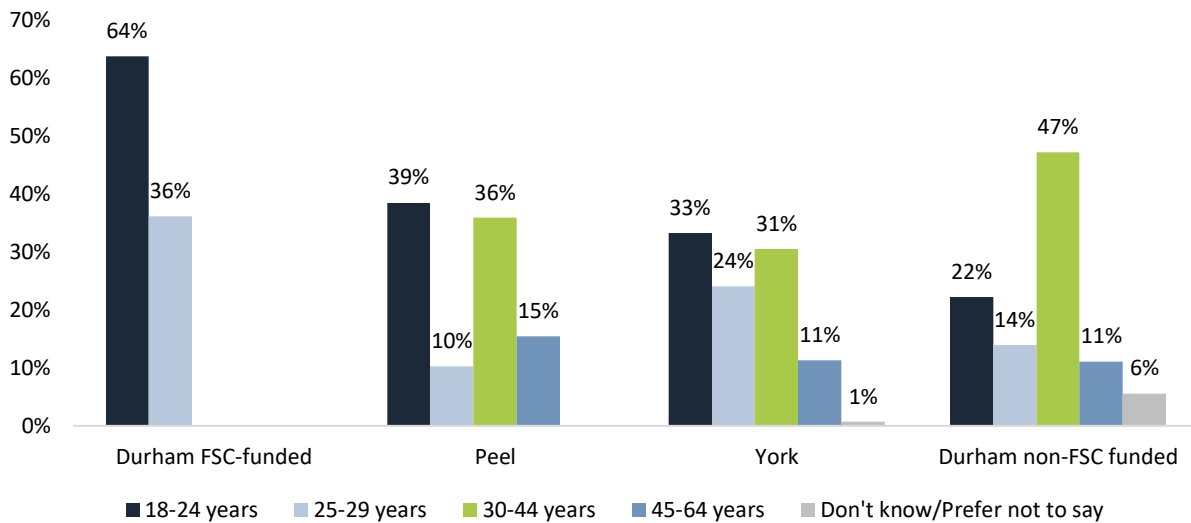
Figure 14. Gender by Region



Construct administrative data, n=274; Druham FSC-Funded n=58, Peel n=39, York n=141, Durham non-FSC funded n=36.

While Durham FSC-funded participants were under the age of 30 years, other regions had a greater dispersion of ages among participants (Figure 15).

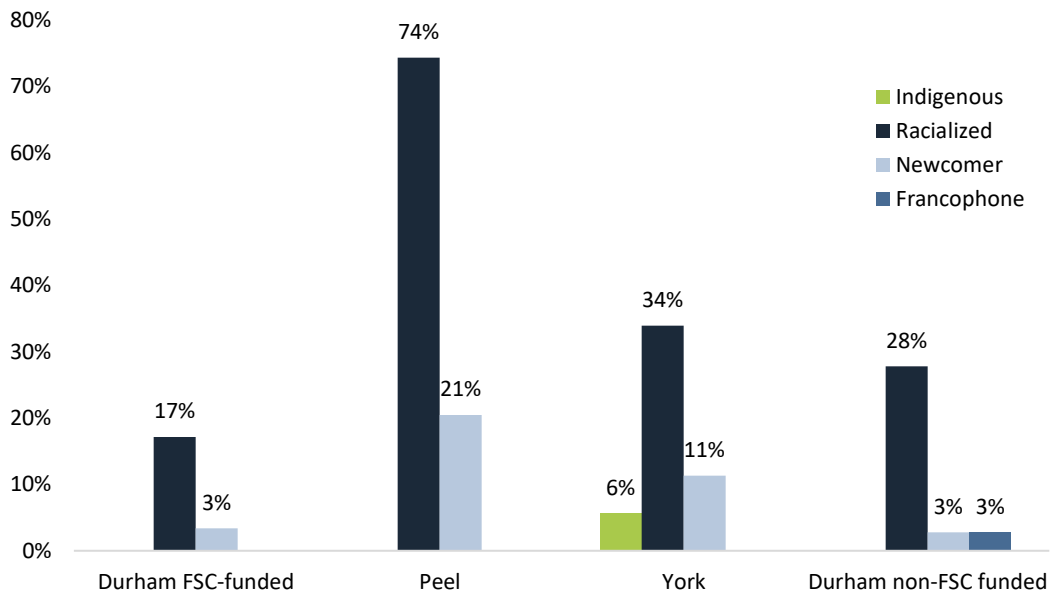
Figure 15. Age by Region



Construct administrative data, n=274; Druham FSC-Funded n=58, Peel n=39, York n=141, Durham non-FSC funded n=36.

Although some Durham FSC-funded participants identified as being a newcomer or form a racialized group, a greater proportion of participants across the other regions identified as being form these groups (Figure 16).

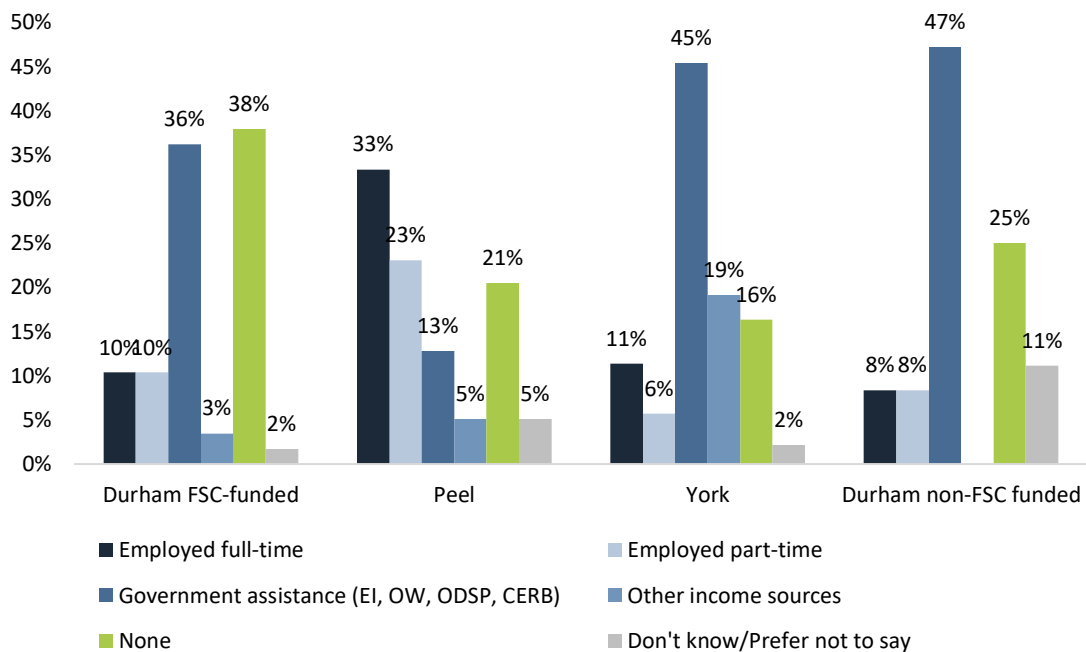
Figure 16. Marginalized Groups by Region



Construct administrative data, n=274; Druham FSC-Funded n=58, Peel n=39, York n=141, Durham non-FSC funded n=36.

The majority of Construct graduates were unemployed prior to their participation in the program with the exception of those in Peel Region (56% employed compared to 20% of Durham FSC-funded, 17% of York and 16% in Durham non-FSC funded participants) (Figure 17).

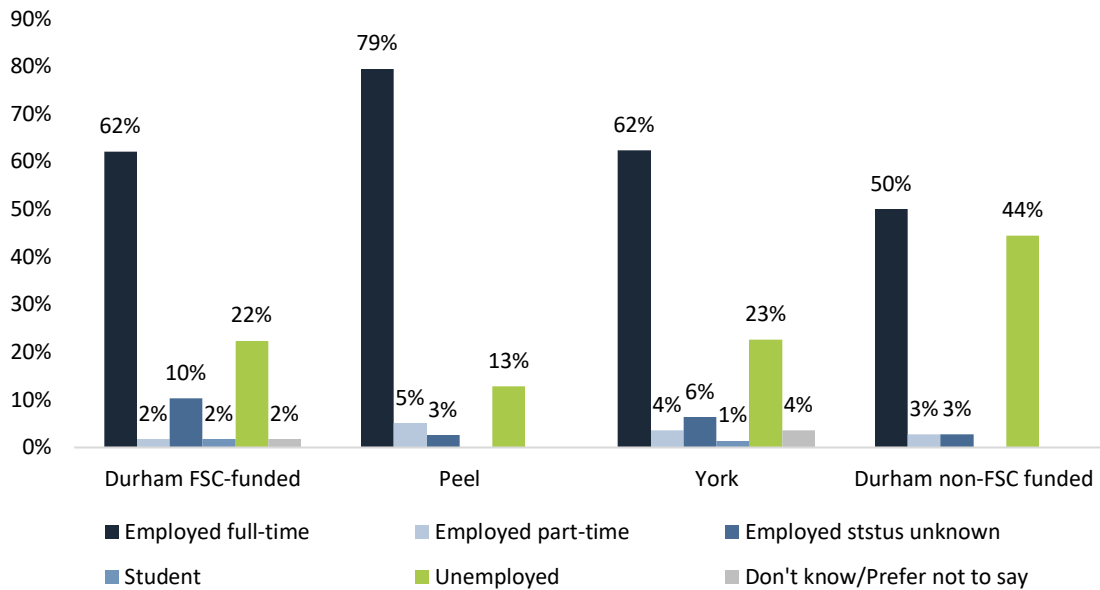
Figure 17. Pre-Program Income



Construct administrative data, n=274; Druham FSC-Funded n=58, Peel n=39, York n=141, Durham non-FSC funded n=36.

The majority of Construct graduates across all regions found full time employment after completing their program (Figure 18).

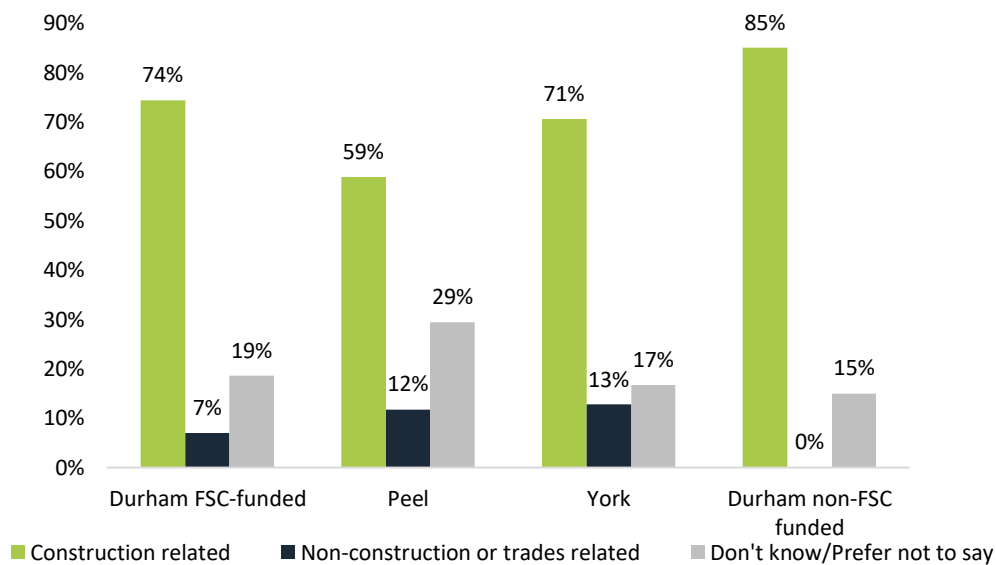
Figure 18. Post-Program Income



Construct administrative data, n=274; Druham FSC-Funded n=58, Peel n=39, York n=141 Durham non-FSC funded n=36.

Across all regions, the majority of graduates who were employed post-program found work in construction-related trades (Figure 19).

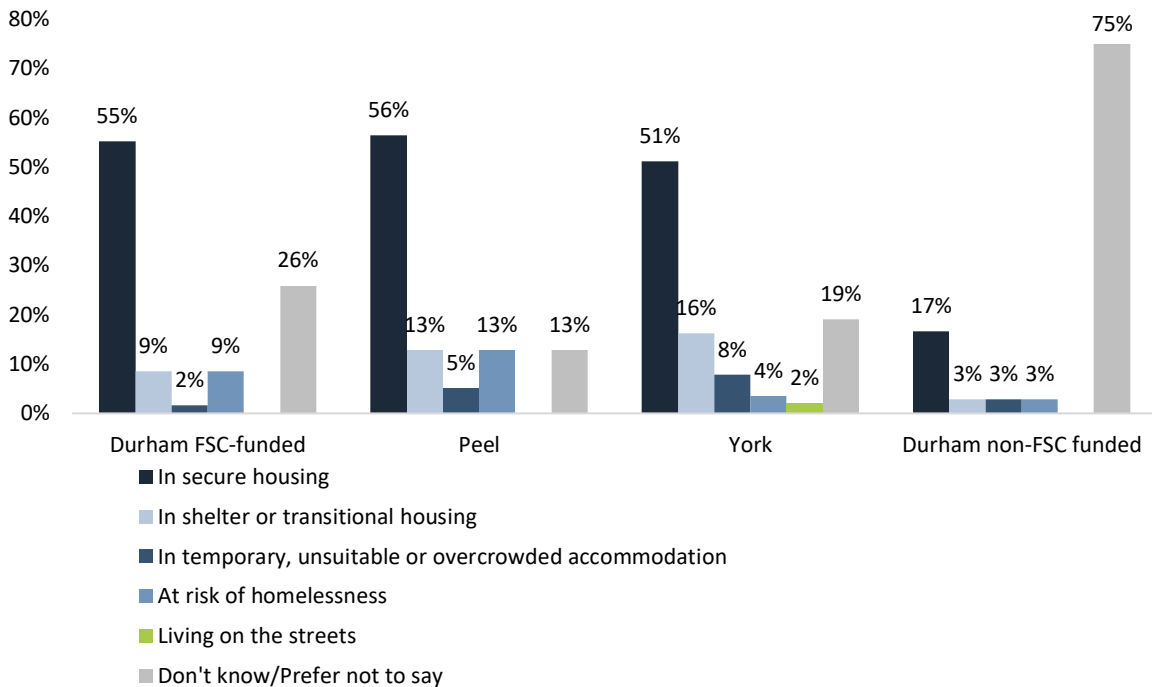
Figure 19. Construct Graduates Employed in Construction by Region



Construct administrative data, among those employed post program n=199; Druham FSC-Funded n=43, Peel n=34, York n=102, Durham non-FSC funded n=20.

A total of 30% of Pell participants, 30% of York participants and 20% of Durham FSC-funded participants were insecurely housed pre-program. More than half of Durham FSC-funded, Peel and York participants indicated they had secure housing pre-program. While only 9% of Durham non-FSC funded participants were insecurely housed, this proportion is misleading as 75% did not disclose their pre-program housing status (Figure 20).

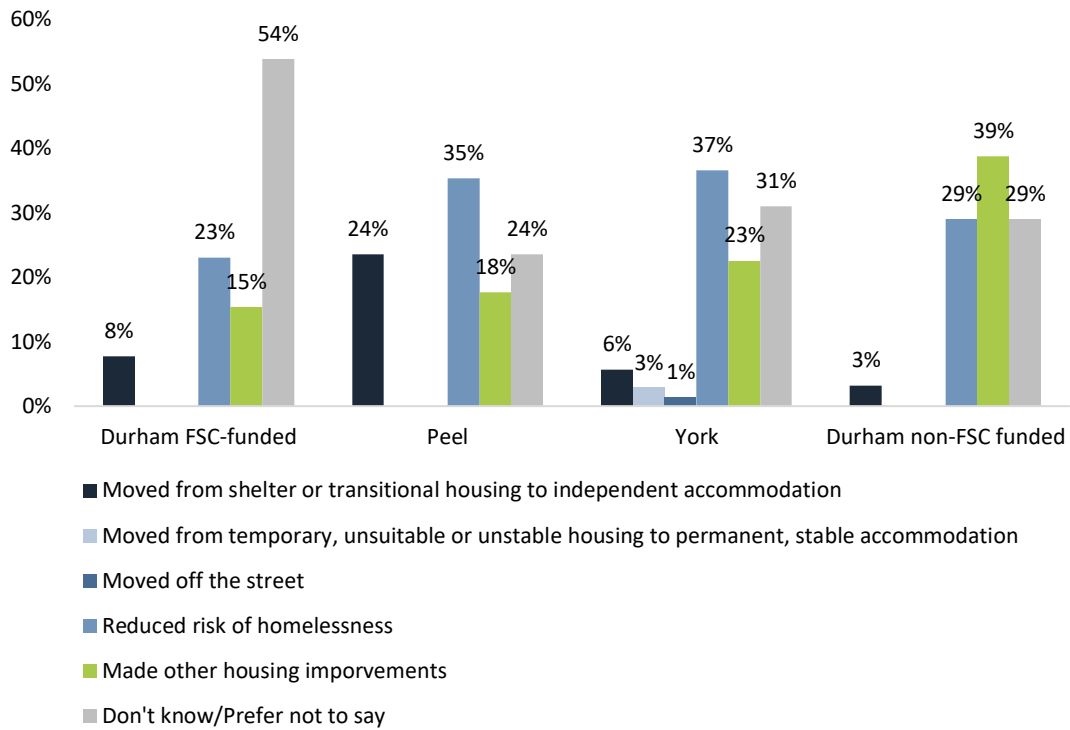
Figure 20. Pre-Program Housing Status



Construct administrative data, n=274; Durham FSC-Funded n=58, Peel n=39, York n=141, Durham non-FSC funded n=36.

Across all regions, most participants not securely housed pre-program improved their housing situation post-program (Figure 21).

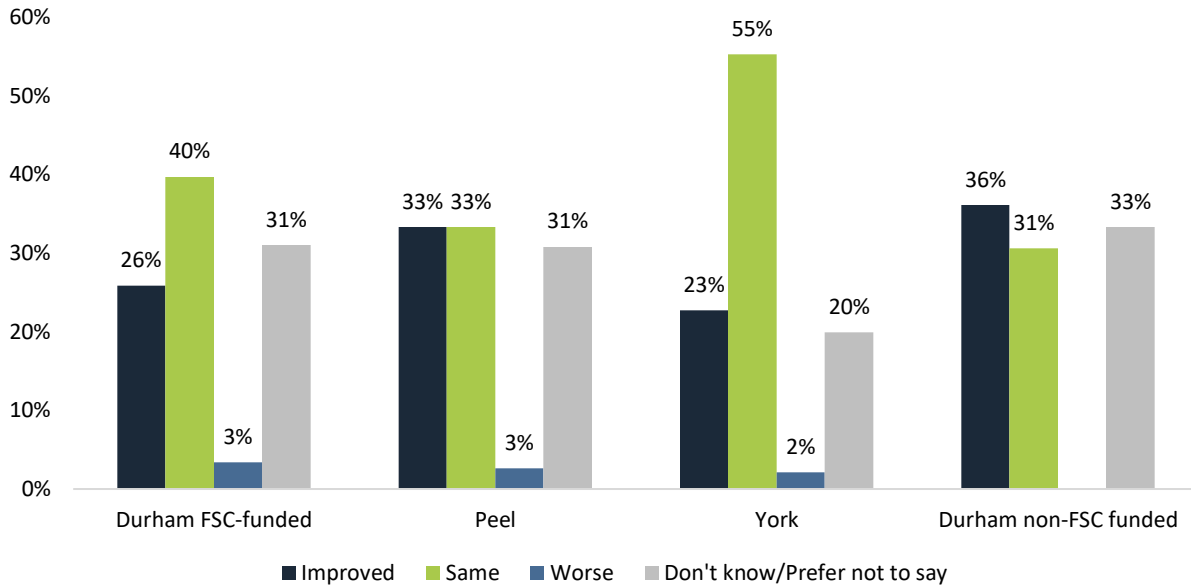
Figure 21. Post-Program Housing Improvements Among Those Not in Secure Housing



Construct administrative data, among those not in secure housing pre-program n=145; Durham FSC-Funded n=26, Peel n=17, York n=71, Durham non-FSC funded n=31.

More than half of York Region participants indicated that their health had improved post-program compared to 40% of Durham FSC-funded participants, 33% of Peel Region participants, and 31% of Durham non-FSC funded participants (Figure 22).

Figure 22. Changes in Participant Health Post Program



Construct administrative data, n=274; Druham FSC-Funded n=58, Peel n=39, York n=141, Durham non-FSC funded n=36.

While only a few participants in each region acknowledged they had been involved in the criminal justice system pre-program, the majority of Durham FSC-funded and Peel Region participants indicated improved outcomes for this metric (Figure 23).

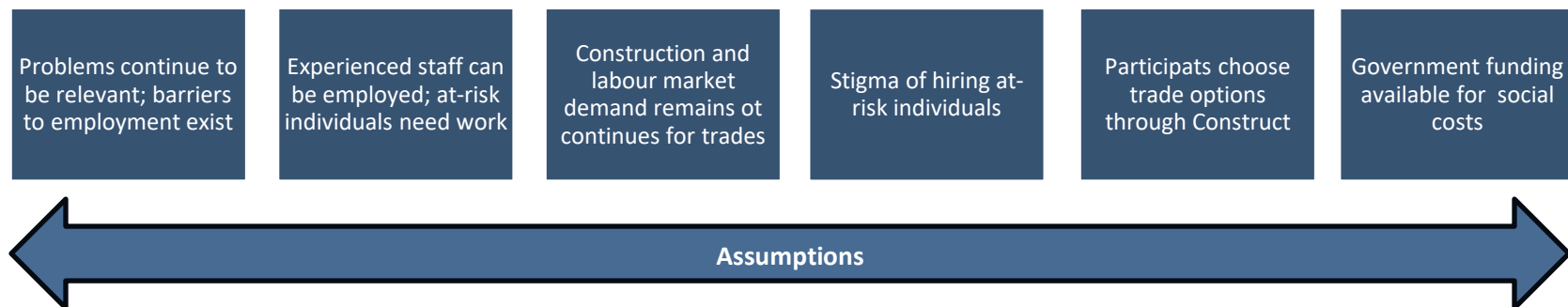
Figure 23. Involvement in Criminal Justice System

	Durham Region FSC-Funded	Peel Region	York Region	Durham Region, Non-FSC Funded
Number involved in criminal justice system pre-program				
	9	4	40	9
Changes with involvement in the criminal justice system				
Improved	5	4	14	2
Stayed the same	4	0	24	4
Don't know/Prefer not to say	0	0	2	3

Construct administrative data, n=274; Druham FSC-Funded n=58, Peel n=39, York n=141, Durham non-FSC funded n=36.

Appendix D: Construct's Theory of Change

Problem	Key Audience	Entry Point to Reach Key Audience (Stakeholders)	Steps to Bring About Change	Measurable Effect of Work (Outputs)	Wider Benefits of Work (Outcomes)	Long Term Objective (Impact)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing homelessness and unemployed Barriers include lack of job-specific skills \$13.74 hourly wage shortfall for a 1-bed apartment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals facing barriers Construct participants growing into peer mentors Graduates of Construct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social sector organizations Local businesses and government Unions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screening and intake of participants Deliver training and supportive employment Apprenticeship intake into union employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applications to Construct Develop adequate educations and credentials Integration into careers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved opportunity self-worth, and accountability Upgraded soft skills Improved housing stability through increased wages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attachment to labour market Reduced barriers to employment Achieve social interdependence



Appendix E: Construct Evaluation Matrix

The table below details the sub-questions, indicators, data collection methods and data sources for each evaluation question noted above:

Table 1. Construct Evaluation Question Matrix, Indicators, Data Collection Methods and Data Sources

Evaluation Question	Indicators	Methods	Data Sources
Implementation (Process) What did we learn about how the program is being implemented?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of employer partnerships, description of trade jobs per employer, sector partnerships (public, private, not-for-profit, academic, employers) • # of outreach activities to develop partnerships and promote project • #Wraparound services needed and provided • #Mental health services • # training components; online and in person • Identified skills gaps • Staff perceptions of program delivery successes and challenges • Lessons in service delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document and literature review • Interviews • Data analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs assessment reports • Industry benchmark reports • Prior evaluation reports • Stakeholder and Lead partner interviews • Quarterly and annual reports to FSC
Effectiveness (Outcomes): What did we learn about the outcomes of the intervention? After what time period?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of participants; completers and non completers • % Under-represented groups represented • Benefits of wraparound services in training enrollment, training completion, and hiring • Participant perceptions of program effectiveness and barriers • Participant satisfaction with the support and training received • Change in employment status • Perceived ability to advance career • Enrollment in further training or education programs • # of organizations engaged • Partner and stakeholder satisfaction • Staff perceptions of program delivery successes and challenges • Partner and employer perceptions of program effectiveness and barriers • # Employers report reduced stigma and satisfaction with hires 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Surveys • Anecdotal • Data analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly and annual reports to FSC • Stakeholder and Lead partner interviews • Stakeholder survey • Participant interviews • Participant survey

<p>Efficiency: What will we learn about how to use resources more efficiently to achieve the desired outcomes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # Of participants; completers and non completer • # Of outreach activities to develop partnerships and promote project • # Of employer partnerships, description of trade jobs per employer, sector partnerships (public, private, not-for-profit, academic, employers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Interviews • Data analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly and annual reports to FSC • Lead partner interviews
<p>Causal Attribution: To what extent will we learn about the extent to which any outcomes can be causally attributed to the project intervention? What information (qualitative or quantitative) would improve our confidence in the role the project played in achieving outcomes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived ability to advance career • % of participants achieve education or credentials needed • % of participants entering high-paying jobs • % of participants pursuing further education • % of participants report career stability or development • % with stable housing • Change in employment status • % of employers report reduced stigma and satisfaction with hires • Employers committed to hiring homeless or at risk for homeless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anecdotal • Review documents • Surveys • Interviews • Data analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly and annual reports to FSC • Stakeholder and Lead partner interviews • Stakeholder survey • Participant interviews • Participant survey