# Evaluation Report: HireNext Artificial Intelligence (AI)–enabled Job Posting Tool (April 2023 – Updated May 2023)

In each evaluation report, we are looking for a discussion of the following overall questions:
**1) Stakeholders and Evaluation Goals (as articulated by partners and key stakeholders)**
    a. Who were the stakeholders for the program undertaken with FSC?

The key stakeholders for the program fall into three main categories:

1. **Young Canadian jobseekers**
   - Based on research pre-COVID-19, over 800,000 young Canadians between the ages of 15-29 were not in employment, education, or training (NEET)
     - 49% of NEET youth are looking for paid work; NEET youth are more likely to be Indigenous; Young Black males were nearly twice as likely as other young males to be NEET in 2016.
     - 32% of NEET youth have worked, but not in the last year. Of the 41% of NEET youth that do have recent job experience, many (45%) were previously in precarious employment situations.
     - Common barriers to employment experienced by these youth include weakened social networks, structural discrimination, and implicit bias.

2. **Employers**
   - Employers having difficulty filling their entry-level roles.
   - Employers who recognize that a diverse workforce will contribute to increased innovation, improve financial performance, and who are actively looking for ways to create a more diverse pipeline of talent within their organization.
   - SMEs (representing 99% of employers) who don't have access to HR resources and rely on traditional recruiting methods.

3. **Program delivery partners:**
   - Youth-facing partners such as Black North Initiative (BNI), Black Talent Initiative (BTI), Canadian Council for Youth Prosperity, and NPower Canada.
   - Employer-facing partners such as CharityVillage, the Mississauga Board of Trade, and WorkInCulture.
   - Funding and probono partners such as Accenture, Future Skills Centre, Mississauga Board of Trade, and University of Toronto.

**Future Skills Centre**
Centre des **Compétences futures**

Canada

b) How has the purpose and use of this evaluation been articulated? Provide details on any work done to articulate how this evaluation's findings were envisioned to have been used by partners, key project stakeholders, and other external stakeholders. If possible, describe any relevant processes undertaken to develop and validate these goals (i.e., design workshops, 1:1 consultations, etc.)

- CivicAction's delivery model is based on incubating actions through convening, collaborating, and co-creation. This builds regional capacity around issues needing attention and mobilization – in this case, barriers to youth employment. From a partnership perspective, not only are partners actively engaged at all stages of our work (including design, build, test, and securing a home of best fit), but HireNext itself has also proven to be a useful test case for other organizations interested in youth-facing, employer-focused, and technology-driven interventions in a post-COVID world.

- CivicAction partnered with NPower Canada, a charitable organization that launches low-income, diverse young adults into tech/digital careers, to survey 200+ youth enrolled in its program to better understand the barriers to traditional entry-level job postings.

- The results highlighted opportunities for employers to make job postings more appealing to youth including providing more clarity on the role, focussing on capabilities over experience, providing more specificity on working conditions and benefits, among others (please see the NPower Canada Survey Results document for details).

- In response, CivicAction, in partnership with Accenture, created an AI-powered assessment that prompts employers with actionable recommendations on how their job postings can be written in a more inclusive manner to attract a diverse and qualified pool of candidates.

- The Job Posting Assessment provided a scalable platform for employers to re-evaluate and improve their entry-level job postings to better attract young, diverse talent.

## 2) Learning-focused Background and Description of the Project

Each evaluator should work with partners to help structure information about project objectives and activities in a learning-focused format. The following elements are of interest:

a) Project Need/ Opportunity:

I. Why was this project needed?

- Pre-COVID-19, close to 800,000 Canadian youth between the ages of 15–29 were not in employment, education, or training.

Specifically, vulnerable youth (e.g.: Black, Indigenous, newcomer, LGBTQ+) experienced higher rates of unemployment due to barriers like weakened social networks, structural discrimination, and implicit bias.

- COVID-19 further exacerbated this situation. According to StatsCan, the economic shutdown had an unequal impact on different groups – in Ontario alone youth (aged 15-24) have suffered an unemployment rate of 30%, more than double that of the general unemployment rate. Those from racialized groups and lower-income households were disproportionately affected, specifically those who identified as Black.

- Research indicates that a period of unemployment at the time of entry into the labour market has a "scarring effect" and is associated with persistently lower wages many years thereafter. Unfortunately, those industries that traditionally offer the majority of entry-level jobs for youth (eg: accommodation, food services, and retail) have been hardest hit – making it even more difficult for an already vulnerable population to participate in the labour market.

- On the flip side, pre-pandemic 30% of employers were having trouble filling entry-level roles, with 70% indicating their biggest challenge was finding applicants.

- By removing barriers in HR practices (e.g: focus on education over skills) we can increase opportunities for equity-seeking youth and help employers fill talent gaps with candidates that can bring a new or diverse perspective.

- There was an immediate opportunity to tackle non-inclusive HR practices as employers started rehiring as part of the COVID-19 pandemic economic recovery.


II. Who are the populations that this project aimed to serve (be as specific as possible about demographics, geographical locations, occupations, and sectors)?

- In addition to young jobseekers in general, the populations this project aimed to serve include Canadian youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET youth). Even more specifically, Black, Indigenous, newcomer, and 2SLGBTQIA+ youth as they tend to experience higher rates of unemployment due to barriers like weakened social networks, structural discrimination, and implicit bias.

- In addition to our broad-based efforts to connect with employers, efforts were made to target businesses representing industries / sectors known to hire youth including construction, manufacturing, retail, transportation and warehousing, finance and insurance, health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services.

- While the no-cost and digital nature of the Job Posting Assessment ensured its accessibility to employers across Canada, our promotional efforts during the program period focused on Ontario, Nova Scotia, and Alberta.

III. To what extent were these needs being addressed before project implementation? What was known about what needed to be improved and/or expanded?

- Action to better connect youth with job opportunities is happening across various levels of government and sectors but it is often felt to be disconnected, disjointed and inaccessible to those it's aiming to reach:

- The Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) builds on programming delivered under the previous Youth Employment Strategy. This modernized strategy, which is delivered by the Government of Canada, aims to provide more flexible employment services and enhanced supports to support all young Canadians.

- Provincial programs such as The Youth Job Connection program serves youth who experience multiple and/or complex barriers to employment by providing more intensive supports beyond traditional job search and placement opportunities.

- Municipal programs such as Youth Employment Partnerships (YEP) – a youth-friendly community organization network offers co-ordinated support to young job seekers.

- Nonprofits such as NPower Canada are launching young jobseekers into meaningful and sustainable IT careers. While other organizations such as Project Liftoff – a Toronto based workforce development company – specializes in helping underserved jobseekers launch meaningful business and technology careers in the digital economy.

- However, there continues to be a need to better engage the employers who often feel disconnected from the youth employment system as they are considered an end-point and not a participant in the system. Additionally, when employers do engage in programs they can often be discouraged by the system and processing times.

- With this in mind, HireNext was designed to be a free, digital tool that, quickly and easily, provided employers with immediate and practical recommendations on how they could improve their job postings to attract a broader pool of young, diverse applicants.

IV. Is there any other background information you gathered about hiring practices in these sectors, or anything you learned about how employers in these sectors typically source workers? We have no additional information to share.

b) Theory of Change/ Logic Model/ Hypothesis

I. What was being tested in this project?
- In this project, the effectiveness of the Job Posting Assessment was tested in:
   1. Increasing employers' understanding of barriers to application for entry-level jobs.

2. Increasing the volume of applications
   for entry-level roles from youth candidates.

3. Increasing the volume of applications from vulnerable youth.

4. Increasing the likelihood of youth applying to entry-level job postings.

II. **How did project partners think the project would work and address stated needs? We are open to multiple approaches to articulating the following:**

*Process:* How were the resources/ inputs to be used to deliver activities and outputs?

The following resources / inputs outlined in our proposal resulted in the following activities and outputs:

- A volunteer advisory group provided strategic advice and guidance in the early stages of our HireNext work. Their support validated the opportunity to better connect young, diverse job seekers to employment through a tool such as the Job Posting Assessment that Accenture would develop for us on a pro bono basis.

- We were able to leverage Accenture's extensive expertise in AI technology to develop a beta version of the assessment through their pro bono consulting program.

- We were also to tap info Accenture's social impact expertise and work with them to develop a project evaluation framework to help measure the assessment's impact. This resulted in the development of the following: employer user survey: youth study: and an assessment recommendation analysis.

- We were able to leverage the University of Toronto's FutureSkills research team to undertake the youth study that ultimately showed youths' preference for job postings that had been modified by the assessment (vs. the original).

- The beta version of the job posting assessment became the foundation for the bulk of the project activities and outputs including:

    - Assessment user-testing: 8 employers tested the assessment before it launched publicly. A number of improvement opportunities were identified and implemented through this process resulting in an improved tool that employers found useful and were likely to recommend it to others.

    - Virtual launch events/activity in Toronto and Halifax: These events generated awareness of assessment, and of youth-inclusive hiring practices more generally. Additionally, they provided an opportunity to generate assessment users.

    - Promotional efforts: These generated awareness of assessment and youth-inclusive hiring practices, drove over 8,200 unique visitors to the

HireNext landing page, and ultimately
generated 126 assessment users – or a 1.5% conversion rate.

- Eight (virtual) training events held in Toronto, Calgary, and Halifax: These activities increased awareness of youth-inclusive strategies and tactics for 135+ participants, as well as helped generate assessment users.

- Our promotional efforts for the assessment and the workshops were rounded out by seven promotional partners with extensive employer networks who helped promote the assessment and the training events to their members/stakeholders.

*Outcomes*: What did project partners anticipate to be the result of delivering the project as planned?
Please consider various levels of outcomes:

– Individuals (people participating in a project/intervention)

- At the individual level, the key desired outcome was to better connect young under-represented talent with entry-level roles as the economy recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic.

– Institutions (changes to an organization's ways of working, organizational policies, practices, or approaches)

- At the institutional level, we wanted employers to be better equipped with the knowledge and motivation to update their hiring practices to be more inclusive.

– Systems (larger changes in the surrounding context, policy change, networks)

- At the systems level, our goal was to tackle systemic racism embedded within hiring practices and increase employers' capacity to remove discriminatory practices in entry-level positions.

III.   What assumptions were initially made about the project in order to achieve its objectives? (Example: participant recruitment, involvement of keystakeholders, etc).

- In hindsight, there are three assumptions that were made about the project's ability to achieve its objectives:
    1. Employer interest would be high making recruitment easy.
    2. Employers using the assessment would use it repeatedly.
    3. Probably the most significant assumption was that the project, as scoped, would have a measurable impact on hiring outcomes and HR practices at the region level. While our key metrics to measure success were correct (number of assessment users and number of employers trained on youth-inclusive hiring practices) the targets of 160 and 120 respectively were enough to provide "proof of

concept" vs. effecting change at a
systems level.

## IV. What contextual factors were anticipated that might affect how the project is delivered? (Example: labour market, etc)

- The biggest contextual factor impacting project delivery that was NOT anticipated was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on businesses. The pandemic pushed unemployment rates to a record high for youth. It also irrevocably shifted business' priorities and ways of doing work.
- In the months before and after the assessment launched, many employers struggled to simply remain open and had to de-prioritize inclusive hiring practices goals and activities in order to focus on simply keeping their businesses running.
- Additionally, the virtual operating environments made networking and relationship-building extremely challenging for the project team (particularly outside of Ontario). As the pandemic wore on, partners and participants increasingly expressed online fatigue, making engagement even more difficult.

## V. How was success initially articulated for this project?

- Success for our project was articulated as objectives we wanted to achieve and as key performance indicator targets:
- Our objectives were to:
    - Tackle systemic racism embedded within hiring practices and increase employers' knowledge and capacity to remove discriminatory practices in entry-level positions and share best practices.
    - Address employers' need for knowledge and motivation to update their hiring practices to address Anti-Black and Anti-indigenous racism and be more inclusive generally.
    - Better connect the supply of young under-represented talent with entry-level roles as the economy recovers.
- We used the following metrics and targets by which to measure our success:
    - Employer testers: 15 employers will be involved in user-testing the AI tool pre-launch.
    - Employer use of the assessment: Over 160 employers will use the assessment*.
    - Job postings evaluated: Over 320 job postings will be evaluated by the assessment.

- Impact: 50% of recommendations provided by the assessment are accepted by assessment users.
- Employer satisfaction: Over 50% of employers find the tool useful and over 50% are likely to recommend it to other employers.
- Youth satisfaction: 3/5 youth surveyed will find the updated job descriptions more inclusive.
- Training: Over 120 professionals will be trained*.
- Outcome: Over 50% of employers and HR professionals trained feel better equipped to develop more youth inclusive job postings.
- Outcome: In a controlled study 50% of participating employers report attracting a more diverse candidate pool.

*Assessment user projected targets were based on our previous HireNext HR assessment work and the communications budget available to us. We thought it reasonable to generate approximately 10 assessment users/month once we launched. Workshop attendance projections were based on our previous pre-COVID experience. We estimated we could attract approximately 40 attendees to 3+ virtual workshops. However, the digital fatigue that came with COVID was unanticipated and we had to host more workshops in order to reach our target.

## 3) Evaluation Questions, Data Sources and Indicators

Consultants should articulate any evaluation questions that have been developed at various points in the project, and any changes that have been made to those questions over time. If possible, please structure the evaluation questions against the following categories:

a. **Implementation (Process)** What did we learn about how the program is being implemented?

- We learned the following about how the program was implemented.
- **Marketing and communications**. Over the project period, we tested various strategies and tactics as part of our comprehensive promotional efforts across our three target markets including: promotion via six Boards of Trade and their communication channels; five promotional partners, paid transit advertising; a digital Google ad campaign targeting priority sectors; outreach to over a dozen industry associations and 109 Business Improvement Areas; 80 high-potential individual; two launch events; and eight presentations/workshops.
- Collectively, these efforts resulted in generating awareness and interest as demonstrated by the 8,200+ unique visitors (UV) to the HireNext landing page over the project period. However only 126 (1.5%) of these UV converted to assessment users.
- Not surprisingly, our call to use the assessment was more successful with those who had already signaled their interest in this

topic: either by registering for a launch or
training event or agreeing to meet with the HireNext team to learn more.

- **Area of Focus.** The Job Posting Assessment and the messaging and training opportunities surrounding it focussed on recruitment. Over the project period, it was clear that employers were keen for an opportunity to discuss challenges across all the HR stages including recruitment, onboarding, and retention. We tried to address this appetite by broadening one of the training activities to be more generally about youth-inclusive hiring practises, and then used that framing to introduce the assessment.

- **Community Partners.** Recognizing that using the assessment is only one way to better connect employers with young, diverse talent, we also tried to connect employers with youth-facing organizations such as ACCESS, NPower Canada, Project LiftOff, and more. Tactics to do so included having representatives on HireNext launch event panel discussions, promoting these organizations in the HireNext e-newsletter, and calling out the role that community partners can play during the HireNext workshops. Unfortunately, we did not have a mechanism in place to gauge the success of these efforts.

- Additional implementation lessons-learned could potentially come from CharityVillage and TalentEgg, the new permanent hosts of HireNext.

b. **Effectiveness (Outcomes):** What did we learn about the outcomes of the intervention? After what time period?

- At the individual level, the key desired outcome was to better connect the supply of young under-represented talent with entry-level roles as the economy recovered from the COVID-19 pandemic. An anecdote from an assessment user illustrated the opportunity for the job posting assessment to do just that:

- *The assessment user posted for an entry-level position for a period of time and then reposted a modified version after running it through the assessment.*

- *Two of the changes made, among others, included changing the job title from Administration and Financial Coordinator to Administration and Financial Organizer and removing the university education requirement. The modified job posting attracted almost 80% more applicants than the original. More significantly, their top candidates came from the applicant pool generated by the modified posting.*

- At the institutional level, we wanted employers to be better equipped with the knowledge and motivation to update their hiring practices to be more inclusive.

   1. *Results from the assessment-user survey showed that of the **nine users** who completed the survey immediately after using the assessment, 100% indicated their knowledge of barriers that may deter young applicants applying for entry-level job postings increased.*

2. *Additionally, results from the post-workshop survey indicated that of the 10 workshop participants that completed the feedback survey across nine workshops delivered over the project period: 100% agreed the workshop increased their knowledge of youth-inclusive recruitment strategies and tactics; 90% agreed the workshop exposed them to practical tools to support their organization recruitment of young, diverse talent; and 100% agreed they would intend to use the HireNext Job Posting Assessment to improve their job postings and make them more youth inclusive.*

- At the systems level, our goal was to tackle systemic racism embedded within hiring practices and increase employers' capacity to remove discriminatory practices in entry-level positions.

- *This project served to provide "proof of concept" and the need for a significant scaling effort to realize this outcome. Partnering with the CharityVillage Foundation and transferring the HireNext tools and resources to CharityVillage and its sister company TalentEgg, provides that scaling opportunity.*

- *CharityVillage is a career resource to over 170,000 charitable and nonprofit organizations across Canada, while TalentEgg is a job board and online career resource for students, graduates, and early career professionals looking for meaningful, career-launching opportunities. Their respective employer communities (non-profit / actively recruiting entry-level talent) and young adult community (young adults actively seeking work) are the perfect audiences for HireNext Job Posting Assessment and additional tools and resources.*

c. **Efficiency:** What will we learn about how to use resources more efficiently to achieve the desired outcomes?

- The bulk of our financial and staff resources over the project period was dedicated to communication and outreach activities in an effort to connect with employers and encourage them to use the assessment.
- As outlined previously, these efforts were not as effective as we had originally anticipated.
- The most significant opportunity to address this is to partner with an organization(s) with mandates that support inclusive hiring, that already serve as a destination for employers, that offer products/services that compliment the assessment, and has the infrastructure in place for frequent and ongoing communications.

d. **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?

- The following survey/study results the HireNext Job Posting Assessment can be attributed to positive outcomes:
    - **The youth study conducted by the University of Toronto's FutureSkills research team**. This study answered three key research questions:
        - Do diverse and vulnerable youth have a preference for entry-level job postings that are modified by the JPA? *RESULTS: The study results concluded that in 9 out of the 10 tested postings, study participants showed a preference for the modified version of the posting. These preferences were statistically significant.*
        - Are preferences for JPA-modified postings depending on the respondents' characteristics (i.e., age, gender, education, immigrant status)? *RESULTS: The more vulnerable participants, i.e., those with lower levels of education, lower incomes, disabilities, and females, had a stronger preference for entry-level job postings that were modified by the JPA.*
        - Do preferences for JPA-modified postings differ by the number of changes or types of improvements suggested by the tool? *RESULTS: The participants' preferences for JPA-modified postings did not differ by the number of changes implemented. It appears that preferences for JPA emerge from holistic changes to the overall posting.*
        - For details, please refer to the Youth Study Report document provided.

    - Of the **five assessment users** who posted a modified job posting and then completed the follow up survey once the recruitment period had ended:
        - 60% indicated the modified job posting helped to increase the number of youth applicants.
        - 20% hired from the candidate pool generated using the modified posting; and 20% indicated they intended to hire them or keep them in the candidate pool for future consideration.
        - 20% indicated select recommendations have become standard practice, with 80% indicating the work was in progress.
        - 80% indicated that using the assessment either did/or will contribute to changes in their overall recruitment processes.

- Please see the Employer Survey
  Results document provided.

- Testimonials & Anecdotes include the following:
  - "We ran our job posting through the HireNext Job Posting Assessment. It made tailored and unique recommendations to help us address bias and reach new candidates—it's incredibly helpful!" Michelle Kearns, Planning Associate at ACCES Employment
  - Based on the recommendations provided by the assessment, one user's modified job posting attracted almost 80% more applicants than the original. More interesting, their top candidates came from the applicant pool generated by the updated posting.

- Training event participant feedback shows that of the 10 workshop participants that completed the feedback survey: 100% agreed the workshop increased their knowledge of youth-inclusive recruitment strategies and tactics; 90% agreed the workshop exposed them to practical tools to support their organization recruitment of young, diverse talent; and 100% agreed they would intend to use the HireNext Job Posting Assessment to improve their job postings and make them more youth inclusive. Please see the Workshop Participants Survey results document provided.

For each question defined above, please provide detail on indicators, methods and data sources used to answer evaluation questions articulated above.

a. *Indicators* – These are the key markers to determine whether an accomplishment has been achieved.
b. *Data Sources* – These are the sources of information you used or developed to gather evidence against your indicators and evaluation questions.

| Evaluation Question | Indicator(s) | Methods | Data Sources |
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| **Implementation (Process)** What did we learn about how the program is being implemented? | • Responses to promotional efforts. • # of assessment registrants • # of HireNext assessment users | • Data analysis | • Google analytics • Intercom analytics (assessment platform) |
| **Effectiveness (Outcomes):** What did we learn about the | • Assessment user feedback | • Anecdotal • Surveys | • Employer user anecdote |

| outcomes of the intervention? After what time period? | • Assessment user surveys | | • Employer user survey<br>• Post workshop survey |
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| **Efficiency:** What will we learn about how to use resources more efficiently to achieve the desired outcomes? | • Responses to promotional efforts.<br>• # of HireNext assessment registrants.<br>• # of HireNext assessment users | • Data analysis | • Google analytics<br>• Intercom analytics (assessment platform) |
| **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? | • Youths' response to modified job postings | • Conjoint study<br>• Surveys<br>• Data analysis | • Youth study<br>• Employer user anecdote<br>• Employer user survey<br>• Post workshop survey |

## 4) Evaluation Results

In addition to learning about promising results, we recognize that many projects will not work as originally planned. Where anticipated results were not achieved, please provide any discussion as to what factors might explain what was observed. Where possible please provide any discussion about what has been learned about **assumptions** that were made at the onset, as well as the **role of context**.

- We were unable to achieve two of our key targets: 1. Generating 160 job posting assessment users and 2. The analysis of 320 job postings.
- Acknowledging the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on our activities in support of these targets (as described previously), below are some key lessons learned throughout the project period:

### Digital Tools (Job Posting Assessment)
- **Test, test, and test again.** Through user-testing, with multiple assessment users and across a variety of job postings, we

discovered the assessment did not work as it
should in certain instances as well as identified opportunities for improvement.
- While we were able to make the required changes to ensure a viable product, we
  were unable to address all the feedback given the financial resources available.

- **The user experience is critical to a strong conversion rate.** Despite significant
  traffic to the HireNext landing page (8,200 unique visitors or UV over the project
  period), only 3.3% (or 270) converted to registrants, and 1.5% of UV converted to
  assessment users (or 126).
- The HireNext landing page user experience required multiple steps to reach the
  assessment including registration (name, email and four registration questions).
  While we could have eliminated the registration step to make the process
  simpler, we would have lost the ability to collect user data.
- Ensuring a more positive user experience including optimizing landing page
  design and content, data capture requirements, and location of the asset could
  have substantially improved those conversation rates.

- **Increasing/maintaining usage (Job postings assessed) takes ongoing effort
  and resources**. Based on our target of 160 assessment users, we estimated 320
  job postings would be assessed (2 postings / user on average). Instead, we found
  that users assessed 1.5 postings on average.
- One tactic we tried to improve that number was to test a monthly email
  campaign targeting assessment registrants and users to help keeping the
  assessment top-of-mind. Unfortunately, the campaign did not result in a
  significant increase.

## Marketing & Communications
- **Ongoing marketing and promotion efforts require significant and ongoing
  investment.** Despite a sizable portion of the FSC budget being allocated to
  promotional efforts (15%) as well as Communication staff's time, additional
  resources were required to generate the significant and sustained promotional
  efforts required to break through to our employer audience.
- For maximum impact, communications need to reach potential assessment
  users before/as they enter a recruitment cycle. While many employers are
  recruiting on-going, we may have seen increased uptake if we had better
  targeted those industries with summer hiring needs and ramped up promotional
  efforts in the months preceding that hiring period (eg: Feb & Mar).
- The lesson learned is that advance of developing an asset such as the Job
  Posting Assessment, ensure you have **access** to the individuals / communities
  you are targeting **at the required scale**. This could mean involving a strategic
  partner(s), whose communities would benefit from the assessment.

- One opportunity to do so is to situate the assessment on an existing career resource / job board hub that is already a destination for employers who are actively recruiting.

### Strategic Partners

- **Not all partners are created equally.** In advance of developing a digital asset such as the Job Posting Assessment, consider striking a strategic partnership with an organization(s) that has a similar mandate, expertise, complimentary tools and resources, AND an existing platform and backend infrastructure / expertise.
- Leveraging existing platforms and backend infrastructure in this way may help alleviate many of the user experience challenges mentioned above. Additionally, the organization may have a built-in network that will benefit from the asset.

### Evaluation

- **Many large employers' HR systems are decentralized making data collection for our employer impact study impractical.** Unfortunately, the decentralized nature of the HR processes does not allow for the easy collection and extraction of data by the employer.
- As our Employer Impact Study required the analysis of a minimum of 250 job postings across up to three organizations, we have had to pivot and replace the planned study with a small-scale employer survey.

### 5) Discussion and Implications

We welcome any discussion of potential larger lessons to be drawn from this evaluation, with appropriate caveats clearly articulated. FSC is, in particular, interested in highlighting potential broader implications along the following dimensions (while recognizing that not all evaluations will be equally available to address the questions articulated):

| Dimensions | Key Questions |
|---|---|
| Resources | Please provide some reflections about the resources required to adequately develop working prototypes of innovations that could address various aspects of the hiring process. <br><br> • **Access to HR expertise / champions:** We benefited from a volunteer Champions Council made up of HR, workforce development, and future of work subject matter experts who helped guide our thinking. A few of these individuals championed our work within their organization and facilitated access to financial and pro bono support. <br> • **Access to pro bono / financial support:** |

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| |    ○  Prior to the launch of the assessment (and the FSC project period) Accenture provided $400,000 of probono support to build the tool<br>   ○  Testing and optimizing the assessment (a portion of the FSC budget was allocated to this)<br>   ○  Impact measurement. Two streams of this work benefitted from two separate organization's probono support (youth survey–University of Toronto; impact measurement framework–Accenture)<br>•  **Access to technical expertise**: This expertise was provided by Accenture (pro bono) and Paddle (paid partnership) |
| Expansion | Is there a need to expand the program or project to reach new population groups or different geographies? Why or why not?<br><br>While the need to connect young, diverse jobseekers to employment opportunities is still as critical as ever, there is no need to expand the HireNext project beyond the new strategic partnership that is already in place.<br><br>CharityVillage and TalentEgg, HireNext's new permanent home, reaches over 170,000 charitable and nonprofit organizations across Canada, in addition to the young adults reached through its job board and online career resource for students, graduates, and early career professionals. We are confident this new home, and the infrastructure supporting it, will provide the scale needed for maximum impact. |
| Adoption | Are opportunities for other organizations serving the populations in question to adopt elements of what was being explored here? Why or why not? What factors are critical here and in what context?<br><br>Yes, there is ample opportunity for youth-facing organizations to continue to draw employer's attention to the opportunity that comes with young, diverse talent, and concrete actions that can be taken to help employers modify their hiring practices to be more inclusive (eg: the HireNext Job Posting Assessment).<br><br>Employer-facing organizations, such as industry associations, can also play a role in reinforcing youth-inclusive hiring practices to their members as a means to close entry-level talent gaps and to diversify their talent pipeline. |

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| Investment or Partnership (actual or potential) | Did the project in question attract additional investment or partnership support over the course of the FSC engagement? If so, what factors might have contributed)? |
| | Yes, we are thrilled that the project attracted additional partnership support over the course of the FSC project window. Our newest and final strategy partner, CharityVillage, recognized the opportunity for our HireNext tools and resources to round out their product/service offering and to provide added value to their employer and young jobseeker audiences. In becoming HireNext's permanent home, CharityVillage will be investing in the maintenance / improvement of the assessment over time. |
| | The key contributing factors that can be attributed to the success of this partnership: |
| | • Strategic alignment (connecting employers with talent; and talent with employers) <br> • Audience alignment (employers – non–profit sector typically don't have the HR capacity and / or access to tools such as these) / <br> • Existing infrastructure: they have two existing hubs where the HireNext tools and resources could easily be plugged in <br> • Complimentary products: HireNext tools and resources round out their existing products and services <br> • We were offering a proven tool for free (no upfront capital costs) |
| | More generally, the following proof points are helpful in making the case for other partners to take on testing, refinement, and scaling: |
| | • A clear need (ie. a compelling fact base supporting the problem trying to tackle) and a viable solution (ie: the assessment) <br> • Statistically significant and qualitative data to support the effectiveness of the solution/tool (eg. the youth study results and positive employer feedback <br> • *NOTE: We would have liked to provide qualitative employer results – but ran into challenges trying to access the require information.* |
| Lessons for service delivery | What larger lessons for service delivery did this project provide? |

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|  | • Think more wholistically and intentionally about what is required to attain the critical mass needed to effect positive change at the systems level.<br>• Identify organizations doing work that supports / compliments your own work and establish relationships / partnership when and where it makes sense. |
| Lessons for policy | What larger lessons for policies at various of government should be discussed?<br><br>• Mandatory educational requirements and credentialization is a barrier to youth accessing employment.<br>• Co-ops, internships, and / or work integrated learning opportunities are critical for youth to gain basic workplace experience and begin to understand the essential "soft skills" that employers require.<br>• Recruitment outreach should be expanded to non-traditional talent sources including seeking out community partnerships, building relationships with different academic institutions and offering internships.<br>• Employers should recruit based on current organizational need and position competencies (not just who held the position previously).<br>• Postings and roles should be made more relevant and accessible to racialized communities – emphasizing transferable skills, the value of lived experience, and ensuring access to technology for those seeking opportunities. |

**Documents to include:**
- NPower Canada Survey
- Youth Study Report
- Employer Survey Results
- Workshop Participants Survey Results
- Youth-inclusive Practices Summary