

Project Insights Report

In Motion & Momentum+ (IM&M+) – Building Resilience, Hope and Sustainable Futures



PARTNERS

Canadian Career Development Foundation



LOCATIONS

Alberta
British Columbia
Newfoundland and Labrador
Nova Scotia
Saskatchewan



INVESTMENT

\$2,876,170



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Executive Summary

Many Canadians who are unemployed want to work but face complex social, economic and health challenges that make it difficult for them to re-enter the labour market. When these are left unaddressed, individuals often find themselves dependent on social assistance, experiencing psychological distress, incurring costs from being caught in a cycle of poverty and unable to sustain unsuitable employment. However, individuals with these complex “pre-employability” needs do not typically have access to the supports they need to reconnect to the labour market.

In response to these challenges, the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) developed In Motion & Momentum+ (IM&M+). IM&M+ is an intensive pre-employability program that supports people to address complex barriers to employment and make progress towards reaching their social and economic potential. The program helps individuals who are most distant from the labour market to build foundational skills and identify and leverage their strengths as a source of hope, motivation and pride.

In 2021, CCDF received a grant from FSC to use a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) to systematically and rigorously measure IM&M+’s causal impact on participant outcomes. Preliminary analysis of RCT results indicates that IM&M+ is having a positive impact on both pre-employability skills and employment.

KEY INSIGHTS

- 1 IM&M+ participants are 41.7% more likely than comparison group participants to be employed three months after program exit.
- 2 IM&M+ has a positive impact on pre-employability skills, with a large positive effect on Employment Hope and a moderate positive effect on Emotional Intelligence.
- 3 Three-quarters of participants were very or somewhat satisfied with IM&M+, and they particularly valued the program's supportive facilitators, the structure and format of training modules, and the role of group-based learning and community engagement to build confidence and resilience.

The Issue

The Canadian labour market is experiencing an unprecedented labour shortage. At the same time, many Canadians who have been out of work for a long time want to rejoin the workforce, but they do not have effective supports to do so. Many are at the stage of “pre-employability” where they face complex social, economic, health and skills challenges to re-entering the labour market, and need additional supports to strengthen their foundational skills and attributes. Existing employment services assume people are employment ready and don't address gaps in pre-employability skills. IM&M+ is testing a model that could help fill this gap.

When pre-employability needs are left unaddressed, social and economic barriers can compound. Individuals often find themselves dependent on social assistance, experiencing psychological distress, caught in a cycle of poverty, and unable to sustain employment. This creates a negative feedback loop: individuals feel reduced motivation, hope and confidence in their ability to succeed in the labour market, which further traps them in the state of dependence on social services and long-term unemployment. This cycle results in significant costs to individuals, communities and local labour markets.



What We Investigated

In response to these challenges, the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) developed In Motion & Momentum+ (IM&M+). IM&M+ is an intensive pre-employability program that supports people to address complex barriers to employment and make progress towards reaching their social and economic potential. The program helps individuals who are distant from the labour market to build foundational skills and identify and leverage their strengths as a source of hope, motivation, and pride.

In 2021, CCDF received a second grant from FSC to use a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) to systematically and rigorously measure IM&M+'s causal impact on participant outcomes. The RCT involves 13 organizations in five provinces and will compare outcomes of IM&M+ participants to other individuals with similar characteristics who are offered “business-as-usual” employment services. Preliminary results of the RCT span February 2022 to March 2023 and include 297 participants.

This report focuses on three main lines of inquiry:

1. Program reach and impact:

- a) Is IM&M+ reaching its target population?
- b) What are the effects of IM&M+ on pre-employability skills, employment and education enrollment?

2. Program implementation:

- a) Is the program delivered with fidelity and what contextual adaptations are needed?
- b) What are successes and challenges with delivering the program?

3. Participant experience:

- a) How satisfied are participants with IM&M+?
- b) For those who exit the program early, what are the reasons why?

✔ What We're Learning

IM&M+ provides a unique opportunity to support individuals at the pre-employability stage, which is a gap in most existing employment services. The preliminary results show that IM&M+'s person-centred strengths-based approach was effective in supporting participants to avoid and/or transition out of the trap of long-term unemployment.

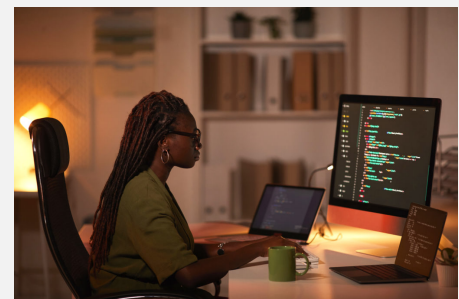
Individuals who participated in IM&M+ had large gains in Employment Hope, moderate gains in Emotional Intelligence and small gains in Self-Esteem, compared to similar individuals who received regular public employment services. Notably, IM&M+ participants were 41.7% more likely than their counterparts to be employed three months after the program. These impacts are coupled with high implementation fidelity and participant satisfaction. Facilitators across Canada delivered the program as planned, and participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

As to be expected with any program, IM&M+ experienced some minor implementation challenges. Working with diverse delivery partners across different geographic, economic and population contexts is a highly ambitious approach that reflects CCDF's position as a capacity-builder in the career development sector. This approach requires adaptation to the local context and clear communications around anticipated risks and expectations for service providers, along with responsive capacity-building supports.

Some implementation challenges are related to societal conditions beyond any single program's scope of influence. With participants at the stage of pre-employability, life stability can quickly change due to socio-economic or personal factors. These changes can influence participants' capacity to engage in the program and the level of personal support they need from facilitators. CCDF has been highly responsive to emergent challenges with tailored resources and supports. Challenges like the limited availability of wraparound services require more attention and investments to the social service sector as a whole.

★ Why It Matters

Individuals with complex "pre-employability" needs do not typically have access to the supports they need to reconnect to the labour market. Existing services often assume that clients are employment-ready. This contrasts with the evidence that shows this population would benefit from targeted interventions focused on breaking the cycle.



**State of Skills:
Digital Tools in the Skills
Ecosystem**

Implementing an RCT while a program is being implemented by multiple delivery partners and scaled to various regions and contexts is a rare and significant undertaking for a community-based social program in the Canadian social services landscape. The final results from the study will help to demonstrate how IM&M+, as a strengths-based program, is directly impacting Canada's gap in pre-employability services.

There is considerable promise in the role digital tools and virtual career services can play in improving access to training and career development, particularly for those with geographic barriers or constraints such as family care or other work responsibilities.

[Read Thematic Report](#)

► What's Next

As the project continues, it will continue to collect participant experience and outcome data from additional cohorts to reach a target sample size of 500 participants. Longer-term outcomes data will also be collected for all participants through follow-up surveys and Statistics Canada data linkage.

With a larger sample size and long-term data, it will be possible to make more confident claims about program effectiveness. Going forward the evaluation will explore how IM&M+ impacts groups differently, such as newcomers and whether there are correlations between number of modules completed and outcomes.

Finally, there will also be additional implementation research to better understand appropriate adaptations for scaling IM&M+, as well as a cost-effectiveness analysis to estimate the cost of delivering IM&M+ relative to comparable programs.

Have questions about our work? Do you need access to a report in English or French? Please contact communications@fsc-ccf.ca.

How to Cite This Report

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