



# Designing for Scale:

## Blueprint's Road Map for the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio

March 2023

**Blueprint**

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# Acknowledgements

## About the Future Skills Centre

[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.

FSC was founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint and The Conference Board of Canada, and is funded by the [Government of Canada's Future Skills Program](#).

## About Blueprint

[Blueprint](#) was founded on the simple idea that evidence is a powerful tool for change. We work with policymakers and practitioners to create and use evidence to solve complex policy and program challenges. Our vision is a social policy ecosystem where evidence is used to improve lives, build better systems and policies and drive social change.

Our team brings together a multidisciplinary group of professionals with diverse capabilities in policy research, data analysis, design, evaluation, implementation and knowledge mobilization.

As a consortium partner of the Future Skills Centre, Blueprint works with partners and stakeholders to collaboratively generate and use evidence to help solve pressing future skills challenges.



The Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio is funded by the Government of Canada's Future Skills Centre.

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

## A Letter from FSC's Executive Director

At the Future Skills Centre (FSC), we want to create a future in which everyone in Canada has access to high-quality career advice and can gain the skills needed to have opportunities for lifelong learning and good jobs. We work with partners across Canada to identify which skills will be needed in our workforce now and in the future, and which efforts will most likely produce knowledge and insights with potential for expansion to more people and communities.

Recent years have highlighted the intense strain Canadians are under to find stable, fulfilling employment. At FSC, we are responding to this challenge by supporting a portfolio of initiatives that helps people gain the skills they need and employers find the workforce they require. We support the testing, growth, development and expansion of some of our most encouraging interventions to foster a resilient learning nation. Lessons from our research and project activities will enable us to share insights and mobilize knowledge central to our wider strategy and overall approach to scaling.

In this report from Blueprint, our valued evidence-generation partner, we get our first glimpse of how some of our partners are addressing urgent issues facing Canadians, and how they are deepening their impact. Blueprint's work on these FSC projects is generating evidence to help us find new solutions and learn what works in order to scale them. From pre-employment initiatives that build confidence and resiliency to helping oil and gas workers re-skill for high-growth IT jobs, these programs reach across geographies, populations and sectors to ensure that the Canadian workforce is future-ready.

Scaling is about growing an intervention to increase its scope and serve more people. In today's constantly-changing economy, we need new approaches, recognizing the challenges these interventions face, and supporting promising ideas at various stages. We welcome this scaling framework as one of many approaches FSC is undertaking to support moving projects to scale. In this dynamic environment, the insights on how skills development can adapt in a fast-changing economy have never been more important.

Looking ahead, we recognize that it is crucial for us all to adopt a continuous learning mindset and allow early-stage interventions to remain responsive, flexible and open to experimentation. In this way, we can support Canadians in developing skills for the evolving economy so that everyone can thrive in the workforce of the future.

**Pedro Barata**

Executive Director, Future Skills Centre



## A Foreword from Blueprint's CEO

The landscape for Canadian workers and employers is unlike anything we've seen before. From demographic shifts to automation, far too many workers are feeling the impacts of changing labour markets, with some facing the acute threats of precarity, low job quality and limited advancement opportunities. Adding to this, the pandemic exacerbated existing inequalities in the labour market. On the demand side, employers report growing gaps between the skills they need and the skills available. More than ever, Canadians need high-quality skilling opportunities so they can keep pace in a rapidly changing labour market. And Canada, like many jurisdictions, has responded to these mounting concerns by pilot testing innovative solutions.

Thankfully, there are countless inspiring organizations across the country rising to the moment. These innovative, forward-thinking groups are committed to meeting the future skills needs of Canadians by leveraging deep subject matter knowledge to offer exciting and creative interventions. But too many of these projects get stalled at the pilot stage, unable to make the jump to operating at scale. In order to address Canada's labour market challenges, we need to break this cycle and help our most promising solutions reach communities across Canada. This is the challenge—and opportunity—of scaling.

There is no “playbook” outlining how to overcome these issues. But working in partnership with ten organizations in FSC's Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio, Blueprint is building one. Our scaling playbook is a groundbreaking way of using evidence to understand how a program can continuously learn, grow and adapt to deepen its reach and impact.

Supporting the progress of these ten initiatives required Blueprint to develop a novel approach to evidence generation that fits within the stages of the innovation cycle. By understanding a program's stage of development, we can use the right tools to bring it to the next stage. This approach helps us strengthen each intervention, assess whether its costs are commensurate with its benefits and systematically address the broader question of what role this intervention could play in solving our most pressing skills challenges.

This approach also offers an opportunity to disrupt the current “one study at a time” method in favour of continuous evidence generation and program improvement that builds the quality and quantity of evidence needed to help promising solutions reach scale. By doing so, programs improve in real time through an integral element of scaling: continuous learning. For successful scaling, organizations and policymakers need to commit to cycles of ongoing improvement, combining flexibility with fortitude.

While the path to scaling is not straightforward, we are excited to be working with innovative organizations that are moving the needle on pressing labour market needs. Together, we're not only transforming the skills development system but helping Canadian employers and workers, now and in the future.

**Karen Myers**  
CEO, Blueprint

# Introduction

The world of work is changing at a rate no one could have anticipated, an acceleration that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Canadians increasingly need responsive and high-quality skilling opportunities so that they can keep pace and thrive in a rapidly changing labour market.

To answer that need, pockets of promising skills development innovations have emerged across Canada. However, not enough of these innovations are moving beyond the pilot stage. Instead, workforce innovators face barriers to scaling their interventions, such as inadequate funding, ecosystem fragmentation and talent gaps. This phenomenon is sometimes referred to as the “stagnation chasm” — the space where good ideas get stuck before they have a chance to maximize their impact.<sup>1</sup> More attention must be paid to helping organizations grow the impact of their most promising interventions, lifting them out of the stagnation chasm to move them toward meeting demand at scale across Canada.

**To meet rising demand for a robust skills development system, Canada needs an evidence-based approach to help promising skills training innovations scale up. This is why the Future Skills Centre (FSC) and Blueprint have launched the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio.**

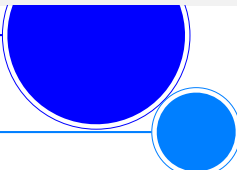
## About the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio

FSC is partnering with ten organizations with promising skills development interventions that have moved toward scaling up their impact. In some cases, this means expanding geographically or to a new sector, while in others it means aiming to reach more people in the same region and/or industry.

As part of the FSC consortium, Blueprint is working closely with each grantee organization to generate evidence to support their scaling journey. As part of a broader commitment to building Canada’s scaling capacity, Blueprint has developed a new approach to evidence generation that is aligned with the stages of the innovation cycle. Our aim is to address a broad range of evidence questions that help each intervention strengthen its design and delivery, assess whether its costs are commensurate with the benefits it brings and systematically address the broader question of what role this intervention could play in addressing our most pressing skills challenges.

The Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio offers a ground-breaking opportunity to disrupt the current “one study at a time” method of evidence building in favour of continuous evidence generation and program improvement that builds the quality and quantity of evidence needed to help our most promising skills solutions reach scale.

Success for the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio does not mean delivering as much training to as many Canadians as possible through these projects. Each grantee is on a scaling journey that includes a commitment to continuous learning: through our evidence generation process, we are helping them understand which aspects of their services are working, but equally, what doesn’t work and why. The point of this approach is continuous learning, identifying challenges and iterating new solutions with an eye toward scale.



More attention must be paid to helping organizations grow the impact of their most promising interventions, lifting them out of the stagnation chasm to move them toward meeting demand at scale across Canada.

<sup>1</sup> Deiglmeier, K., & Greco, A. (2018). Why proven solutions struggle to scale up. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*.

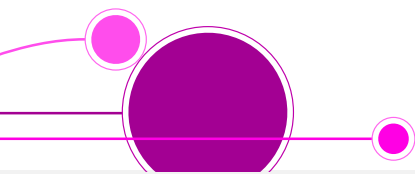
# About This Report

This report—a road map to the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio—outlines how Blueprint is working together with grantees to support their scaling journeys.

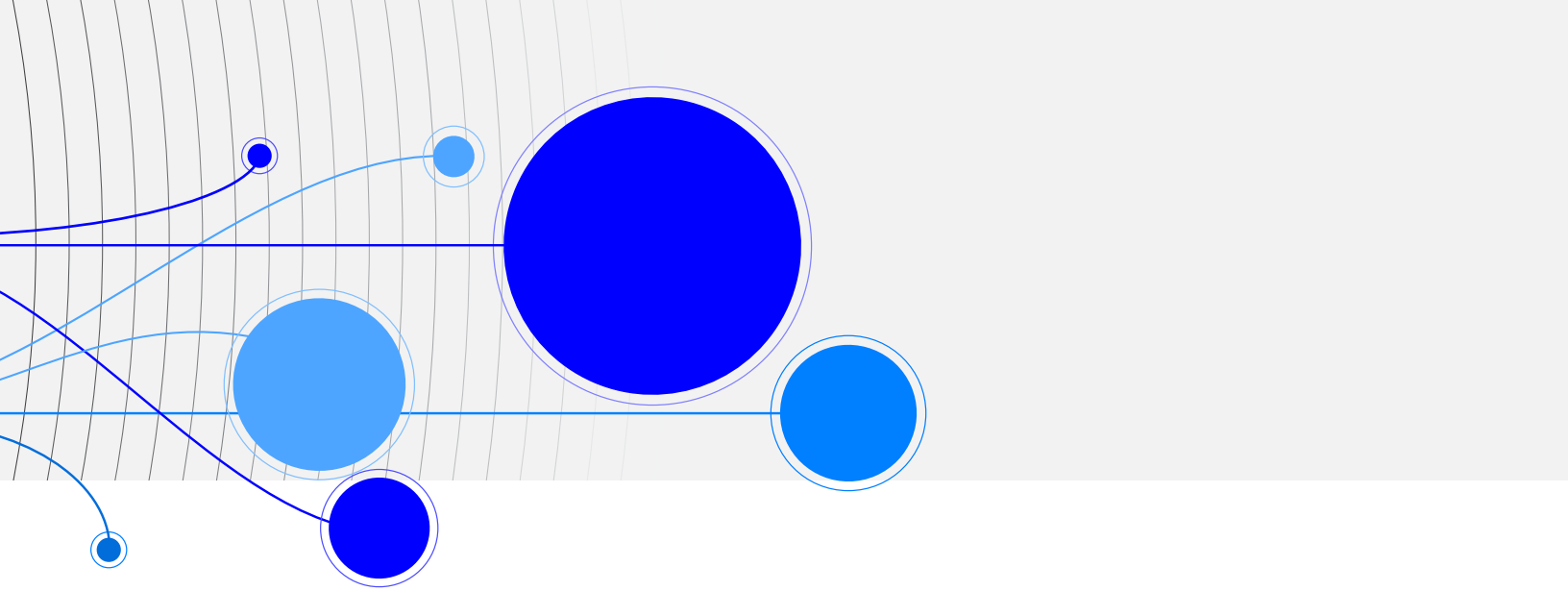
The report includes four sections:

<div>1</div> <div>Our scaling portfolio</div> <div>This section provides an overview of the Portfolio, including what labour market challenge each intervention is addressing and why it matters for Canada.</div>	<div>2</div> <div>Our evidence approach</div> <div>This section introduces Blueprint's evidence generation framework and outlines how it is being used to support the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio.</div>	<div>3</div> <div>Project summaries</div> <div>This section provides a closer look at each intervention, its scaling goals and how we are helping to generate the evidence needed to achieve these goals.</div>	<div>4</div> <div>Early insights</div> <div>This section provides early insights on what we are learning as we apply our evidence framework for the first time and what it takes to support organizations and their interventions on a scaling journey.</div>
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This report is an introduction to the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio and its design and early implementation. It does not present evidence findings, learnings or insights for each specific project. Project-specific results will be shared through a series of reports that will be published starting in early 2023.



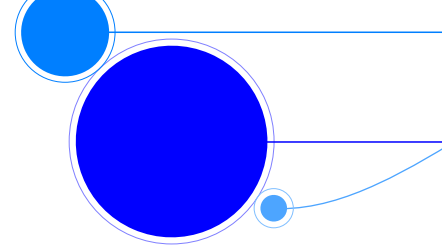
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## Section 1

# The Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio

# 1 The Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio



The Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio is a partnership with ten grantee organizations, each of which has a promising intervention with early signs of success and potential for wider impact. Grantees are innovative, forward-thinking organizations committed to meeting the future skills needs of Canadians. Blueprint and FSC are grateful for their partnership. This section explains how we developed the Portfolio and introduces each grantee and their intervention.

## Developing the Portfolio

The ten projects in the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio were selected from FSC's broader portfolio of innovation projects using a set of criteria to assess two key factors: strategic relevance and feasibility of scaling.

### Strategic Relevance

We began by reviewing FSC's existing portfolio of innovation projects to identify those with the potential to meet pressing skills needs now and in the future. Our aim was to identify interventions that are relevant for Canadians at different points in their career trajectories, from youth entering the labour market to mid-career workers facing transitions. Once we identified a set of strategic interventions, we further prioritized our list by asking, for each intervention, if it were operating at scale could it have the potential to "move the needle?"

### Feasibility of Scaling

We also looked for early signs of feasibility. Just because an intervention is relevant doesn't mean it can or should be scaled. For example, some interventions are too expensive to scale or impossible to scale because they rely on the talents of specific people. We considered four feasibility criteria:

- **Evidence of effectiveness** – Because we were selecting projects from FSC's existing portfolio, we had to work with the available evidence base. Given the emphasis on innovation, many interventions were relatively new and only had light touch evaluations behind them. It was not feasible, therefore, to insist that interventions must have been rigorously evaluated. Instead, we had to look at what was promising: did the intervention have a credible theory of change? What did the internal program data show? Was there preliminary evidence of effectiveness?
- **Demand for service** – Was there a well-defined target population that wanted and needed this service at the time of project conception and for the foreseeable future?
- **Value for money** – What is our best estimate of what this intervention might cost to deliver at maturity? What benefits is it expected to bring? Is it plausible the intervention would be more cost-effective than the alternative? We did not want to end up with "gold-plated pilots": projects that work well in a few places but are too expensive to ever spread.
- **Capacity to deliver** – We also ensured the intervention doesn't rely solely on the talents of specific individuals. There must be an actual model which must be replicable.

All interventions in the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio met our early indicators of relevance and feasibility. In our work together over the next two years, we will build on this early assessment and deepen our understanding of each intervention's potential for further scaling. Each intervention's potential will depend not just on its own effectiveness, but also a range of other factors, including changing demographics, labour market dynamics and what other comparable or complementary programs are being offered to the target population.

# Portfolio Overview<sup>2</sup>

What follows is a brief introduction to the ten partner organizations in the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio. A detailed analysis of each organization's particular project—including design, implementation and cost—can be found in [Section 3](#).

## **Advanced Digital and Professional Training (ADaPT) – Diversity Institute and TECHNATION**

ADaPT helps graduates in arts, social sciences and humanities transition to the workforce by providing technology literacy and professional skills workshops and skills bootcamps. It is designed and delivered by the Diversity Institute at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) in partnership with TECHNATION, a national technology industry association that represents Canadian technology companies.

ADaPT was selected to be part of the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio due to strong outcomes and positive participant experiences over the past eight years. The program has been successfully delivered to 900 participants, the majority of whom belong to groups facing employment barriers. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, 80 percent of participants secured work placements.

Through the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio, ADaPT received an investment from FSC to scale the program to approximately 550 individuals from October 2021 to September 2023. As part of the Portfolio, we are working together to evaluate the impact of ADaPT using a Randomized Control Test (RCT) design that includes about 800 participants across 16 cohorts. This study will provide much needed rigorous evidence on what works for Canadian youth. Besides the ADaPT Core program, delivery is also being expanded to skilled newcomers and mid-career racialized, Indigenous and Black workers as part of the scaling phase.

## **AspireAtlantic – Pier Labs**

AspireAtlantic bridges the gap between the needs of employers and workers seeking to move from unemployment or low-wage jobs into middle-skilled jobs with advancement opportunities in manufacturing and construction in Nova Scotia. Following a pre-screening, participants take part in career readiness training and occupational skills training for middle skills roles and are then provided with job search supports. AspireAtlantic is being implemented for the first time in Canada. It has been adapted from WorkAdvance, an evidence-based sectoral workforce development model from the United States that has previously been evaluated using an RCT design that found significant positive impact and return on investment for both individuals and government.

AspireAtlantic was developed by Pier Labs, a non-profit organization that conducts research and advances innovation on issues that impact the wellbeing of Canadians. AspireAtlantic is being delivered by a collaboration among Pier Labs, service provider organizations and industry associations. In 2020, Pier Labs received an FSC grant to conduct a needs assessment of employers and jobseekers. In 2021, Pier Labs received an additional FSC investment to design and implement AspireAtlantic in Nova Scotia.

<sup>2</sup> OTEC also received funding from FSC in 2021 through the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio for the Tourism and Hospitality Emergency Response project. Blueprint is playing a unique technical assistance role for this project that differs from our typical approach to supporting projects on their scaling journey. As a result, this project is not included in this report.

### **Dual-Client Workforce Development Model – NPower Canada**

NPower Canada's Dual-Client Workforce Development Model is a program to create pathways to economic prosperity for equity-deserving groups in Canada by launching them into meaningful and sustainable digital careers. The program is designed and delivered by NPower Canada, a non-profit organization that opened its doors in the Greater Toronto Area in 2014. The program provides free technical and professional skills training and connects participants with some of Canada's largest employers in the technology sector. In 2020, NPower Canada received an FSC grant to support its expansion to Calgary, Halifax and Vancouver. In the spring of 2021, NPower Canada received an additional investment to expand to Quebec and grow its impact across the country.

NPower Canada has been tracking participant outcomes from the program's inception and has demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement and increasingly rigorous evaluation. As part of the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio, Blueprint and NPower Canada are working together to evaluate the impact of its services for participants served through its Toronto site using an RCT design. This ground-breaking study will be the first evaluation of a sector-based training program using an RCT design in Canada and will provide much needed rigorous evidence on what works for these equity-deserving groups.

### **Energy to Digital Growth Education & Upskilling Project (EDGE UP) – Calgary Economic Development**

EDGE UP aims to re-skill displaced mid-career oil and gas professionals and help them become re-employed in areas of the technology sector where there are large overlaps between their existing skills and those required. It was designed by Calgary Economic Development (CED) based on a skills mapping study they collaboratively conducted with private sector partners and through consultation with employers and focus group participants. CED is a not-for-profit corporation that works with business, government and community partners to attract business investment, foster trade and grow Calgary's workforce. EDGE UP was delivered through a consortium of post-secondary and private sector partners.

In 2019, CED received an initial grant to design EDGE UP and deliver it to 90 displaced workers. In the spring of 2021, CED received an additional investment that was awarded in recognition of EDGE UP's strategic relevance and early promising outcomes. CED and its partners are using this funding to expand EDGE UP to serve 320 participants from July 2021 to December 2022. As part of this expansion, CED is enhancing its employer engagement and work-integrated learning and adding five new training streams.

EDGE UP is an innovative approach to helping mid-career workers in an industry undergoing transition to quickly prepare for and connect to new jobs in a sector with growing demand. The OECD has endorsed the program's promise for replication in other sectors and regions, and its potential to inform future policies.

### **Employability Skills Assessment Tool (ESAT) – Futureworx**

ESAT is a tool that helps trainers and counsellors assess and support the development of their clients' social and emotional skills. ESAT helps jobseekers understand the expectations of employers and helps them build their skills in a way that aligns with those expectations. The tool is designed and administered by Futureworx, an innovative social purpose organization that offers a range of employment and training programs, as well as business and customized services. Launched in 2014, ESAT is already used by service providers in a wide range of contexts across Canada.

In 2020, Futureworx received an FSC seed grant to conduct research on ESAT delivery contexts and success factors. In 2021, they received an additional grant to work in collaboration with Blueprint to conduct an evaluation of the validity of ESAT as an assessment tool, as well as participant outcomes and implementation processes.

### **Facilitating Access to Skilled Talent (FAST) – The Immigrant Employment Council of BC**

FAST is an online skills assessment and development platform that helps newcomers close skills and accreditation gaps. The program accelerates newcomer integration by proactively working with newcomers before, or soon after, their arrival. Launched in 2015, FAST is led by the Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC), a not-for-profit organization that provides employers with the tools they need to attract and retain immigrant talent. In 2019, as one of FSC's inaugural grantees, IEC-BC received a grant to expand FAST to two new sectors—Accounting and Finance and Culinary Arts—and to newcomers in three provinces: Manitoba, Ontario and Nova Scotia. In the spring of 2021, IEC-BC received further funding, awarded in recognition of FAST's strategic relevance to FSC's goals, as well as high levels of demand for the service. IEC-BC is using this funding to expand FAST to the Seniors Care sector. This new stream, developed in collaboration with the BC Care Providers Association, responds to the skill and labour needs for both non-clinical and clinical occupations within the long-term care sector.

FAST is a promising model that is expanding rapidly across Canada in multiple jurisdictions and industry sectors. Based on growing demand, FAST is also being piloted as a talent solution in New Brunswick through a multi-stakeholder initiative led by the New Brunswick Community College. Over the past three years, FAST has demonstrated a strong commitment to continuous improvement even as it is designing new service offerings and expanding to new jurisdictions.

### **In Motion & Momentum+ (IM&M+) – Canadian Career Development Foundation**

IM&M+ is an action-oriented learning program that supports individuals with pre-employment needs to build foundational skills and identify their strengths and accomplishments as sources of motivation, hope and pride. IM&M+ was developed by the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF), a non-profit organization that works to advance career development and the capacity of the career development profession. The program was first launched and delivered province-wide in New Brunswick in 2015. IM&M+ was also piloted in Ontario in 2018.

Supported by an investment from FSC, IM&M+ is now being scaled through a partnership with 26 service delivery organizations across Canada, including study sites in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Newfoundland & Labrador and Nova Scotia, serving roughly 850 participants from February 2021 to May 2023.

IM&M+ was selected to be part of the Scaling Up Skills Portfolio due to promising results over the past seven years. Early evaluations of the program have found increased employability, changes in career goal clarity and perceptions of barriers and improved psycho-social health outcomes for participants.

Blueprint and CCDF are working together to evaluate the impact of IM&M+ using an RCT design. This ground-breaking study will provide much needed rigorous evidence on what works to support those with pre-employment needs to move toward sustainable labour market attachment.

### **Lift/Futur en tête– Centre for Addiction and Mental Health**

Lift/Futur en tête helps youth with mental health needs participate and thrive in a changing economy. Lift/Futur en tête was designed by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)—a leading research centre and one of Canada’s largest mental health teaching hospitals—and delivered through community partnerships across Canada. Lift/Futur en tête was adapted from the Integrated Placement and Support (IPS) model, which has been rigorously tested with positive results in more than 25 RCTs in other countries but has never been delivered in Canada. The IPS model plots a unique path by adopting a “place-then-train” approach instead of focusing on pre-employment training like traditional supported employment.

Lift/Futur en tête is delivered through a network of integrated youth service hubs (IYSHs) that have been implemented across Canada to provide one-stop services for youth. In 2020, CAMH received a grant from FSC to design and implement Lift/Futur en tête in six hubs in Ontario. In 2021, Lift/Futur en tête became part of the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio with an additional investment to support expansion to six more hubs across Canada. Lift/Futur en tête, as a first-of-its-kind initiative, was selected to be part of the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio due to its potential to meet the needs of the many young people facing mental health challenges across Canada.

### **Material Handling 4.0 (MH 4.0) – Mohawk College**

MH 4.0 helps jobseekers gain skills and micro-credentials needed to launch an entry-level career in the supply chain sector. MH 4.0 is a new program designed by Mohawk College's City School in response to the fourth industrial revolution ("Industry 4.0"), in which the evolution of disruptive technologies is creating barriers to success for those not participating fully in Canada's labour force. In 2020, Mohawk College received an FSC seed grant to design, pilot and evaluate the new program. In 2021, they received an additional FSC investment to expand the program through a partnership with Vancouver Community College, Red River College Polytechnic and Nova Scotia Community College.

MH 4.0 was selected to be part of the Scaling Up Skills Portfolio based on the City School's strong reputation for delivering employer-informed programming to equity-deserving groups—including new immigrants, youth and social assistance recipients without post-secondary education—and the potential for this program to address a critical labour market need at scale. In addition to generating evidence about MH 4.0 specifically, we are keen to gain insight into Mohawk's innovative City School model more broadly and whether and how this type of programming could be delivered by colleges across Canada.

### **Reboot Plus Expansion - Douglas College**

Reboot Plus Expansion is a program that re-engages youth at risk of not graduating from high school and supports them with exploring a career path they are interested in and increasing their self-efficacy and communication through training, networking, and career exploration. It also aims to address current labour market shortages by increasing employers' willingness to see the potential of youth with barriers and embrace strategies to supporting them. The program includes 12 weeks of training in essential skills, workforce preparation and exploration support, and employer connections.

The program expands on a previous Douglas College program, Education Reboot, which was developed in 2015 and tested on a small sample of participants. In late 2019, Douglas College received funding for Reboot Plus as part of the FSC Innovation Stream, through which Douglas College delivered the program to three cohorts and reached 60+ youth. The program received additional funding as part of the scaling portfolio to scale operations from January 2022 – September 2023. Under this expansion, Reboot Plus would be offered to more school districts in British Columbia, and in three additional colleges in other provinces.

# Labour Market Relevance

## What Labour Market Challenges does the Portfolio Address?

Each intervention in the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio is designed to meet a specific labour market challenge. In some cases, the need is specific to a population group, such as newcomers or youth. In other cases, the need is related to a specific labour market challenge that is experienced across population groups, such as the need to re-skill for a new career.

We categorize each intervention in terms of the target audience it is designed to serve, and the specific labour market need that is being met (**Table 1**).

We also categorize interventions in terms of the type of service model they use. Broadly speaking, the service models underlying each intervention fall into one of three categories:

- **Sector-based models** – Provide services to prepare individuals for specific industry sectors. Six of the ten interventions use this model (ADaPT, AspireAtlantic, Dual-Client Workforce Development Model, EDGE UP, FAST, MH 4.0).
- **Integrated service delivery** – Provides skills development in the context of services such as mental health supports. One intervention uses this model (Lift/Futur en tête).
- **Transferable skills** – Provides transferable skills that are relevant across sectors. Three interventions use this model (IM&M+, ESAT, Reboot Plus Expansion).

In this section, we discuss each labour market need in detail and the approaches and service delivery models that each intervention is using to meet these needs.

**Table 1 | Interventions by Target Population and Labour Market Need**

Intervention	Target populations	Specific focus	Model type
<b>ADaPT</b>	Early entrants (youth)	PSE graduates with digital and professional skills gaps	Sector-specific
	Newcomers	Internationally educated newcomers facing challenges integrating into the labour market	
	Jobseekers or precariously employed workers	Precariously employed mid-career racialized, Indigenous and Black workers seeking to make labour market transitions	
<b>AspireAtlantic</b>	Jobseekers or precariously employed workers without credentials	Jobseekers with skills gaps needed to attain “middle jobs” in in-demand sectors	Sector-specific
<b>Dual-Client Workforce Development Model</b>	Early entrants (youth)	Youth facing barriers to launching their careers	Sector-specific
	Jobseekers or precariously employed workers without credentials	Jobseekers with skills gaps needed to attain “middle-skill jobs” in in-demand sectors	
<b>EDGE UP</b>	Displaced workers	Mid-career professionals who need to transition to a new industry	Sector-specific
<b>ESAT</b>	Jobseekers at risk of long-term unemployment	Jobseekers with social and emotional skills needs	Transferable skills
		Jobseekers or precariously employed workers	
<b>FAST</b>	Newcomers	Newcomers who need competency assessments and information about occupation- specific training to accelerate their integration to the Canadian economy	Sector-specific
<b>IM&amp;M+</b>	Jobseekers at risk of long-term unemployment	Jobseekers with social and emotional skills needs	Transferable skills
<b>Lift/Futur en tête</b>	Early entrants (youth)	Youth with complex needs who require integrated supports to participate in the labour market	Integrated-service delivery
<b>MH 4.0</b>	Jobseekers or precariously employed workers without credentials	Jobseekers with skills gaps needed to attain “entry jobs” in in-demand sectors	Sector-specific
<b>Reboot Plus Expansion</b>	Youth	Youth at risk of not graduating from high school	Transferable skills

## Youth/New Entrants

While Canada is doing better than most countries when it comes to youth participation in the workplace, a significant proportion of Canadian youth are not thriving. According to the Labour Force Survey, in 2019, there were approximately 77,000 young people ages 15 to 29 who were not working, studying or training in a given week.<sup>3</sup> This is about 11 percent of Canada's youth (over one in nine). Addressing this need is important because the longer a young person remains jobless, the harder it can be to find and keep employment and to recover lost wages.<sup>4</sup> Complicating matters more, the industries that are most likely to be the first employers for youth—such as hospitality, tourism and retail—are the same industries that are facing massive disruption. What worked a decade ago for youth employment will be unlikely to work today. Young people need timely opportunities and support to adapt as the world of work evolves.

The needs of young people range significantly. Many young people successfully attain post-secondary education (PSE) credentials and simply need work experience or targeted training for specific in-demand skills. Others lack credentials and/or have more complex needs. Indigenous youth, young newcomers, youth living in poverty, those who identify as LGBTQ2S+, young people with disabilities, racialized youth and youth in rural/remote communities are more likely to face high barriers to economic success.<sup>5</sup>

Four interventions in our portfolio serve youth across a continuum of needs. Three interventions (Lift/Futur en tête, Dual-Client Workforce Development Model, Reboot Plus Expansion) respond to the needs of youth who are facing barriers and struggling to gain a foothold in the labour market. A fourth intervention (ADaPT Core) is focused on youth who are closer to the labour market and who have or are about to complete a post-secondary credential but need targeted training and work experience to help them launch their careers.



The longer a young person remains jobless, the harder it can be to find and keep employment and to recover lost wages.

3 Statistics Canada. (2022). [Table 37-10-0196-01 Percentage of 15-to 29-year-olds in education and not in education by labour force status, highest level of education attained, age group and sex](#)

4 OECD. (2020). *Youth and COVID-19: Response, recovery and resilience*. <https://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/youth-and-covid-19-response-recovery-and-resilience-c40e61c6/>

5 Government of Canada. (2016). *Understanding the realities: Interim report of the Expert Panel on Youth Unemployment, 2016*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/youth-expert-panel/interim-report.html>

With this segment of our portfolio, we are asking what works to help youth across a continuum of needs participate and thrive in a changing economy:<sup>6</sup>

- **Is Lift/Futur en tête effective in helping youth with mental health needs address barriers to labour market and education participation?**
- **Does the Dual-Client Workforce Development Model have a positive impact on the employment outcomes of youth who are lacking the skills, experience and credentials needed to obtain “middle jobs” (i.e., quality, stable jobs that pay a decent wage in sectors with opportunities for career growth)?**
- **Does the ADaPT Core program have a positive impact on the employment outcomes of youth with digital and professional skills gaps?**
- **Does Reboot Plus Expansion support youth to re-engage with education and improve their long term labour market prospects?**

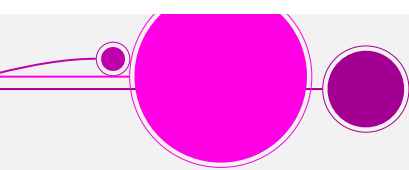
As we better understand the long term outcomes for Lift/Futur en tête participants and the causal impact of the Dual-Client model and ADaPT, we will be well-positioned to answer a second tranche of questions: What are the full costs of delivering each intervention? Are these interventions cost effective? How do they compare to alternatives? What role could these interventions play in a future-state skills development ecosystem for youth? Is it desirable and feasible to invest in further scaling?

Depending on what we learn about each intervention, a further step would be to more systematically understand if these interventions, delivered at scale, would have the potential to move the needle for the 11 percent of Canadian youth that are not working, in school or training. What else would be needed to complement these services? Would policy change be required?

## Newcomers

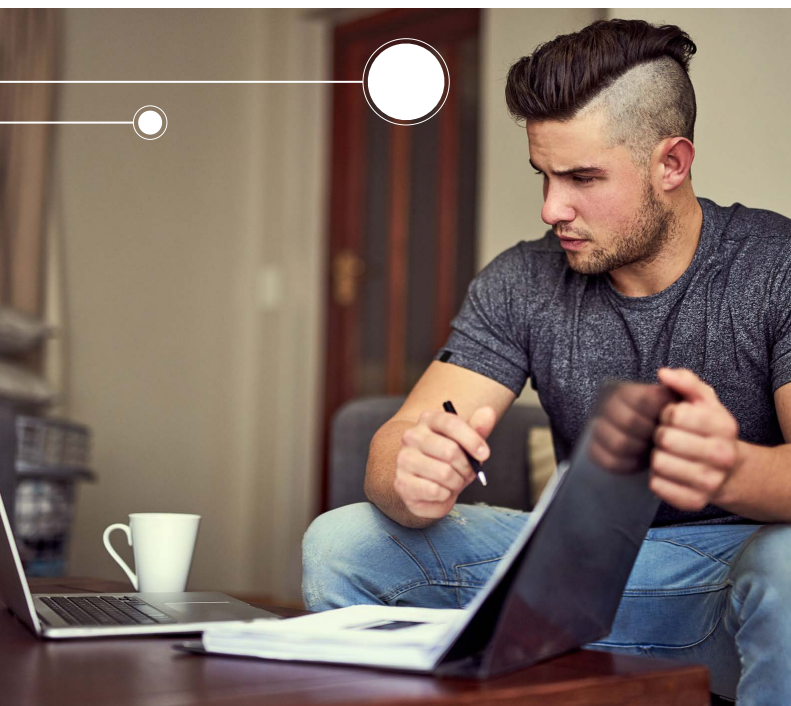
Despite being a country with one of the most established skilled immigration programs in the OECD, under-employment is pervasive among skilled immigrants in Canada. Many skilled immigrants are unable to utilize their skills and experience occupational mismatch due to a multitude of challenges they face in accessing the Canadian labour market, including a lack of recognition of foreign credentials, limited familiarity with Canadian workplace cultural norms and a lack of Canadian work experience. Achieving employment that is meaningful and commensurate with prior experience and expertise is a key milestone in a newcomer's settlement journey, and for building their career prospects. Efforts to leverage newcomers' human capital more effectively, in turn, also help employers fill in-demand jobs.

While many of the interventions in our portfolio serve newcomers as part of their target population, one intervention, FAST, is designed specifically for newcomers. FAST is an online skills assessment and development platform to help newcomers better prepare to enter the Canadian labour market. In addition to sector-specific technical competency assessments, FAST also includes services to help newcomers become more familiar with Canadian workplace cultural norms and better understand how their skills and abilities can be applied in the Canadian labour market. FAST is delivered online and designed to accelerate newcomer integration by proactively working with newcomers before or soon after arrival.



Many skilled immigrants are unable to utilize their skills and experience occupational mismatch due to a multitude of challenges they face in accessing the Canadian labour market.

<sup>6</sup> As we discuss in the next section, for Dual-Client Workforce Development Model and ADaPT we will be able to address the question of effectiveness using a randomized control trial that allows us to directly compare outcomes of participants with the outcomes of individuals with similar characteristics but who do not participate. This allows us to rigorously estimate the causal impact of these interventions. Lift/Futur en tête is at an earlier stage of innovation so we will be looking for early signs of promise rather than rigorously isolating the intervention's causal impact.



With this segment of our portfolio, we are exploring whether the FAST model is effective in helping newcomers integrate into the Canadian economy.<sup>7</sup>

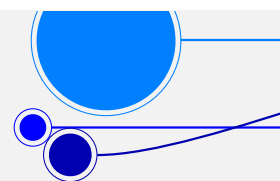
Once we have more information about the long-term outcomes of FAST participants, we can address a second tranche of questions: What are the full costs of delivering the intervention? How do we expect these costs to change as the intervention matures? Is FAST cost effective? How does it compare to alternatives? What role could FAST play in a future-state skills development ecosystem for newcomers? Is FAST desirable and feasible to deliver at scale?

Depending on what we learn about FAST's relative effectiveness, a further step would be to more systematically understand whether if delivered at scale, FAST would have the potential to move the needle on improving newcomer outcomes. What else would be needed to complement FAST? What policy changes would be required?

## Jobseekers or Precarious Employed without Credentials

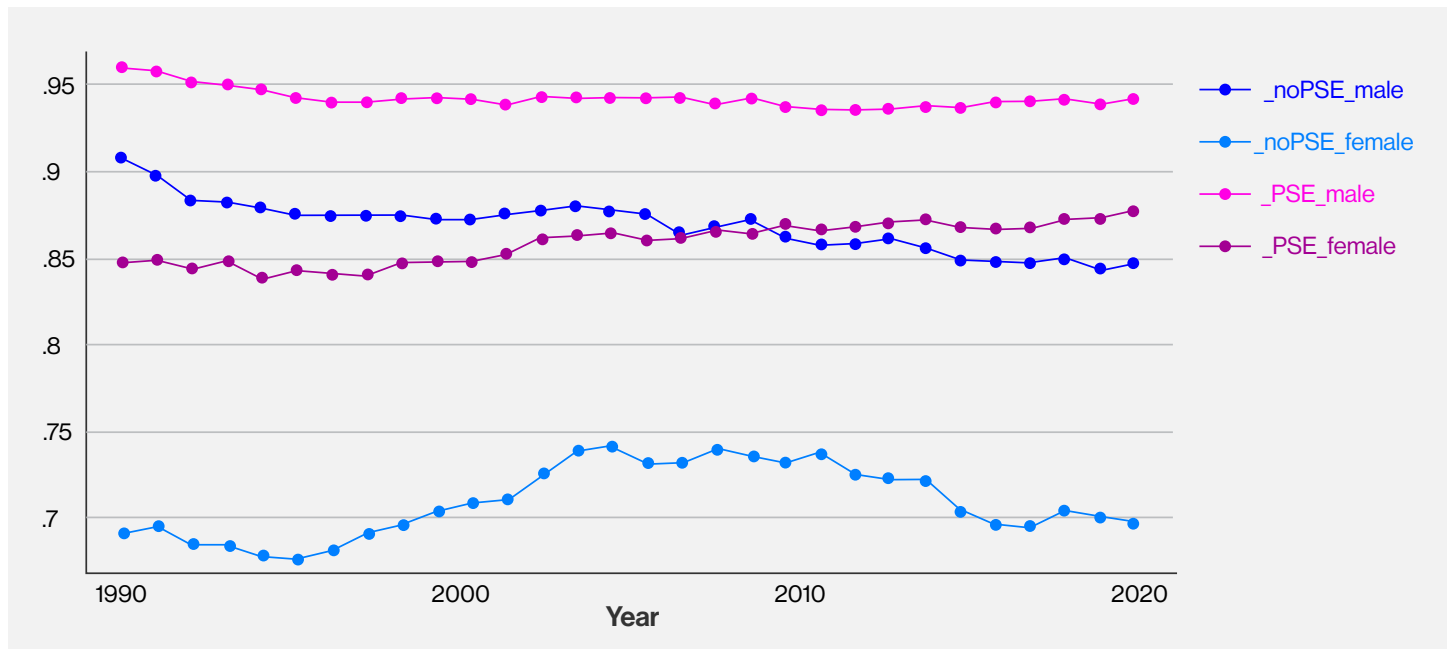
Workers without credentials are particularly vulnerable to disruption and have been hard hit by recent labour market changes. Perhaps the best indicator of this is labour force participation, which measures the proportion of the working age population that is working or actively looking for work. As **Figure 1** shows, over the past three decades, the participation rate has declined eight percentage points for prime-aged (25–54) men without post-secondary credentials, from 91 percent in 1990 to 83 percent in 2019. This is much larger than the two percentage point decline among prime-aged (25–54) men with post-secondary credentials, from 96 percent in 1990 to 94 percent in 2019. For prime-aged women, while the overall story is one of increased labour market participation, when we break it down by educational attainment, we see that these gains have only been experienced by women with post-secondary credentials. For women without credentials, participation rates have been flat: women without post-secondary credentials have fallen behind their more-educated peers. Additionally, while the participation rate for women in 2019 is roughly equal to the rate in 1990, there has been a more recent four percentage point decline in the participation rate since the early 2000s, from a high of 74 percent in 2010 to 70 percent in 2019.

While Canada is a world leader in educational attainment, it is easy to forget that approximately 30 percent of Canadians aged 25 to 64 do not have a post-secondary qualification.



<sup>7</sup> As we discuss in the next section, ideally we would address this question by directly comparing FAST to other services. While our project design does not enable us to do this, we can track long term outcomes and ask participants directly about their experiences.

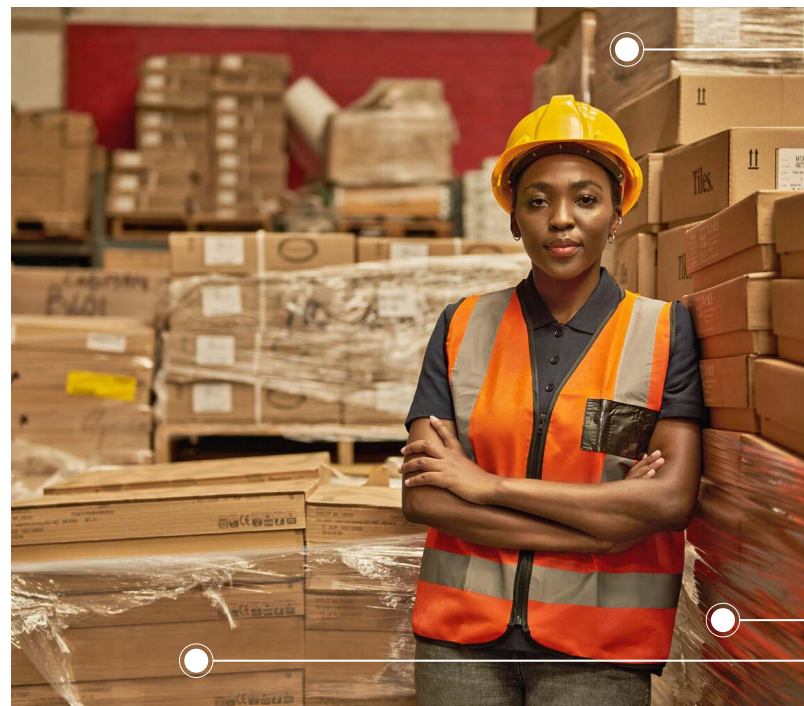
**Figure 1 | Labour Force Participation Rates**



This growing gap matters. While Canada is a world leader in educational attainment, it is easy to forget that approximately 30 percent of Canadians aged 25 to 64 —about 6.1 million Canadians—do not have a post-secondary qualification.<sup>8</sup> While younger cohorts are more likely than older cohorts to have qualifications, even among the 35 to 44 age group—a group that traditionally has had time to finish their initial education and establish themselves in the labour market—26.7 percent of men and 19.3 percent of women in this age group do not have post-secondary qualifications.

The declining labour force participation of workers without credentials is a trend that will likely be further exacerbated by skills-based technological change. This is a trend that requires urgent attention.

More positively, there is a growing evidence base to suggest that sector-based training programs are an effective approach to preparing individuals without credentials for in-demand jobs and middle jobs.



8 Statistics Canada (2022). *Labour Force Survey* (Catalogue no. 71M0001X) Ottawa: Labour Statistics Division, Statistics Canada.

## | Box 1 | Sector-Based Models

Sector-based models emerged out of the simple insight that if training is more carefully tailored to existing jobs, the trainees will have much better chances of obtaining them. If employers were satisfied with these trainees, they would in turn be more likely to hire from the training program in the future.<sup>9</sup>

This insight led workforce practitioners to experiment with a “dual customer” approach that treats employers, as well as workers, as clients. Practitioners focused on specific industry sectors so that they could develop deep industry expertise and better understand employer needs. Working closely with employers and industry associations ensured that candidates built the right skills to succeed in in-demand jobs and obtained the necessary credentials and licensing.

Sector-based models hold great appeal in the context of the changing world of work. As skills needs and labour market demands rapidly shift, employment and training providers will need to work more closely with employers to understand and respond to these shifts.

Multiple rigorous studies have found that sector-based training can have positive impacts on participant employment and earnings.

One of the most significant investigations into the effectiveness of sector-based models is the WorkAdvance Demonstration. WorkAdvance is a sector-based model with a specific focus on career advancement. The model is currently being implemented by four providers across the US and is being evaluated using an RCT design with over 2,500 study participants for a five-year follow-up period. At the three-year follow-up point, program participants earned 12 percent more on average than workers in a control group who did not participate in WorkAdvance, which translates to an additional \$1,865 (USD) in earnings per year.<sup>10</sup>

While there is already a robust international evidence base on the positive impact and return on investment of the sector-based model, the evidence also suggests that sector-based models are challenging to implement and take a specialized skill set, strong partners and time to mature.

Three interventions in our portfolio (AspireAtlantic, MH 4.0, Dual-Client Workforce Development Model) serve working-age adults who lack skills and/or needed credentials for in-demand jobs. AspireAtlantic is based explicitly on the WorkAdvance model described in **Box 1**. MH 4.0, while not based explicitly on this model, shares similar components and builds on Mohawk College's track record of working with jobseekers without credentials.

EDGE UP and FAST also use similar sector-based training models and have additional components that are designed to meet specific needs of their target populations.<sup>11</sup> These interventions are discussed in other sections in this report.

9 Ontario360 (2019). *Skills-training reform in Ontario: Creating a demand-driven training ecosystem*.  
<https://on360.ca/policy-papers/skills-training-reform-in-ontario-creating-a-demand-driven-training-ecosystem/>

10 Ibid.

11 NPower Canada is a sector-based model that includes components that are customized to the needs of new entrants to the labour market. Similarly, EDGE UP is a sector-based model that is targeted to the needs of mid-career workers. For example, since NPower Canada's target audience typically has limited work experience, there is strong emphasis on workplace expectations. In contrast EDGE UP's participants have significant work experience so this component is unnecessary.



With this segment of our portfolio, we are asking what works to help jobseekers who are ready to work but lack needed skills and credentials for in demand jobs:

- **Is AspireAtlantic effective in preparing jobseekers for middle jobs and in supporting jobseekers to advance in those jobs?**
- **Is MH 4.0 effective in preparing jobseekers for middle jobs?**

Once AspireAtlantic and MH 4.0 have been operating for a longer period, it will be possible to generate more rigorous evidence. Having this more rigorous evidence will allow us to more definitively assess whether these interventions are part of a growing Canadian evidence base on the effectiveness of sector-based training models.

More generally, as part of the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio, we are exploring the broader question of what role sector-based models should play in training Canadians for middle-jobs, including how they complement other training offerings and whether they are more cost-effective than the alternative. As part of this broader portfolio level analysis, we will be exploring learnings from all the interventions that use a sector-based model including Dual-Client Workforce Development Model, EDGE UP and FAST.

Would it be feasible and desirable to offer sector-based models at scale across Canada? If yes, what would it take to achieve this goal? Would policy change be required?

If these types of interventions are delivered at scale, would they have the potential to move the needle on improving outcomes for workers without credentials? What else would be needed to complement these services?

## Long-Term Unemployed

Despite tight labour markets characterized by record low unemployment, long-term unemployment—which Statistics Canada defines as being unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks—remains a problem. Long-term unemployment was higher in August 2022 (the most recent data available) than in August 2019, the most recent August before the pandemic, and while long-term unemployment had been declining in the past few months, there was an increase in the number of working-age people who were long-term unemployed from July 2022 to August 2022.<sup>12</sup>

While this trend is likely driven by several factors such as regional skills mismatches, there is emerging evidence suggesting that socio-emotional skills may play a role.<sup>13</sup> Given the growth in the number of jobs that require non-routine analysis, employers are increasingly citing the need for more sophisticated social and emotional skills.<sup>14</sup>

Given the growth in the number of jobs that require non-routine analysis, employers are increasingly citing the need for more sophisticated social and emotional skills.

<sup>12</sup> Statistics Canada. (2022). *The Daily: Labour force survey*  
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/220909/dq220909a-eng.pdf?st=nXz6SK9>

<sup>13</sup> Acosta, P. & Muller, N. (2018). *The role of cognitive and socio-emotional skills in labor markets*. IZA World of Labor.  
<https://wol.iza.org/articles/the-role-of-cognitive-and-socio-emotional-skills-in-labor-markets/long>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=10927>

Social and emotional skills describe a person's ability to regulate their emotions and behaviour, navigate social situations and collaborate with others, build relationships and communicate effectively. Specific in-demand skills that fall in this category include critical thinking, resiliency and leadership.<sup>15</sup>

Historically, publicly funded employability programs have not been particularly effective in supporting unemployed individuals to develop their social and emotional skills. This is unfortunate because as recent research<sup>16</sup> found, most Canadians seeking employment services have employability skills needs. Front-line staff delivering publicly funded employment services have identified a pressing need for programming to tackle these challenges, break cycles of dependence on social assistance and support those furthest from the labour market to move toward sustainable work.

Two interventions in our portfolio (IM&M+, ESAT) serve individuals who have been, or are at risk of being, long-term unemployed. Both interventions place a strong emphasis on social and emotional skills. IM&M+ helps participants identify their strengths and assets, build confidence and set goals using an action-oriented approach to fostering self-efficacy, motivation and resilience. ESAT is an online resource that enables counsellors to support and engage clients in assessing and enhancing employability skills such as collaboration, adaptability and communication.

With this segment of our portfolio, we are asking what works to help jobseekers who are at risk of long-term unemployment build social and emotional skills needed to thrive in an economy that increasingly places these skills at a premium:

- **Does IM&M+ have a positive impact on helping jobseekers build social and emotional skills and find and keep employment?**
- **Is ESAT a valid assessment tool to measure and help jobseekers build social and emotional skills and find and keep employment?**

Together the results will provide rigorous evidence to help us better understand how to support individuals who are unemployed or cycling in and out of employment to build their social and emotional skills. With rigorous evidence of effectiveness, we will be well-positioned to address a series of second-order questions. What are the full costs of delivering these interventions? How do they compare to alternatives? Are they cost effective? If these types of intervention are delivered at scale, would they have the potential to move the needle on long-term unemployment? What else would be needed to complement these services? Would policy change be required?

## Displaced Workers

According to the OECD, about two percent of Canadian workers are displaced every year, meaning they have permanently lost a stable job and as a result are unemployed, out of the labour force or re-employed elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> About half are re-employed within one year and almost two-thirds within two years. However, many face significant wage cuts and/or shift to part-time or temporary jobs. Older workers struggle the most to become re-employed and long-tenure workers face the largest earnings losses.<sup>18</sup>

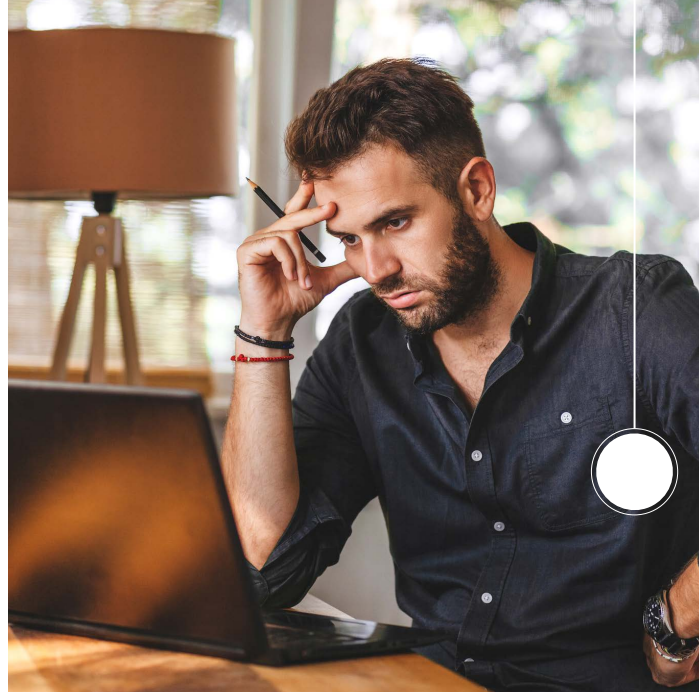
15 Business Council of Canada (2020). *Investing in a resilient Canadian workforce: 2020 Business Council of Canada Skills Survey*. [https://thebusinesscouncil.ca/app/uploads/2020/08/2020-BCC-Skills-Survey-Report\\_Final.pdf](https://thebusinesscouncil.ca/app/uploads/2020/08/2020-BCC-Skills-Survey-Report_Final.pdf)

16 In Motion and Momentum+. (2022). *About*. <https://implus.ca/about/>

17 OECD (2002). Displaced workers. <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=3558>

18 OECD. (2015). *Back to work: Canada: Improving the re-employment prospects of displaced workers*. [https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/back-to-work-canada\\_9789264233454-en#page13](https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/back-to-work-canada_9789264233454-en#page13)

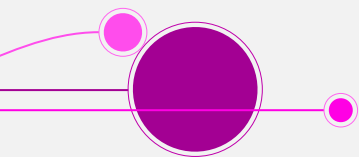
While Canada has policies to help workers minimize the negative consequences of disruptions, most of the emphasis is placed on early intervention for workers affected by mass layoffs. For workers facing individual or small-scale disruptions, there are significant gaps, with services becoming available typically only after people become unemployed. This creates a **reactive “fail first” career transition model** in which workers are expected to find services on their own and make effective career decisions while they are in crisis.



One intervention in our portfolio (EDGE UP) aims to better respond to the needs of displaced workers. EDGE UP is working with highly skilled professionals displaced from the oil and gas sector and helping them find commensurate careers in the IT sector.

With this segment of our portfolio, we are asking what works to help workers at risk of disruption leverage their existing skills, efficiently gain new skills and make seamless transitions to new in-demand sectors.<sup>19</sup>

- **Is EDGE UP an effective model to help displaced workers make efficient and desirable transitions to new careers?**

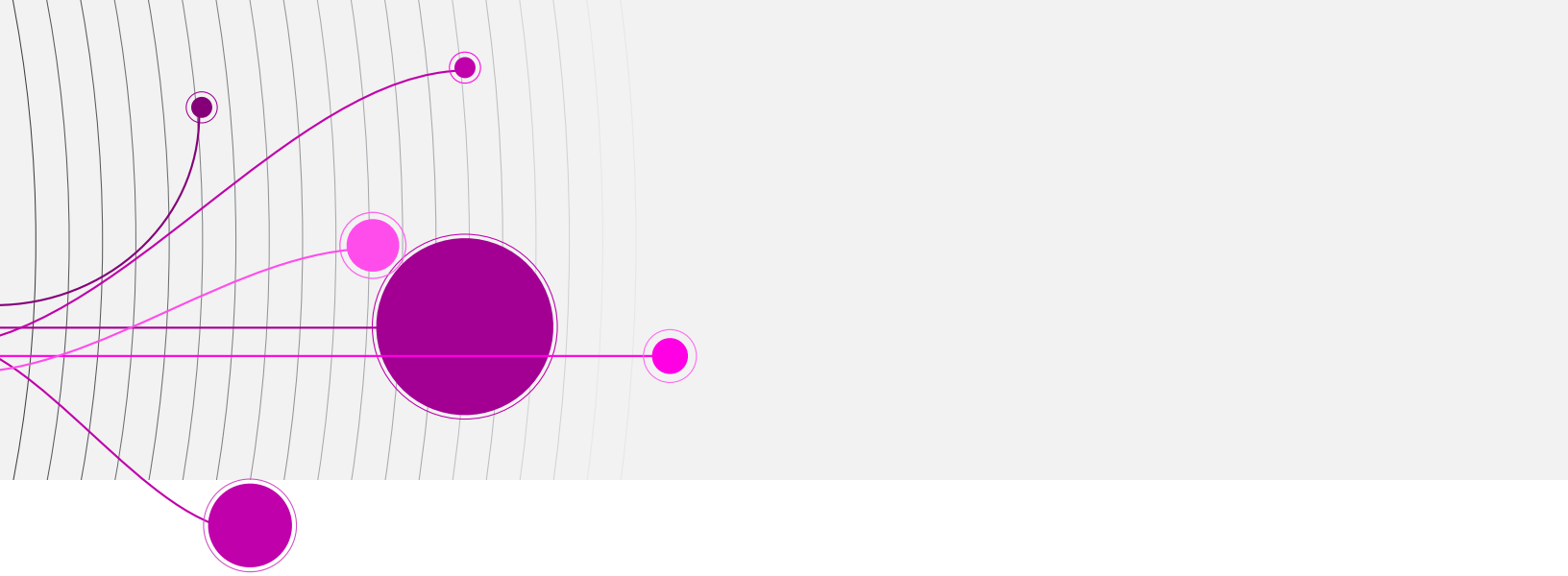


Workers are expected to find services on their own and make effective career decisions while they are in crisis.

As we better understand the long-term outcomes of EDGE UP participants, we can address a second tranche of questions: What are the full costs of delivering the intervention? How do we expect these costs to change as the intervention matures? Is EDGE UP cost effective? How does it compare to alternatives? What role could EDGE UP play in a future state where increasingly more workers will need to make transitions? Could the EDGE UP model be applied to other industry sectors?

Depending on what we learn about EDGE UP, a further step would be to more systematically understand whether if EDGE UP were to be delivered at scale, would it have the potential to move the needle on outcomes for displaced workers. What else would be needed to complement EDGE UP? What policy changes would be required?

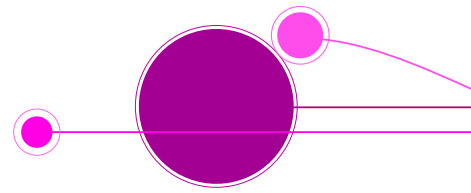
<sup>19</sup> As mentioned above, EDGE UP uses a sector-based model that is like AspireAtlantic and MH 4.0. A key difference is the focus on helping mid-career workers find new career paths that leverage existing skills so that they can make efficient transitions.



## Section 2

# Our Evidence Approach

## 2 Our Evidence Approach



To move the needle on our most pressing skills challenges, there is growing consensus that we will need to deliver more effective skills interventions at a larger scale. This is easier said than done. We know from decades of social innovation funding that **few innovations reach their potential**. In Canada, all levels of government fund pilot projects, but they are almost always one-off interventions. Many are not even rigorously evaluated, let alone supported along a path for scale.

In 2019, shortly after Blueprint became an FSC consortium partner, we set out to better understand why social innovation scaling is so challenging. We consulted with practitioners and other experts and reviewed the literature. What we found first and foremost was that scaling requires more than just rigorous evidence. Through this discovery process we gained many valuable insights that resonated with our own years of experience leading an evidence generation practice. There are many factors that determine whether an intervention will translate to other contexts, geographies and populations. Even when there is evidence that an intervention works, there is no guarantee that it can be scaled to match the level of need in the ecosystem.

The experts we spoke with pointed to the role of implementation science and the need to **invest in continuous improvement of design and delivery**. Practitioners require time and resources to better understand what their target population needs, how to improve the design of their model to meet these needs, whether their model is being delivered as intended and whether their model will work in new contexts or which components can or should be adapted.

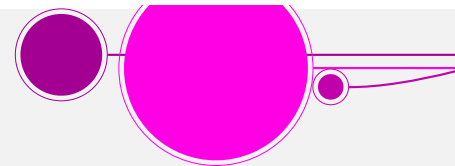
Experts also spoke about the importance of properly preparing interventions for rigorous evaluation and ensuring that the **evidence questions we ask make sense given where a project is at in its lifecycle**. We heard that while understanding a program's causal impact is an important goal, there are many evidence generation activities that should occur first. One expert referred to it as preparing interventions to walk before they run and crawl before they walk.

We also heard that supporting organizations to undertake **data-driven continuous improvement** was equally as important as supporting them for impact evaluation. Finally, we heard about the importance of providing hands-on support for evidence generation activities and the need for more technical assistance and capacity-building.

**We realized that although there was a consistent theme of constructive dissatisfaction with the current state of scaling in Canada, no one could point us in the direction of a scaling playbook that provided a new way forward.**

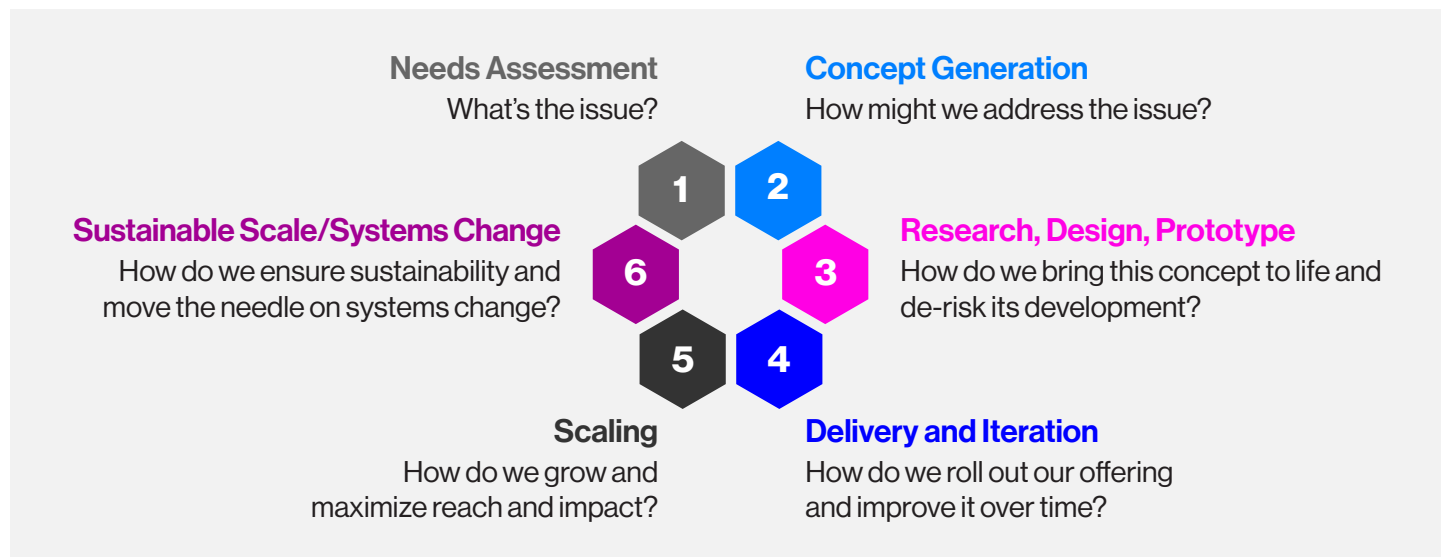
To address this gap, Blueprint is designing and testing a new way to use evidence to move pilots along a scaling journey. Our new framework incorporates evidence generation activities alongside other dimensions related to implementation and continuous improvement. Our toolkit includes a range of evaluation methods and integrates techniques associated with human-centred design, implementation science and innovation tradecraft.

Blueprint is designing and testing a new way to use evidence to move pilots along a scaling journey.



# Aligning Evidence Generation with the Innovation Cycle

| **Figure 2** | Innovation Cycle



In our 2021 Annual Evidence Report, we highlighted the importance of ensuring that our evidence generation toolkit supports innovations at different stages in their lifecycle. As **Figure 2** shows, in a well-functioning innovation ecosystem, innovations move along the cycle starting with needs assessment, moving to conceptualization and design and then to delivery, testing and iteration. For those interventions that are proven to work, the goal is to expand to meet the need at scale and create system changes to institutionalize the innovation.

Knowing where an intervention is in the innovation cycle allows us to ask the right questions and collect the right evidence to move the project forward. Fostering early-stage innovation requires understanding and assessing complex issues, generating new and untested concepts and exploring the feasibility and desirability of these concepts with stakeholders. Projects that have moved into the delivery, testing and iteration stage are typically ready for evaluation.

The interventions in the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio are all **in stage four in the innovation cycle — delivery, testing and iteration**. As described above, as part of FSC's grant-making process, each project was determined to have the potential to move to the fifth and sixth stages of scaling and systems change.

As part of our onboarding work with each grantee, **we assessed how far along the delivery, testing and iteration process each intervention was**. Some interventions (Lift/Futur en tête and AspireAtlantic) are drawing on evidence-based models but are being adapted and delivered in Canada for the first time. In contrast, other interventions (ADaPT, the Dual-Client Workforce Development Model and IM&M+) have relatively stable models that have been delivered many times over a period of years and are well-established in the ecosystem. The remaining interventions are somewhere in the middle.

To address this range, we categorized interventions in terms of three phases of delivery maturity: pilot, testing and iteration phase and model stabilization phase. (**Figure 3**)

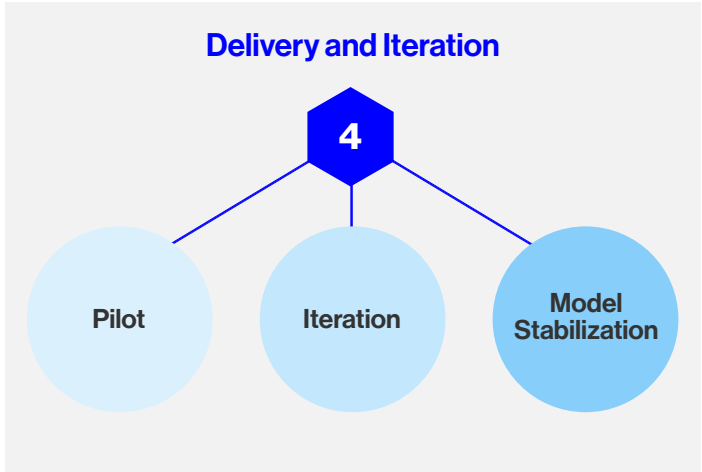
Knowing where an intervention is in the innovation cycle allows us to ask the right questions and collect the right evidence to move the project forward.

# About Blueprint’s Evidence Generation Framework

## Phases

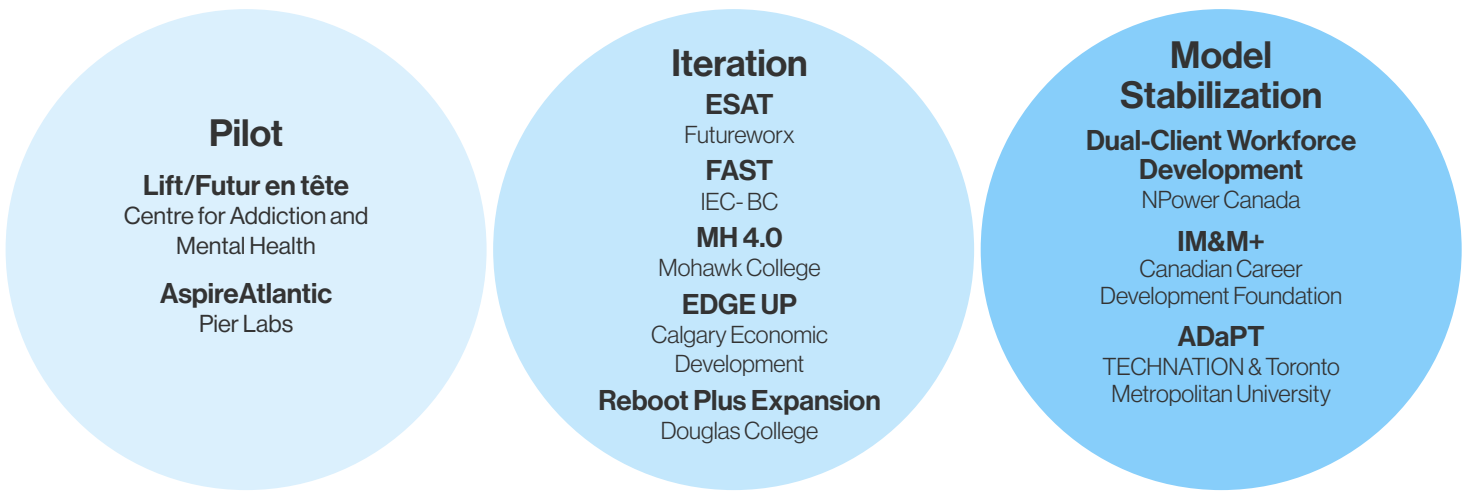
For interventions at the delivery, testing and iteration phase of the innovation cycle, there are three discrete phases:

| **Figure 3** | The Three Phases of Delivery Maturity



- **Pilot phase** – The pilot phase is the earliest stage of delivery. When an intervention is being delivered for the first few times, the focus is on generating preliminary evidence on whether it is working, for whom and under what conditions, and using these learnings to strengthen design and delivery. For interventions where we find positive outcomes, the next step is to prepare for more rigorous testing. For interventions with less positive outcomes, the focus shifts to targeted learning and improvement activities.
- **Testing and iteration phase** – In this phase, organizations should be continuing to generate evidence to strengthen design and delivery and continuing to learn and improve their intervention’s service model. But they are also typically keen to understand whether their intervention is achieving its intended outcomes and require flexible evaluation methods that generate evidence about effectiveness while also allowing for continuous improvement cycles.
- **Model stabilization phase** – In this phase, after a period of testing and iterating, the intervention’s core model becomes more stable and is delivered consistently over a sustained period. This creates ideal conditions for rigorous evaluation that credibly estimates an intervention’s causal impact and return on investment for individuals, government and society. Our ultimate aim is to assess the business case for delivery at scale. In this stage we often match grantees to independent evaluators to increase credibility and rigour.

| **Figure 4** | Distribution of Projects Accordingly to Delivery Maturity



While we have presented our framework as three progressive phases, we also want to be clear that the actual path an intervention takes will likely be much more complex. Some interventions in the Pilot stage will not move forward to the Iteration stage but rather will require going back to the drawing board. Similarly, some interventions in the Iteration phase will require a series of rapid learning and continuous improvement cycles before they are ready for the Model Stabilization phase. And of course, even interventions that reach the Model Stabilization phase will need to continuously learn and adapt to new needs such as changing demographics, employer expectations and/or labour market conditions. This may require shifting to the Iteration phase or, depending on the degree of change, may even require activating the Pilot stage.

## Activities

As part of the Evidence Generation Framework, we developed three categories of activities that cut across each of the three phases of delivery maturity described above. We describe each of these cross-cutting activities below.

### Design and delivery optimization

Activities in this category include:

- **Evidence activities to inform implementation and continuous improvement** – Includes activities to generate insights for continuous learning (e.g., participant diary studies to better understand how participants are experiencing the program).
- **Technical assistance** – Includes activities that require us to offer technical assistance in order to provide implementation support (e.g., conducting quality improvement cycles rather than simply generating evidence to support them).
- **Demand and capacity analysis** – Includes activities to assess how large the target audience is and whether the service offering meets the needs and preferences of this audience. As the intervention matures it should also include an analysis of what scaling strategies should be considered and what adaptations will be needed in new contexts.

### Evaluation activities

The next block of activities focuses on building evidence about outcomes, impact and return on investment with increasing rigour over time. Activities in this category include:

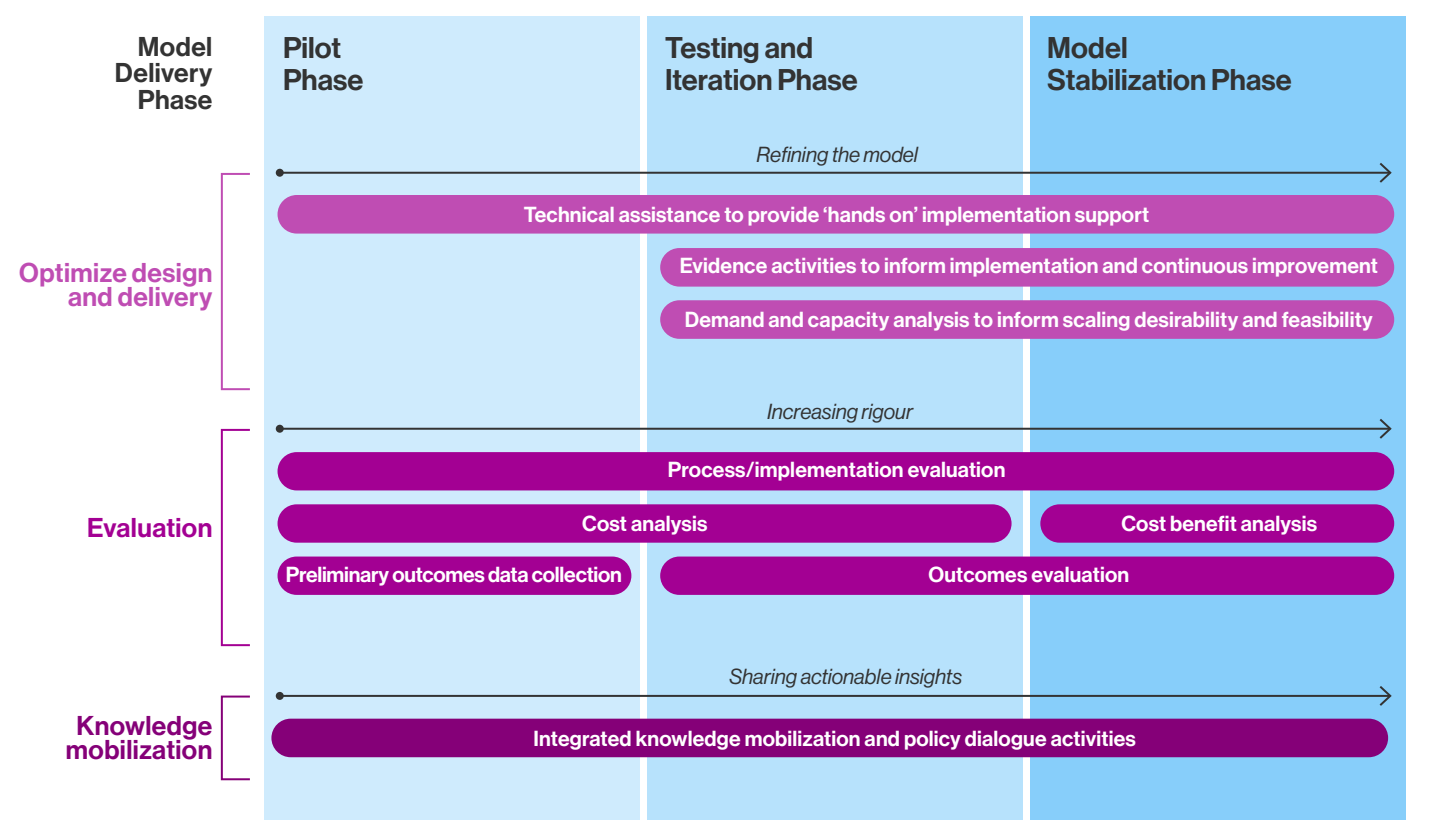
- **Process/implementation evaluation** – We determine whether the model is reaching its target population and if participants are satisfied with the services they receive. We also determine if the model is delivered with high fidelity (i.e., aligned with initial design) and identify specific success factors, adaptations and challenges in implementation.
- **Preliminary outcomes data collection** – We make sure that we are collecting the data we need to track outcomes of program participation.
- **Outcomes evaluation** – We use data to see if the model achieves its objectives for participants. All projects include measurement of outcomes aligned with our **Common Outcomes Framework** (see **Box 2**).
- **Impact evaluation** – We use experimental or quasi-experimental designs (e.g., RCTs) to assess the impact of the model on participant outcomes by comparing it to a similar group of non-participants.
- **Cost analysis and cost benefit analysis** – We calculate the full costs of delivering the intervention and estimate the benefits it provides. In the pilot stage, we focus on documenting costs to understand the potential financial sustainability. As the model matures, we aim to estimate cost per participant so that we can calculate cost-effectiveness. Ultimately, we want to understand the net value of a model for participants, governments and society.
- **Ongoing monitoring** – We track programs to make sure that the model is meeting desired implementation factors, outputs and outcomes.

Knowledge mobilization

The third block of activities focuses on knowledge mobilization. Evidence of effectiveness is only part of the puzzle. Sharing results and insights with the right audiences at the right time is key to identifying opportunities to scale effective models.

Figure 5 provides an overview of our Evidence Generation Framework with the categories of activities and how these activities evolve over the three stages of an intervention’s development.

| Figure 5 | Blueprint’s Evidence Generation Framework



## | Box 2 | The Common Outcomes Framework and Data Linking

Measuring common outcomes and characteristics is critical to helping us learn across projects and assess the impact of the entire Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio. The **Common Outcomes Framework** is a set of outcomes and participant socio-demographic characteristics measured across all projects.

**The framework includes:**

1. **Intermediate outcomes that reflect participant experiences or milestones,**
2. **Long-term outcomes that measure the effectiveness of each project, and**
3. **Customized outcomes, for which indicators and measurement differ by project.**

**The full framework can be found in Appendix A of our [Evidence Summary 2021](#).**

To enable long-term data collection, Blueprint is also working with Statistics Canada's Social Data Linkage Environment. This linkage will allow us to measure outcomes using administrative data, provide detailed information on participant labour market history and insight into employment and education outcomes as the data become available.

Data from the Scaling Up Skills Development projects will be linked in late 2023 (once enrolment is completed for all the interventions) and will continue as more data become available.

## Evidence Framework in Practice

We designed our **Evidence Generation Framework** to guide our work in the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio. While our aim was to provide a systematic approach, we were also committed to working closely with each grantee to co-design customized evidence plans that would align with their learning goals, needs and capacity.

Our commitment to co-design means that our practice is much more varied and dynamic than our framework suggests. From the beginning, we expected that grantees would vary significantly in terms of what they wanted to learn and achieve. We also expected that grantees' staff would vary in terms of their interests, skills and availability.

Similarly, we acknowledge that our Framework represents a fundamental change to the way that funders, grantees and evaluators have traditionally worked together. We do not expect to achieve wholesale change in the first attempt. This is especially true given that our Evidence Generation Framework is itself brand new and is being real-world tested for the first time. While we are enthusiastic about the potential of our Framework, we also humbly recognize that we are in the early stages of our own learning journey. In the concluding section, we share some early reflections on the implementation of the Framework.

## How Projects are being Scaled

Scaling an intervention simply means increasing delivery to reach and serve more people. Social innovations have scaled when their reach and impact grow to match the level of need.<sup>20</sup> But while the definition of scaling is relatively simple, the process is inherently complex. Scaling social innovations is almost always a non-linear, multi-step process that tends to happen over a period of years, not months—if it happens at all.

The grantee organizations in the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio are pursuing a range of paths to reach more people. Some grantees are aiming to reach more people in their existing target population and geographic location with their existing services. Others are expanding to new target populations or new locations and/or adding new services. Most are pursuing some combination of these strategies.

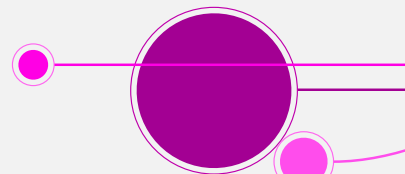
Grantee organizations also differ in their approaches to pursuing their chosen scaling pathway. While some organizations are delivering their own programming on the ground (e.g., NPower Canada), others have also sought out partner organizations to deliver their program (e.g., Futureworx) or are intermediary organizations that have brought together a range of partners to design and deliver the intervention (e.g., EDGE UP).

As we worked with each grantee, we aimed to tailor our approach not only to what they were trying to learn but also to the scaling path that they had chosen. Organizations that are onboarding new delivery partners and working in new geographies face different challenges than organizations that are increasing their own capacity.

It is also important to note that most of the interventions in the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio are in the early stages of their scaling journey. For example, even though NPower Canada has expanded from 1,032 program enrolments in 2020 to an estimated total of 2,618 in 2022, this is still far from the size of the potential target population they could serve. Even more fundamentally, many of the interventions are not just in the early stages of scaling, they are also in the early stages of delivery. The organizations that are piloting their interventions for the first few times (such as CAMH and Pier Labs) are therefore trying to work out some delivery wrinkles as they launch across multiple locations.

Even among organizations that have been delivering their intervention for a while, many are adding something new to their service offering. Thus, organizations may be working to optimize the design and delivery of their intervention while at the same time trying to chart a path to reaching more people. This is no small feat. We are inspired by the vision and commitment of grantee organizations to help build a strong and agile Canadian workforce.

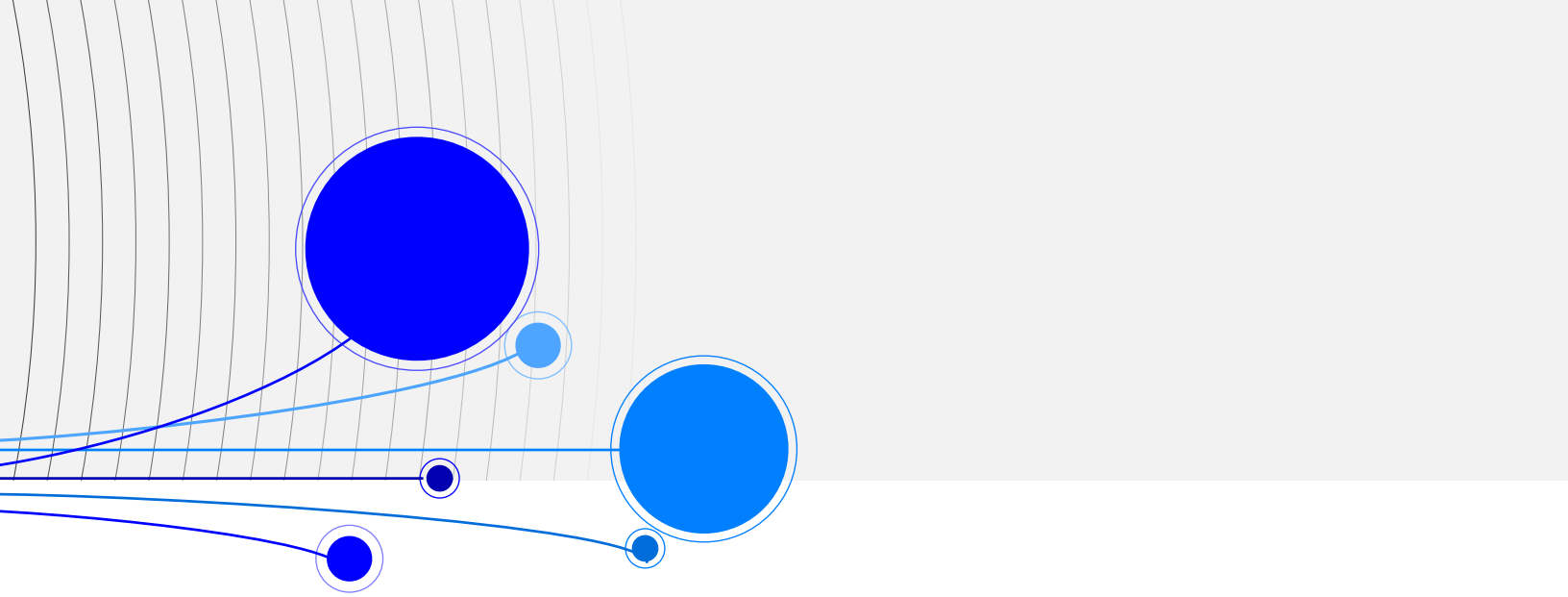
Scaling social innovations is almost always a non-linear, multi-step process that tends to happen over a period of years, not months—if it happens at all.



20 Duke University's Center for Advancement of Social Entrepreneurship

**Figure 6 | Scaling Pathways**

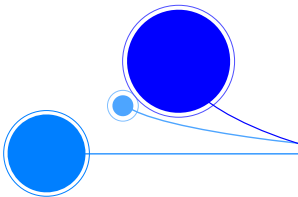
Intervention	Target population		Geography		Sector	
	2019/20	2023	2019/20	2023	2019/20	2023
<b>Lift/Futur en tête</b>	Youth		ON QC NS BC	ON QC NS BC + NB AB	Integrated employment/ education services	
<b>ADaPT</b>	Youth	Youth + skilled newcomers, mid-career racialized, Indigenous and Black workers	ON AB NS	ON AB NS + BC	Digital economy	
<b>Dual-Client Workforce Development Model</b>	Youth		ON	ON + AB NS BC	IT	
<b>AspireAtlantic</b> (Note: Initial delivery, no scaling)	-	Jobseekers w/o credentials	-	NS	-	Construction
<b>MH 4.0</b>	Jobseekers w/o credentials		ON	ON + BC AB NS	Supply chain logistics	
<b>EDGE UP</b>	Displaced workers		AB		IT	
<b>FAST</b>	Immigrants		BC	BC + AB SK MB ON NS NB	Skilled Trades, Biotech & Life Sciences, IT & Data Services	Skilled Trades, Biotech & Life Sciences, IT & Data Services, Accounting & Finance, Culinary Arts, Senior Care
<b>ESAT</b>	Jobseekers	More learners	Canada		Transferable skills	
<b>IM&amp;M+</b>	Long-term jobseekers		NB ON	ON AB BC NL SK	Transferable skills	
<b>Reboot Plus Expansion</b>	Youth		BC	ON AB NL	Transferable skills	








**Section 3**

**Project Summaries**

# 3 Project Summaries



## ADaPT – Diversity Institute and Technation

 <b>Project phase</b> Model stabilization	 <b>Target population</b> PSE graduates and final semester students in Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities	 <b>Target locations</b> Toronto, ON; Calgary, AB; Halifax, NS; Lower Mainland, BC	 <b>Industry focus</b> Digital economy and technology	 <b>Scaling targets</b> More recipients, new populations (skilled newcomers, mid-career racialized, Indigenous and Black workers)
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### About the project

Digital skills are becoming increasingly important in the workplace, but many recent post-secondary graduates have not had the opportunity to develop these critical skills. To help solve this problem, the Diversity Institute at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) and TECHNATION have developed the Advanced Digital and Professional Training (ADaPT) program. ADaPT provides tech literacy training and professional skills workshops, followed by optional skills bootcamps, to **help people transition from university to the workforce.**

### How ADaPT works

ADaPT provides training workshops of 70+ hours over two months in digital literacy, research, communications, business financials and professional skills. Workshops are provided as either a virtual classroom led by an instructor, or online and self-directed. After completing all workshops, ADaPT participants can enrol in specialized training bootcamps with partners in digital marketing (lasting six weeks) or software engineering (lasting 10–12 weeks). ADaPT also provides wraparound supports including career support and options for paid work-integrated learning placements, typically lasting three months. ADaPT utilizes an employer-centred design, starting with an in-depth analysis of employer needs to validate the program curriculum and ensure in-demand skills are taught. ADaPT also works with employers to create inclusive workplaces and provide diverse, upskilled talent that can be retained.

**| Figure 7 | ADaPT Project Timeline**

2012	2019	2021	April-Sept 21	Oct 2021 – Sept 23	Oct 2023 – March 24
Diversity Institute and TMU Office of the Vice-President of Research and Innovation (OVPRI) launch ADaPT	Diversity Institute and TECHNATION receive FSC grant to expand ADaPT to more learners	Diversity Institute and TECHNATION receive FSC grant to expand ADaPT to 600 additional participants	<b>Scaling planning</b> Design and capacity-building	<b>Implementation of Data Collection</b> <i>Status update</i> 320/800 participants in RCT (as of Oct 26, 2022) 16/55 for new populations (as of Oct 26, 2022)	<b>Analysis and reporting</b> <i>Interim</i> Summer 2023 <i>Final report</i> Spring 2024

### Learning agenda

ADaPT is in the model stabilization phase, meaning that it has been delivered for a sustained period. To support the scale-up of the program, Blueprint is helping the Diversity Institute and TECHNATION learn more about ADaPT’s impact on participant outcomes. We have launched an RCT that aims to recruit 800 participants (including 410 women, 40 people with disabilities, 360 racialized people and 600 people who self-identify with an equity-deserving group) to rigorously assess the impact of the ADaPT Core program on participants’ skills and employment outcomes, with and without wraparound supports.

In addition, ADaPT will be piloted with two new populations: skilled newcomers and mid-career displaced/transitioning workers, with a focus on mid-career racialized, Indigenous and Black workers. A total of 55 participants will be targeted over three cohorts. Interviews and surveys will be used to understand the experiences and outcomes of participants.

### Key questions

#### Design and Delivery

- **Implementation** – What resources are required for successful implementation of the model? Is the model implemented with fidelity across sites/contexts? What adaptations were made to the model across sites/ contexts? What challenges and successes occurred during delivery?
- **Reach and completion** – Is the program reaching the target population for whom it was designed? Do participants complete programming?
- **Participant experience** – Are participants/staff/ employers satisfied with the program? What do they see as the strengths and areas for improvement?

#### Outcomes/Impact

- Do participants in the virtual and online streams show improvement in the competencies and professional skills targeted by the program? What labour market and educational outcomes do participants achieve? How do these outcomes vary across participants?
- What impact does the program have on participant employment and education outcomes? How does this impact vary across participants?

#### Cost

- Given the current focus of the Diversity Institute and ADaPT model, a cost analysis was not pursued at this time.






Figure 8 | ADaPT Data Collection Plan

Blueprint and the Diversity Institute are implementing a joint data collection strategy, led by Blueprint and supported by grantee administrative data. Blueprint is carrying out surveys and interviews to collect participant and staff data, which are supplemented by administrative data collected by partners during delivery.

Collected by Blueprint    Collected by grantee    Collected by Statistics Canada

Participant data				Implementation findings	
Socio-demographics	Program completion	Satisfaction	Outcomes	Participant perspectives	Staff perspectives
Application form	Program admin data	Exit survey	Exit, 3 month and 9 month surveys	Participant interviews	Staff interviews
Baseline survey			StatCan linkage		Program partner interviews

# AspireAtlantic – Pier Labs

 <b>Project phase</b> Pilot	 <b>Populations served</b> Job seekers with or without credentials	 <b>Target locations</b> Nova Scotia	 <b>Industry focus</b> Construction, manufacturing	 <b>Scaling targets</b> N/A - Initial delivery
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## About the project

Increasing labour force participation is a high priority for Atlantic Canada. To support this priority, Pier Labs developed AspireAtlantic, a sector-based training model that aims to **enhance the employment, career advancement and earnings of jobseekers in three high demand sectors** by providing relevant skills training, job matching and coaching. To implement AspireAtlantic, Pier Labs utilized an evidence-based sectoral workforce development model called WorkAdvance and adapted it to the needs of Atlantic Canada.

## How does AspireAtlantic work?

Participants are first pre-screened to assess their coachability, experience and career interests. They then participate in career readiness training and occupational skills training for middle skills roles with advancement opportunities in one of three sectors: 1) home construction and renovation, 2) industrial, commercial and institutional construction, or 3) manufacturing.

Following training, participants are then supported with job matching, job search support and advancement coaching. AspireAtlantic also provides customized HR support to employers and 18 months of individual advancement coaching to participants. Technical assistance is provided to the project team at all stages to ensure the fidelity of recruitment and instructional designs, as well as to support the overall program implementation.

**| Figure 9 | AspireAtlantic Project Timeline**

April 2020	April 2021	Summer 2021	Oct 2021 – Sept 23	Oct 2023 – March 24
Pier Labs receives FSC seed grant to assess jobseeker and employer needs	Pier Labs receives grant to implement AspireAtlantic in NS	<b>Scaling Planning</b> Design and capacity-building	<b>Implementation of Data Collection</b> <i>Status update</i> 52/150 participants (as of Oct 28, 2022)	<b>Analysis and reporting</b> <i>Interim</i> Summer 2023 <i>Final report</i> Spring 2024

## Learning Agenda

AspireAtlantic integrates knowledge generation and knowledge mobilization practices to support the project team in implementing the model as intended. The project’s concurrent research program aims to assess how AspireAtlantic is working, for whom and under what conditions. The key question is whether AspireAtlantic is an effective model to help jobseekers access middle jobs and advance in those jobs in the construction and manufacturing industries. Note that Pier Labs is working directly with the AspireAtlantic delivery partners to provide many of the implementation supports. These activities are marked with an asterisk.

Key Questions

Design and Delivery

- **Implementation:** Is the model implemented with fidelity? What adaptations were made? What challenges and successes are occurring during delivery? What can be improved? What resources are required for successful implementation? In what ways are ecosystem structures, processes and capacity helping or hindering the implementation of AspireAtlantic? What program components are working? Where are there gaps?\*
- **Program reach and completion:** Is the program reaching the target population for whom it was designed? Do participants complete programming?
- **Participant experience:** Are participants/staff/employers satisfied with the model/platform/program? What do they see as the strengths and areas for improvement?\*

Outcomes/Impact

- What labour market and advancement outcomes do AspireAtlantic trainees achieve?
- How do these outcomes vary across participants?
- How receptive are employers to this innovative concept?\*
- What is the project's overall impact on the employment ecosystem in Nova Scotia?\*

Cost

- How much does the program cost to deliver?

Figure 10 | AspireAtlantic Data Collection Plan






Pier Labs is playing a lead role in the implementation of data collection for the AspireAtlantic project, supported by participant data collection led by Blueprint. Pier Labs is carrying out all participant, staff and employer qualitative data collection, which is supplemented by surveys carried out by Blueprint.

Collected by Blueprint    Collected by grantee    Collected by Statistics Canada

Participant data				Implementation findings			Cost data
Socio-demographics	Program completion	Satisfaction	Outcomes	Participant perspectives	Staff perspectives	Employer perspectives	Cost estimates
Baseline survey	Program admin data	Exit survey	Exit, 3 month and 9 month surveys	Participant interviews	Staff focus groups	Employer interviews	Program admin data
			StatCan linkage		Staff journaling		Cost tracking worksheets
					Site observation		
					Staff interviews		

\*Questions answered by grantee-led evidence generation activities

# Dual-Client Workforce Development Model – NPower Canada

 <b>Project phase</b> Model stabilization	 <b>Populations served</b> Youth with skills and credential gaps	 <b>Target locations</b> Toronto, ON; Calgary, AB; Halifax, NS; Vancouver, BC	 <b>Industry focus</b> Information Technology	 <b>Scaling targets</b> Geography
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## About the project

Employers across Canada are increasingly in need of people with digital skills, and many equity-deserving groups face barriers to acquiring training for these skills and landing these types of jobs. Responding to this challenge, NPower Canada developed the Dual-Client Workforce Development Model — a program to create pathways to **economic prosperity for Canada’s equity-deserving jobseekers by launching them into meaningful and sustainable digital careers.**

## How the Dual-Client Development Model Works

The Dual-Client Workforce Development Model provides three months of employability, professional skills training and technical training developed in partnership with industry stakeholders, alongside intensive job search supports to prepare and connect underserved jobseekers to meaningful and sustainable digital careers. Currently, there are two streams in the program: 1) Junior IT Analyst Program and 2) Junior Data Analyst Program.<sup>21</sup>

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, NPower Canada shifted to a hybrid model combining virtual program delivery with in-person wraparound supports, in keeping with local public health measures. This accessible and agile model will be expanded to bring virtual skills training and remote work opportunities to Indigenous, francophone and Northern communities and to small and mid-sized cities and larger metropolitan hubs such as Ottawa-Gatineau and Montreal.

| **Figure 11 | Dual-Client Workforce Development Model Timeline**

2014	April 2020	April 2021	April 2020 – Sept 2023	Oct 2023 – March 24
NPower Canada launches in Toronto	<b>Scaling Planning</b> NPower Canada receives FSC grant to expand to Alberta and Nova Scotia and reach 3,000 participants across locations	<b>Scaling planning</b> NPower Canada receives FSC grant to expand to British Columbia and Quebec to reach 4,000 more participants across all locations	<b>Implementation of Data Collection</b> <i>Status update</i> 4,720/6,680 participants enrolled in full evaluation 1,493/2,425* participants enrolled in RCT (including treatment and control) (as of Nov. 2, 2022)	<b>Analysis and reporting</b> <i>Interim</i> Spring 2023 <i>Final report</i> Spring 2024

## Learning Agenda

NPower Canada has been tracking outcomes since it launched in 2014. While delivery at its newest sites is still in the iteration stage, delivery at its Ontario and Alberta sites are in the model stabilization phase, meaning the model is operating stably and is reliably associated with positive outcomes.

21 A few additional streams (User Experience and Junior Security and Quality Assurance) have recently been put on hold as of August 2022, but only insights from those streams that were delivered within the evaluation timeline will still be included in this analysis.

Designing for Scale 2022 39

Over the past three years, Blueprint has been working with NPower Canada to prepare for increasingly more rigorous evaluation. NPower Canada, Blueprint and external academic researcher partners have just launched an RCT to assess the causal relationship between program participation and educational and employment outcomes. The RCT will compare a group of approximately 1,960 program participants to a group of approximately 465 individuals referred to other career services . A cost-benefit analysis will assess the program's benefits to government and society in comparison to the overall cost of the program.

Key questions

Design and Delivery

- **Implementation** - What resources are required for successful implementation of the model? Is the model implemented with fidelity across sites/contexts? What adaptations were made to the model across sites/contexts? How should program fidelity be defined, and what variations are acceptable and/or desirable? Has the definition of fidelity changed over time? If so, how? What challenges and successes occurred during delivery?
- **Program reach and completion** - Is the program reaching the target population for whom it was designed? Do participants complete programming?
- **Participant experience** - Are participants/staff/employers satisfied with the model/platform/program? What do they see as the strengths and areas for improvement? For those that do not complete, what factors hindered their completion? And what supports might be needed to address these barriers?

Outcomes/Impact

- What labour market and educational outcomes do participants achieve? How do these outcomes vary across participants?
- What causal effect does the program have on participant employment and education outcomes? How do these effects vary across participants?

Cost

- How much does the program cost to deliver?
- Do the benefits of the program (e.g., increased earnings for participants, savings to government, tax revenues) exceed the cost of delivery?

Figure 12 | Dual-Client Workforce Development Model Data Collection Plan

Blueprint and NPower Canada are implementing a joint data collection strategy. We are leveraging NPower Canada's existing participant touchpoints at intake and throughout program delivery, and additionally carrying out follow-up surveys, implementation-focused interviews and data linkage.

Collected by Blueprint    Collected by grantee    Collected by Statistics Canada

Participant data				Implementation findings		Cost data	
Socio-demographics	Program completion	Satisfaction	Outcomes	Participant perspectives	Staff perspectives	Cost estimates	Benefit estimates
Application form	Program admin data	Exit survey	Exit, 3 month and 9 month surveys	Participant interviews	Staff interviews	Program admin data	Program admin data
			Program admin data		Program documentation		Exit, 3 month and 9 month surveys
			StatCan linkage		Implementation assessment tool		External admin data

# EDGE UP – Calgary Economic Development

 <b>Project phase</b> Iteration phase	 <b>Populations served</b> Mid-career displaced professionals	 <b>Target location</b> Calgary, AB	 <b>Industry focus</b> Oil and gas and technology	 <b>Scaling targets</b> More learners, new training streams
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## About the project

The oil and gas sector is undergoing transformation, displacing many highly skilled workers. Between 2014 and 2019, more than 50,000 sector jobs were lost in Alberta. In response, Calgary Economic Development (CED), the Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC) and a consortium of post-secondary and private sector partners delivered Energy to Digital Growth Education and Upskilling Project (EDGE UP). EDGE UP is an innovative training program that **re-skills oil and gas professionals to help them transition to the high-growth IT sector** in areas where there are large overlaps between their existing skills and those required. The program was designed based on a skills mapping study CED collaboratively conducted with private sector partners and through consultation with employers and focus group participants.

## How Does EDGE UP Work?

EDGE UP provides training and short-term work experience. Individuals join a two-week workplace readiness program — “Transition to Tech Training” — delivered by the ICTC and attend a two-day “Foundations of Digital Transformation” course. To target learning, they engage in three-to-four month digital technology training delivered by a post-secondary institution in one of seven streams, including three original streams (Data Analytics, Full-Stack Software Development, IT Project Management) and four newly launched streams (AWS Cloud Computing, Cyber Security for Today’s World, IT Network Management, Product Manager with Specialization in Digital Product Marketing). An eighth stream is currently being developed.

At the end of the technical training, participants engage in a three-week work-integrated learning (WIL) program through a capstone project with Riipen, where they receive a \$1,400 stipend. They then have the option to participate in a three- to-four-month work-integrated learning paid internship (when available with ICTC WIL Digital Subsidy). Participants continue to receive employment support and job search assistance, including notifications about employment opportunities, check-in calls from the program coordinator, one-on-one employment supports, featured graduates’ profiles on the EDGE UP website, a newsletter on the tech ecosystem and targeted tech industry events, among other initiatives.

**| Figure 13 | EDGE UP Project Timeline**

September 2019	April 2021	Summer 2021	August 2021 – Dec 22	Jan 2023 – March 24
CED receives FSC grant to develop and deliver EDGE UP to 90 participants	CED receives FSC grant to add five new training streams and serve 320 participants	<b>Scaling planning</b> Design and capacity-building	<b>Implementation of Data Collection</b> <i>Status update</i> 300/320 participants (as of Oct 31, 2022)	<b>Analysis and reporting</b> <i>Interim</i> Spring 2023 <i>Final report</i> Spring 2024

## Learning Agenda

Blueprint has been working with EDGE UP to support its scaling journey over the past three years. Our evaluation of EDGE UP's early pilot phase found that the program is valuable and meets a clear need: it reaches a key target population, and program completion and satisfaction rates were high among the initial 88 participants who participated in the evaluation. The evidence also showed clear opportunities to improve, such as work placements and new training streams, that are being actioned in this project phase.

With a 2021 grant from FSC, EDGE UP moved from the early pilot phase to the iteration phase.

## Key questions

### Design and Delivery

- **Implementation:** What resources are required for successful implementation of the model? Is the model implemented with fidelity across sites/contexts? What adaptations were made to the model across sites/contexts? What lessons from implementation might serve scaling in future? What are the lessons learned about highly specialized target groups? What challenges and successes occurred during delivery, including employment challenges in the community?
- **Program reach and completion:** Who did the program reach and how long were participants unemployed for before the program? How does this vary across sites? Do participants complete programming?
- **Participant experience:** Are participants/staff/employers satisfied with the model/platform/program? What do they see as the strengths and areas for improvement?

### Outcomes/Impact

- What labour market and educational outcomes do participants achieve? How do these outcomes vary across participants?

### Cost

- Given the current focus of CED and the EDGE UP model, a cost analysis was not pursued at this time.


## Figure 14 | EDGE UP Data Collection Plan

Blueprint and CED are implementing a joint data collection strategy, led by Blueprint and supported by grantee administrative data. Blueprint is carrying out surveys and interviews to collect participant and staff data, which are supplemented by administrative data collected as part of EDGE UP program delivery.


Collected by Blueprint    Collected by grantee    Collected by Statistics Canada

Participant data				Implementation findings		
Socio-demographics	Program completion	Satisfaction	Outcomes	Participant perspectives	Staff perspectives	Employer perspectives
Baseline survey	Program admin data	Exit survey	Exit, 3 month and 9 month surveys	Participant interviews	Staff and delivery partner interviews	Employer interviews
			Program admin data			
			StatCan linkage			


# ESAT – Futureworx




**Project phase**  
Testing and iteration




**Populations served**  
Jobseekers with social and emotional skills needs



**Target locations**  
Canada-wide



**Industry focus**  
General employment services



**Scaling targets**  
Additional users

## About the project

Social and emotional skills are a critical factor in employability and adaptability in a changing labour market. To address this need, Futureworx developed the Employability Skills Assessment Tool (ESAT).

## How does ESAT work?

ESAT provides an online tool and guidance on implementation processes for the development and assessment of social and emotional skills like attitude, accountability, confidence, adaptability and collaboration. ESAT provides a consistent way for individuals to assess their own skills and compare their results to assessments from their program instructors/facilitators, case workers/employment counsellors and potential employers if they are currently working. As such, **ESAT fosters participant self-awareness of strengths and skills gaps** through an observation-based, timely and respectful feedback process.

ESAT can be applied in any training or educational setting where the development of social and emotional skills is relevant to the long-term success of the client. Current applications include programs as short as three weeks where the aim is to create awareness of employability expectations, as well as longer programs of 12 weeks or more designed to support achievement of more significant behavioural changes. Training on how to use ESAT is available in the form of two-day accreditation courses, orientation courses (online or in-person) and practical supports and guides.

**| Figure 15 | ESAT Project Timeline**

2014	April 2020	April 2021	Sept 2021 – Sept 23	Aug 2022 – March 24
Futureworx creates ESAT and it is delivered in locations across Canada	Futureworx receives initial FSC seed grant to research ESAT delivery contexts, perceived effectiveness and to design an evaluation approach	<b>Scaling planning</b> Futureworx receives FSC grant to evaluate the validity of ESAT as an assessment tool	<b>Implementation of Data Collection</b> <i>Status update</i> 483*/500-1,000 participants *Only includes individuals consenting to the evaluation (as of Oct 13, 2022)	<b>Analysis and reporting</b> <i>Interim</i> Winter 2023 <i>Final report</i> Spring 2024

## Learning Agenda

In 2020, Futureworx received seed funding to better understand how and when ESAT is used and how employment and training providers perceive its effectiveness. These results showed that ESAT is perceived to have utility and that there is wide variation in how and where the tool is used. In 2021, with an investment from FSC, Blueprint and Futureworx are more systematically evaluating ESAT with a study of 500-1,000 learners across Canada. This study aims to understand the outcomes for ESAT users and its validity as an assessment tool, as well as its potential to scale to new contexts. The project is now in the iteration phase, meaning we are generating evidence to strengthen implementation and assess effectiveness.

## Key Questions

### Design and Delivery

- **Implementation:** Is the model implemented with fidelity across sites/contexts? What adaptations were made to the model across sites/contexts? What resources are required for successful implementation of the model? What challenges and successes occurred during delivery?
- **Program reach and completion:** Is the program reaching the target population for whom it was designed?
- **Participant experience:** Are participants/staff/employers satisfied with the platform? What do they see as the strengths and areas for improvement?

### Outcomes/Impact

- Do participants show improvement in employability skills? What labour market and educational outcomes do participants achieve? How do these outcomes vary across participants?
- Are higher ESAT scores, or growth in ESAT scores, positively related to outcomes for participants?
- Is ESAT a valid measure of participants' employability skills?

### Cost

- Given the current focus of Futureworx and the ESAT model, a cost analysis was not pursued at this time.



## | Figure 16 | ESAT Data Collection Plan

Blueprint and Futureworx are implementing a joint data collection strategy, led by Blueprint and supported by grantee administrative data. Blueprint is carrying out surveys and interviews to collect participant and staff data, which are supplemented by administrative data collected as part of ESAT tool delivery.

Collected by Blueprint    Collected by grantee    Collected by Statistics Canada

Participant data				Implementation findings		
Socio-demographics	Program completion	Satisfaction	Outcomes	Participant perspectives	Staff perspectives	Employer perspectives
Intake form	Program admin data	Exit survey	Exit, 3 month and 9 month surveys	Participant interviews	Delivery partner interviews	Employer interviews
Baseline survey			Skills assessment data		Delivery partner surveys	
			StatCan linkage			

# FAST – Immigrant Employment Council of BC

 <b>Project phase</b> Iteration	 <b>Populations served</b> Newcomers	 <b>Target locations</b> Pan-Canada, with primary partners in BC, AB, SK, MB, ON, NS and NB	 <b>Industry focus</b> Skilled Trades, Biotech & Life Sciences, IT & Data Services, Accounting & Finance, Culinary Arts, Seniors Care	 <b>2021 scaling strategy</b> Geographic and sector expansion
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## About the project

Newcomers to Canada often face significant barriers to employment that prevent them from making full use of their skills and experience. To address this, the Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC) developed Facilitating Access to Skilled Talent (FAST), an online skills assessment and development platform to **help newcomers better prepare to enter the Canadian labour market**. FAST accelerates newcomer integration by proactively working with newcomers before they arrive or soon after arrival. FAST is the only platform of its kind in Canada.

## How FAST works

FAST is an online self-paced skills assessment and development platform designed to reduce the time that it takes for newcomers to find commensurate employment in their chosen industry. Specifically, the platform helps newcomers become more familiar with Canadian workplace cultural norms and better understand how their skills and abilities can be applied in the Canadian labour market. It provides a comprehensive occupation-specific assessment in six industry streams: Skilled Trades, Biotechnology & Life Sciences, IT & Data Services, Accounting & Finance, Culinary Arts and Seniors Care. Each sector stream is supported by a series of modules, which may vary slightly due to the needs of employers in that sector: 1) workplace cultural competency and assessment; 2) technical competency modules and assessment (for Carpentry, Automotive Service Tech, Power Engineering, Culinary Arts, Accounting, Food Services, Recreation Therapy Assistant and Home Care Companion); 3) skills validation and credentialing support (for IT & Data Services stream and Biotechnology); and 4) job search and career navigation supports.

**| Figure 17 | FAST Project Timeline**

2015	April 2019	April 2021	Summer 2021	Oct 2021 – Sept 23	Oct 2022 – March 24
IEC-BC launches FAST in BC	IEC-BC receives FSC grant to expand FAST to two new sectors and three new jurisdictions: MB, ON and NS	IEC-BC receives grant to continue expansion to the senior care sector	<b>Scaling planning</b> Design and capacity-building FAST expands to the seniors care sector in BC IEC-BC partners with NBCC to expand FAST to New Brunswick	<b>Implementation of Data Collection</b> <a href="#">Status update</a> 221/729 participants (as of Oct 14, 2022)	<b>Analysis and reporting</b> <a href="#">Interim</a> Winter 2023 <a href="#">Final report</a> Spring 2024

## Learning Agenda

Blueprint has been working closely with IEC-BC to support its scaling journey over the past three years. An [early evaluation](#) found that newcomers saw value in FAST, particularly in helping them gain a better understanding of Canadian workplace culture. It also identified key areas for improvement, such as exploring opportunities to provide more targeted sectoral content for FAST participants and continuing to invest in sustainable partnerships with service delivery partners.

With the 2021 grant, FAST has moved from the early pilot phase to the iteration phase. This means that focus shifts from generating early evidence of effectiveness to generating data to help strengthen design and implementation, and over time to demonstrating that FAST is achieving its intended goal. FAST is continuing to focus on continuous improvement, and Blueprint has accordingly used innovative methods such as a diary study with a small group of participants to understand their experiences and identify areas for improvement.

## Key Questions

### Design and Delivery

- **Systemic barriers:** For FAST participants, what systemic barriers do they face in gaining meaningful employment?
- **Ecosystem services for newcomers:** What types of support do FAST participants find helpful in navigating the job search process as newcomers? How does FAST fit into the workforce development ecosystem that newcomers navigate when looking for employment?
- **Program reach and completion:** Who did the program reach? How did program reach vary across streams? Do participants who begin FAST complete programming? Does completion differ by stream and participant characteristics, and if so, why?
- **Participant experience:** What are participants' experiences with FAST? Are participants satisfied with the program? How do perceptions vary by participant background and experience? What updates can be made to improve FAST and to support successful implementation?

### Outcomes/Impact

- What employment outcomes do participants achieve?
- How do outcomes differ by participant characteristics and streams?

### Cost

- Given the current focus of IEC-BC and the FAST model, a cost analysis was not pursued at this time.






## | Figure 18 | FAST Data Collection Plan

Blueprint and IEC-BC are implementing a joint data collection strategy, led by Blueprint and supported by grantee administrative data. Blueprint is carrying out surveys and interviews to collect participant and staff data, which are supplemented by administrative data collected as part of FAST platform delivery.

■ Collected by Blueprint   ■ Collected by grantee   ■ Collected by Statistics Canada

Participant data				Implementation findings		
Socio-demographics	Program completion	Satisfaction	Outcomes	Participant perspectives	Staff perspectives	Employer perspectives
Intake form	Program admin data	Exit survey	Exit, 3 month and 9 month surveys	Participant interviews	Delivery partner interviews	Industry partner interviews
Exit survey			StatCan linkage	Participant diary study	Staff interviews	

# In Motion & Momentum+ – Canadian Career Development Foundation

 <b>Project phase</b> Model stabilization phase	 <b>Target population</b> Jobseekers (long-term unemployed or never employed)	 <b>Geography</b> AB, BC, NL, ON, SK	 <b>Industry focus</b> General employment services	 <b>Scaling strategy</b> Geographic
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## About the project

Many Canadians come to career and employment services with pre-employment needs and face multiple barriers that can prevent them from sustained labour market attachment. A recent Canadian study found that almost 85 percent of jobseekers using publicly funded employment services have employability skills needs.<sup>22</sup> To address this challenge, the Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF) developed In Motion & Momentum+ (IM&M+), a pre-employment program that **builds foundational skills and emphasizes positive experiences, strengths and accomplishments as sources of motivation, hope and pride.**

## How IM&M+ works

IM&M+ helps participants identify strengths and assets, build confidence, set goals and build interpersonal and intrapersonal skills using an action-oriented learning approach. The program consists of three modules, delivered over 10 weeks by community-based agencies. Participants first attend In Motion, a three-week module focused on identifying participants' strengths and skills and creating a vision for their future. They then participate in Momentum, a four-week module that helps participants build on their personal vision for the future and collaborate on a community project. The final step is Momentum+, a transition module that can be delivered in two-to-six weeks and provides action planning support to help participants continue building momentum toward their goals.

| **Figure 19 | IM&M+ Project Timeline**

2015-2018	April 2020	Jan – Dec 2021	Jan 2022 – Sept 23	Jan 2023 – March 24
CCDF launches IM&M+ across New Brunswick; IM&M+ piloted at three sites in Ontario	CCDF receives FSC grant to expand to new sites across Canada and reach new populations	<b>Implementation of Data Collection (phase 1)</b> <i>Status update</i> 358/200-300 participants served <b>Scaling planning</b> CCDF receives FSC grant to serve additional cohorts and expand evidence-generation activities	<b>RCT launches - January 2022 (phase 2)</b> <i>Status update</i> 340/500 participants	<b>Analysis and reporting</b> <i>Phase 1 report</i> Winter 2022 <i>Phase 2 interim</i> Spring 2023 <i>Final report</i> Spring 2024

22 In Motion and Momentum+. (2022). About. <https://imimplus.ca/about/>

## Learning Agenda

IM&M+ is in the model stabilization phase, meaning that it has been delivered for a sustained period. To support the scaling, Blueprint is helping CCDF learn more about IM&M+'s impact on participant outcomes and the different contexts in which IM&M+ works.

Blueprint is working closely with CCDF to conduct an RCT with 300–500 participants to rigorously assess the impact of the program on participants' skills and career outcomes. The RCT is taking place with 12–14 organizations in five provinces and will compare outcomes of IM&M+ participants to other individuals with similar characteristics who are offered other employment services. We are also conducting detailed cost tracking which will allow us to assess the cost per participant and per module, and to compare IM&M+ costs across locations and to similar programs/services.

This builds on a previous phase of work that examined the outcomes achieved by program participants through participation in the program and the resources required for delivery. That evaluation and its results supported preparation for an RCT and helped to build partner sites' readiness for the RCT.

## Key questions

### Design and Delivery

- **Implementation** - What resources are required for successful implementation of the model? Is the model implemented with fidelity across sites/contexts? How can the model be implemented for new population groups? What variations are needed to respond to different participant needs and contexts? What adaptations were made to the model across sites/contexts? How should program fidelity be defined, and what variations are acceptable and/or desirable? Has the definition of fidelity changed over time? If so, how? How can the model be scaled across delivery organizations?
- **Program reach and completion** - Is the program reaching the target population for whom it was designed? Do participants complete programming?
- **Participant experience** – Are participants satisfied with the program? How do perceptions vary by participant backgrounds and experiences? What do they see as the strengths and areas for improvement? What do participants flag as the most important parts of the model? Are there parts that participants find hindering or impeding? What do participants find least important? What are the full range of outcomes that participants achieve, and under what conditions? What impacts from IM&M+ do participants observe after they complete IM&M+ and how does IM&M+ interact with the workforce development ecosystem? How do participants see the model as influencing outcomes?
- **Demand for the program** – What is the demand for pre-employability programming across Canada? Is demand for pre-employability programming being met?

### Outcomes/Impact

- What labour market and educational outcomes do participants achieve? How do these outcomes vary across participants?
- What causal effect does the program have on participant employment and education outcomes? How do these effects vary across participants?
- Do participants show improvement in self-reported pre-employability skills?
- Do participants subsequently engage with employability programming?

### Cost

- How much does the program cost to deliver? Do these costs vary among delivery locations or jurisdictions? If so, how?
- How cost-effective is IM&M+ in improving participants' outcomes? How does the cost effectiveness of IM&M+ compare to that of other programs intended to improve these outcomes?

\*Questions answered by grantee-led evidence generation activities

| **Figure 20 | IM&M+ Data Collection Plan**

Blueprint and CCDF are implementing a joint data collection strategy. Blueprint is leading data collection on participant characteristics and outcomes, as well as carrying out implementation research and cost-effectiveness analysis. CCDF is leading qualitative analysis of mechanisms of change for participants, and demand analysis of the need for similar programming across Canada.






Collected by Blueprint    Collected by grantee    Collected by Statistics Canada

Participant data				Implementation findings		Cost data	
Socio-demographics	Program completion	Satisfaction	Outcomes	Participant perspectives	Staff perspectives	Cost estimates	Benefit estimates
Baseline survey	Program admin data	Exit survey	Exit, 3 month and 12 month surveys	Participant interviews	Staff interviews	Staff surveys	Exit, 3 month and 12 month surveys
			StatCan linkage	Participant interviews*	Facilitator focus groups	Program documentation	External benchmarks
					Implementation assessment tool		StatCan linkage

\*Blueprint and CCDF are carrying out parallel sets of participant interviews; Blueprint's to support our implementation evaluation and CCDF's to support a better understanding of how participants experience changes through the model

\*Questions answered by grantee-led evidence generation activities

# Lift/Futur en tête – The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)

 <b>Project phase</b> Pilot	 <b>Target population</b> Youth with complex needs	 <b>Geography</b> ON, QC, NB, BC, and AB	 <b>Industry sector</b> General employment services	 <b>Scaling strategy</b> Geographic expansion
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## About the project

An increasing number of Canadian youth are experiencing mental health challenges. To address this need CAMH developed Lift/Futur en tête, a first-of-its-kind pan-Canadian initiative that **incorporates personalized employment and education services into integrated support services for youth with complex needs**. Lift/Futur en tête is delivered through three networks of Canadian youth service hubs (four from each of Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario, Foundry (British Columbia) and ACCESS Open Minds (pan-Canadian)) that provide a one-stop shop for youth mental health, substance use, physical health and social support.

## How Lift/Futur en tête works

Traditionally, youth with mental health challenges are required to receive mental healthcare through one agency and then go elsewhere for employment and educational support. This can be daunting for vulnerable youth. Lift/Futur en tête changes this by integrating employment and education services into the service mix using the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model. Now young people can access employment and education supports in a youth-friendly, mental health and social service environment.

IPS is an evidence-informed model of supported employment for people with mental health challenges. This model also includes education supports specially tailored to youth. IPS is unique because it adopts a “place- then-train” approach instead of focusing on pre-employment training like traditional supported employment programs. In this model, the IPS specialist is integrated into the mental health services team and works to help youth find, secure and keep meaningful employment or find desirable educational opportunities.

**Figure 21 | Lift/Futur en tête Project Timeline**

April 2020	April 2021	Summer 2021	Oct 2021 – Sept 23	Oct 2023 – March 24
CAMH receives FSC grant to launch Lift/Futur en tête at six integrated service hubs	CAMH receives grant to expand Lift/Futur en tête to six additional hubs	<b>Scaling planning</b> Design and capacity-building	<b>Implementation of Data Collection</b> <i>Status update</i> 388/720 participants have accessed the service (as of Oct 28, 2022)	<b>Analysis and reporting</b> <i>Interim report</i> Spring 2023 <i>Blueprint final report</i> Spring 2024

## Learning agenda

**Is Lift/Futur en tête effective to help youth with complex needs thrive in a changing economy?** Lift/Futur en tête is still in the early pilot stage, so our focus is on supporting the project team to implement the IPS model as needed and to assess how Lift/Futur en tête is working, for whom and under what conditions. Given CAMH's strengths as a research institution and their expertise with implementation science, they are leading on several of the learning activities (marked with an asterisk).

Key Questions

Design and Delivery

- **Implementation:** To what extent is the IPS model implemented as intended across sites/contexts? To what extent are current fidelity monitoring practices fit-for-purpose for Integrated Youth Service (IYS)? What adaptations were made to the implementation of the model across sites/contexts? What are the enablers and barriers to successful implementation of IPS in urban, rural and remote settings? What is needed to ensure that IPS workers and youth service hub staff perceive the IPS model as fitting with their organizational principles and cultures? What challenges and successes occurred during delivery?\*
- **Program reach:** Is the program reaching its target population?
- **Program experience:** Are participants/staff/employers satisfied with the program? What do they see as the strengths and areas for improvement?\*

Outcomes/Impact

- What labour market and educational outcomes do participants achieve? How do these outcomes vary across participants and settings?
- How effective is IPS in engaging youth and employers?\*

Cost

- What is the cost of the program per participant, per site and per unit of "health outcome?"
- Does Lift/Futur en tête provide value for money?\*






Figure 22 | Lift/Futur en tête Data Collection Plan

The CAMH research team is playing a lead role in data collection for Lift/Futur en tête, collecting both participant and implementation data. Blueprint is supporting the CAMH team in implementing evidence generation tools such as our Common Outcomes Framework, and by carrying out data analysis and reporting.

Collected by Blueprint    Collected by grantee    Collected by Statistics Canada

Participant data				Implementation findings		Cost data	
Socio-demographics	Program completion	Satisfaction	Outcomes	Participant perspectives	Staff perspectives	Cost estimates	Benefit estimates
0 month survey	Program admin data	3, 6, 9 and 12 month surveys	3, 6, 9 and 12 month surveys	Participant interviews	Staff interviews	Program admin data	3, 6, 9 and 12 month surveys
			Program admin data		Program documentation		Existing benefit benchmarks
			StatCan linkage				

# MH 4.0 – Mohawk College

 <b>Project phase</b> Iteration	 <b>Populations served</b> Unemployed and underemployed persons, with priority for those who have not participated in postsecondary education	 <b>Target locations</b> Hamilton, ON; Halifax, NS; Winnipeg, MB; Vancouver, BC	 <b>Industry focus</b> Supply chain	 <b>Scaling targets</b> New geographies
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## About the project

Employers in the supply chain logistics sector are facing acute labour shortages, and many equity-deserving groups continue to face barriers to full participation in the labour market. To help address this need, Mohawk College’s City School developed Material Handling 4.0 (MH 4.0), a **micro-credential program to build pathways to entry-level jobs in material handling**.

## How MH 4.0 works

MH 4.0 was designed and delivered as part of Mohawk College’s City School initiative, which provides free post-secondary and employment pathways programming to Hamilton and region residents in an inclusive community-based environment. Working closely with employers, City School designed customized technical training integrated with 21st century skills training and assessment, facilitated using benchmarked adaptations of the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U)’s VALUE rubrics. Participants attend six weeks of instruction and are supported in finding a paid work placement through the college’s network of employers in the sector. Participants can receive up to five unique micro-credentials for successful skill demonstration and can take an exam to earn the Manufacturing Skill Standards Council (MSSC)’s Certified Logistics Associate or Technician certification. Participants can also access wraparound supports such as childcare, work safety equipment and referrals to food programs, housing and healthcare.

**| Figure 23 | MH 4.0 Project Timeline**

April 2020	Fall 2020 - Spring 21	Spring 2021 – Dec 22	Summer 2022 – March 23
Mohawk College receives FSC grant to develop and deliver MH 4.0	Mohawk College receives grant to expand MH 4.0 through a partnership with Vancouver Community College, Red River College Polytechnic and Nova Scotia Community College	<b>Implementation of Data Collection</b> <a href="#">Status update</a> 239/252 participants (as of Nov 1, 2022)	<b>Analysis and reporting</b> <a href="#">Interim</a> Winter 2022 <a href="#">Final report</a> Spring 2023

## Learning Agenda

Blueprint and Mohawk College have been working closely together since the initial FSC grant. The project has moved from the early pilot phase to the iteration phase, meaning we are focused on generating evidence to strengthen design and implementation, understand participant outcomes and explore how implementation processes are adapted to different contexts. Mohawk College is leading design and implementation support activities at three new pan-Canadian delivery sites.

## Key questions

### Design and Delivery

- **Implementation:** What resources are required for successful implementation of the model?\* Is the model implemented with fidelity across sites/contexts?\* What adaptations were made to the model across sites/contexts?\* What lessons from implementation might serve scaling in future?\* What challenges and successes occurred during delivery?\* Is the City School model replicable or adaptable to other geographic areas and institutions based on all other findings?\*
- **Program reach and completion:** Whom did the program reach? How does this vary across sites? Do participants complete programming?
- **Participant experience:** What are participants' experiences with the program? Are participants/staff/employers satisfied with the program? How do perceptions vary by key characteristics? What do they see as the strengths and areas for improvement?

### Outcomes/impact

- Do participants show improvement in 21st century skills?\*
- What labour market and educational outcomes do participants achieve?
- How do these outcomes vary across participants?

### Cost

- Given the current focus of Mohawk College and the MH 4.0 model, a cost analysis was not pursued at this time.

### | Figure 24 | MH 4.0 Data Collection Plan





Mohawk College is playing a lead role in implementation data collection for the MH 4.0 project, supported by participant data collection led by Blueprint. Mohawk College is carrying out all participant, staff and employer qualitative data collection, which is supplemented by surveys carried out by Blueprint.

■ Collected by Blueprint   ■ Collected by grantee   ■ Collected by Statistics Canada

Participant data				Implementation findings		
Socio-demographics	Program completion	Satisfaction	Outcomes	Participant perspectives	Staff perspectives	Employer perspectives
Baseline survey	Program admin data	Exit survey	Exit, 3 month and 9 month surveys	Participant interviews	Staff interviews	Employer focus groups
			StatCan linkage			Employer interviews

\*Questions answered by grantee-led evidence generation activities

# Reboot Plus Expansion – Douglas College

 <b>Project phase</b> Iteration	 <b>Populations served</b> Youth	 <b>Target locations</b> ON, AB, NL	 <b>Industry focus</b> General employment services	 <b>Scaling targets</b> New geographies
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## About the project

Many youth navigate stigma in school and as they take their first steps in the workforce. The Reboot Plus program was designed to be an innovative education and career development program designed to improve outcomes for youth who have experienced barriers to the traditional transitions between school and work, and to shift employer perspectives about the potential of this demographic.

## How Reboot Plus Expansion works

The Reboot Plus Expansion program includes three main components: (1) 12 weeks of training in essential skills, Hope-Centred Career Development, career assessments, goal setting and action plan development and introduction to post-secondary education and available support services. (2) Workforce preparation and exploration where participants receive support to engage with employers, including resume writing, job search skills, portfolio development, networking, communication and interview tips and practice. (3) Employer/workplace connections where participants connect with a potential employer through a 45- minute interview.

| **Figure 23** | **MH 4.0 Project Timeline**

May 2015 - 18	2020 - 2022	Jan 2022	Feb 2023	September 2023
The first Reboot program, Education Reboot, was developed and delivered by Douglas College	The next generation of the program, Reboot Plus, received funding from FSC to expand the content of the program and to deliver the program through new partnerships in BC.	The program received scaling funding from FSC to scale to new provinces	Cohorts began at new scaling delivery sites	<b>Analysis and reporting</b> <i>Final report</i> Fall 2023

## Learning Agenda

Douglas Collect has a concurrent research team that aims to evaluate the outcomes of the project by providing evidence on the outcomes and impact of the program, and to gather learning to improve program delivery and implementation. Blueprint is working with the research team at Douglas College to generate evidence on the process of scaling the program to new sites.

## Key questions

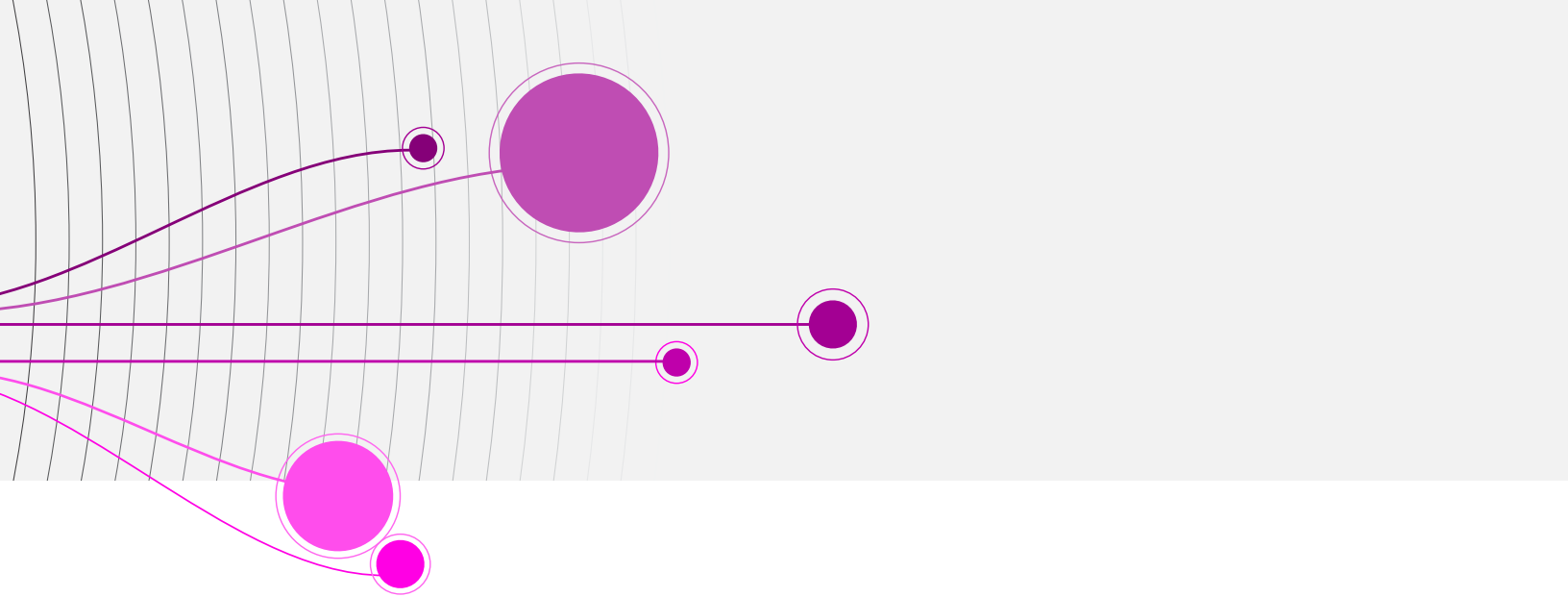
### Design and Delivery

- **Outcome and process evaluation:** Can the intervention support youth to re-engage with education and improve their long-term labour market prospects? Are youth who participate in Reboot Plus satisfied with the program? Can techniques used to give privileged youth a leg-up be adapted and used to improve the outcomes of youth who face barriers? Can we raise employer awareness of this group as a pool of talent and impact their hiring practices? How do participant outcomes and experience differ across sites?
- **Implementation Evaluation:** How did the program’s implementation vary across sites and over time? What are the “core” components of the program that must stay the same across sites? What practices, approaches, policies, tools, or contextual factors make it easy for the program to be delivered with fidelity?
- **Cost Analysis:** What are the total and per-participant costs? How does the program cost vary by site and over time? How does the program cost compare with the cost of similar programs?
- **Demand Analysis:** What is the potential demand for Reboot Plus in the current service area? In other jurisdictions? Does potential demand for Reboot Plus vary by context/ location?

**Figure 24 | Reboot Plus Expansion Data Collection Plan**

Collected by Blueprint   Collected by grantee   Collected by Statistics Canada

Participant data				Implementation findings			Cost data	Demand data
Socio-demographics	Program completion	Satisfaction	Outcomes	Participant perspectives	Staff perspectives	Employer perspectives	Cost Estimates	Demand estimates
Baseline survey	Program admin data	Exit survey	Exit survey	Participant interviews	Staff interviews	Employer Survey	Staff interviews	External benchmarks
					Partner meetings		Program documentation	



## Section 4

# Summary and Early Insights

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## 4 Summary and Early Insights

The Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio includes ten projects that focus on a range of skills development needs. Each of the grantees are at different stages in their scaling journeys and bring a wide range of strengths and expertise to the table. We have been inspired by the enthusiasm of grantees for finding and testing new ways to better serve their communities.

Fifteen years ago, there was a lack of innovation in the skills and workforce development sector. Today, there is increased innovation activity and numerous sources of funding for early-stage innovation. The challenge now is to ensure that promising, early-stage innovations are supported to scale their impact.

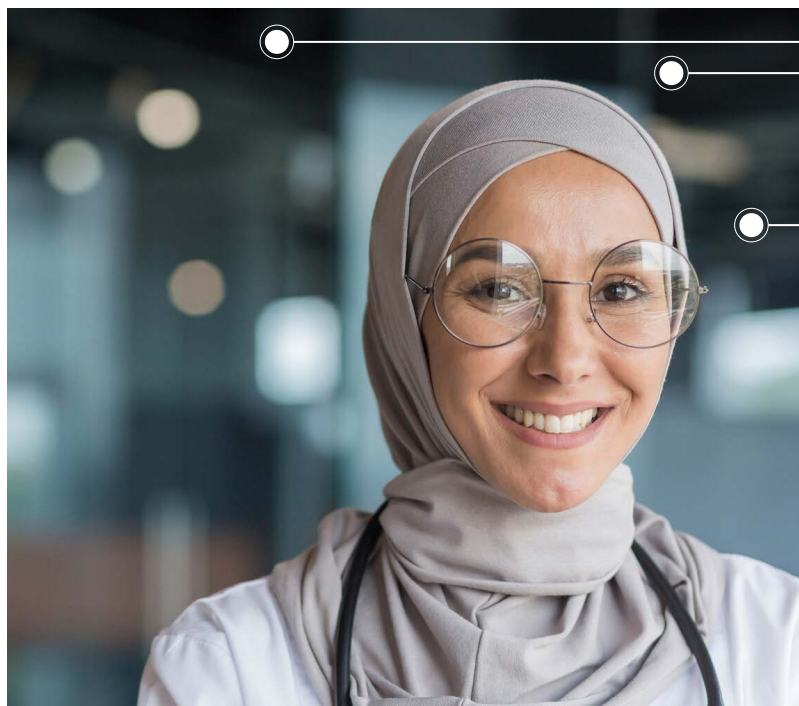
Blueprint and FSC are not alone in identifying this problem. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation calls this “an innovation pile up at proof of concept.” It has also been referred to as the “missing middle” in the innovation lifecycle. As Grand Challenges Canada observes, there is no systematic path for proven innovations to access the attention and resources needed to achieve scale.

Scaling up social innovations is a complex, multi-step process. It can follow many different pathways that come with a range of challenges. Through this portfolio, Blueprint is invested in learning how scaling is being delivered by grantees, and grantees are committed to learning how to improve their services as they bring them to scale. But taking promising innovations to scale is complex, time consuming and resource intensive, and requires flexible, multi-year funding.

Funding in the skills and workforce development sector has focused on early-stage innovation and has flowed in unpredictable ways. This means that most expansion in the sector has been based on opportunistic factors such as the interest of a new partner or a new funding opportunity that is “too good to pass up.” While there are certainly cases where scaling strategy is based on rigorous analysis of demand, costing and capacity and calculations of the optimal path forward, in our experience, such cases are rare.

**This Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio is an early effort to build a more systematic approach to scaling.** In this section we provide a high-level summary of the Portfolio including the labour market challenges each intervention is addressing and the service models and scaling strategies being used. We also share some early reflections on how our Evidence Framework is being implemented and learnings on what it takes to do this work.

As discussed above in the introduction to this report, additional specific learnings and results for each intervention will be shared through a series of reports that will be published starting in early 2023.



Blueprint is invested in learning how scaling is being delivered by grantees, and grantees are committed to learning how to improve their services as they bring them to scale.

# Portfolio Summary

## Meeting Pressing Labour Market Needs Through Promising Service Delivery Models

Each intervention in the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio is designed to meet a specific labour market challenge. In some cases, the need is specific to a population group, such as newcomers or youth. In other cases, the need is experienced across population groups, such as the need to re-skill for a new career.

### Our portfolio categorizes interventions according to five types of labour market needs:

- Early entrants establishing a foothold in the labour market (Dual-Client Workforce Development Model, ADaPT Core, Lift/Futur en tête, Reboot Plus Expansion)
- Newcomers integrating to the Canadian labour market (FAST)
- Jobseekers or precariously employed workers attaining “middle jobs” (MH 4.0, AspireAtlantic)
- Jobseekers at risk of long-term unemployment attaining sustainable employment (IM&M+, ESAT)
- Displaced workers making feasible and desirable transitions to new careers (EDGE UP)

### Broadly speaking, interventions fall into one of three categories:

- Sector-based models (AspireAtlantic, MH 4.0, EDGE UP, Dual-Client Workforce Development Model, FAST, ADaPT)
- Integrated service delivery (Lift/Futur en tête)
- Transferable skills (IM&M+, ESAT, Reboot Plus Expansion)

Most interventions, whether they are employing sector-based or integrated service models, tend to include a similar set of components including work experience and financial and other wraparound supports. Moving forward, we will be aiming to better understand the key features and components of each intervention's underlying model.

## Expanding Service Delivery Through Three Modes of Expansion

Interventions in the portfolio are using one or more of three modes of expansion.

- **Existing target population expansion** – ADaPT, EDGE UP, ESAT are aiming to grow by expanding delivery within their existing target population and geography of their existing services.
- **Industry sector/service expansion** – Two interventions (FAST, EDGE UP) are aiming to grow by expanding the services they offer either by adding new occupation-specific training streams within a given industry or expanding to a new industry.
- **Geographic expansion** – Expansion to new jurisdictions is by far the most common strategy. Six interventions are using this strategy (Lift/Futur en tête, Dual-Client Workforce Development Model, MH 4.0, FAST, IM&M+, Reboot Plus Expansion).

## Building Delivery Capacity via Partnership-based Expansion or Organizational Growth

Most organizations are expanding their delivery capacity through a partnership-based model. For example, Mohawk College is expanding MH 4.0 through a partnership with three other pan-Canadian colleges; CCDF is expanding IM&M+ through a partnership with 26 community-based organizations; and CAMH is expanding Lift/Futur en tête through a partnership with twelve integrated youth services hubs. A partnership-based expansion mode is shrewd because it leverages multiple organizations' expertise and resources. It is worth noting, however, that it also requires significant resources to manage a network of organizations spread out across the country, especially when they may have disparate missions and ways of working.

One organization, NPower Canada, is expanding their services by building their own capacity. NPower Canada has chosen this strategy so that they can ensure fidelity to their model and take a centralized approach to ensuring continuous quality assurance. Moving forward, we aim to better understand the benefits, drawbacks and suitability of each mode of building delivery capacity.

# Early Insights

## Understanding Context and Evolving User Needs and Preferences

All the interventions in the portfolio are being delivered in the context of the COVID-19 global pandemic, which has been, and continues to be, a time of unprecedented change and turmoil. This requires grantees to track, understand and adjust to continually changing labour market dynamics, public health requirements and income support eligibility criteria. Most importantly, organizations wishing to scale up their innovations need to understand and adapt to the continuously evolving needs and preferences of the people they are trying to reach and support with their programming. We have been inspired by the tremendous creativity, agility and resilience that grantees have shown in adapting their service offerings to changing conditions. One of our early learnings is that **project teams will likely need to continue to “double click” on understanding and adjusting their service-beneficiary fit.** Moving forward, Blueprint will work closely with grantees to better understand how they are using design thinking and behavioural insights methodologies to respond to the needs and perspective of their target audiences.

## Fostering a Rapid Learning and Continuous Improvement Mindset

Most scaling experts point to the importance of scaling already-proven models. Perhaps the most striking early insight to date is that most interventions in the Scaling Up Skills Portfolio do not fit this mold. While interventions were selected to be part of the Portfolio because they were considered promising, most are yet “unproven.” Moreover, mobilizing to meeting funder timelines meant that most grantees were adding new services or expanding to new geographic markets with as-yet unproven business models.

There may be an upside to this type of expansion. In theory, unproven business models should remain responsive, flexible and open to experimentation. This means they may have increased potential to capture the local market dynamics in an uncertain environment.<sup>23</sup> In this way, their flexibility may make them more, rather than less, likely to succeed. But there is an important caveat: **for these potential benefits to emerge, organizations need to commit to cycles of rapid learning and continuous improvement.**

We also note, however, that a commitment to continuous learning can be challenging in an ecosystem that is understandably tilted toward success stories. As we move forward, Blueprint will be actively encouraging policymakers, innovation project teams and all stakeholders in the Canadian skills ecosystem to **lean into a continuous learning mindset.**

## Targeting Financial Sustainability

Having the right evidence in place is critical to ensuring innovations can scale effectively. But evidence is only one piece of the scaling puzzle. As Grand Challenges Canada points out, **the durability of an innovation is its ability to persist over time, which is often dependent on the financial sustainability of its implementation strategy.**<sup>23</sup> Some grantees in the portfolio are leading the way in determining how to align financial incentives and social outcomes to allow their interventions to thrive over time. About half of the organizations in the portfolio are participating in cost tracking to estimate the full costs of delivering their interventions. Some like CAMH, NPower Canada and CCDF are going further to conduct cost-effectiveness or cost-benefit analyses. These are important steps in developing a proven business case. Moving forward, we want to explore ways to connect organizations to specialized supports for financial and business modelling and value chain building.

<sup>23</sup> Islam, S. (2020). Towards an integrative definition of scaling social impact in social enterprises. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*. <https://ideas.repec.org/a/eee/jobuve/v13y2020ics2352673420300202.html>

## Impact at Scale – Learning how to Move the Needle on Pressing Social Challenges

Each intervention in our portfolio meets a specific labour market need. Over time, with rigorous evidence of causal impact, we can estimate the magnitude and likelihood of impact. This in turn can help us understand what role each intervention could play in “moving the needle.” It can also help us understand what else is needed.

This is important because **our ultimate goal is not to scale interventions but rather to scale social impact**. As one expert puts it, we are trying to increase “the magnitude of both quantitative and qualitative positive changes in society by addressing pressing social problems at individual and/or systemic levels through one or more scaling paths”.<sup>24</sup> Services that do not address a specific social need in a better way than the current alternative may not be helpful in scaling social impact.

But to do this credibly we need rigorous estimates of causal impact. Currently three grantees are using rigorous designs to estimate the causal impacts of their interventions. For us to have credible estimates, we need to support more interventions to prepare for this rigorous type of evaluation. At the same time, we equally need to be supporting grantees to continuously learn and adapt their service offerings to changing need. Moving forward, we will explore how we can balance these two objectives. Even more fundamentally, we will be exploring how measurement can be “baked into” an organization’s services so that purpose is intertwined with each organization’s core activities. We hope that this is something that funders and policymakers encourage.

24 Islam, S. (2020). Towards an integrative definition of scaling social impact in social enterprises. *Journal of Business Venturing Insights*.  
<https://ideas.repec.org/a/eee/jobuve/v13y2020ics2352673420300202.html>

# What's Next

This report provides a road map for how interventions in the Scaling Up Skills Development Portfolio are planning to grow their impact. As these ten organizations continue along their learning journeys, Blueprint and FSC will continue to generate evidence, gather insights and strengthen project implementation. We will consider the full costs of delivering these interventions, how we expect these costs to change as the intervention matures, what role these programs will play in the future's state skills development system and whether they are desirable and feasible to deliver at scale. Learnings from this process will be released in a series of interim reports starting in early 2023. Project results and larger implications will be shared through a series of final reports, scheduled for release throughout 2023–2024.

