

Experiential Learning in Innovation, Technology, and Entrepreneurship (ELITE) Program for Black Youth: Holistic Assessment and Comprehensive Knowledge Mobilization Project

Project Leads: Sophie Yohani, PhD & André McDonald, PhD

Research Associates: Kutay Saçak, Madison Dabbs-Petty, Evan Essapa, & Idara Effiom

External Evaluator: Malatest



This report was produced as part of a project funded by the Future Skills Centre (FSC), with financial support from the Government of Canada's Future Skills Program.

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

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



Executive Summary

The holistic assessment and comprehensive knowledge mobilization project for the ELITE Program was carried out between April 2024 and December 2024. The project was funded by Future Skills Centre (FSC) as a part of their 2024-2025 thematic strategies for inclusive opportunities with a focus on Black youth.

The ELITE Program has been actively supporting Black Canadian youth who seek careers in STEM areas since 2021. The program is dedicated to offering hands-on skills, knowledge, and resilience building that are needed to create pathways for STEM related work careers in high wage professions. In addition to technical skills, the program addresses specific challenges of racism and maintaining wellness in a holistic way.

The current project, as funded by FSC, has three main objectives. These are:

1. To better understand the impact of the ELITE Program on job-readiness for Black youth after program completion.
2. To provide data and analysis on the impact of targeted wrap-around activities in entrepreneurship training and wellness coaching on Black youth employment prospects, and solutions for the specific challenges they face in pursuing STEM careers and in related labour markets.
3. To develop a comprehensive description of the wrap-around components of the ELITE Program for use as a model for future programs.

Assessing the impact of the ELITE Program on job-readiness and providing data analysis on the impact of wrap-around activities were accomplished through a collaboration between the ELITE Program and Malatest, a research and evaluation firm contracted by FSC. Specifically, Malatest conducted a detailed external assessment of outcome achievement for the ELITE Program over a 4-year period. The participants of the evaluation research consisted of the ELITE Program alumni, collaborators, and staff members. Additionally, the program staff conducted a comprehensive review and synthesis of the existing information on the ELITE Program and developed case studies to describe the holistic model's structure, inputs, outcomes, implementation, and evaluation practices in detail.

The external evaluation findings by Malatest revealed that the ELITE Program is achieving nearly all of its intended outcomes, and is demonstrating progress on others. Almost all ELITE Program participants interviewed and surveyed reported remaining interested in STEM careers. Participants generally agreed that the holistic approach of incorporating paid internships, the Entrepreneurship Design Series and the Wellness and Coaching Series enhanced their job readiness and growth as individuals. The most useful skill development reported by participants was learning how to network. The evaluation also found that the participation of people with disabilities in the program is lower than the general population. One recommendation that came out of this finding was to consider possibilities to improve access of people with physical, mental, and learning disabilities to the ELITE Program.

The implication for FSC, other workforce development funding organizations, and programs similar to the ELITE Program include the following highlights:

- **A Promising Model:** The multipronged approach to job-readiness can be a promising model of skill development. The three-tiered model employed by the ELITE Program, which incorporates paid internships, entrepreneurial training, and wellness training and coaching seems to have produced a program that meets the holistic needs of youth.
- **Evaluation:** Program designs that incorporate regular internal evaluation can strengthen outcomes. Internal evaluation must be incorporated into a process of refining and revising program content and implementation, for full effectiveness. Funding organizations would do well to encourage proactive internal evaluation with periodic external evaluation. While the ELITE Program did excel at this, some guidance in how to best conduct an internal evaluation and use it to greatest effect could be beneficial for future projects.
- **Black-Led Program:** Programs with a target group produce effective results when delivered by members of that target group. In the case of the ELITE Program, having Black leaders run a program for Black youth allowed for the program to address the real issues Black youth face in pursuit of STEM careers, and provided role-models for these youth.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
List of Appendices.....	5
Tables and Figures.....	6
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	8
Project Background and Rationale.....	8
Project Objectives.....	9
Chapter 2: Methods.....	10
Internal Review and Synthesis of the Program Information.....	10
External Evaluation Research Methods.....	11
Collaboration Efforts.....	12
Chapter 3: The Holistic Model of The ELITE Program.....	14
Case Study 1 - Overview of the ELITE Program for Black Youth.....	14
Case Study 2 - Overview of the Entrepreneurship Design Series.....	29
Case Study 3 - Overview of the Wellness and Coaching Series.....	37
Chapter 4: External Evaluation Report by Malatest.....	44
Executive Summary of the Evaluation Report.....	44
Project Objectives, Activities and Anticipated Outcomes.....	46
Methods.....	47
Findings and Analysis.....	52
Suggestions, Recommendations and Implications.....	68
Chapter 5: Summary and Key Findings.....	72
Summary.....	72
Key Findings and Learnings from External Evaluation of the ELITE Program.....	73
Chapter 6: Next Steps for the ELITE Program.....	76
References.....	77
Appendices.....	79

List of Appendices

Appendix A. RBC Future Launch Survey.....	79
Appendix B. Wellness and Coaching Survey (Wellness Questionnaire).....	98
Appendix C. Entrepreneurship Design Series Evaluation Survey.....	104
Appendix D. Entrepreneurship Design Series Infographic (Playbook) in English.....	115
Appendix E. Entrepreneurship Design Series Infographic (Playbook) in French.....	116
Appendix F. Wellness and Coaching Series Infographic (Playbook) in English.....	117
Appendix G. Wellness and Coaching Series Infographic (Playbook) in French.....	118
Appendix H. Wellness and Coaching Series Exit Interview Guide.....	120
Appendix I. The ELITE Program's Logic Model.....	123
Appendix J. Job Readiness Questionnaire (External Evaluation Questionnaire).....	124
Appendix K. External Evaluation Participant Interview Protocol.....	135
Appendix L. External Evaluation Program Staff/Partner Interview Protocol.....	136
Appendix M. Malatest's Evaluation Matrix for The ELITE Program.....	137

Tables and Figures

Tables

Table 1. Entrepreneurship Design Series Modules Original Curriculum.....	30
Table 2. Entrepreneurship Design Series Schedule.....	32
Table 3. Entrepreneurship Design Series Assignments and Deliverables.....	33
Table 4. Undergraduate (ELITE Associates) Modules.....	39
Table 5. High School (ELITE Assistants) Modules.....	40
Table 6. Enrollment in the ELITE Program for Black Youth.....	46
Table 7. Participants and Response Rate by Line of Evidence.....	49
Table 8. Survey Respondents by Participant Group and Year, Compared to Enrollment.....	49
Table 9. Interview Participants by Participant Group and Year, Compared to Enrollment.....	50
Table 10. Summary of Outcomes.....	54

Figures

Figure 1. Stages of Collaboration Efforts Between the ELITE Program and Malatest.....	12
Figure 2. Logic Model of the ELITE Program.....	20
Figure 3. Organization of the ELITE Program Governance.....	26
Figure 4. Interested Parties and Collaborators of the ELITE Program.....	27
Figure 5. In What Ways Was the Internship Experience Helpful?.....	56
Figure 6. The Internship Experience Made Me More Job-Ready.....	56
Figure 7: The Entrepreneurship Design Series Enhanced My Business Skills or Knowledge.....	57
Figure 8. Entrepreneurial Design Series Benefits.....	58
Figure 9. Ways the Wellness and Coaching Series Were Helpful.....	59
Figure 10. The Wellness and Coaching Series Supported Me to Grow as an Individual.....	59
Figure 11. Since completing the ELITE Program, Assistants vs. Associates.....	61
Figure 12. The Most Relevant Challenges.....	62
Figure 13. Survey Participants From Equity-seeking Groups.....	64
Figure 14. Newcomer vs Non-newcomers in STEM.....	65

Figure 15. Ways the Entrepreneurship Design Series was helpful, Women vs. Men.....	65
Figure 16. Skills, Knowledge, Strengths and Resources, Which Have Been Helpful to Pursue Career Goals, Newcomers and Non-Newcomers.....	66
Figure 17. Ways the Wellness and Coaching Series was helpful, Women vs. Men	67
Figure 18. Most Relevant Challenges, Women vs. Men.....	68

Chapter 1: Introduction

The Experiential Learning in Innovation, Technology, and Entrepreneurship (ELITE) Program is a holistic internship program for Black Canadian youth who pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine fields. The program was first designed and implemented in 2021 to create opportunities for Black youth to access experiential learning, work-integrated training, and entrepreneurship training related to careers in STEM while acquiring wellness-enhancing skills. As of 2024 summer, the program has been running for the fourth consecutive year, hosting interns from high school and postsecondary levels.

In 2024, the program was funded by Future Skills Centre to conduct a holistic assessment and knowledge mobilization project. Between May 2024 and December 2024, the project was carried out through the collaboration between the ELITE Program staff and Malatest.

This project report includes information regarding:

- The background, rationale, and objectives of the project
- Methods of internal reviews and external evaluation of the ELITE Program
- Case presentation of the ELITE Program's holistic model
- External evaluation results
- Summary and key findings
- Next steps for the ELITE Program

Project Background and Rationale

As Future Skills Centre mentioned in their 2024-2025 thematic strategies for inclusive opportunities, Black youth continue to face unique challenges during their transition to workforce, including discrimination, microaggression, and systemic barriers. In fact, Black Canadians are noticeably underrepresented among innovators and professionals in high wage emerging technology areas of work (e.g., AI, manufacturing, quantum technologies, regenerative medicine, renewable energy systems). Technology professionals and innovators tend to be entrepreneurs who create jobs and stimulate the economies of their communities. Underrepresentation of Black youth in these areas poses a barrier to their upward socio-economic mobility and that of their communities going into the 2030's.

The ELITE Program was designed in 2021 to support Black youth on building hands-on skills, knowledge, and resilience needed to create pathways for STEM related work careers in high wage professions. The Program not only addresses technical skills, but also addresses specific challenges of racism and maintaining wellness in a holistic way. It also uses a training platform to create an emancipatory entrepreneurial mindset in Black youth.

Preliminary evaluations of the programming in the previous years of the ELITE Program have shown positive outcomes based on reports of the participating students, providing insights on what can be helpful for Black youth seeking STEM careers. However, understanding the true impact of our program in the workforce requires a holistic assessment. By conducting evaluation research with the previous participants who completed their undergraduate education, it is possible to understand the impact of the ELITE Program in relation to labor market outcomes. The evaluation research will focus on exploring

what is suitable and helpful for the Black Canadian youth who pursue STEM careers, their process of employment, and their transition to work life. The findings can help refine the existing ELITE Program content and delivery for more efficient outcomes. This can also support refinement of the program content and strategies that will be shared broadly.

Project Objectives

There are three main objectives for the ELITE Program Holistic Evaluation and Comprehensive Knowledge Mobilization Project:

1. To better understand the impact of a holistic work-integrated program on job-readiness for Black youth after program completion.
2. To provide data and analysis on the impact of targeted wrap-around activities in entrepreneurship training and wellness coaching on Black youth employment prospects, and solutions for the specific challenges they face in pursuing STEM careers and in related labour markets.
3. To develop a comprehensive description of the wrap-around components of the holistic STEM-based work-integrated program on job-readiness for Black youth using existing documents and data collected over a 4-year period (2020-2024) for use as a model for future programs.

In **Chapter 2**, we share the methods and collaboration efforts to conduct the current project. **Chapter 3** consists of in-depth narratives of the holistic ELITE Program which also covers the third objective of the project. This chapter provides extensive descriptions of the program's resources, structure, delivery, and evaluation outcomes. **Chapter 4** includes the external evaluation report for the ELITE Program as conducted by Malatest. In **Chapter 5**, we share the project learnings with a summary of key findings and observations. Together, these two chapters correspond to the first and second objectives of the project. To conclude, we share the future directions for the ELITE Program in **Chapter 6**. This comprehensive overview of the ELITE Program will serve as a living document and a basis for future research and evaluation activities.

Chapter 2: Methods

The methodology employed to carry out this project can be described in three aspects, in line with the diverse program objectives:

- Methods employed for internal review and synthesis of the program information
- Methods of external evaluation research by Malatest
- Collaboration efforts between the ELITE Program and Malatest

The details on each method are explained in this chapter.

Internal Review and Synthesis of the Program Information

Conducting a review and synthesis of the program was possible using two sets of data sources. *The first set* was the program's descriptive documents; including proposals, description of theoretical backgrounds, curriculum and activity documents, and program reports. This data set also involved qualitative interviews carried out with the program staff and leads which were conducted by graduate students employed in the ELITE Program. Combining these documents and interviews allowed for producing detailed descriptions of rationale, aims, specific inputs, structure, and delivery of the program components.

The second data source was the existing documents and data from the internal evaluation practice of the ELITE Program. The program developed internal measurement tools and accumulated data that were used to adjust and grow the program over four years of being active. These documents and data were used to describe the evaluation practices in the program such as the measurement sources, outcomes, and the feedback.

Internal evaluation and feedback system. The ELITE Program has a strong in-built feedback loop that runs through internal evaluations annually. The ELITE Program runs these annual internal evaluations both for the holistic program and for its specific components. The findings of the internal evaluation are shared with the program collaborators as well as the general public through infographics and annual program reports. The feedback is used to for learning and making adjustments to the program to better meet the needs of the interns.

Evaluation data is collected through qualitative and quantitative measures at the beginning and the end of the program. Participation in these evaluations are entirely voluntary, confidential, and do not impact interns' relationships with the ELITE Program. Examples of the surveys include the RBC Future Launch Survey (Appendix A), Wellness Survey (Appendix B), and Entrepreneurship Survey (Appendix C).

In line with the project's Objective #3 (i.e., to develop comprehensive descriptions of the wrap-around components of the ELITE Program), a comprehensive review and synthesis of the resources from the two data sources mentioned above were conducted to produce detailed case studies of the program

components. Three graduate students employed in the ELITE Program created these case studies under the supervision of one of the project leads - and were subsequently reviewed by the program leads and staff for accuracy of representation. The case studies were created in the following structure: (1) Overview of the program with short-term and long-term goals, (2) Development of curriculum and activities, (3) Program structure and delivery, (4) Evaluation practices and reflection. The case studies are accessible in Chapter 3 of this report.

External Evaluation Research Methods

External evaluation research was conducted by Malatest, the ELITE Program's evaluation research partner in the current project. The details of the methods employed by Malatest were discussed with the ELITE Program staff at the planning phase of the project. A comprehensive description of these methods can be found in **Chapter 4**.

Malatest built its research methods to cover the following three main questions:

1. What works, for whom and in what context to improve labour market outcomes for Black youth?
2. What works, for whom and in what context to address anti-Black racism in workplaces and skills and training organizations?
3. How do we mobilize knowledge about what works to improve labour market outcomes for Black youth and to address anti-Black racism in workplaces and skills and training organizations?

Ethics. Prior to conducting the research, ethics approval was obtained by the ELITE Program from the University of Alberta's Research Ethics Board. All participants were informed that their participation is strictly voluntary, that they can stop participating at any time, and that they have the right to have their data removed from the research. Participants joined both the surveys and interviews anonymously and they were informed about how their privacy will be protected. Participants were able to choose between the options of participating in English or French languages. Alumni of the ELITE Program received \$25 gift cards for each part of their participation in this research. Those who participated in both survey and interviews received two gift cards (total amount, \$50).

Data sources. In order to carry out the research, Malatest utilized three lines of evidence. One of these was the Job Readiness Survey – a twenty-two-item quantitative survey that focused on challenges and resources in pursuing STEM careers, skills and knowledge acquisition through the ELITE Program, and perceived job-readiness after completion of the program. The second was semi-structured participant interviews. These interviews consisted of 10 questions which aimed to catch deeper insights into challenges and resources in pursuing STEM careers, skills and knowledge acquisition through the ELITE Program and perceived job-readiness after completion of the program. These two measures were developed through a collaboration between the ELITE Program staff and Malatest. The final line of evidence for Malatest was the interviews conducted with the ELITE Program staff and partners. The questions here focused on the lessons learned during the development and implementation of the ELITE Program. All measurement materials were developed in English and were also translated into French.

Participants. A total of 46 ELITE Program alumni completed the Job Readiness Survey. 16 of these participants also joined the semi-structured interviews. Additionally, 6 staff members or partners were interviewed by Malatest about the program development and implementation.

Collaboration Efforts

Although the individual evaluation research activities were employed by the ELITE Program staff and Malatest to fulfil the differing objectives of the project, the collaboration efforts between the two were essential to running the project. The collaborative efforts were organized in a systematic way which are worth a mention in this section, and presented as a summary in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Stages of collaboration efforts between the ELITE Program and Malatest

Planning stage. This stage began with an initial meeting between the ELITE Program project leads, staff, and the evaluation research partner (Malatest), which included providing Malatest with an overview of the ELITE Program. The parties then developed a working plan to agree on tasks and projected deadlines for these tasks. Following the work plan meeting, the program staff provides the evaluation partner with documents that will familiarize them with the aims, structure, and outcomes of the program. The parties meet again to clarify various aspects of the program content and finalize the work plan. This stage concluded with a final meeting to discuss the evaluation research strategies. This meeting involved finalizing details relating to research goals, measurement tools, number of participants, ethical considerations, and clarifying each party's responsibilities around conducting the research.

Work stage. Building on the previous stage, the work stage involved initial efforts to develop and/or prepare the measurement tools. This task requires close collaboration between program staff and the evaluation partner via an ongoing feedback loop. This process resulted with the ELITE Program developing a 22-item job readiness survey and a 10-item semi-structured interview protocol through collaboration with Malatest. These tools were utilized for data collection in the following stage. The

work stage also involved preparing an ethics application for the evaluation research through University of Alberta's Research Ethics Board. Throughout the application process, the ELITE Program staff worked closely with Malatest to describe the details of Malatest's research practices, as well as inform Malatest of the University's ethics board's requirements. Upon receipt of ethics approval, the ELITE Program sent out research invitations to previous program participants via emails. These emails included Malatest's contact information, so that those who were interested in participating were able to register to join the research directly in Malatest's portal. Malatest subsequently contacted the voluntary participants to administer the measurement tools and interviews.

Report stage. In this final stage, the evaluation research partner analyzed the data that was collected from the participants. Some collaboration was still needed at this stage, including the evaluation partner requiring additional information and data from past years in order to set baseline figures. Finally, the evaluation report was reviewed by both parties for accuracy and completeness before producing a final draft for sharing with the funder.

Chapter 3: The Holistic Model of The ELITE Program

This chapter introduces the ELITE Program's holistic model consisting of paid internships that facilitate work-integrated learning, and two wrap around components; The Entrepreneurship Design Series, and Wellness and Coaching Series. Each component of the model is presented as a case study intended to provide a comprehensive and in-depth description necessary for developing similar programs. The case studies of the wrap around components were also used to create infographics (see Appendices D - G) which serve as playbook summaries. Therefore, this chapter is organized under three subsections:

1. Overview of the ELITE Program for Black Youth
2. Overview of the ELITE Entrepreneurship and Leadership Training Series
3. Overview of the ELITE Wellness and Coaching Series

Case Study 1 - Overview of the ELITE Program for Black Youth

Introduction: What is the ELITE Program?

The Experiential Learning in Innovation, Technology, and Entrepreneurship (ELITE) Program is a three-tiered internship approach for Black Canadian youth (ages 15 to 22) who pursue careers in science, technology, engineering, mathematics and medicine (STEMM) fields. The program was first designed and implemented in 2021 to create opportunities for Black youth to access experiential learning, work-integrated training, and entrepreneurship training related to careers in STEMM while acquiring wellness-enhancing skills.

As a holistic program, the ELITE Program has three main specific components: (1) a paid internships that facilitate work-integrated learning; (2) The Entrepreneurship Design Series which involve training in entrepreneurship, financing, leadership, team work, and communication skills; and (3) Wellness and Coaching Series which aims to facilitate personal growth by building wellness-enhancing skills, resilience, hope and increasing mental health skills and knowledge. The details of each component can be found in this document.

Our Vision

Address the gap between skilled Black Youth in STEMM fields and access to experiential learning opportunities.

What makes the ELITE Program unique is its focus on providing work-integrated learning and training on cutting-edge equipment within an innovation ecosystem, while offering wrap-around activities (i.e., the Entrepreneurship and Wellness components) that are designed to prepare the youth for academic and work-life transitions. The training is delivered through paid internships over 8 to 16 weeks. The ELITE

Our Mission

Provide meaningful, holistic, work-integrated, hands-on learning experiences in STEMM for Black Youth in collaboration with industry, government, and academia.

Program leverages the University of Alberta's experience and expertise across its campus to provide advanced technical skills development and experiential learning. To the best of our knowledge, this is also the first internship program that integrates mental health promotion through our wellness and coaching series, as mental health promotion is often offered as stand-alone programs.

Why is the ELITE Program Important?

Black Canadians are noticeably underrepresented among innovators and professionals in high wage emerging technology areas of work such as artificial intelligence, manufacturing, quantum technologies, regenerative medicine, renewable energy systems and others. As the world of technology moves into the 2030's, underrepresentation in these career fields create a barrier to Black youth's and of their communities upward socio-economic mobility.

Research shows that Black youth can be influenced to become innovators and technology professionals by environmental factors such as residing in high-innovation areas and engaging meaningfully with innovation and professional role-models (Bell et al., 2019). Building on this point, the ELITE Program aims to create the opportunities for exposure and training in technology and innovation areas.

The ELITE Program assembles teachers, researchers, engineers, industry partners, and scientists at the University of Alberta who work closely with interns to facilitate acquiring technical skills, transitioning to post-secondary studies, and building professional networks for future employment. Experienced innovation practitioners provide mentoring and professional development opportunities, including experiential learning and work-integrated skills development.

We believe that keen focus on substantive early experiential training in technology jobs, entrepreneurship, and business creation for youth, together with exposure to experienced professionals and entrepreneurs around technology projects or viable product ideas will create the professional and entrepreneurial mindset necessary for upward socio-economic mobility for Black youth early in their academic careers. It will also provide the requisite knowledge to avoid some systemic pitfalls and overcome other system barriers.

Structure of the ELITE Program: A Closer Look at Three-Tiered Approach

As mentioned above, the ELITE Program has three components that take place simultaneously over the course of the ELITE Program. Each component has its specific activities and learning goals, which are evaluated on an annual basis.

1. *Hands-on Work-integrated Learning/Training*

Students in the ELITE Program are matched with the internship hosts that are our partnering industry companies and government partners based on students' matching interests, training, and availability. Once matched, students work in their internship sites for 25 to 32 hours per week and for 8 to 16 weeks. During this time, interns spend at least 4 days a week in their work site. This paid work experience is intended to facilitate opportunities for hands-on learning, technical skills development, and engagement with professionals from specific STEM fields.



2. *Entrepreneurship Design Series*

During their participation in the ELITE Program, interns also join the Entrepreneurship Design Series. These series involve an 8-week training in entrepreneurship topics such as start-up business creation steps, financing, customer base development and financial literacy. The program also involves several activities to facilitate development of:

- Team work and collaboration skills,
- Communication skills (such as pitching and negotiation, oral presentation, writing skills)
- Leadership skills (such as engaging with people, training others, creating a vision and plan, leading projects and tasks, listening to others carefully)
- Creativity and an entrepreneurial mindset

For further details on the ELITE Program's Entrepreneurship Design Series are presented in the *Case Study 2 – Overview of the Entrepreneurship and Leadership Training Series*.

3. Wellness and Coaching Series

Participants in the ELITE Program also join the Wellness and Coaching Series for 8 to 16 weeks over 8 online group sessions. Each session takes approximately 2 hours. These series aim to provide Black youth with mental health knowledge and skills for building their capacity and enhancing resiliency and hope as they navigate transitions in academic and professional life. The Wellness series are delivered by graduate counselling psychology students and supervised by a professor and registered psychologist. Topics covered in these series include:

- Stress management
- Emotional, cognitive, and physical awareness for wellness
- Understanding anxiety and depression
- Addressing anti-Black racism and microaggressions
- Interpersonal relationships

As a part of the Wellness and Coaching Series, interns are also encouraged to set themselves attainable wellness goals to work toward throughout the internship program. During these series, students receive one-on-one coaching to monitor and discuss their progress with a wellness coach. These one-on-one sessions are delivered by graduate counselling students and supervised by a registered psychologist. More information on the Wellness and Coaching Series is available in the *Case Study 3 – Overview of the Wellness and Coaching Series*.

Short-Term Program Outcomes

The short-term outcomes for the ELITE Program can be grouped under the specific components of the program. These include:

Hand-on Work-integrated Training (paid internships):

- Improve STEM-related technical skills and knowledge of the interns (such as engineering analysis, scientific research, artificial intelligence)
- Improve soft skills of the interns (such as public speaking, adaptability, communication)
- Help interns develop their professional networks
- Help interns develop confidence in their work areas

Entrepreneurship Design Series:

- Improve knowledge of financing strategies
- Increase understanding of steps to start-up a business
- Improve teamwork and collaboration skills
- Improve communication skills (such as pitching and negotiation, oral presentation, writing skills)
- Improve leadership skills (such as engaging with people, training others, creating a vision and plan, leading projects and tasks, listening to others carefully)
- Improve entrepreneurial skills (such as critical thinking, complex problem solving, social perceptiveness, creativity and innovation, adaptability)

Wellness and Coaching Series:

- Increased mental health and wellness literacy
- Develop mental health-supporting skills and coping strategies (such as managing stress, interpersonal relationships, and supporting wellness)
- Develop skills for setting and working towards a wellness goal
- Improve ability to manage transitions in academic and professional life
- Improve ability to manage microaggressions and anti-Black racism
- Develop knowledge of how to advocate for self and the others
- Improve knowledge of how to access mental health supports and services when needed

Long-Term Program Outcomes and Impact

The long-term outcomes of the ELITE Program can be grouped under four impact areas. These areas are educational, social, economic, and psychological.

Educational Area:

- Learned knowledge and skills will improve job-readiness for interns
- Black youth will be more equipped to navigate challenges in STEM careers and entrepreneurship pursuits
- Recognizing the need for higher education in entrepreneurship in the technology space, more Black youth will seek education in undergraduate and graduate/professional schools

Economic Area:

- More Black Canadian youth will acquire job opportunities in STEM fields or pursue start-up business ideas
- Reduction in youth unemployment in Alberta

Social Area:

- Black youth will be more prepared to access high wage professions or embark on entrepreneurial endeavors

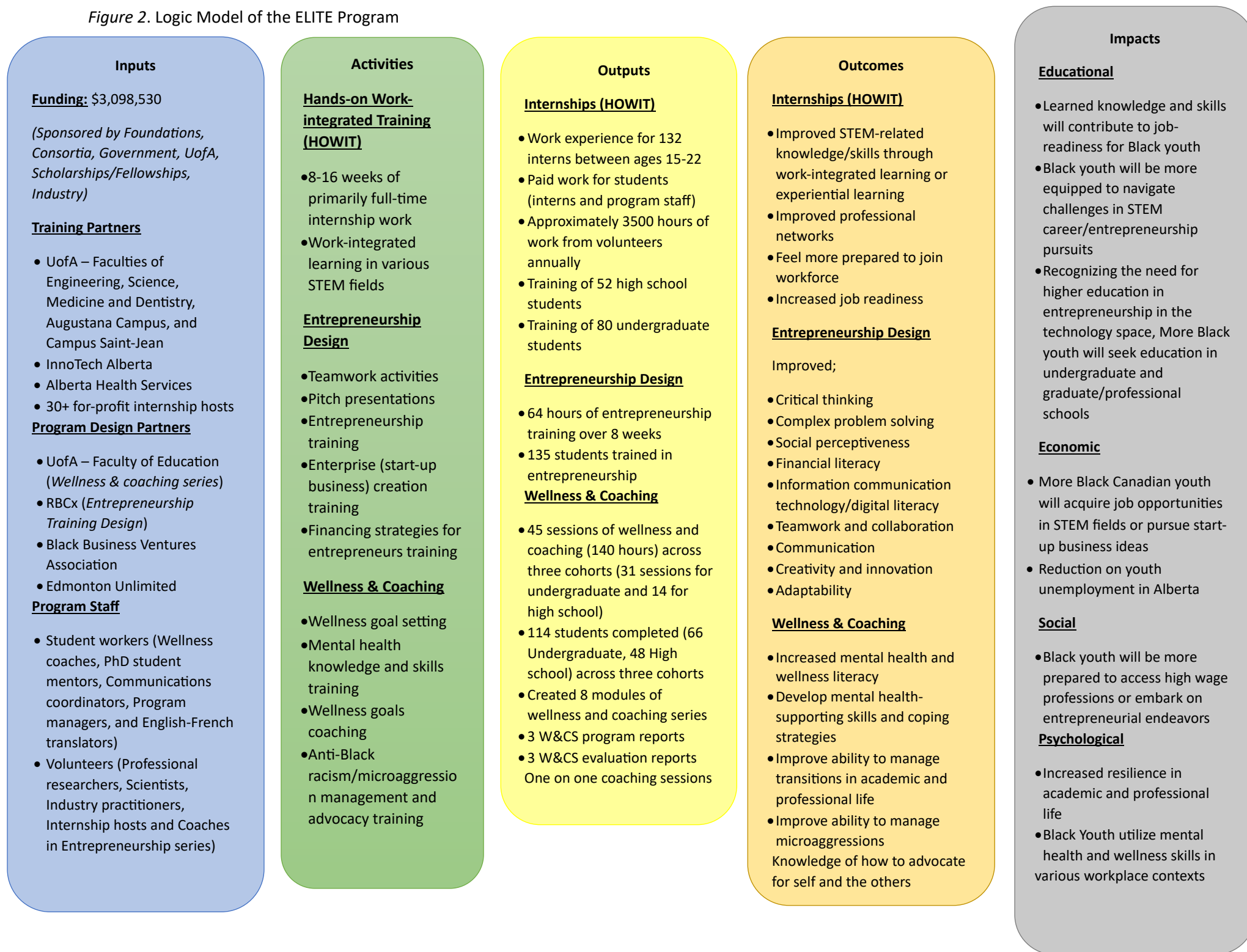
- Reduced barriers for upward socio-economic mobility of Black youth and their communities

Psychological Area:

- Increased resilience in academic and professional life
- Black youth utilize mental health and wellness skills in various workplace contexts

A summary of the ELITE Program's logic model can be seen below in Figure 2:

Figure 2. Logic Model of the ELITE Program



Participants of the ELITE Program

The ELITE Program hosts students from diverse linguistic, ethnic/racial, gender, citizenship, and research backgrounds. Each year, interns are accepted into two sub-cohorts. Namely, these are (1) the ELITE Associates, who are students from undergraduate academic level; and (2) the ELITE Assistants, who are students from high school academic level. Typically, undergraduate cohorts start the program in May and continue for 16 weeks, while the high school cohorts start the program in July and continue for 8 weeks.

Since its first year in running, the ELITE Program has been dedicated to offering internship and training opportunities to Black youth in STEM fields. From 2021 to 2024, the program hosted 174 interns across four years of cohorts. Although our program is mainly situated in Alberta, the program expanded to involve students from Carleton University in Ottawa in 2022. Some demographic statistics describing our participant profile can be found below:



The ELITE Program hosted a total of 174 interns between 2021 and 2024. The highest number of interns were trained in 2023 summer, during which time we received 53 participants in our program.

Although the ELITE Program mainly targets the Black Canadian youth, the program is open to the intersections of all equity deserving groups. Based on our data between 2021-2023, approximately 95% of our participants identified as Black.



42%

High schoolers

The ELITE Program serves Black youth between the broad age range of 15 and 22. According to our data, 42% of the students who joined our program came from high schools. The remaining group were undergraduate students enrolled in Canadian universities.

Throughout the four cohorts of the ELITE Program between 2021 and 2024, the number of females and males have been in balance. In fact, our data shows that 47% of the students accepted into the program identified as females.

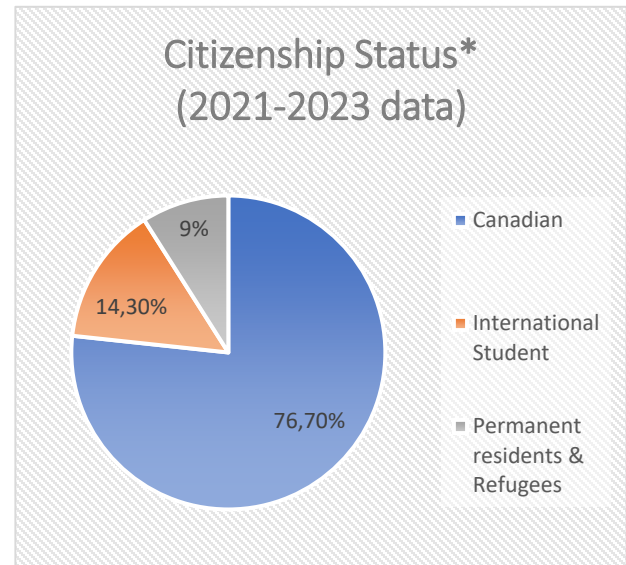
47%

Female student

24%Francophone
students*

With its dedicated staff and resources, the ELITE Program is committed to serving both Francophone and English-speaking students. Francophone students comprised 24% of the interns in the first three cohorts of the ELITE Program.

The ELITE Program has been offering training opportunities to students from all citizenship statuses. In the previous cohorts, interns with international student, permanent resident, and refugee statuses alongside the Canadian citizens have joined the ELITE Program.



*: Data from the years 2021-2023

Implementation of the ELITE Program: Building a Bridge

The best way to understand the implementation of the ELITE Program is to explain the program's role with the analogy of a bridge. Throughout the implementation process, the ELITE Program is intended to work as a bridge that links the industry partners and the qualified Black youth who are training to work in specialized areas. In this respect, the ELITE Program holds a unique position being based in Black communities, Industry, and University.

Communications Plan

The first step in building bridges is to *spread the word*. The ELITE Program has a communications plan which involves a campaign to inform the Black communities and the industry partners about the opportunities offered by the program. As a part of the communication campaign, the program coordinators contact internship hosts, educational institutions, community spaces, and the general public to invite interested parties to apply for the program. This process sometimes looks like calls for projects for internship hosts, sending announcements in email lists for internship opportunities, holding workshops, reaching out to the community directly through social spaces (churches, schools etc.) and social media.

Students who are interested in applying to the ELITE Program can get more information about the program and submit their application form through the program website (<https://www.eliteprogram.ca/>). The application form involves some demographic information, education transcripts, letter of interest, curriculum vitae, and any relevant additional documents. This information is used to determine whether student interests match with the opportunities offered in the program.

Matching with Internship Hosts

The second step in building the bridge involves the actual work of matching the students with the industry partners. In line with this understanding, the ELITE Program does not have a typical “student selection” approach to accepting the students into the program. Instead, the program functions as a matching system. Specifically, the steering committee of the ELITE Program works to match students with suitable hosts based on their interests, training, availability for full time internship, and age range. After determining the applicants that align most closely with specific internship hosts, the hosts are encouraged to conduct interviews with the potential interns. As a result of the interviews, internship hosts reach a decision on whether the students are accepted into the ELITE Program.

Applications for the ELITE Program open as early as October. The steering committee of the ELITE Program reviews the applications in November and informs the internship hosts about the matching students for interviews. Students that are accepted by the hosts receive welcome letters from the ELITE Program via their email addresses and they start the program in May.

Industry Partners and Internship Hosts

If we continue on the bridge analogy, we need to describe the industry leg of the ELITE Program. Here, the relationship with industry partners is important to describe. Our program works in a close collaboration with our industry partners. Every year, the program shares annual reports and newsletters with our partners and hosts, receiving their feedback for the program, and discussing possibilities about what can be done next in a pre-planning period.

The internship hosts hold a critical role in the work-integrated training component of the ELITE Program as they provide a safe work environment (physically and mentally) to the interns. Specifically, the hosts provide real experiential training by carrying out work-integrated projects and providing nuanced targeted training for interns in their fields of interests. Throughout their internships, students also receive specific targeted mentorship by the managers in their internship sites.

The ELITE Program supports this learning process by providing administrative and human resources support, workshops, and covering the payment and benefits for intern work. The students are also supported with their training during their internships through the wrap-around components of the ELITE Program.

Wrap-around Components and Other Activities

The bridge role that the ELITE Program undertakes should not be seen limited to connecting students with industry partners. As mentioned earlier, the program aims to address, at large, the underrepresentation of the Black communities among innovator and technology professions. This perspective requires addressing structural barriers, empowerment, and personal growth that goes beyond training merely in technical areas.

In order to address these issues, two important wrap-around components, namely the Entrepreneurship Design Series and the Wellness and Coaching Series are part of the ELITE Program. *The Entrepreneurship*

Design Series are intended to support the development of soft skills such as team work, communication, creativity, and leadership while facilitating the growth of entrepreneurial mindset for students. On the other hand, the *Wellness and Coaching Series* addresses personal growth areas such as dealing with stress, managing racism and microaggressions, managing interpersonal relationships, working toward personal wellness goals, and understanding mental health. Beyond the training, these components provide space for Black youth where they can come in contact and create connections with peers and mentors that work toward similar goals.

In addition to completing the training in the three components of the program mentioned above, students are expected to complete some other activities including but not limited to:

- Training for workplace safety
- Mid-term presentations/workshops
- Pitch presentations for entrepreneurship design
- Final presentations

The final presentations are delivered by students in an event that is held at the end of the ELITE Program. In these presentations, students organize and share all of their major learning achievements (including technical and “soft” skills) throughout the internship program. The audience of these presentations also involve the steering community of the program, sometimes family members of the students, and everyone contributing to the program. These presentations also provide a chance to celebrate the completion of the program.

Together, the components of the ELITE Program targets professional and personal growth while supporting Black youth to cope with the challenges and barriers in work life transitions. The bridge created by the ELITE Program connects Black youth and industry, and brings together a community that work together and inspire each other.

Program Governance and Parties

Structure of Program Governance

The governance body of the ELITE Program consists of two co-directors, a steering committee and an advisory committee, three section leads for the Wellness and Coaching Series, Entrepreneurship Design Series, and Francophone engagement, and finally the program staff working in respective sections. The staff consists of graduate students employed by the program and the volunteers. A summary of the governance structure can be found below in Figure 3.

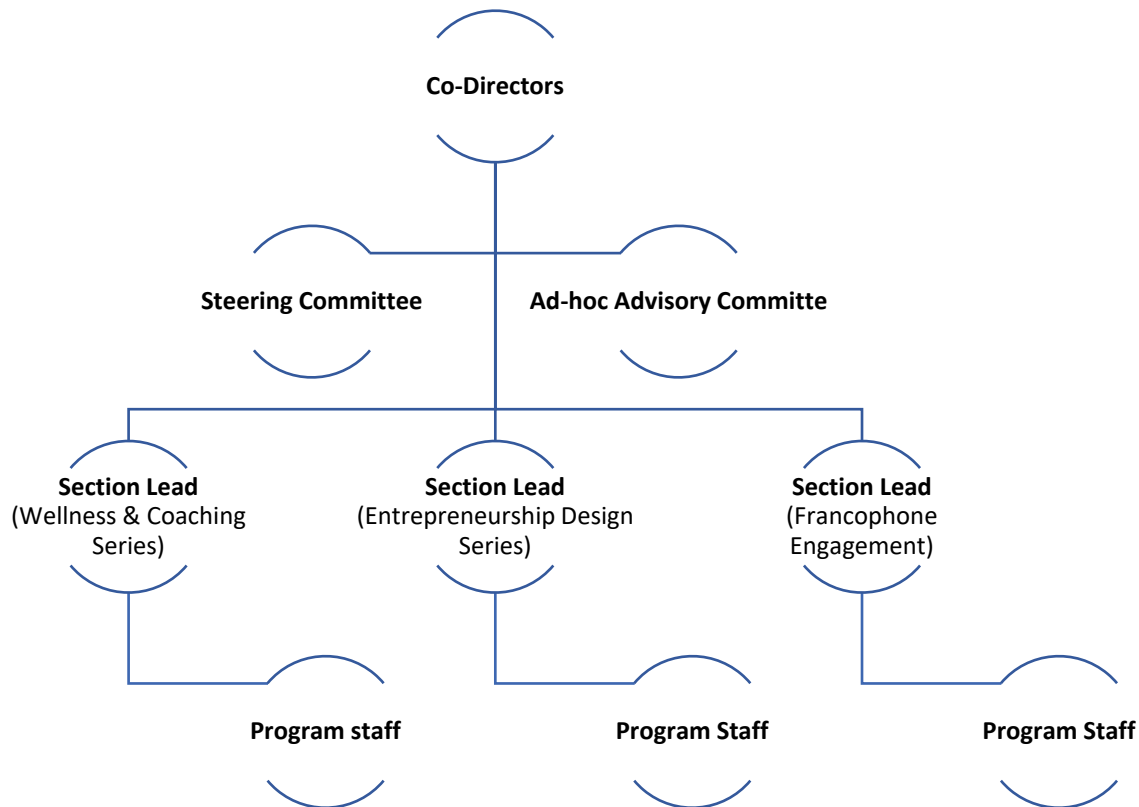


Figure 3. Organization of the ELITE Program Governance

Interested Parties and Collaborators

The ELITE Program brings together numerous collaborators and interested parties from different areas. Below is a figure that shows these parties.

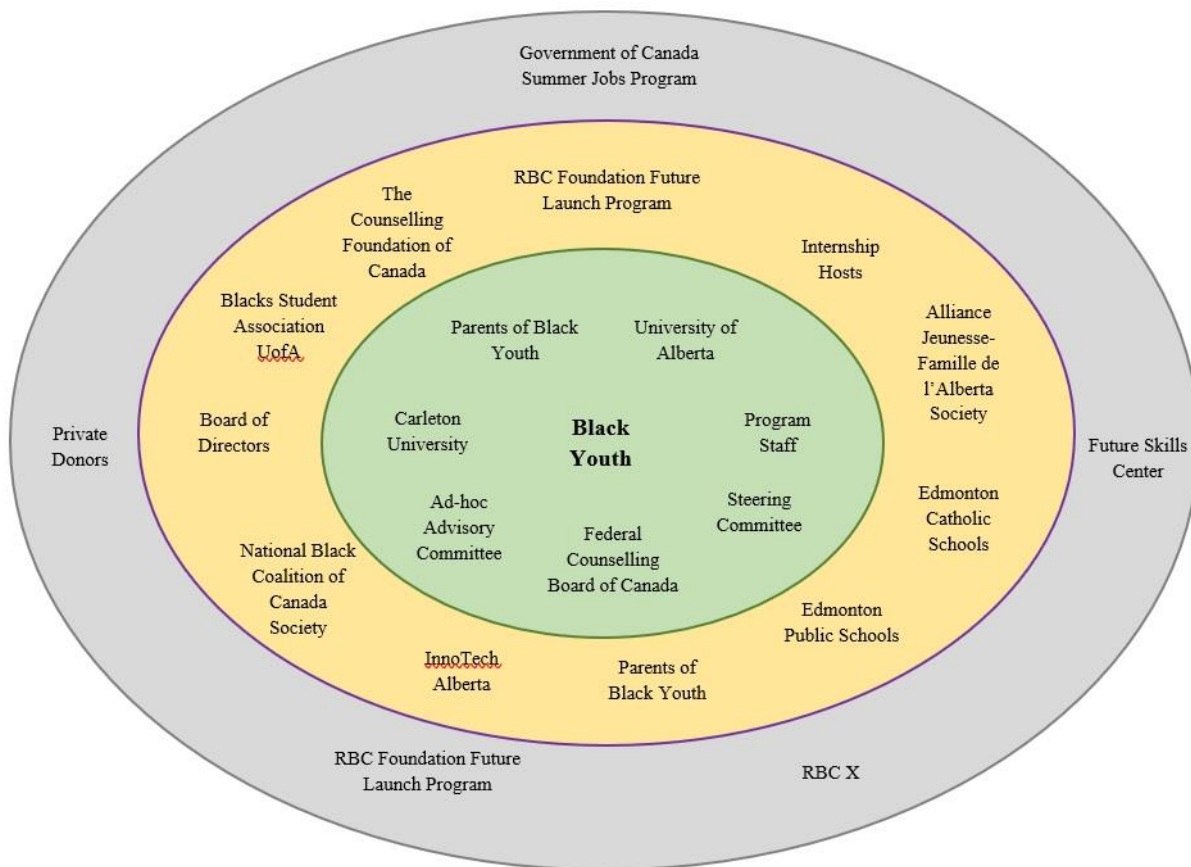


Figure 4. Interested parties and collaborators of the ELITE Program

Evaluation

The ELITE Program runs annual internal evaluations for each of its specific components as well as for the whole program. Evaluation data is generally collected at the beginning and the end of the program either through quantitative surveys and semi-structured qualitative interviews. Evaluation research is conducted with permission from the University of Alberta's Research Ethics Board and the participation is entirely voluntary. Students are informed about the confidentiality of their identities and that their participation does not impact their relationship with the ELITE Program.

In order to collect data for evaluating the overall program functioning, the RBC Future Launch Survey has been utilized (see Appendix A). This survey involves questions regarding interns' perceptions of job readiness, work experience, confidence in work skills, career planning and development areas, and personal skills (such as communication, team work, decision making, problem solving, creative thinking). Collecting data at two points (pre- and post-) in the program allows us to track changes in these perceptions. The findings from the RBC survey informs the ELITE Program's annual report which is shared with the program collaborators as well as the general public. The pre- and post- testing approach is also employed in the surveys conducted for the Wellness and Coaching Series and the Entrepreneurship

Design Series. The details of the evaluation for these components can be found in the *Case Study-2 Overview of the Entrepreneurship Design Series* and the *Case Study-3 Overview of the Wellness and Coaching Series*.

In its fourth year, the ELITE Program has collaborated with Malatest for evaluation research. This is the first external evaluation for the ELITE Program. The results of this external evaluation are available in **Chapter 4** of this document.

Case Study 2 - Overview of the Entrepreneurship Design Series

Introduction

The ELITE Entrepreneurship Design Series is a component of the holistic, three-tiered approach of the Experiential Learning in Innovation, Technology, and Entrepreneurship (ELITE) Program for Black youth at the University of Alberta. The three-tiered program (<https://www.eliteprogram.ca/>) is designed to create opportunities for Black youth (ages 15 to 22) to access experiential learning, work-integrated training, and entrepreneurship training related to careers in STEM while acquiring wellness-enhancing skills. The Entrepreneurship Design Series is an 8-week interactive training initiative that is part of the ELITE Program for Black Youth. This series is designed to provide Black youth with essential entrepreneurial skills and leadership training. The purpose of the series is to equip participants with hands-on experience in business creation and entrepreneurship, with a strong emphasis on teamwork, enterprise creation, and financing strategies. The series is a vital component of the ELITE Program, which focuses on enhancing the practical skills and entrepreneurial mindset of Black youth to prepare them for future careers in STEM and business fields.

Context

The Entrepreneurship Design Series is embedded within the ELITE Program. Once students apply and are accepted into the program, ELITE helps them secure an internship host that aligns with their career interests and future goals. Paid internships include involvement in projects with university researchers, for-profit industry stakeholders, and government agencies, ranging from 8 to 16 weeks. During this period, all interns participate in leadership and entrepreneur training. The Entrepreneurship Design Series was created in response to the systemic barriers that Black entrepreneurs face, including limited access to capital and professional networks. These challenges often hinder their ability to build, scale, and sustain businesses. The series aims to address these barriers by providing participants with the knowledge, skills, and networks necessary to succeed in entrepreneurship. The program also seeks to create a sense of community among Black youth and foster trust between them and the larger Edmonton STEM and business communities.

Short-Term Outcomes

The immediate goals of the Entrepreneurship Design Series include training participants in financial literacy, business communication, lean start-up methodologies, innovation strategies, and pitch presentation skills. Participants will receive hands-on training in the rudiments of entrepreneurship and start-up business creation (e.g., lean start-up, innovation methodology, minimum viable product). By the end of the series, participants are expected to gain confidence in their entrepreneurial abilities, improve their problem-solving skills, and develop a foundational understanding of the entrepreneurial landscape in Edmonton.

Long-Term Outcomes

The long-term impact of the series is anticipated to be significant, with participants expected to advance in their careers, take on leadership roles, and increase the representation of Black entrepreneurs in Edmonton's tech and business sectors. The series also aims to inspire participants to pursue higher education and professional development opportunities, contributing to their long-term success and economic empowerment. The outcome of the proposed activities will be a cohort of Black students in STEM with technical training, an entrepreneurial mindset, and material knowledge to convert their technical skills and products into commercial endeavors for the benefit of Alberta and Canada.

Module Development

Original Curriculum

The initial curriculum of the Entrepreneurship Design Series was designed to cover core topics such as financial literacy, lean start-up methodologies, innovation strategies, business communication, and minimum viable product development. The curriculum was structured to provide a comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurship and equip participants with the skills necessary to create and sustain start-up businesses. Activities will include problem and proposition development, customer discovery, design thinking and testing, and financial strategies for start-ups.

Table 1 lists the key content and activities for the series.

Table 1. Entrepreneurship Design Series Modules Original Curriculum

Week/ Partner	Key Content	Activities/Features
1 BBVA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal Financial Literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budgeting Being a Smart Consumer Credit Card & Debt Management Saving and Investing Setting Financial Goals Protect Yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to the Entrepreneurship Design Series Icebreaker activities Individual activities supported with participant manuals Interactive video materials
2 EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Problem Generation Lean Canvas Customer Discovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumption Mapping, Problem Interview, Validation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team/Facilitator/Coach Intros Collaboration Tool (Miro) Customer Discovery Tool Team Building Team Coaching
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design Thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demo Creation

EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intro to Human-Centred design • Prototyping/MVP/Iteration/Demo • Testing Business Idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker (Product management) • Team Coaching
4 EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desirability Testing: Using a Prototype • Data Collection (Solution Interviews, dashboard discussion) • Testing Business Ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dev/App Tool • Demo Rehearsal • Team Coaching
5 EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demo Day <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Preparation/Rehearsal ◦ Presentation • Startup Crawl 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demo Day • Team Coaching • Demo Feedback • Startup Crawl (Tours)
6 EU/ BBVA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Financial Literacy Part 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Business Structure ◦ Business Accounting 101 ◦ Traditional Funding and Banking ◦ Alternative Funding ◦ Financial Modelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactive workshop • Team activity supported with planning tools • Team Coaching
7 EU/ BBVA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Financial Literacy Part 2 • Intro to Pitch Preparation • Marketing Basics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Positioning, Brand Voice • Funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ TAM, SAM, SOM ◦ What makes a Company investible? (Venture Funding101) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding & Identity • Be a Dragon: What would you invest in? Investment Games: • Investor engagement: RBC Venture Fundraising • Team Coaching
8 EU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitching Preparation • Rehearsal • What's Next • Showcase/Finale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pitch Preparation • Team Pitch Coaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Finance Input (RBC) • Team Presentations/Awards

Updates

The original content, developed in 2021, has been adapted for subsequent cohorts to better align with current needs and priorities. While the major outcomes of each module remain consistent, the time allocated for specific discussions and the focus on certain activities have been adjusted. The material has been updated to enhance its relevance for each cohort, for example, by replacing the "Product Management" module with "Business Roadmap" to better suit early-stage and ideation-stage companies, which helps distribute the work among group members. Additionally, we've substituted a session on tools for building an MVP (such as Figma and Wix) with a focus on building a comprehensive

business model that includes founder well-being, offering a more holistic approach. We've also added Black entrepreneurs as co-facilitators to provide real-world insights and illustrate how business concepts are applied in practice. These updates were guided by insights from feedback collected from previous participants.

Implementation

The series was implemented over an 8-week period, with weekly sessions held every Tuesday from July 4 to August 23, 2023. Each session lasted for 8 hours, including a lunch break, and involved a combination of hands-on training, workshops, and networking events. Key milestones included the mid-term intern presentation, the ELITE Entrepreneurship showcase, and the final pitch presentation event. The program expansion will include activities in French to ensure the inclusion of members of the Black Francophone community and the engagement of Black doctoral candidates in STEM in entrepreneurship training towards the commercialization of research results.

Table 2 outlines the schedule for the Entrepreneurship Design Series, detailing the weekly sessions from July to August 2023. The sessions are held every Tuesday from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM.

Table 2. Entrepreneurship Design Series Schedule

Week	Dates and times
1 EU/BBVA	Tuesday, 2 July 2024 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM
2 EU	Tuesday, 9 July 2024 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM
3 EU	Tuesday, 16 July 2024 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM
4 EU	Tuesday, 23 July 2024 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM
5 EU	Tuesday, 30 July 2024 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM
6 EU/BBVA	Tuesday, 6 August 2023 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM
7 EU/BBVA	Tuesday, 13 August 2023 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM
8 EU	Tuesday, 20 August 2023 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM

Structure

The ELITE Program's Leadership and Entrepreneurship Training Series is meticulously organized into a multi-week format, with each week dedicated to a distinct phase of the entrepreneurial journey. The program's structure is built around weekly interactive sessions, pitch presentations, and networking events, all designed to facilitate a comprehensive learning experience. Each session runs from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, with planned breaks and debriefs to ensure continuous engagement and reflection. The series is delivered in close collaboration with the Black Business Ventures Association (BBVA) and Edmonton Unlimited, emphasizing the creation of a strong community among participants. This structured approach not only provides participants with a clear progression through the entrepreneurial journey—from ideation and customer discovery to product management and business model execution—but also ensures consistent interaction with industry experts and peers, fostering valuable connections and collaborative learning.

Delivery

The ELITE Program's Leadership and Entrepreneurship Training Series is meticulously structured to ensure an immersive, supportive, and hands-on learning experience. The delivery method combines a mix of lectures, workshops, team-based projects, and one-on-one mentoring sessions. Lectures provide the theoretical underpinnings of entrepreneurship, while workshops offer participants the chance to apply these concepts in real-time. Participants are divided into small teams, each assigned a primary coach, with additional mentoring from facilitators, including industry experts from BBVA, Edmonton Unlimited, and other organizations. Team-based projects are a cornerstone of the program, fostering collaboration and the practical application of knowledge, with regular pitch sessions where participants present their progress and receive constructive feedback from peers and industry professionals. The curriculum emphasizes experiential learning, utilizing key resources like Thinkific and MIRO for assignments and collaboration. This iterative process of feedback and refinement ensures that by the end of the series, participants are well-prepared to launch their ventures, having been guided through various modules, including team building, idea generation, and customer discovery.

Table 3 outlines the assignments and deliverables for the Entrepreneurship Design Series, detailing the tasks and their respective due dates.

Table 3. Entrepreneurship Design Series Assignments and Deliverables

Assignment Number	Details and Description	Due Date
1 (EU) (Assigned in Week 2)	Customer Discovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct interviews with potential customers (8 B2B; 15 B2C) Use other customer discovery tools as determined with coach 	Week 4: Tuesday, July 23 rd

	Facilitator/Coach will analyze the data to validate desirability.	
2 (EU) (Assigned in Week 2)	Building, Testing and Presenting a Demo <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organize sprints with the team Validate class and features of prototype. Facilitator/Coach will assess prototypes and iteration of data.	Week 4: Tuesday, July 23 rd
3 (BBVA) (Assigned in Week 6)	Stress Test Business Viability (Using Fermi Estimate) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine minimum success criteria. Determine your revenue, retention, acquisition and referral assumptions Develop your customer factory and extract your financial projections.	Week 7: Tuesday, August 13 th
4 (EU) (Assigned in Week 6)	Construction and Presentation of Pitch Deck <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the audience for the pitch (investor or other). Develop style of pitch. Create a master deck to use for any occasion Judges will assess pitches and provide feedback	Week 8: Tuesday, August 20 nd

Evaluation

Introduction and Overview

In the first three years of the ELITE Entrepreneurship Design Series, an internal evaluation was conducted to gauge the impact of the program on its participants. The goals of implementing evaluation measures into the ELITE Entrepreneurship Design Series were to:

1. Assess the effectiveness of the curriculum in developing entrepreneurship skills.
2. Measure participants' confidence and ability to start and manage ventures.
3. Evaluate the relevance of the training to participants' future career goals.
4. Identify areas for program improvement based on participant feedback.
5. Track long-term outcomes, such as business creation and entrepreneurial success.
6. Understand the overall satisfaction of participants with the program's structure and support systems, including mentorship and resources provided.

The effectiveness of the Entrepreneurship Design Series was assessed using pre- and post-program surveys to measure participants' confidence in their entrepreneurial knowledge and problem-solving skills. Key performance indicators included the number of interns trained, the number of industry or government participants engaged as mentors or judges, and the number of major events hosted. The

success of the series was also evaluated based on feedback from participants, with 80% of interns expected to report increased confidence in their problem-solving skills and preparedness for the workforce.

A complete outline of the 2024 survey is provided in Appendix C of the report.

2023 Main results

The 2023 ELITE Program's intern demographics reflect diversity in gender, with a near-equal split between female (49%) and male (46%) participants. A majority (56%) were born in Canada, and 59% had lived in Canada for over 10 years. Most interns (87%) identified as Black or of African descent, and 76% were 20 years old or younger. Over 90% were enrolled in STEM programs, with a strong belief (93%) that their education was relevant to their careers. The fields of study were varied, with a significant representation in Engineering (33%), Applied Sciences (23%), and Health Sciences (21%). Educational backgrounds ranged from high school graduates (56%) to some post-secondary education (23%).

Internship experience was a first for 59% of the participants, and 95% were working in a team setting for the first time. Most internships were with established corporations (70%), and more than half of the interns (54%) reported living comfortably. Communication skills, such as audience consideration (67%), active listening (59%), and clear visual communication (56%), were commonly demonstrated during their internships. Additionally, 72% of interns expressed moderate to high confidence in their job mastery, while 57% believed their education prepared them well for future careers.

Entrepreneurial aspirations were high, with 80% of interns willing to start a new venture, though only 36% rated their ability to do so as above average. The primary skills interns hoped to gain included attention to detail (72%), flexibility (67%), and interpersonal skills (62%). Despite limited prior entrepreneurship experience (85%), many interns developed crucial skills in business plan development (78%), financial planning (72%), and product design (63%) through the program. Post-program, 66% of interns had launched ventures, and 88% were inspired to pursue future ideas.

The results showed that communication skills such as using a confident voice (84%), active listening (72%), and reviewing written communication (66%) were the top skills demonstrated during the internship. In the entrepreneurship training program, participants reported gaining critical skills like business plan development (78%), financial plan development (72%), and product or service design (63%). Additionally, 56% of interns enrolled in another entrepreneurship program after ELITE, with 88% expressing that the program sparked an idea they could pursue, and 66% went on to start a venture post-program.

The evaluation also revealed that 67% of interns experienced a high to significant increase in their entrepreneurial abilities, with 44% likely to use the knowledge acquired to start a business. Furthermore, 59% of interns reported an increase in their willingness to engage in entrepreneurship, with 50% noting that the program's time allocation to entrepreneurship had a high or transformative impact on their entrepreneurial confidence. Personal financial literacy improved as well, with 47% reporting significant

to complete transformation in their financial knowledge, and 44% saw similar improvements in business finance management.

The program's curriculum on financial literacy was highly valued, with budgeting (81%), setting financial goals (72%), and managing the cost of living (69%) ranking as the most useful subjects. Following the program, 78% of interns continued to pay for tools introduced during the program, and 50% used these tools for tasks outside of the program while 81% see themselves using the tools provided for other tasks not carried out in the program. Satisfaction with the program was high, with 72% of interns reporting great satisfaction with coaches and mentors, followed by facilitators (59%) and activities (53%). Financial compensation also played a role, with 40% stating that it significantly impacted their commitment to the program.

Future Directions

Feedback and Recommendations

Future directions for the series include continued expansion to reach more Black youth across Alberta, incorporation of additional training on budget preparation, analysis, and balancing, and the potential collaboration with organizations like JA Southern Alberta for financial literacy training. The program also seeks to sustain long-term partnerships with entities like StartUp Edmonton, FSC, and eHUB at the University of Alberta to continue supporting Black youth in entrepreneurship beyond the duration of the ISEE Program funding.

Case Study 3 - Overview of the Wellness and Coaching Series

Introduction

The ELITE Wellness and Coaching series is a component of the holistic, three-tiered approach of the Experiential Learning in Innovation, Technology, and Entrepreneurship (ELITE) Program for Black youth at the University of Alberta (Mbiattem et al., 2021). The three-tiered program (<https://www.eliteprogram.ca/>) is designed to create opportunities for Black youth (ages 15 to 22) to access experiential learning, work-integrated training, and entrepreneurship training related to careers in STEM while acquiring wellness-enhancing skills.

The Wellness and Coaching series (W&CS) aims to provide Black youth with mental health knowledge and skills for building their capacity and enhancing resiliency as they navigate transitions in academic and professional life (Mbiattem et al., 2021). A health promotion approach is essential, considering Black youths' critical challenges accessing mental health services. Furthermore, incorporating wellness support within an internship program is unique as it ensures Black youth have access to mental health resources in a safe and supportive environment and feel empowered to take care of their mental health and well-being.

In 2022, the ELITE Program for Black youth was rolled out to Carleton University, which is currently considered a branch of ELITE. Carleton students continued to participate in the program in 2023 and 2024, with 1-3 students joining existing W&CS sessions each year. Program support and data analysis for the Carleton rollout are fulfilled by the University of Alberta's Wellness and Coaching Unit.

Why is Mental Wellness Important for Black Youth?

Despite Canada's promise of multiculturalism, Black Canadians of all ages face racism and microaggressions on a regular and repeated basis (Mullings et al., 2016; Cénat et al., 2021; Kogan et al., 2022). These instances of racism can have the same long-term mental health impact as severe trauma (Jones et al., 2022). In addition, almost half of the Black population in Canada (over 600,000 individuals) are immigrants, who face particular mental health challenges as they navigate acculturation, familial adjustment, and unfamiliar health, education, and legal systems (Statistics Canada, 2019). Both of these considerations would indicate that Black Canadians have an especially serious need for opportunities to increase coping skills and access to mental health services. However, research also demonstrates that Black Canadians face disproportionate challenges in accessing mental health care (Fante-Coleman & Jackson-Best, 2020). These challenges may be systemic (poor access to practitioners, financial barriers), practitioner-related (racism and discrimination, inadequate knowledge to provide culturally competent care) or personal barriers (internalized stigma, stigma from community, Fante-Coleman & Jackson-Best, 2020). Taken together, this context provides a rationale for the necessity of programs which seek to provide mental health coaching and education to Black Canadians.

Why add a Wellness Component to an Internship Program?

Due to the above barriers faced by Black youth, experiential programs which centre a wellness element have been posited to be more helpful than programs which focus exclusively on professional development (Dinizulu et al., 2024). Previous research has demonstrated the effectiveness of community-based wellness education on the mental wellness of Black Youth (Dinizulu et al., 2024; Louder et al., 2023; Sheehan et al., 2022; Woods-Jaeger et al., 2024). For example, Dinizulu et al. (2024) examined the feasibility and acceptability of a social justice infused learning program to promote adolescent Black health in Chicago. Similarly to the W&CS, they used a series of quantitative scales to measure students' motivation, belongingness, and community responsibility, as well as conducting focus groups with the youth at post. They found that the program created both a sense of inclusion and agency in their participants, as well as facilitating goal-setting, social-emotional regulation, and problem-solving skills. Research on similar interventions has found similar results (Louder et al., 2023; Sheehan et al., 2022; Woods-Jaeger et al., 2024).

Context

The W&CS is embedded within the ELITE Program. Once students apply and are accepted into the program, ELITE helps them secure an internship host that aligns with their career interests and future goals. Paid internships include involvement in projects with university researchers, for-profit industry stakeholders, and government agencies, ranging from 8 to 16 weeks. During this period, all interns participate in leadership and entrepreneur training in addition to the Wellness Series, which aims to enhance resiliency and cultivate strategies for managing and thriving in a workplace environment.

Internship hosts are notified of mandatory participation in the Wellness Series component of the program to reduce the likelihood of interns experiencing any barriers to participation. With all sessions being hosted remotely (through Zoom) from 2021-2024, participants can join from a private location at their internship or leave the office/workplace to participate from a location that provides a sense of security and comfort.

Short-Term Outcomes

The short-term outcomes for the ELITE Wellness and Coaching Series include:

- Creating a safe place for students to share about and debrief from their internship experiences.
- Creating an engaging learning environment that encourages mental health and wellness literacy and offers opportunities to discuss and ask questions.
- Increasing mental health knowledge and awareness through the duration of the series.
- Broadening and deepening students' understanding of unique mental health challenges in workplace contexts.
- Increasing mental health-supporting skills and coping strategies through the duration of the series.
- Broadening and deepening students' "toolkits" for maintaining mental health in workplace contexts.
- Enhancing students' understanding of the benefits of wellness goal-setting.

- Enhancing students' ability to set measurable, attainable goals in the context of a workplace setting.
- Expanding students' understanding of hope-building and the importance of hope in cultivating a sustainable, satisfying career.

Long-Term Outcomes

The long-term outcomes for the ELITE Wellness and Coaching Series include:

- Cultivating a sense of ongoing curiosity about strategies to enhance personal mental health in workplace contexts.
- Building students' wellness and mental health knowledge and skill foundation to a point where it can be applied across various workplace contexts.
- Bolstering students' confidence in their ability to set wellness goals in various workplace contexts.
- Building students' confidence in their ability to access mental health services and supports.

Module Development

Original Curriculum

The curriculum for the wellness modules was decided upon and developed with topics relevant to Black youth (Mbiattem et al., 2021). After reviewing relevant research on Black youth's mental health and with input from the Advisory Committee, topics were selected. In the spring of 2021, a draft curriculum was subsequently developed for the series, and modules were updated back on feedback from the Advisory Committee, group members, and observations made during the groups.

Tables 4 and 5 list the module titles for the two cohorts.

Table 4. Undergraduate (ELITE Associates) Modules

Module 1	Group Development and Orientation to Wellness
Module 2	Exploring Everyday Stressors and Resilience-building through Stress Management
Module 3	Harnessing the Power of Emotions and the Body
Module 4	Harnessing the Power of the Mind
Module 5	Beyond the Blues: Understanding Anxiety and Depression
Module 6	Addressing Anti-Black Racism and Microaggressions
Module 7	Building Healthy Relationships
Module 8	Advocating for Self and Others; and Group Closure

Table 5. High School (ELITE Assistants) Modules

Module 1	Group Development and Orientation to Wellness
Module 2	Strengthening the Body-Mind connection by Harnessing the Power of Emotions, Cognitions, and the Body
Module 3	Beyond the Blues: Understanding Anxiety and Depression
Module 4	Addressing Anti-Black Racism/Microaggressions and Advocating for Self and Others
Module 5	Building Healthy Relationships; and Group Closure

Updates

The original content, developed in 2021, was modified for later cohorts. The major outcomes of each module remain the same, although the time allocated for specific discussions and focus allocated to certain activities has been revised. Material has also been updated to better reflect the needs of each cohort; for example, by adding a discussion on minority stress in Associates Module 2, including additional emotional regulation strategies in Associates Module 3, and expanding discussions on systemic racism in Associates Module 6. These updates were informed by the expertise of the Wellness Coaches, the Program Lead, and the Wellness Assistant. Feedback from the previous cohort, which cited the length of modules (some sessions were content heavy with minimal time for interaction) and content focus (individuals wanted to learn more about anti-Black racism), also informed content updates (Mohamed & Yohani, 2021).

Implementation

Structure

University of Alberta

Prior to 2024, undergraduate students (referred to as “ELITE Associates”) were divided into morning and afternoon groups, and a total of eight sessions were delivered biweekly between the months of May and August. In 2024, the ELITE Program supported fewer interns; as a result, facilitators ran only one morning group, and sessions were modified from biweekly to once per week.

In 2022, high school students (referred to as “ELITE Assistants”) were also divided into morning and afternoon groups, and a total of five sessions were delivered biweekly between mid-July to mid-August. In 2023 and 2024, as with the 2024 Associates, facilitators ran only one morning group, and sessions were modified from biweekly. During the planning phase of module development in the spring of 2021, eight sessions were developed for the ELITE Associates compared to five for the ELITE Assistants because they were involved with the ELITE Program for a more extended period (16 weeks) than the ELITE Assistants (8 weeks) (Mbiatem et al., 2021).

In 2024, one in-person session was introduced for the interns. This took place in the Anti-Black Racism/Microaggressions session for each group (Module 6 for Associates and Module 4 for Assistants). Feedback for this in-person session was overwhelmingly positive.

Carleton University

Undergraduate Carleton students (also referred to as “ELITE Associates”) followed the same schedule as above.

Delivery

The Wellness and Coaching series is delivered in a group format, facilitated by a Wellness Coach, who is a mental health professional registered with a governing body or in the process of completing a graduate (Master’s or Doctoral) degree in counselling psychology or related fields. In 2023 and 2024, sessions were also supported by a co-facilitator who took the lead in moderating breakout room discussions and ran the 1/1 coaching component. Group planning, rollout, and development are overseen by a Program Lead (Dr. Sophie Yohani), a Registered Psychologist and Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. A Research Assistant (McKenna Gawalko in 2022, Kutay Sacak in 2023/2024) supports the Coaches and Program Lead with program delivery, research, and evaluation.

Following formal acceptance into the program, a welcome letter is sent to interns to introduce them to the Wellness and Coaching series and prepare them for the first days of the groups. The letter contains an overview of the processes, Zoom links to access the groups, and contact information for the Coach (Mbiatem et al., 2021).

During the first session, participants have an opportunity to meet their Wellness Coach and each other, and guidelines for creating a “safe space” are discussed. Each group begins with a check-in and closes with a check-out exercise. Check-ins are an opportunity for self-reflection and a safe space for group members to “hold” (witness and validate) each other’s experiences. Check-outs are a summary of new content and an overview of the next module. Small group activities and discussions through breakout rooms allow participants to engage directly with each other. Activities include the following (Mbiatem et al., 2021):

- **Self-awareness and mindfulness exercises:** Mindfulness practices are facilitated through grounding exercises, enhancing embodiment of experiences and resources, and ending the groups on a positive tone of relaxation.
- **Experiential exercises:** Practice scenarios in dyads and small groups to experience skills learned (Socratic line of questioning, assertiveness skills) and experience mind-body connection (noticing and tracking emotions, cognitions and bodily responses).
- **Homework activities:** Follow-up exercises (thought tracking, grounding exercises, mindfulness practice, and breathing exercises) are encouraged to enhance the integration of skills further.
- **Resources:** Mental health resources and self-care exercises are shared with the groups. Group members will have access to module resources on e-Class.

One-to-one debrief sessions with the Wellness Counsellor are also provided on an as-requested basis.

Evaluation (Internal/Program Run)

Introduction

In the first three years of the W&CS, an internal evaluation was conducted to gauge the impact of the program on its participants. The goals of implementing evaluation measures into the Wellness and Coaching Series were to:

- Determine whether program content and delivery are associated with significantly increased mental health knowledge and skills.
- Determine whether the program content and delivery are associated with a significantly increased sense of hope.
- Test for a relationship between hope levels and wellness goal-setting intent and capability.

Internal evaluation results were analyzed yearly by research assistants, with the support of the Wellness Facilitator (and, in later years, Co-Facilitator). Results were used to help inform the subsequent year's delivery. In 2024, an external evaluation of all aspects of the ELITE Program, including the W&CS, is being conducted in lieu of an internal evaluation.

Evaluation Measures and Methods

In years where an internal evaluation occurs, the process is as follows:

All participants complete a Wellness Questionnaire (WQ) during the first and last sessions of the series (see Appendix B). The WQ participants complete during the first session is referred to as the "Pre-Wellness Questionnaire" and is the same as the WQ they complete during the last session, which is referred to as the "Post-Wellness Questionnaire". The WQ consists of three sections. The first section is related to participants' knowledge and application of curriculum, the second section is a hope measure, and the last section includes open-ended questions about goal-setting. The questionnaire is delivered across time to assess participants' knowledge and ability to apply the skills they have learned throughout the series. Note that only the Pre-Wellness Questionnaire is in the appendix, as the Post-Wellness Questionnaire is identical. In past years, we have found it helpful to deliver these questionnaires as part of sessions, accounting for around 20 minutes in the first and final weeks of the program. This ensures maximum participation and reduces the need to follow up with students.

Upon completing the Wellness and Coaching Series, ELITE Program Associates and Assistants are invited to engage in voluntary semi-structured exit interviews (Mohamed & Yohani, 2021; see Appendix H). In these interviews, participants offer holistic feedback on the program's delivery, including in-depth feedback on the program length, session frequency, program responsiveness to wellness, and the impacts of COVID-19. Exit interviews are voluntary, and incentives are offered to participants in the form of a \$25 Chapters gift card. In previous years, we have had anywhere from seven participants to nearly full participation (22 participants).

Hope in a Work Context

Hope is an essential trait for individuals in various workplace settings, where stressors and challenges are frequent and inevitable and can largely impact career trajectories, and the pursuit and attainment of meaningful work (Juntunen & Wettersten, 2006). A meta-analysis conducted by Reichard et al. (2013) found that hope has a strong relationship with employee self-rated performance and well-being. Specifically, hopeful employees report higher job satisfaction, career commitment, and less stress than their less hopeful counterparts.

For the Wellness and Coaching series, we refer to hope as it relates to Snyder et al.'s (1991) definition. The authors described the ability of an individual to imagine their future and demonstrate confidence in their ability to achieve it as two fundamental components of hope (Snyder et al., 1991). They argue that hope is an enduring disposition that has relatively insignificant outside influence, unlike other researchers who emphasize relational factors (Herth, 1992; Miller & Powers, 1988). Snyder et al. (1991) highlighted *agency* and *pathways* as the two main factors associated with hope. On the one hand, *agency* is related to goal-directed determination and self-efficacy: the expectation of performance in a particular context. On the other hand, *pathways* involve the planning required to meet goals, which can elicit goal-directed behaviours. Snyder et al. suggested that both components are necessary to describe hope, and that they interact in a complex, reciprocal fashion.

For the program's pilot in 2021, the Wellness and Coaching unit embedded Snyder et al.'s (1991) *Adult Trait Hope Scale* into the second section of the WQ. For 2022, the unit decided to replace this scale with Juntunen and Wettersten's (2006) *Work Hope Scale*, which is based on Snyder's Hope Theory but is tailored to assess hope levels in workplace contexts. Using a work-specific measure of hope aligned with the ELITE Program's overarching goal of enhancing Black youth's career journeys. In 2023, we replaced these two scales with Snyder et al.'s *State Hope Scale (1996)*. This scale is better suited to capturing pre- and post- program changes in hope, and it was not as lengthy as the above two scales, thus reducing barriers to student participation. This same scale was used in 2024.

Evaluation Reflections

Previous evaluations generally reveal significant increases across all wellness domains and minor increases in the area of hope. The most substantial increases in both the undergraduate and high school cohorts are generally observed in the areas of identifying and addressing anti-Black racism and microaggressions, stress management, and emotion recognition and regulation. The most common request from students in 2024 was an addition of more in-person sessions: this reflects the success of this year's in-person session and suggests opportunities for additional in-person modules in the future.

Chapter 4: External Evaluation Report by Malatest

Executive Summary of the Evaluation Report

The Future Skills Centre has funded the Experiential Learning in Innovation, Technology, and Entrepreneurship (ELITE) Program for Black Youth since 2021 to increase job readiness of Black youth for careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) under the thematic priority of inclusive economy. The ELITE Program nurtures their talents through paid internships, developing entrepreneurial skills and supporting their wellness as individuals.

R. A. Malatest & Associates conducted an independent rapid evaluation of the project to assess the extent to which project objectives were met and, where possible, to assess the impact of project activities on the short-term outcomes associated with the project. This evaluation collected data through a survey of participants, and semi-structured interviews of participants, staff, Steering Council members, and program partners. This document summarizes the evaluation's design, methods, results and implications.

Key Findings

Overall, the ELITE Program is achieving many of its intended outcomes, and is demonstrating progress on others. Almost all ELITE Program participants interviewed and surveyed remain interested in STEM careers (95% of survey respondents) and some have taken academic and career steps towards that end. Participants agree that the holistic approach of incorporating paid internships, the Entrepreneurship Design Series and the Wellness and Coaching Series has enhanced their job readiness and growth as individuals. The most useful skill development reported by participants was learning how to network (88% of survey respondents). The program is well on its way to improving labour market outcomes for Black youth.

In terms of inclusion, the program is offered to a diverse group of Black youth, though the participation of people with disabilities is lower than the general population. Some consideration of why newcomers seem to be less inclined to apply for STEM jobs and further internships should be made. The ELITE Program is delivered by Black professionals, who act as advocates, mentors, and role models, and allow for safe discussions around mental health.

Adapting the program each year, based on internal feedback loops, effectively serves student needs and should be viewed as an example of effective program planning for other organizations working on similar projects.

Recommendations

To ensure that the ELITE Program is as inclusive as possible and to ensure that the program tracks its impact on participants, the ELITE Program should:

- Consider whether there are any barriers for newcomers to progress within STEM employment and internships.

- Consider whether there are any barriers for people with physical, mental, and learning disabilities to participate in the program.
- Gather data about when participants first became interested in a STEM career (whether it was through the ELITE Program or prior). Socio-economic status and family history of university education would also be relevant data to determine if the program is reaching Black youth who face multiple barriers.
- Track participants' career journeys in a longitudinal study as part of the program's ongoing activities.
- Involve internship hosts in the evaluation process to provide a more comprehensive understanding of Black youth's transition into the labour market.

1. Project Objectives, Activities and Anticipated Outcomes

The Experiential Learning in Innovation, Technology, and Entrepreneurship (ELITE) Program aims to support Black Youth by building the hands-on skills, knowledge, and resilience needed to chart pathways to careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Specifically, the program:

- Enhances technical skills,
- Addresses specific challenges of racism faced by Black and racialized youth and maintaining wellness in a holistic way, and
- Hosts a training platform to create an entrepreneurial mindset in Black youth.

1.1 Activities

The ELITE Program for Black Youth began in 2021 and has run for four consecutive summers. Each year the program welcomes two cohorts of participants: high school students (assistants) and university undergraduate students (associates).

Table 6. Enrollment in the ELITE Program for Black Youth

	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total*
Assistants (High School students)	21	14	20	15	79
Associates (Undergraduate students)	18	31	31	13	93
Total Enrollment	39	45	51	28	163

*Some individuals participated in more than one year.

The program developed these youth through three sets of activities:

- **Hands-on Work-Integrated Training:** Paid experiential work internships that provide nuanced targeted training to students in their STEM fields of interest.
- **Entrepreneurship Design Series:** A series of workshops, pitch presentations, and group activities that provide training in entrepreneurship, financing, leadership, teamwork, and communication skills.
- **Wellness and Coaching Series:** A series of group meetings led by a registered psychologist and facilitated by graduate counselling students that involve presentations, group activities, and coaching on building mental health and wellness-enhancing knowledge and skills.

1.2 Rationale

As FSC mentions in their 2024-2025 thematic focus area of inclusive economy, Black youth face higher unemployment rates, are overrepresented in lower paying jobs, and earn lower earnings than their non-Black peers. Black Canadians are also noticeably underrepresented among professionals in high wage and emerging technology careers (such as AI, manufacturing, quantum technologies, regenerative

medicine and renewable energy systems) and are less likely to be entrepreneurial innovators. Together these trends form barriers to their upward socio-economic mobility and that of their communities. Barriers to Black participation in high-technology professions and in entrepreneurship are associated with higher levels of pursuit of opportunities in less lucrative sectors, lack of mentorship and advocacy, reduced financial literacy and deficiencies in awareness of system supports.¹

The media have picked upon these trends. The media has reported on the need to open doors to Black Youth into STEM careers. One article reported that many Black Youth feel isolated and discouraged in school because they lack Black teachers and mentors. Organizations such as the Canadian Black Scientists Network are working to raise awareness of the problem by analyzing data from Statistics Canada and relating the experiences of Black students.²

The education system is also starting to respond. A number of universities have implemented STEM programs for Black youth, but they are all after-school type programs for kindergarten to high-school students (York University, University of Waterloo, Queen's University, University of Northern British Columbia). None of these incorporate a paid internship model.

This project addresses barriers to Black youth's entry into high-paying STEM careers by providing experiential training in STEM skills, by fostering professionalism, by nurturing interpersonal relationship skills, and by developing awareness of mental health strategies and resources. Further, it aims to provide participants with the job experience and networks required to open doors to STEM careers. The goal is to increase the number of Black youth pursuing STEM fields in university and acquiring high-paying jobs after graduating.

1.3 Logic Model

The ELITE Program supports Black youth on building hands-on skills, knowledge, and resilience through experiential learning and work-integrated training for STEM-related careers. The program targets Black youth between 15 and 22 (in particular, high school, college and university students). Participants receive paid internships ranging from 8 to 16 weeks, leadership and entrepreneur training, and mental health supports. The ELITE Program's logic model, which can be found in Appendix I, describes the program's inputs, activities, outputs, and anticipated outcomes. Although the logic model specifies its intended short-term and long-term outcomes, only short-term outcomes are evaluated in this report. Long-term outcomes need more time to come to fruition and could be measured during a later evaluation.

2. Methods

The project involved a rapid evaluation to assess the extent to which project objectives were met and, where possible, to assess the impact of project activities on the longer-term outcomes associated with the project. The evaluation:

¹ (Hancock, 2021)

² (Wong, 2022) See also (The State of Black Canadians in STEM, 2022) and (Danby, 2024)

- Assessed the effectiveness of the supports provided to Black youth through the ELITE Program.
- Incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methods and included the collection of benchmarking data where possible.
- Collected data in September and October of 2024.
- Summarized the findings into this report. When qualitative data is reported without specific numbers, ‘most’ refers to over 50%, ‘some’ refers to 25-50%, ‘a few’ refers to under 25%.

2.1 Key Evaluation Questions

Eight key evaluation questions were developed in collaboration with ELITE Program to respond to Future Skills Centre’s three thematic priority and focus area questions for Black youth. These questions formed the basis for survey and interview questions, as well as the results summarized in this report.

What works, for whom and in what context to improve labour market outcomes for Black youth?

- What skills, knowledge, resources, and strengths obtained during the ELITE Program were helpful for managing the challenges encountered during the transition to work life?
- What additional skills, knowledge, resources, and strengths can make transition to work life easier?
- How does the experience obtained through the ELITE Program affect Black youths’ career pursuit over the years after completing the Program?
- How have the targeted wrap-around activities offered by the ELITE Program supported youths’ transition to work life and the workforce?

What works, for whom and in what context to address anti-Black racism in workplaces and skills and training organizations?

- What are some of the challenges for Black youth seeking STEM careers during their transition to work life and the workforce (i.e., employment search, early years of work experience)?
- What is unique about the design and execution of the ELITE Program that makes it effective in supporting Black youth in overcoming these challenges?

How do we mobilize knowledge about what works to improve labour market outcomes for Black youth and to address anti-Black racism in workplaces and skills and training organizations?

- What recommendations for improving support programs for Black youth emerge from evaluating the ELITE Program?
- What lessons learned from the ELITE Program can be shared to improve similar programs?

2.2 Lines of Evidence

The evaluation answers these questions through multiple lines of evidence, including a survey of program participants, interviews with program participants, and interviews with ELITE Program staff, its Steering Council and its partners (see Table 7). Together these lines of evidence gathered benchmarking

data for the program and to inform recommendations for improving it. This information will be assessed for its contribution to FSC's thematic priorities of labour market outcomes for Black youth and anti-Black racism in the workplace and skills and training organizations. The lines of evidence are summarized below.

Table 7: Participants and Response Rate by Line of Evidence

	Job Readiness Survey	Participant Interviews	Staff and Partner Interviews
Participated	46	16	6
Invited	150	46	10
Response Rate	31%	35%	60%

Job Readiness Survey (developed by the ELITE Program and Malatest, administered by Malatest)

- **Respondents:** 46 individuals who participated in the ELITE Program for Black Youth sometime during 2021-2024 completed the survey.
- **Information collected:** Survey questions focused on challenges and resources in pursuing STEM careers for Black youth, skills and knowledge acquisition through the ELITE Program, and perceived job-readiness after completion of the program. (See questionnaire available in Appendix J).
- **Sampling:** Malatest provided Malatest-hosted registration and consent form links to the ELITE Program to distribute to current and past participants of the program. In total, 150 individuals were invited to take the survey (for a gross response rate of 31%). Those that consented to participate were subsequently provided with an invitation email that contained a link to access the online questionnaire. The resulting 46 respondents fairly represent participation by year and group. They may slightly overrepresent more recent years, for instance 24% of respondents participated in 2024, compared to 17% of participants (See Table 8).

Table 8. Survey Respondents by Participant Group and Year, Compared to Enrollment

Group	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total*	% of respondents	Response rate***
Assistants (high school students)	7	2	7	7	23	50%	33%
Associates (university students)	2	9	13	4	28	61%	30%
Total	9	11	20	11	46		
% of respondents**	20%	24%	43%	24%			

Response rate***	23%	24%	39%	39%	
-------------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	--

*5 respondents completed the ELITE Program as assistants and associates. In data discussed in this evaluation they are counted as Associates when a distinction is made.

**Sum of percentages exceeds 100% due to some respondents participating in more than one year.

***Proportion of total respondents from total participants (see Table 6).

Participant interviews (developed by the ELITE Program and Malatest, administered by Malatest)

- **Respondents:** 16 individuals who participated in the ELITE Program for Black Youth sometime during 2021-2024, and who had completed the Job Readiness survey, completed the interview.
- **Information collected:** Interview questions focused on deeper insights into challenges and resources in pursuing STEM careers, skills and knowledge acquisition through the ELITE Program and perceived job-readiness after completion of the program. (See interview guide available in Appendix K).
- **Sampling:** The sampling strategy was the same as for the survey above. After **completing** the job readiness survey, participants were asked if they would be willing to be part of the interview process. Those who answered “yes” were invited to an interview. 21 survey respondents were invited to an interview. The 16 respondents accurately represent participation by year, but seem to overrepresent assistants. 63% of interview respondents were assistants, versus 48% of participants (See Table 9).

Table 9. Interview Participants by Participant Group and Year, Compared to Enrollment

Group	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total*	% of respondents	Response rate***
Assistants (high school students)	4	2	3	1	10	63%	14%
Associates (university students)	0	2	2	3	7	44%	8%
Total	4	4	5	4	16		
% of respondents**	25%	25%	31%	25%			
Response rate***	10%	9%	10%	14%			

*1 participant completed the ELITE Program as an assistant and as an associate.

**Sum of percentages exceeds 100% due to some respondents participating in more than one year.

***Proportion of total respondents from total participants (see Table 6).

ELITE Program staff and/or partner interviews (administered by Malatest)

- **Respondents:** 6 staff or partners in the delivery of the ELITE Program completed the interview (3 staff, 1 member of the Steering Council and 2 partners).
- **Information collected:** Interview questions focused on the lessons learned during the development and implementation of the ELITE Program. (See interview guide available in Appendix L). This information contributed to the understanding of FSC's thematic priority of mobilizing knowledge about what works to improve labour market outcomes for Black youth and address anti-Black racism in workplaces and skills and training organizations.
- **Sampling:** The ELITE Program identified ten points of contact within the program (such as program coordinators or managers that address participant issues) and partner organizations who were invited to participate in an interview (7 staff and 3 partners).

How the lines of evidence were designed to answer the various key evaluation questions is summarized in the evaluation matrix (available in Appendix M).

2.3 Evaluating Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Reconciliation

The ELITE Program aims to support socio-economic upward mobility of Black Canadian youth, and thus, equity, diversity, inclusion and reconciliation (EDI&R) is interwoven into project objectives. While acknowledging this foundational perspective, the evaluation therefore examined the degree to which other EDI&R factors were being reflected in the work and impacts of the program, such as gender, place of birth, and disability. Because the ELITE Program targets Black youth, the evaluation did not focus on reconciliation and other Indigenous concerns.

2.4 Research Ethics

An ethical approval was obtained from the University of Alberta's Research Ethics Board prior to commencing the evaluation research. All materials were translated into French. French-speaking youth were given the option to participate in either English or French, though none took up the French option. The qualitative measures employed in the evaluation allowed participants to explain their experiences and perspectives in their own words. Participants in both surveys and interviews participated anonymously.

In establishing informed consent, the evaluation made sure to implement leading practices in conducting ethical research, by:

- Explaining to study participants that their participation is voluntary, and they could skip any questions they felt uncomfortable answering,
- Explaining to study participants how their data will be collected and how their privacy will be protected,
- Providing access to Malatest's privacy policy which informs participants of their right to have their data removed if they choose to withdraw from the study.

2.5 Limitations

A few limitations were experienced during this evaluation. Malatest took what actions were available to mitigate these limitations and remains confident in the strength of the evaluation. However, the following should be kept in mind when interpreting the evaluation findings.

- **Timelines.** The evaluation faced limitations due to time constraints, given its rapid evaluation nature. However, by offering a small incentive of a \$25 gift card for participation, sufficient individuals volunteered to participate in surveys and interviews in a short period of time.
- **Stakeholder engagement.** Despite best efforts, not all stakeholders invited to provide feedback did so. The participant survey was open for nine weeks. As detailed in the lines of evidence, 150 participants were invited and 46 participated (31% participation rate). Of those 46 participants, 16 were interviewed (35% interview rate). Ten staff and partners were invited to be interviewed: six participated (60% participation rate). The sample of staff and partners provided by the ELITE Program did not include internship hosts, thus their input is not included in this evaluation.
- **Participant stage of life:** As a youth-oriented program, many participants are focused on their education. As such, some participants are not currently pursuing STEM jobs, limiting the data gathered on the labour market outcomes for Black youth. This evaluation can only report on participants' perception of their job-readiness for the future.
- **Recency:** Individuals who responded to the survey and those who were interviewed participated in the ELITE Program in a range of dates from 2021-2024. Those who participated in the earlier years may have a reduced recollection of their experience than those for whom the experience was more recent.
- **Selection bias.** Program staff and participants that are already engaged and invested in the ELITE Program's activities are likely to hold positive views about the program. Additionally, students choosing to participate in the ELITE Program may have already been committed to a STEM career, thus limiting the degree to which the program introduced STEM career options to Black youth.
- **Evaluators' ethnicity:** Interviewer and evaluators on this project were not people of colour. This could have limited the comfort of interviewees in discussing issues around anti-Black racism and microaggressions. However, the interviewer was trained in EDI&R methods and experienced in their sensitivities.

3. Findings and Analysis

The ELITE Program for Black Youth is building participants' job readiness through improved STEM knowledge, skills and experience. An internal feedback system keeps the program relevant and the Black leadership provides essential support for Black youth. The wrap-around activities facilitate effective business and wellness experiences. The impacts of the ELITE Program could be enhanced by considering

the experiences of new Canadians, the low participation of people with disabilities and collecting more robust outcome data.

3.1 Findings around Program Development

Interviews with ELITE Program staff and partners considered the implementation of the program. The fruit of these discussions can be seen in the lessons learned (below) and the suggestions found in Section 4.1. Additionally, the ELITE Program team has been proactive in conducting annual learning exercises. As a way of gauging effectiveness, they have collected pre- and post-program data from participants for the Entrepreneurship Design Series, the Wellness and Coaching Series and the program in general. Based on the results of these exercises, which included both quantitative surveys and semi-structured qualitative interviews, the ELITE Program team adjusted the program, including making the offer more inclusive. To this end they:

- Added proactive recruitment in Francophone high schools to increase the linguistic diversity of the participants.
- Added an additional Black facilitator to the Entrepreneurship Design Series to provide more Black role models.
- Added a Black male facilitator to the Wellness and Coaching Series to provide a male voice to Black mental health and wellness.

The project also streamlined the Entrepreneurship Design Series workshops and incorporated financial literacy training to emphasize applying new skills in practical situations.

In addition to these findings, interviews with ELITE Program staff and partners unveiled a number of lessons learned in the implementation of the ELITE Program that could be beneficial for other job-readiness projects.

3.1.1 Internal Feedback Loops Add Program Flexibility

Adapting the program each year based on internal feedback loops enhances the Program to effectively serve student needs.

The first lesson learned was the importance of flexibility in serving students and meeting their needs. For the ELITE Program this meant making adjustments to the program each year it was offered based on internal learning exercises. This built-in feedback function worked well when starting small with a defined target group and mandate; with success, one could then scale up, as the ELITE Program did with the addition of the Carleton University program (not under evaluation here).

3.1.2 Being Black-led Enhances Outcomes

Developing the program as a Black-led initiative ensures appropriate and informed youth training.

An additional lesson staff emphasized is that the success of the ELITE Program for Black Youth was tied to the development of the program within, by and for the Black community. As such, they stated that

success was driven by a project led by Black professionals within STEM, who hired other professionals of colour to run the program. This means that those who are running the program are personally aware of the issues facing Black youth and can themselves act as role models, advocates, and mentors. The Wellness and Coaching Series that provided a culturally adapted perspective on wellness was mentioned as particularly important as racism and microaggressions were cited as having a large impact on Black youth's mental health and these youth had few other mental health resources.

"Within the Black community, mental health is still kind of taboo. It is not something that people want to talk about or want to show. Having us come and teach them about that, that asking for help is not bad, helped them to frame it in a different way." (ELITE Program staff member)

3.2 Summary of Program Impacts and Outcomes

A summary assessment of whether the ELITE Program has obtained its objectives is presented in **Error! Not a valid bookmark self-reference.** 10 below.³ More details on short-term impacts and outcomes are discussed in the subsequent subsections.

Table 10. Summary of Outcomes

Intended Outcomes for Participants	Actual Outcomes for Participants	Assessment
1. Improved STEM-related knowledge and skills through work-integrated learning	Almost all participants surveyed and interviewed agreed that the ELITE Program improved their leadership, teamwork, communication and technical skills, as well as their career and self-development and professionalism.	Achieved
2. Improved professional networks	Most participants surveyed and interviewed agreed that the ELITE Program helped to grow their professional networks.	Achieved
3. Increased job readiness	Almost all participants surveyed, and most participants interviewed agreed that the ELITE Program internship experience made them more job ready.	Achieved
4. Improved entrepreneurial and leadership skills	Most participants surveyed and interviewed agreed that the Entrepreneurship Design Series enhanced their business skills and knowledge. A few have already started a business venture after participation in the ELITE Program.	Achieved

³ Long-term outcomes are out of scope for this evaluation.

5. Increased mental health and wellness literacy	Participants largely agreed that the Wellness and Coaching Series helped them develop mental health supporting skills and coping strategies as well as giving them improved knowledge of how to access mental health supports.	Achieved
6. Improved ability to manage microaggressions	Some participants surveyed and interviewed agreed that the Wellness and Coaching Series improved their ability to manage microaggressions and anti-Black racism.	Partially Achieved
7. Increased knowledge of how to advocate for self and others	Most survey participants agreed that the Wellness and Coaching Series improved their knowledge of how to advocate for themselves and others.	Achieved

3.3 Impacts from Program Activities

Overall, participants appreciated the skills and knowledge gained through the program. The internship was most often cited as the most beneficial part of the program, though both the Entrepreneurship Design Series and the Wellness and Coaching Series were valued by participants to be beneficial to their job readiness as well. Slightly fewer participants indicated appreciation for the Wellness and Coaching Series than the Entrepreneurship Design series. Almost all participants were still interested in STEM careers. Interestingly, few saw racial or gender discriminating as one of the most relevant challenges to their career pursuits. Lack of career guidance was more concerning for these participants.

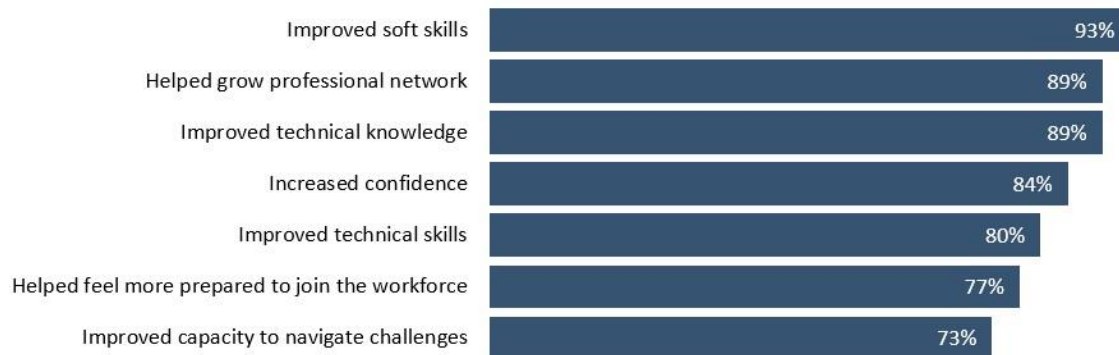
3.3.1 Internship

Most ELITE Program participants found the internship to be the most helpful aspect of the ELITE Program.

Both interview and survey participants answered that the internship was a catalyst to STEM careers. For interview participants, the internship taught the STEM research and lab skills that helped them advance. Some cherished the encouragement they received from their supervisors in developing their skills. Only one interview participant did not find the internship useful for their career goals as they did not have access to the lab due to their age as a minor.

The survey data supported the importance of the internship on technical skills. Fully 89% of respondents answered that the internship was helpful in developing their technical knowledge and skills (80%). Interestingly, even more respondents answered that the internship was helpful in improving their soft skills (93%) (as seen in Figure 5).

Figure 5: In what ways was the internship experience helpful?



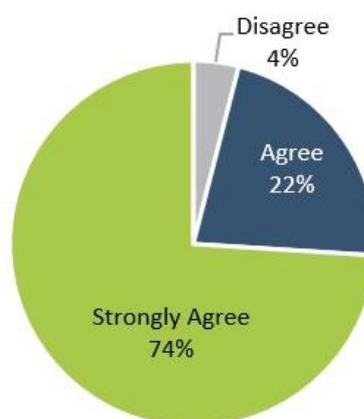
n=46

Percentages sum to >100% since respondents allowed multiple answers

Beyond skills development, some appreciated the benefits of adding an internship experience to their résumé. Survey data supported the finding that the benefits of the internship went beyond skills development, including 89% that answered that the internship helped grow their professional network, 84% that answered it increased their confidence, and 73% that answered it improved their capacity to navigate challenges.

As a result, 77% answered that the internship helped them feel more prepared to join the workforce. When asked directly, most survey respondents (96%) agreed that the internship experience made them more job ready (as seen in Figure 6 below).

Figure 6: The internship experience made me more job-ready



n = 46

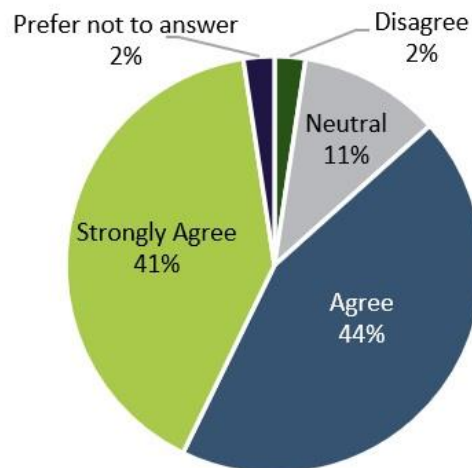
“The ELITE Program was really useful in just kickstarting my internship career, which hopefully will further lead me into a stronger professional career going on”
 (Associate, postsecondary intern).

3.3.2 Entrepreneurship Design Series

Most ELITE Program participants saw the Entrepreneurship Design Series as enhancing their business skills and knowledge

Learning to work in a diverse group and learning business skills such as financial management of a venture, doing a pitch, market research, and managing were indicated by interviewed participants as significant benefits of the Entrepreneurship Design Series. Only a few participants found the Entrepreneurship Design Series unhelpful as they were not interested in business.

Figure 7: The Entrepreneurship Design Series enhanced my business skills or knowledge



n=46

“The Entrepreneurship Design Series, before then I would consider myself not an entrepreneur. I did not want anything to do with this. But when I did the series, it definitely improved and opened that innovative part of me.” (Associate, postsecondary intern).

The Entrepreneurship Design Series was a success, as it enhanced the business skills for 85% of survey participants (as is displayed in Figure 7 above). Through the Entrepreneurial Design series, the skills survey participants most commonly gained were teamwork and collaboration skills, communication skills and leadership skills (all were selected by 82% of respondents) (as shown in Figure 8 below). Although fewer selected it, one in four (26%) were inspired to start an entrepreneurial venture.

Figure 8: Entrepreneurial Design Series benefits



n=46

Percentages sum to >100% since respondents allowed multiple answers

Most participants cited networking as the most helpful skill gained through the Entrepreneurship Design Series, some stated that it would have a lasting effect on their careers.

Interview participants indicated that networking with peers and STEM leaders had become less daunting, with some having built a sense of community within their networks. Many also talked about collaboration; the ELITE Program prepared them for STEM careers by teaching them how to contribute to a team and how to become more comfortable working with others. In particular, participants commonly mentioned the deepened skills and increased confidence in written and oral communication. Some specifically mentioned public speaking as an important skill developed. A few talked of developing interpersonal skills such as conflict resolution.

Of the survey respondents, 91% agreed that the ELITE Program helped them to create and maintain contact with people in their area who can help them professionally. Further, 88% indicated that the internship, specifically, helped them grow their professional networks.

“The networking that ELITE gave was one of the best things from it, because I got to meet people in different fields to learn from them and get mentored by them”
 (Assistant, high school intern).

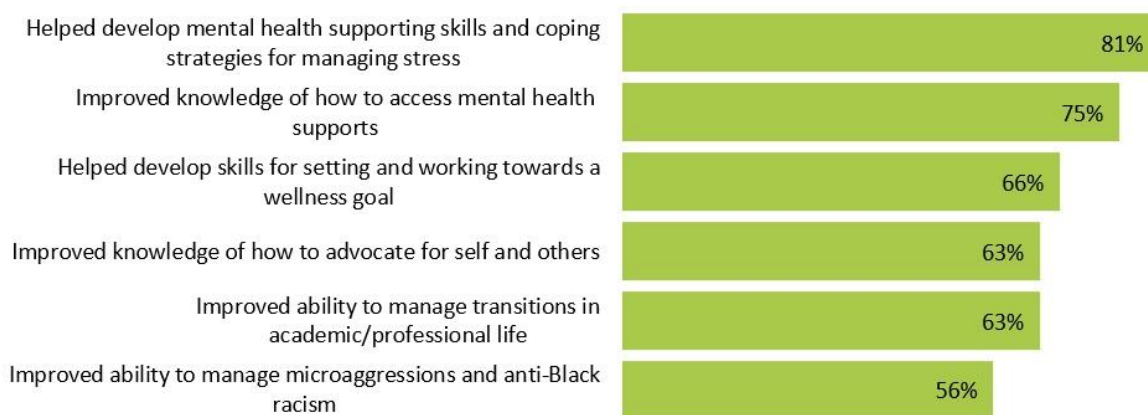
3.3.3 Wellness and Coaching Series

Most ELITE Program participants found that the Wellness and Coaching Series supported their growth as an individual.

Most interview participants benefited from the Wellness and Coaching Series' stress-reduction techniques and self-care. However, some indicated that the program was not particularly useful as they already had coping skills, or they found the virtual format challenging.

Based on survey data (see Figure 9), the Wellness and Coaching Series was helpful in a number of ways. Most commonly, the Wellness and Coaching Series helped develop mental health supporting skills and coping strategies for managing stress (81%). Additionally, more than half (56%) improved their ability to manage microaggressions and anti-black racism.

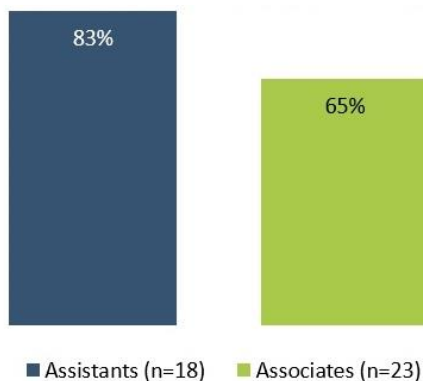
Figure 9: Ways the Wellness and Coaching series were helpful



n=46

Percentages sum to >100% since respondents allowed multiple answers

Figure 10: The Wellness and Coaching series supported me to grow as an individual (assistants vs. associates)



The benefits of the Wellness and Coaching Series may be more profound among assistants than associates. Two thirds of associates (65%) indicated that the Wellness and Coaching Series supported their growth as an individual, slightly less than for the assistants (83%) (see Figure 10 **Error! Reference source not found.**). Given that associates are generally older than assistants, it is possible that, like some of the interview participants, survey respondents who were associates had already learned some of these mental health skills.

3.4 Outcomes

Almost all the participants surveyed and interviewed were still students, mostly undergraduates in university. Thus, this evaluation cannot report on their transition into the job market. Their discussions of job-readiness were based on their thoughts about their future, not their current status. Both interviews and survey results collect participants' perceptions of their knowledge and skill, rather than demonstrated knowledge and skill. At least from this perspective, all the intended short-term outcomes for participants were actualized or partially actualized. Long-term outcomes will need more time to determine success.

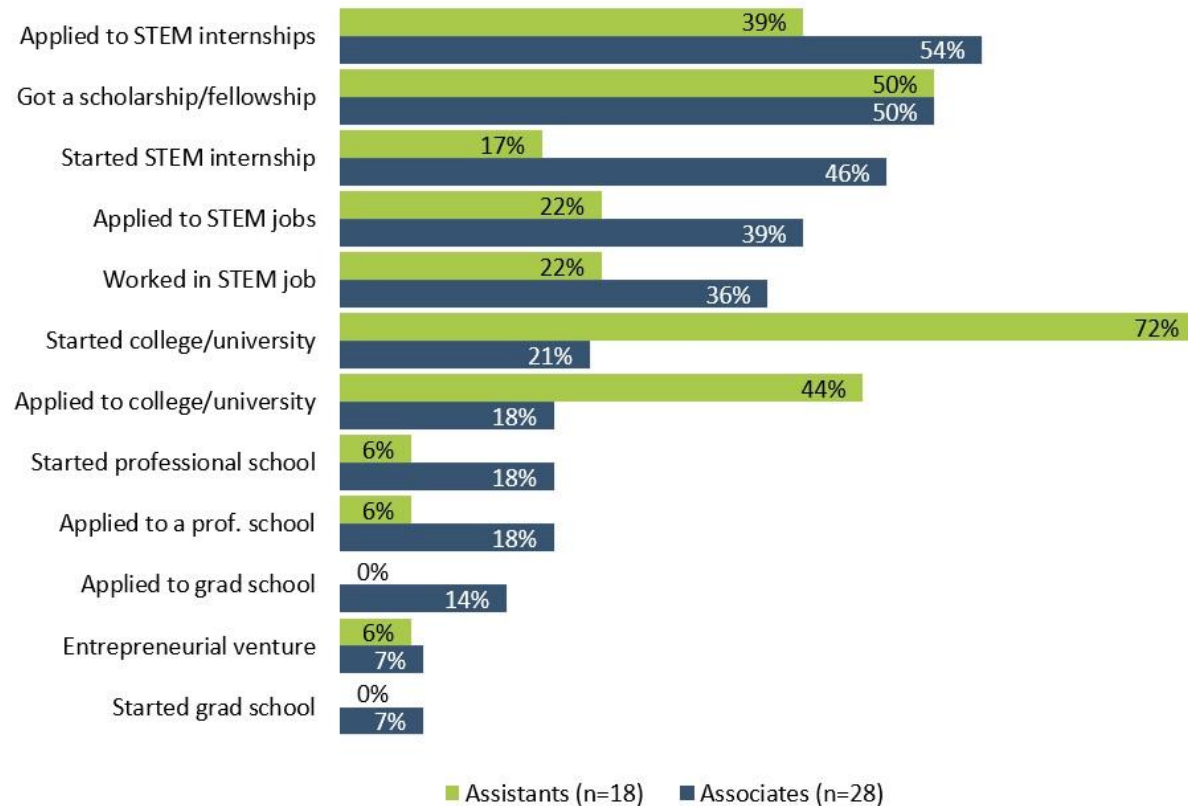
3.4.1 Interest in STEM

Almost all ELITE Program participants interviewed and surveyed remain interested in STEM careers.

Almost all survey respondents who had started a college or university program indicated they were in a STEM-related area of study (95%). Some interview participants mentioned they changed their career choice to STEM, or within STEM, based on their ELITE Program experience.

Since participating in the ELITE Program, both assistant and associate survey respondents have taken various educational and employment steps in pursuit of a career in STEM (see Figure 11 below). Assistants were most likely to have started university or college (72%). Associates were most likely to have applied to further STEM internships (54%). An equal percentage of assistants and associates were granted scholarships or fellowships (50%). Overall associates have been more active than assistants within the STEM space; although this is perhaps not surprising given that assistants are either just getting into university or still in high school.

Figure 11: Since completing the ELITE Program, Assistants vs. Associates



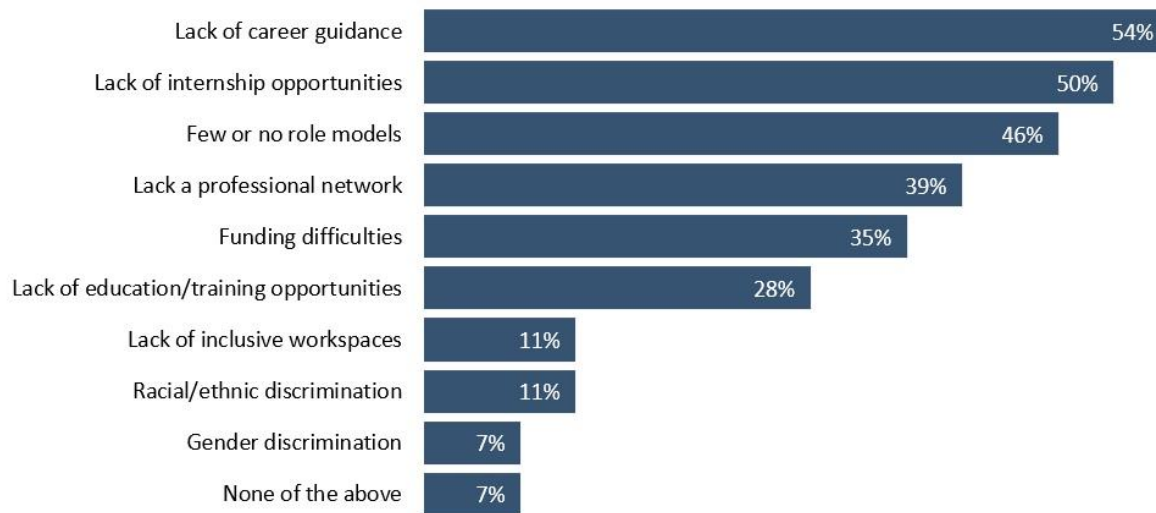
Percentages sum to >100% since respondents allowed multiple answers

“It has given me an edge and being able to hit the ground running early and being able to acquire a multitude of skill sets and different tools that I can use to kind of tackle the challenges I face today a bit quicker” (Associate, postsecondary intern).

3.4.2 Remaining Challenges

The most relevant challenges survey participants identified were lack of career guidance (54%) and lack of other internship opportunities (50%) (as seen in Figure 12 below).

Figure 12: The most relevant challenges



n=46

Percentages sum to >100% since respondents allowed multiple answers

Some participants also spoke to the challenge of finding a job in a difficult market. Although 39% still found their lack of a professional network a challenge, those interviewed indicated that the ELITE Program helped address this challenge by teaching them networking skills and providing an internship that built up their STEM skills and looked good on a resumé.

Few survey respondents indicated that a lack of inclusive workspaces, racial or ethnic discrimination or gender discrimination were the most relevant challenges to their career.

Some interview participants indicated that social isolation as the only Black person, or more specifically the only Black woman, in the room would be a challenge. The ELITE Program helped address this challenge by creating a Black network, helping build confidence that their voice matters and providing skills to manage microaggressions.

One interesting finding is that few of the survey participants saw racial discrimination (11%) or gender discrimination (7%) as one of the challenges most relevant to their pursuit of a STEM career (see Figure 12 above). In addition, few interview participants expected racism or sexism as a potential challenge to their STEM career as well.⁴ In trying to explain this, it is plausible that the experience of the ELITE Program, with Black men and women trainers, professionals, mentors, and professors, has normalized STEM careers as possible pathways for Black youth of any gender, thereby reducing the perception that racial and gender discrimination will be a barrier.

⁴ It must be noted, however, that the interviewer was not a person of colour and this could impact the comfort level for the participants in discussing racism. However, this situation would not have affected the survey respondents.

It is important to note that some interview participants specifically mentioned the significance of the ELITE Program staff and supervisors in encouraging them, wanting to see them grow, and providing an important network for them, all of which helps them address the challenges of current and future STEM work.

“The fact that Doctor Andre and the other creators of the ELITE Program are so dedicated in supporting Black youth in achieving their dreams or just supporting them in this vital step really spoke volumes for me and it has inspired me to want to do something as well in the future. If I have the opportunity to support people in their dreams, especially when they come from marginalized backgrounds, I want to be in a position to support them the same way the ELITE Program provided me with so many skills, so many different connections” (Associate, postsecondary intern).

3.5 EDI&R Findings

As the ELITE Program for Black Youth focuses on improving labour market outcomes for Black youth, a group underrepresented in STEM fields, this is a program supporting equity and inclusion. Additionally, a component of the program is focused on addressing anti-Black racism and microaggressions in workplaces and skills and training organizations. Still, the program may want to consider how it supports women and newcomers, given their differing experiences with the program. Also, more could be done to support the engagement of youth with disabilities.

3.5.1 Program Diversity

The ELITE Program is diverse and has increased participation by Francophone youth.

In addition to Black youth, the program recruits from a diverse range of equity-deserving groups. Participants include immigrants and those born in Canada.⁵ The program has near equal male and female participants.⁶ After recognizing some earlier shortcomings, they have proactively engaged the francophone Black youth of Edmonton.⁷ Our survey showed a comparable percentage of LGBTQ+⁸ participants as is found nationally in that age group (see Figure 13 below).

Additionally, the ELITE Program includes diversity within the program leaders. The Steering Council and staff of the ELITE Program, including the part-time facilitators of the Wellness and Coaching Series and the Entrepreneurship Design Series, are diverse by race, gender, sexuality and language.

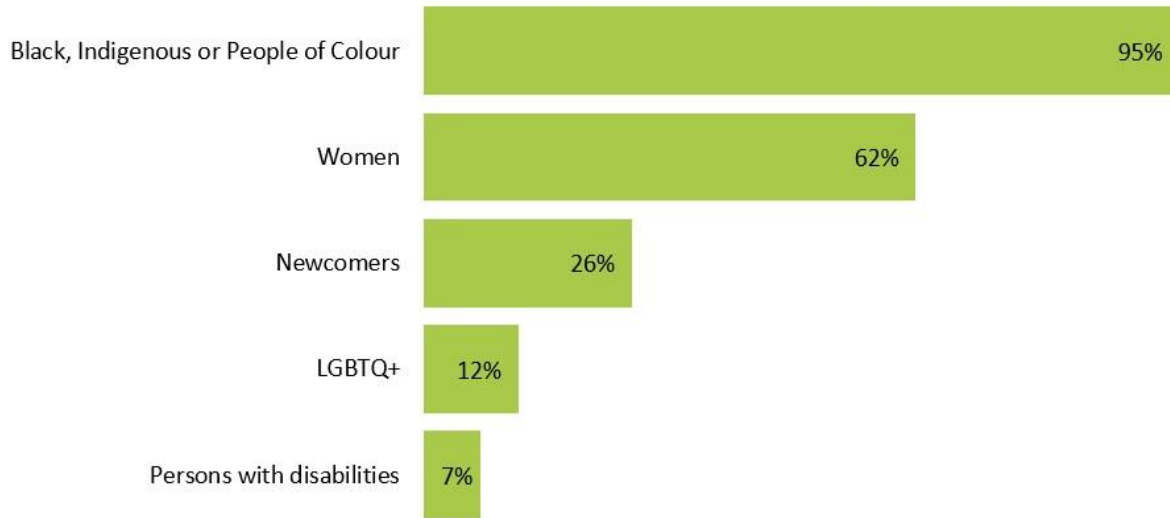
⁵ (ELITE, 2023)

⁶ (ELITE, 2023) and (ELITE, 2022)

⁷ (ELITE, 2024)

⁸ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, plus. Multiple versions of this acronym exist to include the wide variety of minority sexualities and genders.

Figure 13: Survey participants from equity-seeking groups



n=46

Percentages sum to >100% since respondents allowed multiple answers

Participation by people with disabilities is low compared to the general population

The ELITE Program may want to do more in supporting disabled youth. Only 7% of survey respondents identified as having a disability (see Figure 13). By comparison in 2022, 20% of young people aged 15-24 in Canada reported having a disability.⁹ More specifically, the Canadian University Survey Consortium reported that 35% of graduating students from Canadian universities in 2024 identify as having a disability.¹⁰

Given the modest sample size and response rate, it is difficult to know for sure if this finding is spurious. For instance, the low numbers of disabled participants in the evaluation survey may simply be due to people with disabilities not participating in the survey. Still, the ELITE program may want to investigate further to identify whether people with disabilities face barriers in participating in the ELITE Program.

3.5.2 Newcomers May Face Continuing Challenges

Even after participating in the ELITE Program, newcomers may have greater challenges to pursuing STEM careers than non-newcomers.¹¹ The survey suggests that newcomers are less likely than others to have applied to further STEM-related internship positions (18% compared to 57%) or employment positions (18% compared to 37%) and less likely to have worked in STEM-related employment (9% compared to 37%) (as seen in Figure 14 **Error! Reference source not found.** below). They are also more likely to see a

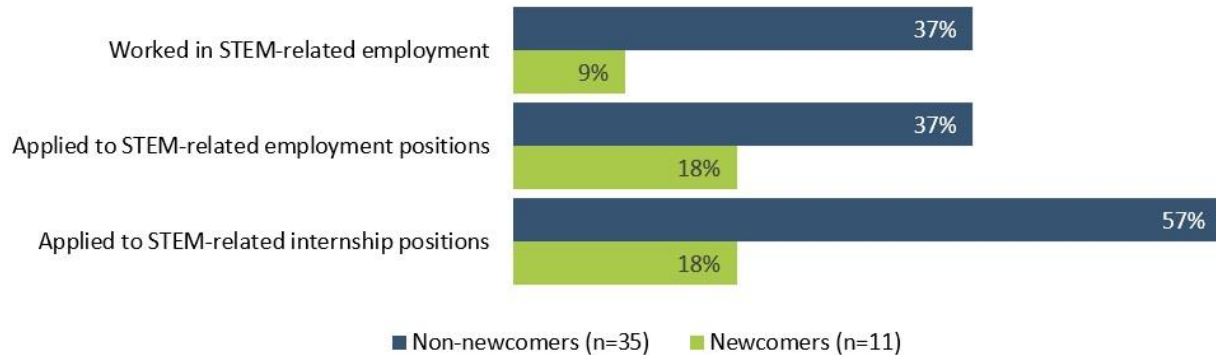
⁹ (Hebert, 2024)

¹⁰ (Canadian University Survey Consortium, 2024)

¹¹ Which could include Canadian citizens (by birth and naturalization) and permanent residents

lack of education or training opportunities as a career challenge (45% compared to 23% of non-newcomers).

Figure 14: Newcomers vs. Non-newcomers in STEM

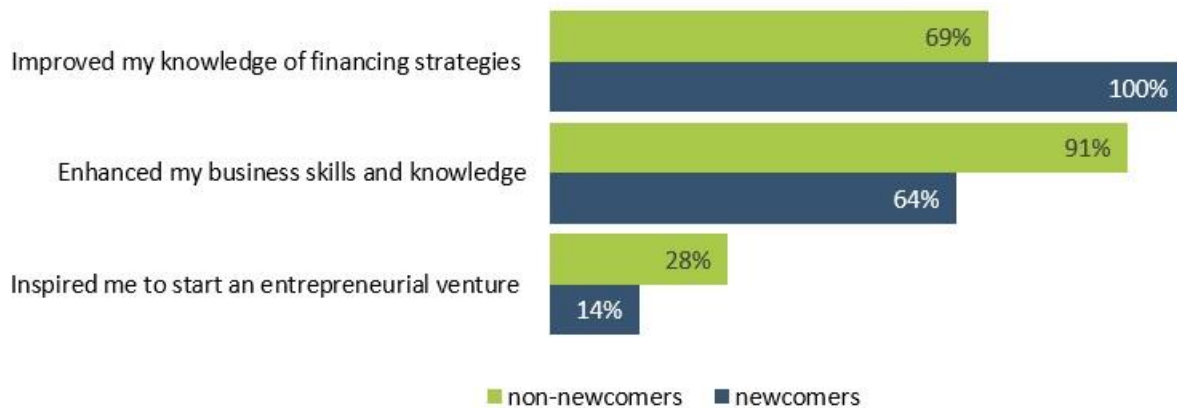


Percentages sum to >100% since respondents allowed multiple answers

There are many possible reasons for this. For instance, some newcomers may still be struggling with English or face discrimination due to their accent. For some, their socioeconomic status may be a barrier to remaining in school. However, there is also some evidence that newcomers experienced the ELITE Program differently than non-newcomers.

In particular, only 55% of newcomers perceived the internship as improving their capacity to navigate challenges in pursuing a career, compared to 79% of non-newcomers. It seems newcomers also were not as likely to agree that the Entrepreneurship Design Series provided enhanced business skills and knowledge. Only 64% of newcomers agreed with that statement, whereas 91% of non-newcomers agreed. Whether this was because newcomers already had business skills and knowledge, were less interested in business skills and knowledge, or had difficulty gaining the offered skills and knowledge is unclear. However, newcomers were slightly less likely to be inspired to start an entrepreneurial venture (14%) than non-newcomers (28%). Where newcomers did benefit seems to have been from learning financial strategies (100%, see Figure 15 below).

Figure 15: Ways the Entrepreneurship Design Series was helpful, newcomer vs. non-newcomer

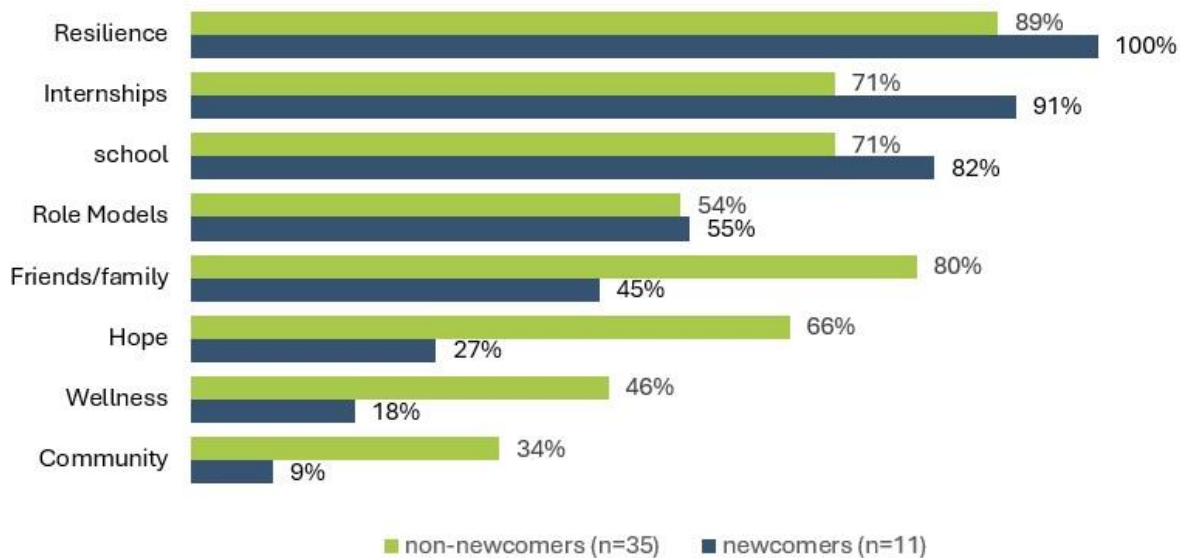


Newcomers seem to have benefited less from mental health supports. They were less likely to report improved knowledge of accessing mental health supports (50% compared to 83%), and less likely to agree that the Wellness and Coaching Series improved their knowledge of advocating for themselves and others (25% compared to 75%).¹²

When asked about supports they consider helpful for pursuing their career goals, there were some clear differences between newcomers and those born in Canada. Newcomers were less likely than non-newcomers to have selected hope (27% compared to 66%), family and friends (45% compared to 80%), community (9% compared to 34%) or wellness knowledge and skills (18% compared to 46%) as supports (as can be seen in Figure 16 below). It is unclear if these supports were less likely to be available or less important to newcomers. Newcomers were, however, more likely to have selected resilience (100%), internships (91%), and school (82%) as helpful supports.

Figure 16: Skills, knowledge, strengths and resources, which have been helpful to pursue career goals, newcomers and non-newcomers

¹²There was, however, a higher proportion of newcomers (75%) than non-newcomers (50%) who indicated that they had improved ability to manage microaggressions and anti-Black racism.



Percentages sum to >100% since respondents allowed multiple answers

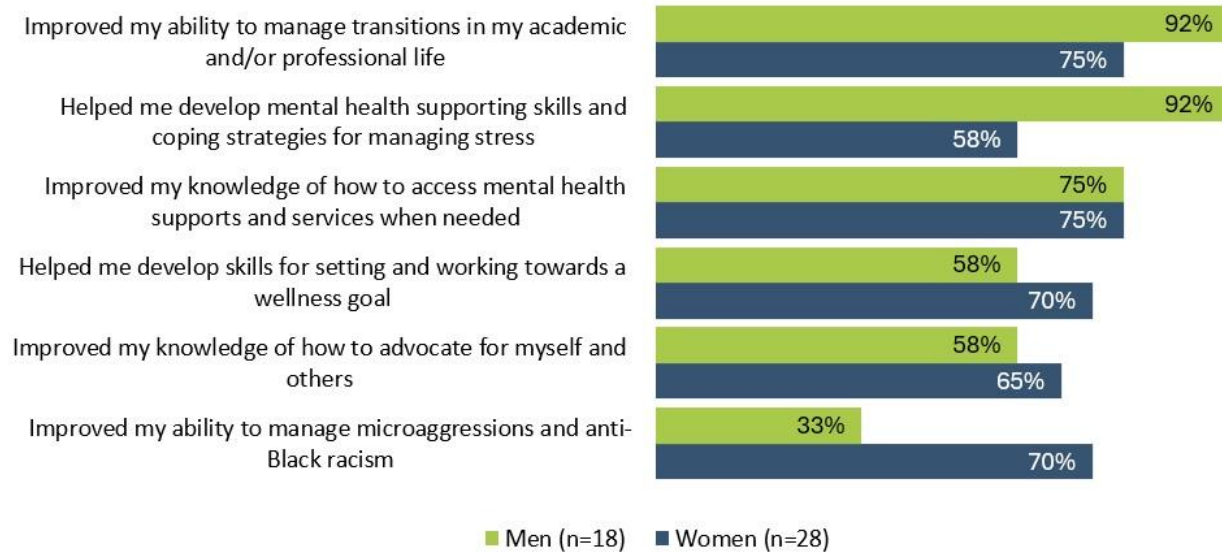
These results lead to a conclusion that the challenges facing newcomers are great and the ELITE Program could do more to mitigate these challenges. Of course, as we have no baseline information we cannot say if these percentages are, in fact, an improvement from prior to participating in the ELITE program. However, attention should be paid to this issue to improve the outcomes for newcomers. It is of particular concern that only 18% of newcomers have applied to further STEM-related internships when 91% of them indicated internships were helpful to support their career goals.

3.5.3 Women may have benefited Less from the Program

A lower proportion of women (58%) than men (92%) agreed that the Wellness and Coaching Series helped them develop mental health supporting skills and coping strategies for managing stress (see Figure 17 below).¹³ However, a higher proportion of women (70%) than men (33%) indicated that they improved their ability to manage microaggressions and anti-black racism. It is difficult to discern if these differences are due to interest or previous experience.

Figure 17: Ways the Wellness and Coaching Series was helpful, Women vs. Men

¹³ Since survey respondents were only asked if they were women, as an equity-deserving group, we can only infer the remaining respondents were something other than women. For the sake of simplicity, we name these as men, though the group could include non-binary or other identities.



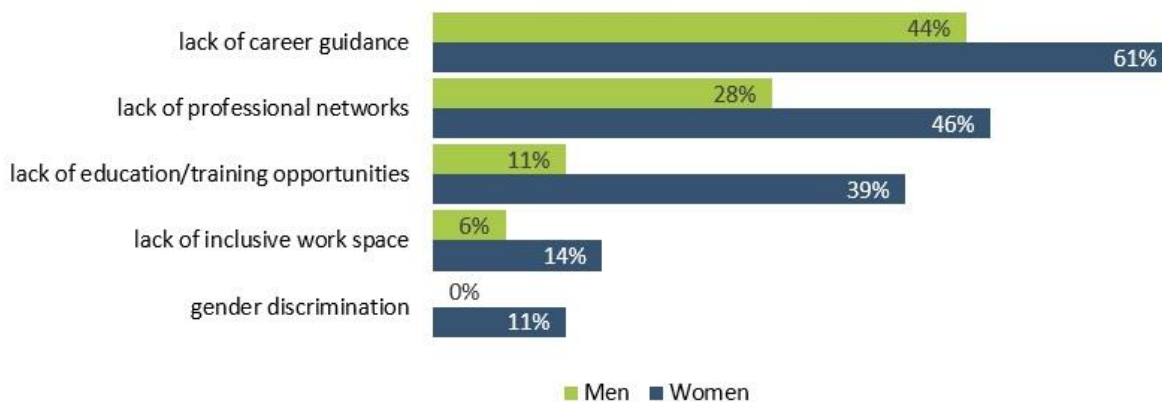
Percentages sum to >100% since respondents allowed multiple answers

It is apparent that there is also a gender distinction around education. Women seem to be:

- more likely to have applied to or started a program at a professional school (both choices at 21% for women compared to 0% for men), and
- less likely to have begun another STEM-related internship (25% compared to 50%).

Women are also more likely to see a lack of education or training opportunities (39% compared to 11% of men) as one of the most relevant career challenges. Other challenges for women are a lack of career guidance and a lack of professional networks (see Figure 18 below).

Figure 18: Most Relevant Challenges, Women vs. Men



These differences seem consistent with the current challenges for women in STEM. While these challenges remain, it is possible that these numbers for the women of the ELITE Program are actually an

improvement from the Canadian experience.¹⁴ As with newcomers, we do not have baseline data for Black women's experiences in STEM and cannot speak to how much these women's experiences indicate a change. A few interview participants did indicate that STEM had a reputation as being "an old boys' club."

4. Suggestions, Recommendations and Implications

The ELITE Program for Black Youth addresses the FSC thematic priorities of improving labour market outcomes for Black youth, addressing anti-Black racism in workplaces and skills and training organizations, and knowledge mobilization of the successes in addressing these. More specifically, the ELITE Program is doing well in achieving its main objectives of opening doors for Black youth to STEM careers. But some changes could help enhance the benefits to participants. Based on the evaluation, a series of suggestions and recommendations emerged as ways to potentially improve an already strong program. The evaluation concludes with implications for the funding of this and other similar projects.

4.1 Stakeholder Suggestions

All participants, staff and partners interviewed agreed that the ELITE Program was well designed and beneficial for making Black youth job-ready, as well as supportive of other life and socio-emotional skills. Even so, most offered suggestions for improvement.

- The most common suggestion was to provide exposure to a greater variety of STEM careers and industry leaders, perhaps through industry lab tours, networking with the supervisors of other ELITE Program participants, or hearing from ELITE Program alumni (through presentations or a database) about their current projects and research.
- The second most frequently mentioned suggestion by participants was to keep the whole program in-person. Some participants learned virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic, which they recounted as being not ideal. Others particularly mentioned that the Wellness and Coaching Series needed to be in-person as it was difficult for them to make meaningful connections with others online. Based on staff interviews, this is a situation that the Wellness and Coaching Series team seems to be aware of.
- A few participants suggested a series of university skills, particularly for the assistants, and a series of job search skills such as résumé writing, interviewing, and using LinkedIn.
- Other participant suggestions were
 - to include more cohort social events,
 - to explain more fulsomely the purpose of the Entrepreneurship Design Series,
 - to provide participants more lab time,
 - to let high school students access the labs (or keep them out of internships that have an age restriction),
 - to add more industry-based internships,

¹⁴ In 2023 women made up only 25% of people employed in STEM in Canada (Global University Systems Canada, 2023)

- to allow interns to evaluate their internships,
- to support participants through a mentorship system,
- to offer learning sessions about entrepreneurship, job search skills, and wellness during the school year.
- Additional staff and partner suggestions included:
 - to host a larger public end event to showcase the work the students were doing,
 - to offer internships that can continue into the school year,
 - to develop a mentorship program drawing on the alumni of the program,
 - to develop a junior high program that could start influencing Black youth earlier.

4.2 Recommendations

With the thematic priorities and the evaluation findings in mind, the following are recommended:

Recommendation 1: Newcomers seem to have a significantly lower rate of staying within STEM jobs. The ELITE Program leadership should consider whether there are any additional barriers to staying within STEM that are facing newcomer youth, which could be mitigated through the ELITE Program for Black Youth. Some possible issues to explore are

- the socioeconomic status of newcomers, and
- the access to information about internship and job applications.

Recommendation 2: Few ELITE Program participants self-identified as being disabled in the survey. The ELITE Program for Black youth should consider whether there are any barriers to the program for people with physical, mental, and learning disabilities. Should it be determined that barriers exist, the ELITE Program should look to close those gaps and look for increased levels of participation among disabled youth to improve labour market outcomes for all Black youth. Possible activities would be:

- a training program for staff and partners on the needs of people with disabilities within STEM education and employment, if barriers found, and
- a speaker series with Black professionals with disabilities to discuss challenges and opportunities.

Recommendation 3: This evaluation did not address how participants are chosen. It is possible that participants were already committed to careers in STEM. Thus, this evaluation cannot indicate to what extent the program is *increasing* the number of Black youth going into STEM fields in university. It would be useful for the ELITE Program team to gather data about when participants first became interested in a STEM career (whether it was through the ELITE Program or prior). Socio-economic status and family history of university education would also be relevant data to determine if the program is reaching Black youth facing multiple barriers.

Recommendation 4: It would also be beneficial to track participants' career journeys in a longitudinal study as part of the program's ongoing activities. This would allow greater understanding of the long-term outcomes of the program, such as labour market outcomes in the transition from STEM education

to STEM employment, the development of entrepreneurial ventures, and the continued benefits of wellness and mental health knowledge and skills, including addressing anti-Black racism and microaggressions in workplaces. A longitudinal study could be a valuable resource for the continued securing of funding and for other organizations wanting to develop similar programs. The data from recommendations 3 and 4 could potentially add significant impact to any knowledge mobilization ELITE engages in to further highlight the thematic priorities for Black youth.

Recommendation 5: Including feedback from internship hosts in both internal and external evaluations would add an important layer of understanding how the ELITE Program is improving labour market outcomes for Black youth and addressing anti-Black racism in workplaces and skills and training organizations.

4.3 Implications for FSC, for Other Funding Organizations and for Organizations like the ELITE Program for Black Youth

As these findings are considered, there are a number of learnings that can be applied within organizations trying to achieve similar aims.

The multipronged approach to job-readiness is a high potential model of skill development.

Incorporating paid internships, entrepreneurial training, and wellness education and coaching seems to have produced a program that works well to meet the holistic needs of youth. More time is needed to understand the long-term outcomes, but the participants surveyed and interviewed for this evaluation point to a developing cohort of well-prepared individuals for successful high-wage STEM employment. Further skills development programs utilizing such a multipronged model, especially for other marginalized groups, would be useful investments.

A program design that incorporates regular internal evaluation can strengthen outcomes. This internal evaluation must be incorporated into a process of refining and revising program content and implementation, for full effectiveness. Funding organizations would do well to encourage proactive internal evaluation with periodic external evaluation. While the ELITE Program did excel at this, some guidance in how to best conduct an internal evaluation and use it to greatest effect could be beneficial for future projects.

Programs with a target group are strongest when delivered by members of that target group. In the case of the ELITE program, having Black leaders run a program for Black youth allowed for the program to address the real issues Black youth face in pursuit of STEM careers such as anti-Black racism and microaggressions, and provided role-models for these youth to look to. Other programs that target a specific group (whether ethnicity, sexuality or gender, among others) should have foundational input and participation by members of that specific demographic group.

Chapter 5: Summary and Key Findings

Summary

The holistic assessment and comprehensive knowledge mobilization project for the ELITE Program was carried out between April 2024 and December 2024. The project was funded by Future Skills Centre as a part of their 2024-2025 thematic strategies for inclusive opportunities with a focus on Black youth.

The ELITE Program has been actively serving the Black Canadian youth who seek careers in STEM areas since 2021. The program has been dedicated to offering hands-on skills, knowledge, and resilience building that are needed to create pathways for STEM related work careers in high wage professions. In addition to technical skills, the program has been addressing specific challenges of racism and maintaining wellness in a holistic way.

The project had three main objectives. These were:

1. To better understand the impact of the ELITE Program on job-readiness for Black youth after program completion.
2. To provide data and analysis on the impact of targeted wrap-around activities in entrepreneurship training and wellness coaching on Black youth employment prospects, and solutions for the specific challenges they face in pursuing STEM careers and in related labour markets.
3. To develop a comprehensive description of the wrap-around components of the ELITE Program for use as a model for future programs.

For the knowledge mobilization objective of the project (Objective #3), documents and data accumulated in the ELITE Program between 2021-2024 were reviewed and synthesized to develop comprehensive descriptions of the ELITE Program and its components. When necessary, interviews with program staff and delivery partners were also conducted to aid the information synthesis.

The efforts of information review and synthesis resulted in three case studies for the program, one describing the program in general, and two focusing on the specific wrap-around components. The case studies described details that are necessary to build the program components such as inputs, outcomes, structure, delivery, and evaluation practices. As such, these documents serve as a description of the holistic model for future programs similar to the ELITE Program. In addition to the case studies, two playbooks were created to summarize the details mentioned in case studies.

In order to meet the evaluation objectives (Objective #1 and #2), the ELITE Program partnered with Malatest as an external evaluation research partner. This aspect of the research project was planned through close collaboration between the ELITE Program and Malatest, which involved several steps including planning, working, and reporting phases of the research. The evaluation report was completed by the beginning of December 2024.

The external evaluation found that overall, the ELITE Program is achieving nearly all of its intended outcomes, and is demonstrating progress on others. Almost all ELITE Program participants interviewed and surveyed reported remaining interested in STEM careers. Participants generally agreed that the holistic approach of incorporating paid internships, the Entrepreneurship Design Series and the Wellness and Coaching Series enhanced their job readiness and growth as individuals. The most useful skill development reported by participants was learning how to network. The evaluation also found that the participation of people with disabilities in the program is lower than the general population. One

recommendation that came out of this finding was to consider possibilities to improve access of people with physical, mental, and learning disabilities to the ELITE Program.

Finally, three strengths of the ELITE Program were cited as implication for FCS, other funding organizations, and programs similar to the ELITE. These strengths highlighted that:

- The multipronged approach to job-readiness can be a promising model of skill development. The three-tiered model employed by the ELITE Program, which incorporates paid internships, entrepreneurial training, and wellness training and coaching seems to have produced a program that meets the holistic needs of youth.
- Program designs that incorporate regular internal evaluation can strengthen outcomes. Funding organizations can encourage building evaluation practices in similar programs.
- Programs with a target group produce effective results when delivered by members of that target group. In the case of the ELITE Program, having Black leaders run a program for Black youth allowed for the program to address the real issues Black youth face in pursuit of STEM careers, and provided role-models for these youth.

Key Findings and Learnings from External Evaluation of the ELITE Program

Key learnings on the general program outcomes. A total of seven general outcomes of the ELITE Program were evaluated in the current project. These seven outcomes are relevant to improvement on:

- STEM-related knowledge and skills
- Professional networks
- Job readiness
- Entrepreneurial and leadership skills
- Mental health and wellness literacy
- Ability to manage microaggressions and anti-Black racism
- Knowledge of how to advocate for self and the others

Malatest's evaluation report has shown that the ELITE Program has achieved all of its projected program outcomes with participants reporting improvement in these areas. In one of the seven areas, (managing microaggressions and racism) the program reached a partial achievement on its outcome. This means that only some (between 25% to 50%) of the participants reported improvement in their ability to manage microaggressions and racism. For the remaining six outcomes, over 50% of participants reported improvements on various skills and networks.

Taken together, the evaluation results show that the ELITE Program has been successfully supporting Black youth's transition to work life and their preparation to join the workforce in STEM areas. Outcome achievements in diverse areas that the ELITE Program covers (e.g., technical knowledge, network building, leadership and entrepreneurial skills, mental health knowledge and skills, advocacy) show that the program works as intended with its unique and diverse wrap-around components.

The partial achievement in addressing microaggression and racism is also interesting and requires a separate reflection given the fact that this area usually emerges as a strong aspect of the ELITE Program in annual internal evaluations. The biggest difference between the external evaluation conducted in the current project and the annual evaluations conducted within the ELITE Program is the passage of time. Internal evaluations are usually conducted at the end of each program year, and the current project is a long-term evaluation covering a 4-year period. This difference tells us that although the participants learn some skills and knowledge to manage microaggression and racism in the ELITE Program, they might continue to encounter newer and different challenges as they move forward in their careers. This tells us that resources for managing microaggressions and racism need to be available as an ongoing support as Black youth move through different stages of their transition to work life.

Key Learnings on Program Implementation. Overall, Malatest's evaluation highlighted two strengths of the program regarding its implementation. First of these strengths is the **internal evaluation and feedback loop** has been effective in adjusting and improving the program to match the needs of the students. In fact, the ELITE Program has made several changes and adjustments to its curriculum, delivery, resources, and extended its reach to French speaking students as well as students outside Alberta (Carlton University).

The second strength on program implementation that was mentioned by Malatest is related to the nature of the **ELITE Program as a black-led initiative**. This allows for programs to provide appropriate and informed training as the ones who are running the program are personally aware of the issues facing Black youth and can themselves act as role models, advocates, and mentors.

One key learning from these findings is the importance of maintaining an ongoing internal evaluation and feedback system in long-term projects such as the ELITE Program. As a Black-led initiative, the program staff's awareness of the ongoing issues and their contact with the Black community enables creating appropriate program adjustment and solutions to the needs voiced by students through a feedback loop.

Key Learnings on the Impact of Program Activities. Given that the ELITE Program is a three-tiered holistic structure, program activities were analyzed in three pieces: the internship experience, entrepreneurship series, and wellness series. The findings on the internship experience have shown that participants cited internship as the most helpful component of the program. The reports of participants confirm that the hands-on experiential learning in the internship experience works as intended in preparing students for the workforce. In fact, 77% of the participants reported that the internship helped them feel more prepared to join the workforce.

Malatest's report also reveals that the wrap-around components of the ELITE Program were also received as helpful by the participants. The findings tell us that the Entrepreneurship Design Series seem to enhance students' business skills and knowledge. Beyond financial knowledge and skills, the majority of the participants (above 80%) reported an increase in their leadership, communication, and teamwork skills which are crucial skills in STEM positions. Additionally, one in every four participants reported feeling inspired to start an entrepreneurial venture.

Finally, participants generally agreed that the Wellness and Coaching Series supported their growth as an individual. Specifically, participants cited stress management and mental health supporting skills as most helpful lasting learning from this component. This finding is meaningful and important, as the ELITE Program is unique for incorporating mental health skills training into a STEM-related internship experience. Taken together, these results show that the wrap-around components of the ELITE Program can offer unique benefits and opportunities of growth for students beyond technical knowledge and skills gained from the internship experience.

Key Learnings on STEM Interest and Challenges. Nearly all participants (95%) reported remaining in STEM related fields of study after completing the ELITE Program. Over 70% of the participants from high school cohort reported having started university or college, while over 50% the postsecondary interns reported applying to further STEM-related programs. Half of the participants mentioned receiving grants and fellowships to support their studies.

In terms of the challenges of pursuing STEM careers, the most commonly cited issue was lack of career guidance (54%), this was followed by lack of internship opportunities (50%), and having few or no role models (46%). These results indicate the need for programs such as the ELITE to expand and increase in number to support Black Canadian Youth.

Key learnings on EDI&R findings. The following key findings were revealed as a result of Malatest's evaluation on the ELITE Program:

- The ELITE Program maintains a diverse range of recruits. Participants include immigrants and those born in Canada. The program has near equal male and female participants. The program is active in recruiting francophone Black youth of Edmonton. Finally, the program hosts a comparable percentage of LGBTQ+ participants as is found nationally in that age group.
- The program staff are diverse by race, gender, sexuality and linguistics.
- Participation by people with disabilities is low compared to the general population.
- Female participants were more likely to see a lack of education or training opportunities one of the most relevant career challenges (39% compared to 11% males). Females were also less likely less likely to have begun another STEM-related internship (25% compared to 50% males). While these challenges remain, the numbers for female participants of the ELITE Program were noted as an improvement from the Canadian norm.
- Overall, compared to non-newcomers, the newcomers reported gaining fewer benefits from the ELITE Program. One exception is the improvement on ability to manage microaggressions and anti-Black racism (75% compared to 50% of non-newcomers).

These findings suggest several important points. The ELITE Program holds a room for improvement to increase participation of Black Youth with disabilities. Also, the program may need to target the unique needs of newcomer students to improve program outcomes in this group.

Chapter 6: Next Steps for the ELITE Program

The ELITE Program Holistic Assessment and Comprehensive Knowledge Mobilization Project has made it possible to conduct a long-term outcome evaluation of an ongoing internship program dedicated to supporting Black Canadian Youth who pursue careers in STEM fields. The comprehensive evaluation research conducted in collaboration with Malatest has shown that the ELITE Program is achieving its main objectives. In addition, the review and synthesis of the existing program information led to development of detailed descriptions of the program components, which can serve as a model for the future programs. Together, this project report serves as a living document that will continue to inform the development of enhancement of the ELITE Program, as well as inspiring the newer program with similar objectives.

In the light of the findings shared in this project, the following future directions will ensure an efficient delivery of the ELITE Program:

- **Offer greater variety of exposure to STEM careers:** In line with the feedback from the evaluation, the ELITE Program will work on building more partnerships to offer events such as meeting industry leaders, having industry lab tours, networking opportunities, and research/project announcements.
- **Increase the number of in-person sessions for Wellness and Coaching Series:** Participants commonly cited the need to keep the program in-person, which they noted would facilitate building meaningful connections and improve program delivery. The ELITE Program will work to increase the in-person sessions in the Wellness Series.
- **Improve participation of people with disabilities in the program:** The ELITE Program will conduct an analysis of potential barriers to the participation of people with disability in the program. Additionally, the program will determine necessary training and resources to improve participation, and overcome the barriers to participation.
- **Analyze opportunities to improve program benefits for newcomers and for women:** Following on Malatest's feedback, another future step for the ELITE Program will be to analyze specific needs, challenges, and strengths of the newcomer and women interns to improve their gains from the ELITE Program.
- **Add more career guidance resources to support Black Youth in their transition to work life:** Lack of career guidance was cited most frequently by the participants in the current project. The ELITE Program will work on increasing the resources that will facilitate career guidance to students.
- **Gather data on how the high school cohort students become interested in STEM careers:** The data can potentially inform the future strategies to improve interest in high technology and entrepreneurial careers among Black Youth.
- **Increase resources and staff members** to expand the opportunities offered to Black Youth seeking STEM careers.

References

- Bell, A., Chetty, R., Jaravel, X., Petkova, N., & Van Reenen, J. (2019). Who becomes an inventor in America? The importance of exposure to innovation*. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 134(2), 647-713. <https://doi.org/10.1093/qje/qjy028>
- Canadian University Survey Consortium. (2024). 2024 Graduating Student Survey Master Report.
- Cénat, J. M., Hajizadeh, S., Dalexis, R. D., Ndengeyingoma, A., Guerrier, M., & Kogan, C. (2021). Prevalence and effects of daily and major experiences of racial discrimination and microaggressions among Black individuals in Canada. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37(17-18), 50-78. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260521102349>
- Danby, C. (2024, Feb 6). Waterloo Engineering Outreach's community program STEMpowered tackles the lack of Black representation in STEM. Retrieved from Education News Canada: <https://educationnewscanada.com/article/education/level/university/1/1064071/-waterloo-engineering-outreach-s-community-program-stempowered-tackles-the-lack-of-black-representation-in-stem.html>
- Dinizulu, S. M., Velez, G. M., Morency, M., Jacobson, K., Moore, K., Carter, N., & Frazier, S. L. (2024). Lift every voice: Engaging Black adolescents in social justice service-learning to promote mental health and educational equity. *Prevention Science*, 25(1), 68–84. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-023-01570-w>
- ELITE. (2022). ELITE Pre-Entrepreneurship Design Report 2022.
- ELITE. (2023). ELITE Entrepreneurship Survey Data 2023.
- ELITE. (2024). An Overview of the ELITE Program for Black Youth.
- Fante-Coleman, T., & Jackson-Best, F. (2020). Barriers and facilitators to accessing mental healthcare in Canada for Black youth: A scoping review. *Adolescent Research Review*, 5(2020), 115–136. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40894-020-00133-2>
- Gawalko, M. Y.-P. (2022). 2022 Evaluation Report for the Elite Program for Black Youth Wellness and Coaching Series.
- Global University Systems Canada. (2023). Breaking Barriers: Women in STEM. <https://guscanada.com/breaking-barriers-women-in-stem/>
- Hancock, B. M. (2021, April). The Black experience at work in charts. Retrieved from McKinsey Quarterly: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/19Pu08bmAySBLsfduderGXYHbwJ7vmZJ-/view>
- Hebert, B.-P. e. (2024). A demographic, employment and income profile of persons with disabilities aged 15 years and over in Canada, 2022. Retrieved from Statistics Canada: www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-654-x/89-654-x2024001-eng.htm
- Herth, K. (1992). Abbreviated instrument to measure hope: development and psychometric evaluation. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 17, 1251–1259. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.1992.tb01843.x>

- Juntunen, C. L., & Wettersten, K. B. (2006). Work hope: Development and initial validation of a measure. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 53(1), 94–106. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.53.1.94>
- Kogan, C. S., Noorishad, P. G., Ndengeyingoma, A., Guerrier, M., & Cénat, J. M. (2022). Prevalence and correlates of anxiety symptoms among Black people in Canada: A significant role for everyday racial discrimination and racial microaggressions. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 308(2022), 545–553. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2022.04.110>
- Louder, C. N., Meyer, M. L., del Rey, G. M., & Franklin, A. R. (2023). Elevating community-driven socioecological participation and action: A case study with Black youth. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 72, 145–156. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.12679>
- Mbiatem, M. E., Mohamed, S., & Yohani, S. (2021). *Experiential learning in innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship (ELITE) program for Black youth: Wellness and coaching series pilot report*. www.mece.engineering.ualberta.ca
- Miller, J. F., & Powers, M. J. (1988). Development of an instrument to measure hope. *Nursing Research*, 37(1), 6–10. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00006199-198801000-00002>
- Mohamed, S., & Yohani, S. (2021). *ELITE program for Black youth wellness and coaching series evaluation report*.
- Reichard, R. J., Avey, J. B., Lopez, S., & Dollwet, M. (2013). Having the will and finding the way: A review and meta-analysis of hope at work. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 8(4), 292–304. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2013.800903>
- Sacak, K. (2023). 2023 Evaluation Report for the Elite Program for Black Youth Wellness and Coaching Series.
- Snyder, C. R., Harris, C., Anderson, J. R., Holleran, S. A., Irving, L. M., Sigmon, S. T., Yoshinobu, L., Gibb, J., Langelle, C., & Harney, P. (1991). The will and the ways: Development and validation of an individual-differences measure of hope. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 60(4), 570–585.
- The State of Black Canadians in STEM. (2022, May 13). Retrieved from Obsidi: <https://obsidi.com/the-state-of-black-canadians-in-stem/>
- Wong, J. (2022, Feb 20). Black scientists, community leaders want Black youth 'to see possibility' in STEM. Retrieved from CBC: [/www.cbc.ca/news/canada/black-students-stem-1.6344939](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/black-students-stem-1.6344939)
- Woods-Jaeger, B., Jahangir, T., Lucas, D., Freeman, M., Renfro, T. L., Knutzen, K. E., Cave, N., Jackson, M., Chandler, C., Riggins, C., & Lightfoot, A. F. (2024). Youth Empowered Advocating for Health (YEAH): Facilitating partnerships between prevention scientists and Black youth to promote health equity. *Prevention Science*, 25(1), 20–30. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11121-022-01450-9>

Appendices

Appendix A: RBC Future Launch Survey

1. I am the following age (**please note: you must be 14 years of age or older to participate*)

Under 14*	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	Over 30	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Which of the following options best describes you in the past three months? (*Choose 1 option*)

- ☐ Enrolled in school or vocational training (in-school training for a skilled trade or occupation and/or on-the-job workplace training): *[PROCEED TO Question 3]*
- ☐ Employed full time (30 or more hours per week): *[PROCEED TO Question 4]*
- ☐ Employed full time (30 or more hours per week) and enrolled in school or vocational training (in-school training for a skilled trade or occupation and/or on-the-job workplace training): *[PROCEED TO Question 3]*
- ☐ Employed part time (less than 30 hours per week): *[PROCEED TO Question 4]*
- ☐ Employed part time (less than 30 hours per week) and enrolled in school or vocational training (in-school training for a skilled trade or occupation and/or on-the-job workplace training): *[PROCEED TO Question 3]*

☐ Not enrolled in school, vocational training (in-school training for a skilled trade or occupation and/or on-the-job workplace training) or employment (part time or full time):
[PROCEED TO Question 4]

☐ Prefer not to answer: *[PROCEED to Question 4]*

3. Which of the following best describes the type of school or vocational training (in-school training for a skilled trade or occupation and/or on-the-job workplace training) you are currently enrolled in? *[If you are NOT enrolled in school or vocational training, please proceed to Question 4].*

☐ High school

☐ Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel (CEGEP)

☐ Technical and/or vocational education (in-school training for a skilled trade or occupation) working towards a certification, diploma or degree

☐ University, working towards an undergraduate degree

☐ University, working towards a post-graduate degree

☐ Prefer not to answer

☐ Other (please describe)

4. Listed below are statements related to how you feel about your career/job path. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements.

a. I have the skills and/or knowledge to be successful in the workforce.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Prefer not to answer
-------------------	----------	----------------------------	-------	----------------	----------------------

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

b. I have a clear vision of what my ideal job looks like.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

c. I know what skills I need to develop in order to reach my career goals.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

d. I am optimistic about attaining the career/job path that I want in the future.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Listed below are statements related to your current job. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with each statement. *[If you are NOT employed full-time or part-time, please proceed to Question 6].*

a. In my current job, I have the opportunity to use the skills and/or knowledge learned through school and/or training.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b. My current job is related to what I studied in school and/or training.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

c. Within the next six months, I plan to change jobs.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Listed below are activities related to career planning and career development. Please indicate how often you do the following.

a. Use LinkedIn to source job opportunities and information about careers.

Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Attend professional networking events.

Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

c. Seek advice from a mentor, advisor or coach about education, training and/or career decisions (outside of my immediate family).

Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- d. Talk to a professional career counsellor or career coach about your career plans or job path (e.g. job search strategies, interview prep, career transition)

Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- e. Access online programs or tools that inform your career plans or job path (e.g. job search strategies, interview prep, career transition)

Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Have you ever participated in a practical work experience (education-related opportunities to gain work-relevant skills in real workplaces) (select all that apply)?

- ☐ Yes, co-op (periods of study alternating with work placements)
- ☐ Yes, internship (paid or unpaid work experiences)
- ☐ Yes, apprenticeship (a combination of in-school training for a skilled trade or occupation, and on-the-job workplace training)
- ☐ Yes, entrepreneurship (business incubator program or course, and/or launching own business with an accelerator and/or incubator)
- ☐ Yes, other (please specify)

- ☐ No: *[PROCEED TO Question 9]*

☐ Prefer not to answer

8. Did you participate in a practical work experience as part of this program or project?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to answer

**9. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement:
Participating in a practical work experience(s) helped better prepare me for the workforce.**

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The following questions ask about your confidence and experience with a number of different skills. Please answer these questions related to your life in general (e.g. includes personal life, work life, school life, extra-curricular activities etc.)

10. Thinking about your life in general, please indicate how confident you are with the following activities.

a. Thinking through and identifying causes of problems.

Not confident at all =1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Completely confident = 10	Prefer not to answer
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Figuring out how different ideas fit together.

Not confident at all =1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Completely confident = 10	Prefer not to answer
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

c. Considering viewpoints that are different from your own.

Not confident at all =1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Completely confident = 10	Prefer not to answer
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

d. Considering the pros and cons of different options and deciding which one is the best.

Not confident at all =1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Completely confident = 10	Prefer not to answer
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Thinking about your experience in groups (e.g. at school or work, sports teams, volunteering etc.), please indicate how confident you are with the following activities.

a. Working cooperatively in groups to complete tasks, projects, or activities.

Not confident at all =1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Completely confident = 10	Prefer not to answer
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Considering other people's perspectives in a group.

Not confident at all =1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Completely confident = 10	Prefer not to answer
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

c. Contributing your ideas and suggestions to a group.

Not confident at all =1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Completely confident = 10	Prefer not to answer
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

12. Thinking about your life in general (e.g. at work or school, sports teams, volunteering etc.), how often do you work in a group to complete tasks, projects, or activities?

Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Thinking about your life in general, please indicate how confident you are with the following activities.

a. Speaking or presenting in front of groups.

Not confident at all =1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Completely confident = 10	Prefer not to answer
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Expressing your ideas and thoughts through writing.

Not confident at all =1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Completely confident = 10	Prefer not to answer
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

c. Listening to others to understand their point of view.

Not confident at all =1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Completely confident = 10	Prefer not to answer
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

14. Please indicate how often you do each of the following activities.

a. Make speeches or give presentations in front of a group of people.

Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Advise people (e.g. clients, co-workers, classmates, teammates etc.)

Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

c. Persuade or influence people (e.g. clients, co-workers, classmates, teammates etc.)

Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. Thinking about your life in general, please indicate how confident you are with the following types of activities.

a. Brainstorming ideas in a group.

Not confident at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Completely confident = 10	Prefer not to answer
=1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Thinking "outside the box" and developing unique ideas.

Not confident at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Completely confident = 10	Prefer not to answer
=1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

16. Thinking about your life in general, please indicate the extent to which you think the following statements describe you.

a. Regardless of the obstacles, I finish whatever I begin.

Not like me at all	Not much like me	Somewhat like me	Mostly like me	Very much like me	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b. I am a hard worker

Not like me at all	Not much like me	Somewhat like me	Mostly like me	Very much like me	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

c. I get discouraged when I run into a setback.

Not like me at all	Not much like me	Somewhat like me	Mostly like me	Very much like me	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

d. I don't adapt to change very easily.

Not like me at all	Not much like me	Somewhat like me	Mostly like me	Very much like me	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The following questions ask you about your experience with technology and technological devices.

17. Thinking about technology (e.g. software programs) and technological devices (e.g. laptop, smartphone) please indicate how confident you are using technology for the following types of activities:

a. Managing and organizing information in spreadsheets.

Not confident at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Completely confident	Prefer not to answer
=1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	= 10	<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Creating and formatting documents (e.g. different font types, bullets, numbered lists, bolded and underlined text etc.)

Not confident at all	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Completely confident	Prefer not to answer
=1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	= 10	<input type="checkbox"/>

c. Using software to create slides and charts for presentations.

Not confident at all =1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Completely confident = 10	Prefer not to answer
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

18. Please indicate how often you do each of the following activities.

a. Use a computer or other personal device to create information, for example a Word document.

Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Create and use a spreadsheet to organize information, for example in Excel.

Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

c. Use the internet to buy or sell products and bank online.

Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

d. Use networking tools and cloud computing to complete a project, task, or activity (e.g. email, shared drives, the cloud).

Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

The following questions ask you about your experience with money.

19. How would you rate your level of financial knowledge?

- ☐ Not very knowledgeable
- ☐ Somewhat knowledgeable
- ☐ Very knowledgeable
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

20. How would you rate yourself on each of the following areas of financial management?

a. Keeping track of money.

Not relevant to me	Not very good	Fairly good	Good	Very good	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b. Saving money.

Not relevant to me	Not very good	Fairly good	Good	Very good	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

c. Knowing which financial products I need (e.g. bank account, credit card, loan, line of credit)

Not relevant to me	Not very good	Fairly good	Good	Very good	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

d. Investing money

Not relevant to me	Not very good	Fairly good	Good	Very good	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The following questions ask about your experience with this program.

21. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement. I feel better prepared for the workforce after participating in this program.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Prefer not to answer
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

22. Please add any additional information you'd like to share about your experience with this program (e.g. what you liked the best, what you would change etc.)

The following questions ask about you and your background.

23. Which of the following most closely reflects your gender identity?

☐ Male

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Not listed above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

24. In what country were you born?

- ☐ Canada [*PROCEED to Question 25*]
- ☐ Other [*PROCEED to Question 24*]
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

25. How long have you been living in Canada?

- ☐ More than five years
- ☐ Five years or less
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

26. Considering your own income and the income from any other people who help you, how would you describe your overall personal financial situation?

- ☐ Live comfortably
- ☐ Meet needs with a little left
- ☐ Just meet basic expenses
- ☐ Don't meet basic expenses

☐ Prefer not to answer

27. What kind of community do you live in?

☐ Remote

☐ Rural

☐ Suburban

☐ Urban

☐ On reserve

☐ Prefer not to answer

28. How would you describe yourself? (Select all that apply).

☐ First Nations

☐ Métis

☐ Inuit

☐ International Indigenous Peoples

☐ White

☐ South Asian (e.g. East Indian, Pakistani)

☐ Chinese

☐ Black

☐ Filipino

☐ Latin America

☐ Arab

☐ Southeast Asian (e.g. Vietnamese, Cambodian)

☐ West Asian (e.g. Iranian)

☐ Korean

- ☐ Japanese
- ☐ Not listed above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

29. Would you describe yourself as a person living with a disability (physical condition, mental condition, or health problem)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

30. Do you consider yourself to be a member of the LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Two-Spirited) community?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Questioning/Not sure
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**The following questions will help match your pre-survey with your post survey.
They will not be used to identify you in any way.**

31. Please indicate your initials (2 letters only)

- ☐ Prefer not to answer

32. On what day of the month were you born? (1 – 31)

☐ Prefer not to answer

99. RBC, in partnership with the University of Waterloo's Youth & Innovation Project, is studying how the programs we support impact young people such as yourself, as well as Canada's economy and society, over the long term. If you would like to volunteer to participate in this important research please enter your first name, last name, email address, and the first three letters of your postal code below.

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

First three letters of your postal code:

By providing your email address you understand that your responses will no longer be anonymous. You agree that RBC and the RBC Foundation can contact you about the following: (select all that apply)

- ☐ Relevant programs or opportunities offered by RBC, the RBC Foundation or its partners in which you may be interested.
- ☐ Opportunities to participate in research studies related to the programs we support.
- ☐ Opportunities to participate in RBC or RBC Foundation marketing and communications activities.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your feedback and responses are appreciated.

Appendix B: Wellness and Coaching Survey (Wellness Questionnaire)

Wellness Questionnaire

Please take the time to carefully complete this Wellness Questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 4 sections and takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. The information will be used to develop our Wellness and Coaching Groups. Your responses are anonymous and confidential.

1. Please provide a pseudonym (fake name) for yourself. We will ask you to remember this pseudonym at the end of this program in another survey.

Note: The pseudonym you pick will never be matched with your real name.

2. We will also need you to type in an anonymous code for your responses. This code will never be matched with your real name.

To create the code, please answer the following three questions:

- First letter of your elementary school's name
- Number of your older siblings
- Month you were born

For example: if you graduated from King Edward Elementary School (**K**), have no older siblings (**0**), and was born in **June**; then your response code would be: *K-0-June*

Please type in your response code below

3. What is your gender?

☐ Woman ☐ Man ☐ Non-Binary ☐ Prefer to self-identify ☐ Prefer not to answer

4. If you answered with "Prefer to self-identify" in the previous question, please enter your response below:

5. How many years have you completed in your program? *
- ___ Entering my first year ___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4+ ___ Prefer not to answer
6. What is your current major and minor (if applicable)?
- _____
7. How old are you?
- _____
8. I am aware of how my body responds to stress.
- ___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
9. I know effective ways to cope with stress.
- ___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
10. I'm aware of how my body responds to different emotions.
- ___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
11. I know healthy ways to identify and communicate my emotions.
- ___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
12. I recognize my thoughts and how they affect my emotions and behaviour. *
- ___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
13. I can track my thoughts and respond in wellness-enhancing ways. *
- ___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
14. I am aware of mental health and wellness resources available to me.
- ___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
15. I know how to access to mental health and wellness resources.
- ___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
16. I am able to maintain healthy boundaries in my relationships (for example, with family, friends, and coworkers).
- ___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree
17. In my relationships, I am able to resolve conflicts in a constructive manner.

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

18. I am able to identify different forms of microaggressions/anti-Black racism.

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

19. I have the tools (i.e., skills and resources) to manage microaggressions/anti-Black racism.

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

20. I am able to identify opportunities to advocate for myself or others.

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

21. I know how to advocate for myself and others (i.e., I have the skills and resources).

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

Section 2

Please take a few moments to focus on yourself and what is going on in your life at this moment. Once you have this "here and now" set, go ahead and answer each item according to the following scale:

1 = Definitely False, 2 = Mostly False, 3 = Somewhat False, 4 = Slightly False, 5 = Slightly True, 6 = Somewhat True, 7 = Mostly True, 8 = Definitely True.

22. If I should find myself in a jam, I could think of many ways to get out of it.

Definitely False 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Definitely True

23. At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my goals. *

Definitely False 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Definitely True

24. There are lots of ways around any problem that I am facing now. *

Definitely False 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Definitely True

25. Right now I see myself as being pretty successful. *

Definitely False 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Definitely True

26. I can think of many ways to reach my current goals. *

Definitely False 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Definitely True

27. At this time, I am meeting the goals that I have set for myself. *

Definitely False 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 Definitely True

Below, we ask you about the kind of experiences you actually have in your life. Please read each of the following items carefully. You can choose from 1 to 5 to indicate the degree to which the statement is true for you at this point in your life.

28. I feel a sense of choice and freedom in the things I undertake. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

29. Most of the things I do feel like “I have to”. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

30. I feel that the people I care about also care about me. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

31. I feel excluded from the group I want to belong to. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

32. I feel confident that I can do things well. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

33. I have serious doubts about whether I can do things well. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

34. I feel that my decisions reflect what I really want.

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

35. I feel forced to do many things I wouldn't choose to do. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

36. I feel connected with people who care for me, and for whom I care. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

37. I feel that people who are important to me are cold and distant towards me. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

38. I feel capable at what I do.

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

39. I feel disappointed with many of my performances. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

40. I feel my choices express who I really am. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

41. I feel pressured to do too many things. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

42. I feel close and connected with other people who are important to me.

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

43. I have the impression that people I spend time with dislike me. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

44. I feel competent to achieve my goals. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

45. I feel insecure about my abilities. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

46. I feel I have been doing what really interests me.

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

47. My daily activities feel like a chain of obligations. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

48. I experience a warm feeling with the people I spend time with. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

49. I feel the relationships I have are just superficial. *

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

50. I feel I can successfully complete difficult tasks.

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

51. I feel like a failure because of the mistakes I make.

Not True at all 1 2 3 4 5 Completely True

52. I have a career-related wellness goal that I would like to achieve through my internship.

___ Strongly Agree ___ Agree ___ Disagree ___ Strongly Disagree

53. What are some career-related wellness goals you hope to achieve through your internship?

54. Are there specific wellness topics or skills that you would like us to address in the Wellness Coaching Groups?

Appendix C: Entrepreneurship Design Series Evaluation Survey

Pre Program Survey:

About Myself:

1. A unique ID:
2. What is your age?
 - i. 16 & Under
 - ii. 17
 - iii. 18
 - iv. 19
 - v. 20
 - vi. 21
 - vii. 22
 - viii. 23 and above
3. Which of the following best describes the type of school or vocation training you are currently enrolled in?
 - i. High School
 - ii. Collège D'enseignement Général et Professionnel (CEGEP)
 - iii. Technical and/or vocational education (in school training for a skilled trade or occupation) working toward a certification, diploma or degree
 - iv. University, working towards an undergraduate degree
 - v. University, working towards a graduate degree
 - vi. Not enrolled in school, vocational training or employment
 - vii. Prefer not to answer
4. What is your highest level of education?
 - i. Less than high school
 - ii. High school diploma or equivalent
 - iii. Some post-secondary education
 - iv. Post secondary certificate, diploma or degree
 - v. Graduate degree
5. What is your field of study?
 - i. Health Sciences
 - ii. Agriculture Sciences
 - iii. Applied Sciences
 - iv. Business
 - v. Engineering
 - vi. Environmental Sciences
 - vii. Not Applicable
6. How do you identify? Male, Female, Binary, Two-spirited, other?

- i. Male
 - ii. Female
 - iii. Binary
 - iv. Non-Binary
 - v. Two-Spirited
 - vi. Other
 - vii. Prefer not to say
7. How long have you been living in Canada?
 - i. Less than a year
 - ii. 2-10 years
 - iii. 10+ years
8. In which country were you born?
 - i. Canada
 - ii. Other
 - iii. Prefer not to Say
9. How do you self-identify?
 - i. Black
 - ii. Other
 - iii. Prefer not to Say
10. Would you describe yourself as a person living with a disability (physical condition, mental condition, or health problem)?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. Prefer not to say
11. Before ELITE, have you ever participated in a practical work experience (education-related opportunities to gain work-relevant skills in real workplaces) (check all that apply)?
 - i. Yes, co-op
 - ii. Yes, internship
 - iii. Yes, apprenticeship
 - iv. Yes, others
 - v. No
12. What are the top 3 skills you find relevant for your career?
 - i. Communication skills
 - ii. Analytical and Research skills
 - iii. Flexibility/adaptability
 - iv. Interpersonal abilities
 - v. Problem solving skills

- vi. Attention to detail
 - vii. Leadership/management skills
13. Which of the following best describes your entrepreneurship experience?
- i. Founder or Co-founded a Venture
 - ii. Worked in a new venture
 - iii. Started a project within a larger organization
 - iv. No startup experience
14. Considering your personal and family income, how would you describe your overall financial situation?
- i. Live comfortably
 - ii. Meet needs little left
 - iii. Just meet basic expenses
 - iv. Don't meet basic expenses
 - v. Prefer not to answer
15. Which skills do you hope to gain from the Internship Program? (Select Top 3)
- i. Communication skills
 - ii. Analytical and Research Skills
 - iii. Flexibility/Adaptability
 - iv. Interpersonal Abilities
 - v. Ability to make decisions and solve problems
 - vi. Attention to detail
 - vii. Leadership/Management skills
16. What skills do you hope to gain from the Entrepreneurship Training Program? (Select Top 3)
- i. Business plan development
 - ii. Financial plan development
 - iii. Customer or product discovery
 - iv. Product, solution or service design
 - v. Sales and marketing
 - vi. Accounting and finance operations
 - vii. HR & business operations
17. Are you currently enrolled or plan to enroll in a STEM post-secondary program?
- i. Yes
 - ii. No

Belief

1. In your current job, do you feel confident enough to say you've mastered your current role? (1 least confident & 5 being most confident)
- i. 1
 - ii. 2

- iii. 3
 - iv. 4
 - v. 5
2. Do you feel your school program has prepared you enough for your current career? (1 least prepared & 5 being most prepared)
- i. 1
 - ii. 2
 - iii. 3
 - iv. 4
 - v. 5
3. What strengths do you bring to your current employment? If not employed, what strengths do you feel you can bring to your future job?
- i. Communication skills
 - ii. Organization and planning
 - iii. Initiative
 - iv. Teamwork
 - v. Problem Solving
 - vi. Self-awareness
 - vii. Leadership
4. Do you feel your current post-secondary education is relevant to your future career goal?
- i. Yes
 - ii. No
 - iii. Unsure
 - iv. Not applicable
5. How confident do you feel using digital programs such as Teams, Zoom, Outlook, and communicating virtually? On a scale from 1-5, with 1 being the lowest, 5 being the highest.
- i. 1
 - ii. 2
 - iii. 3
 - iv. 4
 - v. 5
6. Do you feel confident enough to say you have mastered the communication skills required for your prospective career? On a scale from 1-5, with 1 being the lowest, 5 being the highest.
- i. 1

- ii. 2
- iii. 3
- iv. 4
- v. 5

Work experience

- 7. Do you have experience working in a group environment?
 - i. Yes
 - ii. No
- 8. Which of the following examples of entrepreneurship experience have you had before?
(Select all that applies)
 - i. Business plan development
 - ii. Financial plan development
 - iii. Customer or product discovery
 - iv. Product, solution or service design
 - v. Sales and marketing
 - vi. Accounting and finance operation
 - vii. HR & business operations
- 9. Which of the following examples of career development tools have you used in the past?
(Select all that applies)
 - i. Use of self assessment tools to understand your strengths and interest
 - ii. Career expos, employer info session and industry career events
 - iii. i/nternship/volunteering in field of interest
 - iv. resume , cover letter, and interviewing workshops
 - v. Industry and professional association conferences
 - vi. Networking events and using LinkedIn to connect with industry professionals
 - vii. Request for information interview in industry/company of interest
- 10. Which of the following examples are strong communication skills you demonstrated, whether it be in your personal or work life? (Select all that applies)
 - i. Use of strong, confident speaking voice
 - ii. Use of active listening
 - iii. Notice how your emotions feel physically
 - iv. Be intentional about your nonverbal communications
 - v. Consider your audience
 - vi. Use visual to make things clear and easy to understand
 - vii. Strive for simplicity
 - viii. Take time to review your written communications
- 11. Which of the following examples of work experience activities have you participated in in the past? (Select all that applies)
 - i. Communication skills
 - ii. Organization and planning
 - iii. Initiative

- iv. Teamwork
- v. Problem solving
- vi. Self-awareness
- vii. Leadership

Entrepreneurship

1. How would you rate confidence in starting a new venture? (1 least confident & 5 being most confident)
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5
2. Ability to Execute Entrepreneurship
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5

Financial Literacy

1. How would you rate your level of financial knowledge? (1 least confident & 5 being most confident)
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5

Program Tools and Resources

2. How important are digital tools that allows multiple people to collaborate visually and problem-solve together (i.e. Miro, Mural, Notion, Google Suite)
 - a. Very important
 - b. Somewhat important
 - c. Not important
3. How important are digital tools that allow the user to automate gathering feedback or conducting surveys (i.e. Survey Monkey, Airtable, Google Forms, Microsoft Forms)
 - a. Very important
 - b. Somewhat important

- c. Not important
- 4. How important are digital tools that help you to design and prototype your product (i.e. Canva, Adobe XD, Figma)
 - a. Very important
 - b. Somewhat important
 - c. Not important
- 5. How do you usually purchase the tools you currently use?
 - a. Purchased at full price
 - b. Purchased using student discount
 - c. Only use freemium version
- 6. Please indicate the cost range of tools you can afford per tool.
- 7. Internship Opportunity
- 8. Business Finance and Administration

Post Program Survey

- 1. Unique ID
- 2. What top 3 skills do you hope to gain from the Entrepreneurship Training Program?
 - a. Business plan development
 - b. Customer or product discover
 - c. Financial plan development
 - d. Product, solution or service design
 - e. Sales and marketing
- 3. What are the top 3 skills you hope to gain from the Internship Program?
 - a. Flexibility/adaptability
 - b. Leadership/management skills
 - c. Attention to detail
 - d. Communication skills
 - e. Ability to make decisions and solve problems
 - f. Interpersonal abilities
 - g. Analytical and research skills
- 4. Which of the following examples of career development tools have you used in the past?
(Select all that applies)
 - a. Networking events and using LinkedIn to connect with industry professionals
 - b. Internship/Volunteering in field of interest
 - c. Career expos, employer info session and industry career events
 - d. Use of self assessment tools to understand your strengths and weaknesses
 - e. Resume, cover letter, and interviewing workshops
 - f. Request for information interview in industry/company of interest

5. Which of the following examples are strong communication skills you demonstrated, whether it be in your personal or work life? (Select all that applies)
- a. Use of active listening
 - b. Notice how your emotions feel physically
 - c. Use of strong, confident speaking voice
 - d. Use visuals to make things clear and easy to understand
 - e. Be intentional about your nonverbal communications
 - f. Take time to review your written communications
 - g. Consider your audience
 - h. Strive for simplicity

Entrepreneurship

1. How likely is it that you will use the knowledge acquired during the training program to start a business? (1 being the lowest likelihood, 5 being the highest likelihood)
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5
2. Has the training program been able to spark an idea that you could pursue in the future?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
3. Have you started a new venture since you completed the ELITE program?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
4. Have you enrolled in another entrepreneurship program since you completed the ELITE program?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
5. How would you rate your level of financial knowledge? (1 being least confident, 5 being most confident)
 - a. 1 - No increase
 - b. 2 - Slight increase
 - c. 3 - moderate increase
 - d. 4 - significant increase
 - e. 5 - High increase
6. Which aspects of the entrepreneurship curriculum did you find most useful? (Select all that apply)
7. How likely will you use the knowledge acquired during the financial literacy training? (1 least confident & 5 being most confident)

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4
- e. 5

Program Tools and Resources

- 1. I see myself using the tools provided for other tasks not carried out within the program
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 2. I used the tools provided for other tasks not carried out within the program
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
- 3. I continued paying for the tool even after the completion of the program
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

Program Satisfaction

- 1. How would you rate your satisfaction level with the entire program? (1 least satisfied & 5 being most satisfied)
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5
- 2. How would you rate your satisfaction level with the program facilitators? (1 least satisfied & 5 being most satisfied)
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5
- 3. How would you rate your satisfaction level with the program engagement? (1 least satisfied & 5 being most satisfied)
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5

4. How would you rate your satisfaction level with the program activities? (1 least satisfied & 5 being most satisfied)
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5
5. How would you rate your satisfaction level with the program curriculum? (1 least satisfied & 5 being most satisfied)
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5
6. How would you rate your satisfaction level with the program coaches and mentors? (1 least satisfied & 5 being most satisfied)
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5
1. On a scale of 1 to 5, how much has your willingness to participate in entrepreneurship increased since the start of the program?
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5
2. On a scale of 1 to 5, how much has your ability to execute an entrepreneurship venture improved since the beginning of the program?
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5
3. On a scale of 1 to 5, given that you dedicated 8+ hours weekly to entrepreneurship activities during the internship, how much did this influence your willingness and ability to engage in entrepreneurship compared to less time invested?
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3

- d. 4
 - e. 5
4. Given that this was a paid internship, how much did the financial compensation influence your commitment and engagement in learning and performing?
- a. No influence
 - b. Slight Influence
 - c. Moderate influence
 - d. High influence
5. Managing Business Finance
- a. No increase
 - b. Slight increase
 - c. Moderate increase
 - d. Significant increase

ELITE

Program for Black Youth

Entrepreneurship Design Series Playbook



Dipo Alli from the Black Business Ventures Association coaching ELITE Program interns in 2024

INPUTS

8-week entrepreneurship and leadership curriculum:

Personal and business financial literacy, problem generation, lean start-up methodologies, innovation strategies, business communication, and minimum viable product development

Delivery partners:

- Black Business Ventures Association and Edmonton Unlimited
- Mentors and facilitators
- Group coaches (*Industry experts in entrepreneurship*)

OUTCOMES

SHORT TERM:

Train and provide hands-on training in financial literacy, business communication, lean start-up methodologies, innovation strategies, entrepreneurship and start-up business creation. Improve participants' problem-solving skills and confidence in entrepreneurship.

LONG TERM

Participants advance in their careers, take on leadership roles, and increase the representation of Black entrepreneurs in Edmonton's tech and business sectors, pursue higher education and professional development opportunities.

Economic empowerment for Black youth.



ELITE Program interns and entrepreneurship coaches at Edmonton Unlimited

STRUCTURE & DELIVERY

SESSION LENGTH

full-day meetings, including lunch break once a week

- Lectures on theory of entrepreneurship
- Workshops to apply entrepreneurship concepts in real-time
- Team-based projects guided by primary coaches assigned to each group
- Regular feedback and refinement on venture ideas (*guidance through modules*)
- One-on-one mentoring

ACTIVITIES

- Hands-on training exercises and interactive workshops
- Networking events and guest speakers
- Assignments and team projects
- Mid-term intern presentation
- Final pitch presentations

GOALS

- Provide hands-on experience in business creation and entrepreneurship
- Enhance teamwork, enterprise creation, and financing strategies
- Enhance the practical skills (e.g. *communication and problem solving*), leadership skills, and entrepreneurial mindset of Black youth
- Empower Black youth to address barriers in entrepreneurship by building knowledge, skills, and networks
- Create a sense of community among Black youth and the larger Edmonton STEM and business communities

EVALUATION

Using quantitative surveys to:

- Assess the effectiveness of the curriculum in developing entrepreneurship skills
- Measure participants' confidence and ability to start and manage ventures
- Evaluate the relevance of the training to participants' future career goals
- Identify areas for program improvement based on participant feedback
- Track long-term outcomes (e.g. *business creation and entrepreneurial success*)
- Understand the overall satisfaction of participants with the program's structure and support systems

4-YEAR EVALUATION

85%

of interns had their skills enhanced through The Entrepreneurship Design Series

1 in 4 (26%)

were inspired to start an entrepreneurial venture

Skills

Skills most commonly gained were teamwork and collaboration skills, communication skills and leadership skills (82% of respondents)

Programme

ELITE

pour la jeunesse noire

Manuel sur la série d'activités sur l'entrepreneuriat

CONTRIBUTIONS

Programme de 8 semaines sur l'entrepreneuriat et le leadership :

Connaissances financières personnelles et professionnelles, génération de problèmes, méthodologies de start-up, stratégies d'innovation, communication commerciale et développement d'un produit minimum viable.

Partenaires de prestation :

- Black Business Ventures Association et Edmonton Unlimited
- Mentors et animateurs
- Coachs de groupe (experts du secteur de l'entrepreneuriat)

STRUCTURE ET LIVRAISON

DURÉE DE LA SESSION

réunions d'une journée entière une fois par semaine, avec une pause pour le dîner

- Séances sur la théorie de l'esprit entrepreneurial
- Ateliers pour appliquer les concepts de l'entrepreneuriat en temps réel
- Projets en équipe guidés par des coachs assignés à chaque groupe
- Rétroaction régulière et raffinement des idées d'entreprise (à l'aide des modules)
- Mentorat individuel



Dipo Ali de Black Business Ventures Association encadrant le Programme ELITE

ACTIVITÉS

- Exercices de formation pratiques et ateliers interactifs
- Événements de réseautage et conférenciers invité.e.s
- Travaux et projets d'équipe
- Présentations des stagiaires à mi-parcours
- Présentations finales



Stagiaires du Programme ELITE et coachs en entrepreneuriat à Edmonton Unlimited

OBJECTIFS

- Offrir une expérience pratique en développement d'entreprise et en entrepreneuriat
- Améliorer le travail d'équipe, la création d'entreprise et les stratégies de financement
- Améliorer les compétences pratiques (par ex. la communication et la résolution de problèmes), les compétences en leadership et l'esprit d'entreprise de la jeunesse noire
- Donner aux jeunes Noir.e.s les moyens pour surmonter les obstacles à l'entrepreneuriat en développant leurs connaissances, leurs compétences et leurs réseaux
- Créer un sentiment de communauté parmi les jeunes Noir.e.s et les communautés STIM et d'affaires d'Edmonton

RÉSULTATS SOUHAITÉS

COURT TERME

Former et fournir une formation pratique sur l'éducation financière, la communication d'entreprise, les méthodes de démarrage, les stratégies d'innovation, l'esprit d'entreprise et la création d'entreprises. Améliorer les compétences des participant.e.s en matière de résolution de problèmes et leur confiance dans leur esprit d'entreprise.

LONG TERME

Les participant.e.s progressent dans leur carrière, assument des rôles de leadership et augmentent la représentation des entrepreneurs noir.e.s dans les secteurs de la technologie et des affaires d'Edmonton, poursuivent des études supérieures et bénéficient d'opportunités de développement professionnel.

Autonomisation économique des jeunes Noir.e.s.

ÉVALUATION À 4 ANS

85%

des stagiaires ont vu leurs compétences améliorées grâce à la série d'activités sur l'entrepreneuriat.

1 stagiaire sur 4 (26%)

a été incité à lancer une opération entrepreneuriale

Compétences

Les compétences les plus couramment acquises sont les compétences en matière de travail d'équipe et de collaboration, les compétences en communication et en leadership (82% des répondants)

ÉVALUATION

Utiliser des sondages quantitatifs pour :

- Évaluer l'efficacité du programme d'études dans le développement des compétences entrepreneuriales
- Mesurer la confiance des participant.e.s et leur capacité à lancer et à gérer des entreprises
- Évaluer la pertinence de la formation par rapport aux objectifs professionnels futurs des participant.e.s
- Identifier les domaines d'amélioration du programme sur la base du retour d'information des participant.e.s
- Suivre les résultats à long terme (par exemple, la création d'entreprises et la réussite entrepreneuriale)
- Comprendre la satisfaction générale des participant.e.s à l'égard de la structure du programme et des systèmes de soutien.

ELITE

Program for Black Youth

Wellness & Coaching Series Playbook

ACTIVITIES

- Presentations to cover module topics
- Self-awareness and mindfulness exercises
- Experiential exercises (e.g. practicing scenarios in dyads)
- Homework activities/follow up exercises (e.g. grounding exercises, thought tracking)
- Mental health resources and self-care exercises
- Wellness goal development, planning and implementation

STRUCTURE & DELIVERY

SESSION LENGTH

Modules delivered bi-weekly over 2-3 hours

- Online group format (one session in person)
- Discussion of guidelines for creating "safe space" in the first session
- Bi-weekly check-in for self reflection on internship experiences
- Session activities
- Bi-weekly check-out for reflection on session learning
- One-on-one wellness goal coaching
- One-on-one mentoring

OUTCOMES

SHORT TERM:

"Interns understand the unique mental health challenges in workplace contexts, develop toolkits for maintaining mental health in workplace, and develop the ability to set measurable, attainable goals.

Interns also learn mental health supporting and coping skills, the benefits of wellness goal-setting, and importance of hope for a sustainable, satisfying career. "

GOALS

- To provide Black youth with mental health knowledge and skills
- Building capacity to navigate transitions in academic and professional life
- Provide access to mental health resources in a safe and supportive environment
- Empower Black youth to take care of their mental health and well-being
- Enhance hope and resiliency and cultivate strategies for managing and thriving in a workplace environment
- Create a safe place for students to share about and debrief from their internship experiences
- Encourage mental health and wellness literacy and offer opportunities to discuss and ask questions



ELITE Program interns gathered in an engagement circle



Intern Hamidat Bello communicating her results to a technical audience

INPUTS

8 modules for post-secondary interns 5 modules for high school interns

Group Development and Orientation, Stress Management and Resilience Building, Understanding and Emotions, Understanding Cognitive Processes, Understanding Anxiety and Depression, Addressing Anti-Black Racism and Microaggressions, Building Healthy Relationships, Advocacy for Self and the Others

- Facilitators for group session (two graduate counselling psychology students)
- One-on-one wellness coach (a graduate counselling psychology student)
- Evaluation research assistant (a graduate counselling psychology student)
- Program Lead and Supervisor (a registered psychologist and professor)

EVALUATION

Using quantitative surveys (pre- and post-measures) and qualitative semi-structured interviews to evaluate:

- Whether program content and delivery are associated with increased mental health knowledge and skills
- Whether the program content and delivery are associated with increased sense of hope
- Whether there's a relationship between hope levels and wellness goal-setting intent and capability
- Changes in basic psychological needs as an indicator of wellness

2-YEAR EVALUATION

Hope

Interns experienced significantly increased hope levels in relation to their goals.

4-YEAR EVALUATION

81%

The number of interns who developed mental health supporting skills and coping strategies for managing stress due to the Wellness & Coaching Series.

56%

Half (56%) of interns improved their ability to manage microaggressions and anti-black racism.

LONG TERM

Cultivating a sense of ongoing curiosity about strategies to enhance personal mental health in workplace contexts. Building students' wellness and mental health knowledge and skill foundation to be applied across various workplace contexts.

Bolstering students' confidence in their ability to set wellness goals in various workplace contexts. Building students' confidence in their ability to access mental health services and supports.

Programme

ELITE

pour la jeunesse noire

Manuel sur la série d'activités sur le bien-être et l'encadrement



Les stagiaires du Programme ELITE réuni.e.s dans un cercle d'engagement

CONTRIBUTIONS

8 modules pour les stagiaires postsecondaires

5 modules pour les stagiaires du secondaire

Développement et orientation de groupe, gestion du stress et renforcement de la résilience, Émotions et corps, comprendre les processus cognitifs, comprendre l'anxiété et la dépression, aborder le racisme anti-noir et les microagressions, établir des relations saines, Protection de soi et des autres

- Responsables pour les séances de groupe (*deux étudiant.e.s gradué.e.s en psychologie du conseil*)
- Coach de bien-être individuel (*un étudiant gradué en psychologie du conseil*)
- Assistant de recherche pour l'évaluation (*un étudiant gradué en psychologie du conseil*)
- Superviseure (*une psychologue agréée et professeure*)

OBJECTIFS

- Fournir aux jeunes Noir.e.s des connaissances et des compétences en matière de santé mentale
- Renforcer la capacité à gérer les transitions dans la vie académique et professionnelle
- Fournir un accès aux ressources en santé mentale dans un environnement sûr et solidaire
- Donner aux jeunes Noir.e.s les moyens de prendre en charge leur santé mentale et leur bien-être
- Renforcer l'espoir, la résilience et cultiver des stratégies de gestion et d'épanouissement dans un lieu de travail
- Créer un lieu sûr pour que les étudiant.e.s puissent partager leurs expériences de stage et en faire le bilan.
- Encourager les connaissances en matière de santé mentale et de bien-être et offrir des opportunités de discuter et de poser des questions



La stagiaire Hamidat Bello communique ses résultats à un public cible

ACTIVITÉS

- Présentations couvrant les thèmes des modules
- Exercices de connaissance de soi et de pleine conscience
- Exercices expérimentaux (*par ex. pratiquer des scénarios en dyades*)
- Activités à domicile/exercices de suivi (*par ex. exercices d'ancrage, suivi des idées*)
- Ressources de santé mentale et exercices de soins personnels
- Développement, planification et mise en œuvre d'objectifs de bien-être

STRUCTURE ET LIVRAISON

DURÉE DE LA SESSION

modules dispensés toutes les deux semaines sur une durée de 2 à 3 heures

- Format de groupe en ligne (*une séance en personne*)
- Discussion des lignes directrices pour créer un « espace sûr » lors de la première séance
- Bilan bimensuel pour une auto-réflexion sur les expériences de stage
- Activités de rétroactions
- Bilan bimensuel pour une réflexion sur l'apprentissage des rétroactions
- Encadrement individuel sur les objectifs de bien-être
- Mentorat individuel

RÉSULTATS SOUHAITÉS

COURT TERME

« Les stagiaires comprennent les défis uniques de la santé mentale dans les contextes professionnels, développent des outils pour maintenir la santé mentale sur le lieu de travail et développent la capacité à fixer des objectifs quantifiables et réalisables.

Les stagiaires apprennent également des techniques de soutien et d'adaptation en matière de santé mentale, les bénéfices de fixer des objectifs de bien-être et l'importance de l'espérance pour une carrière viable et gratifiante. »

LONG TERME

Cultiver un sens de curiosité continue à l'égard des stratégies visant à améliorer la santé mentale personnelle dans les contextes de travail. Développer les connaissances et les compétences de base des étudiant.e.s en matière de bien-être et de santé mentale à appliquer dans divers contextes de travail.

Renforcer la confiance des étudiant.e.s dans leur capacité à fixer des objectifs de bien-être dans divers contextes de travail. Renforcer la confiance des étudiant.e.s dans leur capacité à accéder aux services et au soutien en matière de santé mentale.

ÉVALUATION

À l'aide de sondages quantitatifs (*mesures avant et après*) et des entrevues qualitatives semi-structurées, nous avons évalué :

- Si le contenu et l'exécution du programme sont associés à l'amélioration des connaissances et des compétences en matière de santé mentale
- Si le contenu et la prestation du programme sont associés à une hausse du sentiment d'espérance
- S'il existe une relation entre les niveaux de l'espérance et l'intention et la capacité de se fixer des objectifs de bien-être.
- L'évolution des besoins psychologiques fondamentaux en tant qu'indicateur de bien-être.

ÉVALUATION À 4 ANS

81%

Le nombre de stagiaires ayant développé des compétences en matière de santé mentale et des stratégies d'adaptation pour gérer le stress grâce à la série sur le bien-être et le coaching.

56%

La moitié (56%) des stagiaires ont amélioré leur capacité à gérer les microagressions et le racisme anti-noir.

ÉVALUATION SUR 2 ANS

Espoir

Les stagiaires ont connu une augmentation significative de leur niveau d'espérance par rapport à leurs objectifs.



Appendix H. Wellness and Coaching Series Exit interview Guide

Exit Interview Guide

Probes are indicated by lettered subquestions under each numbered question.

Interviewer Instructions:

Invite participants to bring any materials (e.g. journey maps/reflections) that would be helpful for recalling their experiences with the Wellness and Coaching series.

General Perceptions of the ELITE Wellness and Coaching Series:

1. Tell me about your experience in the Wellness and Coaching groups?
 - a. What have been the most positive/challenging aspects of the groups for you?
2. How did the fact that the program lasted 8 sessions (specify session number according to the cohort) impact your experience?
 - a. Would you have preferred more/less time or more/less frequent meetings? Do you have any feedback on time
3. Was this a welcoming and inclusive space for you in terms of how you identify yourself? For example, in regards to your gender, sexuality, race, etc.?
 - a. Ask more about specific identities; if none, what could have been done to support you or make you feel more welcomed?
 - i. What made the space feel welcoming?
 - ii. In what ways could the Wellness groups be more inclusive?

Questions from the Wellness Sessions:

1. Did your mental health knowledge increase throughout the sessions? In what ways?
2. What information covered in the sessions was most/least meaningful, relevant, and/or helpful?
3. Have you applied the content to your life/internship experience? What content has been easiest/most difficult to translate?
4. How did you find the process of setting a wellness goal? Were you able to achieve your wellness goal?
 - a. Was the goal-setting instruction clear and easy to follow?
 - b. If yes, what was particularly helpful in achieving this goal?
 - c. If not, what do you think would have been helpful for you to achieve your goal?
5. Have you accessed resources shared through the program? If so, what resources have been useful?
 - a. How did you use them?
 - b. Were emailed resources valuable?

Journey Mapping/Reflections:

Note that “journey mapping” was introduced and referred to as “reflections” throughout the sessions by the Wellness Coach.

1. How did you find the reflection experience?
 - a. Was it helpful for you to track your experience in the program?
 - b. What did you like/not like about reflections?
 - c. Did you feel you had adequate time for reflections?
2. Was there anything you would like to share from your reflections?

Hope:

1. What does hope look like for you?
 - a. How do you see this being relevant for you in your career journey?
2. What aspects of your identity contribute most strongly to your perceptions of hope and what you hope for?
 - a. The ELITE program aims to create a welcoming space for intersecting identities. Do you have any other identities (i.e. racial, gender, sexual, religious/spiritual, etc.) that affect what you hope for?
3. Do you feel your personal hope levels or perspective on hope changed throughout the program? In what ways?

Perceptions of Mental Wellness:

1. What does mental wellness currently mean to you?
2. What do you do to promote or manage your mental health and well-being?
3. Where or from whom do you receive mental wellness support?
4. What barriers do youth face in reaching out to mental wellness supports and resources in Alberta?
 - a. Do you perceive stigma about reaching out for help? What contributes to this?

Program Recommendations:

1. What recommendations do you have for the ELITE wellness and coaching program?
2. What recommendations do you have for mental health practitioners? (counsellors, social workers, campus supports, etc.)
 - a. Is there anything specific that practitioners in educational settings should be aware of?
3. What recommendations do you have for policymakers to improve the mental wellness of Black Canadian youth?

- a. Is there anything specific that policymakers in educational settings should be aware of?
(e.g. in the context of the internship program, policymakers can influence fund allocation and program direction decisions)

General/Closing:

1. Do you have any further comments about the program?
2. Is there anything else you would like to add
3. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix I: The ELITE Program's Logic Model

Problem: Black Canadians are underrepresented among innovators and professionals in high-wage emerging technology areas of work, and this creates a systemic barrier to their socio-economic upward mobility. The ELITE Program aims to support Black youth to generate hands-on skills, knowledge, and resilience, which will translate to pathways for STEM related work careers in high wage professions.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Funding: \$3,098,530 <i>Sponsored by Foundations, Consortia, Government, UofA, Scholarships/Fellowships, Industry</i> Training Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UofA – Faculties of Engineering, Science, Medicine and Dentistry, Augustana Campus, and Campus Saint-Jean InnoTech Alberta Alberta Health Services 30+ for-profit internship hosts Program Design Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UofA – Faculty of Education (<i>Wellness & coaching series</i>) RBCx (<i>Entrepreneurship training design</i>) Black Business Ventures Association Edmonton Unlimited Program Staff Who works to run the program? Numbers? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 student workers (Wellness coaches, PhD student mentors, Communications coordinators, Program managers, and English-French translators) 44 Volunteers (<i>2022 only</i>) (Professional researchers, Scientists, Industry practitioners, Internship hosts and Coaches in Entrepreneurship series) 	Paid Internships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8-16 weeks of primarily full-time internship work Work-integrated learning in various STEM fields Entrepreneurship & Leadership Training (E&LT) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teamwork activities Pitch presentations Entrepreneurship training Enterprise (start-up business) creation training Financing strategies for entrepreneurs training Wellness & Coaching Series (W&CS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellness goal setting Mental health knowledge and skills training Wellness goals coaching Anti-Black racism/microaggression management and advocacy training 	Paid Internships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 132 interns between ages 15-22 Paid work for 62 students (50 interns and 12 program staff) (<i>2022 only</i>) 3520 hours of work from volunteers (<i>2022 only</i>) 52 high school students 80 undergraduate students E&LT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 64 hours of E&L training over 8 weeks (<i>2023 only</i>) 135 students W&CS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 45 sessions of wellness and coaching (140 hours) across three cohorts (31 sessions for undergraduate and 14 for high school) 114 students completed W&CS (66 Undergraduate, 48 High school) across three cohorts Created 8 modules of wellness and coaching series 3 W&CS program reports 3 W&CS evaluation reports One on one coaching sessions 	Internships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved STEM-related knowledge/skills through work-integrated learning or experiential learning Improved professional networks Feel more prepared to join workforce Increased job readiness E&LT ? (RBC impact report 2022): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved Critical thinking Complex problem solving Social perceptiveness Financial literacy Information communication technology/digital literacy Teamwork and collaboration Communication Creativity and innovation Adaptability W&CS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased mental health and wellness literacy Develop mental health-supporting skills and coping strategies Improve ability to manage transitions in academic and professional life Improve ability to manage microaggressions Knowledge of how to advocate for self and the others 	Educational <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learned knowledge and skills will contribute to job-readiness for Black youth Black youth will be more equipped to navigate challenges in STEM career/entrepreneurship pursuits Recognizing the need for higher education in entrepreneurship in the technology space, More Black youth will seek education in undergraduate and graduate/professional schools Economic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More Black Canadian youth will acquire job opportunities in STEM fields or pursue start-up business ideas Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black youth will be more prepared to access high wage professions or embark on entrepreneurial endeavours Reduction on youth unemployment in Alberta Psychological <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased resilience in academic and professional life Black Youth utilize mental health and wellness skills in various workplace contexts

Appendix J: Job Readiness Questionnaire (External Evaluation Questionnaire)

Job Readiness Questionnaire

1. What cohort(s) of the ELITE Program did you complete?

Please select all that apply.

- ☐ ELITE Assistants (high school cohort)
- ☐ ELITE Associates (undergraduate cohort)
- ☐ Did not complete the ELITE Program

2. What year did you complete the ELITE Assistants Program (high school cohort)?

- ☐ 2021
- ☐ 2022
- ☐ 2023
- ☐ 2024
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

3. What year did you complete the ELITE Associates Program (undergraduate cohort)?

- ☐ 2021
- ☐ 2022
- ☐ 2023
- ☐ 2024
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

4. What is your employment status?

- ☐ Currently not working and not seeking employment
- ☐ Seeking employment in STEM fields
- ☐ Seeking employment outside of STEM fields
- ☐ Working in a STEM-related job position
- ☐ Working in a job position outside of STEM fields
- ☐ Working as a graduate teaching/research assistant
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

5. Since completing the ELITE Program, have you:

Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Applied to STEM-related internship positions
- ☐ Applied to STEM-related employment positions
- ☐ Applied to a college or university undergraduate program
- ☐ Applied to graduate school (such as a master's or PhD)
- ☐ Applied to a professional school
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

6. Since completing the ELITE Program, have you:

Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Began a STEM-related internship
- ☐ Worked in STEM-related employment
- ☐ Started a college or university undergraduate program
- ☐ Started graduate school (such as a master's or PhD)
- ☐ Got a scholarship or a fellowship
- ☐ Started a program at a professional school
- ☐ Started an entrepreneurial venture
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

If applied to or started a college or university program

7. Is your area of study STEM-related?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

8. When you consider your pursuit of STEM careers, which of the following challenges have been most relevant to your experience?

Select all that apply

- ☐ Lack of education/training opportunities
- ☐ Funding difficulties
- ☐ Lack of career guidance
- ☐ Lack of internship opportunities
- ☐ Lack of a professional network
- ☐ Racial or ethnic discrimination
- ☐ Gender discrimination
- ☐ A language barrier
- ☐ Lack of inclusive workspaces
- ☐ Having few or no role models
- ☐ Other. Please describe: _____
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Strengths and Resources in Pursuing STEM Careers

9. When you consider your skills, knowledge, strengths and resources, which have been helpful to pursue your career goals so far?

Select all that apply

- ☐ Hope
- ☐ Resilience
- ☐ Social support from my friends and family
- ☐ Social support from my community
- ☐ Role models or mentors
- ☐ School/University education
- ☐ Learning from internships or work-integrated training
- ☐ Physical/mental wellness skills and knowledge

- ☐ Other. Please describe: _____
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Skills and knowledge acquisition (program-specific effects on essential and technical skills)

10. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements about the ELITE Program.

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)	Prefer not to answer (99)
a. The internship experience made me more job-ready	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. The Entrepreneurship Design Series enhanced my business skills or knowledge	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. The Wellness and Coaching Series supported me to grow as an individual	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. In what ways was internship experience helpful?

Select all that apply

- ☐ Improved my technical knowledge (such as engineering analysis, scientific research, artificial intelligence)
- ☐ Improved my technical skills (such as engineering analysis, scientific research, artificial intelligence)
- ☐ Improved my “soft” skills (such as public speaking, adaptability, communication)
- ☐ Increased my confidence
- ☐ Helped me grow my professional network
- ☐ Improved my capacity to navigate challenges in pursuing a career
- ☐ Helped me feel more prepared to join the workforce
- ☐ Other. Please describe: _____
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Ask Q12 if the Entrepreneurship Design Series enhanced their business skills (Q10b=4,5)

12. In what ways was the Entrepreneurship Design Series helpful?

Select all that apply

- ☐ Improved my knowledge of financing strategies (1)
- ☐ Increased my understanding of steps to start-up a business (2)
- ☐ Improved my teamwork and collaboration skills (3)
- ☐ Improved my communication skills (such as pitching and negotiation, oral presentation, writing skills) (4)
- ☐ Improved my leadership skills (such as engaging with people, training others, creating a vision and plan, leading projects and tasks, listening to others carefully) (5)
- ☐ Helped me develop my entrepreneurial skills (6)
- ☐ Inspired me to start an entrepreneurial venture (7)
- ☐ Other. Please describe: _____ (500-character limit) (77)
- ☐ None of the above (88)x
- ☐ Prefer not to answer (99)x

13. In what ways was the Wellness and Coaching Series helpful?

Select all that apply

- ☐ Helped me develop mental health supporting skills and coping strategies for managing stress
- ☐ Improved my ability to manage transitions in my academic and/or professional life
- ☐ Improved my ability to manage microaggressions and anti-Black racism
- ☐ Improved my knowledge of how to advocate for myself and others
- ☐ Improved my knowledge of how to access mental health supports and services when needed
- ☐ Helped me develop skills for setting and working towards a wellness goal
- ☐ Other. Please describe: _____
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Career/Job Readiness Questions:

14. Please indicate whether you agree with the following statements about capacities developed through the ELITE Program.

Leadership skills	Agree (1)	Disagree (2)	Prefer not to answer (99)
The ELITE Program improved my ability to motivate and encourage myself and others toward a shared goal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After completing the ELITE Program, I feel more confident to serve as a role model when approaching tasks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program improved my skills on planning, initiating, and managing projects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program inspired me to make use of innovative thinking and go beyond traditional methods in my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Teamwork skills	Agree (1)	Disagree (2)	Prefer not to answer
The ELITE Program improved my ability to collaborate with others in a team to achieve common goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program helped me improve the ability to compromise within teamwork.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program helped me improve the ability to manage conflicts and respect diverse personalities in work teams.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After completing the ELITE Program, I feel more comfortable taking team responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Technological skills	Agree (1)	Disagree (2)	Prefer not to answer (99)
The ELITE Program inspired me to follow and adapt to new technological developments in my area.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The ELITE Program improved my ability to identifying the appropriate technology to accomplish tasks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program inspired me to use technology to increase efficiency in my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Communication skills	Agree (1)	Disagree (2)	Prefer not to answer (99)
Since completing the ELITE Program, I feel more confident in my communication skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program improved my ability to communicate my ideas and thoughts with others clearly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program improved my ability to ask the right asking questions to my supervisors or colleagues to learn the specific information I need.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program improved my ability to address issues when working with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Critical Thinking	Agree (1)	Disagree (2)	Prefer not to answer (99)
The ELITE Program helped me improve my skills in gathering and organizing information from diverse sources to solve problems.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program inspired me to be mindful of personal biases when analyzing data from different sources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program helped me with utilizing multitasking and prioritizing skills in fast-paced environments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. Thinking again about the ELITE Program overall, please indicate whether you agree with the following statements about capacities developed through the program.

Equity and Inclusion	Agree (1)	Disagree (2)	Prefer not to answer (99)
The ELITE Program improved my ability to identify and address barriers related to racism, biases, and inequities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program inspired me to keep an open mind to diverse ideas and new ways of thinking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program improved my ability to incorporate multiple cultural perspectives to my professional activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program inspired me to advocate for inclusion, equitable practices, justice, and empowerment for marginalized communities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

16. Thinking about the ELITE Program overall, please indicate whether you agree with the following statements about capacities developed through the program.

Career & Self-development	Agree (1)	Disagree (2)	Prefer not to answer (99)
The ELITE Program helped me be mindful of my career-related strengths and areas of development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program inspired me to seek opportunities for learning or developing career-related skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE program inspired me to develop career plans for my professional goals.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program helped me to create and maintain contact with people in my area who can help me professionally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Professionalism	Agree (1)	Disagree (2)	Prefer not to answer (99)
The ELITE Program helped me be mindful of being present and prepared for work tasks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program inspired me to act with integrity toward myself, my colleagues, and organizations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ELITE Program helped me feel prepared to join the work force in my interest area.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Demographics

17. How old are you now?

18. Do you belong to any of the following equity-deserving groups?

Select all that apply

- ☐ Women
- ☐ LGBTQ2S+
- ☐ Newcomers/immigrants
- ☐ Persons of color
- ☐ Indigenous peoples, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit
- ☐ Persons with disability
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

19. Which most closely describes your race/ethnicity?

Select all that apply

- ☐ Black
- ☐ Arab
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Filipino
- ☐ Japanese

- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Latin American
- ☐ South Asian (including East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)
- ☐ Southeast Asian (including Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai)
- ☐ West Asian (including Iranian, Afghan)
- ☐ White
- ☐ First Nations
- ☐ Métis
- ☐ Inuk (Inuit)
- ☐ Other Indigenous community
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

(selected Black for race/ethnicity)

20. With which of the following Black ethnicities do you identify?

Select all that apply

- ☐ African Canadian Descent
- ☐ African
- ☐ Afro-Caribbean
- ☐ African American
- ☐ Afro-Latin
- ☐ Another (please specify): _____
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

21. What is the highest level of education you have obtained?

- ☐ Some high school
- ☐ High school diploma
- ☐ Some college or university

- ☐ College diploma
- ☐ University degree
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

22. What did you study?

Select all that apply.

- ☐ Agriculture, Animal & Related Practices
- ☐ Arts & Culture
- ☐ Business, Finance & Administration
- ☐ Career & Preparation
- ☐ Computers & Telecommunications
- ☐ Culinary, Hospitality, Recreation & Tourism
- ☐ Education, Community & Social Services
- ☐ Energy, Environmental & Natural Resources
- ☐ Engineering & technology
- ☐ Fire, Justice & Security
- ☐ Health, Food & Medical
- ☐ Media
- ☐ Professions & Trades
- ☐ Transportation & Logistics
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Appendix K. External Evaluation Participant Interview Protocol

Semi-structured Interview Guide for Participants

1. Which parts of the ELITE Program did you complete? Probe: ELITE Assistants (high school), or ELITE Associates (university), or both?
 - a) When (what year) was that?
2. Was the internship you did as part of the ELITE Program good preparation for working in STEM?
 - a) What was useful about it?
 - b) What would have improved it?
3. Have the interpersonal relationship skills covered in the ELITE Program been helpful? If so, how?
4. When you consider the skills, knowledge, strengths and resources of the ELITE Program, which have been most helpful to pursue your career goals so far?
5. What aspects of the program stand out to you as having a lasting effect on your work life?
6. What has been your experience in STEM since participating in the ELITE Program?
 - a. If participating in STEM: How did the ELITE Program prepare you for those experiences?
 - b. What challenges have you experienced?
7. What else have you been up to since completing the ELITE Program internship?
 - a) How well did that work out for you?
 - b) How did the ELITE Program influence what you pursued following the program?
 - c) How did the ELITE Program help you get where you are now?
8. How interested are you in pursuing a STEM career?
9. If interested in pursuing a STEM career, what challenges do you expect with pursuing a STEM career?
 - a. How has the ELITE Program helped with how you address those challenges?
10. In your opinion, what other resources or training could the ELITE Program offer to support students' career pursuits in STEM areas?

Appendix L. External Evaluation Program Staff/Partner Interview Protocol

Semi-structured Interview Guide for Staff and/or Partners

1. What was your (or your organization's) role with the ELITE Program for Black Youth?
 - a. For how long have/did you held/hold this role?
2. Why was this program needed?
 - a. What lessons can be drawn from how the program developed in response to these needs that can be shared with others in the skills development sector?
3. What have you learned about getting Black youth job ready for STEM careers from **the internship portion** of the program?
 - a. What went well?
 - b. What could be improved?
4. What have you learned about getting Black youth job ready from **the entrepreneurship portion** of the program?
 - a. What went well?
 - b. What could be improved?
5. What have you learned about getting Black youth job ready from **the wellness and coaching portion** of the program?
 - a. What went well?
 - b. What could be improved?
6. What are the greatest strengths of the ELITE Program?
7. What other changes would you recommend to make the program even more effective at getting Black youth job ready?

Appendix M: Malatest's Evaluation Matrix for The ELITE Program

Key Learning Questions (including FSC Strategic Questions)	Sub-questions	Key Metrics (disaggregated where possible)	Data Collection Methods & Sources (including target pop. where relevant)
What works, for whom and in what context to improve labour market outcomes for Black youth? (FSC thematic priority question for Black Youth, Q1)			
What skills, knowledge, resources, and strengths obtained during the ELITE Program were helpful for managing the challenges encountered during the transition to work life?	To what degree did the skills, knowledge, and resources provided help participants manage challenges in transitioning to work life?	Extent to which participants found the Entrepreneurship and Leadership Training prepared them for work in STEM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant surveys • Semi structured interviews with participants
	How resilient are the cohorts of the program?	Brief Resilience Scale (matrix of for measuring resilience)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant surveys
What additional skills, knowledge, resources, and strengths can make transition to work life easier?	What supports beyond those provided by the program have helped the most with transitioning to work?	Perceptions of participants about what outside supports were most helpful in transitioning to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant surveys • Semi structured interviews with participants
	What additional supports that have not been available would be helpful in transitioning to work?	Perceptions of participants about what additional supports might be helpful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant surveys • Semi structured interviews with participants

Key Learning Questions (including FSC Strategic Questions)	Sub-questions	Key Metrics (disaggregated where possible)	Data Collection Methods & Sources (including target pop. where relevant)
How does the experience obtained through the ELITE Program affect Black youths' career pursuit over the years after the Program?	What have the career outcomes of previous cohorts been? (Are they employed, in what field)	Career trajectory (additional training pursued), employment status since completing the program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant surveys • Semi structured interviews with participants
	Which training and supports have participants found the most useful in obtaining and retaining employment?	Relative influence of different supports (wellness and coaching, entrepreneurship and leadership training, paid internship) over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant surveys • Semi structured interviews with participants
		Comparison with nonparticipants (was not possible in the end)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonparticipant survey
How have the targeted wrap-around activities offered by the ELITE Program supported youths' transition to work life?	To what extent have the supports offered by the program helped participants transition to work life?	Perceived usefulness of the Wellness and Coaching Series in supporting their transition to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant surveys • Semi structured interviews with participants
What works, for whom and in what context to address anti-Black racism in workplaces and skills and training organizations? (FSC thematic priority question for Black Youth, Q2)			
What are some of the challenges for Black youth seeking STEM careers during their transition to work life? (i.e., employment search,	How useful was the paid internship opportunity in transitioning to work?	Perceived usefulness of the paid internship in transitioning to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant surveys • Semi structured interviews with participants

Key Learning Questions (including FSC Strategic Questions)	Sub-questions	Key Metrics (disaggregated where possible)	Data Collection Methods & Sources (including target pop. where relevant)
early years of work experience)		Perceived usefulness of the paid internship in transitioning to work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant surveys • Semi structured interviews with participants
	What challenges remain for Black youth pursuing STEM careers?	Perceptions of participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant surveys • Semi structured interviews with participants
What is unique about the design and execution of the ELITE Program that makes it effective in supporting Black youth in overcoming these challenges?	What innovations in content delivery and design are incorporated into the ELITE Program that help support Black youth?	Perceptions of ELITE staff and content delivery partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with staff and content delivery partners
How do we mobilize knowledge about what works to improve labour market outcomes for Black youth and to address anti-Black racism in workplaces and skills and training organizations? (FSC thematic priority question for Black Youth, Q3)			
What recommendations for improving support programs for Black youth emerge from evaluating ELITE's program?	What are the key findings from the evaluation?	Analysis of indicators listed above	Synthesis of above methods
What lessons learned from the ELITE Program can be shared to improve similar programs?	What key findings from the evaluation might apply to other similar programs?	Perceptions of ELITE staff and content delivery partners	Interviews with staff and content delivery partners