





Scaling Purpose Homes

Final evaluation

March 2026

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Winnipeg – and Canada more broadly – there are severe shortages of affordable housing, particularly in inner city environments. While there is a need for more skilled workers in the construction trades, as a part of a solution to address housing shortages, there are barriers to employment for many equity-deserving groups access training and employment within the sector. Purpose Construction is a social enterprise that provides pre-apprenticeship skilled trades training to equity-deserving groups and employs many of their trainees in construction projects to develop non-market housing (or improve the living conditions in existing non-market housing) within the community.

In this project, we evaluated Purpose's training program, following the journeys of one cohort of Indigenous learners. Of the seven learners that completed the training, five were employed by the end of the evaluation. In addition to training completion and employment rates we also explored less tangible outcomes. In a photovoice evaluation, learners reported increased feelings of confidence, motivation, increased community engagement, engagement with cultural learnings, strengthened social support systems, and successful re-engagement with training and work after prolonged separation from labour market.

We also conducted qualitative research with local employers, union representatives, service providers, and Purpose board members to better understand the value Purpose provides to community through training skilled workers and generating housing. Local service providers shared that Purpose serves a unique need by providing supportive, low-barrier training opportunities for learners that face multiple and complex challenges. Employers and union representatives provided useful insights into skill and labour needs within the local labour market, which Purpose will use to inform future training delivery.

The training model was successful in connecting multi-barriered individuals to skilled trades employment. Based on the results of this project, we identified factors that support Purpose's successful training of learners and identified opportunities for future expansion and development.

KEY INSIGHTS

Key insights from this project:

- Over the last several cohorts, 77 per cent of learners that completed the training program obtained skilled trades employment. In the cohort evaluated in this project, five of the seven program graduates have already found employment in the first weeks after training completion.
- Training stipends, comprehensive wraparound supports, and a trauma-informed training model made it possible for multi-barriered individuals with complex needs to gain skills and transition to full-time skilled trades employment.
- Purpose's in-house employment model was a major factor in their success transitioning learners from groups underrepresented in the labour market into full-time employment, as learners were able to continue accessing supports and were not exposed to the discrimination that is present on some job sites.
- Consultations with Purpose Construction staff, a local employer, and a local union representative suggested that micro-credentials are not recognized unless the training is accredited and the delivery provider is known and trusted by employers. Training providers may not be adding practical value by offering micro-credentials unless they are able to go through full accreditation process and generate buy-in from local employers.

THE ISSUE

The project "Scaling Purpose Homes" addressed four interconnected issues:

- severe shortages of affordable housing in Winnipeg's inner city;
- major employment barriers in construction trades for marginalized groups, especially Indigenous individuals facing systemic discrimination;
- a growing skilled labour shortage in the construction sector; and
- the need for construction to prepare for a low-carbon economy.

As outlined in the recently announced federal budget, investments in infrastructure and housing projects will increase the already high demand for skilled trades workers. It will be imperative to increase training opportunities to meet the demand for this work, and to develop training models that successfully connect job seekers to relevant employment. In particular, there is a need for training programs that are successful in retaining marginalized learners and supporting those distant from labour market in gaining skills and transitioning into employment.

Purpose Construction, a social enterprise, addresses these four issues through creating an "ecosystem" of housing development, training, and employment. As a housing developer, Purpose addresses critical community needs by building environmentally friendly, multi-generational, rent-to-own homes. Their housing development work is concentrated in Winnipeg's North Point Douglas neighbourhood, a residential area with a high housing need. In our consultations with board members and staff, we heard that many traditional developers are not investing in housing development in this area due to lack of profitability. As a result, Purpose faces little direct competition as a housing developer while addressing an acute need for affordable housing within the area.

As a training provider, they provide access to training to learners distant from the labour market. These learners access hands-on training with wraparound supports, in a trauma- and culturally- informed environment. The supports enable learners to overcome barriers to participation and allow Purpose to support those furthest from employment. As an employer, Purpose hires many of the training graduates, and employs them in housing development or maintenance and repair projects. Employees work within the local community, increasing access to safe, affordable housing.

In summary, this "ecosystem" helps multi-barriered individuals engage in training, find employment, and increase access to housing within the community. This evaluation focuses on Purpose Constructions' training model, which provides hands-on skilled trades training to

individuals distant from the labour market and connects them to employment opportunities. Through the evaluation, we identify elements that support the success of the program, with a view to identifying key characteristics to support future upscaling and replication of the model.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Purpose Construction is a Winnipeg-based social enterprise dedicated to providing hands-on trades training and meaningful employment in one of the city's most underserved neighbourhoods. They prioritize addressing systemic barriers to employment in the community, such as providing training opportunities for justice-involved individuals and those facing barriers to stable housing.

Purpose provides training opportunities for equity-deserving groups that might otherwise be excluded from training and employment, including those with justice-system involvement, unstable housing, and in substance use recovery. By helping learners with complex needs build skills and find employment, they reduce unemployment and reliance on social assistance, empower individuals, and train them to develop in-demand skills to help address labour shortages within the construction sector.

> *"They provide [training] to people that want to better their own lives… And it's bettering their lives, but at the same time, they're also bettering the lives of other people in the community as well…they're taking rundown houses and turning them into something that the families can be proud of living in."*
> *–Board member*

In 2023/24, Purpose Construction piloted this training model, linking affordable housing development with comprehensive construction training and supports for Indigenous people facing employment barriers. Participants completed a six-month paid training program, that combined skills development with wraparound supports, and hands-on experience on the construction of affordable homes. Wraparound supports included housing assistance, addiction recovery support, budgeting, life-skills classes, and job readiness training. The training program incorporated Indigenous traditional knowledge, Elders' teachings, and ceremonies. During the pilot, Purpose built five affordable housing units on vacant lots donated by the City of Winnipeg and trained 40 Indigenous learners.

In this project, Purpose built on the success of the pilot model, providing a cohort of learners with 8 weeks of hands-on training and 12 weeks of work placements with access to enhanced wraparound supports. Additionally, Purpose explored strengthening its training model by offering micro-credentials and training in modular construction techniques to better equip training participants for employment in the construction sector while supporting green construction projects. An outline of the outcomes and outputs is included in the Theory of Change (see Appendix A).

The evaluation of this project aimed to capture successes and lessons learned from the model. Documenting these lessons, program structure, and project outcomes will facilitate further upscaling and communication of the program model to other service providers, social enterprises, communities, policy makers, and funders.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This project explored the strategic questions and the evaluation questions listed in Appendix B. These evaluation and learning questions were explored through the following data collection activities:

- **Needs analysis survey:** At the outset of the evaluation, a short survey was conducted with training participants from a previous training cohort to capture feedback on the training program. The results of this survey were used to inform program improvements for the subsequent cohort. Ten participants completed the survey.

- **Key informant interviews and community consultations:** During the evaluation, individual and small group interviews were conducted with local employers, union representatives, Purpose board members and local service providers. These interviews explored skill needs within the sector, the value of micro-credentials, and the perceived role of Purpose Construction as a training provider within the community. Six interviews were conducted.

- **Administrative data:** Program completion rates and post-program employment rates were tracked through administrative data.

- **Theory of Change Reflection workshops:** Following the evaluation, we conducted a workshop with program staff and some training participants. In this workshop, we explored the inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes of the program to identify successes and opportunities for improvement and upscaling. Four staff members and two program participants participated in the workshop.

- **Implementation interviews:** Interviews with program staff were conducted to examine the curriculum enhancements and successes in program delivery. As a part of this implementation research, we explored how micro-credentials and green building approaches were integrated into the program and identified lessons learned for ongoing and future work. Interviews were conducted with five staff members.

- **Photovoice**: Photovoice, an arts-based reflection activity, was conducted to capture participants' perceptions of the program. Ten participants participated, sharing photos and written reflections about the training program, candidly sharing their experience, feedback, and outcomes. The participant reflections were analysed using a thematic content analysis (please see the Photovoice report for a full description of the Photovoice results).

Using a variety of data collection methods (including qualitative and quantitative methods) and sources (including data from participants, training providers, board members, and local sectoral

representatives) provided the opportunity to triangulate and validate results from multiple perspectives. The data generated was analyzed with the aim of evaluating the outcomes outlined in the Theory of Change (see Appendix A) and the evaluation questions (see Appendix B).

Throughout the evaluation, we actively incorporated EDI&R principles. In our community consultations, we prioritized community members who could speak to Indigenous perspectives on the training, including members of Purpose Construction's Indigenous advisory board and representatives from local Indigenous organizations. We shared our draft results with these participants for feedback, recognizing the importance of co-constructed narratives. Our data collection activities with participants and program staff were conducted through a strength-based lens, with a focus on how the program builds on participants' existing skills and strengths.

EVALUATION EVIDENCE & INSIGHTS

The evaluation results below are organized into the three strategic questions that we sought to answer through this evaluation.

What are the most effective approaches for integrating wraparound services in skills-based programs for equity-seeking groups, and how do these approaches overcome the barriers (e.g., funding) that typically compromise the effectiveness of such programs?

In this project, we explored approaches for integrating wraparound services to support training engagement for participant populations that face barriers to engaging in training. First, we describe the participant population that Purpose serves, illustrating the need for wraparound supports to engage these groups of learners. Next, we describe examples of the types of wraparound supports provided and how these supports are delivered. This is followed by a section on culturally specific wraparound supports. We then highlight the importance of creating a supportive learning environment, framing this as a cost-effective "support". Finally, we describe how Purpose leverages connections with local service providers and board members to deliver these supports through a cost-effective strategy that balances training cost-per-participant with the quality of training outcomes.

Participant population

Purpose Construction serves learners who face a range of barriers to participation, including justice system involvement, housing instability, substance use recovery, negative past experiences in education systems, and systemic and interpersonal discrimination. In addition to this, Purpose serves learners from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in the trades (e.g., women, Indigenous people, newcomers, 2SLGBQIA+ community members). These groups of learners often lack access to role models and peer support that can help them engage in skilled trades training and may face real or anticipated discrimination that discourages them from pursuing this career. Additional supports can help mitigate these barriers and encourage these groups of learners to engage in training.

> *"Give people a chance that otherwise wouldn't have a chance."*
> *-Board member*

Most of the learners in the evaluated project cohort were Indigenous with multiple barriers to training and employment, including past justice system involvement, prolonged breaks from the

workforce, substance use recovery, and housing instability.[1] In the photovoice reflection, some participants shared doubts or feelings of anxiety entering the training program. Without a supportive environment, these learners would not have been able to remain engaged in training.

As a result of the supports provided, participants reported that the training program provided stability and accountability that helped them re-engage with training and gain skills to start (or re-start) a career in the skilled trades. In the words of one participant: *"coming into this program, my life was unstable, I was struggling finding my purpose and struggling to maintain sobriety and stop giving up on myself…The program gave me motivation and something to rely on everyday."*

However, as Purpose works with a population with complex needs, not all learners who enroll in training complete the program. As shown in Table 1, in the last four cohorts, around two-thirds (64 per cent) of learners enrolled completed training. Note that this project evaluated cohort four; however, data from previous cohorts are included for comparison and to showcase broader trends. Program staff shared that most learners exit the program due to personal issues (e.g., incarceration, family deaths, substance use challenges, etc.), while some learners leave the program early because they find employment.

Of the learners who did complete training, more than three-quarters (77 per cent) reported accepting an employment offer in the first few weeks or months after the program.

The high proportion of learners who exit the program highlights the challenge of serving a population of learners with complex needs and multiple barriers to engaging in training and employment. The high post-program employment rate showcases that when learners can access the appropriate supports, they can move towards employment and increased stability. In the following section, we explore the wraparound supports that Purpose offers to promote training engagement; in later sections, we dive deeper into the supported transition into employment and program graduates' career paths.

Figure 1 Purpose Construction: training completion and post-program employment[2]

[1] Participant demographic information and information related to barriers were collected through intake interviews conducted by Purpose Construction. Cohort-level demographic information and a synthesis of barriers faced was provided to SRDC. Individualized data were not provided to protect participant privacy and confidentiality.

[2] Employment data were collected in November 2025 at the data-collection cut-off deadline for the project. Employment rates were reported by Purpose Construction staff, who tracked employment outcomes through one-on-one participant check-ins. Participants who did not provide a response are tracked as "unknown" (see right-side column).

Cohort	Entered training	Completed training	Employed	*In-house employment*	*External employer*	*Self-employed*	Not employed/ looking for work/unknown
1	12	7	5	*2*	*2*	*1*	2
2	13	9	6	*5*	-	*1*	3
3	10	7	7	*7*	-	-	-
4	12	7	5	*5*	-	-	2
Total	**47**	**30**	**23**	***19***	**2**	**2**	**7**
Per cent		64%	77%				23%

Wraparound supports

The primary support provided to learners was the training stipends that compensated learners for their time in the classroom and on job placements. This made it possible for learners who relied on a consistent income to engage in the training. Without this support in place, many of learners who need it the most would be unlikely to consider training in the first place.

In addition to the training stipend, learners had access to a range of wraparound supports. Supports included transportation assistance (e.g., bus tickets), practical supports (e.g., getting Status cards or renewing drivers' licences), legal clinics, in-house mental health supports (counselling and access to Elders), cultural supports, and employment supports (e.g., resume writing and interview preparation workshops and one-on-one coaching).

"I believe everyone should experience the joys, laughs, opens, and supports that Purpose offers while being in the program. Not only do we learn the carpentry trade we were supported in our home lives, next steps for schooling, resume building, sharing circles, and much more."
-Participant

These supports were delivered on a flexible, as-needed basis. Participants' needs are first identified during the onboarding and registration process. This allowed program staff to work with participants to identify and address barriers that may otherwise prevent them from engaging in training and help learners get off to a good start. However, staff noted that learners facing multiple barriers often have complex and evolving needs to overcome them. Challenges may arise during the training period, or learners may feel comfortable disclosing additional needs as they build relationships with training providers. Participants are encouraged to continue to speak up when they need support throughout the program. As issues arose, staff worked directly with participants to troubleshoot and find solutions, rather than relying on a fixed menu of supports.

For example, one board member shared the following example: *"... some of our folk, this was a transgender person, had a lot of trouble just getting to work, getting harassed on the bus, so... you're able to get the crew lead to come pick them up instead."* In this case, the learner had been accessing the bus tickets provided by Purpose as a wraparound support. However, they were still not able to get to the jobsite safely, so Purpose staff adapted and worked with another team member to make sure the participant had a ride to work.

Examples of wraparound supports provided:

- Transportation assistance (e.g., bus tickets)
- System navigation (i.e., connecting with services)
- Administrative support, including help with obtaining Status cards and Drivers Licences
- In-house mental health support
- Cultural supports
- Legal supports and advice, including guidance on clearing legal records or addressing criminal charge issues.
- Mail services for participants without a permanent address.
- Connection with housing and other services.
- Job search skill development and coaching.

Where possible, wraparound supports were offered in-house, removing barriers to access. The process to access support was informal. Learners contacted the instructor or training coordinator (who has an office in the training building) and discussed what they needed to continue engaging in training.

Purpose's approach to developing supports is an iterative and ongoing process. As they work with participants to find solutions to challenges, Purpose keeps these supports in mind for future cohorts. Similarly, as they learn of the challenges that training graduates face in transitioning to employment, they have taken the initiative to address these barriers. For example, many local employers are prioritizing job seekers who have a driver's license. To respond to this need, Purpose has incorporated supports to empower learners to address violations, unpaid tickets, and to help learners obtain their licenses.

Culturally-specific supports

Many Indigenous trainees arrive at Purpose feeling disconnected from their community. As a part of the wraparound support offerings, program staff work with participants to help them understand *"how to be a community member rather than an individual in a community"*. This includes supporting cultural reconnection through smudging, weekly sharing circles, time to connect with Elders, and opportunities to participate in cultural teachings and activities. For many, these activities are the first time participants are able to engage with and learn about their culture. These activities are offered as optional add-ons to the training program, that some participants take advantage of and others find less aligned with their interests. As an instructor shared: "*We can provide access to those resources but [we are] not saying this is the right or only way."*

Participants may also have to work through additional responsibilities such as providing for community or family members who need support, which can make it harder to participate in training programs. Purpose acknowledges these realities and creates an environment where participants can see and develop their own skills and strengths while accommodating family commitments.

Supportive environment: trauma-informed staff

In addition to the training stipend and the low-barrier access to wraparound supports, Purpose supports training engagement by maintaining a supportive and inclusive training environment. Skilled program staff create a non-judgmental and inclusive space while maintaining firm boundaries and a structured training environment.

"They interact with any person at any level, like that's the most important person in the world". -Local service provider

This supportive environment is especially important when working with learners affected by individual or intergenerational trauma. For example, many Indigenous learners bring a lifetime of experiences that come along with being an Indigenous person in Canada, and intergenerational trauma from the legacy of residential schools and other acts of colonization and systemic oppression. Learners exiting the justice system also often have experiences of trauma related to time in incarceration. As one board member shared, providing support is crucial to adequately serving participants who have been through complex challenges: "*It is acknowledging that there is trauma, and there's going to be… extra support that our staff needs [to provide].*"

"I felt supported even when I did make mistakes on my cuts, building, even measurement and blueprints." -Participant

For example, mornings started with stretching and coming together as a group, showcasing the importance of self-care and connection with each other. Participants shared how their instructors and their co-learners provided support and motivated them keep showing up each day. For example, one participant shared how important the growth mindset and safe learning environment was for them: "*I felt supported even when I did make mistakes on my cuts, building, even measurement and blueprints.*" Another participant shared how the program environment helped them as they experienced personal challenges while participating in the program: *"I was going through a loss in my life and I felt supported and heard… I felt supported"*.

Building an inclusive environment that prioritizes learners' mental health and well-being is a cost-effective wraparound support that helps learners continue to engage in training. As learners

face challenges or stumbling blocks in their learning journey, knowing they have people they can turn to for support can make the difference between giving up and finding a solution to overcome barriers to remain on a path of learning.

Staff with shared lived experience

Purpose employs a diverse team, reflecting the diversity of their trainees and the wider community. There is representation of a range of other equity-deserving groups that are traditionally underrepresented in the trades, including women and members of the 2SLGBTIQIA+ community. Shared lived experience provides opportunities for staff to connect with participants, build trust, and have a more in-depth knowledge of the strengths, needs, and challenges participants may have when entering the program.

> *"It's definitely way, way, way, way more beneficial than having someone with not lived experience. …people with lived experience can take people through their own journey."*
> *– Board member*

How are wraparound supports offered in a sustainable, cost-effective manner?

Purpose delivers wraparound supports by leveraging its relationships with other service provider organizations and board members. They are well integrated into the service provision landscape and are able to work with partner organizations to offer wraparound supports.

In addition to these partnerships, Purpose has a board with a diverse range of skills and expertise, including backgrounds in law, architecture, and Indigenous cultural knowledge. This allows the organization to access in-house consultations and guidance. For example, Indigenous board members are engaged to review training curriculum elements related to cultural learning and to support Purpose in developing culturally informed wraparound supports and activities. Another board member offers legal guidance and organizes legal clinics to provide information for participants engaged in the justice system; yet another provides in-house guidance on re-designing modular building plans for urban lots, leveraging their architectural experience. Through intentional board representation and active engagement with members, Purpose is able to offer a broader range of in-house wraparound supports to training participants.

What approaches are the most effective at equipping new labour market entrants with the skills that are most in demand by employers?

In this evaluation, we interviewed a local employer and union representative to get a better sense of skill needs in-demand by local employers. Building on these, we interviewed and surveyed Purpose staff members and participants to understand how these skills are trained in the program to prepare learners for employment.

Employer skill needs

In our case study interview with a local employer, they shared that technical skills and competencies are the baseline for what they look for in employees. These are the skills that are expected of everyone, or skills and competencies that can be relatively easily trained. While technical skills are beneficial, transferable soft skills were described as more challenging to obtain. This employer shared that what makes jobseekers stand out is their professionalism, attitude, work ethic, openness to learning, and compliance with safety regulations.

"My main thing when we're hiring an entry-level person is just their overall attitude"
-Local employer

For example, they shared that "professionalism" is increasingly valued in the sector, as the culture within the construction sector is changing. Openness to learning was another highly valued quality, as it allows employees to better adjust to changes within job sites and adopt new techniques that are emerging within the sector.

In the employers' words: *"My main thing when we're hiring an entry-level person is just their overall attitude... You can kind of see their passion for being a builder, um, or just having some type of a career where they get to work with their hands, or just kind of an overall, like, excitement and, like, positive energy is more what I look for."*

These skills were seen as valuable for entry-level roles and for career progression. As employees advance, this employer shared that they are looking for a combination of technical proficiency and "being a people leader". Soft skills are often the deciding factor in advancing to supervisory or management roles, as well as the ambition or interest in moving into leadership roles. Generally, employees are first assigned small leadership tasks so they can practice taking on responsibility, and so their supervisors can gauge their skill level. As they shared: *"It's just really finding the people who are either kind of the loudest... giving them acting opportunities, or giving them small parts where they can do a little bit of the role and see how they like it. Because the barrier that we sometimes do find, we talk a lot about these people having really good technical aspects to it, but being a people leader is very different."*

Program outcome: skills for work and for life

Purpose's target skill outcomes for the program are aligned with the value employers place on social-emotional skills. In addition to training technical tool skills required for skilled trades employment, the training program is designed to build communication and adaptability skills, increase confidence and resilience, support trauma recovery, provide opportunities for cultural (re-)connection, facilitate access to services, and create chances for learners to build friendships and social support.

"We are teaching confidence and personal growth management… those things are actually what is going to keep a person on the job."
– Instructor

In turn, success in these areas sets learners up to succeed in finding and maintaining employment. For example, key learning objectives include building a habit of daily attendance and developing strong communication skills (e.g., providing notice for absences, raising concerns, asking questions), skills that support long-term employability.

One participant shared an example of how Purpose staff incorporate social emotional skill training into their work placements: *"one of our homes [was] broken into and stripped of copper, we had just finished installing the insulation and poly. It was hard work and we came back after a long weekend and everything was destroyed…Although all our hard work felt worthless our supervisors and coworkers flipped the awful situation into a learning experience and also gave us a taste of real life situations that may arise. We as a team fixed the mess. We also had chances to fix mistakes that we may not have seen prior."*

The Purpose approach to training and work emphasizes building not only technical skills, but also the mindset and adaptability required to address the challenges that life throws at you. Through building these skills, participants are better equipped for the job site and to move through challenges in their personal lives.

Strength-based training delivery approach

Purpose trains these skills through a strength-based approach that helps learners recognize and build on their existing skills and capacities. This approach helps learners stay engaged with the content and build confidence, while also helping them to leverage existing skills. Instructors also work as "translators" breaking down intimidating technical concepts into accessible language and examples that resonate with participants' areas of knowledge or experience.

One of the most important things is recognizing that they have skills when they walk in the door. People are not blank slates".
-Instructor

Purpose encourages participants to express their individual skills and talents, providing time to those with more experience to work on personal projects if they complete assignments early. This allows participants who are excelling to continue practicing their skills, while instructors are able to reconnect with participants who need more guidance. Allowing individuals to proceed at their own pace within a clear framework supports their transition into employment and helps rebuild trust and confidence.



This strength-based approach helps learners transition into employment feeling confident and capable. For example, one learner reflected on their experience of the training program, sharing a picture of their work boots (right), sharing: *"Steel toe boots. Every time I put 'em on I learn and make money...every paint drop has a story of a hard worker"*.

In a survey of the previous cohort of learners, 100 per cent of respondents shared that the training met its objectives. Approximately 90 percent reported that the program was useful, helped them improve skills, and that they will be able to use what they learned in the training at work.

Hands-on learning and finding creativity

Purpose also focuses on providing a hands-on training environment, where learners are encouraged to access creativity as a pathway to learning. For many, the hands-on aspect of the program was received positively. Participants shared that they were happy to get the hands-on experience, and the active nature of the work created an accessible environment for learning for those who don't gravitate towards "book learning".

> *"I really liked the physical side of things, like working in the shop, and working on projects… I learned new skills. the work space overall was friendly, it was clean, safe, we had access to all the tools and opportunities."*
> *-Participant*

Participants also shared how the training program allowed them to reconnect with a sense of creativity and purpose. During the program, participants had opportunities to build projects for family and community members, and to create items that had personal or cultural significance.

Some participants linked this creative expression to their own healing journey; others shared pride in being able to make gifts for loved ones.

Culturally-specific curriculum

Purpose has also integrated some cultural components directly into the training curriculum. The training draws on Indigenous ways of knowing and being, adding value by combining hands-on learning with cultural teachings. This curriculum is reviewed by Indigenous board members to ensure it reflects community priorities. For example, participants can engage in activities like building medicine wheels from different types of wood.

Purpose also supports participants as they work through stigma and build up self-confidence. For many participants, the discrimination and intergenerational challenges they've faced as Indigenous people in Canada contribute to negative self-perception and doubts about their abilities. Through the program, participants have opportunities to see the tangible results of their hard work. For example, participants cited their cuts becoming straighter and their work becoming more consistent as signs that their efforts were paying off. These practical reminders of skills and improvements can help participants have confidence in their skills and potential.

> *"Lots of Indigenous folks still have a stigma that, you know, they're not good enough or talented enough, learned enough to do this sort of work, and all those stereotypes of not showing up on time, and… the other sort of family commitments that come with intergenerational trauma which take away from work, our training is aware of and makes space for."*
> *-Board member*

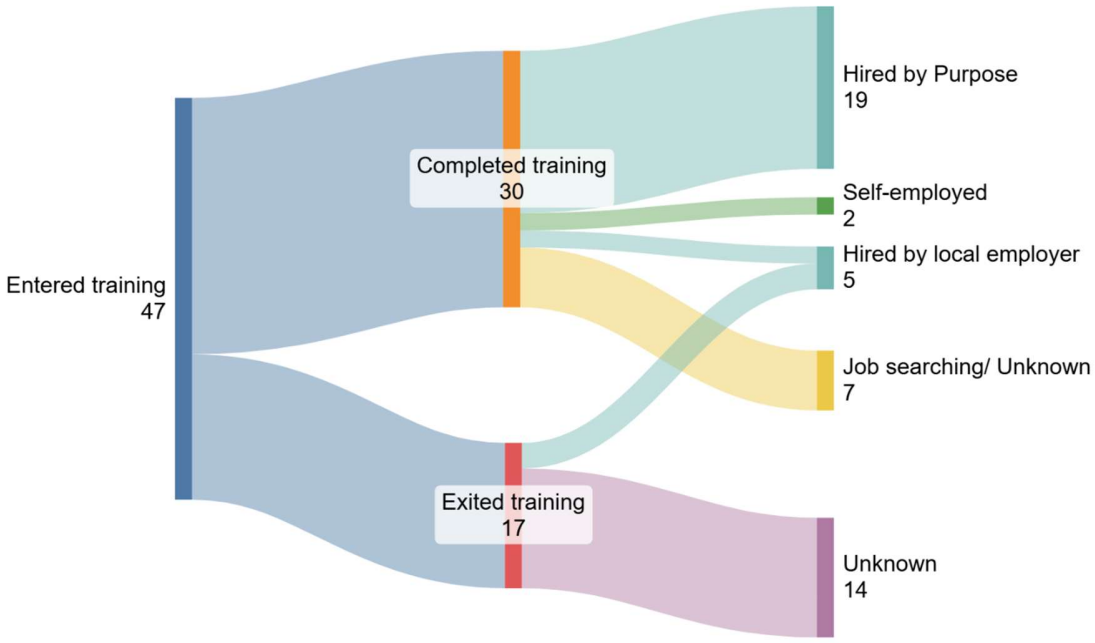
Incorporating cultural teachings and values into the curriculum is seen by instructors as a way for participants to tap into the strength and resilience of themselves and their communities. As one instructor shared: *"people can change their habits, change their lifestyle, navigate difficult circumstances with those goals, navigate those difficult circumstances intact… it's the power of those cultural teachings."*

What interventions are most effective in smoothing job transitions for people currently out of the labour market or those in precarious employment?

Purpose is successful in moving training graduates into employment. More than three-quarters (77 per cent) of learners who complete the training program find full-time employment in the skilled trades. As shown in Figure 1, most learners are employed in-house at Purpose. A few learners move into self-employment, and others find work with a local employer.

In this section, we explore how Purpose supports transitions to employment and opportunities to further support entry into skilled trades employment, particularly for learners with complex needs. First, we explore the perceived value of micro-credentials for entry-level training programs in the skilled trades. Next, we describe Purpose's approach to supporting transitions to employment with local employers. Then, we outline Purpose's in-house employment and the opportunities this model presents for supporting employment transitions. Finally, we conclude with participants' reflections on their transitions to employment.

Figure 1 Trajectories from training to employment



Micro-credentials

We explored the perceived value of micro-credentials within the construction sector through interviews with an employer, union representatives, and a Purpose trainer. Overall, the consensus was that micro-credentials are most valuable when offered through recognized sources.

The employer that we spoke with reported that tickets and micro-credentials (e.g., health and safety, forklift operation, or first aid) are valuable, but only if they come from familiar and respected providers. They shared examples of employees who were asked to redo courses that came from unknown or untrusted providers. This can be a waste of time and money for jobseekers and serves as a word of caution for training providers considering offering their own micro-credentials. Without recognition from local employers, these credentials may hold little practical value.

> *"At the end of the day, for us, we want to quantify and know that the provider that they got it from meet[s] our standards for it, which can be different… they've done it, but it doesn't mean that we're necessarily going to accept it if it's not a provider that we have used before."*
> *-Local employer*

Similarly, the union representative expressed skepticism about micro-credentials due to concerns about inconsistent quality, lack of comprehensiveness, and insufficient monitoring. They highlighted the risks to safety if underqualified workers cause harm, as well as potential costs to employers and risks to the union's reputation and relationships. However, the interviewee did raise the importance of ensuring that employees are prepared to take on new practices (e.g., green building practices) so that organizations can adopt evolving industry trends and serve emerging markets.

One Purpose instructor provided an additional perspective, questioning the value of micro-credentials in contrast to practical experience. While Purpose does provide a certificate from their training course, they acknowledge that this was not necessarily recognized by employers. The trainer prioritized focusing on building skills: *"I don't want to get stuck in credentialing instead of practice. If people come out knowing how to build, doesn't matter what the credentials say."*

However, the instructor noted that certificates (particularly post-secondary education diplomas) can be meaningful for learners, and can be a source of confidence and pride. Learners did indeed report positive views of micro-credentials. In a survey completed by program participants from the previous cohort, approximately 90 per cent agreed that the micro-credential received in the program is valuable to their career growth, and 70 per cent of learners shared that knowing they would earn the micro-credential motivated them to complete the training.

Supported transitions to employment

To help connect jobseekers with workplaces where they can thrive, Purpose engages with local construction employers and unions and provides trainees with recommendations and job postings. An example of their continued efforts in this area is the recent addition of a "transition coordinator" to help participants find and apply for employment opportunities that are aligned with their interests and goals.

As well as building relationships with local employers, the transition coordinator provides participants with workshops and one-on-one support for resume building and interview preparation. After finding an employment position, the transition coordinator connects with participants on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to provide ongoing support until the trainee is comfortably established in their new role.

> *"What we're trying to do is find places that are safe for people to work, and that doesn't always exist... So then it's about building resilience to stay whole in those environments…that comes back to confidence, self-awareness, empowerment, clear boundaries, positive support, personal goal setting."*
> *-Instructor*

Purpose also works with local employers and sector organizations to raise the standards of inclusivity within Manitoba's construction sector, advocating for long-term change. In the short-term, Purpose helps connect participants with job opportunities in safe and supportive workplaces. Finding a workplace that is both inclusive for groups underrepresented in the trades and protective of employee wellbeing is not a guarantee within the sector. As one example, a local employer shared how the older generation of supervisors started their career at a time when 60+ hour weeks were the norm, which is resulting in friction when employees are not willing or able to work overtime, or require mental health or sick days.

The employer shared the following example: *"we had people who... maybe they did their apprenticeship during, you know, that time where you worked 60 hours a week, no questions asked... so that's been just a bit of a shift, I think, for maybe some of our managers who grew up in that environment and are now managing the other people."*

Participants are also advised against taking "truck and ladder" contracts where there are no HR departments, which leaves employees vulnerable to worker rights protections. Another challenge is exposure to drugs, particularly for individuals in substance use recovery, as methamphetamine use is widespread on non-unionized job sites. As described in the previous section, the training program aims to build the personal skills required for employees to navigate these situations.

In-house employment

However, the most inclusive workplace is often Purpose Construction, as their job sites are characterized by the same inclusive values and approach as their training program. Purpose also prioritizes hiring "in-house", employing their training graduates when possible. In this cohort, five of the seven training graduates were hired by Purpose.

Five of the seven training graduates from this cohort are now employed by Purpose.

Purpose provides a trauma-informed, supportive, and flexible workplace. Additionally, Purpose's mandate of development and maintenance of non-market housing in the local community is also meaningful work for many participants, which promotes job satisfaction. For example, in post-program reflections, several participants spoke about the pride they felt in being able to contribute to their local community through their construction work. Through their work with Purpose, they contributed to housing development and maintenance and repair projects in the North End, a Winnipeg neighbourhood that is underserved and has many buildings with poor living conditions. Participants shared pride in being able to – quite literally – help build this neighbourhood back up.

As another benefit, Purpose plans their projects to be able to offer full-time, year-round employment positions. While there is high demand for skilled trades labour, employment is often contract-based. Finding full-time, year-round work opportunities can be a challenge within Manitoba's construction sector, where many projects halt over the winter. This presents a challenge for some training graduates who rely on the stability, structure, and consistent paychecks of full-time employment. For learners with histories of justice-involvement or substance use, layoffs or slow periods can increase the risk of relapses or re-incarceration, making it critical to maintain contracts that bridge those gaps.

Purpose also works to provide opportunities for career progression, prioritizing internal hiring and supporting the advancement of entry-level employees into leadership positions, such as crew leads. The culture of mentorship, support, and ongoing learning is present within Purpose teams. Staff members and board members shared that those who move into employment with Purpose Construction have opportunities to continue to progress in their careers. For example, in the most recent cohort, one participant is now working as a safety supervisor; two others are going to be engaged to support training activities of subsequent cohorts, sharing their personal journeys and lessons learned.

> *"I think just, pushing from within. A lot of our leads are former staff, a lot of them started in [training at] Purpose, and now they're leads of the crews. …we're building this community together."*
> *– Board member*

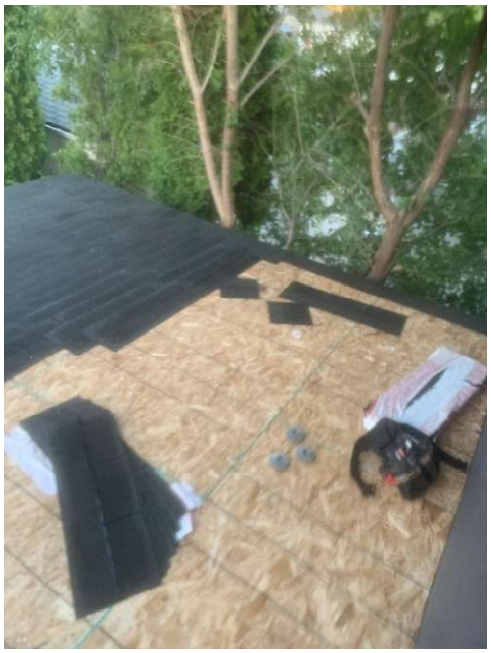
As Purpose grows as an organization, they aim to continue to increase its capacity to hire training graduates and to provide ongoing training to supervisors and employees to support positive conflict resolution and inclusive management on job sites.

Participant employment experiences

Participants shared that the program was an integral step in their journey to stable employment. During the program, participants gained technical and life skills, confidence, found opportunities for meaning and purpose, and began building a community of peers and instructors in the skilled trades. These achievements laid the foundation for participants to transition into employment or bring new skills to their existing work. For many, it was their first time working in several years.

"Training program really works. I am stable now, got my own place, I have a job with the homes division. Hard work pays".
- Participant

For example, one participant shared a photo of a roof they built over the summer, using skills they learned in the program (see right). They titled the photo "*getting my bearings back*" and shared that they would not have done this if they were not signed up for the program. They reflected: *"This picture means something to me. This is the first time in years I've been working, I am in recovery."*



Another participant shared that because of the training, they are now working as a safety supervisor within Purpose's Homes division and have achieved more stability in their life. Overall, participants shared the message that the program was an opportunity to re-enter employment.

Across the reflections, participants emphasized the role that Purpose Construction played in their journey towards personal development and employment. They shared positive messages for other learners, sharing that if they could do it, others can too. In the words of one participant: *"I represent an opportunity for the unemployed ... A potential starting point for their success."*

LESSONS LEARNED/RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY SUCCESSES AND LESSONS LEARNED

In this project, we identified a few key lessons learned and successes of the Purpose training model.

- **Micro-credentials are of limited value for entry-level unless they are provided by recognized training providers.** Micro-credentials are not regulated. While they can have additional value for building learners' confidence and showcasing time and effort invested in learning specific techniques or skills, employers are often looking for trusted providers so they can be sure of the quality of the credential. This suggests that for training providers interested in pursuing offering micro-credentials, it is essential to gain validation from a regulating body (if relevant) and to carefully assess the value of the credential for local employers. Purpose highlighted the desire to empower the community by moving away from colonial, system-based stamps of approval. They emphasized the need to shift validation towards Indigenous and community-led recognition that affirm local knowledge, skills, and authority.

- **Comprehensive wraparound supports and training stipends can help multi-barriered participants transition from being very distant from the labour market to full-time, skilled employees in a short period of time (~6 months).** However, even comprehensive supports will not be able to retain all learners, when working with those facing complex challenges. Offering both supports and a structured pathway to employment was essential in this model.

- **The "in-house employment" model was highly successful in supporting transitions to employment.** Purpose provides training, housing development, and repair and maintenance services to the local community. As a social enterprise, they reinvest profits back into the organization, subsidizing their non-revenue producing activities, such as training provision. Their model of working in both training and employment has been highly successful, as it allows them to provide in-house work placements on Purpose projects as a part of the training process, and to offer employment positions to many training graduates. Hiring their own training graduates also connects Purpose to employees who they know are aligned with their workplace culture and have received quality training.

- **Integrating employment skills supports and engagement with local employers further supports transitions to employment.** Purpose's ongoing connection with local employers has helped them to build a reputation as a trusted training provider and helps connect training graduates to open employment positions. Additionally, participants shared that the

resume writing and interview preparation coaching services were valuable in helping to find employment positions.

- **Integration with local service providers and leveraging board members' expertise facilitates wraparound support and training delivery**. Purpose demonstrates how partnerships can be leveraged to offer a wider range of wraparound supports in a cost-effective manner. By connecting with partners and board members to offer services, Purpose is able to customize wraparound supports for learners, such as legal workshops led by a board member or local Indigenous Elders that provide in-house cultural supports.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OTHERS

In addition to the specific lessons learned, we identified several elements of Purpose's training approach that we feel could be valuable for other training providers. We focused on identifying characteristics that are general and can be adapted to training in a range of sectors, for a range of populations.

Community-informed programming

Purpose develops their training curriculum and offerings in consultation with board members, all of whom bring knowledge and experience in either community needs or the construction sector. For example, their Indigenous board members lead community organizations and review the cultural components of Purpose's curriculum and wraparound support offerings to ensure they are aligned with community needs. The ongoing feedback from community members was identified as a contributor to Purpose Construction's success. As one board members shared: "*if you're gonna help community, go ask them how they want to be helped.*"

> *"if you're gonna help community, go ask them how they want to be helped."*
> *- Board member*

Through partnerships with community organizations, Purpose is able to provide integrated services and referrals, deliver in-house wraparound supports, and capture feedback about community needs. In turn, these organizations often nominate clients for Purpose's training program, connecting individuals who require paid skills training opportunities to re-enter employment with Purpose's training offerings. As a result, individuals who may otherwise have "slipped through the cracks" get on a path to stabilization and employment. Similarly, Purpose maintains relationships with local employers and unions. Ongoing communication with sector representatives allows Purpose to ensure that its training content remains relevant to the skills most in-demand by local employers.

Community-informed training development is valuable as it ensures that the curriculum content and the supports offered are aligned with genuine community interests and current labour market needs. For organizations struggling with recruitment, program satisfaction, or transitions to employment, we suggest incorporating deeper consultations with community to adjust training so that the content and approach meets salient needs.

Trauma-informed training delivery

As participants move out of challenging life circumstances into stability and full-time employment, they must balance the need for finding financial security, engaging in learning/training, and rebuilding their health and well-being. Purpose instructors have a strong understanding of the impacts of trauma, and work to support participants to build the skills and positive coping mechanisms to manage triggers day-to-day while they pursue larger goals. These skills – including the ability to trust, communicate, ask for support, and bring an adaptable mindset to challenges – supports participants in work and in their personal lives. For training organizations working with populations facing multiple barriers, we strongly recommend incorporating trauma informed practices into training delivery.

"How do we overall give people the tools…to maintain themselves while they're going after this big next step?"
-Local service provider

Provide inclusivity and supports to facilitate entry into new sectors

Purpose is unique within the service delivery sector, as they have broad eligibility criteria. While many organizations serve specific populations, Purpose's provides training to anyone wanting to learn the trades. As a result, Purpose provides training opportunities for equity-deserving groups that might otherwise be excluded from training and employment, including those with justice-system involvement, unstable housing, and in substance use recovery. By helping learners with complex needs build skills and find employment, they are decreasing unemployment and reliance on social assistance, empowering individuals, and generating employees with in-demand skills to help address labour shortages within the construction sector.

Partners and former clients emphasized that Purpose has created an environment that feels welcoming to people of all different backgrounds. Their focus on inclusivity makes them stand out as a training provider, and they serve individuals from many different populations that are underrepresented in the trades, including women, 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals, Indigenous people, and newcomers. By serving as an entry point into the trades for individuals that are unlikely to enter traditional pre-apprenticeship training programs, Purpose is helping to address labour shortages within the skilled trades.

We recognize that serving such a wide range of communities and having limited eligibility criteria requires organizations to be prepared to offer more support and to have more

experienced instructors and program staff to appropriately support participants as they move through complex challenges. However, these types of programs are crucial for learners distant from labour market, and help connect sectors with high labour needs with new communities of learners and potential employees.

LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

This evaluation faced several limitations and challenges, described in the bullet points below.

- **Limited outcome data:** The short-term nature of the data collection limited our capacity to explore longitudinal outcomes and retention in employment positions. Our findings showcase the success of the program as reported by participant satisfaction and employment offers but does not provide evidence of sustained employment.

- **Limited sample sizes:** The limited sample sizes, particularly for our consultations with local employers and sectoral representatives, limit the generalizability of our findings.

- **Participant retention:** The training cohort has a relatively low retention rate (64 per cent). Lower retention rates represent a trade off when providing training to participant populations facing multiple and complex barriers. Supported training opportunities for these populations are valuable to connect those distant from labour market to stable employment. However, due to the complex and intersecting barriers, not all participants have the capacity to complete training. This recognition of how barriers influence training completion rates is crucial to interpreting the success of training providers: despite offering supports, there are often challenges faced by participants which are not compatible with full-time training.

- **Employment challenges:** Program staff faced tension in wanting to provide participants with opportunities for work placements in a range of local construction companies. However, Purpose recognized that many of these workplaces would not provide the consistent year-round employment that helps participants find stability; would not be "patient" employers and could have stricter policies that do not provide the flexibility that supports participants facing complex barriers to remaining in employment; and/or have harassment or discrimination present on the job site. Recognizing this reality, Purpose staff did support participants in finding employment opportunities but also provided in-house employment opportunities. The in-house job offers accounted for the majority of post-program employment.

Alignment with Theory of Change and Evaluation and Learning Plan

As a result of the limitations, challenges, and evidence generated in this project, there are a few suggested amendments to the Theory of Change (ToC) and the Evaluation and Learning Plan (ELP; see Appendices A and B). The activities and short-term outcomes described in the Theory of Change and ELP were achieved. However, adjustments to the longer-term outcomes were required.

Based on the feedback related to micro-credentials, Purpose Construction is amending the ToC to remove the long-term objective of adapting a range of micro-credentials to their training context. Instead, they are planning to pursue partnerships with local unions to provide participants with existing, recognized training credentials. While these training credentials will not have the benefit of being adapted to a hands-on delivery context (i.e., represent classroom learning), the value of micro credentials is minimal if the adapted credentials are not recognized by local employers.

However, Purpose intends to continue delivering training on low-carbon building techniques to prepare trainees for employment in green building projects and supporting the transition of the construction sector to more environmentally friendly methods. In their future work, this includes plans for upscaling their capacity for training and implementing panelized housing methods on new builds. Outcomes related to this capacity building can potentially be tracked through the number of trainees employed in green building projects and the use of green building practices on Purpose's construction projects.

FUTURE EVALUATION

The basic elements of the training program were evaluated in this project. We have highlighted interesting characteristics that could be replicated to support entry into skilled trades employment for populations with complex needs. Areas for future investigation include:

- Longer-term follow-up to explore career progression and multi-year employment outcomes, including retention and learners' pathways into apprenticeship and/or self-employment pathways.
- A social return on investment analysis of the social enterprise model, as compared to the benefits produced by traditional housing developers. As Canada invests in housing infrastructure through the Building Canada Homes projects, a stronger understanding of the value of different housing development organizational models (e.g., private corporations vs social enterprise) would be valuable to strategically invest funding to support housing development and community revitalization.

INVESTIGATION OF CHARACTERISTICS OF AN INCLUSIVE SKILLED TRADES WORKPLACE, AND STRATEGIES FOR EMPLOYERS TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN DIVERSE EMPLOYEES – INCLUDING SKILLS, BEHAVIOURS, AND STRATEGIES THAT CAN BE TRAINED IN SUPERVISORS AND EMPLOYEES. AS THE SKILLED TRADES SECTOR SEEKS TO INCREASE ACCESS TO SKILLED LABOUR, THERE IS A NEED TO ENSURE THAT WORKPLACES ARE SAFE AND INCLUSIVE FOR GROUPS THAT ARE TRADITIONALLY UNDERREPRESENTED IN THE TRADES. EXPLORATION AND CODIFICATION OF THE STRATEGIES USED IN SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACES, SUCH AS PURPOSE, CAN BE A STARTING PLACE TO IDENTIFY BEST PRACTICES FOR CREATING POSITIVE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENTS THAT CAN RETAIN EMPLOYEES. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The policy implications of the recommendations above point to the need for sustainable funding that allows programs to invest in developing relationships with local employers and service providers, offer wraparound supports, and continue to support participants as they transition into employment.

Additionally, we suggest exploration of ways to address creative funding approaches to support social enterprise models. Currently, siloed funding sources make it challenging for organizations to develop the in-house employment capacity that is key to Purpose's success. Funding for training or workforce development projects is often short-term, project based and separate from funding that organizations can use to develop revenue-producing streams that could eventually be a source of employment for training graduates. We recognize that this is a complex challenge, but invite exploration into opportunities to promote social enterprise models.

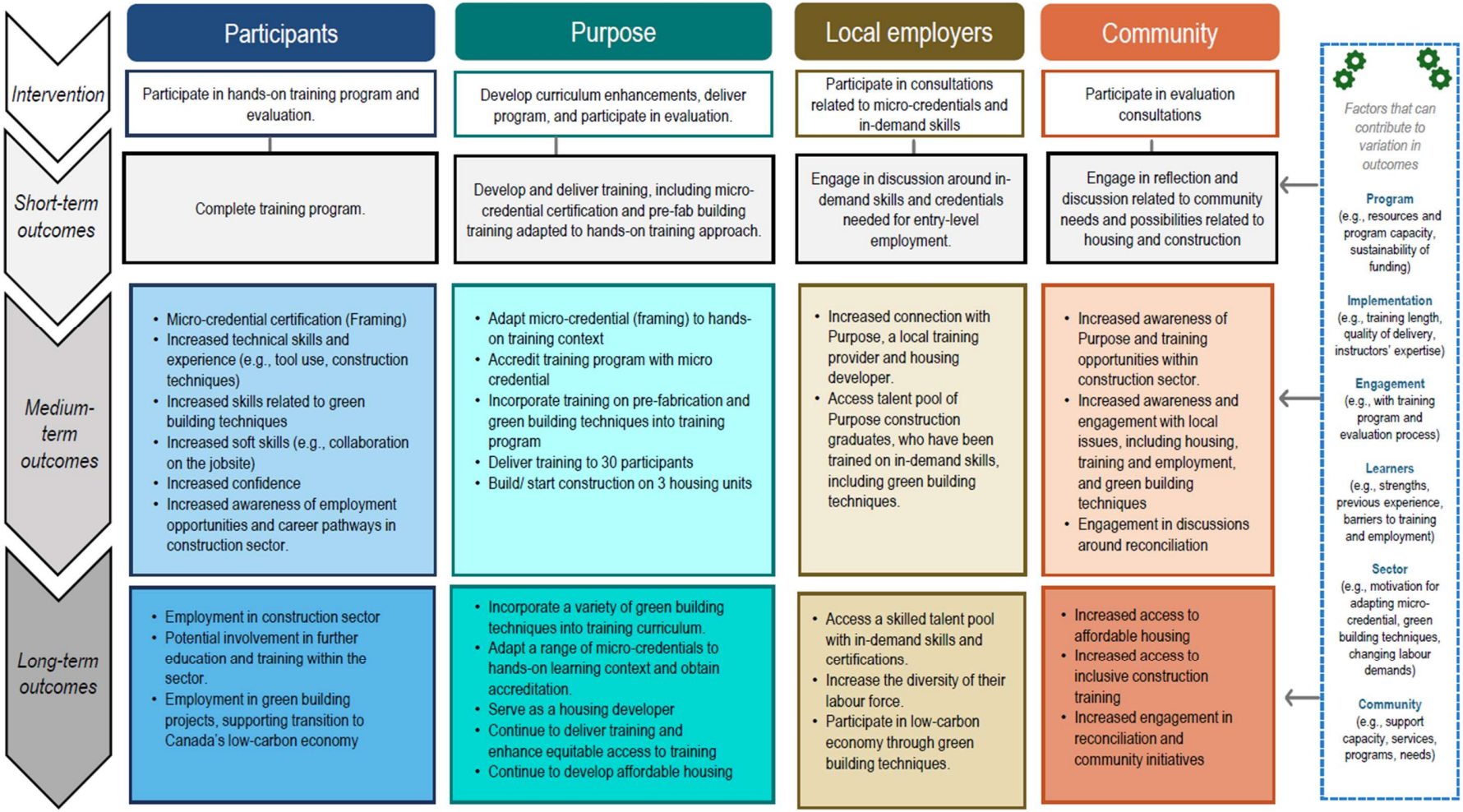
WHAT'S NEXT

Purpose Construction has been awarded SCALE funding from FSC, and looks forward to continuing to build on the lessons learned in this project. Among other activities, in the SCALE phase, Purpose will increase the number of participants enrolled in training. They will also work to develop resources to support career progression for Purpose staff (many of whom are training graduates) and to ensure that Purpose supervisors are equipped with skills and strategies to support retention of employees and to foster inclusive workplaces. This will include an investigation into "sticking points" and factors that lead to turnover within the organization, and skill gaps among employees as they progress from entry-level to supervisory roles. Using participatory methods, Purpose aims to co-develop resources, tools, and strategies to train all employees to improve collaboration, retention, and workplace culture.

The activities in the SCALE phase are an exciting opportunity for Purpose to expand their training offerings beyond entry-level training, bringing the lessons learned from existing delivery to support employees as they progress in their careers. It is also an opportunity for Purpose to codify the approaches and strategies they use to create inclusive workplaces, allowing them to communicate these successes to other organizations, with the intention of contributing to creating an increasingly supportive and welcoming skilled trades sector.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: THEORY OF CHANGE



APPENDIX B: EVALUATION QUESTIONS

FSC Strategic Questions	1. What interventions are most effective in smoothing job transitions for people currently out of the labour market or those in precarious employment? 2. What approaches are the most effective at equipping new labour market entrants with the skills that are most in demand by employers? 3. What are the most effective approaches for integrating wraparound services in skills-based programs for equity-seeking groups, and how do these approaches overcome the barriers (e.g., funding) that typically compromise the effectiveness of such programs?
Evaluation Questions	1. What is required to adapt micro-credentials and green building approaches to a hands-on training approach, or otherwise increase accessibility of training for populations that prefer experiential learning (e.g., Indigenous learners, newcomers, justice-involved learners)? What lessons were learned that can be used to further upscale these approaches (e.g., to other micro-credentials or green building approaches)? 2. What are the necessary skills, training activities, resources, supports, and approaches for a successful training program that supports participants' work-readiness, skill/career development, and entry into construction-based employment? 3. How do community members and community organizations perceive the value and role of this program? What are their perceptions of the program as an opportunity for (1) accessing training and supporting entry into employments; (2) supporting access to housing; and (3) a support for reconciliation and community development? 4. What are local employers' perceptions on the value of micro-credentialing and training in green building techniques? Are there other skills, abilities, or certifications that would support entry-level employment in the local labour market?

APPENDIX C: PHOTOVOICE REFLECTION FORM

Photovoice instructions

Choose 1 or 2 questions that speak to you and take one photo to respond to each. Remember that these are your photos and meant to represent your thoughts, opinions, and experiences. Feel free to interpret these questions in a way that makes sense for you!

Take a photo that…

1. Shows a change in your life from this program.
2. Shows an example of your strength, skills, or something else that you are proud of.
3. Shows your biggest sources of support before, during, or after the program.
4. Highlights something you have learned or realized about yourself through the program.
5. Reflects how you are feeling about the future for yourself, your family, and/or your community.

Questions to ask yourself when taking your photos:

- What is the story I want to tell?
- How can photographs help me tell this story?
- Does this photograph share this story in the way I want it to?
- What message am I trying to communicate, and to who?

Please complete one of these for <u>each</u> of the two photos you wish to share.

Photo #1

First name: _____ Last name: _____

Photo prompts (check one):

☐ A: Shows a change in your life because of this program.

☐ B: Shows an example of your strength, skills, or something else that you are proud of.

☐ C: Shows your biggest sources of support before, during, or after the program.

☐ D: Highlights something you have learned or realized about yourself through the program.

☐ E: Reflects how you are feeling about the future for yourself, your family, and/or your community.

Photovoice Questions:

1) Please provide a brief description of your photo.
2) What title or caption would you give this photo?
3) Why did you want to share this photo?
4) What is important for people to understand about this photo?
5) What does this photo tell others about you and your experience in the training program?

APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (PHOTO VOICE)

Introduction (5 mins)

1. What you were hoping to get out of the program when you started?

Photovoice reflection (20 mins)

2. Thank you for completing the photovoice activity. Can you tell me about your photos?
    a. What do they say about your journey before you started the program?
    b. What do they say about your experience during the program? For example, how you feel in the program, things you have learned, etc.
    c. What do they say about what you learned in the program, or other changes that have happened because of the program?
    d. What do they say about the supports you have in your life, the supports you received during the program or the supports you would like to have?
    e. What do they say about your goals, plans, and hopes for the future?
    f. If you took these photos before you started the program, how do you think they would have been different?

Outcomes

Next, we'd like to hear more about what you did as part of the program and any changes that may have taken place as a result of your participation so far. Remember that we're interested in your honest thoughts and opinions and what you share here will never be associated with your name.

3. What were some things that you got out of this training, or what you're proud of? (For example, a skill you have gained or something you have built)

4. What were some personal strengths you brought to the program? How did they grow during the training?

5. Has anything changed for you in how you see yourself or your general confidence?

6. Did cultural or community supports play a role for you during training? Did anything from the training surprise you? Was it what you expected?

7. Do you feel more confident about applying for jobs in construction since completing the program?

Feedback on the training

8. We're almost done! I just have a few final questions before we end for today.
9. What parts did you enjoy or benefit from the most?
10. Did the training match the way you like to learn?
11. How would you describe the hands-on or practical components of the training? Were they helpful in building your skills? Why or why not?
12. Was there anything in the program that didn't work for you or that could be improved for future participants?
13. Is there anything else you would like to share?

APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

Introduction

1. Can you tell me a bit more about yourself and your current role and work (in the community or in relation to this project)?
2. Can you tell me a bit more about your connection with Purpose Construction?
    a. How did you get engaged with Purpose?
    b. How has the experience been so far?
    c. What role do you see Purpose playing in the community? For example, what needs to they meet, who do they serve, etc.?

Community

3. What do you see Purpose Construction providing to your community/to Winnipeg?
    a. What values, approaches, or practices do they work from? What kind of example do they set for other programs?
    b. What areas do you see they can continue to grow and change to better address community needs?
    c. How does this project contribute to community revitalization or resilience?
    d. How do you see Purpose Construction fitting into other services and programs in Winnipeg?
    e. Does Purpose meet unique needs, or serve specific populations? What are they?
    f. Are there similar programs in Winnipeg? How do the services overlap or support each other?
4. In your perception, what impacts has the program had on the community (positive or negative) in your time working with them/ aware of them?
5. What are the broader social or cultural impacts of the program?

Reconciliation (optional depending on participant)

6. How does this project engage the local Indigenous community?
    a. How are community voices are heard in terms of informing Purpose programs?
    b. Are there specific opportunities Purpose could improve outreach to better connect with local communities?
7. In your view, how does this project support Indigenous participants?
8. What value do you see in providing hands-on construction training for Indigenous learners and others facing barriers?

Upscaling

9. If there were the resources available, how would you like to see Purpose construction grow to better meet – or continue to meet – community needs?
10. If there was the opportunity to do so, what do you see as the value of expanding or upscaling this program? This could be increasing the number of participants trained, the number of builds done, the types of training programs offered, or sharing the program model and teaching other service providers to deliver it in other communities.

Closing

11. Is there anything else that you would like to share?
12. In our reporting, we can include your contributions anonymously, or we can attribute them to you. There are a few options: (1) all contributions anonymous; (2) your name and title listed in our "thank you" section, but quotes and comments anonymous; (3) your name and title in the thank you section and your quotes and comments attributed to you. Prior to publishing, we can share a copy of our report so that you can review and ensure you are comfortable with how your comments are represented. What would you prefer?

APPENDIX F: KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS: EMPLOYERS

Introduction

First, we're curious to hear a bit more about you and your work.

1. Can you briefly tell me about your:
    a. Your role and responsibilities?
    b. Your experience working with your current organization, and in the construction sector more broadly?

Purpose construction and social enterprises

2. Can you tell me a bit more about your partnerships or relationships with Purpose Construction or other training organizations or social enterprises?
3. Based on what you know about the Purpose Construction training model and other social enterprises, how well do you think they aligns with the needs of the sector? What suggestions do you have for improving training programs like this one to better meet industry demands?

Skill and labour needs

Next, we are interested in hearing more about the skill and labour needs you have as a construction employer.

4. Can you share a bit more about your organization and the types of roles you typically train people for/hire for in the construction sector?
    a. What types of entry-level positions do you most commonly provide training for/recruit for?
    b. How easy/challenging is it to find quality employees who are aligned with your job needs?
5. When hiring, what are the skills, abilities, and experience that you prioritize?

6. In your experience, what are the most common gaps in skills or work-readiness among entry-level workers? What skills would make a front-line employee a “stand-out”?

7. In recent years, we’ve done some work with non-traditional groups of employees in the trades, including women, Indigenous people, newcomers, and people with learning disabilities. Have you had experience working with folks from non-traditional groups like these?

Career progression

I’m also curious to hear more about career progression and what you look for in mid-level employees.

8. Are there opportunities for career advancement within your organization? Do you typically promote or hire for mid-level positions internally?

9. What skills, abilities, experience, or credentials do you look for in your mid- and upper-level employees?

10. What skills do you see as essential for the construction sector looking forward? For example, what green building techniques, etc.?

Micro-credential and Training overview

Finally, I’m interested in hearing your thoughts on micro-credentials and other certifications.

11. What are the micro-credentials you see employees holding within the sector?
    a. Are there certain micro-credentials that you see as particularly valuable?
    b. What are your thoughts on micro-credentials as compared to Red Seal certification?
    c. As compared to no certifications, but a lot of work experience and good references?

12. What value, if any, do you see in hiring workers who have earned industry-recognized micro-credentials?

13. How important are green building practices or sustainability skills in your current or future projects?

Closing

14. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

15. In our reporting, we can include your contributions anonymously, or we can attribute them to you. There are a few options: (1) all contributions anonymous; (2) your name and title listed in our "thank you" section, but quotes and comments anonymous; (3) your name and title in the thank you section and your quotes and comments attributed to you. What would you prefer?

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