



May 11, 2023 | 12:00pm to 1:00pm ET
11 mai 2023 | 12h00 à 13h00 HE

Conversations to Connections

Insights and Perspectives from the Canadian Skills and Workforce Development Community

Conversations aux Connexions

Perspectives de la communauté canadienne du développement des compétences et de la main-d'œuvre



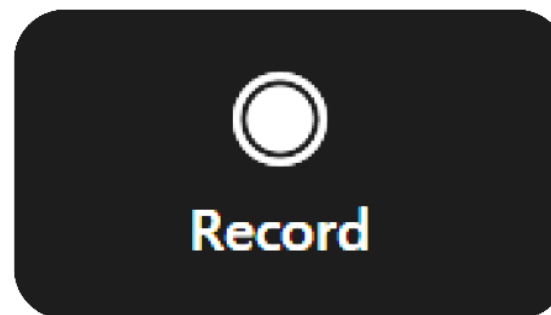
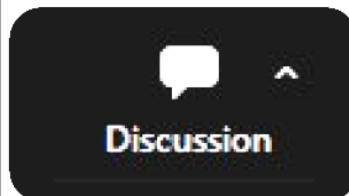
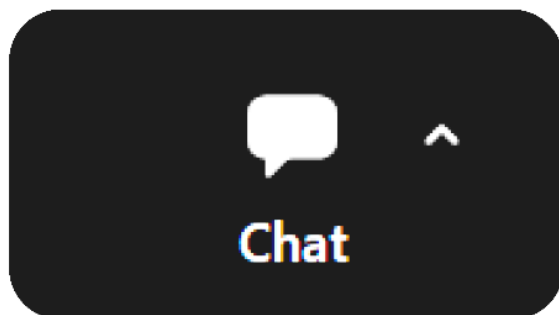
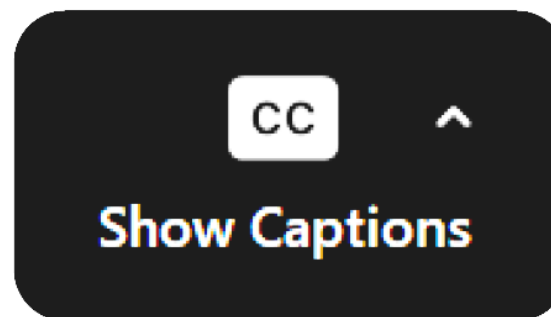
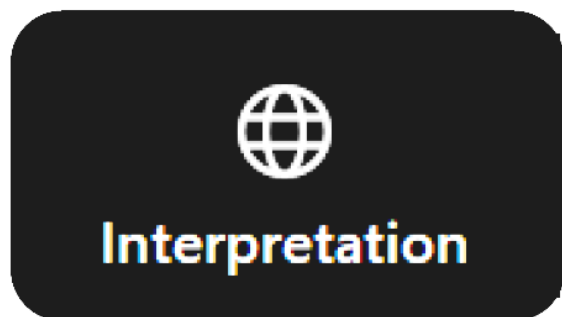
**Future
Skills
Centre**

**Centre des
Compétences
futures**

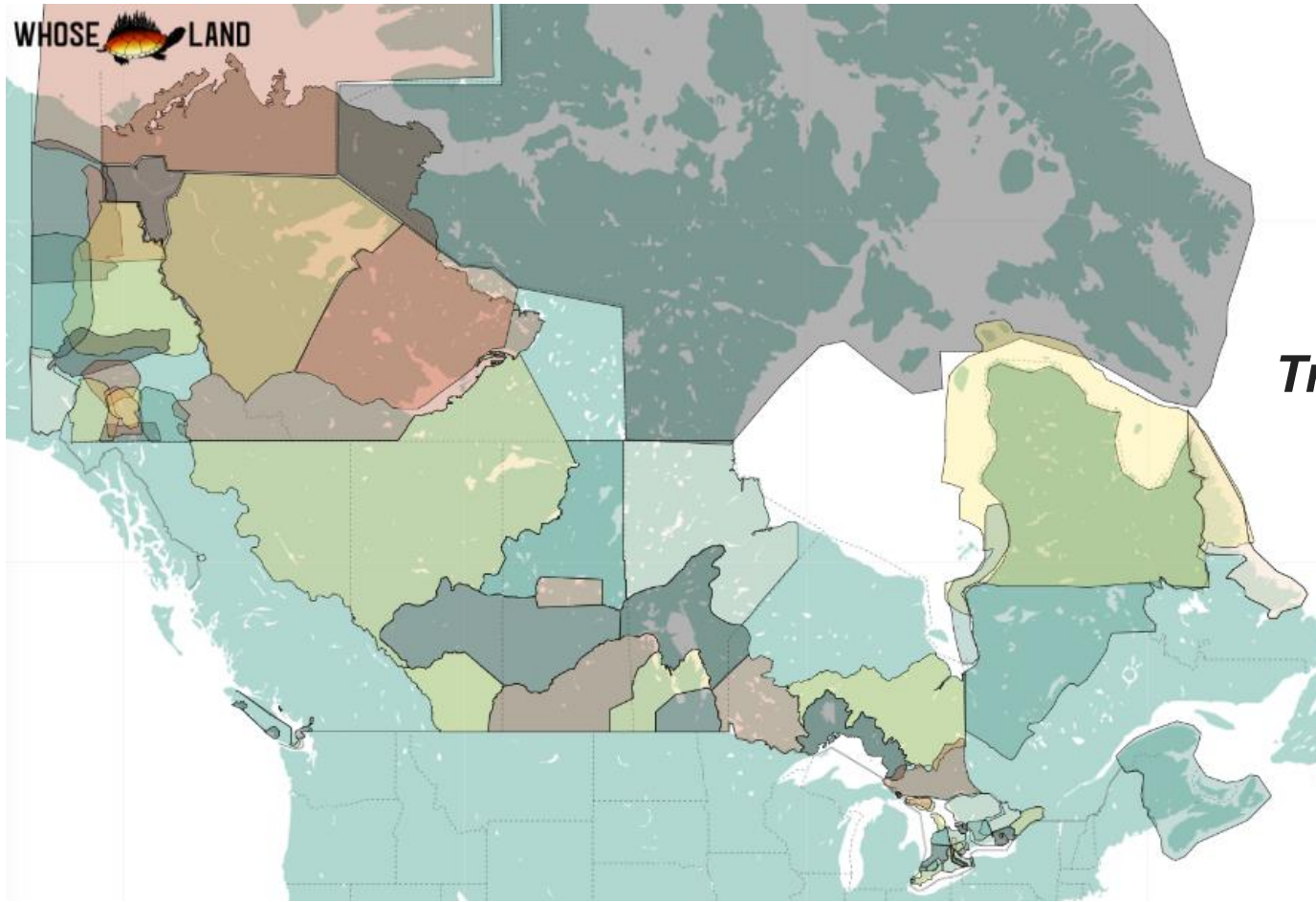
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RÉSEAU **IMPACT**
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ZOOM Tech Tools



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Treaties & Agreement

Land Acknowledgement

Interactive Event



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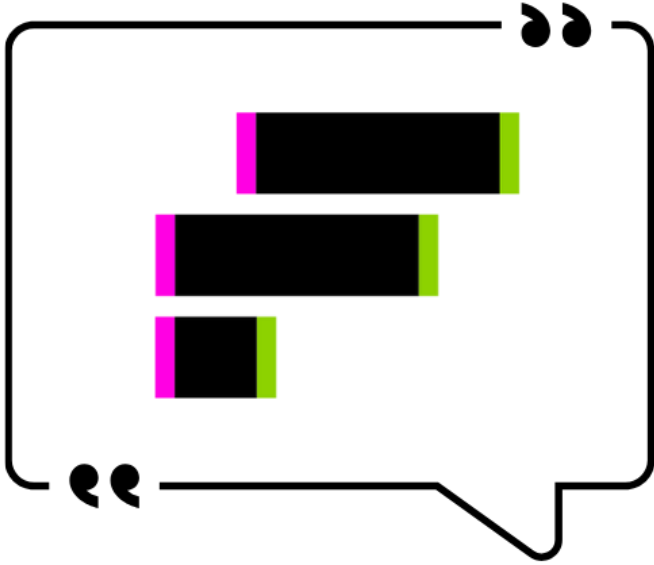
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**Please share your name,
organization and location**



Meghan E. Realesmith, Ph.D.

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Coordinatrice de l'engagement Communautaire bilingue

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- Bilingual pan-Canadian organization made up of 27 member academic institutions
- Support a thriving community of practice for knowledge mobilization



Future Skills
Centre

Centre des
Compétences futures

- Inclusive pan-Canadian organization
- Strengthen Canada's workforce and skills development ecosystem by fostering a more responsive and adaptable approaches to skills development and employment training.

Since 2020:

Partnership to support and foster the growth of
the FSC Community of Practice



Conversations to Connections (C2C)

Purpose

- To learn from practitioners in the skills and workforce development sector
- What are the successes and challenges they are experiencing
- What resources and/or tools would be of value to help practitioners be most successful in their work
- What knowledge or expertise would they like to contribute to fellow practitioners

Goals

- Learn about the needs gaps from practitioners in the skills and workforce development sector that are not currently being addressed.
- Learn how practitioners would like to see any of these gaps addressed.

C2C: August 2022 – March 2023



Manager

Community Engagement Coordinators



**Trudy
Button**



**Marie
Page**

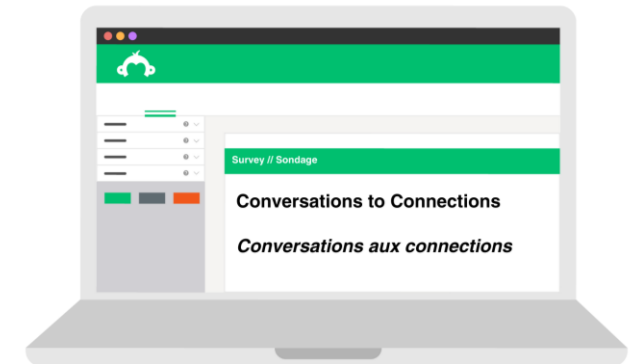


**Crystal
Olson**

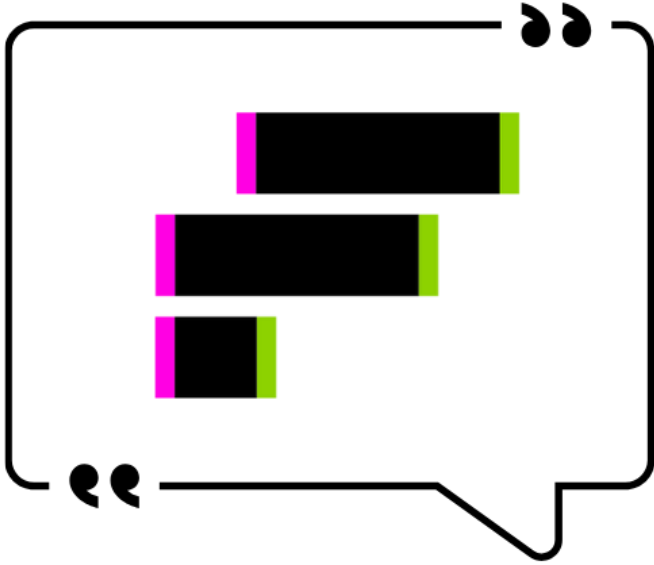


**Meghan
Realesmith**

One-on-one or group conversation with a member
of the RIC Community Engagement Team
(30, 45, or 60 mins)



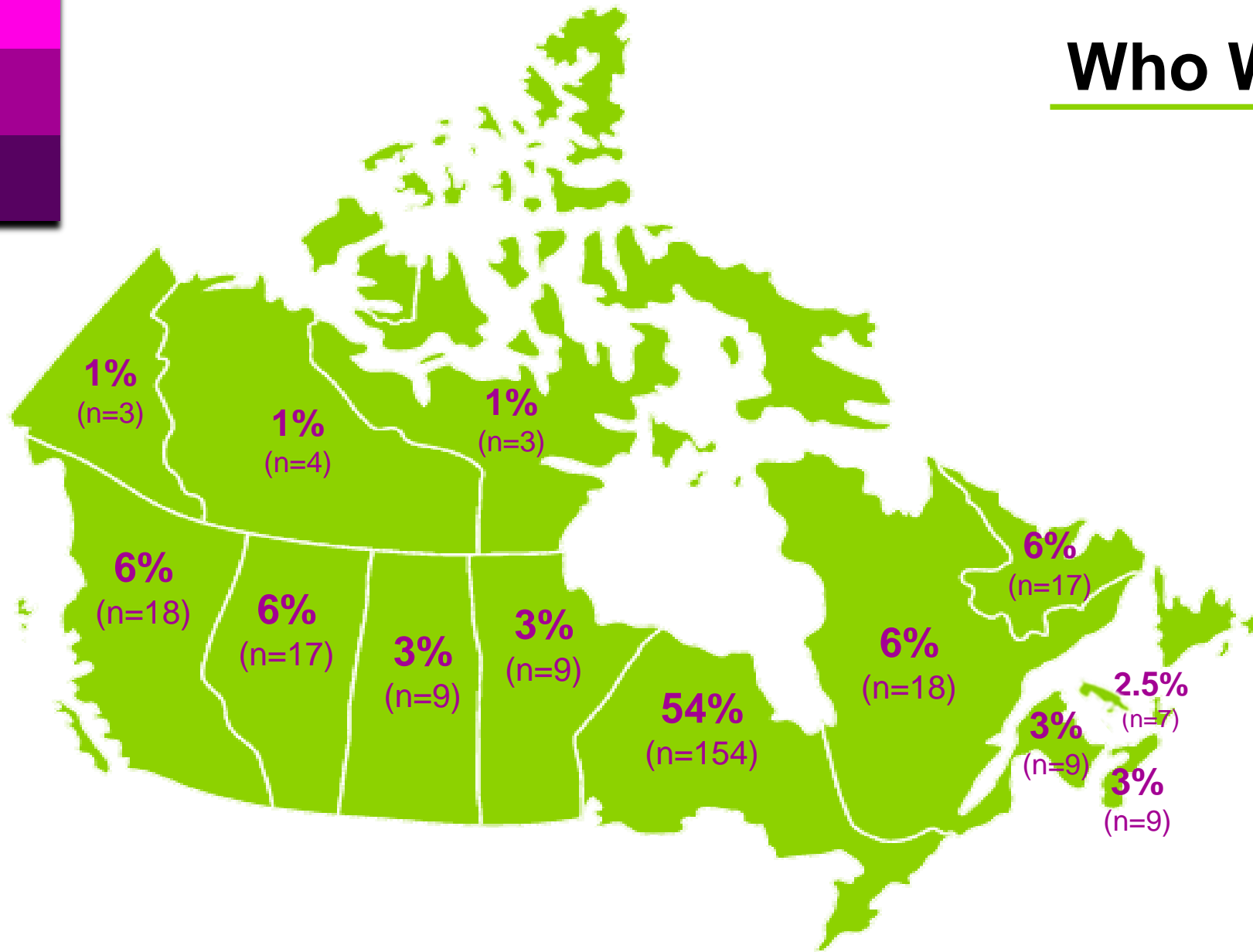
Anonymous, online survey



**Did you participate in a
C2C conversation or survey?**

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Who We Heard From



One-on-one and group conversations

141

Completed surveys

147

288

Practitioners

Who We Heard From

Top 3 sector groups



58% (n=158)
*Employment and
skills-training
providers*



36% (n=98)
*Business, Industry
and/or Labour
Groups*



10% (n=27)
Researchers

Top 3 Areas of Work



39% (n=106)
*Employment and
skills-training
service organization*



22% (n=60)
*Community and
social service
organization*



9% (n=24)
*Post-Secondary
Institution*

Who We Heard From



Top 3 Job Roles



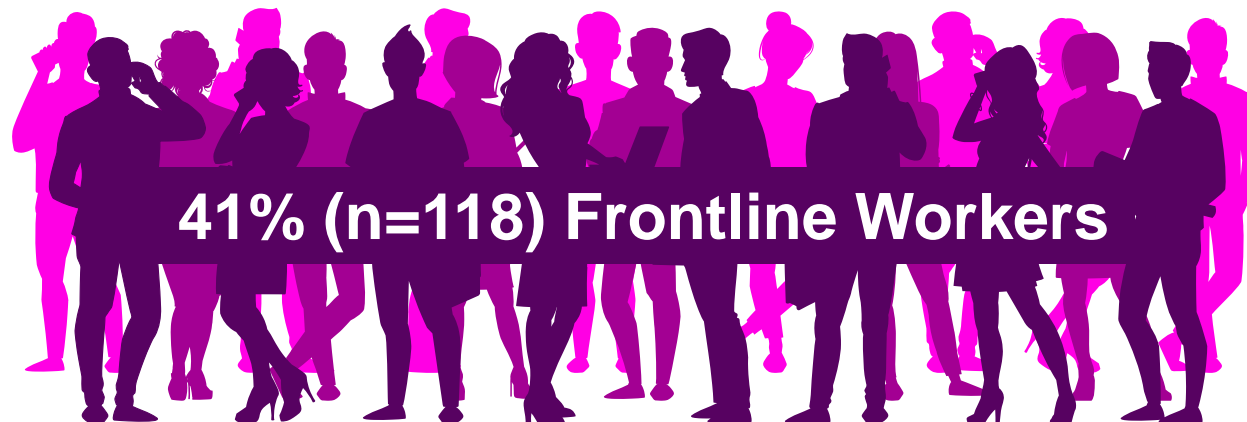
32% (n=87)
Senior Leadership



26% (n=70)
Management



21% (n=56)
*Workforce / Skills
Training practitioner*



Diverse Cross Section of Practitioners



Francophone

10% (n=28)

Supporting Indigenous Communities

Soutien aux communautés indigènes

7% (n=19)

Supporting Rural and/or Remote Communities

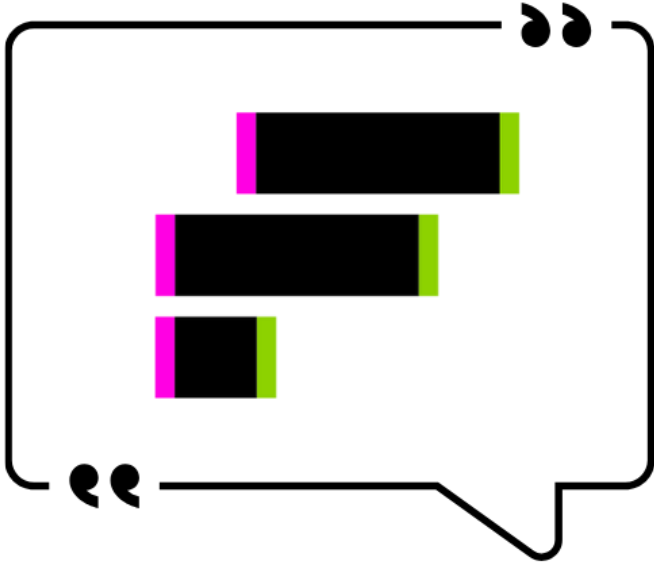
Soutenir les communautés rurales et/ou éloignées

43% (n=124)

Supporting Underserved Communities

Soutenir les communautés rurales

22% (n=63)



**Which of these groups do you identify as being part of?
Select all that apply.**

Collaborations and Partnerships: The “Who”

Individuals, organizations, and networks that share values and a common mission, particularly in supporting a diverse population.

Most connections are with:

- community and social service organizations
- economic development organizations
- educational services
- labor market researchers
- local industry groups
- local businesses
- government agencies



Rural areas

*Local
collaborations*



Urban areas

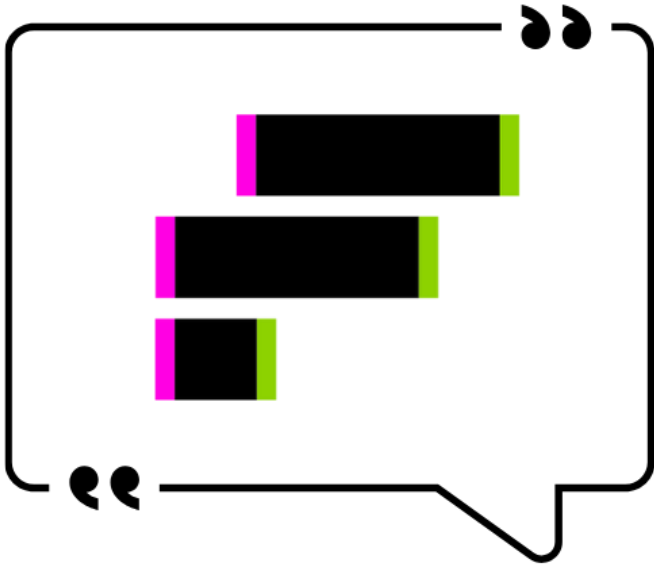
*Regional and
provincial
collaborations*
***Québec**

Collaborations and Partnerships: The “Why”

Exchange of best practices, knowledge sharing, information sharing, resources, ideation, shared funding, and service delivery

- ***Helps increase awareness*** of programs and events
- ***Help practitioners better understand available resources and services***
- ***Provide resources for staff and clients while also mitigating costs***

“This helped us engage and discuss challenges and highlights of our programs with like-minded practitioners”



**Why do you build connections?
What are some advantages of your
partnerships?**

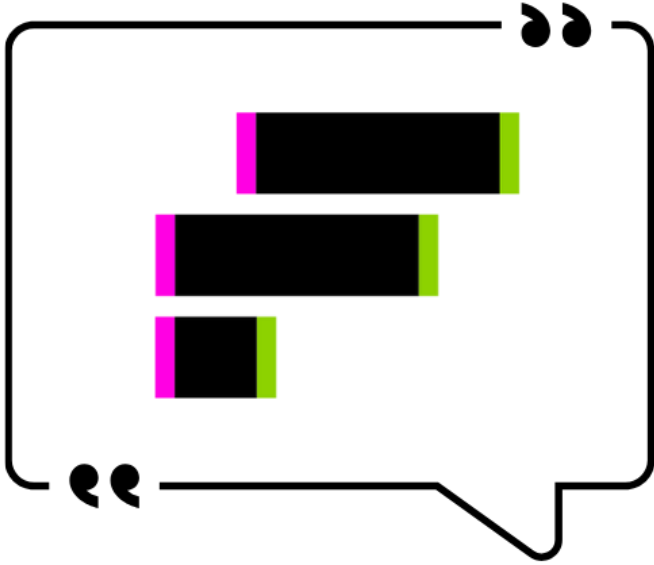
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Collaborations and Partnerships: Challenges



- **Building and maintaining strong relationships** is a major challenge for practitioners, particularly in *understaffed organizations*.
- **Harder to establish the trust needed for strong connections using virtual communication.**
- **Fears of ideas being stolen, and the investment being wasted**
- **Policy barriers and competitiveness**

Competitive nature tends to weaken the collaboration – people are all putting their own proposals in, and they all have their own ideas, so it **makes collaboration difficult.**



What challenges have you or your organization faced when trying to build new partnerships?

Challenges

4 Common Challenges

- 1) Funding
- 2) Staff Recruitment and Retention
- 3) Supporting Newcomers
- 4) Supporting Employers



Geographic & Demographic Specific Challenges

Common Challenges: Funding

- **Barriers to accessing funding and bureaucratic constraints**
- **Lack of resources and capacity** to apply for funding opportunities = underserved communities
- **Short funding cycles** can be too restrictive
- **Opportunities are restrictive in scope**

Need to:

- support innovative and responsive approaches
- enable the sector to tackle meaningful challenges
- stop driving unnecessary competition for clients and funding opportunities

*Agencies and government
pin groups against one
another for funding when
they **would be better
served by supporting
collaborative grants***

Common Challenges: Staff Recruitment and Retention

Understaffing leading to a loss of institutional knowledge

(1) Retirements, (2) high turnover rates, and (3) workers leaving the sector

- *Staff working multiple roles and having an overwhelming workload*
- New staff require **higher thanprecedented need** for PD and mentorship

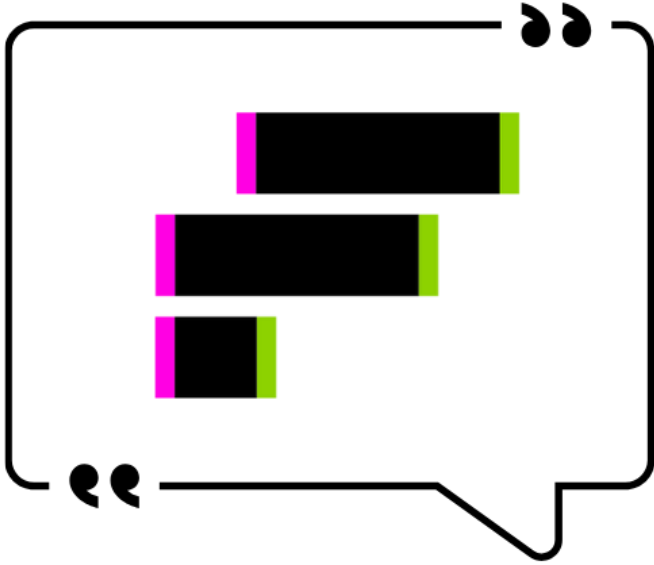
“With the turnover and a lot of senior people in the sector leaving, the **loss of knowledge is impacting the sector like crazy**. When those people are gone, you no longer have that **relationship history**.”

Need:

Standardized onboarding processes

Mentorship programs

Knowledge succession strategies



**Does your organization currently
have any unstaffed positions?**

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Common Challenges: Supporting Newcomers

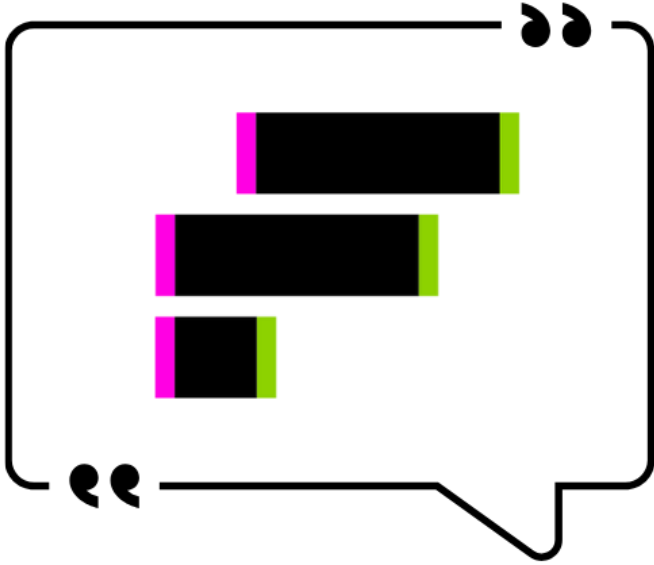
- Engagement challenges tied to **virtual service delivery and cultural differences**
- **General lack of expertise in navigating immigration systems and regulations**
 - Hired immigration consultants and/or partnered with non-profit immigration organizations
- **Challenges with/for employers:**
 - Negative perceptions of newcomer work ethics
 - Struggle to promote **social inclusion** in the community and workforce
 - Misconceptions and lack of clarity about foreign credentials

Needs to be **regular training** for those working at the community level that interacts with newcomers

Common Challenges: Supporting Employers

- Labor shortages have prompted a **power shift in the workforce**
- Employers seeking support to fill vacancies and promote retention
- **Employers need guidance in rethinking hiring and skills training strategies**
- Need to **change the culture around the role of industry in skills training**
- Overcoming staff and financial capacity will **require collaboration between the skills and workforce development sector with employers**

We currently have **2 employment engagement specialists** who are talking to employers all the time. **Take away the red tape** and just provide the service – that would be the ultimate – timely, effective.



Based on the top 4 common challenges identified, rank these challenges based on their importance for your organization.

Geographic- and Demographic-Specific Challenges

Organizations serving rural and/or remote communities

- Greater recruitment and retention issues
- Unique infrastructure challenges:
 - technology and internet capacity
 - poor/non-existent public transportation infrastructure

“The **bandwidth is so low** in communities service organizations **must work around when the kids are in school so they can do their work** [...] equipment is quite dated and has limited capacity in terms of performance.”

“A challenge has been **asset mapping for the Francophone community** in the region to map service levels, access to relevant tools/data.”

Francophone practitioners

- No centralized French resources and few PD opportunities
 - Challenges in accessing resources for their clients

Geographic- and Demographic-Specific Challenges

Policy-based challenges

- British Columbia
- Prairie provinces (AB, SK, MB)
- Central Canada (ON, QB)

Misalignment of priorities and understanding of community needs between the Ministry and sector practitioners

general understanding of client needs

funding requirements

client targets

training alignment and priorities



Knowledge and Resources Gaps

5 Major Themes:

- 1) Connectivity Gaps
- 2) Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion Knowledge and Policy Gaps
- 3) Data and Information Gaps
- 4) Professional Development Training Gaps
- 5) The (Practical) Tools Gap



Knowledge and Resources Gaps

Connectivity Gap

Universal gap in connectivity with their peers across provincial and territorial boundaries

Why Is This Important for the Sector?

Practitioners want a better understanding of what their peers are doing:

- break down existing silos
- build a stronger networks of collaboration
- Increase organizational capacities
- reduce service and research redundancies across the sector



Knowledge and Resources Gaps

Diversity, Equity, Accessibility and Inclusion (DEAI) Knowledge and Policy Gaps

Gap in providing practical support to employers navigating cultural differences and building relationships with underserved populations.

Why Is This Important for the Sector?

To best serve their communities including the growing populations of newcomers, practitioners need:

- DEI training resources
- Resources to understand newcomer employment policies
- Resources to better evaluate the skills and credentials acquired outside of Canada



Knowledge and Resources Gaps

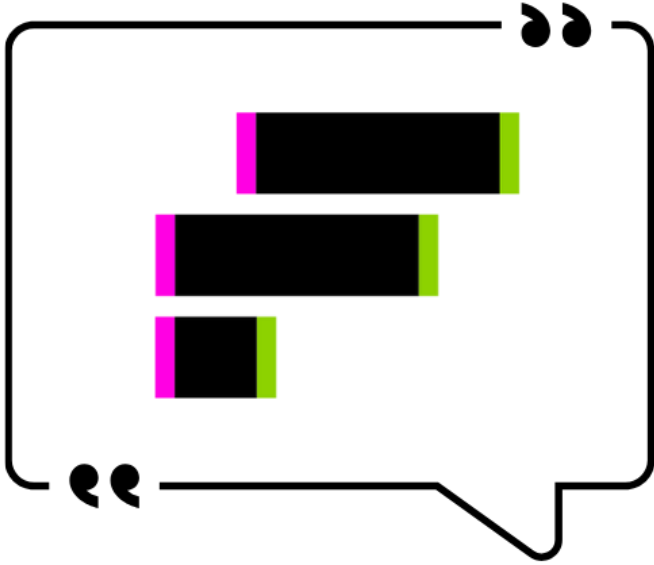
Data and Information Gaps

Gap in sharing practical data and information for skills and workforce development practitioners including local, provincial and national labour market information.

Why Is This Important for the Sector?

To best facilitate effective and efficient program and service delivery for workforce development:

- Overcome financial and capacity barriers
- Facilitate program development and foster innovation
- Share successes, failures, challenges and lessons learned to increase efficiencies and reduce redundancies
- Increase awareness and impact of work being done across the sector



**What are your current sources of
Labour Market Information (LMI)?**



Knowledge and Resources Gaps

Professional Development Training Gaps

Significant gap in PD training tools and resources due to a lack of access to standardized training, sector-specific training, onboarding resources, and career development for various roles within the sector.

Why Is This Important for the Sector?

Improve job performance and productivity, increase retention and promote career growth:

- Increase accessibility and reduced financial barriers
- Evolution of frontline worker roles
- Workforce-specific training resources



Knowledge and Resources Gaps

The (Practical) Tools Gap

Gap in openly accessible and easily shared practical sector-specific tools and resources

Why Is This Important for the Sector?

To facilitate and more effectively support their work, practitioners want:

- Openly accessible, practical tools i.e. toolkits, checklists, action plans
- To share innovative tools and resources to their peers
- Guidance on how to effectively use these tools in the context of their work

Knowledge and Resources Gaps

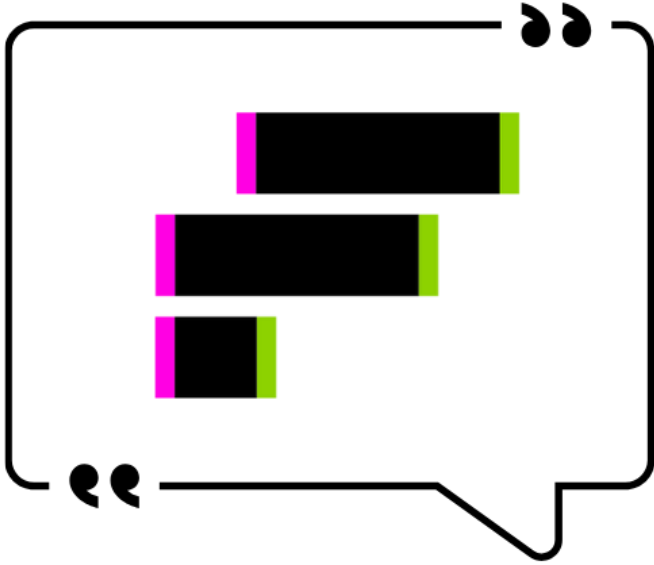
The (Practical) Tools Gap

We created an online platform for this project which has lasted well after the funding has stopped.

*This is a **great resource we would love to share** with the larger community of practice.*

We recently had a 4-year project evaluated that began with a practitioner consultation that informed the work. The evaluator was impressed with this approach and said it could be used with other organizations.

We want to be able to share stuff like this!



What are some tools you wish you had in your professional toolbox?

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Challenges in the Sector

- Collaborations and Partnerships
- Funding
- Staff Retention and Recruitment
- Supporting Newcomers
- Supporting Employers

**Rural Practitioners*

**Francophone Practitioners*



Gaps in Knowledge and Resources

- Connectivity Gaps
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Gaps
- Data and Information Gaps
- Professional Development Training Gaps
- Practical Tools Gap

The 'Key' Missing Piece for Practitioners

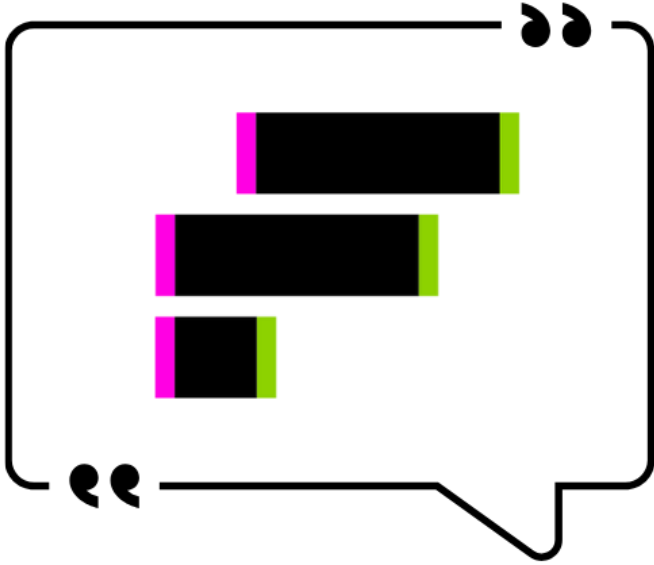


Centralized, open-access database

- Inventory of sector-specific knowledge products
- Training and learning resources
- Practical templates and tools
- Searchable directory of practitioners to facilitate relationship building



Practitioners want a platform to
share successes and lessons learned
and discuss experiences in curated groups of peers.



**What are your sources for new
sector-specific information, resources, tools?**

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Moving Forward: A Community Approach

Collaboration and engagement to:

- i. Identify challenges
- ii. Develop solutions
- iii. Implement plans of action

Benefits:

- Address the needs and priorities of the community in a timely fashion
- Foster connections and collaboration
- Promote knowledge sharing



Future Skills Center Community of Practice



Peer Learning Groups led by sector experts

- Previous: In demand SES, Community Engagement, Using Evidence for Impact
- Upcoming: Employer Engagement

Professional Development Toolbox Series

- Building Partnerships and Collaborations, Storytelling for Impact, Mental Health

Ignite Series

- June 15th: Experts share and lead group discussions

Connected Communities Speed Networking Events

- In-person small group interactions with experts

Conversations 2 Community Monthly Newsletter



Thank You For Joining Us Today

Merci de nous rejoindre aujourd'hui



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