



# **FACING CHALLENGES, FINDING OPPORTUNITY:**

**Young people in Canada navigating a  
new employment reality**

**Initial insights from the RBC Young People &  
Economic Inclusion Longitudinal Study**



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# Acknowledgements

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## Positionality statement from the authors

Valentina Castillo-Cifuentes: I am a 30-year-old Latin American woman from Chile, who immigrated to Canada in 2017. My experiences navigating a new country, language, and workforce shape my perspective and understanding on the issues discussed in this report.

Dr. Ana Ferrer: I am a 55 year-old woman economist. My views and understanding of Canadian labour markets are shaped by my experience as a woman working in a predominantly male environment.

Mariah Jolin: My interpretation of the data shared in this report has been shaped by my experience as a young Canadian woman participating in the Canadian labour force. It has also been influenced by my experience working with young people in various education and recreation settings.

Ilona Dougherty: I am a 43-year-old Canadian born white cis gender woman with a long-term physical disability. My privilege, as well as my experience growing up in rural Canada, in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan and Whitehorse, Yukon and my experience living with a disability have influenced my contributions to this report.

Dr. Amelia Clarke: I am a full professor in sustainability management, in the School of Environment, Enterprise and Development at the University of Waterloo. I have a PhD in management from McGill University. I am currently the Principal Investigator (PI) for two research initiatives: the Youth & Innovation Project and the Municipal Net-Zero Action

Research Partnership, and I care deeply about youth engagement, social equity and addressing the climate emergency. I was born in Ireland and became a Canadian citizen at age 9. I also identify as a parent, as non-binary, and as LGBTQ+. Both my professional and personal experiences shape my interests and perspective.

## Contributors

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We acknowledge that much of our work takes place on the traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo's campus is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River. The University's work toward reconciliation takes place across its campuses through research, learning, teaching, and community building, and is co-ordinated within the Office of Indigenous Relations.

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For more information visit: [www.uwaterloo.ca/youthinn](http://www.uwaterloo.ca/youthinn)

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**Future Launch**

# Executive summary

## Introduction and methodology

Both prior to and since the COVID-19 pandemic, young people (15 to 30 years old) in Canada have faced barriers when entering the labour market, including housing and food insecurity, racism, caregiving responsibilities, and challenges related to mental health and physical and mental disabilities (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2016; Nichols, 2023). These barriers can impact young people's chances of finding and maintaining employment, limit career advancement opportunities, and lead to difficulties navigating workplace relationships (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2016). Additionally, Indigenous youth in Canada not only encounter the barriers just mentioned but may also face the enduring effects of generational trauma resulting from colonization as well as ongoing discrimination (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2016).

In 2018, RBC launched a report titled "Humans wanted: How Canadian youth can thrive in the age of disruption". In that report, the RBC research team concluded that young people in Canada possess qualifications that exceed job requirements. However many find themselves unemployed due to a lack of job opportunities that align with their qualifications (Royal Bank of Canada [RBC], 2018).

In response to the challenges facing young people in Canada, the RBC Foundation made a commitment in 2017 to invest \$500 million over 10 years to support initiatives and programs aimed to prepare young people ages 15 to 29 for the future of work. The support provided to young people focuses on four main solution areas: gaining new skills, growing their network, getting practical work experience, and improving mental well-being. As of October 2023, more than \$393 million has been granted to over 840 organizations. Approximately 6.9 million Canadian youth have participated in RBC funded programs (RBC Future Launch, 2023).

Over the last two years, in partnership with the RBC Foundation, the Youth & Innovation Project at the University of Waterloo has developed the RBC Young People & Economic Inclusion Longitudinal Study. This six-year study (2022-2028) aims to understand and measure the outcomes for young people who have participated in RBC funded programs and how these outcomes vary over time.

This study has unique characteristics that make it a trendsetter for social impact measurement; it is longitudinal, over 20,000 young people have opted in to date, it will allow comparisons with the Canadian population through the Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey, and has been developed in consultation with our [Youth Advisory Council](#), the RBC Longitudinal Study Partner Advisory Council, and with insight from several of colleagues at the University of Waterloo, including the Work-Learn Institute, the Canadian Index of Wellbeing and Waterloo Institute for Complexity & Innovation.

**This study has unique characteristics that make it a trendsetter for social impact measurement.**

The main research question that guides this study is: What are the impacts of the RBC funded programs on young participants and the Canadian economy?

The sub-questions of this study are as follows:

1. How much more likely is it, in the years after a program, for young participants to be **employed** as compared to their peers?
2. How much more likely is it, in the years after a program, for young participants to have **completed additional training** as compared to their peers?
3. If they are employed, how much more likely are the young participants to be **thriving at work** in the years after a program as compared to their peers?
4. Do all young participants have the same outcomes or are the outcomes different when **diversity characteristics** are accounted for?

This research is a six-year (2022-2028) multiple-cohort longitudinal study, which means that we are surveying multiple groups of RBC funded program participants over the course of the study. This way we can identify different outcomes, trends and their variation over time across groups of participants.

When participants complete an RBC funded program, they are asked to fill out a survey called the RBC Post-Program Evaluation Survey. This survey focuses on the skills and knowledge that participants gained while participating in the RBC funded program. At the end of this survey, there is an opt-in question where participants can opt into the longitudinal study. As of May 2024, a total of 23,319 participants have opted into the study.

Participants who opt into the longitudinal study are surveyed three times over three years: at least a year after they completed an RBC funded program, two years after, and again three years after that. At the end of the third survey, participants can express their interest in participating in an interview with us so that we can gather further details about their career paths.

## **Results and insights**

In this report, we are pleased to share the results of the first survey that was sent to the first cohort of participants. Although the results presented in this first report are not yet longitudinal, they are nonetheless valuable and they identify trends and patterns that we will continue to monitor over the course of this study around youth employment in Canada, young people's socioeconomic reality, their relationships with their workplaces, and their



overall well-being.

The key findings from the results of the first survey of cohort one of the longitudinal study are:

1. The participants in the longitudinal study are fairly representative of the Canadian population, however, we are missing the voices of young people from Québec, the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and Nunavut.
2. Transition youth (20-24) and young adults (25-34) in the longitudinal study have higher education levels compared to the Canadian population.
3. Young people today have less access to work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities, when compared to the Canadian graduates from 2020 (Statistics Canada, 2024c).
4. Female participants participate in less hours of professional development per year than male participants.
5. More adolescents (15-19) would prefer to work entirely in person than any other age group, and transition youth (20-24) have a higher preference for hybrid work than older and younger participants.
6. Female participants are paid less than their male counterparts. The biggest disparities occur at the lower end of the earnings range.
7. Transition youth (20-24) and young adults (25-34) are less likely to have developed reliable ways to relax under pressure than adolescents (15-19) and adults (35+).
8. Young immigrants are less likely to be thriving at work compared to those born in Canada.
9. Young participants are very optimistic about collaborating with decision-makers in the workplace; however, they have few opportunities to do so.

Based on these results we recommend the following for funders, policy makers, and employers:

#### **Recommendations for funders and policy makers**

- Support efforts to ensure that the youth employment context in the Yukon, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is better understood, while ensuring efforts are culturally relevant.
- Support efforts to ensure equitable access to youth programs for individuals with lower levels of education as well as facilitating their participation and completion of these programs.
- Invest in further research to better understand the evolving trends in Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), who has access to WIL and how to increase access, and its impact on youth employment.
- Support efforts to increase the participation of women in more hours of professional development and on-the-job training.
- Address the gender-based wage gap by supporting initiatives to promote equal pay and financial literacy among women, as well as advocate for initiatives such as Women in Trades so that young women have access to higher-paying job sectors early in their careers.

### **Recommendations for employers**

- Embrace the interest demonstrated by younger employees to work in person or in a hybrid environment and ensure in-person work is meaningful and time spent in person has ample focus on building relationships.
- Create more opportunities for intergenerational collaboration at work and recognizing the value of diverse perspectives, especially in the context of an aging population.
- Ensure females have increase opportunities to participate in on-the-job training and professional development.
- Offer additional support and resources to transition youth (20-24) and young adult (25-34) employees to ensure they are thriving at work.
- Implement initiatives to support young immigrants in their professional growth and integration into the workplace.

We hope that these initial results of this first cohort of participants of the RBC Young People & Economic Inclusion longitudinal study offer a starting point for a conversation about the challenges faced by and opportunities available to young people in Canada. There are many more cohorts of this longitudinal study to come and as the study continues, our team looks forward to analyzing trends and patterns to gain a deeper understanding of young people's socioeconomic reality and relationships with their workplaces, while continuing to provide insights for decision-makers, including employers, funders and policy makers so that they can, in real time, address the challenges and leverage the opportunities we have identified.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### Why is it crucial to understand youth employment and invest in it?

Young people (ages 15-30) are very different from adults when it comes to their labour market experiences. In general, young people have higher unemployment rates than older workers, as they are more likely to be enrolled in school and working in temporary jobs (Morissette, 2021). They receive lower pay, as they are more often working part time, in entry level positions, or in jobs that pay minimum wage (Morissette, 2021). And even when working full time, their lower levels of experience contribute to lower wages (Morissette, 2021).

Both prior to and since the COVID-19 pandemic, young people in Canada have also faced other barriers when entering the labour market, including housing and food insecurity, racism, caregiving responsibilities, and challenges related to physical disabilities and mental health (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2016; Nichols, 2023). These barriers can impact young people's chances of finding and maintaining employment, limit career advancement opportunities, and lead to difficulties navigating workplace relationships (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2016). Additionally, Indigenous youth in Canada not only encounter the barriers just mentioned but may also face the enduring effects of generational trauma resulting from colonization as well as ongoing discrimination (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2016).

In 2018, RBC launched a report titled "Humans wanted: How Canadian youth can thrive in the age of disruption". In that report, the RBC research team concluded that young people in Canada possess qualifications that exceed job requirements. However many find themselves unemployed due to a lack of job opportunities that align with their qualifications (RBC, 2018). This report from RBC also highlighted that there has been a shift in the job market landscape. The traditional characteristics of job security have become less accessible over time; long-term, full-time job positions that include health insurance, retirement plans, and paid leave are now rare (Busby & Muthukumaran, 2016). In addition, the belief that post-secondary degrees and qualifications guarantee success in the workforce may no longer hold true (RBC, 2018).

Understanding the context surrounding young people's early experience in the labour market and supporting them as they navigate the barriers they face is of vital importance. This not only shapes the future of their careers, but it also has persistent effects in different areas of their lives, including their interpersonal relationships, income and health outcomes (von Wachter, 2020). Young people are essential contributors to economic growth; therefore, failing to support them means risking our economy's ability to stay innovative and remain competitive globally. Leaving young people unsupported, also leads to long term economic scarring of young people increasing inequality, and leaving us

with challenges that will be much more difficult to tackle down the road (Government of Canada, 2020; RBC, 2018).

## **RBC Future Launch**

In response to the challenges facing young people in Canada, the RBC Foundation made a commitment in 2017 to invest \$500 million over 10 years to support initiatives and programs aimed to prepare young people ages 15 to 29 for the future of work. The support provided to young people focuses on four main solution areas: gaining new skills, growing their network, getting practical work experience, and improving mental well-being. As of October 2023, more than \$393 million has been granted to over 840 organizations through RBC Future Launch. Approximately 6.9 million Canadian youth have participated in RBC Future Launch funded programs (RBC Future Launch, 2023).

RBC Future Launch funds organizations that lead youth programs that tackle at least one of the four solutions areas mentioned above and that demonstrate a thoughtful, evidence-based design that considers scale of intended impact, specific costs associated with creating impact, time required to achieve and report on impact, and relevant risks (RBC, n.d.). RBC Future Launch also prioritizes supporting inclusive organizations that reach and meet the needs of young people from diverse communities, including but not limited to people who are of different genders, sexual orientations or identities, Indigenous, Inuit or Métis, Black, from diverse cultural, linguistic or ethnic backgrounds (e.g. newcomer populations), geographically diverse (e.g. rural, remote or on-reserve), living with physical or mental disabilities, and/or are various ages (e.g. mid or late teens: early, mid or late twenties) (RBC, n.d.).

The youth programs that are funded by RBC Future Launch are diverse and varied. Some of the programs may offer one-on-one support to young people online or short workshops either online or in-person, while others offer interventions such as multi-month internships. The organizations eligible to receive funding are charities, for profit and non-for-profit, post-secondary institutions, secondary schools, and hospitals. Applications of \$10,000 or more but less than \$100,000, are accepted on a rolling basis. Applications greater than \$100,000 are discussed with the RBC Donations Manager before submitting an application (RBC, n.d.). The selection process includes an assessment of the organizations' fiscal management and governance practices. The RBC Foundation also requires that the organizations clearly demonstrate the social impact of their work in order to be selected (RBC, n.d.).

## **RBC Young People & Economic Inclusion Longitudinal Study**

The Youth & Innovation Project offers strategic advice and evidence-based guidance to business, government, philanthropic foundations, academia, and civil society to support the development of their youth-focused policy and programs. Our goal is to ensure that young people in Canada are meaningfully engaged in their communities, while also

recognizing and amplifying the positive social, environmental, and economic impact they have on organizations, communities, and systems.

Therefore, when the opportunity arose to work in partnership with the RBC Foundation to understand the impacts of the \$500 million commitment that the RBC Foundation has made to prepare young people for the future of work, and the implications this investment has had on Canadian society and the economy, we were excited to be a part of this critical work. Over the last two years, in partnership with the RBC Foundation team, the Youth & Innovation Project team has developed the RBC Young People & Economic Inclusion Longitudinal Study. This six-year study (2022-2028) aims to understand and measure the outcomes for those young participants who have taken part in an RBC funded program and how these outcomes vary over time.

**This study has unique characteristics that make it a trendsetter for social impact measurement.**

This study has unique characteristics that make it a trendsetter for social impact measurement; it is longitudinal, over 20,000 young people have opted in to date, it will allow comparisons with the Canadian population through the Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey, and has been developed in consultation with our Youth Advisory Council, the RBC Longitudinal Study Partner Advisory Council<sup>1</sup>, and with insight from several colleagues at the

University of Waterloo, including the Work-Learn Institute, the Canadian Index of Wellbeing and Waterloo Institute for Complexity & Innovation.

In this report, we are pleased to share the results of the first survey that was sent to the first cohort of young participants. Although the results presented in this first report are not yet longitudinal, they are nonetheless valuable and in this report we begin to identify trends and patterns that we will continue to observe over the course of this study around youth employment in Canada, young people's socioeconomic reality, their relationships in their workplaces, and their overall well-being.

In the following sections, we share the research questions that guide the RBC Young People & Economic Inclusion Longitudinal Study and the methodology and details of the data we are presenting in this report. Following that are the results, contextualized by other data points that paint a full picture of the reality of young people in Canada, and finally we offer critical insights and recommendations that will support young people to thrive not only in the workplace but also in Canadian society. We end this report by calling on employers, funders, and policy makers to actively engage with these findings and take concrete actions to address the challenges and opportunities identified.

<sup>1</sup> The RBC Longitudinal Study Partner Advisory Council is a group of 10 to 20 RBC funded partners. It includes organizations whose programming is diverse and represents different sub-sectors of the youth sector in Canada (see Acknowledgements for the full list of organizations from the 2021-2022 council). The council ensures that the study was implemented in a way that reflects the realities and needs of RBC funded partners, and that the resulting data would be of value to both RBC funded partners and the youth serving sector more broadly.

## Chapter 2

# Methodology for the six-year longitudinal study

### Research questions

The main research question that guides this study is:

*What are the impacts of the RBC funded programs on young participants and the Canadian economy?*

The sub-questions of this study are as follows:

1. How much more likely is it, in the years after a program, for young participants to be employed as compared to their peers?
2. How much more likely is it, in the years after a program, for young participants to have completed additional training as compared to their peers?
3. If they are employed, how much more likely are the young participants to be thriving at work in the years after a program as compared to their peers?
4. Do all young participants have the same outcomes or are the outcomes different when diversity characteristics are accounted for?

### Research design

This study is a six-year (2022-2028) multiple-cohort longitudinal study, which means that we are following multiple groups of RBC funded program participants over the course of the study. This allows us to identify different outcomes, trends and their variation over time across groups of participants.

We consulted with our Youth Advisory Council and the RBC Longitudinal Study Partner Advisory Council during the design of the methodology of the study. Both groups reviewed the survey and gave feedback on the questions included as well as identifying gaps, and they also contributed to the overall design of the study, including the type of incentives participants should receive for completing the survey.

### Participants

When participants complete an RBC funded program, they complete a survey called the RBC Post-Program Evaluation Survey. This survey focuses on the skills and knowledge that participants gained while participating in an RBC funded program. At the end of this survey, there is an opt-in question where participants can opt into the longitudinal study. As of May 2024, a total of 23,319 participants have opted into the longitudinal study.

Participants who opt into the longitudinal study are surveyed three times over three years: at least a year to a maximum of one year and six months after they completed an RBC funded program, two years after that, and again three years after that. At the end of the third survey, participants can express their interest in participating in an interview with us so that we can gather further details about their career paths. Given that participants complete RBC funded programs on an ongoing basis, we group them into cohorts. We have two cohorts per year and send out surveys in January and July. Therefore, there will be a total of twelve cohorts over the six of the study years. The cohorts are determined based on the month participants complete their program. For example, if a participant completed an RBC funded program between January 2022 and July 2022, they are surveyed in July 2023, July 2024, and July 2025. If participants completed an RBC funded program between August 2022 and December 2022, they are surveyed in January 2024, January 2025 and January 2026.

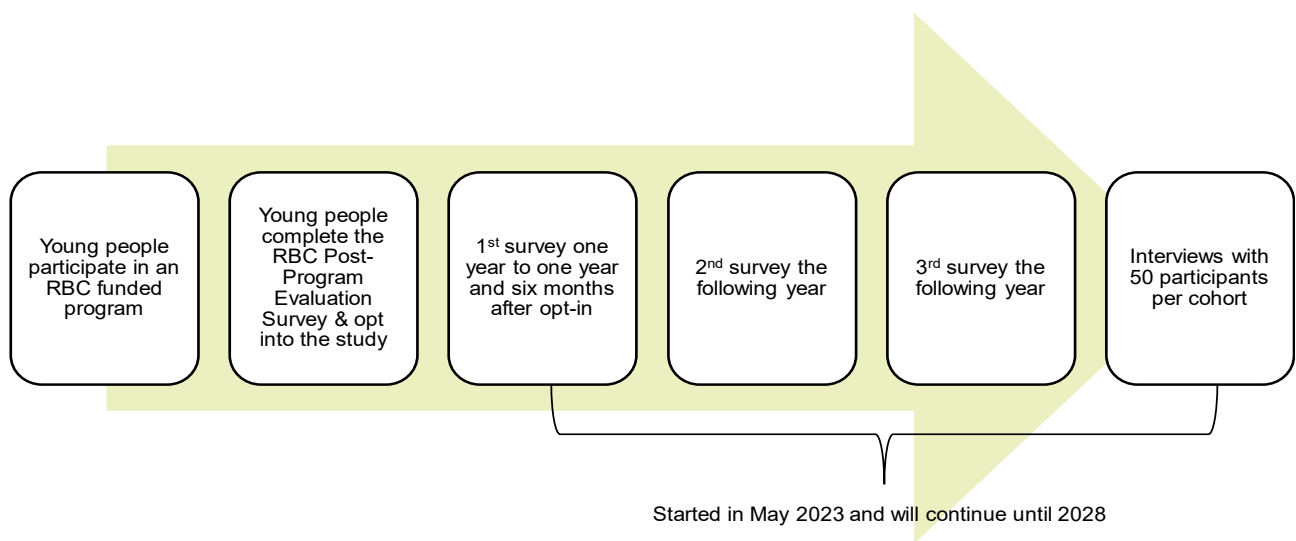


Figure 1. Study design <sup>2</sup>

## Survey details

The questions in the survey were selected to align with the concepts and indicators we wanted to measure based on the research questions<sup>3</sup>, and they are all measures that have been previously tested in other impact measurement or academic contexts.

The employment section is composed of questions suggested by Dr. Ana Ferrer, drawn from Statistics Canada’s Labour Force Survey (LFS)<sup>4</sup>. We also included questions around job precariousness from Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern Ontario at McMaster University as suggested by Dr. Sean Geobey (Martin & Lewchuk, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> The first round of interviews with participants will occur in Fall of 2025. Details about the selection process and interview questions will be provided in the upcoming reports.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix A for full survey.

<sup>4</sup> The Labour Force Survey from Statistics Canada is a monthly survey that measures the current state of the Canadian labour market. It is used to calculate the national, provincial, territorial and regional employment and unemployment rates. The results of the survey are used to make decisions regarding the creation of jobs, education and training, pensions and income support (Statistics Canada, 2024b). Participants across Canada are selected randomly to participate in the survey (Statistics Canada, 2024a).

The education and practical work experience questions were derived mainly from the LFS and other Statistics Canada surveys, as well as suggestions provided by the Work-Learn Institute at the University of Waterloo regarding work-integrated learning. In the section addressing thriving at work, we selected questions from the academic literature, including recommendations from the Canadian Index of Wellbeing at the University of Waterloo as well as from the RBC Longitudinal Study Partner Advisory Council. Finally, the demographic questions are a combination of questions from the LFS, the RBC Post-Program Evaluation Survey (to allow for comparability), as well as recommendations from Dr. Carl James at York University.

To understand the impact of RBC funded programs and the implications for the Canadian economy, a control group is needed for our study (i.e., a group of young people who did not participate in RBC funded programs). We draw a suitable control group for our analysis from the LFS by selecting young respondents ages 18 to 35 from the same geographic areas as the RBC participants. We collect detailed geographical information from our longitudinal study participants, such as the first three letters of their postal code, and as such we are able to match the control and treatment group precisely. Our assumption is that the LFS participants did not take part in the RBC funded programs and as such they are an appropriate control group for the longitudinal study. The analyses performed to compare both groups allows us to answer research sub-questions one, two<sup>5</sup> and four.

For those outcomes for which we cannot obtain a control group from the LFS, such as outcomes related to pursuing additional training or level of access to practical work experience, we rely on previous studies from a variety of sources to provide a benchmark for comparison. Finally, to answer research question three we focus on understanding the extent to which young people are thriving at work using existing academic (e.g., Bhattacharyya et al., 2019; Porath et al., 2012) and non-academic scales.

The data collected through the longitudinal study survey will be linked to the RBC Post-Program Evaluation Survey data, to compare the skills young participants learned in the programs and their employment outcomes after participating in these programs in future reports.

At the end of the survey, participants can share their LinkedIn profile URLs with us. Publicly available information from LinkedIn profiles, including employment status and history, training, internships, volunteer positions and networks will allow us to analyze patterns in both work and educational experience. Our analysis will focus on identifying patterns among RBC participants, rather than conducting an individual analysis of each young person's profile.

A University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board granted ethics clearance to the longitudinal study on February 8th, 2023.

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<sup>5</sup> Only the questions that are similar to the LFS questions, such as educational achievement, current level of education, and field of study allow for comparisons.



Participants are surveyed using software from Qualtrics. Consent forms are integrated into the Qualtrics software, which must be completed by the participants before filling out the survey or providing their LinkedIn profile URL. The Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (TCPS 2) does not require a minimum age for consent for research; instead, they require that participants are informed about the purpose of the research, and its risks and potential benefits, and that they have the capacity to decide for themselves to participate in research (Canadian Institutes of Health Research et al., 2018). Therefore, we only require the participant’s consent to be a part of the study and do not contact participants’ parents or guardians. However, we recommend that participants who are minors share the study’s information letter<sup>6</sup> with their parents.

The following table shows the research themes of the longitudinal study and an example of some of the questions asked in the survey related to each theme.

Research Themes	Examples of survey questions
Economic outcomes and socioeconomic status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differences between RBC funded program participants and non-RBC participants (LFS control group)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is your current labour force status?</li> <li>• In the last 12 months, did you hold more than one job simultaneously?</li> <li>• How many hours do you usually work per week at your main job (the job where you work the most hours)?</li> </ul>
Education and informal training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work integrated-learning</li> <li>• Volunteerism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the highest level of education that you have completed?</li> <li>• Did you have any work-integrated learning experiences as part of your academic program of study?</li> <li>• In the past 12 months, have you volunteered without pay on behalf of a group or an organization?</li> </ul>
Thriving at work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work-life balance</li> <li>• Resilience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How satisfied are you with your main job (the job where you work the most hours)?</li> <li>• How valued do you feel at your main job?</li> <li>• How likely do you think it is that you will get a promotion at your main job (the job where you work the most hours) in the next 6 months?</li> </ul>
Identifying demographic group outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which of the following most closely reflects your gender identity?</li> <li>• What is your place of birth?</li> <li>• What is the language that you first learned at home in childhood and still understand?</li> </ul>

Table 1. Research themes and examples of survey questions

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix B.

## Pilot study

Before the launch of the Longitudinal Study, we conducted a pilot study with a random sample of 800 young participants who had opted in to participate in the longitudinal study. The pilot study aimed to test the survey instrument and determine which incentive options led to the highest response rates. We also tested two different recruitment messages and the willingness of participants to share their LinkedIn profile URLs with us.

In regards to the survey instrument, we tested response rates, calculated the average amount of time participants took to complete the survey, and recorded what percentage of the survey participants completed.

In terms of testing incentives, we were advised by our Youth Advisory Council and the RBC Longitudinal Study Partner Advisory Council that ideally every participant should be compensated for the time they spent responding to the survey. It was recommended that compensation should be based on what is considered a living wage in Ontario, \$20 per hour<sup>7</sup> (Coleman, 2023). The survey was expected to take 20-25 minutes to answer, therefore they recommended that participants receive \$10 for completing the survey. If there were budget constraints, then it was suggested that we provide the incentive of cash draws in amounts between \$50 to \$150. The RBC Foundation also offered to provide LinkedIn Learning licenses as an incentive. As part of the pilot study, we tested four different incentive options: a cash draw of \$150, a cash draw of \$50, \$10 cash per participant, and one-year LinkedIn Learning license per participant (valued at \$324).

We developed two different recruitment messages to test with the young participants. The first was recommended by the University of Waterloo's Ethics Board, which utilized academic language and in-depth explanations of the study. These emails were sent through Qualtrics, the same platform we used to conduct the survey. The second message was developed by a marketing consultant, The Mkt Dept, who has experience developing compelling messages to increase response rates. The second message was youth-friendly, included a visual design concept, and clearly articulated that young participants would making a difference for young people like themselves by answering the survey. These emails were sent through Mailchimp as, unlike Qualtrics, this platform allows for the use of branded emails and is set up to avoid bulk emails being sent to participants' junk mail folders.

Lastly, we tested how likely is that research participants would be willing to share their LinkedIn profile URLs with us, to be used as a communication method for the longitudinal study. Research on longitudinal studies has shown that having several ways to communicate with participants helps to limit loss of contact (Andreß et al., 2013). As an employment-oriented platform, LinkedIn is a suitable platform to contact participants for employment-focused research. However, we were unsure of how willing participants would be to share their LinkedIn profile URLs with us.

<sup>7</sup> Average living wage for Canada was not available at the time the research design was conducted, and therefore the Ontario living wage was chosen.

The participants who completed the pilot study survey also had the chance to opt in to participate in two focus groups. The goal of the focus groups was for participants to share their feedback on the survey instrument and survey materials. From the pool of participants that opted in, 20 were invited to participate in each of the focus groups. Participants were selected to participate based on personal demographic characteristics, regional representation and how much of the survey they had filled out. The opt in question for the focus group was located at the beginning of the survey to ensure that some of the young people who began the survey but did not fully complete it would be invited to participate in a focus group.

### Pilot study results

The survey data collection for the pilot study began on July 15th, 2022, and concluded on September 26th, 2022. Surveys were sent out and monitored by the Youth & Innovation Project’s staff team.

The pilot study survey had a total of 65 questions, and we estimated that it would take participants about 25 minutes to complete the survey on average. The results of the pilot study showed that participants spent approximately 14 minutes answering the survey, and on average completed 89% of the survey<sup>8</sup>. Research suggests that the ideal length of a survey is between 10 to 20 minutes and that retention loss is likely when surveys are longer than that (Revilla & Ochoa, 2017). Our result, 14 minutes, falls within the ideal survey length which encouraged the retention of participants and a high rate of survey completion.

We believe that consulting with our Youth Advisory Council to ensure that the survey was accessible and easy to understand, that we were clear about the purpose of the study in the recruitment messaging and that we explained that answering the survey will make an impact also contributed to the high survey completion rate.

Table 2 shows that higher response rates were achieved when participants were offered a \$10 per participant cash incentive. The different cash draw amounts did not make a significant difference in response rates achieved. These results confirm that participants are more willing to complete a survey when they receive incentives that meaningfully value their efforts.

Incentive group	Response rate
\$10 per participant	19%
LinkedIn Learning license	12%
\$50 cash draw	11%
\$150 cash draw	9%
Overall response rate	12%

Table 2. Response rates achieved by incentive groups

<sup>8</sup> Most survey questions are optional, with the exception of age, employment status and postal code which are mandatory.

Table 3 shows that participants were more willing to share their LinkedIn URLs when offered a LinkedIn Learning license or a \$10 per participant cash incentive. The results suggest that high engagement of participants is more likely to occur when they are offered meaningful incentives that are relevant to the topic of study.

Incentive group	Yes, I want to share my LinkedIn URL
LinkedIn Learning license	36%
\$10 per participant	32%
\$50 cash draw	14%
\$150 cash draw	18%

Table 3. Sharing of LinkedIn URLs by incentive groups.

The focus groups were held on August 9th, 2022 and on October 6th, 2022. Five participants attended the first focus group, and six participants attended the second focus group. The participants were provided with a \$20 cash incentive for their participation. The feedback received focused on the email messaging, with the participants who received the first email message that contained more academic text confirming that the email was text heavy, and that it would make a difference in readability if the email was not just text-based but also had a design concept. This feedback was addressed in the second email we developed with the marketing consultant. Participants indicated that the second email made it clear that the study was from the University of Waterloo in partnership with RBC Future Launch which made them more willing to participate in the survey.

Participants indicated that the survey was easy to follow, although they would have preferred less questions asking them to indicate their level of agreement with certain statements. Participants expressed that they would be more likely to stay engaged in the study over the full three years if we sent them update emails sharing job opportunities, career development workshops and other employment-related content in the months in between being sent the surveys. Participants also mentioned that, in addition to email, LinkedIn would be the best social media platform to communicate with them about the study. They expressed that monetary incentives are a major driver for them to answer surveys. Lastly, they indicated that they would find it valuable to receive updates about the results of the study, in particular how other participants are doing in comparison with the Canadian population.

**These results confirm that participants are more willing to complete a survey when they receive incentives that meaningfully value their efforts.**

It is important to mention that the pilot study results have significantly informed the design of the longitudinal study. Many lessons were learned regarding how to reach young participants, which incentives to use, how to pay incentives, how to maximize our use of survey and email software tools, when to send the survey to increase response rates, and how to ensure our design and text are accessible. Conducting a pilot study was an invaluable part of the study design process.

## Study logistics

After implementing suggested changes and findings from the pilot study into our study design, we launched the longitudinal study on May 15th, 2023. The study logistics are as follows:

When participants opt into the longitudinal study as part of the RBC Post-Program Evaluation Survey, they receive a confirmation email explaining that they will be part of the RBC Young People and Economic Inclusion Longitudinal Study and that we will be in touch with them in advance of sending them the survey. At least one year after the participants opt in, the Youth & Innovation Project staff team sends participants a pre-survey email to remind them that they expressed interest in participating in this study and to let them know that they will receive the survey within a week. One week later invitation emails containing an individualized survey link are sent to participants via MailChimp. Individual survey links allow us to track which participants have completed the survey<sup>9</sup>. Both emails and surveys are sent either in English or French depending on participants' preferred language indicated in the RBC Post-Program Evaluation Survey.

Confirmation email	Opted-in participants receive this email immediately after they have completed the RBC Post-Program Evaluation Survey
Pre-invite survey email	One week before the survey is sent
Survey invitation email	Containing individualized survey links
Reminder 1	One week after survey is sent
Reminder 2	Two weeks after reminder 1 is sent
Reminder 3	One week after reminder 2 is sent
Reminder 4	Asking for LinkedIn profile URLs only. One week after reminder 3 is sent

Figure 2. Participation process from opt in to longitudinal study survey invitation

The survey is open for participants to complete for a month. A reminder to complete the survey is sent one week after the invitation email. A second reminder is sent two weeks after the invitation email and a third reminder is sent a week after that. The reminder emails are only sent to participants that have not yet completed the survey.

<sup>9</sup> The participant's data is anonymized before it is analyzed. Participants' personally identifiable information, such as emails, first three letters of postal codes, and LinkedIn URLs, and their Response ID are stored separately from the survey data.

Participants can enter their LinkedIn profile URLs at the end of the survey. These are collected independently from their survey answers through a separate Qualtrics form. After participants finish the survey, they have the option to enter their contact information to receive their incentive. Their contact information is also collected separately from the survey answers through a Qualtrics form. An email is sent to participants who provide their contact information letting them know to expect the incentive and the \$10 incentive is then sent to each participant via e-transfer. After the survey has been closed, another email is sent to participants who did not complete the survey asking them to share just their LinkedIn profile URL with us. Participants who did not complete the survey but decide to share their LinkedIn profile URL receive a \$5 incentive.

The same survey instrument will be sent one year later and two years later to the same participants, and the previous steps will be repeated.

### **Panel management**

Longitudinal studies have a particular methodological challenge called attrition, which occurs when information from the participants is missed across the period of the study (Andreß et al., 2013). This could occur if participants answer the first survey, but they do not continue participating in survey two and three. Panel management strategies keep participants engaged in longitudinal studies to ensure they continue to answer surveys, so that change can be measured over time (Estrada et al., 2014). We are currently finalizing these strategies for robust panel management to keep our participants engaged. More information regarding panel management will be available in upcoming reports on the longitudinal study.

### **Data collection**

The data presented in this report was collected between May 15th 2023 and August 30th 2023. A total of 4,467 survey invitations were sent and we received 713 responses from young people, resulting in a response rate of 16%. This was slightly lower than expected based on the Pilot Study results where the response rate was 19% when a \$10 incentive was offered. The first cohort of the longitudinal study whose survey results are outlined in this report, completed RBC funded programs between May 2021 and July 2022.

### **Data analysis**

The results in this report are based on descriptive and bivariate analyses of the initial survey responses from the first cohort of participants. At this time, the data analysis is not longitudinal, but will be in the reports to come. Comparisons using demographic characteristics have been conducted and are shared in this report when relevant or statistically significant. Comparisons with the restricted data from the Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey for the months of May, June, and July of 2023 are also presented.

## Chapter 3

### Results

We start this results section by giving an overview of the longitudinal study participant demographics as compared to similarly aged participants in the Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey (LFS). This way we can understand how representative these results are of the Canadian population. We then share results about the education and practical work experiences of young participants, their current employment situation, as well as results related to whether young people feel that they are thriving at work, which includes questions around work-life satisfaction, resilience at work, and collaboration with decision-makers in the workplace. Some of these results are also compared with data available from Statistics Canada. Our hope is that the results from the first cohort of the longitudinal study provide valuable insight into the realities young Canadians are experiencing, and importantly, that they begin a conversation on what a path forward might look like.

#### Who are the longitudinal study participants?

The majority of the longitudinal study participants are female<sup>10</sup>; 62% of the first cohort of survey participants are female as compared to 37% male and 1% identifying as intersex. In contrast, in the LFS, the proportions are more balanced as it is representative of the Canadian population, with 51% of the respondents being male and 49% female. Higher response rates from female participants in online surveys is a recognized trend, which is reflected in our results. Although this trend has been reported in the academic literature, the reasons why female response rates in online surveys are higher than response rates from males are not well understood (Becker, 2022).

For the purpose of our analysis, we divided participants into four age groups: adolescents (ages 15-19), transition youth (ages 20-24), young adults (ages 25-34), and adults (ages 35 and older). These categories are the ones that are generally used in the publicly available data from the LFS, and aligning the categories used in the longitudinal study with those in the LFS facilitates comparison between the two datasets. The labour force engagement of young people is also different across these categories; up to age 19, it is common for young people to live at home, and they may rely on the support of their parents or guardians. From ages 20 to 24, young people are often in transition. Some of them are working or in school, or a combination of both states, i.e. going to school and having a part-time job. Young people between the ages of 25 and 34 have generally transitioned into adulthood, and those that continue on to graduate school are often engaged in some form of paid research work. Although this study is targeting young people, some RBC funded programs are attended by adults (35 and older), and a small

<sup>10</sup> Questions regarding sex and gender have been included in the longitudinal study survey. Unfortunately, the data collected is not sufficiently clear to be presented in this report. We have revised these questions to ensure that in future reports both sex and gender analyses can be included.

number of them participate in the RBC Post-Program Evaluation Survey and therefore are included in our study. This group allows comparison with established adults in the LFS.

In this first study cohort, 27% of the participants are adolescents, 27% are transition youth, 31% are young adults, and 15% are 35 and older. As such, we have a well-balanced distribution of adolescents, transition youth and young adults, which are the target population of the RBC funded programs. Participants of diverse ages are well represented in the longitudinal study.

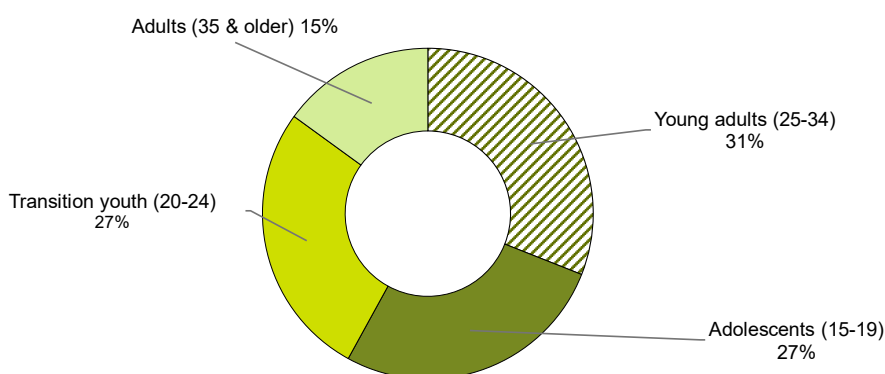


Figure 3. Age

649 respondents in the Longitudinal Study

Most of the first cohort participants come from Ontario (53%), followed by Alberta (14%) and British Columbia (9%). Only 6% of participants come from Québec and only 6% have French as their first language, while the representation of people from Québec in the Canadian population is 20%. Although RBC funded programs takes place in Québec, less participants from Québec answer the RBC Post-Program Evaluation Survey as compared to participants from other provinces<sup>11</sup>. It is important to note that the first cohort of the longitudinal study lacks participants from the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut, due to a lack of RBC funded programs in these regions. We also encountered an absence of data from the territories in the LFS, which does not collect information from these geographical locations due to the challenges of reaching remote areas with disperse populations. This lack of data indicates that the labour force context as well as the needs of young people in these territories is not well understood. Later in this report we will recommend that targeted programming efforts and a deeper understanding of the employment context for the young people living in the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut is needed. Any efforts should be carried out in a way that is culturally relevant.

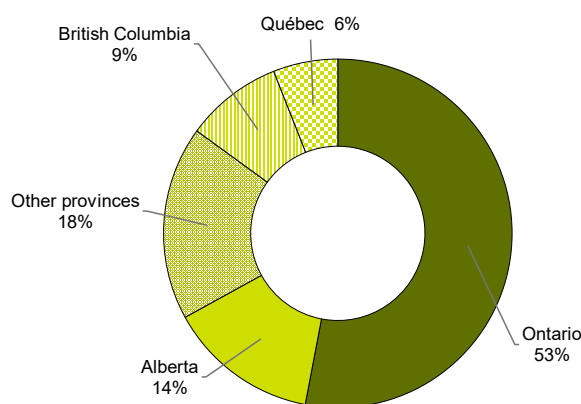


Figure 4. Geographic distribution<sup>12</sup>

640 respondents in the Longitudinal Study

<sup>11</sup> The RBC Post-Program Evaluation Survey and the longitudinal survey are both offered in English and French.

<sup>12</sup> Other provinces: Each of the remaining account for 5% or less.



Compared to the Canadian population, the first cohort of the longitudinal study has a slightly higher representation of Black, Asian, and Indigenous participants. Targeting programs to racialized young people has been one of the main goals of the RBC Foundation and this is reflected in these results.

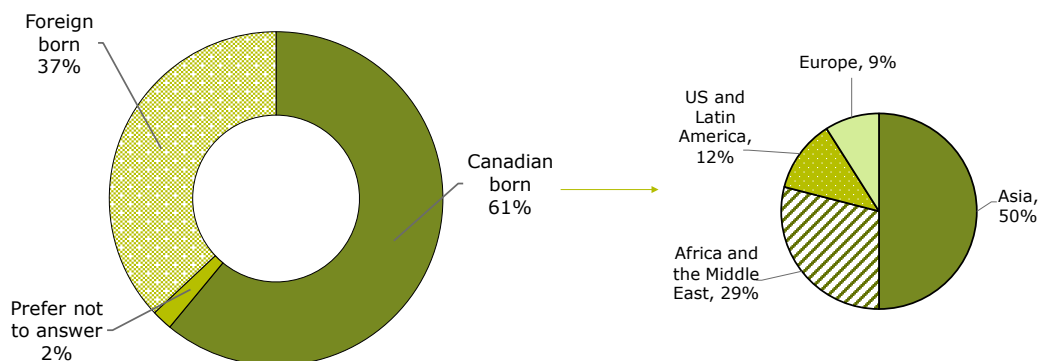


Figure 5. Place of birth  
621 respondents in Longitudinal Study (265 respondents for sub-questions).

In terms of immigration status, 37% of the participants in the longitudinal study were born outside of Canada. Most of these participants were born in Asia (50%), Africa and the Middle East (29%), the United States and Latin America (12%), and Europe (9%). Half of them arrived in the country in the last 10 years. In comparison, the LFS indicates that 24% of young people in Canada are immigrants with 44% of them having arrived in the last 10 years. Therefore, the first cohort of the longitudinal study has a higher proportion of participants born outside of the country than the Canadian population.

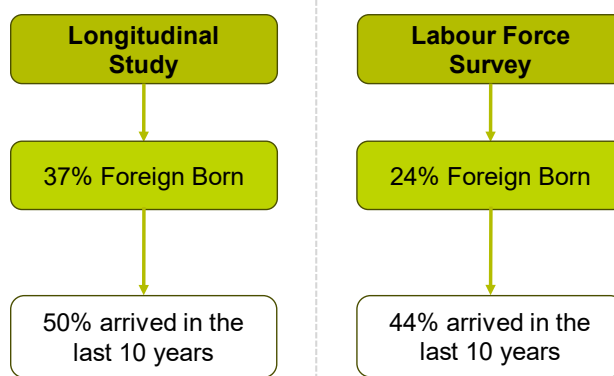


Figure 6. Immigration

Regarding education, 66% of the longitudinal study participants are currently studying, either in formal or informal education<sup>13</sup>. In terms of education achieved, 59% have completed a college or university degree, and 41% have completed high school or a lower level of education. In respect to employment, 67% of the participants are working. Of those, 65% are working full time and 35% work part time. Compared to the Canadian population, young participants in RBC funded programs are less likely to be employed, mainly because they are more likely to be in education or training.

<sup>13</sup> Informal education is defined in this study as any program, structured course, or tutorial outside of an educational institution, e.g., online programming course or training for specific software.

Lastly, in terms of disabilities, 25% of participants reported having a physical and/or mental disability, which is representative of the Canadian population as 27% of Canadians ages 15 and over report having one or more disabilities that limit them in their daily activities (Statistics Canada, 2023).

**Targeted programming efforts and a deeper understanding of the employment context for the young people living in the Northwest Territories, Yukon and Nunavut is needed.**

### **Who are we missing in the study?**

The first cohort of the longitudinal study is fairly representative of the Canadian population. However, it lacks sufficient participants from Québec and is therefore also missing French speakers. The first cohort also lacks participants from the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and Nunavut. Efforts should be made to ensure that the youth employment context in these regions is understood. We hope to be able to provide additional insight into the context of these regions as the longitudinal study progresses.

### **Education and practical work experience**

In this section we present longitudinal study results regarding education and practical work experience and compare them with the Canadian population when possible.

#### **Educational achievement**

We found in the participants' responses that transition youth (20-24) and young adults (25-34) in the longitudinal study were more likely to have completed a university degree compared to those in the LFS; 47% of transition youth attended university compared to 20% in the LFS, and 71% of young adults had graduated from university in contrast to 46% in the LFS.

**What can be done to ensure that less educated young people are also reached by and able to participate in youth programs?**

		Longitudinal Study	Labour Force Survey
Adolescents (15-19)	High School	95%	96%
	College	1%	3%
	University	1%	1%
Transition Youth (20-24)	High School	41%	57%
	College	12%	23%
	University	47%	20%
Young Adults (25-34)	High School	9%	23%
	College	20%	31%
	University	71%	46%
35 & Older (35+)	High School	6%	40%
	College	29%	25%
	University	65%	35%

Figure 7. Educational achievement by age groups

630 respondents in the Longitudinal Study. Statistically significant. P-value <0.05.

These statistically significant results raise the question of whether young participants in RBC funded programs are more educated because they have participated in youth programs and are now pursuing further education, or if they were already more educated to begin with.

We know that young people facing barriers often have a lack of access to technology and networks which may otherwise allow them to access youth programs (Procyk & Howson, 2023). This finding begs the questions; what can be done to ensure that less educated young people are also reached by and able to participate in youth programs? This result is a trend that we will continue to watch and explore further as the longitudinal study progresses.

### Work-integrated learning

Co-operative Education and Work-Integrated Learning Canada's definition of work-integrated learning (WIL) is that it is a form of curricular experiential education that formally integrates a student's academic studies with quality experiences within a workplace or practical setting (n.d.). Given that WIL is an opportunity for those in education to be exposed to diverse work experiences, we wanted to explore whether the young people who have taken part in RBC funded programs took part in WIL as part of their academic programs of study.

We found that, fewer study longitudinal study participants, 43%, participated in WIL compared to 46% in 2020 (Statistics Canada, 2024c) which may indicate a general decrease of WIL participation across Canada. Among the participants that reported participating in WIL in our study, 58% indicated that these opportunities were paid. In comparison, only 40% of the Canadian graduates who participated in WIL in 2020 reported being paid (Statistics Canada, 2024c).

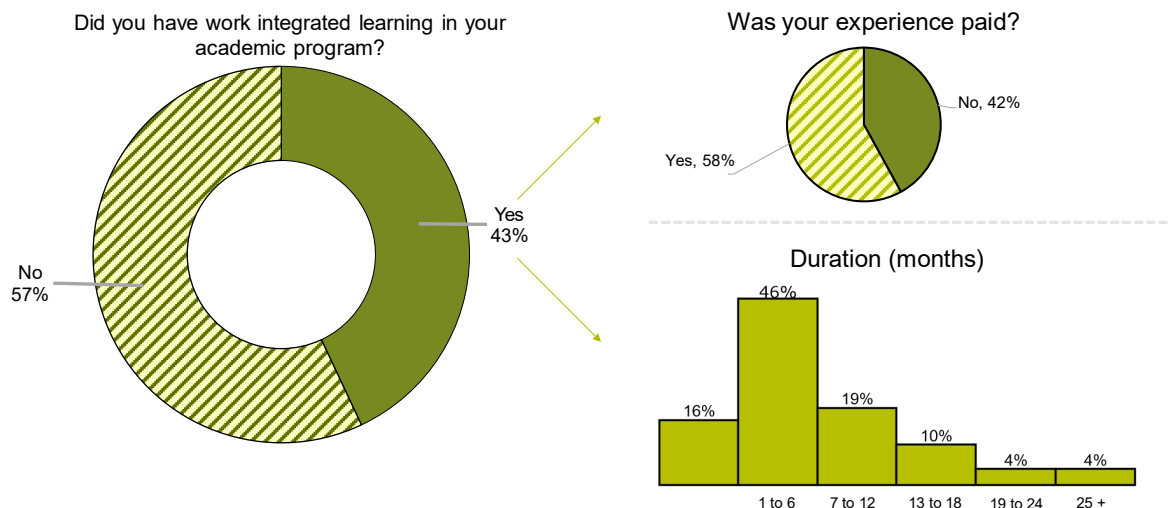


Figure 8. Work-integrated learning

621 respondents in Longitudinal Study. 265 respondents for sub-questions.

A recent study from our colleagues at the Work-Learn Institute at the University of Waterloo indicated that there are structural and non-structural barriers that equity-deserving groups, including international students, women, Indigenous students, LGBTQ+ students, and students with disabilities, face when it comes to participating in WIL (Khan et al., 2024). It is worth continuing to monitor the numbers of young Canadians who participate in WIL, determine if the decrease we have observed in this data holds, and to explore what might lead to an increase in the number of diverse young people participating in WIL experiences.

### On-the-job training and professional development

While young people are working, they may have the opportunity to participate in on-the-job training and professional development. We asked young people whether their jobs provided them with on-the-job training or professional development opportunities, and if so, how many hours they spent on those activities in the past 12 months.

We found that female participants participate in on-the-job training and professional development for only 0-10 hours per year (48%), while male participants tend to participate for more than 10 hours per year (61%).

When we discussed this finding among our team of researchers, we wanted to further explore and understand the extent to which Canadian young people have access to on-the-job training and professional development opportunities. However, there was no public data available to allow us to further explore this topic and to compare the results of the longitudinal study with other data. More data on the topic of access to on-the-job training and professional development opportunities is crucial to enable employers and decision-makers to make data-informed decisions regarding programming and policies to support the development and learning of young employees. It is worth considering how we can

increase the number of hours of on-the-job training and professional development for women while empowering young women to advocate for themselves in the workplace and ask for the support they need to continue to learn as they advance in their careers.

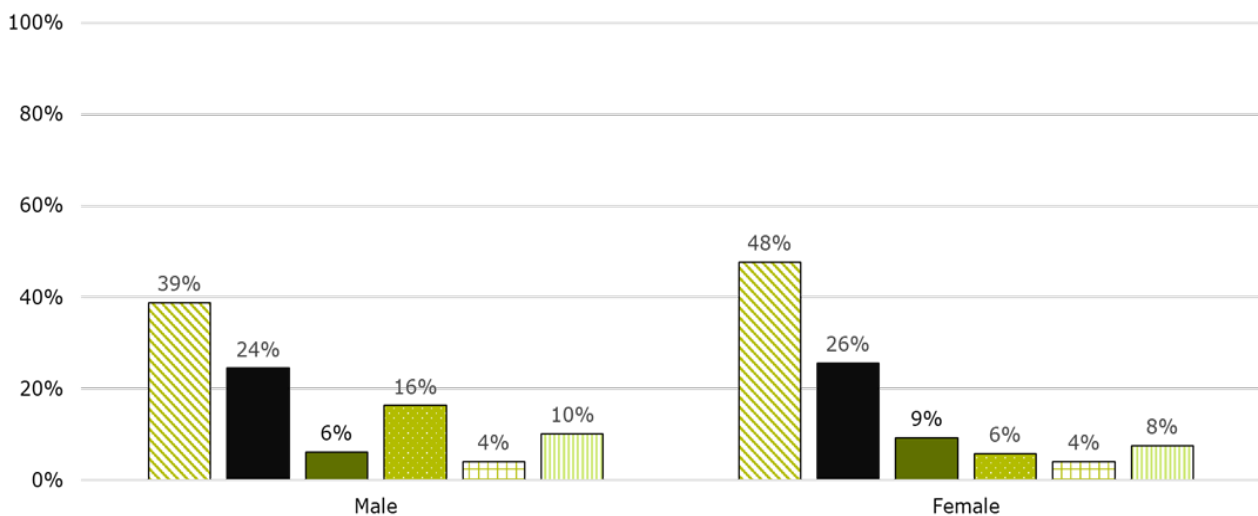


Figure 9. On-the-job training and professional development hours by sex

271 respondents in the longitudinal study (only the ones that answered yes to a previous question related to on-the-job training and professional development). Statistically significant. P-value<0.05.

**More data on the topic of access to on-the-job training and professional development opportunities is crucial to enable employers and decision-makers to make data-informed decisions regarding programming and policies to support the development and learning of young employees.**

## Employment

In this section we present the results related to employment from the longitudinal study. It is important to mention that this section is not dedicated to traditional employment data, such as unemployment rates or job vacancy. Instead, this section focuses on understanding young people's workplace context and their financial wellbeing.

### Job precariousness

Job precariousness can be understood as the uncertainty, instability and lack of security associated with one's employment conditions (Allan et al., 2021). The level of precariousness in a job is determined by several different factors. These may include the type of employment contract, such as permanent or casual, whether sick days are compensated, availability of health benefits, variation of income from week to week, among other factors (Allan et al., 2021; Martin & Lewchuk, 2018). In our study, we included

several questions related to these factors to understand the level of job precariousness experienced by young people in Canada.

One of the questions we asked participants was whether they held more than one job in the last 12 months. Having multiple jobs is a sign of precariousness because this suggests that there may be underlying problems in the quality of someone’s primary employment, such as low pay or instability in the hours worked per week (Glavin, 2020).

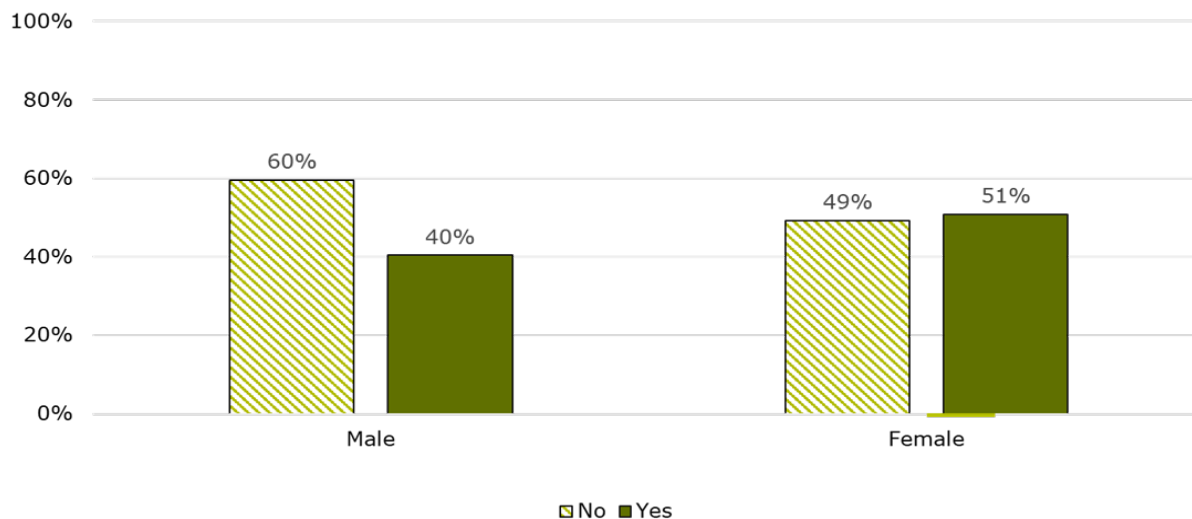


Figure 10. Multiple jobs in the last 12 months by sex  
401 respondents in the Longitudinal Study. Not statistically significant.

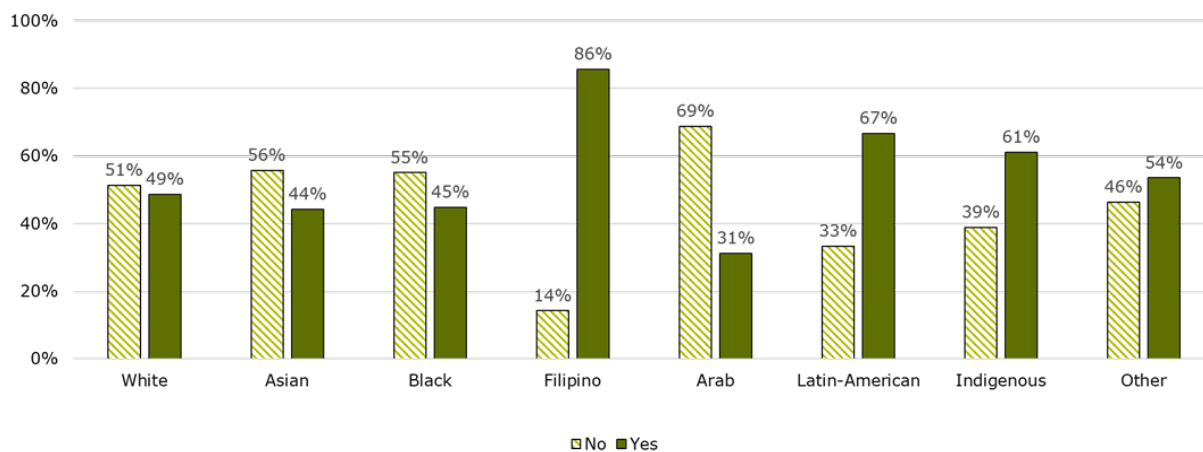


Figure 11. Multiple jobs in the last 12 months by ethnicity  
401 respondents in the Longitudinal Study. Not statistically significant.

In the Longitudinal Study, female (51%), Indigenous (61%), Latin American (67%) and Filipino (86%) participants are more likely to hold multiple jobs than their peers (Male 40%, Arab 31%, Black 45%, Asian 44%, White 49%). Although these results are not statistically significant, monitoring this trend over the coming years is important, as it may indicate that the former groups experience greater job precariousness.

Data from the LFS indicates that, in general, the rate of multiple job holders has slightly decreased since 2016, indicating positive trends in the precariousness of employment for young people. However, despite this improvement, the longitudinal study results show disparity in precariousness by both gender and ethnicity. There is a need for a continued study and conversation about the limitations and opportunities that the labour market offers to young people depending on their gender and ethnicity.

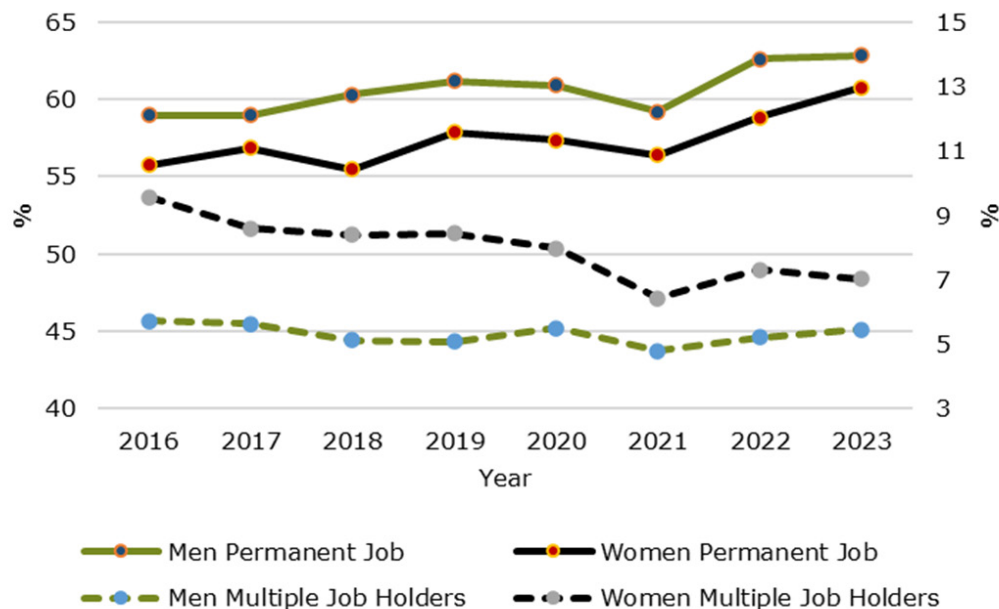


Figure 12. Fraction of multiple job and permanent job holders

Source: Dr. Ana Ferrer’s calculations using the LFS (2016-2023). Includes students.

## Working arrangements

It is evident that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted everyone’s lives over the past few years, including the way we attend education and where we work from. During the height of the pandemic (2020-2022), many were given the option or mandated to work and study remotely. Now that pandemic measures have largely been lifted, some working and educational arrangements have shifted back to either being fully in person or hybrid, while others have stayed remote. Given these changes, we wanted to know what the preference of young people is regarding their working arrangements.

The responses of young people in the study indicated that more adolescents (15-19) would prefer to work in person (37%) than any other age group (21% or less) while transition youth (20-24) have a higher preference for hybrid work (70%) than any other age group (58% or less). These results are statistically significant. These results may seem counterintuitive, as we generally tend to think that young people are more tech-savvy and thus more comfortable in online settings. It will be interesting to see how these results might change over the coming years. Has the current cohort of young people’s experiences attending school online created a desire to work in person? Or are we seeing trends in how young people want to work that will hold steady over time?

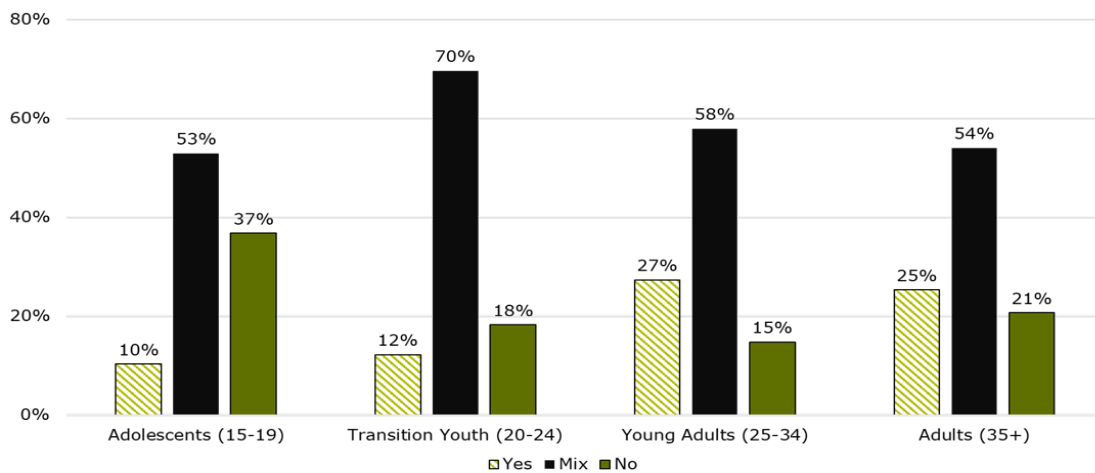


Figure 13. Preference for remote work by age group  
554 respondents in Longitudinal Study. Statistically significant. P-value<0.01.

Recent data from our colleagues at the Work-Learn Institute back up these findings indicating that young workers favour hybrid work over fully remote or fully in-person work arrangements (Knapp et al., 2023). They also reported higher job satisfaction when young people are given the option for hybrid work. The Work-Learn Institute emphasized the importance of providing young people, who are often new to a workplace, with at least some in-person time at work as this allows young people them to build relationships and learn about organizational culture (Knapp et al., 2023). When combined with in-person work, working from home can also offer benefits for young people, providing opportunities for developing self-management and independent thinking (Knapp et al., 2023).

**Has the current cohort of young people’s experiences attending school online created a desire to work in person? Or are we seeing trends in how young people want to work that will hold steady over time?**

It is valuable for employers to ask, how can this interest demonstrated by younger employees to work in-person or in a hybrid environment be leveraged for the benefit of both young employees and their employers? How can employers ensure that young people are building relationships and learning about organizational culture when they do come into the office, rather than sitting on back-to-back virtual calls?



**How can employers ensure that young people are building relationships and learning about organizational culture when they do come into the office, rather than sitting on back-to-back virtual calls?**

**Financial well-being**

It is common knowledge that, at a global level, women are consistently paid less than men (Baker et al., 2023; Youthful Cities, n.d.), and the responses from the young people in the longitudinal study regarding yearly earnings by sex show a similar trend.

Our findings, which are statistically significant, reveal that across all age groups, female participants are paid less than their male counterparts. The biggest disparities occur at the lower end of the earnings range. Specifically, 52% of female participants make under \$30,000 per year, compared to 44% of male participants.

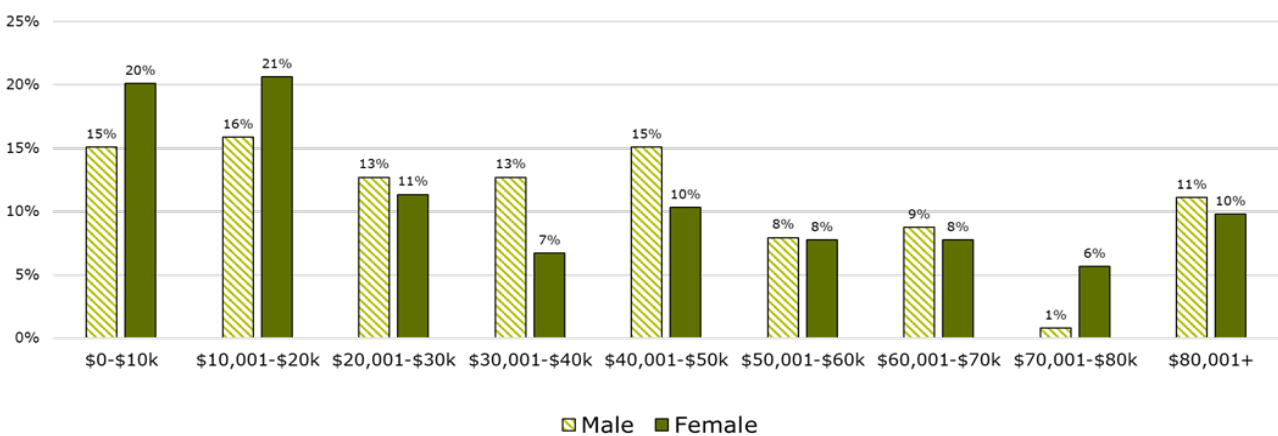


Figure 14. Yearly earnings by sex  
401 respondents in Longitudinal Study. Statistically significant. P-value<0.05.

When we initially saw these results, our research team was surprised that the differences in earnings were larger at the lower levels of earnings compared to the higher income brackets. We consulted with Dr. Ana Ferrer, the economist in our team, and she highlighted that generally, a larger proportion of less educated females tend to occupy roles in sectors such as hospitality and retail where compensation tends to be lower. Meanwhile less educated males, tend to occupy roles in the trade and apprentice sector, such as construction, electricity, carpentry, and plumbing, where the pay is higher.

We delved deeper into this and found a recent report from the Canadian Chamber of Commerce that revealed that the hourly wage gap between men and women is particularly high in the retail, wholesale trade and customer service sectors, where women earn an average of \$11 less per hour than men. In contrast, in specialized occupations, transportation, production and utilities, the gap is smaller with women earning approximately \$6-8 less than men (Abdou & Gill, 2024).

**If income discrepancies between females and males are persisting in younger generations how can we address this?**

If income discrepancies between females and males are persisting in younger generations how can we address this? There is evidence that financial literacy for women can make a significant difference, impacting their financial planning, inclusion in the labour market and empowering them to control their financial wellbeing (Sundarassen et al., 2023). Tailoring youth programs to engage women in financial literacy may be a starting point to address these gaps. Additionally, similar to the campaigns for Women in STEM, supporting Women in Trades initiatives may also help to address this gap. This would not only increase gender diversity in the trades but would also provide an opportunity for women with less education to access higher paying jobs.

## Thriving at Work

We also wanted to know whether young people were thriving at work. We had several discussions involving our team, the RBC Foundation team and the Partner Advisory Council about the meaning of thriving at work. We agreed that definitions of what thriving at work might mean are many. Therefore, we decided to include a variety of different questions to capture a full picture of whether young Canadians are thriving at work. This includes asking questions about life satisfaction, balance between work and personal life, feeling valued at work, resilience at work, and collaboration with decision-makers in the workplace.

## Work-life wellbeing

We asked young people how satisfied they are with their lives and with their work-life balance. The results showed that in general, young people report high levels of satisfaction with their lives. The RBC Youth Outlook Study in 2023, also indicated that overall, young Canadians are more satisfied with their life compared to 2022 (Simpson, 2023). But when we delved deeper into the differences by age, we found in the longitudinal study that transition youth (20-24) and young adults (25-34) are slightly less satisfied with their lives and work-life balance compared to their younger and older counterparts. The results showed that they are also significantly less likely to have developed reliable ways to relax

under pressure than adolescents (15-19) and adults (35+). It is important to note that only the finding related to the ability to relax under pressure is statistically significant. However, these trends are worth continuing to monitor.

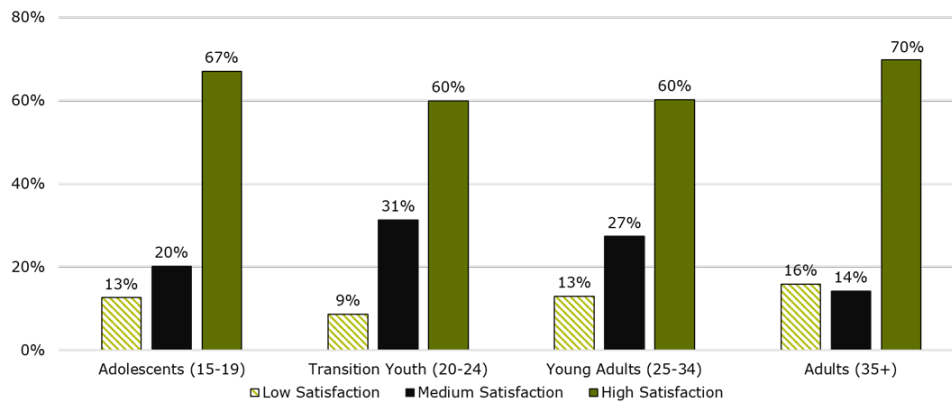


Figure 15. Life satisfaction by age group  
403 respondents in Longitudinal Study. Not statistically significant.

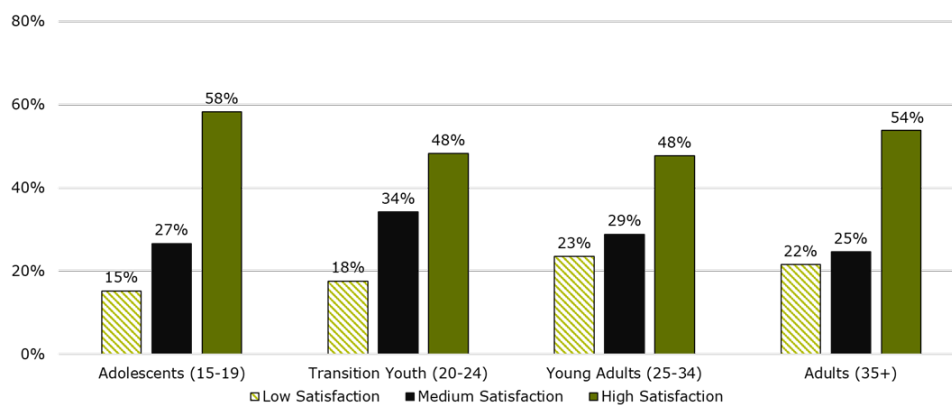


Figure 16. Work-life balance by age group  
403 respondents in Longitudinal Study. Not statistically significant.

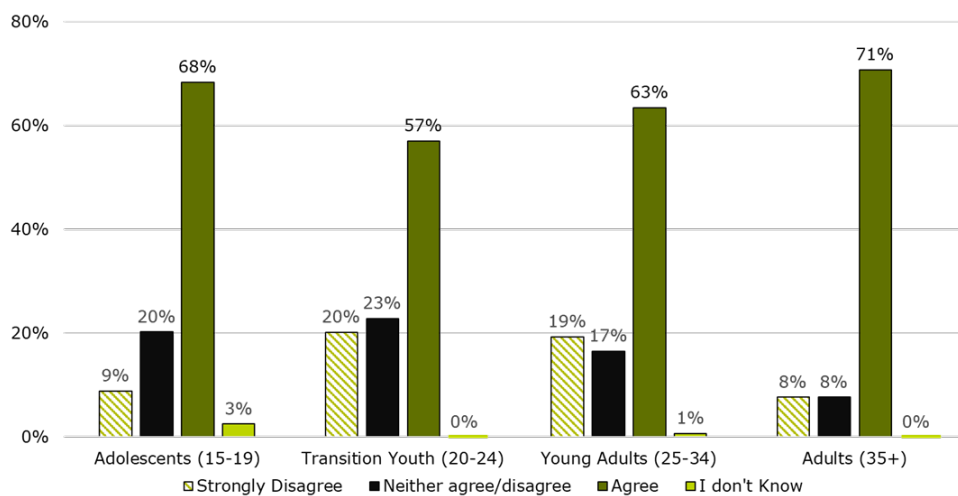


Figure 17. Skills developed to relax while working under pressure by age group  
403 respondents in Longitudinal Study. Statistically significant. P-value<0.1.

This information is not new – we have seen repeatedly in the headlines that young people in Canada suffer from mental health challenges at alarming rates, feel as though they have few mechanisms to deal with stress in their workplace and feel lonely and isolated at work (TELUS Health, 2024). The reverberations from the COVID-19 pandemic have no doubt made this reality more stark. A 2023 report from the Boston Consulting Group, indicated that 40% of employees ages 18 to 24 say they are at a mental health ‘breaking point’ (Bonin et al., 2023).

We also asked questions about resilience at work, and some of the items to measure resilience were related to feeling valued in the workplace. The results showed that transition youth (20-24) and young adults (25-34) feel slightly more valued at their jobs than adolescents (15-19) and adults (35+). Although these results are not statistically significant, our research team discussed the results and wondered whether the results might indicate that young people are sacrificing their life satisfaction and work-life balance for their jobs. If so, how could we ensure they receive the support they need to both feel valued at their jobs and at the same time ensure they are mentally and physically well? Given that the results are not significant, we can’t come to any conclusions however this is trend we will continue to watch.

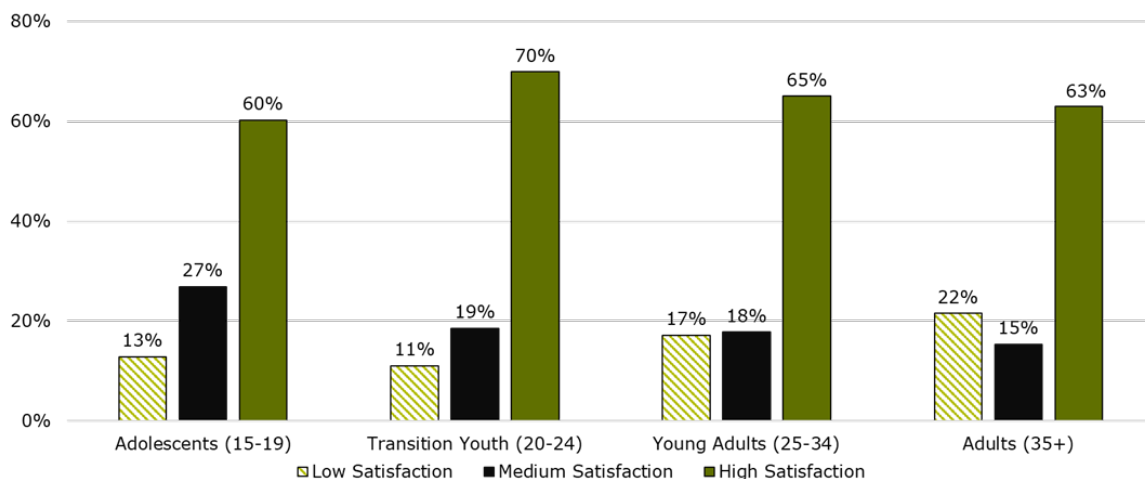


Figure 18. Satisfaction with feeling valued at work by age group  
402 respondents in Longitudinal Study. Not statistically significant.

The Boston Consulting Group indicates in their report that when mental health is taken seriously in the workplace, it drives growth in organizations (Bonin et al., 2023). They suggest that senior leaders make developing strategies for supporting employees’ mental health and wellbeing a business priority (Bonin et al., 2023). They also suggest that it is crucial to provide managers with strategies and methods to support younger employees, ensuring that young employees feel seen, heard and engaged in the workplace, and that structural systems are in place to support their wellbeing (Bonin et al., 2023).

## Thriving at work

An academic scale for thriving at work was included in the longitudinal study which, alongside the other questions we asked, offered a comprehensive view of thriving at work for young people.

Items	Measurement
I find myself learning often	Likert scale from 1 -5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree
I continue to learn more as time goes by	
I see myself continually improving	
I am not learning at all	
I am developing a lot as a person	
I feel alive and vital	
I have energy and spirit	
I do not feel energetic	
I feel alert and awake	
I am looking forward to each new day	

Table 4. Thriving at work scale

Source: (Porath et al., 2012)

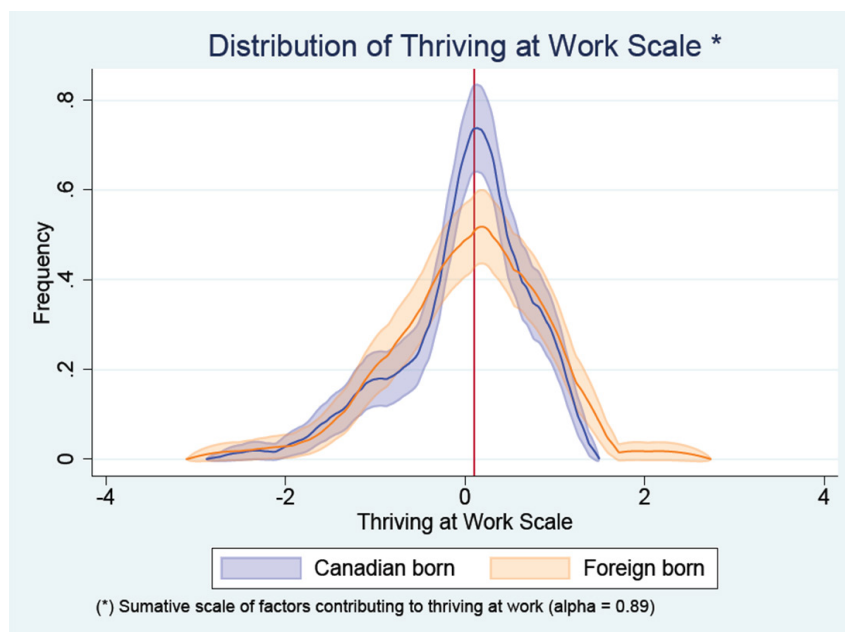


Figure 19. Thriving at work by place of birth

This scale has ten items related to learning and vitality at work. We grouped the positive items of the thriving at work scale (with the exception of the items “I’m not learning at all” and “I do not feel energetic”), and conducted analyses based on different demographic characteristics. The higher the points in the scale, the more someone is thriving at work. The results from the grouped scale indicate that young immigrants are, on average, thriving at work significantly less than young people who are born in Canada.

It is known that immigrants in Canada face barriers to employment, promotion and social integration (Ertorer et al., 2022). In one qualitative study of immigrants in Ontario, participants expressed that they encounter forms of discrimination in the workplace related to their culture and education, and often feeling misjudged about the quality of their knowledge (Ertorer et al., 2022). Research tells us that it is crucial that immigrants develop relationships with coworkers and supervisors to enhance social integration and create a supportive environment conducive to understanding the organization's norms and values, while fostering a sense of belonging in their workplace (Ertorer et al., 2022; Malik & Manroop, 2017).

**The results from the grouped scale indicate that young immigrants are, on average, thriving at work significantly less than young people who are born in Canada.**

Our findings alongside existing research suggest that additional support for immigrants to facilitate their integration in the Canadian workplace is much needed. We encourage employers to offer robust support for their young immigrant employees so they can reach their full potential, contribute to the country's growth and thrive at work.

**We encourage employers to offer robust support for their young immigrant employees so they can reach their full potential, contribute to the country's growth and thrive at work.**

### **Intergenerational collaboration**

The Youth & Innovation Project's research has shown that young people have unique abilities that, when supported and utilized, lead to increased innovation as well as positive impacts on society, the environment and the economy (Dougherty & Clarke, 2018). The unique abilities of young people can be leveraged by creating spaces for intergenerational collaboration, which can be defined as when young people and adults work together to achieve a common goal (Zeldin, 2004). When young people with bold ideas are given access to decision-makers, and work collaboratively in intergenerational partnerships, complex social, economic and environmental issues can be solved more effectively (Ho et al., 2015).

Given that workplaces are largely intergenerational by nature as well as places where solutions to complex problems are needed, we decided to include questions in the longitudinal study around collaboration between decision-makers and young people. We asked young people whether they have had the chance to share their ideas with decision-makers in their workplace, including with their boss, the organization’s senior leadership, the organization’s board of directors, and/or any other decision-makers. If they responded that they had had those opportunities, we asked them if they think that they were heard, taken seriously and whether they think decision-makers will act on their ideas.

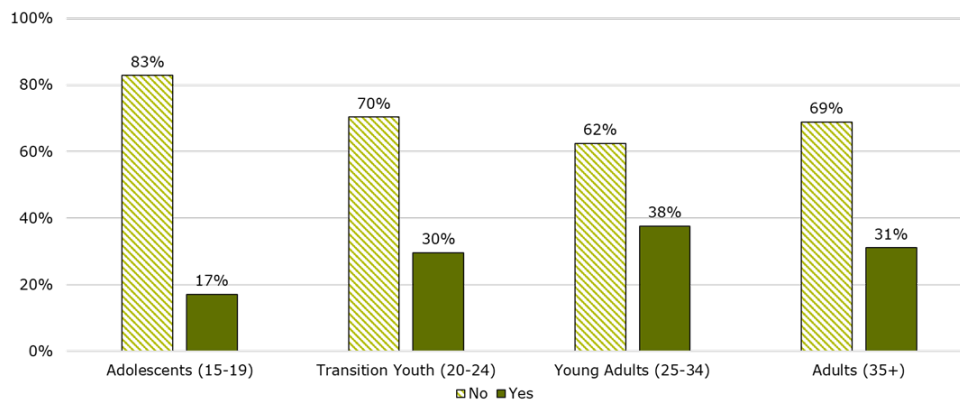


Figure 20. Opportunity to share ideas with decision-makers in the workplace by age group  
362 respondents in Longitudinal Study. Statistically significant. P-value<0.05.

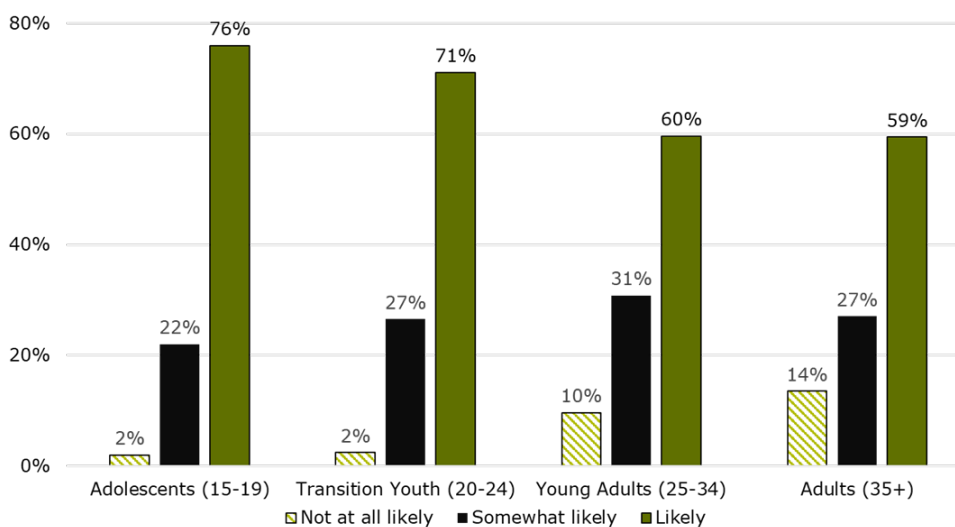


Figure 21. Decision-makers listening to young people’s ideas in the workplace by age group  
274 respondents in Longitudinal Study. Statistically significant. P-value<0.1.

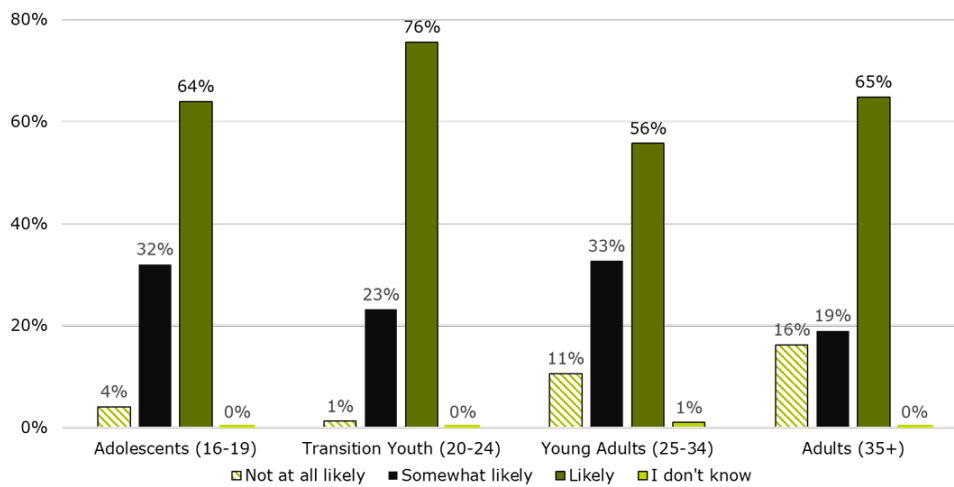


Figure 22. Decision-makers taking young people's ideas seriously in the workplace by age group 273 respondents in Longitudinal Study. Statistically significant. P-value<0.05.

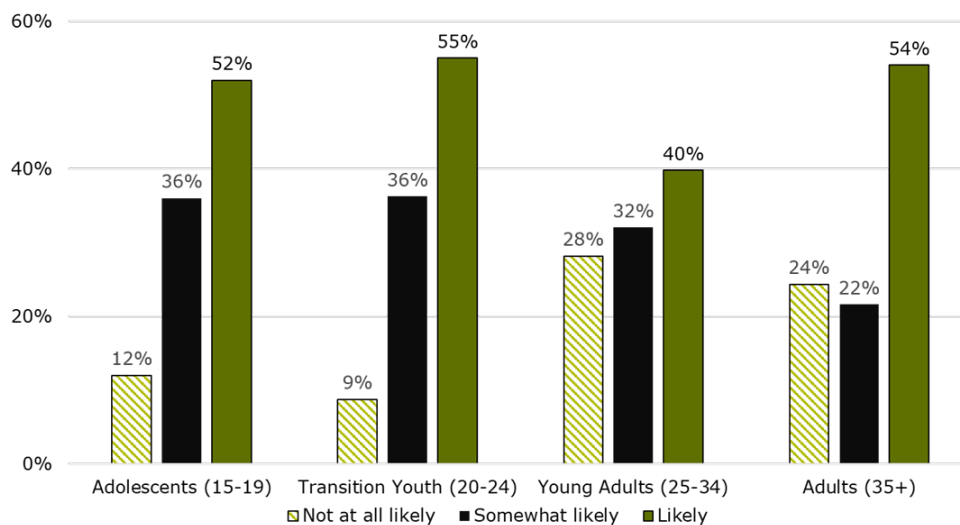


Figure 23. Decision-makers acting on young people's ideas in the workplace by age group 270 respondents in Longitudinal Study. Statistically significant. P-value<0.05.

The results, which are all statistically significant, show that although most young participants of all ages lack opportunities to share their ideas with decision-makers, they still express confidence that their ideas will be heard and taken seriously. However, they are less optimistic that decision-makers will act on their ideas. These results reveal a similar trend to those we have seen in other research we have conducted in the youth volunteerism space.



These results beg the question: how might employers create more opportunities for intergenerational collaboration, particularly in the context of Canada's aging population (Zimonjic, 2022)? It is crucial that employers not only create workplaces that are generationally diverse but that also facilitate the collaboration between diverse age groups. By leveraging the unique skills and abilities of young workers and combining them with the expertise of older workers, workplaces can more easily find solutions to mission critical problems (Dougherty & Clarke, 2018).

**How might employers create more opportunities for intergenerational collaboration, particularly in the context of Canada's aging population?**

## Chapter 4

### Discussion and insights

Our hope is that the initial results of this first cohort of participants of the RBC Young People & Economic Inclusion Longitudinal Study will begin a conversation about the employment context faced by young people in Canada. These results, although not longitudinal in nature, provide an initial view of the situation as well as valuable insights that will allow our team to track trends and patterns around youth employment in Canada, young people's socioeconomic reality, their relationships with their workplaces, and their overall well-being at work in years to come. These results are also a call to action for employers, funders and policy makers to work to address the challenges and embrace the opportunities we have identified in this report.

**These results are also a call to action for employers, funders and policy makers to work to address the challenges and embrace the opportunities we have identified in this report.**

The participants in this Longitudinal Study are from diverse contexts: over half are women, they are diverse in age, some come from racialized communities, and they live in all provinces. However, we are missing the voices of young people from Québec, which is concerning since it represents 20% of the Canadian population. We have also identified that the voices of young people in the Northwest Territories, the Yukon and Nunavut are missing from this longitudinal study as well as in the Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey. We will work where we are able to ensure that in future cohorts of this study these groups are better represented. **We also recommend that those doing research and collecting data on this topic ensure that the youth employment context in these regions is better understood, while ensuring efforts are culturally relevant.**

We found that transition youth (20-24) and young adults (25-34) in the longitudinal study have higher education levels compared to the Canadian population. It is difficult to determine whether young participants in RBC funded programs are more educated because they engaged in youth programs and now are pursuing further education, or because they were already more educated to begin with. We will continue to follow this trend and aim to better understand it in future years of the study. **The question is worth asking; how can we guarantee that less educated young people are reached by and able to participate in youth programming? Ensuring that young people who are most in need access and complete youth programs so that they can succeed in the workplace is crucial.**

In the Longitudinal Study, we found that young people today also have less access to work-integrated learning (WIL) opportunities, when compared to graduates 2020 (Statistics Canada, 2024c) and only 58% of the participants that access WIL are compensated for their work. Given that the most recent data we were able to find about WIL in Canada was from 2020, it is clear that more research into WIL is needed to fully understand the current context. **It is worth asking how we can ensure that opportunities to take part in WIL increase in a post-pandemic context and how we can ensure young people have equal access to these opportunities.**

We found that female participants participate in less hours of professional development per year. **We are left with the question: how can we increase the number of hours of professional development that females take part in per year?**

Female, Indigenous, Latin American and Filipino young participants are more likely than their peers to hold multiple jobs. Although these results are not statistically significant, it is important to continue the conversation about the limitations young people face based on their gender and ethnicity and explore what actions can be taken to ensure that these young people have access to less precarious jobs. In this report we could not explore a multivariate analysis that might have revealed potential causes for these differences, such as education, language fluency, or place of residence. As we collect more data, we hope to use such analysis techniques to better understand the source of differences in job precariousness.

Our Longitudinal Study shows that more adolescents (15-19) would prefer to work entirely in person than any other age group, and transition youth (20-24) have a higher preference for hybrid work than older and younger participants. It has also been shown in research by the Work-Learn Institute that young people are more satisfied with their jobs when they have access to some in-person work as part of their working arrangements (Knapp et al., 2023). **As such, it is important to ask how employers can leverage this interest demonstrated by some younger employees to work in person or in a hybrid work arrangement. And how can we ensure that both employers and employees benefit from this trend by ensuring that time spent in-person is meaningful?**

We also found higher income differences between male and female participants in the lower income brackets. **If income discrepancies between females and males are persisting in younger generations, how can we address this?** How can we ensure that women have access to higher paying jobs early in their careers? A multivariate analysis could help us understand the source of these differences. One potential cause is education selection; young women might be choosing fields of study and/or careers that are less rewarding economically, based on traditional perceptions of societal roles. Tailoring youth programs to engage women in financial literacy may be a starting point to address this gap. Additionally, similar to the campaigns for Women in STEM, there may be an opportunity to advocate for Women in Trades, given that jobs in the trades tend to be higher paying than retail and customer service jobs where women tend to work.

Transition youth (20-24) and young adults (25-34) indicate that they are less likely to have developed reliable ways to relax under pressure than adolescents (15-19) and adults (35+). How could we ensure they receive the support they need to thrive in both life and work?

The results also showed that immigrants are less likely to be thriving at work compared to those born in Canada. Research has shown that immigrants in Canada face barriers to employment, promotion and social integration (Ertorer et al., 2022). It is crucial that support is available specifically for immigrants to ensure their successful integration in the Canadian workplace. Employers should also consider how they can offer opportunities to and develop relationships with immigrant workers so they can fully contribute to the country's growth, while thriving at work.

Young participants are very optimistic about collaborating with decision-makers in the workplace; however, they have few opportunities to do so. **In the context of an aging population, how can employers create more opportunities for intergenerational collaboration?** It is crucial that collaboration between diverse age groups is facilitated in the workplace. By leveraging the unique skills and abilities of young workers and combining them with the expertise of older workers, workplaces can more effectively address complex challenges and leverage innovative ideas (Dougherty & Clarke, 2018).

Based on the results and discussion, we recommend the following for funders, policy makers, and employers:

#### **Recommendations for funders and policy makers**

- Support efforts to ensure that the youth employment context in the Yukon, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories is better understood, while ensuring efforts are culturally relevant.
- Support efforts to ensure equitable access to youth programs for individuals with lower levels of education as well as facilitating their participation and completion of these programs.
- Invest in further research to better understand the evolving trends in Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), who has access to WIL and how to increase access, and its impact on youth employment.
- Support efforts to increase the participation of women in more hours of professional development and on-the-job training.
- Address the gender-based wage gap by supporting initiatives to promote equal pay and financial literacy among women, as well as advocate for initiatives such as Women in Trades so that young women have access to higher-paying job sectors early in their careers.

### **Recommendations for employers**

- Embrace the interest demonstrated by younger employees to work in person or in a hybrid environment and ensure in-person work is meaningful and time spent in person has ample focus on building relationships.
- Create more opportunities for intergenerational collaboration at work and recognizing the value of diverse perspectives, especially in the context of an aging population.
- Ensure females have increase opportunities to participate in on-the-job training and professional development.
- Offer additional support and resources to transition youth (20-24) and young adult (25-34) employees to ensure they are thriving at work.
- Implement initiatives to support young immigrants in their professional growth and integration into the workplace.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

We hope that these initial results of this first cohort of participants of the RBC Young People & Economic Inclusion longitudinal study offer a starting point for a conversation about the challenges faced by and opportunities available to young people in Canada. There are many more cohorts of this longitudinal study to come and as the study continues, our team looks forward to analyzing trends and patterns to gain a deeper understanding of young people's socioeconomic reality and relationships with their workplaces, while continuing to provide insights for decision-makers, including employers, funders and policy makers so that they can, in real time, address the challenges and leverage the opportunities we have identified.

#### What's next? Future directions of the longitudinal study

As young people participate in RBC funded programs on a rolling basis, we are regularly gathering more data, including from new cohorts of participants, as well as following the cohorts we have already surveyed. That will allow us to conduct more complex analyses, including linking the data from the RBC Post-Program Evaluation Survey with the longitudinal study data as well as matching the longitudinal study data with the Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey data. The first of these longitudinal results will be shared in our next report in the Spring of 2025.

We are also excited to share that we are developing a new RBC Program Design and Implementation Study. This research will better allow for the measurement of the impacts of RBC funded programs by gathering data on program design and implementation from RBC funded partners. This research will allow us to understand how different program designs influence the outcomes achieved by the young participants. This research is innovative and unique in the youth sector, and we hope it can serve to further understand young people's realities and support them navigating the path ahead while at the same time providing valuable insight to the youth-serving and youth-led sectors so that they can ensure their programs are as impactful and effective as possible.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Survey

### Survey instrument

#### Section 1: Questions about employment and socioeconomic status

1. How old are you? DROP DOWN MENU
2. In order to compare this data with the rest of the Canadian population, please provide the first three letters of your postal code:

Postal Code: TEXT BOX

3. What is your current labour force status?
  - a) Employed
  - b) Self-employed
  - c) Not employed but looking for job
  - d) Neither employed nor looking for job

*Skip to 5. Is this a job that you started in the last 12 months? a. **Employed** and b. **Self-employed** are selected.*

*Display 4. What is your main reason for leaving work/not working? If c. **Not working but looking for job** and d. **Neither employed, nor looking for job** are selected.*

4. What is your **main** reason for not working?
  - a) Job ended: temporary job or contract ended
  - b) Job ended: layoff or dismissal
  - c) Pregnant or caring for own children
  - d) Other personal or family responsibilities
  - e) Mental health
  - f) Physical health
  - g) A consequence of COVID-19
  - h) Other (optional) TEXT BOX

*Skip to **Section 2: Questions about Education** if c. Not employed but looking for job or d. Neither employed nor looking for job are selected in 2. What is your current labour force status?*

5. Is this a job that you started in the last 12 months?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
6. In the last 12 months, did you hold more than one job simultaneously?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No
7. What is your current job level? If you work at more than one job simultaneously, please refer to the job where you work the most hours:
  - a) Entry level (staff member, representative, associate)
  - b) Intermediate (coordinator, analyst, specialist)
  - c) First-level management (senior manager, manager supervisor, project manager, team leader, office manager)
  - d) Middle management (senior director, director, associate director, regional manager, adviser)
  - e) Executive or senior management (chief officer, president, vice-president, senior executive, executive)
8. Which of the following best describes the job where you work the most hours?

*Note that a **permanent job** is one that is expected to last as long as the employee wants it to, given that business conditions permit. That is, there is no pre-determined termination date. A **fixed term contract** has a predetermined end date or will end as*

*soon as a specified project is completed.*

- a) Casual (on-call, manual labour paid by the day)
- b) Seasonal (e.g., summer job)
- c) Fixed term contract – less than one year
- d) Fixed term contract – one year or more
- e) Permanent contract
- f) Self-employed - no employees
- g) Self-employed - others work for me

*Display 9. If Which of the following best describes the job where you work the most hours? g. **self-employed – other work for me** was selected*

9. How many full-time employees are currently employed by your business?
- a) 1-2
  - b) 3-5
  - c) 6-9
  - d) 10+
10. How many hours do you usually work per week at your main job (the job where you work the most hours)?
- a) 0-10
  - b) 11-20
  - c) 21-30
  - d) 31+

*Skip to 12. How many weeks do you work per year? ENTER NUMBER if **more than 30 hours per week.***

11. What is your **main** reason for working part-time?
- a) Going to school or informal training
  - b) Do not want full-time work
  - c) Could not find full-time work
  - d) Pregnant or caring for own children
  - e) Other personal or family responsibilities
  - f) Mental health
  - g) Physical health
  - h) A consequence of COVID-19
  - i) Other (optional) TEXT BOX
12. How many weeks do you work per year at the job where you work the most hours?  
A year has 52 weeks  
**Include** weeks when you worked part time, paid vacation and sick leave paid by the employer.
- Exclude** weeks absent and not paid by the employer (such as maternity, parental or disability leave, etc.).
- a) 0-10
  - b) 11-20
  - c) 21-30
  - d) 31-40
  - e) 41-50
  - f) 51+
13. How much were you paid in the last year? If you held more than one job in the last 12 months, please include your wages from all your jobs.
- a) \$0 - \$10,000
  - b) \$10,001 - \$20,000
  - c) \$20,001 - \$30,000

- d) \$30,001 - \$40,000
  - e) \$40,001 - \$50,000
  - f) \$50,001 - \$60,000
  - g) \$60,001 - \$70,000
  - h) \$70,001 - \$80,000
  - i) \$80,001+
14. In the past five years, were there periods when you were neither employed nor looking for employment, as well as not in education or training?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) Prefer not to answer
15. For how long were you neither employed nor looking for employment, as well as not in education or training?
- a) A week or less
  - b) One month
  - c) Between one month and six months
  - d) Between six months and one year
  - e) One year or more
16. In which industry do you work at your main job (the job where you work the most hours)?
- a) Agriculture
  - b) Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction
  - c) Utilities
  - d) Construction
  - e) Manufacturing
  - f) Wholesale trade
  - g) Retail trade
  - h) Transportation and warehousing
  - i) Information and cultural industries
  - j) Finance and insurance
  - k) Real estate and rental and leasing
  - l) Professional, scientific and technical services
  - m) Management of companies and enterprises
  - n) Administrative and support
  - o) Waste management and remediation services
  - p) Educational services
  - q) Health care and social assistance
  - r) Arts, entertainment and recreation
  - s) Accommodation and food services
  - t) Public administration
  - u) Other
17. Are you looking to leave your main job (the job where you work the most hours)?
- a) Yes
  - b) No

*Skip to 19. At your main job, do you usually get paid if you miss a day's work? If **b. No** is selected.*

18. What is the main reason you are looking to leave your main job (the job where you work the most hours)?
- a) Your values do not align with the company's mission
  - b) You would like better pay
  - c) You feel undervalued in your current role
  - d) You want a job with better career growth opportunities
  - e) You want to change career paths
  - f) You want more mentorship or support from your supervisor
  - g) You want a job where you can work remotely / from home

- h) Pregnant or caring for own children
  - i) Other personal/family responsibilities
  - j) Mental health
  - k) Physical health
  - l) Other (optional) TEXT BOX
19. At the job where you work the most hours, do you usually get paid if you miss a day's work?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
20. How likely is it that you will lose your main job (the job where you work the most hours) in the next 6 months?
- a) Not likely at all
  - b) Not likely
  - c) Somewhat likely
  - d) Likely
  - e) Very likely
  - f) I don't know
21. What is your working arrangement at the job where you work the most hours?
- a) I work from home or remotely all of the time
  - b) I work in person all of the time (e.g., in an office, in a retail setting, on a job site)
  - c) It is a mix – sometimes I work from home or remotely and sometimes I work in person
22. What would your ideal working arrangement be?
- a) Working from home or remotely all of the time
  - b) Working in person all of the time (e.g., in an office, in a retail setting, on a job site)
  - c) A mix – sometimes working from home or remotely and sometimes working in person

## Section 2: Questions about education and informal training

23. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?
- a) Elementary or middle school
  - b) High school
  - c) College (College includes college or other non-university certificates, college or other non-university diplomas, collège d'enseignement général et professionnel (CEGEP) certificates and CEGEP diplomas)
  - d) Bachelor's
  - e) Master's
  - f) Doctorate
24. In the last 12 months, have you pursued any additional education or informal training? Please select all that apply:
- a) Yes, some high school
  - b) Yes, some post-secondary
  - c) Yes, some informal training (any program, structured course, or tutorial outside of an educational institution, e.g., online programming course, training for specific software)
  - d) No, I have not pursued any education or informal training
25. Are you currently enrolled as a student and/or in informal training?
- a) Full-time student
  - b) Part-time student
  - c) I am pursuing informal training (any program, structured course, or tutorial outside of an educational institution, e.g., online programming course, training for specific software).
  - d) No, I am not enrolled as a student or in informal training

Skip to 27. In what field of study is your highest level of education if **a. Full-time student, b.**

**Part-time student, and c. I am pursuing informal training are selected.**

26. What is the **main** reason you are not enrolled as a student or in informal training?
- a) Graduated
  - b) Started working
  - c) Marks too low
  - d) Did not like it or it was not for me
  - e) Pregnant or caring for own children
  - f) Other personal or family responsibilities
  - g) Financial reasons
  - h) Mental health
  - i) Physical health
  - j) A consequence of COVID-19
  - k) Other (optional) TEXT BOX
27. In what field of study is your highest level of education?
- a) Educational, Recreational and Counselling Services
  - b) Fine and Applied Arts
  - c) Humanities and Related Fields
  - d) Social Sciences and Related Fields
  - e) Commerce, Management, and Business Administration
  - f) Agricultural, Biological, Nutritional and Food Sciences
  - g) Engineering and Applied Sciences
  - h) Applied Science Technologies and Trades
  - i) Health Professions and Related Technologies
  - j) Mathematics, Computer and Physical Sciences
  - k) No specialization
  - l) Other

*Skip to 29. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I have the skills and/or knowledge to be successful in the workforce". If c. **Not working but looking for job** and d. **Neither employed, nor looking for job** are selected in 2. What is your current labour force status?*

28. Is your main job in the field that you studied?
- a) Yes – directly related
  - b) Yes – somewhat related
  - c) No – Not related
29. Please indicate to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I have the skills and/or knowledge to be successful in the workforce".
- a) Strongly disagree
  - b) Disagree
  - c) Neither agree nor disagree
  - d) Agree
  - e) Strongly agree
  - f) Prefer not to answer
30. Would you like to pursue further education and/or informal training?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) I don't know

*Skip to 33 Have you had any work-integrated learning experiences as part of your academic program of study? If c. **Not working but looking for job** and d. **Neither employed, nor looking for job** are selected in 2. What is your current labour force status?*

31. Does your main job provide on-the-job training or professional development opportunities?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
  - c) I don't know

*Skip to 33. Have you had any work-integrated learning experiences as part of your academic program of study? If **b. No** is selected.*

32. How many hours did you spend in on-the-job training or professional development opportunities at your main job (the job where you worked the most hours) in the last 12 months?

- a) 0-10
- b) 11-20
- c) 21-30
- d) 31-40
- e) 41-50
- f) 51+

33. Have you had any work-integrated learning experiences as part of your academic program(s) of study?

*A work-integrated learning experience **INCLUDES**: a co-op program, internship, practicum, clinical placement, field experience, community service learning, consulting or research project, or entrepreneurship experience that was part of your academic program and involved working with or for external parties such as employers, community organizations or the general public. It **EXCLUDES**: work placements or work experiences that were not part of your academic program.*

- a) Yes
- b) No

*Skip to 37. In the past 12 months, have you volunteered without pay on behalf of a group or an organization? If **b. No** is selected.*

34. Which of the following best describes any work-integrated learning experiences that you have participated in or are currently participating in as part of an academic program? Please select all that apply:

- a) I worked (or am currently working) directly with or for an organization in a full-time capacity for a period of time (e.g., co-op, internship)
- b) I worked (or am currently working) directly with or for an organization in a part-time capacity for a period of time (e.g., field placement, clinical placement)
- c) I worked (or am currently working) directly with or for an organization as part of one of my academic classes (e.g., consulting project, community service learning project)
- d) I developed my own entrepreneurial venture as part of a class or as part of my academic program

35. How much time have you spent participating in work-integrated learning experiences in total across the course of your academic program(s)?

- a) Less than 1 month
- b) 1-6 months
- c) 7-12 months
- d) 13-18 months
- e) 19-24 months
- f) 25+ months

36. Have you been paid for any of your work-integrated learning experiences?

- a) Yes
- b) No

37. In the past 12 months, have you volunteered without pay on behalf of a group or an organization?

- a) Yes
- b) No

*Skip to 39. In the past 12 months, did you help anyone with tasks such as cooking, cleaning, maintenance work, snow shovelling, visiting the elderly, unpaid babysitting, etc.? If **b. No** is selected.*

38. How many hours did you spend on volunteering without pay in the last 12 months?

- a) 0-10

- b) 11-20
- c) 21-30
- d) 31-40
- e) 41-50
- f) 51+

39. In the past 12 months, did you help anyone without pay with tasks such as cooking, cleaning, maintenance work, snow shovelling, visiting the elderly, unpaid babysitting, etc.?

- a) Yes
- b) No

*Skip to Section 3: Question about Thriving at Work if b. No is selected in Q35.*

40. How many hours did you spend on these activities without pay in the last 12 months?

- a) 0-10
- b) 11-20
- c) 21-30
- d) 31-40
- e) 41-50
- f) 51+

*Skip to Section 4. Sustainable Development Goals If c. Not working but looking for job and d. Neither employed, nor looking for job are selected in 2. What is your current labour force status?*

**Section 3: Questions about thriving at work**

41. Using a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means “Very dissatisfied” and 10 means “Very satisfied”, how do you feel about your life as a whole right now?

Not valued =1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very valued = 10	I don't know
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

42. Using a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means “Very dissatisfied” and 10 means “Very satisfied”, how satisfied are you with your main job (the job where you work the most hours)?

Not valued =1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very valued = 10	I don't know
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

43. Using a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means “Very dissatisfied” and 10 means “Very satisfied”, how satisfied are you with the balance between your work life (all your jobs) and your personal life?

Not valued =1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very valued = 10	I don't know
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>



44. Using a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means “Not valued” and 10 means “Very valued”, how valued do you feel at your main job (the job where you work the most hours)?

Not valued =1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Very valued = 10	I don't know
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

45. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your main job (the job where you work the most hours):

Thriving at work	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	I don't know (6)
I find myself learning often						
I continue to learn more as time goes by						
I see myself continually improving						
I am not learning at all						
I am developing a lot as a person						
I feel alive and vital						
I have energy and spirit						
I do not feel energetic						
I feel alert and awake						
I am looking forward to each new day						

46. How likely do you think it is that you will get a promotion at your main job (the job where you work the most hours) in the next 6 months?

- a) Not likely at all
- b) Not likely
- c) Somewhat likely
- d) Likely
- e) Very likely
- f) I don't know

47. Did you have the opportunity to share your ideas with decision-makers in any of your jobs in the last 12 months? Please select all that apply:

- a) Yes, I shared my ideas with my boss
- b) Yes, I shared my ideas with my organization's senior staff leadership
- c) Yes, I shared my ideas with my organization's board of directors
- d) Yes, I shared my ideas with other decision-makers
- e) No, I did not share my ideas with any decision-makers

*Skip to 49, In your opinion, how likely do you think it is that these decision-makers will? If e. No, I did not share my ideas with any decision-makers is selected.*

48. How likely do you think it is that these decision-makers will:

	Not likely at all (1)	Not likely (2)	Somewhat likely (3)	Likely (4)	Very likely (5)	I don't know (6)
Listen to your ideas?						
Take your ideas seriously?						
Act on your suggestions?						

49. In your opinion, how likely is that young employees like yourself are given the following opportunities at your main job (the job where you work the most hours):

	Not likely at all (1)	Not likely (2)	Somewhat likely (3)	Likely (4)	Very likely (5)	I don't know (6)
To make decisions independently?						
To take risks?						
To challenge the status quo?						
To propose solutions to important issues?						
To implement solutions to important issues?						
To be rewarded and recognized for creativity?						

50. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your main job (the job where you work the most hours).

<b>Resilience</b>	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	I don't know (6)
The work that I do helps to fulfil my sense of purpose in life.						
My workplace is somewhere where I feel that I belong.						
The work that I do fits well with my personal values and beliefs.						
I make sure I take breaks to maintain my strength and energy when I am working hard.						
I have developed some reliable ways to relax when I am under pressure at work.						
I have developed some reliable ways to deal with the stress of challenging events at work.						

51. Do you use generative artificial intelligence (AI), such as Chat GPT, Bard, Dall E2 or

other software as part of your work?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Prefer not to answer

#### **Section 4: Sustainable Development Goals**

52. What is your level of awareness of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

- a) No awareness
- b) Low awareness
- c) Moderate awareness
- d) High awareness

*Skip to **Section 5. Demographic questions** if a. **No awareness** is selected.*

53. What topics do you focus on the most at work, if any? Please select up to three that are most relevant:

- a) GOAL 1: No Poverty (End poverty in all its forms everywhere)
- b) GOAL 2: Zero Hunger (End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture)
- c) GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages)
- d) GOAL 4: Quality Education (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all)
- e) GOAL 5: Gender Equality (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls)
- f) GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation (Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all)
- g) GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy (Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all)
- h) GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth (Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all)
- i) GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation)
- j) GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality (Reduce inequality within and among countries)
- k) GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable)
- l) GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production (Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns)
- m) GOAL 13: Climate Action (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts)
- n) GOAL 14: Life Below Water (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development)
- o) GOAL 15: Life on Land (Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss)
- p) GOAL 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels)
- q) GOAL 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goals (Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development)
- r) None

#### **Section 5: Demographic questions**

We are collecting demographic information to ensure our study is representative of young Canadians. We will be analyzing the previous information by the demographic characteristics we are asking about below. This demographic information will not be linked to any of your personally identifiable information.

54. What is your sex assigned at birth?

- a) Male
- b) Female
- c) Intersex
- d) Prefer not to answer

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

- a) Man/Transman
- b) Woman/Transwoman
- c) Genderqueer/Gender non-conforming/Gender non-binary/ Gender Fluid
- d) Two-spirited
- e) I prefer to self define (optional): TEXT BOX
- f) Prefer not to answer

56. Do you consider yourself to be a member of the LGBTQ2S+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Two-Spirited) community?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Questioning or not sure
- d) Prefer not to answer

57. What is your place of birth?

- a) Canada
- b) United States
- c) Central America
- d) Jamaica
- e) Other Caribbean and Bermuda
- f) South America
- g) United Kingdom
- h) Germany
- i) France
- j) Other Northern and Western Europe
- k) Poland
- l) Other Eastern Europe
- m) Italy
- n) Portugal
- o) Other Southern Europe
- p) Eastern Africa
- q) Northern Africa
- r) Other Africa
- s) Iran
- t) Other West Central Asia and the Middle East
- u) China
- v) South Korea
- w) Other Eastern Asia
- x) Philippines
- y) Vietnam
- z) Other Southeast Asia
- aa) India
- ab) Pakistan
- ac) Sri Lanka
- ad) Other Southern Asia
- ae) Oceania and others
- af) None of the above

ag) Prefer not to answer

*Skip to 60. Are you or have you been in the foster care system? If other than a. Canada is selected in 51. What is your place of birth?*

58. Are you now, or have you ever been, a landed immigrant in Canada? (A landed immigrant (permanent resident) is a person who has been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities)?
- a) Economic immigrant (permanent resident)
  - b) Immigrant sponsored by family and other immigrants (permanent resident)
  - c) Refugee (permanent resident)
  - d) Non-permanent immigrant (e.g. study visa, work permit)
  - e) Prefer not to answer

*Skip to 60. Are you or have you been in the foster care system? If d. Non-permanent immigrant is selected.*

59. In what year did you become a landed immigrant (permanent resident) to Canada?  
DROP DOWN MENU

60. Are you or have you been in the foster care system?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Prefer not to answer

61. Have you ever spent time in a jail, prison, or juvenile detention centre?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Prefer not to answer

62. Have you spent time in a jail, prison, or juvenile detention centre in the past 12 months?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Prefer not to answer

63. How would you describe your overall personal financial situation (consider your own wages from all your jobs and any other income you receive from other sources)?

- a) Live comfortably
- b) Meet basic needs with a little left over
- c) Just barely meet basic needs
- d) Don't meet basic needs
- e) Prefer not to answer

64. What kind of community do you live in most of the year?

- a) Remote
- b) Rural
- c) Suburban
- d) Urban
- e) On reserve
- f) Prefer not to answer

65. Have you ever been unhoused (for example living in your car, in a shelter or on the street)?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Prefer not to answer

66. What is your housing situation right now?

- a) Renting a house
- b) Homeowner
- c) Living without paying rent
- d) Living in a shelter or transitional housing
- e) Living in co-operative housing

- f) Other:
- g) I do not have housing
- h) Prefer not to answer

67. I am...

- a) Arab
- b) Black
- c) Chinese
- d) Filipino
- e) Indigenous (North American)
- f) Japanese
- g) Korean
- h) Latin American
- i) South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan)
- j) Southeast Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Cambodian, Laotian, Thai)
- k) West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan)
- l) White
- m) Other group (optional) TEXT BOX
- n) Prefer not to answer

*Display 68. Do you identify yourself as...? If f. Indigenous (North American) is selected.*

68. I identify as...

- a) Inuk (Inuit)
- b) First Nations
- c) Métis
- d) Other (non-affiliated etc.) (optional) TEXT BOX
- e) Prefer not to answer

69. What is the language that you first learned at home in childhood and still understand?

- a) English
- b) French
- c) Other (optional) TEXT BOX
- d) Prefer not to answer

70. Do you have a long-term physical or mental condition that limits your ability to fully participate in your community, at school, at work, or in some other activities?

- a) Yes, I have a physical condition
- b) Yes, I have a mental condition
- c) Yes, I have both mental and physical conditions
- d) No, I don't have any conditions that limit my abilities
- e) Prefer not to answer

*Skip to Section 5: Thank you if 70. Do you have a long-term physical or mental condition that limits your ability to fully participate in your community, at school, at work, or in some other activities? b. No is selected.*

71. My physical or mental condition limits my ability to fully participate...

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Prefer not to answer (5)
In my community					
At school					
At work					
In other activities (e.g., leisure activities)					

72. Are you a member of another historically underrepresented group?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Prefer not to answer

Skip To: End of Block If Are you a member of another historically underrepresented group?

= No or prefer not to disclose

73. Is there anything that you would like us to consider when we are handling and processing your responses? TEXT BOX

### Section 5: Separate LinkedIn Profiles Page

We would love to keep in touch with you about the progress of this study. In addition to sending you updates over email, we would like to connect with you on LinkedIn as well!

Please consider sharing your LinkedIn profile URL with us so we can keep in touch.

Additionally, we would like to review participants' LinkedIn profiles to conduct comparisons with the survey data we have collected. The aim is to analyze patterns in work and educational experience using publicly available profile information including employment status and history, training, internships, volunteer positions and network.

We will not share your LinkedIn profile URL with third parties, including RBC Future Launch. The LinkedIn profile URLs will be stored separately from the survey data.

Consent:

	Yes	No
I'd like to be contacted about the RBC Longitudinal Study through LinkedIn.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I consent for the Youth & Innovation Project to use my LinkedIn profile for research purposes related to the RBC Future Launch Longitudinal Study.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please enter your LinkedIn profile URL below: INSERT TEXT BOX.

### Section 6: Separate Incentives Page

Please provide your contact information so we can e-transfer your \$10 thank-you gift to you.

We will not share your contact information with anyone. Information collected to make the e-transfer will not be linked to the study data in any way, and this identifying information will be stored separately.

**Important information: You will need a Canadian bank account to receive the transfer.**

Please indicate if you would like to provide your email address to receive the incentive:

- Yes, I would like to receive the \$10 incentive.
- No, I would prefer NOT to receive the \$10 incentive.

[DISPLAY ONLY FOR *a. Yes, I would like to receive the \$10 incentive*].

I acknowledge that this amount received from the University of Waterloo is taxable; that it is my responsibility to report the amount received for income tax purposes; and the University of Waterloo will not issue a tax receipt for the amount received.

INCLUDE CHECK BOX HERE

Email Address: TEXT BOX

## Appendix B: Information Letter

### Ethics information letter

[INSERT DATE]

*Note: If you are under 18 years old in Quebec or 16 years old in the rest of Canada, please share this information letter with your parents/guardians. If they have any questions or concerns, they can contact us at [youthimpact@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:youthimpact@uwaterloo.ca).*

Dear RBC Future Launch Participant,

The [Youth & Innovation Project](#) at the University of Waterloo works to ensure young people are meaningfully engaged in finding and implementing solutions to social, environmental and economic problems, and are valued for the contributions they make.

In collaboration with [RBC Future Launch](#), we are conducting a longitudinal study to research the impact that RBC Future Launch funded programs have had on the young participants who take part in them, as well as the resulting implications for Canadian society and the economy.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you completed an RBC Future Launch funded program, filled out a post-program evaluation survey and opted in to participate in research opportunities that RBC Future Launch supports.

### Survey information

As part of this study, we will ask you to fill out three surveys; one at least a year after you completed the post-program evaluation survey, a second a year from now and the third a year after that. Following up with you three times will allow us to track changes in your employment and training status over several years. We will also follow up with you every 3 months to ask you to update your contact information as well as updating you about the study.

This survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. You will be completing the survey using the survey platform Qualtrics. Qualtrics has implemented technical, administrative, and physical safeguards to protect the information provided via the services from loss, misuse, and unauthorized access, disclosure, alteration, or destruction. However, no internet transmission is ever fully secure or error free. Qualtrics temporarily collects your computer IP address to avoid duplicate responses in the dataset but will not collect information that could identify you personally.

### Data storage

The data collected will be stored on the Youth & Innovation Project's OneDrive, and on two hard drives stored in a locked office at the University of Waterloo. Access to the OneDrive is granted to the Youth & Innovation Project's staff, students and research assistants while they are working on the project. The data will be kept for at least seven years after the end of the six years of the study.

### Anonymized data

Once we have finished collecting data, we will make your responses anonymous, i.e., your email address, first three letters of your postal code, and your LinkedIn URL will be removed from the database that contains your survey responses. By anonymizing your data, no one will be able to link your responses to your identity.

Your anonymized responses will then be shared with RBC Future Launch and the organizations that received an RBC Future Launch grant. Your anonymized responses will also be publicly available on the RBC Future Launch online repository.

### Data analysis

#### *Labour Force Survey*

Your anonymized responses will also be used to compare the employment status of people who participated in the RBC Future Launch funded programs with the employment status of young Ca-



nadians that have not participated in these programs. This comparison will be conducted by analyzing data from the Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey (LFS) from respondents of geographic areas where RBC Future Launch programs take place.

#### *RBC Future Launch post-program evaluation*

To understand the importance of the skills young people learned during their participation in the RBC Future Launch funded programs and the impact they had on their employment status, education, and work experience, we will link the anonymized responses with the responses given to RBC Future Launch in the post-program evaluation survey. We will then create a separate database that will contain both responses. This new database will also be anonymized.

#### *LinkedIn profiles*

At the end of the survey, we will ask you to share your LinkedIn profile URL with us. The aim is to analyze patterns in work and educational experience using publicly available profile information including employment status and history, training, internships, volunteer positions and network. Sharing your LinkedIn profile is optional and there is a separate consent form to express your willingness to participate in this part of the study. We will not share your LinkedIn profile with third parties, including RBC Future Launch. The LinkedIn profiles will be stored separately from the survey data.

### **Reporting**

The data collected will be used to create a report for RBC Future Launch and may be used in future academic publications or in studies that further explore the impacts of RBC Future Launch programs on young participants and the Canadian society and economy.

### **Consent and withdrawal**

If you do not wish to participate in the study, you can withdraw your consent up until one month after you have received the survey, at which point the data will be anonymized. If you decide to withdraw, your responses will be deleted. You may also skip any questions in the survey that you do not wish to answer.

### **Incentives**

In appreciation of your time, you will receive \$10 by entering your contact information at the end of the survey. Please note that this amount is taxable and that it is your responsibility to report this amount for income tax purposes.

The information collected to contact you regarding the payment of the \$10 gift will not be linked to the survey data in any way, and this identifying information will be stored separately.

### **Ethics approval**

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Board (REB #44044). If you have questions for the Board contact the Office of Research Ethics at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or [reb@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:reb@uwaterloo.ca). If you wish to have a copy of this letter, feel free to save it and download it as a PDF.

### **Indigenous peoples**

If you are an Indigenous person, we would like to assure you that this research recognizes the responsibility of Indigenous peoples to preserve and maintain their role as traditional guardians of ecosystems through the maintenance of their cultures, spiritual beliefs and customary practices. This research respects the integrity, morality and spirituality of the culture, traditions and relationships of Indigenous communities and aims to avoid the imposition of external conceptions and standards. We recognize that Indigenous communities have the right to exclude and/or keep any information concerning their culture, traditions or spiritual beliefs confidential. Further, we acknowledge the traditional rights of Indigenous peoples to control the way the information they provide is used and accessed. As such we have included space in the survey for you to provide us with any comments that you would like us to consider when we handle and process your responses.

### **Participate in the survey**

If you would like to participate in the survey, please click on the survey link included in the invitation email you received.

### **Questions**

If you have any questions regarding the study, do not hesitate to reach out to us at [youthimpact@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:youthimpact@uwaterloo.ca).

Sincerely,  
Ilona Dougherty  
Managing Director  
Youth & Innovation Project  
University of Waterloo  
<https://uwaterloo.ca/youth-and-innovation/>

