

Youth with Disabilities

System Change for Employment and Lifelong Careers

Challenge Brief

December 2013

1. THE PROBLEM

Ontario’s youth are facing an employment crisis. In 2013, the unemployment rate for Ontario youth between the ages of 15 and 24 was between 16% and 17.1% with **only one in two Ontarians between the ages 15 and 24 who have paid employment** – the worst numbers seen since Statistics Canada has kept records since 1976¹.

Youth with Disabilities (YWD) experience even higher rates of unemployment than their similarly aged peers, as is apparent from the most recent figures available from 2006 (see Table 1). From 2001 to 2006, Canada’s disability rate increased from 12.4% to 14.3% - 4.4 million Canadians. The rate is expected to rise further.

Table 1: Latest labour workforce data available for persons with disabilities.

Source: Statistics Canada 2006 Census.

Ontario 2006 Unemployment Rate	15-19	20-24	Working Age Pop.
With Disabilities	21.9%	15.1%	10.2%
Without	15.9%	9.9%	7.0%

Ontario offers a suite of special education, employment training and supports for youth with disabilities. Despite these efforts, the high unemployment rates of youth with disabilities continue to be a complex and seemingly intractable challenge, with multiple possible problems and stakeholders. We need to look for new approaches and new solutions that can help change transform the education and employment services system. The Ministries of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and Children and Youth Services (MCYS) is working with MaRS Solutions Lab to develop and test such new approaches with youth, innovators and stakeholders.

This challenge brief gives the problem definition as we now see it and describes the process to develop solutions. For the next stage, we propose to research, explore and design solutions together with individual youth, employers, innovators and experts, as interventions to affect change in the system. Identifying areas to intervene will begin with better understanding of the barriers faced by youth with different disabilities in getting employment and meaningful careers, the business needs of employers and employment intermediaries and creative ways to match youth abilities. How can we redesign the system from a citizen-centred perspective? And do we have a common understanding of our objectives for the employment services system?

At the end of this stage, we aim to have answers and some prototypes ready to be tested.

2. WHY A LAB?

Around the world, governments face increasingly complex social challenges whereas public resources are decreasing. At the same time society's capacity for problem solving is stronger than ever. People are better educated and demand to be involved. There is more private capital available for social good. Technology connects us easily and enables society to organize complex, collaborative tasks quickly and cheaply. So, we need to solve these complex social challenges together: governments, corporations, non-governmental organizations, foundations, academia and the community.

This is certainly true for a challenge like this. This demands actions by many individuals and organizations throughout society, not just government. The MaRS Solutions Lab brings together stakeholders and develops new solutions collaboratively. The value of our lab approach for the Ontario Government can be described as follows:

- **Develop solutions with society**
In the lab we convene stakeholders from different parts of society and develop solutions together. The lab acts as a neutral common ground. Government is just one of its partners. Solutions that come out of the lab are to be implemented and funded by all stakeholders, not just government.
- **Understand the problem from a citizen/user perspective**
Many social problems are often defined from an institutional perspective. The lab takes a different view. Using tools from design thinking we try to gain a deep understanding of the problem from a citizen or user perspective. Not by just analyzing the numbers, but by also studying the people.
- **Offer opportunities to experiment and learn**
An important value of the lab is experimenting and learning on a small scale. First of all to test what works before we make expensive large scale mistakes. But also because such complex problems can only be fully understood when you are trying to solve them.
- **Working towards scale and sustainability**
More than doing one off projects, the lab offers a process to deliberately work towards scale to create system change. This means building receptor capacity in society to take up new solutions. It implies focusing on solutions that can become sustainable without prolonged support from governments or foundations. And it requires developing policies and building capacities for solutions to scale.
- **Having a long-term view**
Solving social challenges and creating system change does not happen overnight. It requires time, stamina and commitment. It may take years and multiple interventions before success can be claimed, and it often does. While many institutions need to focus on the short term, the lab takes a long-term view. We are committed to solving the challenge, however long it takes and whatever solutions are needed.
- **Better social outcomes against lower cost**
Innovation is about finding better answers. For social challenges, the result of innovation should be better social outcomes at lower cost. Solutions that are developed in the lab may require investments, but in the long term need to result in cost savings to society.

3. WHERE TO INTERVENE

Canada and Ontario is still recovering from the 2008 global financial crisis. Public budgets are increasingly constrained while the need for Ontario to be more competitive in Canada and globally becomes more urgent. Ontario's economic and social agendas will need to be better aligned and coordinate to address the YWD unemployment challenge.

Unemployment of YWD is important because of:

- Career "scarring" – unemployed youth are more likely to miss out on developing crucial life and employment skills resulting in reduced earnings, greater earnings instability, and more spells of unemployment over 10 to 15 year periods (Fong 2012).
- Health and social implications – unemployment and underemployment for YWD would more likely lead to poverty, poor physical and mental health than for other youth.
- Increased government programming costs – prolonged unemployment can lead to life-long dependence on government supports.
- *Creating a province where every person who lives or visits can participate fully makes good sense* – One in seven people in Ontario have a disability and that number will rise further². Furthermore, the Ministry of Finance anticipated that retirement of the baby boom population will create workforce deficits of some 600,000 by 2021, and should pass the one million mark by 2031³.

A preliminary research team of staff and managers from the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), and Cabinet Office (CO) worked with MaRS Solutions Lab over four sessions in Spring 2013 to develop a project research brief. This design proposal is based on the insights and findings of the project research brief.

The preliminary research brief identifies a number of possible areas to explore. It also acknowledges that other government partners needs to be at the table. The following proposed is based on the research brief findings.

Employment and Meaningful careers

The original challenge proposal focused on finding innovative approaches to improving the unemployment rates of YWD. The subsequent discussions and research led the preliminary research team to redefine the focus to YWD-centric outcomes: *meaningful careers*, opportunities and tools to explore employment options, not just job placements.

Incentives in current policies and programs tend to focus on job placements. Goals of employment programs need to shift towards meaningful employment that provides living wages and increases opportunities to explore meaningful career options.

For some YWD, competitive employment and living wages may not be practical. We have also heard through preliminary interviews that some YWD may choose not to work. These are important nuances that the government is likely to have difficulty discuss with stakeholders.

While the team recognized the importance of labour workforce statistics as important indicators of Ontario's economic health, the shortcomings of these indicators as measures of citizens short and long-term wellbeing was also obvious. From a citizen-centric perspective, unemployment rate is better framed as a consequence, not an outcome.

Employers perceptions and business needs

Recent reports from the Canadian federal government, the Ontario government and various disabilities think tanks have all signalled that people with different types of disabilities can be well integrated into the work force (*Rethinking Disability in the Private Sector*, Government of Canada, 2013; *Brighter Prospects: Transforming Social Assistance in Ontario*, Lankin, F. & Sheikh, M. A., 2012). These reports recommend shifting the focus of employment training efforts from creating a “supply” of workers (i.e. YWD) through training and skills development to increasing employers “demand” (i.e. labour market and employer) for YWD in the employment market. Understanding and matching the business needs of the employer to the abilities of the youth employee is still a major challenge and a key area of research and solutions development for further exploration. Another important area to explore: the roles of private sector employment intermediaries, i.e. human resource services and recruitment agencies versus community employment agencies.

Types of disabilities

YWD with different disabilities face different barriers to employment. Statistics Canada data indicates that employment rates for YWD are varied by the type and severity of the disability⁴. Clearly a one-size fit all approach will not be able to reconcile the needs of a diverse demographic. We can assume that youth with visual and auditory disabilities will face different barriers, and require different kinds of training and accommodation than youth with intellectual disabilities or severe learning disabilities. The types and severity of disabilities will also constraint employment and career options.

The impact of the types and severity of disabilities on youth begin in schools. Our current integrated education system (of youth and YWD in the same school setting) strives to prepare youth in high schools for colleges and universities where they are then prepared for employment. For some youth with the severe or complex disabilities, further education is often not a practical goal. But high schools rarely have the resources and the inclination to prepare these youth for employment. It comes as no surprise then that these youth leave high school with little prospects for employment or they leave school only to enter perpetual sheltered work.

Further research is required to determine the barriers to employment faced by different classifications of disabilities; the variety of services that are available to serve the needs of the population; and, potential access barriers to employment programs and job opportunities for persons with severe disabilities.

Service integration, transitions and accessibility

Further to the service fragmentation addressed above (**Error! Reference source not found.** and Employers perceptions and business needs), it appears that services are fragmented across ministries and service providers and it is not clear whether employers are being effectively engaged in understanding the problem of, or finding solutions to, careers for YWD. Most employment programs focus on training clients for generic positions - not on career formation and life-long employment, and do not provide adequate support to locate positions for successful clients.

The *Commission for the Review of Social Assistance in Ontario* reported that YWD are not provided with equitable access to publically provided training opportunities as people without

disabilities. ODSP recipients are reported as having fewer employment training opportunities than social assistance recipients. ODSP is perceived to categorize YWD as being able or unable to work upon entrance into the social assistance system. Public training accessibility is exacerbated by an apparent reduction in training opportunities that are being provided by private employers (Mourshed, Farrell, and Barton, 2013)⁵ (Fischer, 2013)⁶. Both of these factors contribute to exclusion from the labour market and a barrier to accessing additional supports to improve YWD employment rates. (Brighter Prospects: Transforming Social Assistance in Ontario. 2013)⁷.

Engaging the full party: aligning Ontario's economic and social agendas

YWD unemployment is both an economic and social problem. Multiple Ontario ministries are tackling and impacting the unemployment and underemployment of YWD with a spectrum of economic, education, training and other supports¹. Coordination and integration of the government's responses to the needs of YWD is limited and difficult. The most apparent divide is between the economic ministries' focus on the economy and job creation targeting employers, and the social ministries' focus on education, employment training and job placement targeting YWD. MCSS and MCYS have been leading the preliminary research efforts with participation from CO. Ideally, the full party of ministries will engage with YWD, employers, innovators and experts, to better align Ontario economic vision with the business needs of industries and employers, and the abilities and needs of YWD.

Further research needed

Finally, the preliminary research team noted that research and data on YWD, the current effectiveness of programs and services offered by the government of Ontario and the population's outcomes is sparse and/or out of date. While the team was able to identify success stories about employers, they were either anecdotal or one-off that have not been replicated / scaled. Early work on this topic suggests that more research and exploration is needed to establish what the most pressing issues are, prior to presenting innovative ways to address them.

The preliminary research team developed a list of research questions to guide the work of MaRS Solutions Lab moving forward with more in-depth research and analysis in the next phase of the project. The themes of the questions were:

- Deepening understanding about the profiles and perspectives of YWD.
What are YWD looking to accomplish? Why have some succeeded and some have not? What is the impact of different types of disabilities? Are there discernable patterns across demographic and socio-economic groups?
- Understanding the economic trends and labour market impact for YWD in the broader context of youth unemployment and the economy.
Which are the sectors, regions and jobs where YWD have had most successes, and the ones with the least? What are the implications of these differences?

¹ Programs, policies and regulations impacting YWD employment in the provincial government alone reside with *seven ministries*. The full list of ministries and how they impact YWD employment and employers is listed in the *Appendix*.

- Do employers value YWD employment? How are employers integrated into or engaged in the education and training design process? How can we reconcile the facts and myths surrounding the employment of YWD?
- Effectiveness of policies and regulations.
What is the intended impact of the key employment policies and regulations? How do they support YWD in attaining meaningful employment? What are the targeted outcomes? How can they be more effective?

The preliminary research team also felt that further exploration with a more diverse group of innovators and leaders would be crucial. This would include

- YWD and innovators who work with YWDs, e.g. TDSB Alternate Schools, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital
- Innovative and inclusive employers (SMEs and large corporations like those identified in HRSDC's *Rethinking DisAbility in the Private Sector* report)
- Employment innovators, e.g. Social Capital Partners, Canadian Association for Community Living, Essential Skills Ontario, Lime Connect, Career Edge, Abilities First Coalition
- High schools, colleges and universities
- Other governments: Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), municipal governments, school boards

4. THE PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING SOLUTIONS

Before describing the process we propose to follow for this challenge in the coming months, here is some background on the MaRS Solutions Lab and its approach to clarify and give a better context.

The MaRS Solutions Lab

The MaRS Solutions Lab helps to tackle complex social challenges that require system change. We provide support and space for multiple stakeholders to collaborate, experiment and learn. We introduce new approaches, perspectives and players. Applying new approaches like design thinking, social innovation and behavioural economics. Providing new perspectives on the basis of a thorough understanding of the citizen, looking outside in. Bringing new players into the game, which can give fresh ideas. The MaRS Solutions Lab partners with government and is a linking pin between government and society. We develop solutions, create support systems and build capacity for change to improve the lives of people and strengthen the resilience of communities. Our working model has four stages:

1. Hypothesis

In this first stage the problem is defined, scoped and framed from a system perspective. On the basis of preliminary research, interviews and some stakeholder workshops we formulate our hypothesis and an approach for how to tackle the challenge. The end result of this stage is a challenge brief, which in this case is the document you are reading now. It provides a guideline for the team, our partner(s) and key stakeholders.

2. Conceptualization

The second stage is about analyzing the problem and developing potential interventions or solutions. This starts with extensive user research in order to get a better understanding of the citizens involved in this challenge. Through interviews, observations and ethnographic study we want to understand the choices and considerations that are being made or how policies and procedures really work. After that we do a systems mapping exercise, which provides us with even better insights where to intervene. This is done through data research, expert interviews and different types of review. Taken together this gives a design brief with a thorough analysis of the problem. It is input for the ideation (idea generation) phase to develop interventions (or solutions). They are developed into prototypes, which are first tested in a lab environment. End products of this stage are one or more intervention plans to test these prototypes in a real life situation. We make sure that in ideation we involve users, stakeholders, experts and innovators. They form a first community of change, which can later grow into a movement of practitioners that promote change. The analysis and ideas can also be used to start to create support for future policy change.

3. Intervention

Change and tangible results are only being realized by taking action. In the third stage, we intervene by prototyping ideas that have been developed in stage two. These prototypes are projects that we undertake ourselves in partnership with others, or where we help others to undertake them. The role of the lab is above all to monitor the progress, reflect and learn. And make sure everyone involved learns from it. We help grow this learning community, reaching out to early adopters in the field. We help to gather evidence on what works, as well as input for future policies that can help scale and sustain these prototypes. And if

needed we help to redesign. End products are evaluated prototypes with evidence of what works and around them a vibrant community of change agents.

4. Synthesis

In the final and fourth stage, we synthesize all activities into a strategy for system change. This consists of three types of strategies. First, we develop strategies to scale prototypes that work. That can be done in many ways. Second, we translate the evidence into strategies for policy change, which supports and helps to sustain the innovations, and we help to achieve that. This will also enable scaling. Third, we grow the learning community by reaching out to the early majority. This means helping to establishing materials, toolkits, learning programs etc. That also is a way of scaling and sustaining the innovations. Taken together we have a synthesis. The end product is a strategy document, and hopefully scaled innovations, new policies and a large-scale community of people that are engaged in making the change happen.

With this challenge brief, formulating our hypothesis, we can now go towards stage 2, which is to conceptualize new solutions on the basis of a good understanding of the user and the system.

The challenge

Beginning in Spring 2013, MaRS Solutions Lab conducted a series of workshops with the OPS preliminary research team. The focus was on the issues of and factors contributing to the significantly lower rates of labour market participation and higher rates of unemployment of YWD compared to other youth.

In the course of the preliminary research, the team developed three important shifts in the framing of the challenge:

- Aligning the unemployment social agenda with the economic agenda
- YWD as users/clients vs. YWD AND employers as users/clients (focusing on labour “supply” vs. “demand”), i.e. both YWD and employers needs and perspectives are key design considerations
- Job placements vs. meaningful career

As noted above (

Engaging the full party: aligning Ontario’s economic and social agendas

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Further research needed) the preliminary research team has recommended engaging a broader group of ministries, stakeholders and experts as the next step prior to beginning the Design Phase.

In addition to conducting further research and engagement, based on the preliminary research, MaRS Solutions Lab proposes exploring design options through the lens of

- Supporting meaningful employment and careers, not job placement
 - Meaningful employment opportunities that help YWD explore and build career options
 - Increase long-term employment income and reduce ODSP income support dependence
- Exploring and deepening understanding of and addressing employers perceptions and business needs in the context of Ontario's changing economy
 - Work with educators, employment/recruitment services agencies to better align YWD training and supports with employers business needs
 - Encourage and support YWD entrepreneurs in emerging business and social enterprise opportunities
- Better transitions from school to work; better integration between programs
 - Look for high impact opportunities to integrate and harmonize key programs and policies
 - Design user-centric alternatives for YWD and employers

The MaRS Solutions Lab proposes that we organize the next phase of our work on analyzing the challenge and conceptualizing solutions based on the following challenge question, goals, principles, strategies for intervention and design process.

How can we maximize the employment and career potential and abilities of Youth with Disabilities (YWDs)? How can we better align the abilities of YWDs with the business needs of employers and emerging business opportunities?

The problem of the unemployment and underemployment of YWDs is reframed as a challenge to redesign the current system of education, support, training, policies and regulations to maximize the career potential and abilities of YWD in meeting the business needs of employers, economy and society.

This represents a complex challenge without easy solutions and is broad enough to allow for creativity and authentic social innovation and system change yet specific enough to bring focus to the change process.

Design Goals

1. Develop a better understanding of what it means for YWD above and beyond other youth, to attain meaningful employment; the career formation processes; opportunities and barriers for YWD at an individual and system level.
2. Develop a better understanding of employers hiring practices, rationale, requirements and expectations, the role of employment intermediaries, in the context of Ontario's changing economy

3. Active collaboration and committed partnerships with innovators, stakeholders and experts beyond OPS to ideate (generate ideas), design, develop, prototype and scale interventions.
4. Develop 4 – 6 high-impact interventions that can be scaled to create system change that improves employment and job opportunities for YWD, that meets the business needs of employers.
5. Provide opportunities for public sector leaders, from the provincial, federal and municipal government, employment services agencies and school boards, to learn and gain skills to develop public services from a user-centred perspective and how to apply design thinking.

Design Principles

The following design principles will guide the process:

- Start with the citizen users (in this case: YWD and employers)
- Create solutions with users and stakeholders
- Always look for the smallest possible intervention with the largest possible impact
- No action without reflection, no reflection without action
- Combine to diagnose problems, to galvanize change and to deliver concrete improvements
- Create a safe environment for ideation and collaboration: youth, employers and government, educators, community employment services providers and employers.

MaRS Solutions Lab proposes to approach research and design of interventions by focusing on how Youth with Disabilities (YWD) and employers interact with one another, and then identify potential interventions that can support them. Given the complexity and reach of this challenge, additional partnerships beyond OPS will be essential and will be developed throughout this phase, starting with the establishment of key partnerships at the early stage.

As suggested by the preliminary research team, we need to broaden and deepen understanding of the challenge with a more diverse and representative group of youth, employers, innovators, experts, service providers and other stakeholders. We will also need to include and engage the broader group of Ontario ministries whose program and policies impact YWD employment and employers. We will begin with a system mapping workshop with this diverse group to broaden understanding and perspectives about this challenge. Insights from the workshop will be used to update this Challenge Brief and guide the subsequent research and design efforts.

To deepen our understanding about YWD from a user perspective, we will interview and undertake ethnographic studies of YWD who are meaningfully employed, unemployed and underemployed. Employers will also be the focus of user studies via interviews and focus groups. We will be interviewing innovators, experts and service providers for additional insights. We will also conduct focus groups and workshops with YWDs, employers, innovators, experts and service providers. Participants in these studies will be selected with criteria based on insights from the system mapping workshop.

As illustrated in Table 2, we would approach the research focusing on the perspectives of YWD and employers. Youth with different types of disabilities will have different experiences with employers. Studying all types is beyond the scope of this project. Instead, we propose 2 – 3 groups of disabilities to focus on, to be informed by the system mapping workshop:

- Youth with disabilities that have well-established accommodations for learning and work, e.g. mobility disabilities, visual impairment, etc.
- Youth with disabilities that do not have established accommodations for mainstream work, e.g. developmental and cognitive disabilities
- Youth with learning disabilities who are high-functioning but are less likely to succeed in a traditional work and employment setting

We will assemble a Design Brief based on insights from the research. The Design Brief will be used to inform youth, employers, innovators and partners collaborating in a series of ideation (ideas generation) and design workshops.

Our goal is to identify 4 – 6 promising high impact interventions that will positively impact employment and career opportunities for Youth with Disabilities (YWDs) that will align and maximize the abilities and energy of YWDs with the business needs of employers, emerging business opportunities and social entrepreneurship opportunities (in response to local social challenges). Design and prototype development based on the identified interventions will then proceed with partners (including MCSS, MCYS and other OPS partners) and stakeholders.

Based on discussions with MaRS Solutions Lab partners, we have identified some early opportunities. See *Early partnership opportunities & quick wins* in the *Appendices* for further information.

Table 2 YWD employment research and design focus areas, with sample questions.

System dimensions	YWD perspective	Employers perspective
YWD dimension	<p>What are YWD looking for in a meaningful job and career? How are YWD achieving career success?</p> <p>How does the type of disability impact employment and career?</p>	<p>What are employers looking for in a youth job candidate?</p> <p>Who are the YWD that employers are employing and retaining?</p> <p>Why/how these employers doing it?</p>
Employers dimension	<p>Who are the employers who are employing YWD in meaningful jobs with positive career prospects? How are these employers supporting YWD?</p>	<p>Who are the successful employers who are employing and retaining YWD for business competitiveness reasons?</p> <p>Why/how are they doing it?</p>
Community dimension	<p>How can the local community provide job and career opportunities for YWD?</p> <p>How can YWD contribute to the local community?</p>	<p>How do employers employment of YWD and other diversity and inclusion practices support the local community? How is it a business advantage?</p>
Educators dimension	<p>What education and supports do YWD need to help them match the employers' requirements and expectations?</p> <p>What do YWD need to transition successfully to work?</p>	<p>What are employers looking for in a youth job candidate?</p> <p>What supports do employers need to help new graduate YWD employees succeed in their jobs and careers?</p>
Community Employment SPs dimension	<p>What do YWD need to transition from school to work? To be employable?</p> <p>What do YWD need to give them the best chances for meaningful careers?</p>	<p>What supports can help employers hire and retain YWD?</p>
Human Resources SPs dimension	<p>What do YWD need to become competitively employable and an attractive job candidate?</p>	<p>How do employers direction or requirements for human resources recruitment services include or exclude YWD?</p>
Policies & Regulations dimension	<p>What are the key outcomes and outputs measures of Ontario's employment and inclusion policies and regulations for YWD?</p>	<p>What are the key outcomes and outputs measures of Ontario's employment and inclusion policies and regulations for employers?</p>

5. DESIGN PROPOSAL

The proposed phase consists of five streams:

- A. Broaden understanding about YWD and employers to identify high impact interventions designs
- B. Deepen understanding about YWD and employers to inform interventions designs
- C. Design interventions and prototypes
- D. Develop strategy of prototype implementation and quick wins
- E. Build network of YWD and youth career innovators, stakeholders, experts and early adopters

A. Broaden understanding about YWD and employers to identify high impact interventions designs

Results:

Updated Challenge Brief that includes: 1) a system map of factors and drivers impacting YWD careers and employer hiring practices; 2) promising high impact interventions and quick wins; and 4) partnerships with innovators and stakeholders (other than OPS).

MaRS Solutions Lab will host a 2-part workshop for 24 – 36 youth, employers, innovators, experts and stakeholders. As suggested by the preliminary research team, more diverse perspectives need to be incorporated. The discussion will focus on the perspectives of YWD and employers in a framework based on Table 2. Workshop participants will also be selected for their partnership potential. The finalized Challenge Brief will also serve as the basis of MoUs for short and mid-term partnerships initiatives.

Actions:

- A.1. Systems Workshop design and preparation
- A.2. Systems Workshop 1: System mapping and promising interventions
- A.3. Systems Workshop 2: Future states and success indicators
- A.4. Interviews with 6 - 12 Canadian and international innovators
- A.5. Identify quick wins with partners
- A.6. Finalize partnerships

B. Deepen understanding about YWD and employers to inform interventions designs

Results:

Design Brief that informs the ideas generation, design and development of the interventions and quick wins identified in Stream A that includes 1) Information and data about current supports for YWD and employers; 2) key observations from user ethnographic studies, focus groups and interviews; and 3) insights to inform ideas generation and designs.

MaRS Solutions Lab will undertake 2 streams of research with partners, prioritizing and drawing on existing work and ongoing efforts whenever possible. The research will begin as early as possible while addressing the key areas identified by Stream A workshop participants and

interviewees. The final Design Brief will be used in the subsequent design workshops in Stream C and Stream D.

Actions:

- B.1. Complete knowledge gaps (as needed, with OPS partners)
 - B.1.1 Inventory of key employment programs and supports
 - B.1.2 Scans for promising practices, rapid literature review & jurisdictional review
 - B.1.3 Data profiles of YWD: education attainment, employment barrier types, personal financial status, health and wellbeing, social mobility
 - B.1.4 Economy and labour market trends, inclusive labour practices trends
- B.2. Understand youth, employers, and employment services (as needed)
 - B.2.1 2 Focus groups with 10 unemployed YWD
 - B.2.2 2 Focus groups with 10 employed YWD
 - B.2.3 Ethnography studies of 8 unemployed YWDs
 - B.2.4 Interviews with 12 - 15 employers
 - B.2.5 Interviews with 12 - 15 colleges and universities education & career services experts, education policy experts (inside and outside government)
 - B.2.6 Interviews with 12 - 15 high school special education supports services experts, policy experts
 - B.2.7 Interviews with 12 - 15 employment services providers, job placement agencies and policy experts
- B.3. Finalize Design Brief and identify additional quick wins with partners

C. Design interventions and prototypes

Results:

4 – 6 interventions and prototypes (Including quick wins) ideas that maximizes and aligns the abilities and energy of YWDs with the business needs of employers and emerging business opportunities that 1) are co-designed with YWD and employers; 2) have clear outcomes goals and measures.

Actions:

- C.1. Design ideation workshop with 16 – 24 YWD, employers and partners
- C.2. Design ideation workshop with 24 – 36 YWD, employers, education innovators and partners
- C.3. Design ideation workshop with 24 – 36 YWD, employers, community employment service innovators, human resource service innovators and partners
- C.4. Design ideation workshop with 24 – 36 YWD, entrepreneurship, social innovation leaders, community leaders including high-priority neighbourhoods and partners

- C.5. Design outcomes and measures frameworks with partners and 1) business and employment performance evaluation experts; and 2) labour market experts
- C.6. Design ideation workshop with 80 – 120 YWD, employers, experts, innovators, leaders and partners
- C.7. Future of Employment & Careers Expo - public engagement event on inclusive employment and meaningful careers
- C.8. Develop interventions and prototypes models with experts and partners

D. Develop strategy for prototype implementation, early opportunities and quick wins

Results:

1) Strategy for prototype(s) implementation and testing; 2) execution strategy for early opportunities and quick wins with partners

Actions:

- D.1. Prioritize interventions and prototype models with YWD, employers and partners
- D.2. Prototype(s) development and planning with YWD, employers and partners
- D.3. Prototype(s) tests and simulations with YWD, employers and partners
- D.4. Develop interventions and prototype implementation plan with YWD, employers and partners
- D.5. Collaborate with the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) on the *Ready, Willing & Able* initiative to expand and align community capacities to meet employer needs
- D.6. Collaborate with Social Capital Partners (SCP) on select programming and framework development on 1) outcomes and measures; and 2) YWD and employer matching
- D.7. Career financing planning (as an example of quick wins implementation)
 - D.7.1 Identify potential partners in finance and community services
 - D.7.2 Develop partnership agreement and revenue sharing model (if appropriate)
 - D.7.3 Design services informed by insights from Stream B and C activities
 - D.7.4 Test business model and services
 - D.7.5 Implementation planning and rollout

E. Build network of YWD and youth career innovators, stakeholders, experts and early adopters

Results:

An active community for learning, connecting and aligning YWD, employment innovators, stakeholders and experts focused maximizing career potentials for YWD.

Actions:

- E.1. Create network and online community with challenge partners and participants
- E.2. Maintain network and online community with highlights and insights from challenge activities, including interviews, workshops, focus groups and research
 - o Produce bulletins, briefs, presentations, videos and other collaterals and share with participants and partners
 - o Collect and synthesize feedback on work stream products from network

APPENDICES

ONTARIO MINISTRIES IMPACTING YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES EMPLOYMENT AND EMPLOYERS

- Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS) – policies and supports for children and youth
- Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) – disabilities support, social assistance
- Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment (MEDTE) – holds the government’s employment and accessibility mandate
- Ministry of Education (MEDU) – high school special needs education that have direct impact on the entrance success of YWD choosing post-secondary education and the employment or apprenticeship success of YWD who do not continue with post-secondary education
- Ministry of Finance (MOF) – financial and benefits policies that impact YWD, employers of YWD
- Ministry of Labour (MOL) – workplace safety and non-discrimination standards
- Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) – employment training services and higher education
- Cabinet Office (CO) – to help align the economic and social agendas of jobs, training and unemployment
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) – significant portions of youth employment and training programs are delivered in partnerships with municipalities, including affordable housing

EARLY PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES & QUICK WINS

We also propose partnering with innovators who are already working on initiatives with principles and goals that are aligned with this challenge. Working with these innovators will give us the opportunity to quickly prototype ideas building on existing research, resources and networks.

Leverage government influence for inclusive employment practices

Government Procurement Inclusion Requirements: The Ontario Government is a major buyer of services and products, though its pre-negotiated list of Vendors of Records for commonly requested services and open tenders. Evaluation criteria and requirements of vendors could be updated to promote inclusive employment practices, e.g. Vendors with an inclusive employment programs with demonstrable outcomes will have an advantage competing for contracts of \$300,000 and more.

Address immediate YWD financial planning “pains”

Career Financing Planning: financial supports, benefits and employment accommodation supports are important resources for YWD seeking employment. Banks and other financial institutions may have a role to play. Navigating the federal, provincial and municipal programs and their eligibility criteria and misconceptions can be very challenging for YWD. Currently, employment services providers address these need as part of their offerings. Banks and other financial institutions may be able to supplement their services from the alternate focus of longer-term financial independence. Banks may also have revenue incentives to address misconceptions (e.g. about contributions to the Registered Disabilities Savings Plan, leveraging Canada Disability Savings Grant and Canada Disability Savings Bond and the income-linked benefits cut-offs for Ontario Disabilities Support Program) as bundled advisory services.

Build capacity to help YWD meet employers needs

Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) is developing its *Ready, Willing & Able* initiative to expand community capacity to support employers hiring people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This initiative builds on an earlier successful pilot.

Social Capital Partners (SCP) is developing its initiative to provide specific-employer-needs training and support for prospective job candidates who are disadvantaged with the balance of a mainstream human resources services business.

Align innovators and employers networks to support YWD employment

Career Edge Organization (CEO) connects multi-sector businesses with diverse, qualified talent through three innovative paid internship programs to fulfill talent strategies for recent grads, internationally qualified professionals and graduates with disabilities.

Canadian Institute of Diversity and Inclusion (CID) provide innovative and proven strategies and educational supports for HR professional on diversity and inclusion initiatives in the workplace. CID is well recognized for its leadership and expertise in workplace diversity and inclusion.

Ability First Coalition is a non-profit group of dedicated professionals who meets monthly to share best practices and success stories related to hiring and retaining persons with disabilities. Ability First Coalition works with PIE – Partners in Employment, who are the non-profit agencies that provide services to help employers recruit, hire and retain persons with disabilities.

Addressing the future of employment and careers for YWD and youth

Future of employment and careers expo: will be an opportunity to engage the public in a creative, constructive and optimistic conversation about employment and careers in Ontario and Canada. The challenge and uncertainties of supporting citizens to thrive in changing work places, the changing nature of work and Canada’s changing economy was a common theme throughout the preliminary research. The Canadian economy is witnessing a number of shifts, from the ageing population to the changing composition and structure of our industries and sectors in a hyper competitive global stage with uncertain economic outlooks. The limited labour work force and economic data available seems to indicate that youth, especially YWD are bearing the brunt of the negative impact. *How can we prepare our youth for emerging future careers while balancing career options currently available?* The expo will bring together education, employment training and supports, small and large employers and regional planners to begin a conversation on Ontario’s best chances to thrive in the next 20 years.

¹ Geobey, Sean, 2013-09-27. *The Young and the Jobless: Youth Unemployment in Ontario*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

² Making Ontario Accessible. Government of Ontario. Retrieved 2013-10-01 from <http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/>

³ Statistics Canada (2011). *Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics*.

⁴ Statistics Canada (2008). *Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006: Tables (Part III)*. Minister of Industry, 2008. Retrieved on 2013-06-10 from http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2008/statcan/89-628-X/89-628-XIE2008008.pdf

⁵ Mourshed, M., D. Farrell and Barton, D., 2012. *Education to Employment: Designing a System that Works*. Washington, DC: McKinsey and Company.

⁶ Fischer, K., March 2013. *A college degree sorts job applicants, but employers wish it meant more*. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved 2013-07-30, from <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Employment-Mismatch/137625/#id=overview>

⁷ Lankin, Francis and Sheikh, Munir A., 2012-10-03. *Brighter Prospects: Transforming Social Assistance in Ontario*.