



Manitoba Employment in 2030 Action Labs: Regional Summary



Authors



Heather Russek, Project Lead + Collaborator

Heather is a strategist and designer with 15+ years of professional experience. Over the course of her career, Heather has held various positions, including policy innovation, health care leadership, management consulting, program and project management, and strategy. Heather was formerly the Director, Policy Innovation at the Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship. Heather holds a Bachelor of Science from Queen's University, an MBA from the DeGroote School of Business at McMaster University, and a Master of Design in Strategic Foresight and Innovation from OCAD University. Heather is a 2021 Next Generation Foresight Practitioner Fellow.

heather@creativefutures.studio

 [@hrussek](https://twitter.com/hrussek)



Jessica Thornton, Founder at Creative Futures

Jessica is a futures researcher and process designer with 12+ years of experience in the public and nonprofit sectors. Throughout her career, she has designed and delivered a range of programs and engagement experiences, published numerous strategic foresight writings, and worked on a wide range of subjects including skills, sustainability, food systems, cities, and governance. Jessica is a collaborator at the Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship and a Future Cities Canada foresight associate. Jessica has a Bachelor of Arts in Socio-Cultural Anthropology from the University of Toronto and a Master of Design in Strategic Foresight and Innovation from OCAD University.

jessica@creativefutures.studio

 [@jessmthornton](https://twitter.com/jessmthornton)



Michelle Park, Project Manager at BII+E

Michelle is a project manager at the Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship supporting projects under the Skills for an Innovation-Driven Economy workstream. In addition, she supports the management team on Institute wide priorities and strategic initiatives. Michelle holds a Bachelor of Commerce in Retail Management from Ryerson University.

michellepark@ryerson.ca

 [@michellesohee](https://twitter.com/michellesohee)

A special thank you to all of the workshop participants who contributed their lived expertise and energy to help job seekers and workers better prepare for the future labour market in Canada.

Contributors

Lori Wheeler, Member Engagement Director, Tech Manitoba
Elise Flaten, Association Administrator, Tech Manitoba
Marie Hacault, Program Manager, Tech Manitoba
Jessica Thomson, Marketing and Communications Specialist, Brookfield Institute
Claire Raymond, Administrative Assistant, Finance + Operations, Brookfield Institute
Mark Hazelden, Senior Director, Brookfield Institute
Lianne George, Director of Strategic Communications, Brookfield Institute
Kayla Zhu, Communications Intern, Brookfield Institute
Nina Rafeek, Marketing and Communications Specialist, Brookfield Institute
Suzanne Bowness, Copyeditor, CodeWord Communications
Suriya Lyons, Graphic Designer
Jesseca Buizon, Illustrator

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Introduction

Employment in 2030 was an 18-month initiative that combined futures research, expert workshops, and a machine-learning algorithm to generate a forecast of skills demand and occupational growth in 2030. The project was summarized in the Brookfield Institute's *Ahead by a Decade* (Spring 2020). The intent of the original initiative was to fill a gap in Canada's labour market information (LMI) by providing a skills-based forecast that was responsive to changing labour market conditions across the country.

Given the Brookfield Institute's mandate to make research practical and applied, *Employment in 2030 Action Labs* (herein referred to as "Action Labs") was designed to build on the original initiative and to translate this labour market forecast (in addition to other sources of LMI) into tangible solutions that could help workers prepare for their future. With funding from the Future Skills Centre, this project launched in fall 2020.



Given the diversity of Canada's labour market and worker experiences across the country, this project sought to generate region--specific solutions that would ideally have replicability and scalability to other contexts. To accomplish this, we partnered with five organizations:

- + Yukon University (Whitehorse, Yukon),
- + RADIUS SFU (Vancouver, British Columbia),
- + Tech Manitoba (Winnipeg, Manitoba),
- + Observatoire compétences-emplois (Montréal, Québec), and
- + Newfoundland and Labrador Workforce Innovation Centre (Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador).

The following summary describes the Manitoba Action Labs.

About Action Labs

Action Labs included three project phases. The first phase focused on exploring the impact COVID-19 may have on Canada's labour market, and how that may impact current projections. To do this, we conducted futures research and engaged a national panel of experts to provide feedback on emerging trends and their potential impact. This phase culminated in the release of [*Yesterday's Gone: Exploring possible futures of Canada's labour market in a post-COVID world.*](#)

The second phase entailed a series of human-centred design workshops that started by reviewing existing LMI to identify a regional challenge area. After identifying the challenge, we conducted interviews with living experts [see call out box] to gain a deeper understanding of the current experience, which led to two virtual workshops to translate the challenge into possible solutions. These challenge areas varied across regions, with the Manitoba Action Labs focused on supporting high school students to better prepare for the future workforce, and in particular for navigating non-linear career paths, through improved career guidance and development of foundational skills and abilities. For more details about the design of the workshops, see our workshop design [commentary.](#)



The third and final phase focused on translating our process into LMI insights, which led to the generation of a series of considerations and ideas about how we might redesign LMI in the future to be more worker-centric. This information is summarized in [Ground Control to LMI: Making Labour Market Information Work for Workers](#).

What is a living expert?

Every day, each of us uses the skills and experience we possess to solve challenges. These skills and experiences are part of our “expertise” and the result of our lived experiences, education, and training. While we may each take a different approach to tackle a challenge based on our expertise, problem-solving is a shared human experience, a skill we are all required to use on a daily basis. This project invited participants to bring their expertise, as a living expert, to explore and suggest ideas that respond to the regional challenge.

Selecting the Manitoba Regional Challenge

We started with the broad research question of “How might we identify practical solutions that help workers across Canada gain the foundational skills and abilities identified by the [Forecast of Canadian Occupational Growth](#) (FCOG) critical for the future of work?” We worked with Tech Manitoba, along with a number of labour market experts, consultants, and other stakeholders in Manitoba to identify a promising focus area based on the regional labour market in the province.

Thirty-four percent of Manitoba’s workers are in occupations that are projected to change by 2030. The FCOG identified that young workers are half as likely to be in an occupation projected to grow as other age groups. According to Manitoba’s Ministry of Growth, Enterprise and Trade (now Economic Development and Jobs)¹, 56 percent of the forecast’s job openings are expected to require some post-secondary education and training (e.g., college, university, trade certification).

¹ Government of Manitoba. Manitoba Labour Market Outlook 2021-2025. https://www.gov.mb.ca/jec/lmi/pdfs/mb_labour_market_outlook_2021_25.pdf



[The Labour Market Information Council \(LMIC\)](#) conducted a research study² to learn more about how to support students in making informed career decisions and successful transitions. As part of this project, the LMIC found that students realize the world of work is changing rapidly and acknowledge that many careers may not be linear. Despite recognizing the importance of skills, the students felt somewhat lost in terms of how to turn their understanding of skills into action.

According to the government of Manitoba³, the province is a developed, diverse, and dynamic economy with stable economic growth and one of the nation's lowest unemployment rates. Key components of the economy include manufacturing, financial services, agriculture, hydroelectricity, and natural resources.

Regional challenge question: How might we help high school students to better prepare for the future workforce, and in particular for navigating non-linear career paths, through improved career guidance and development of foundational skills and abilities?

2. LMIC. "In Conversation with students: What about skills?" LMI Insights Report no.26, (February 2020). <https://lmic-cimt.ca/publications-all/lmi-insights-report-no-26-in-conversation-with-students-what-about-skills/>

3. Government of Manitoba. "Manitoba's Strategic Advantages: Business Development" <https://www.gov.mb.ca/jec/mbadvantage/businessdev.html>

Understanding the Challenge

Working in collaboration with Tech Manitoba, the Brookfield Institute facilitated a two-part workshop series with 12 participants in Manitoba on May 28 and June 3, 2021. The workshops engaged participants with lived experience of working with high school students, in addition to youth mentors, educators, teachers, career counsellors, and industry professionals.

Manitoba already has a number of programs to support high school students with career development and planning, such as:

[Career Trek](#) provides career-oriented programming and hands-on learning activities.

[YES \(Youth Employment Services\)](#) provides youth with employment services, skills development programs, and volunteer opportunities.

[Manitoba Career Prospects](#) helps students, parents, and educators explore the many rewarding and enriching career opportunities available in a multitude of industries in Manitoba.

[The Seven Oaks School Division's Met Schools](#) provide work and real-world learning opportunities and internships. They provide opportunities for students to explore their interests and career goals directly with mentors in the real world.



Career Internship Program (at LRSD) gives students the opportunity to build transferable soft skills, network with professionals in a variety of fields, and develop focus and confidence for successful post high school transitions.

Louis Riel Arts & Technology Centre (also delivered by LRSD) helps students begin or complete their post-secondary education while in high school. They facilitate the development of meaningful connections and transitions to employment.

High School Apprenticeship Program is an extension and enhancement of regular apprenticeship training that is administered by the Apprenticeship branch of Manitoba Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade.

Pembina Trails Early College (PTEC) is a school with accelerated programming in the highly technical streams of software development, cyber defense and networking.

Sisler Network and Cyber Security Academy (at the Winnipeg School Division) delivers an enriched technology education experience that aims to develop both technology skills and relevant soft skills employers require to be competitive in the digital economy.

Interactive Digital Media Initiative (also delivered by Winnipeg School Division) provides students with the opportunity to learn the knowledge, skills and

attitudes required to develop and produce interactive digital media projects, such as apps, games, websites, virtual worlds, and cross-platform media.

Technical Vocational Programming (TVE) (at Manitoba Education and Training) provides students with the skills and competencies that will allow them to transition successfully into the workplace, apprenticeship opportunities, post-secondary education, and their daily lives.

Manitoba Institute of Trades & Technology (MITT) High School provides students with an opportunity to head start developing knowledge and skills for entry into high-demand trade or technical careers.

Osborne Village Resource Centre provides one-on-one job search services, workshops, career counselling, computer training, and access to technology. They support a wide range of groups including youth to seniors.

Reaching E-quality Employment Services (REES) promotes, facilitates, and maintains the employment of people with physical disabilities and/or health conditions by providing diverse and customized employment, training, and consultation services.



Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development provides education and training, employment services, and support programs, such as counselling, daycare, and housing.

Manitoba Metis Federation Metis Youth (MMF) optimizes its resources to ensure Metis youth have new opportunities. The programs and services offered are designed to support Metis youth through professional development and planning for their futures.

Elmwood Community Resource Centre (ECRC) provides programs for youth such as Reach Out and the HEEY program. Supporting youth to maximize their potential is one of the mandates and initiatives that is embedded in ECRC's mission and vision.

Working with Tech Manitoba, the Brookfield Institute interviewed four high school students to understand their experiences. We shared edited summaries of these interviews, in the form of short videos, with all workshop participants in order to ground our understanding of the challenge with the perspectives of living experts. Based on the interviews, a number of key insights emerged:

- + The importance of having mentors close to their age that were able to help them navigate their future careers.
- + The best way to develop new skills was through hands-on opportunities such as internships, workshops, and activities.
- + Social media plays a huge role with our youth generation. Whether it's through TikTok, YouTube, Instagram and other social media platforms, our youth are consuming the majority of their information about jobs and skills via these platforms.
- + The students had conflicting views about school and the way they learn within the traditional education system. Some felt that school was not the best place to learn new skills due to the lack of personalized feedback and support. However, some expressed that when speakers or informa-



tion come from schools, it seems like a reliable and trustworthy source of information.

- + Some students had family and friends as support systems to teach them about future jobs and skills but some students did not.
- + Students are exposed to different types of information daily but still did not feel prepared for the future of work.

A focus on justice, equity, diversity and inclusion (JEDI): working closely with our partners at RADIUS SFU, we incorporated a JEDI approach to our workshop design. This included setting a series of community commitments and expectations at the beginning of the workshop to ensure each participant understood and was committed to creating an environment of respect. This was particularly important given that our process intentionally engaged a diversity of participants, including “users” with lived experience related to the challenge area. This also resulted in an overall shift in the language we used, avoiding suggestions that the challenges these workshops sought to address would be “solved” and that a “solution” was not necessarily the workshop goal or a required contribution of participants.

Despite the success of these programs, participants felt that gaps remained in the support available for high school students. To better understand these gaps, participants explored the challenge statement in further detail by discussing the specific experience of high school students, based on their individual lived experience. The following section outlines what participants identified as being the current experience, main challenges, as well as what is currently working well.

What high school students hear:

- + That they need traditional education, sometimes more than one credential
- + Large financial and time investment must be made for a “useful” level of education
- + The future is in tech
- + There are no jobs so they have to go to school forever
- + “What do you want to study in university?”
- + If they go to post-secondary, they are guaranteed to earn a lot of money
- + Trades are for the less intelligent

What high school students think + feel:

- + School does not always prepare students for the “real” world. The current education system doesn’t teach applicable life skills (i.e., mortgage and taxes)
- + Very entrepreneurial minded



- + Distrust in traditional education system
- + They don't want to take their classes online
- + Confused with either a lack of or too many options
- + Anxious about the future

What high school students see:

- + Non-traditional career options on social media and social media influencers
- + Media glamorizing wealth
- + Lots of inaccurate information
- + Industry complaining about their readiness skills
- + Lack of school support/program for students that are not excelling
- + In some cases, information overload or lack of information
- + Pandemic struggles and that the economy is difficult

What high school students say + do:

- + They did not want to be “just an employee,” but may not know how tough it is to be an entrepreneur, or that you often need to be an employee first before you can be a manager or business owner
- + Self-guided career exploration
- + “How can I talk to people when everything is closed?”
- + “Not sure how to find a job doing something I like”
- + Find volunteer opportunities that align with

interest

- + Compare themselves with friends/siblings
- + Attend webinars to help them figure out their interests and possibilities

- + “My parents want me to get a degree even though I would like to study something else”
- + “I will go to university because that's where all my friends are”

Overall, what high school students say is working well:

- + Eagerness to learn
- + Social media showing students a real-world view of work or career that is not seen otherwise
- + There are many devoted teachers who would love to support students
- + Free webinars and training
- + Students who have received direction or programming will do research/exploration
- + More experiential learning opportunities than ever before



What high school students say is most frustrating:

- + Not knowing what career options exist
- + Feeling pressure to continue down traditional paths
- + Not sure that the traditional “career counsellor” and their parents are even aware of what great, non-traditional jobs are available
- + Teachers who don’t offer advice on how to apply learning



Solution Criteria

Building on our understanding of the challenge, we asked workshop participants to develop a list of solution “must haves” to use as inspiration for identifying new ideas and solutions. Based on the discussions held in the various groups, here is the list of solution criteria.

In order to be successful, any solution must:

- + Be student-focused and compelling, with the use of social media
- + Be a priority for educators
- + Be supportive and holistic, career planning/values based
- + Be sustainable and long-lasting
- + Integrate and consider mental health
- + Shine a light on non-traditional careers
- + Provide mentorship
- + Create out-of-the-box, experiential, unique, and authentic solutions
- + Work with teachers and industry stakeholders to ensure current, accurate, and accessible information
- + Show different capabilities of entering a career despite perceived barriers (gender, age, race)



Initial Solution Ideas

Using these criteria and their knowledge of the challenge, participants identified the following ideas as possible solutions to support high school students better prepare for the future workforce:

1. A global learner support app that offers overall wellness supports, but specifically offers connection to a career or life skills mentor to provide one-on-one relationships to help develop students based on their needs
2. A grade 6-12 career exploration and internship program to help better prepare high school students for future careers and internship opportunities
3. An app that functions as an aggregator to provide connections to integrated and secure labour-market information, career cruising platforms, community / industry mentors, and educational partners

Other ideas discussed include:

- + An information + wellness app that supports students “24/7 live” and provides wellness strategies and readily up-to-date information regarding career pathways and LMI
- + Networking / career retreats and summer camps that will be online or local which will give students

- the opportunity to develop social connections
- + Social media campaign that highlights different careers and job paths in Manitoba, potentially through TikTok
- + A ubiquitous career online-management program to build equity for all students and give access

Developing and Refining Solutions

To further develop these ideas, participants developed a series of prototypes. Each group created a storyboard outlining how the solution would be used, allowing groups to clarify their ideas and identify areas for improvements. From there, groups explored further prototyping options including app designs and program outlines. Based on this exercise, participants clarified their solution, and identified possible implementation considerations. The following summarizes their comments.

Solution 1: A global learner support app

The group working on this idea proposed an app that offers overall wellness widgets, but specifically offers connection to a career or life skills mentor to provide a one-on-one relationship that would help develop students based on their needs. They wanted the app to provide access to a mentorship program, mental health resources, career / job board, skills development (i.e., resiliency, life skills, meditation, and mindfulness), webinars, and workshops.



The group highlighted the importance of mentors who are able to provide personalized and relevant guidance to high school students. Matching the aptitudes, passions, and interests of both learners and mentors would be a benefit to using this proposed platform. The group also wanted to make sure that the mentors would have familiarity with non-linear career paths, especially in the gig economy. Mentors would need to be available to support students throughout high school and the beginning of their post-secondary education to ensure continuous support. There would be live support offered, with additional resources when live support wasn't available. It is important that this app is developed, tested, and driven by youth.

Solution 2: A grade 6-12 career exploration and internship program

The group working on this idea wanted a solution to help better prepare high school students for future careers and internship opportunities. This program would give students exposure to different post-graduation options, learning, courses, networking opportunities, and ultimately, skills development and growth. During this program, there would be multiple touch-points throughout their high school journey. The group believed that exposing students to multiple different career paths early on would help break down those perceived barriers that may limit high school students from pursuing different types of career paths.

The group outlined a detailed program proposal that included:

- + **Grade 6:** This program starts with introducing grade six students to different types of careers and skilled trades. This can be done through take-your-kids-to-work days, virtual tours, and campus tours.
- + **Grades 8 / 9:** Students will need to complete the Young Worker Readiness Certificate Course.
- + **Grades 9 / 10:** Students will need to take one life / work course for self-reflection that exposes them to different possible careers. This program would include support and integration of other existing resources such as career development exploration (e.g., tools by EdTech provider myBlueprint), guest speakers (in-person and virtual), and internships with industry based on student interests.
- + **Grades 11 / 12:** By the time the students reach their senior years in high school, students will have been exposed to different career options and developed important professional and life skills that they will be able to apply to future opportunities. This program will help students explore different options after graduation, such as college, trades, apprenticeships, university, micro-credentials, and direct-entry careers with on-the-job learning and growth.



Solution 3: Aggregator and personal assessment app

The group working on this idea proposed an aggregator app that provides connections to integrated and secure labour market information, career-cruising platforms, community / industry mentors, and educational partners. This interactive app will provide personal assessments to develop a student's profile, skills, and interests. Based on their personality quizzes and assessment, high school students would be matched with potential career pathways. These matches would contain detailed action plans and information to help build student career pathways.

The group wanted to highlight the realities of the job and provide a real window into the career through resource integrations with social media apps such as TikTok. With the onslaught of information that youth is exposed to, short clips can potentially be most impactful in getting their attention.

The group emphasized the importance of building relationships with partners in the community, industry, and the school systems. The app would also need to seek support from the federal government to ensure consistent and accessible labour market information is provided within the app.



Next Steps

Each solution would require partners and funding. The groups identified various potential partners such as community organizations, industry partners, high schools, and different levels of government. Tech Manitoba expressed the most interest in exploring the idea of the career exploration program (Solution #2) due to its close alignment of their current work with Pembina Trails Early College (PTEC). Further funding, partnership, resources, and volunteers are required to pilot each of these ideas, as well as a landscape analysis to understand existing tools that could be improved to incorporate functionality needed to support high school students.



About the Regional Partner

Tech Manitoba is the province's primary technology industry association. Everything Tech Manitoba does is driven by the belief that the Manitoba tech community is stronger, smarter, and more innovative when we work together. Tech Manitoba empowers its members to thrive and grow by connecting people to facilitate collaboration, education, and promotion. By building connections at the local, national, and international levels, Tech Manitoba stimulates economic growth in Manitoba and serves as the unified voice of Manitoba's tech sector.

Quick Links:

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[Ground Control to LMI](#)

[British Columbia Regional Summary](#)

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20 Dundas St. W, Suite 921, Toronto, ON M5G 2C2

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