

# EMPLOYMENT & MENTORSHIP

## An Overview from the CIF Impact Report

### COMMUNITIES BUILDING YOUTH FUTURES (CBYF)

Tamarack Institute's Communities Building Youth Futures (CBYF) is a five-year initiative funded by the Government of Canada's Supports for Student Learning Program\* that operates in 20 rural, remote, and/or Indigenous communities across the country. The goal of CBYF is to develop community-wide strategies to support youth (aged 15 – 30) to graduate high school and successfully transition to post-secondary, training or employment. Each CBYF community receives core funding and capacity building support from Tamarack to develop and implement their local action plan.

### COMMUNITY INNOVATION FUND (CIF)

CBYF communities are eligible to apply annually for one-year Community Innovation Fund (CIF) grants. These grants enable local CBYF initiatives to achieve “quick wins” on pressing issues while balancing the deep work of addressing the priorities of their community's youth. After the first year of implementing CBYF in communities, six domains emerged to address barriers to academic and employment success faced by youth. The six themes have been structured into six overviews, focusing specifically on the impacts of 40 CIF grants distributed between 2020 and 2023. All overviews will be updated to include data from the final year as it becomes available.

### EMPLOYMENT & MENTORSHIP

To succeed in a chosen career, youth need a series of opportunities that incrementally increase their capacity for success. These opportunities not only help young people practice their job skills they also enable youth to grow confidence in their own abilities. This makes them more likely to invest in higher education or training programs in the future. While 12 CIF initiatives addressed challenges and barriers to youth employment, the following projects specifically prioritized job opportunities and employment skill-development for youth.

### COMMUNITY-IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES

- Unclear pathway from high school education to employment.
- Limited options for youth to gain meaningful employment in career paths of their interest.
- Gaps or barriers in free or accessible skill-building opportunities.
- Youth experience structural racism and bias, which affects their employment opportunities.

**While 16 initiatives addressed youth employment success, the projects on the following page focused most specifically on this theme.**

## INITIATIVES ADDRESSING EMPLOYMENT & MENTORSHIP

### Ambition Incubator

*Chatham-Kent, ON*

This intensive project taught youth hands-on employment skills while running a professional kitchen. The initiative also connected youth with mentorship and internship opportunities with local businesses.

### Makerspace YK

*Yellowknife, NT*

This project connects youth with a woodshop, a digital lab, and an arts space to help them develop their small businesses. Youth were paired with mentors and business leaders to help them succeed in their entrepreneurial efforts.

### Portage Innovation Centre

*Portage La Prairie, MB*

The PIC is a makerspace designed to help youth entrepreneurs start new small businesses and connect with local employers and mentors.

### Pépinière d'innovation

*Laval, QC*

This program serves as an innovation incubator, allowing youth the chance to try out different interests and career options.

### Miskwaawaak Carpentry Program

*Sudbury, ON*

Local Indigenous youth had access to a carpentry training program that incorporated traditional cultural teachings and projects with the support of Indigenous elders.

## COMMUNITY IMPACTS OF THE CIF PROJECTS

- 1 Over 800 youth** had the opportunity to build their resumé and gain professional references because of their involvement with CIF initiatives.
- Youth leaders of **nine CIF initiatives** specifically reported that their leadership experience with the project had resulted in either successful applications to further education or jobs in their desired field.
- Youth in at least three communities were able to apply for ID cards that would enable them to work and access other benefits because of CIF leadership support.
- 44 young people** had the opportunity to use laser cutters, 3D printers, woodshops, and other services through the Portage Innovation Centre and Makerspace YK initiatives with 24 youth developing a functioning business over the course of the one-year project.
- 5 All 16 youth participants** of Chatham-Kent's employment bootcamp were successfully employed in jobs related to their interests, with 10 being paid more than minimum wage.
- Community partners of the employment bootcamp reported that they completely reassessed their understandings of youth leadership capacity and independently collaborated on further mentorship programs for local youth.
- Youth leaders of the Pépinière d'innovation initiative engaged over **1,200** majority low-income and 1st or 2nd generation Canadian youth in leadership and training programs.
- 8 100% of participants** in the Miskwaawaak carpentry program (majority Indigenous women) reported that it inspired them to choose carpentry as their profession.

*\*The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.*