

BridgeWorks Fellowship

The Canadian Status Quo

Youth unemployment in Toronto, particularly among low-income, racialized, and immigrant youth, is at all time high as a result of **economic conditions, local support infrastructure** and most importantly **lack of relevant work experience** particularly entering the in office-related roles. This demographic is often overlooked and underserved, which exacerbates existing socio-economic disparities and loss in productivity for the overall Canadian Market

Youth unemployment rate is 2.4 times higher than adult unemployment rate and these issues compounded have resulted in Canada have more than **700,000 or 11% of the 15-29 age demographic**—who are categorized as NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training).

Three key structural challenges contribute to these problems are:

1. Lack of Employment Experiences

- Young workers face significant challenges in securing initial employment due to a lack of prior work experience. Employers often prefer candidates with demonstrated work history, making it difficult for young entrants to break into the job market. This barrier not only prevents them from starting their careers but also from gaining the vital experience needed for future opportunities.

2. Accessible Employment Services Aligned with Market Needs :

- The labor market has seen a rising share of temporary and part-time positions, impacting young workers who are trying to gain a foothold in their careers. This shift, coupled with rapid technological changes, demands adaptability but also creates instability for young Canadians entering the workforce.

We survey over 20 students from the local community and 67% rate lack of relevant work experience as the bigger barrier from getting jobs

Our Possible Impact

Solution

We are building a **3-week experiential learning program** for youth in these underserved to come to gather for community impact.

Fellows are not only trained in essential office related skills but are also directly involved in designing and executing a community event as team, building countless transferable skills in the process.

This approach creates individuals who are not only enhance their employability but also play a role in becoming changemakers for with their own community.

Taking this approaching to solving the unemployment has the opportunity to boost the workforce by some **170k people**, or around **1% of current employment**.

Examples of community projects can include community clean-up, wellness workshops, cultural festival, youth sports event. community picnic, book drive and art and music night

Value to Participants

Join BridgeWorks's network of youth and change-makers taking action across the GTA to learn with and support each other to amplify impact in your careers. +

Mentorship

75% of youth surveyed say they would be better prepared for the workforce after participating in a Future Launch funded program.

- **Access exclusive learning and support resources:** Gain skills through experiential Career-ready and design-thinking training and workshops and be additional for
- **Jumpstart your career:** Build market-ready skills, network with influential partners, local youth throughout your experience, and receive a letter of recommendation

employment support, resume building and more with our partners.

- **Take tangible action within your community:** You'll join a local team of fellows to design, plan and execute an action project that bridges issues facing your community now

after the program along with referrals to other services with our partners.

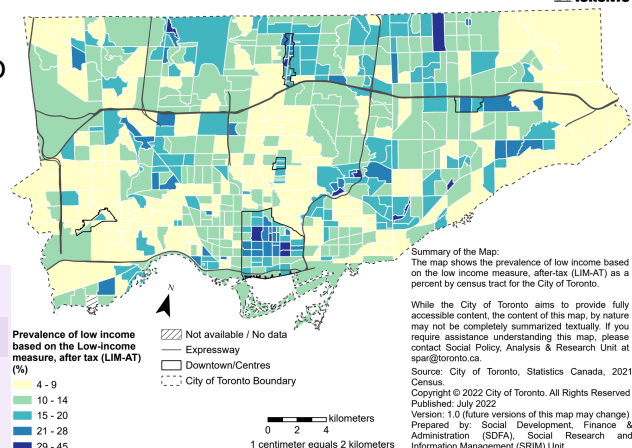
- **Meet and collaborate with professionals in your sector:** Your team will be matched with a partner who will provide ongoing coaching and mentorship throughout the program.

Implementation Plan

This problem is even more exacerbated in Rexdale where the medium household income is **\$39,200**. Therefore we plan to conduct our pilot study with Rexdale students as our ideal customer profile (ICP).

We've already validated this program with local student and have more than already got more than 20 student in enrolling in cohort 1

Map 6: City of Toronto Prevalence of Low Income (LIM-AT), 2020



Week 1: Concept Finalization and Partner Outreach

- Finalize the program concept and scope.

Week 2: Partnership Development and Mentor Engagement

- Discuss with local partners for spaces and resources.

Week 3: Participant Recruitment

- Develop and implement recruitment process including digital ads, outreach and

Week 4: Curriculum Development and Logistics

- Finalize the curriculum including workshops, event planning frameworks, and

- Initiate outreach to potential local partners for spaces and resources.
- Begin recruitment of professionals for the mentorship program.
- student schedules.

Week 5: Pilot Program Launch

- Kick off the program with set of workshops and mentorship sessions from design thinking to event planning
- Bring partners, mentors, and speakers from various background for additional workshops. ex spark org: using ai for interview training

Week 6: Program Implementation and Monitoring

- Conduct the planned curriculum, focusing on active learning and participation.
- Regularly gather feedback from participants and mentors to iterate fast and increase program effectiveness

Week 7: Event Execution and Participant Support

- Assist participants in applying their skills through the planning and execution of the community event.
- Hold a debriefing session to discuss successes, challenges, and learnings.

Week 8: Program Wrap-up and Evaluation

- Conduct final assessments and collect feedback from all stakeholders
- Connect participants with partner programs, honorarium and provide letters of recommendation for participants.

Partnerships

Over the past 2 weeks we've been reaching out towards possible community partners to help bring this program to life. We've already seen interest from several organizations to help sponsor and give additional resources to our student

Local Businesses and Organizations

Partner with community organizations such as libraries (e.g., Toronto Public Library at Rexdale) and community hubs ("thehub") to provide physical spaces for hosting events and workshops.

Corporate Sponsors and Local Enterprises:

Engage businesses in sectors relevant to office-related employment who can provide mentorship, curriculum guidance, and potentially offer future employment opportunities to participants.

Professional Mentors

Recruit professionals from various sectors who are willing to guide, educate, and inspire the fellows through mentorship. Especially those who started with office related jobs.

Employment Service Providers

Partner with organizations that can provide further post-program support to fellows, such as advanced training, resume building, and job placement services ex. YRA, YMCA, YCI, First Employment, Access and Spark Org.