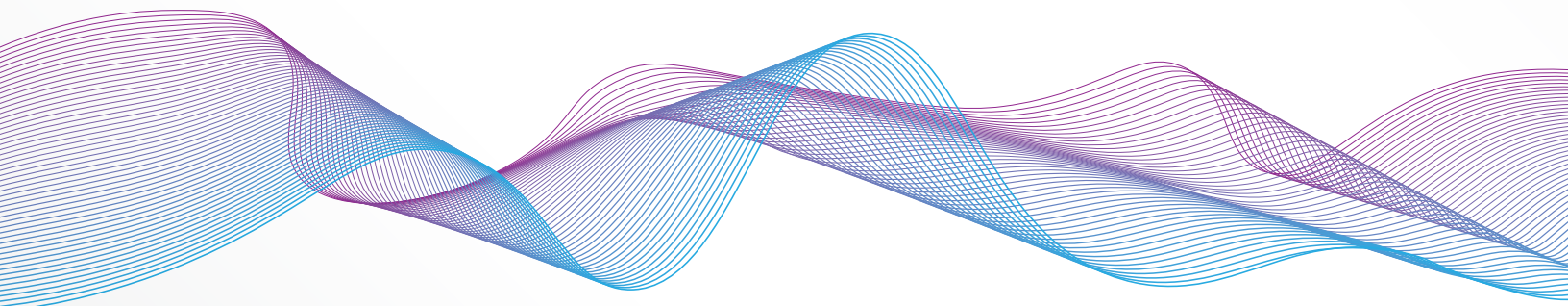


BUILDING A
PAN-CANADIAN
SOFT SKILLS
FRAMEWORK



Futureworx

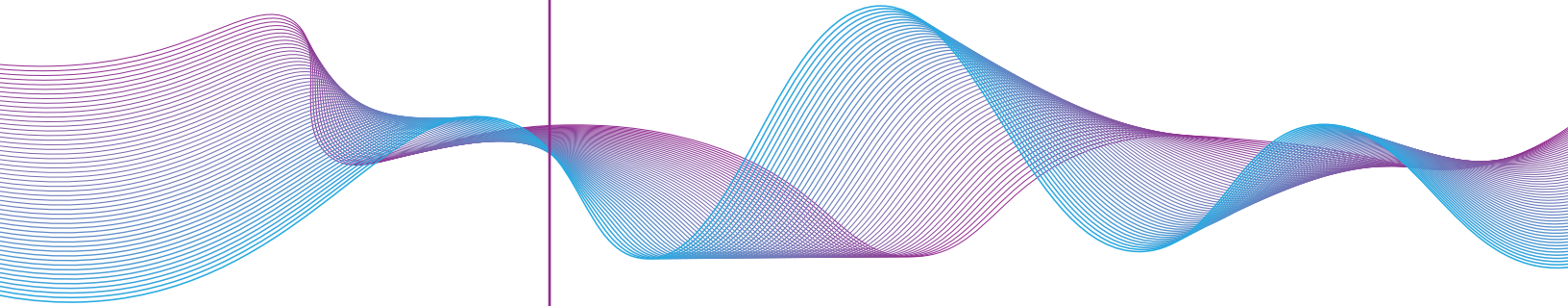
Funded by the Government of Canada's Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program.

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This project was funded to explore the need for, and how best to create, a pan-Canadian soft skills framework to support the development of a productive, adaptable, globally competitive workforce capable of meeting the rapidly changing needs of work and the workplace.

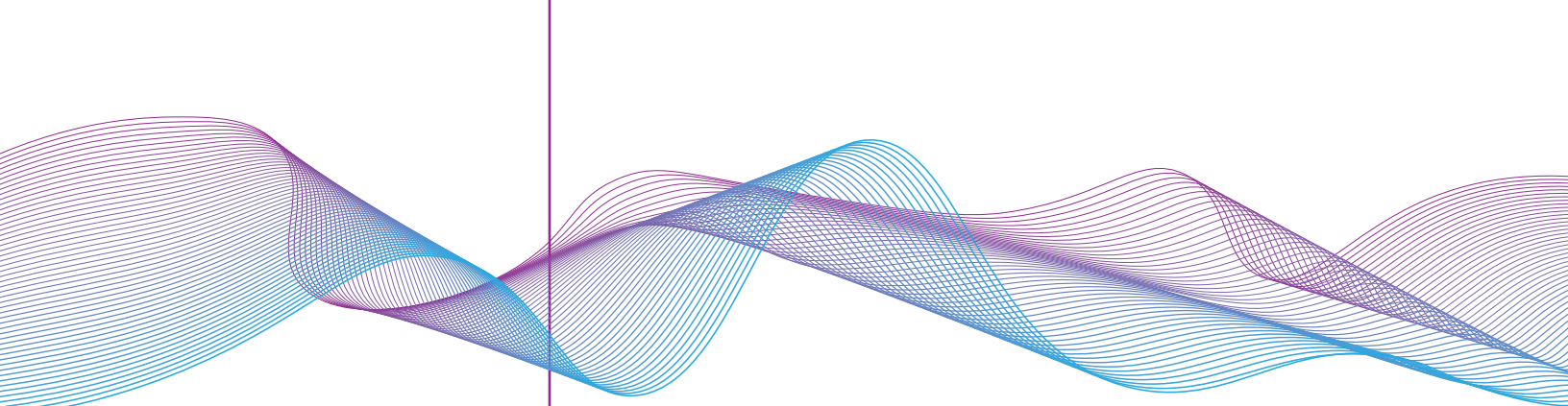
The project involved conducting a literature review of current work on soft skills in Canada and consulting stakeholders using a national survey. A group was then selected to represent those stakeholders at a national symposium in Toronto at which they were engaged in discussions to explore the subject.

From this group work, it was concluded that a pan-Canadian framework of behavioural skills is required. The group also concluded that the existing Essential Skills framework, managed by the Office of Literacy and Essential skills, (OLES), could be expanded to meet this requirement. They suggested structural changes to make this happen, including the introduction of the term behavioural skills to account for the soft skills category. They also suggested that any framework needs to be highly adaptable and expandable if it is to remain relevant in the face of technological change, and that this framework should be developed to focus on the practical needs of Canadian workers, employers and frontline service providers. This implies that the framework and associated tools should be focussed on what is good as opposed to what is best. It should also be able to include multiple skills within a carefully managed structure and a set of procedures that allow users to populate the framework based on their needs. The report concludes that a virtual skill and resource library should be created to achieve this and that such a framework could be built within two years.

The results of the project also acknowledged that some debate still exists regarding the ability of educators and trainers to develop and assess behavioural skills. While experience amongst front line service providers demonstrates that behavioural skills can be effectively developed, and tools exist for effective assessment purposes, research is lacking to back up many of these claims. The project concludes that the creation and promotion of a pan-Canadian framework that includes behavioural skills would spur research and development in this area both at the front-line and within research and academic circles.

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INTRODUCTION

The job market in Canada is changing rapidly, often requiring workers to change jobs and take on new tasks over the course of their working lives. The Government of Canada's Future Skills Centre, launched only a few months ago, acknowledged this reality with a quote from the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, the Honourable Patty Hajdu, who said, "Work is changing, and so are the skills Canadians will need to succeed in the future" (Employment and Skills Development Canada, 2018). These workplace transitions necessitate the development of a different skill set on the part of employees, in addition to their technical or "hard" skills, to maintain employment (Overtoom, 2000). Learning to learn, flexibility, and adaptability have been highlighted as examples of soft skills that are crucial in workers because these skills serve as a foundation for their responses to frequently changing skill demands. Increasingly, employees are being asked to master various soft skills in addition to the technical skills of their job (Dixon, Belnap, Albrecht & Lee, 2010).

The regular shifts in the job market referred to here leave certain demographics (older workers, workers with disabilities, Indigenous workers, and low skilled workers) at even more of a disadvantage and often puts them at risk for underemployment and unemployment. Workers who don't possess the foundational skills noted above are less likely to keep up with the ever-changing demands of the workplace. Workers who do not have the required skills or work experience, such as new graduates from secondary or post-secondary institutions, are less likely to be hired. As one study noted (Business Council of Canada, 2016), most recent graduates have adequate skillsets for hiring but as the workforce changes, applicants will have to remain flexible to stay relevant in regard to their positions.

Types of employment are also changing, often leaving workers less able to acquire new skills on the job. Job positions are more likely to take the form of contract, temporary, and part time work. This lack of stability and high turnover in the employee pool results in employers being reticent to invest in workers (Sutton, 2002), as employees often leave before their training benefits the workplace or their absence while training requires that additional staff be used to temporarily fill their position. This is especially true for small to medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Though there is a financial cost to companies for maintaining unskilled or under-skilled precarious workers, including a lack of overall productivity and efficiency, the frequency of employers providing workers with skills training is quite low unless those workplaces are large, leading enterprises. With this said, employers frequently acknowledge the

importance of soft skills as equal to or greater than hard or technical skills and prefer to hire workers who already possess these skills (Rego, 2017).

As the number of technical jobs and automation in the workplace increases, routine tasks in many jobs, and low skilled and general labour jobs, will be eliminated. Employees, in particular older, indigenous, and disabled workers who may not have the skills to thrive in new roles, risk unemployment. The Conference Board of Canada reported that skills gaps in the BC economy cost the province up to \$4.7 billion as of 2014 (Stuckey & Munro, 2014). The employers they talked to noted that there are skill weaknesses in recent graduates entering the workforce, particularly in terms of critical thinking skills and problem solving, oral communication skills, literacy skills, and skills in working with others. They believe that these critical skill deficiencies impact workers' abilities to create a foundation for learning all other skills (learning to learn), which they believe is necessary for workers to evolve with their jobs and workplaces. These are also required for career advancement and for securing future positions, thereby impacting a worker's long-term employability.

Employment paths for Canada's youth have drastically changed over the decades from a single, stable career to ever-changing roles and tasks spread across multiple employments. Youth tend to spend a maximum of two years in a position before moving on to something new, due in part to current employment opportunities taking the form of contract, temporary, and part-time work (Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2014). These precarious work opportunities tend to be low paid as well as low skilled, with 11.6% of Canadians under 30 working such non-permanent jobs as of 2011 (Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2014).

We know that Canadians need good soft skills if they are to succeed and be resilient in the workplace and that people

may struggle to connect with work, or excel at work, because they do not meet employer soft skills expectations. We also know that employers across the country increasingly express concerns about their ability to hire people with good soft skills. This skill gap represents a significant challenge because employers are often unable or unwilling to address soft skill deficits themselves and, at the same time, there is no nationally agreed upon soft skills framework to encourage the development of best practices amongst trainers/educators. Methods for assessing and developing soft skills with intent are rare, not widely known or used, and lack resources for development and testing. This situation needs to be addressed in light of the changing workplace to ensure that Canada has an engaged and prepared workforce for the future. Addressing this issue, however, represents a significant challenge not just for individual employees, but also for the organizations and institutions charged with preparing Canadians (schools, colleges, literacy groups etc.), aiding Canadians (career and employment services etc.), and employing Canadians in the new economy.

With this in mind, Futureworx, a non-profit, community-based organization in Truro, Nova Scotia, has initiated a nation-wide effort, with funding from the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES), aimed at establishing a national consensus on soft skills that could add to the existing essential skills framework so that organizations across Canada can share best practices, develop tools and programming materials, and learn from each other about how to best develop these skills. This effort has resulted in a project to investigate how such a pan-Canadian framework might be built. This report provides an overview of how this project unfolded and makes recommendations for a way Canada might meet the challenge of our changing work environment.

PROJECT GOALS

The goals of the project were to:

- Recommend whether a pan-Canadian soft skills framework is required.
- Recommend the purpose of such a framework.
- Recommend how such a framework should tie into the existing essential skills framework.
- Provide input regarding the LMI Taxonomy with respect to soft skills.
- Recommend language to be used for defining soft skills in subsequent work on the framework.
- Recommend a starting set of soft skills.
- Confirm the appropriateness of the Collective Impact process to define a framework or recommend an alternative approach.
- Identify objectives, activities, timeline, costs and roles for the development of a pan-Canadian soft skills framework.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Literature Review

Dr. Jeff Landine of the University of New Brunswick was contracted to complete a review and bibliography of soft skills literature and initiatives in Canada over the past 10 years. His report, and the associated annotated bibliography, are attached in Annex A. The report demonstrates that while some work is being done in this field, more effort is needed to resolve important questions.

Key points in the report are:

- a. There is no universally, or even Canadian, agreed upon definition of soft skills, nor is there current consensus as to which skills qualify as 'soft.' Different names are applied to the concept of soft skills, and different labels are used as alternatives to skills, including competencies, behaviours, attitudes, abilities, attributes and qualities to name a few. These are seen, however, as key factors to people being able to 'navigate their environment, work well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals' (Lippman, Ryberg, Carney & Moore, 2015, p.4). The authors of this report are concerned that debate about terminology may delay the development of practical tools and methods to assist Canadians who struggle in these key areas.

The authors of this report also note that much of the

language used to discuss soft skills carries with it a stigma associated with class, education level, social status etc. (Bridgstock, 2009 and Hyslop-Margison and Graham, 2001). Soft skills deficits are often seen as being mostly attributed to people in low paying, service-oriented work, when in fact they exist in all workplaces, at all levels. While it is true that the language selected to refer to these skills needs to avoid negative connotations, those connotations will tend to follow whatever terms are used if we do not treat the skills themselves as important and as part of the skill set that we all seek to develop at school and throughout our lives.

- b. Reports indicate that soft skill training is less likely to transfer well to the job compared to hard skill training (Laker & Powell, 2011), suggesting that embedding the training of soft skills into hard skill courses may be more effective (Schulz, 2008). Such embedding suggests the need to develop a means of assessing soft skills that is equivalent in scope to those used to assess hard skills. Examples of integrated training do exist and have good anecdotal success rates that should be examined more closely in the literature.
- c. Some papers including Grugulis and Vincent (2009) and Hyslop-Margison (1999) express concern about combining soft and hard skills based on ethical considerations related to whether the availability of satisfactory work is a responsibility of the worker or the workplace. Concerns are expressed about an emphasis on soft skills being used to legitimize discrimination based on stereotyped attributes, attitudes and individual qualities. Such concerns should be balanced against the practical need to help people facing soft skill related barriers to work with the self-awareness and tools they need to handle the real demands of the workplace, while not losing sight of the long terms goals to create fair and equitable workplaces.
- d. An increasing number of studies are attempting to define the skills required by workers to thrive in the workplace of the future. The LMI taxonomy lists dozens of soft skills referred to by other agencies. The literature review also identified numerous soft skills with a focus found on the following:
 - Stress management
 - Financial management
 - Personal management
 - Conflict management
 - Time management
 - Communication (oral, written, interpersonal)

- Problem solving and thinking skills
- Leadership
- Learning
- Teamwork
- Flexibility/Adaptability
- Relationship/interpersonal skills
- Organization
- Speaking
- Creativity

The authors note that, keeping in mind the practical need to provide individuals with training and supports, having an excessive number of soft skill targets adds complexity and confusion for both trainers and learners. Identifying a core set of soft skills, and a common means for defining skills that must be added for specific sectors/jobs, is therefore a key goal of this project.

- e. There remain ongoing questions in the literature about the ability to teach soft skills (Rego, 2017) despite extensive anecdotal examples of success in the training community. Reports highlight the failure of the educational system to help students understand the relevance of their learning to employment and to develop the skills that employers require (Butterwick & Benjamin, 2006; Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2014). Reports also have recommended the creation of a national framework for career and skills development best practices and the creation of organizations to focus on assessment, school-to-work transitions and stakeholder liaison. The review did not identify any progress towards those goals.
- f. Assessment of soft skills outside the workplace is primarily a process of self-assessment or subjective checklists. Several assessment tools that go further are listed in the report, but generally it is noted that the research to support soft skill assessment is lagging behind the need (Gibb, 2014). The authors of this report want to stress that the importance of soft skills to worker success is significant enough to warrant the promotion of these skills despite the shortage of validated assessment methods, and that stressing the need for these skills should increase the effort placed on validating existing methods and developing new ones.

The authors stress that the question as to whether soft skills can be assessed in meaningful, validated ways is unresolved, and program development tends to focus in areas that are thought to be more measurable. Though assessment tools and methods do exist (see Survey report pg. 28/29), doubts regarding soft skills

development create a catch-22 situation in which research is delayed because of a shortage of formally validated assessment methods, and assessment method development is delayed due to a lack of research. Determining/confirming meaningful ways to assess the effectiveness of soft skill development is considered by the authors of this report to be a major need. Canadians who are currently struggling to get and keep work may find it increasingly difficult as the skill demands shift into areas where supports and assessment methodologies are lacking. The reader's attention is drawn to 'Soft skills assessment – theory development and the research agenda' (Gibb, 2014).

- g. The inclusion of underrepresented groups in the discussion regarding soft skill assessment and development is important to ensure that all Canadians can benefit from the changing workplace. Canadians currently struggling in the present workplace are unlikely to find the evolving workplace, with its emphasis on soft skills, any more manageable.

National Survey

Constellation Consulting of Calgary, Alberta was contracted to work with the authors to develop and manage a survey of soft skill stakeholders across Canada, including trainers, career practitioners, employers, government departments, researchers/consultants, educators etc. A goal of the study was to get feedback from all parts of Canada, as well as responses from a full range of demographic and typically under-represented groups. The survey report is attached Annex B.

The survey was forwarded to an initial list of 250 organizations that were asked to complete it and forward the survey link to other organizations that they felt might also have an interest in the topic. A total of 235 replies were received from 181 different organizations. Replies were obtained from every province and territory, though those from the northern regions and Quebec were few (in part because project funding did not allow for translation, an issue that should be addressed with subsequent work).

Most replies were from providers of literacy programming (42%), trainers (27%), job search service providers (24%), government agencies (15%) and educators (15%). A variety of other types of organizations responded, but only 4% were from employers, making this an area that will require attention in future efforts.

While most of the respondents reported providing service to under-represented groups in their region, very few responses

were received from organizations specifically supporting those groups despite being invited to participate. This is an area that will require greater attention in future work.

Key messages taken from the survey results include:

- a. The terms used most commonly to refer to soft skills were employability (78%), essential (74%), soft (72%) and life (60%).
- b. The word 'skills' was much more commonly used than behaviours, attributes or competencies.
- c. Some reservation about the term soft skills was expressed in the survey, which echoes concerns the authors of this report have heard in the community, mostly because the term is seen to make these skills seem easier or less critical than 'hard' skills.
- d. The average rating of importance for soft skills in maximizing a person's potential in society was 9/10, with 10 being very important. Almost all the respondents expected the importance of soft skills to increase (60%) or stay the same (39%).
- e. The top ten soft skills most commonly listed by respondents were:
 - Communication (78%)
 - Teamwork (56%)
 - Problem solving/Thinking skills (41%)
 - Time management (41%)
 - Attitude (31%)
 - Adaptability/flexibility (30%)
 - Motivation (26%)
 - Accountability (22%)
 - Work ethic (11%)
 - Emotional regulation/Personal management (10%)
- f. 80% of respondents felt that clients seeking work or participating in their programs struggle with soft skills. 42% felt that their employees struggle with soft skills.
- g. The majority of respondents stated that they provide considerable effort training clients on soft skills (40%) with most supplying soft skills supports or training on a short-term basis (54%) or via coaching/counselling (46%) and/or workshops (37%). Long-term supports were applied by 7% of respondents.
- h. Respondents identified a lack of tools/resources, insufficient funds for soft skills related work, a lack of time and a lack of knowledge as the principal challenges that limit their effectiveness regarding soft skill development (each in the range of 50-60% of respondents).
- i. 86% of respondents felt a pan-Canadian framework on soft skills would be beneficial in some way, while 10% were unsure and 4% felt it would not be of benefit. The majority (61%) felt that the existing essential skills framework could be adapted to more explicitly recognize and support soft skills, while 6% expressed their satisfaction with the existing framework as it is. 24% thought a different soft skills framework was required.
- j. 67% of respondents felt a consensus approach was appropriate to develop a pan-Canadian framework, however concerns were expressed about the number of stakeholders and the time required for such an approach. A more rapid method of development was seen by some as being necessary to respond quickly to the changing workplace.

Panel Discussions August 8-10, Toronto

The bulk of the recommendations in this report flow from a gathering of stakeholders that took place in Toronto, over August 8-10, 2018. This gathering and the three days of discussion were facilitated by the Tamarack Institute, which was selected for its expertise in implementing the Collect Impact process.¹

Participant Selection

Project funding obtained from OLES allowed for 20 representatives to attend the gathering. The authors used the survey responses and existing contacts to identify the group of stakeholders that would be invited to participate. The participants were strategically selected to ensure representation from all regions of Canada and all stakeholder groups. Nearly 80 survey respondents indicated a desire to be involved in the gathering. The final list of attendees is included in the Panel Report, Annex C.

The project was pleased to have a strong First Nations presence at the gathering but was less successful in securing representation from other under-represented groups, in part because of a lack of response to the survey by groups dedicated to specific ethnic or cultural groups. More effort will be needed to include representation from under-represented groups in future work.

Activities

A reading pack consisting of the survey and literature review reports and a Collective Impact Review was forwarded to participants four weeks before the gathering. Participants were also provided with a summary of the Labour Market Information Skills Taxonomy.

The gathering comprised three day of meetings, with the first day focussing on reviewing the survey and literature review and ensuring participants understood the Collective Impact process. Day two consisted primarily of discussions around the nature and need of a pan-Canadian framework, while day three addressed planning goals for the framework.

A detailed agenda for the session can be found in the report, Annex C.

Representatives showed a remarkable degree of agreement

both with respect to the need for action regarding soft skills and the steps needed to have a positive impact. A number of key points arose during the three days that were further refined in subsequent document reviews. The results of these discussions are discussed in the following sections.

Do we need a pan-Canadian framework?

The panel quickly came to agreement on the importance of soft skills to the success of individuals in the workplace and in their communities, and to the development of a productive, adaptable and competitive workforce in general. All also agreed that there is a lack of national consensus for soft skill development in terms of an agreed upon language, research, and means to develop and share good practices. A national framework and database for soft skills was seen by all panelists as a necessary step towards addressing this shortfall.

What is the vision for the framework?

The group was committed to a vision of a Canadian workforce that is mobile, flexible, globally competitive, and able to meet the changing needs of the workplace. To achieve this, they envisioned a skills framework that supports employers, trainers, educators and workforce developers with information on those skills (including soft skills), and the associated tools and methods required to help Canadians keep up with changing work structures, technology and the changing needs of employment.

Boundaries

The group focussed on how best to ensure that soft skills are included in the effort to build a prepared and competitive workforce. It did not consider how other skills (i.e. technical) should be incorporated in that effort but did consider how best to tie into the existing Essential Skills framework.

The group focussed primarily on optimizing the employment/self-employment potential of Canadians (i.e. they have the skills they and employers need) but recognized that the skills involved play a key role in other forms of success in life. While the group recognized that a lot of work has been and is being done related to skill definition etc., it did not feel restricted by boundaries imposed by existing frameworks, etc. The group's focus on practical recommendations for front-line skill development and employment practices is expected to challenge some of the existing structures and supports already in place.

1 See <https://www.collaborationforimpact.com/collective-impact/>

Audience

The group recognized that there are many stakeholders interested in this work, and that the audience that will be affected is huge. That audience includes:

- Individual Canadians (including youth, seniors, under-represented groups etc.) seeking successful employment;
- Employers seeking skilled employees and developing existing employees;
- Trainers/educators who develop individual skills and resources;
- Career practitioners who help to guide and connect employers and individual job seekers;
- Federal, provincial and territorial governments who provide policy and funding supports;
- Researchers who explore new approaches and validate practice;
- Organizations dedicated to supporting specific demographic, cultural or other under-represented groups; and
- Potential corporate sponsors for skill development programming, R&D (Banks, Foundations, etc.)

This audience must be actively engaged and informed in the process of developing the framework.

Values and Guiding Principles

The group felt strongly that any movement forward on the framework should be completed under a mutually agreed upon set of guiding principles and values. They thought that the initiative and resulting framework and processes should build on existing work and be:

- driven by the needs of those seeking employment/self employment and the needs of employers;
- of practical value as a frontline tool to be applied by individuals seeking work, employers, career developers and trainers/educators;
- easy to understand and use;
- highly adaptable and open to managed changes and additions by its users;
- governed by a body representing both funders and the users of the framework;
- focussed on supporting action versus achieving a perfect solution; and
- able to reflect the special needs of sectors, regions and demographic/cultural groups.

Objectives of a Framework

The group identified the following set of objectives for the framework:

- To support Canadians as they develop the soft skills needed to optimize their participation in the workplace and their community.
- To support the development of a competitive, adaptable workforce through enhanced cooperation between employers, educators/trainers and career developers as they define the soft skills necessary for employment.
- To expand the existing Essential Skills framework so that it more fully recognizes and supports the assessment and development of soft skills required for success in the workplace.
- To enhance the ability of educators/trainers, career developers, employers and employment service providers to assess and develop soft skills.
- To have new tools developed as part of this project that can be integrated smoothly into existing structures and initiatives.

Outcomes

To meet the stated objectives, the group saw the need to create:

- A common, expandable language with which to refer to soft skills.
- A structure for categorizing those skills within the Essential Skills framework.
- A process for managing and adding to skills in the framework so that a virtual library of skills is gradually created in response to user needs.
- A template to be used to describe each skill in the virtual library and provide information on its applicability across sectors, regions and demographics and any tools and resources available to support its assessment and development.
- A backbone organization, governed by stakeholders, to vet and maintain the framework and evolving virtual skill library, promote its use, and create opportunities for the building and sharing of good practices in the:
 - development and assessment of essential skills, including soft skills, at all levels of education/training.
 - the use of essential skills, including soft skills, by employers for employee hiring and development
 - the use of essential skills, including soft skills, by career practitioners for comprehensive career guidance and coaching services.

A Proposed Framework

While the term soft skills is used in this project, it was noted by survey respondents and agreed upon by panelists, that the term is not ideal because of its negative connotations (that somehow the skills are less important or less meaningful in part because they are not so easily assessed or measured). It has also been clear throughout the project that a wide variety of alternative terms are used both to label soft skills and to describe them.

In academic circles and within the federal government's LMI taxonomy, distinctions are made between skills, abilities, competencies, attributes etc. While these distinctions have value in many applications, they are less evident at the points where trainers/educators meet learners, and employers seek employees, with the term 'skills' dominating those interfaces. This is already recognized in the use of terms like Essential Skills to encompass elements that might be seen as more than just skills in some circles. Because of this language in front-line communities, and to keep the framework simple, we propose that the term 'skills' be used to represent abilities, competencies, attributes, etc. The use of the general term 'skills' should also recognize that the development of skills involves both acquiring knowledge and applying that knowledge in ways that demonstrate competency, and that the demonstration of competency in a skill includes the exercise of judgment in particular contexts expressed as both specific behaviours and the ability to complete specified tasks/practices.

The panel accepted that a set of skills exists that can be seen as common to most forms of work and which people need for work, learning and life. The panel considered several ways to label these skills. The approach described below, in the form of a Venn diagram, divides the skills into two sets that overlap to form a third.

The first set consists of skills currently included in the Essential Skills framework that are used to support the completion of workplace activities, tasks or functions. This set has been tentatively labelled as "functional skills." These include reading, writing, numeracy, document use, digital skills, thinking skills and aspects of learning skills.

The second set, addressing what we have called soft skills to date, consists of **behaviours** that support the effective and efficient completion of work activities and are thus referred to as "behavioural skills". These behavioural skills involve how people shows their personal attributes, personality,

etc. as behaviours that are needed to meet employer or social expectations. Examples of these behavioural skills might include how one demonstrates motivation, attitude or accountability both verbally and physically. The distinction between the internal expression of a personal attribute or personality trait (which some would argue can't be changed), and the external expression of them as behaviours required to be successful, is important as the goal of the framework is to assist individuals to develop, control and adapt the skills needed for this success. Having those skills eventually result in changes to a person's internal attributes is desirable, but not necessary to achieve the goals of the framework.

It will be important when discussing this new framework, to stress the previous point. **The goal of behavioural skill development should be to help people be aware of the impact of their behaviours on employment and their own success, and to support their empowerment through strategies that let them make changes when they so choose.** Understanding and identifying employer and social expectations for the behavioural skills will be critical to the development process. An awareness and understanding of those expectations should inform a person's decisions on behaviour, but those decisions are ultimately also based on other personal and cultural values.

There is significant overlap between functional and behavioural skills and, indeed, all of the skills may be said to fall on a continuum between functional and behavioural extremes. A third descriptor, "social skills" was identified to indicate those skills that include specific functional components, but which rely on successful social behaviours to be effectively applied (for example, Oral Communication, Working with Others), Fig. 1. Also suggested for this third set was the term "interpersonal skills".

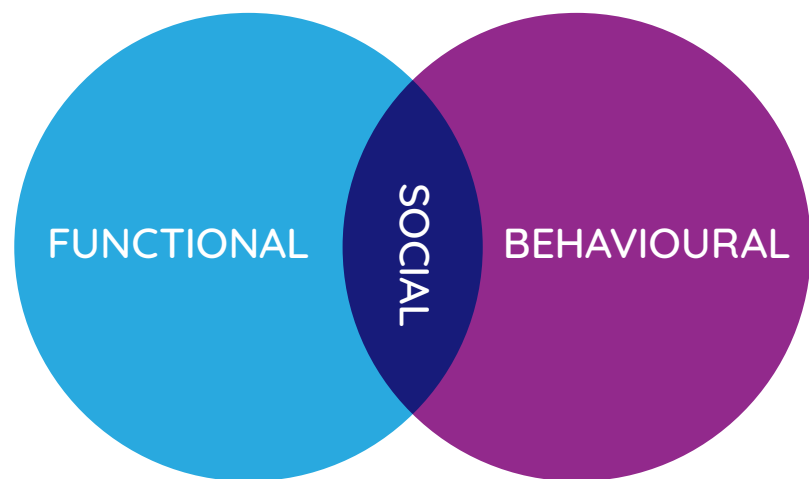


Figure 1 – Proposed Essential Skill Categories

The panel recognized that the existing Essential Skills framework could be adapted to reflect this new structure. It was generally agreed that doing so would build upon the existing awareness of the Essential Skills framework while simultaneously enhancing its usefulness to Canadians seeking work/work improvement, as well as employers and educators/trainers.

In an effort to follow the values and guiding principles for this work, the panel thought that the framework should:

- Provide clear, practical language for the purpose of discussing, developing and assessing the skills needed for work and life.
- Be designed for the primary purpose of supporting participation in the workplace while recognizing that the skills are also applicable to life in general.
- For each of the three sets, identify a core set of skills required for most work/workplaces to foster the sharing of methods, tools and curriculum. The framework should then allow other skills to be defined as required by sectors, employers, regions, and demographic/cultural groups. These other skills might be derivatives of the core skills that further break the core skills into subsets or they may provide alternatives to the existing skills. The use of skills by users over time would serve to confirm, or suggest changes to, the core set.
- Be based on clear, well defined and uniform processes that allow users to define and propose the addition of skills, and adjustments to the framework, required for the changing workplace.
- Focus on the creation of a useful, manageable skill and resource 'library' as opposed to trying to identify the 'best' configuration for such a tool. The effort should be directed towards action vs optimization, allowing for users to suggest improvements as the framework evolves. The library is seen as a source of consistent, clear, and straight forward information, focussing initially on behavioural and social skills that can be used by people seeking to develop their skills and the professionals who engage in the assessment and development of those skills.
- Provide users with easy online access to skill definitions, exemplars (based on task complexity and/or employer

expectations as appropriate for the skill), suggested methods for skill assessment and development, and, as the skills become less general, their intended applicability to specific sectors, regions, demographics or cultural groups.

Having concluded that the framework should involve an adjustment to the existing Essential Skills framework, Fig. 2, the panel undertook to identify the skills that should be included in the core sets. It is stressed that these suggested core sets, particularly the behavioural skills, while based on the literature review, survey and panel discussions, will need review. The aim should be to establish a workable set as opposed to a set that is 'best'. It is also suggested that a full consensus on the set would take up time that could be better spent on building and using the framework. Ultimately, the choice of core skills will be validated over time by the users.

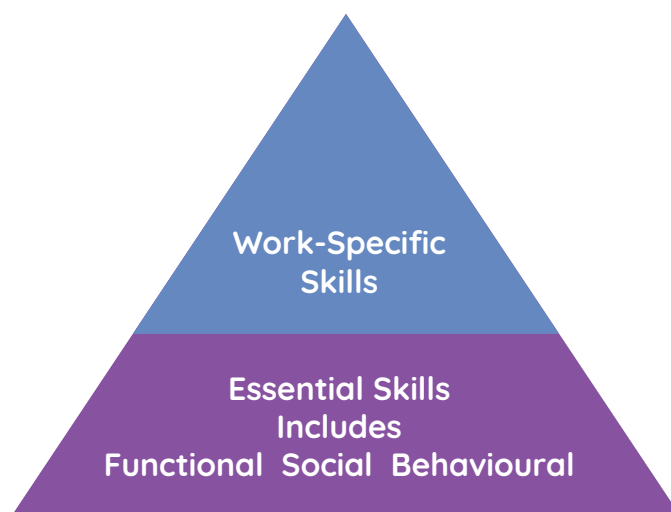


Figure 2

The core sets proposed are not seen as more important than other skills. The skill library would be non-hierarchical. Each of the skills suggested can be broken into sub-skills, some of which are suggested. The open nature of the recommended framework supposes that these sub-categories can be expanded as necessary to meet the needs of users (sectors, regions, demographic groups etc.) As long as a core set is identified for general training purposes, and duplication of skills is avoided, restricting the skills that can be included in the skill library is not considered necessary.

It is also important to stress that by identifying these social and behavioural skills as part of a core set, we are implying that training and education programs should address these core sets as key outcomes. For this reason, it is important

that the core sets not be so condensed as to make the skills too complex to train, nor so numerous that they become unmanageable for practitioners.

Each skill listed in the eventual library would be defined and described using a common template that would also list available curriculum, assessment tools, etc. The template should accommodate skill description based on complexity where appropriate, or simply list the behaviours (verbal and physical) that reflect competency and non-competency. Annex D provides an example of what a template might look like, for illustrative purposes only.

Core Functional Skills (each as currently described in the Essential Skills framework):

Reading
Writing
Numeracy
Document Use
Digital Skills
Thinking (Critical Thinking, Problem Solving, etc.)
Learning

Core Social Skills:

Oral Communication (speaking, listening, persuasion, public speaking, etc.)
Working With Others (Teamwork, Organization, Leadership, Empathy, Cultural Awareness, Respect, Emotional Regulation, etc.)

Core Behavioural Skills:

Attitude (Non-verbal communication, Positivity, etc.)
Adaptability (Flexibility, Creativity, Innovation, etc.)
Motivation (Work ethic, Willingness to learn, Openness to experience, etc.)
Accountability (Honesty, Integrity, Reliability, etc.)
Presentation (Language, Hygiene, Manners etc.)
Resilience (Stress management, Work/Life balance, Confidence, etc.)
Planning (Organization, Time management, Decision making, Prioritization etc.)

Indicators/Measures of Success

The panel suggested some indicators/measures of success for the work:

Indicators:

- The formal creation of an expanded initial set of core Essential Skills including behavioural and functional skill sets.
- The establishment of a functional online skills 'library' within two years.
- The establishment of a permanent and sustainable backbone organization within two years.
- The creation of an annual ES symposium within two years.
- The development of on-line and in-person professional development on assessing/developing behavioural skills.

Measures:

- The number of service delivery agents, schools, colleges and universities incorporating behavioural skills as outcomes in four years.
- The number of programs/tools created or validated to support the development and assessment of behavioural skills.
- Rates of library access and contribution.
- Rate of inclusion of social and behavioural skills in job postings.
- Increased inclusion of the expanded ES framework in career development supports/programs.
- Library user satisfaction survey results.
- Increased employers reported training and engagement in behavioural skill assessment and development.
- Increased corporate investment/partnerships regarding behavioural skill development and assessment.

Closing Thoughts

The proposals listed in the preceding paragraphs, and the recommendations that fall from them, represent the thoughts of the panel as it strove to reach consensus on how best to proceed. They are not the preferred choice for all participants, but all confirmed their agreement to move forward with the recommendations. They also include details that should be explored more widely with stakeholders. A process for achieving this is included in the section of the report entitled *Way Ahead*.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following sections provide recommendations based on the results of the literature review, survey and the input from stakeholder representatives.

Do we need a pan-Canadian framework?

The literature review, survey and panel discussion all agreed on the importance of soft skills to the success of individuals in the workplace and community, and to the development of a productive, adaptable workforce in general. All also agreed that there is a lack of support for soft skill development in terms of agreed upon language, research, and means to develop and share good practices. A national framework and database for soft skills was seen by the majority of survey respondents and all panelists as a necessary step towards addressing this shortfall.

RECOMMENDATION 1: That OLES take steps to develop a new, or adapt an existing, national skills framework and database to support the development of soft skills in the Canadian workforce. The existing Essential Skills framework is seen as a suitable starting point for creating this framework.

What language should be used for soft skills?

The wide range of terms used to discuss soft skills, and the negative connotations surrounding some, suggest that a single terminology be adapted for the framework. The language needs to support Canadians seeking to develop strong work skills and employers seeking to hire and develop good employees; it therefore needs to be clear, non-judgemental and simple. The complexity of the subject, for example, distinctions between competencies, attributes and skills, need not be reflected in language designed for front line application.

RECOMMENDATION 2: The framework should refer to Essential Skills, which are divided into two sets, Functional Skills and Behavioural Skills, that have some overlap in a region that can be referred to as Social Skills. It is further recommended that, as an initial position, and for training purposes, these labels be defined as:

Functional skills: the skills and associated knowledge that indirectly support the completion of other work-specific activities². Examples include reading, writing, numeracy, digital skills, etc.

Behavioural Skills: the skills and associated knowledge needed to demonstrate behaviours that support the completion of other work-specific activities.

Examples include the demonstration of motivation, accountability, resilience, etc.

Social Skills: A descriptor to recognize those Behavioural or Functional skills that have significant elements of the other set, and which involve interactions with others. Examples include teamwork, oral communication, etc.

Nature of the Framework

The pace of change in the workplace represents a huge challenge to Canadians, employers and governments seeking to maintain a productive, competitive workforce. Supports that are static or that rely on lengthy adaptation processes will not serve people well. Canadians need to be able to identify and define the skills needed for work as they arise and have them reflected in supports quickly. Ideas and new resources need to be shared, allowing users to assign value to them based on their utility. Technology allows us to create supports that are adaptive and responsive to user needs and input.

RECOMMENDATION 3: The framework should allow for the development of a virtual skill and resource library that can be searched by users for the skills they need. Users should be encouraged to suggest skills they need for their workplace, sector, region or culture, using a common template that includes information on the skill as well as related tools, resources and jobs.

Management of the Framework

Having an open framework in the form of a virtual library implies the need for strong management so that the resource is known, understood, easy to use, non-repetitive, and efficient.

RECOMMENDATION 4: A back-bone organization be identified/created to develop, promote and manage the framework. This organization should be governed with input from users and funded to ensure sustainability.

2 As opposed to technical skills or the skills and associated knowledge that **directly** support the completion of activities related to a **specific** job. Examples include welding, operating a sewing machine etc.

Elements of the Framework

The specific skills in the framework should be allowed to evolve based on user input. The utility of each element will determine its importance over time, but the structure should avoid being hierarchical. That being said, a core set of skills considered relevant to general work/workplaces would be useful for education and training organizations so as to promote sharing of good practices and avoid duplication of effort. Such a set would also support employers who wish to clearly specify behavioural skills in job postings.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Sets of core skills should be identified under the agreed headings of Functional, Social and Behavioural Skills. This core set can also be allowed to evolve over time based on feedback from users and regular review by stakeholder representatives. Resources should be provided to develop good assessment and training practices for the core sets. Such practices and related tools should be clearly identified in the framework.

Skill Assessment

Behavioural Skills are important enough to warrant promotion as part of the Essential Skills immediately, but there is a need to support the development/validation of effective methods and tools for assessment purposes. Existing tools should be investigated and validated. New tools should be created. Partnerships between researchers, employers, educators and front-line practitioners should be encouraged to ensure that such work is both practically oriented and meaningful.

RECOMMENDATION 6: OLES should host a symposium on the assessment of the Core Behavioural and Social Skills, to explore current and future approaches, followed by a call for proposals aimed at validating existing behavioural skill assessment methods, and developing new methods. This recommendation should not delay the inclusion of Behavioural Skills in the expanded framework.

WAY AHEAD

Implications for LMI Taxonomy

The Labour Market Information (LMI) branch of Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) is proceeding with a rewrite of the Career Handbook that draws upon the Essential Skills framework. The Handbook is also based on a skills taxonomy that lists skills, attributes, abilities etc. associated with a huge range of jobs. Many of the Behavioural Skills listed in this report can be found in the taxonomy as attributes, but it is not clear whether they will be included in the Career Handbook.

It is suggested that the Career Handbook should stress the importance of Behavioural Skills for success in the workplace and reflect the core set of skills identified for general employment. The importance and relevance of such a set could be considered uniform across the majority of jobs, removing the need for assessment against each specific job in the Handbook.

While the details in the Career Handbook are clearly useful to career developers, curriculum developers etc., the addition of Behavioural Skills to the Essential Skills framework, as suggested, would be an appropriate and practical approach for front-line trainers and employers. The Career Handbook can be used to provide information needed to complete elements of the framework's skill template (relevant jobs for example). The proposed framework would be more responsive to the changing needs of front-line trainers and employers as it would be allowed to evolve based on their input.

Is Collective Impact appropriate?

The Collective Impact (CI) process is an effective way to get large groups with multiple stakeholders to move forward on a complex issue. That said, the approach being recommended allows stakeholders to participate in the definition of skills and choose which skills they wish to apply. The definition of a core skill set is provided for use if desired and is not intended as an expression of relative skill importance. This means that consensus on skills is not a necessary goal for the project, rather focus can be placed on ensuring that the structure and processes involved in the framework are easy to use and sustainable.

While broad consultation with stakeholders across Canada is still recommended in the definition phase of the project, and elements of the CI process can be used in that consultation, the panel did not consider the full CI to be necessary for a successful outcome.

Next Steps

The panel believes the development of an expanded Essential Skills framework as recommended requires three key phases:

Phase 1 – Planning and Confirmation

- Fully develop the plan and costing outlined in this report with the assistance of a project steering committee consisting of stakeholder representatives.
- Establish an initial backbone organizational structure to manage project development.
- Confirm objectives and a statement of values and guiding principles for the work.
- Confirm the language of social and behavioural skills to be used during the project.
- Complete a focussed, international literature review on the practical assessment of behavioural/social skills including the identification of existing assessment tools/models.
- Make recommendations regarding the validation of existing/development of new, assessment strategies/tools.

Phase 2 – Design and Consultation

- Produce a design document that fully details the recommended structure, initial content, access, management, key performance indicators, business model and governance model for an on-line Essential Skills Library.
- Consult with stakeholders across Canada and adjust the design document as necessary.
- Determine core skill inputs.
- Gather second level Library inputs suggested by stakeholders.
- Initiate validation/development of selected existing assessment tools and methods.

Phase 3 – Build Phase

- Implement the design to build the online Essential Skills Library.
- Promote the Library amongst stakeholders including employers, educators, career developers, trainers etc.
- Establish a permanent backbone organization for the management and promotion of the library.
- Continue validation/development of selected behavioural/social skill assessment methods.
- Launch the Essential Skills Library.

Participants/Roles

Futureworx is prepared to act as the backbone organization for this initial project. The nature and identity of the backbone organization post-project will be determined in Phase 3. A project steering committee will be formed in Phase 1. The committee will need representatives from OLES, LMI, and stakeholders. Current suggestions for stakeholder representation include:

- Mack Rogers, Executive Director
ABC Life Literacy Canada
- Marisa Sosa, Essential Skills Program
Manager, Skills/Compétences
Canada
- J.P. Giroux, National Director, Skills
and Talent Development, Excellence
in Manufacturing Consortium
- Dr. Jeff Landine, Professor, University
of New Brunswick
- Daniel Baril, Executive Director,
Institute de Coopération pour
l'éducation des adultes
- Sonya Horsburgh, Director Adult
Education, Labour and Advanced
Education, Nova Scotia
- Shari St. Peter, Executive Director,
Niagara Peninsula Aboriginal Ara
Management Board

The panelists identified in this report will be retained and expanded as necessary (particularly regarding employer/union representation) to coordinate regional input and assist in promotion of the project during Phases 1-3.

Timeline

An ambitious timeline is proposed to maintain momentum and keep the focus on creating a simple tool with practical applicability. The ability to adjust and optimize the Library will be built in so it can take place as part of the ongoing management of the resource as opposed to its design.

Phase 1 Completed six months after initiation (target completion May 2019)

Phase 2 Completed within eight months of initiation (target completion January 2020)

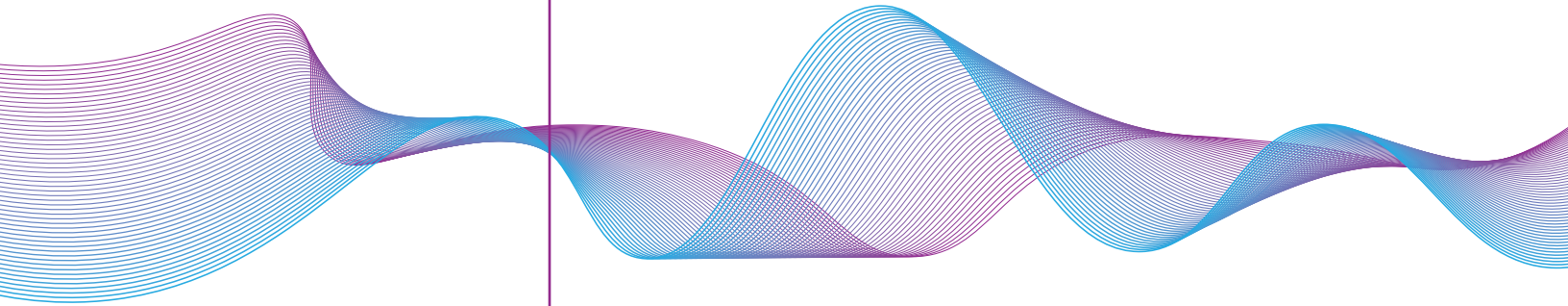
Phase 3 Virtual library completed within six months of initiation (target completion July 2020). Some validation of assessment methods may take longer depending on the nature of the study selected.

Funding

Estimating the costs of Phases 2 and 3 will require more information than is available from this work. Cost drivers are listed in the tables below. A full costing for each step will be completed in Phase 1. Funding for translation of documentation and the Library is strongly recommended. Funding drivers in each phase are expected to be:

PHASE 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR costs for project work including a project manager Translation costs Initial consultations to obtain detailed database design/build cost estimates Assessment literature search/review
PHASE 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued project HR costs Regional review costs related to travel Consultant design costs for the technical aspects of the Library. Translation costs Pilot assessment validation studies
PHASE 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued project HR costs Library construction costs (including web site construction, translation etc) Marketing/promotion costs Translation costs Ongoing assessment validation studies.

The cost of Phase 1 is estimated at \$80,000.



CONCLUSION

The skills that are essential to success in an evolving workplace include far more than technical and the existing essential skills. Being able to meet complex behavioural expectations and adhere to social norms, no matter how simple or complex the job, is key. While many people develop these skills as they mature and complete school, ensuring this happens with every student should be part of the education and training process through adulthood. Programs should include opportunities to learn about and practice the behavioural skills that will be needed in the workplace. Trainers and teachers should have effective and efficient ways to assess and support skill development, as they have for other skills.

The expansion of the Essential Skills framework to include behavioural skills is a significant step towards ensuring that Canadians develop such skills before they enter the workplace and continue to do so as they progress in their careers. Where they do not, an expanded Essential Skills framework will support trainers, educators and career developers in developing and delivering the programming need to help people meet their full potential. At the same time, the proposed skill framework will help employers attract and develop the employees they need.

By providing a simple, responsive, use-driven framework as is recommended in this report, OLES can provide Canadians with a responsive and adaptable tool to promote the development and sharing of good practices related to behavioural skill development.

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ANNEX A: SOFT SKILLS SUMMARY REPORT

Introduction

The job market in Canada is changing rapidly, often requiring workers to change jobs and take on new tasks over the course of their working lives. The Government of Canada's *Future Skills Centre*, launched this year, acknowledged this reality with a quote from the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, the Honourable Patty Hajdu, who said, "Work is changing, and so are the skills Canadians will need to succeed in the future" (Employment and Social Development Canada, 2018). These workplace transitions necessitate the development of a different skill set on the part of employees, in addition to their technical or "hard" skills, in order to maintain employment (Overtoom, 2000). Learning to learn, flexibility, and adaptability have been highlighted as crucial soft skills in workers as these skills serve as a foundation for their responses to frequently changing skill demands. Increasingly, employees are being asked to master various soft skills in addition to the technical skills of their job (Dixon, Belnap, Albrecht & Lee, 2010).

The regular shifts in the job market also leave certain demographics (older workers, workers with disabilities, Indigenous workers, newcomers to Canada, and low skilled workers) at a greater disadvantage and often puts them at risk for underemployment and unemployment. Workers who don't possess the foundational skills noted here are less likely to keep up with the ever-changing demands of the workplace. Workers who do not have the required skills or work experience, such as new graduates from secondary or post-secondary institutions, are less likely to be hired. In addition, as one study noted (Business Council of Canada, 2016), most recent graduates have adequate skillsets for hiring but as the workforce changes, applicants will have to remain flexible to keep relevant to their positions.

The form of employment is also changing, and the new types of employment often leave workers less able to acquire skills on the job. Job positions are more likely

to take the form of contract, temporary, and part time work. This lack of stability and high turnover in the employee pool results in employers being reticent to invest in workers (Sutton, 2002), as the employees often leave before their training benefits the workplace or, their absence while training requires their position to be filled by additional staff. This is especially true for small to medium enterprises (SMEs). Though there is a financial cost to companies for maintaining unskilled or under-skilled precarious workers, including a lack of overall productivity and efficiency, the frequency of employers providing workers with skills training is quite low unless those workplaces are large, industry-leading enterprises. With this said, employers frequently acknowledge the importance of soft skills as equal to or greater than hard or technical skills and prefer to hire workers who already possess these skills (Rego, 2017).

As tech jobs and automation increases, low skilled and general labour jobs will increasingly be eliminated. Employees, in particular older, Indigenous, and disabled workers who often don't have the skills to thrive in new roles, risk unemployment. The Conference Board of Canada reported that skills gaps in the BC economy cost the province up to \$4.7 billion annually in lost Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as of 2014 (Stuckey & Munro, 2014). The employers they talked to noted skills weaknesses in recent graduates entering the workforce, in particular in terms of critical thinking skills and problem solving, oral communication skills, literacy skills, and working with others. They believe that these critical skill deficiencies impact workers' abilities to create a foundation for learning all other skills (learning to learn), which they believe is necessary for workers to evolve with their jobs and workplaces. These skills are also required for career advancement and securing future positions, thereby impacting a worker's long-term employability.

Employment paths for Canada's youth have drastically changed over the past five decades from a singular, stable career to ever-changing roles and tasks spread across multiple employments. Youth tend to spend a maximum of 2 years in a position before moving on to something new, due in part to current employment opportunities taking the form of contract, temporary, and part-time work (Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2014). These precarious work opportunities tend to be low paid as well as low skilled, with 11.6% of Canadians under 30 working such non-permanent jobs as of 2011 (Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2014).

Futureworx, a non profit, community-based organization in Truro, Nova Scotia, has initiated a nation-wide effort, with the help of the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES), aimed at establishing a national consensus that would add to the existing essential skills framework so that organizations across Canada can share best practices, develop tools and programming materials, and learn from each other

about how to best develop the skills needed to be employable. This consensus will seek to:

Define a shared terminology for these skills (including what they are and what they are called);

1. Define a core set of generic 'soft' skills;
2. Define a consistent process for developing skill resources so that they are shareable and can be easily expanded for specific sectors and to identify and promote best practices for soft skill development.

This report provides an overview of the already existing resources and organizations in Canada that are focused on the identification and development of soft skills for employment.

Soft skills defined

A review of the growing body of literature on soft skills reveals that there is no universal definition of soft skills nor is there consensus as to which skills qualify as "soft skills" in Canada. The term soft skills appears to be interchangeable with transferable skills, essential skills, professional skills and competencies within the literature, compounding the difficulty of any effort to outline a core set of required skills. Several frameworks cataloguing these skills exist but they tend to reference or build upon Employment and Social Development Canada's (ESDC) list of nine essential skills.

The concept of 'skill' emphasizes that, "skills are learned, or are capable of being learned and developed, and necessarily involve the appropriate (and observable) performance of particular types of activity and task" (Kechagias, 2011, p.33). Soft skills have been described as a combination of interpersonal and social skills (Dixon, et al., 2010), in contrast to the technical and administrative skills and procedures that constitute hard skills. These two sets of skills are complementary in the sense that, though different in terms of how they are developed and implemented, they are both necessary for satisfactory employment and contribute to the success of the organization (Rego, 2017). Hard skills are typically learned through formal education and training while soft skills are, for the most part, developed through personal experience and reflection. A comprehensive definition of soft skills from the literature is that,

Soft skills refer to a broad set of skills, competencies, behaviors, attitudes, and personal qualities that enable people to effectively navigate their environment, work well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals. These skills are broadly applicable and complement other skills such as technical, vocational, and academic skills. (Lippman, Ryberg, Carney & Moore, 2015, p.4)

Comparing soft and hard skills, one study looking at senior Engineering students at a Canadian university found that students reported higher levels of self-efficacy for professional

or “soft skills” than for the technical skills they learned in their classes (Brennan & Hugo, 2017). In contrast, Laker and Powell (2011) found that soft skills training is significantly less likely to transfer from training to job than hard skills training and that the lack of transferability results in wasting time, energy and money. A possible solution (Schulz, 2008) may be embedding the training of soft skills into hard skills courses as an effective and efficient method for teaching specific content and enhancing soft skills.

Hurrell, Scholarios, and Thompson (2013) define soft skills as “non-technical and not reliant on abstract reasoning, involving interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities to facilitate mastered performance in particular contexts” (p.162). Hurrell et al. (2013) caution, however, against allowing new categories of basic skills, for example social competencies and personal attributes (Grugulis & Vincent, 2009), to become synonymous with the existing definitions of ‘real’ skills as they relate to the workplace. They point out that appropriate presentation, enthusiasm, a positive attitude and a willingness to come to work on time are less soft skills than behavioural requirements. Their concerns about the ambiguity related to how these skills are defined echo those expressed by Hyslop-Margison (1999), who pointed out that by mixing values and attitudes under the same heading as generic employability skills and technical skills, important ethical distinctions between values education and basic skills instruction become obscured. Even a perceived shift in emphasis from employment as a structural orientation to employability as an individual orientation has brought the current focus on soft skills into question as the employability emphasis places the responsibility to find satisfactory work firmly on the shoulders of the worker, at the risk of ignoring the structurally oriented responsibilities of the workplace (Butterwick & Benjamin, 2006). Hyslop-Margison and Graham (2001) criticize human capital education, that emphasizes generic and transferable employability skills over specific technical skills, on the grounds that it understates the complexity of the relationship between skill acquisition and employability. Critical thinking, for example, requires a complex foundation of knowledge and additional skills. In addition, they point out that personal attitudes, traits and values are frequently classified as soft skills and they question the morality and democracy of teaching students to adopt particular attitudes and values. For some, the shift in focus to soft skills represents the marginalization of hard skills and privileging of soft skills, which can lead to advantaging the highly skilled workers who become more employable with the addition of soft skills versus the less skilled who are offered the possibility of soft skills as an alternative to technical competency (Grugulis & Vincent, 2009). Those workers with low skills often lack confidence and require support to engage in learning new skills (Weedon & Tett, 2013). The research described in this section speaks to the potential for an

increasing emphasis on soft skills to “legitimize discrimination” based on stereotyped attributes, attitudes and individual qualities (Grugulis & Vincent, 2009, p.599).

Finally, it is important to note that soft skills may not develop equally across dissimilar groups of workers. It may be that those from more affluent backgrounds have more access to the resources needed to develop and practice these skills outside the workplace in a number of settings (Hurrell, et al., 2012). It may also be the case that soft skills develop differently between urban and rural contexts. The massing of people in cities and larger workplaces presents increased opportunities for valuable interactions that contribute to the development of soft skills (Bacolod, Blum & Strange, 2009). Cities also offer a more refined division of labour that, in turn, results in more specialization and a decreased need for soft skills (Bacolod, et al., 2009).

What soft skills do employers want their employees to have?

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) identifies 9 *essential skills* as the basis upon which all other skills are learned, developed and are implemented in most every type of employment. These 9 foundational skills are: reading, writing, document use, numeracy, computer/digital skills, thinking, oral communication, working with others, and continuous learning. Essential skills, in this model, can be evaluated based on the level of complexity of the task or roles required. Complexity level is considered fluid and may change within a single position. ESDC differentiates skills from *competencies*, which are the individual characteristics that underlie the performance of essential skills. For example, thinking competencies may include: strategic thinking, generating creative ideas, and making logical connections. This framework of skills provides the foundation for many subsequent approaches to outlining necessary soft skills in employment contexts and many of the frameworks and organizations referenced here.

The number of studies looking into the required skills for various diverse contexts is growing. In reference to global engineering students, Del Vitto (2008) noted that students and new graduates need to, in addition to foreign language proficiency, develop cross-cultural, adaptive soft skills which will assist them in working collaboratively in their international co-ops, internships and expatriate assignments. University engineering programs often focus on hard technical skills, but it is becoming increasingly evident that in order to compete in a global environment, international engineering students must become competent in both foreign language and culture.

Similar to this research initiative, the authors of a US report focused on developing consensus around which soft skills are most critical for workplace success (Lippman,

Ryberg, Carney & Moore, 2015). They reviewed more than 380 resources from around the world, including empirical studies, employer studies, and the findings of other international consensus projects. The criteria they used to compare skills included: the quantity, breadth and quality of research support; the contextual diversity of the skill; whether the skill is malleable (i.e., changeable or teachable); and the developmental appropriateness of each skill. The resulting list identified five key skills that they believed could be strongly supported and were applicable to workforce success across sectors and world regions: higher-order thinking skills, communication, positive self-concept, self-control, and social skills.

Needless to say, the soft skills literature identifies a great diversity of skills that employers have deemed essential. These include communication skills (Ahmed, Capretz, & Campbell, 2012; Andrews & Higson, 2008; Business Council of Canada, 2016; Del Vitto, 2008; Dixon, et al., 2010; Lippman, et al., 2015; Marketwired, 2016; Mitchell, Skinner & White, 2010; Rego, 2017; Robles, 2012; Stuckey & Munro, 2014), teamwork (Ahmed, et al., 2012; Andrews & Higson, 2008; Business Council of Canada, 2016; Del Vitto, 2008; Dixon, et al., 2010; Marketwired, 2016; Mitchell, et al., 2010; Rego, 2017; Robles, 2012; Stuckey & Munro, 2014), problem solving (Ahmed, et al., 2012; Business Council of Canada, 2016; Dixon, et al., 2010; Mitchell, et al., 2010; Stuckey & Munro, 2014), decision-making (Dixon, et al., 2010), working under pressure (Dixon, et al., 2010), professionalism (Rego, 2017; Robles, 2012), dependability/reliability (Marketwired, 2016), motivation (Marketwired, 2016), commitment (Marketwired, 2016), relationship building skills (Business Council of Canada, 2016), critical thinking (Lippman, et al., 2015; Mitchell, et al., 2010; Stuckey & Munro, 2014), cross-cultural sensitivity and knowledge (Del Vitto, 2008; Mitchell, et al., 2010), social awareness (Del Vitto, 2008), business acumen and sense of entrepreneurship (Del Vitto, 2008), positive self-concept (Lippman, et al., 2015), self-control (Lippman, et al., 2015), social skills (Ahmed, et al., 2012; Lippman, et al., 2015; Robles, 2012), organizational skills (Ahmed, et al., 2012; Mitchell, et al., 2010;), being a fast learner (Ahmed, et al., 2012;), being an independent worker (Ahmed, et al., 2012;), being innovative (Ahmed, et al., 2012; Andrews & Higson, 2008), adaptability to change (Ahmed, et al., 2012;), having ethics/integrity (Mitchell, et al., 2010, Robles, 2012), leadership (Mitchell, et al., 2010), flexibility (Robles, 2012), courtesy/customer service skills (Mitchell, et al., 2010, Robles, 2012), and work ethic (Robles, 2012).

Experience tops the list of hard skills employers look for (Marketwired, 2016) but experience is valued differently from country to country in recognition of the variation in opportunity afforded to students (Andrews & Higson, 2008). The following list of soft skills (though not exhaustive) notes

the frequency with which they are mentioned in the research, education programs, and business training documents included in the attached bibliography:

- Management skills (stress, financial, personal, contract, conflict, time) - 18
- Communication skills (oral, written, interpersonal) - 17
- Business skills - 8
- Problem-solving skills - 8
- Thinking skills - 6
- Leadership - 5
- Learning skills - 5
- Teamwork skills - 5
- Flexibility/Adaptability - 4
- Relationships/Interpersonal skills - 4
- Organization skills - 4
- Speaking skills - 3
- Creativity skills - 2

Who is working on these and how are soft skills being developed?

The question as to whether or not soft skills can be taught has been raised in the literature (Rego, 2017). Indeed, perhaps the best avenue to implement soft skills training is through formal education institutions. Public school curricula Canada-wide include adequate career and skill development components for K-12 students. However, no national framework exists on how to best educate students in the area of soft skills (Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2014). Career education in secondary school is often non-compulsory and frequently not elected by students. Career education is taught in combination with other unrelated course material like health, sexuality and civics, which limits the focus on skill development to prioritizing the dissemination of information. Often educators are not properly trained in career education, which negatively impacts student development, and the information shared with students is often out-dated and does not take into consideration the trends and future needs of the workforce. Co-op programs, apprentices, and internships are considered the most effective way to develop the skills necessary for current job markets but these are not readily available at the secondary level and may represent a financial barrier for those at the post-secondary level when the work experience is unpaid.

Krahn, Lowe and Lehmann (2002) examined the self-reports of Alberta high school students about the employability skills they thought they had acquired in high school courses, formal work-experience programs, paid part-time employment and volunteer work. They found that high school students believe that they are developing a wide range of skills through various experiences related to school and work but that they fail to see the employment relevance

of their education and concomitant analytic skills, which they saw as developing primarily in school. On the other hand, interpersonal, social and specific job-preparedness skills were seen as developing in conjunction with paid and volunteer work experiences. In addition, they found that the skills that employers typically indicate they are seeking are not the same as the skills that students believe employers want. Findings like these underscore the need for an integrated educational and labour market policy framework that is capable of balancing the broad curricular mandate of the education system with the changing and specific needs of the labour market (Krahn, Lowe & Lehmann, 2002).

The Canadian education system has failed to help students understand the relevance of their learning, how their learning may connect with future employment, and to develop the employability skills that employers require (Butterwick & Benjamin, 2006; Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2014). Not surprisingly, youth feel that they are poorly supported in the development of skills such as budgeting, independent living, and work ethic (Canadian Career Development Foundation, 2014). A report from Bell, Benes and Redekopp (2016) noted that Canadian youth have a difficult time transitioning from school to work when they have few employability skills and inadequate work-readiness experience. Their report cited the need for a school-to-work strategy, career and skills education, and meaningful collaboration between education institutions (secondary and post-secondary) in areas of co-op learning, apprenticeships, and internships, to foster career development and ensure that education matches the demands and skills requirements of the current and future labour markets. An increasing onus is being placed on post-secondary education institutions to prepare graduates to meet the needs of employers (Andrews & Higson, 2008). This move towards accountability, however, comes with cautions from some of the people who work and conduct research in this area. The shifts in education and labour market dynamics that have resulted in universities being placed under increasing pressure to produce employable graduates have raised the question of what exactly constitutes employability. According to Bridgstock (2009), employability involves more than possession of the generic soft skills listed by employers as desirable or necessary. Rather, to be truly employable, graduates must be able to proactively interact with the world of work and they require skills to self-manage their own career development. And as noted above, the privileging of certain soft skills, in particular those that are related to specific values and attitudes, is seen as undemocratic and possibly immoral (Hyslop-Margison & Graham, 2001).

In 2015, Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) requested an analysis of their *Career Launch Program* (Bell, Redekopp, & Hollihan, 2016), which provided work-integrated learning through paid internship positions to better prepare young

Canadians for the work force and to better navigate the transition from school to employment by breaking the “no experience, no job” cycle. The research suggested young workers needed to be able to anticipate shifts in careers, manage uncertainty, and be creative, as well as hone skills for career management, continuous learning, and relationship building. Program participants provided survey responses highlighting their perceptions of youth needs, including: greater collaboration between education institutions and stakeholder companies to support the integration of learning in work experience programs; more support from post-secondary education in connecting theoretical knowledge to applied learning or work experience; more information on careers, pathways, skill requirements, and career management skills; greater knowledge of the skill demands in the current labour markets; alternative ways to gain skills such as volunteering; and shifting the impedance of “no experience, no job” back onto the employer, to limit the burden of accepting underemployment over unemployment. The young participants in this study also noted the importance of transferable (soft) skills in facilitating their transition into the workforce, regardless of field or position, and they understood the value of these skills alongside technical or hard skills.

Several suggestions have been made regarding a national framework for career and skills development best practices, such as the creation of national organizations that would be tasked with the job of creating opportunities for skill development and the acquisition of work experience. These organizations could include: an organization that would focus on research and assessment of skills, as well as labour market trends; an organization to assist in the school-to-work transition; and an organization to liaise between the various stakeholders (government, education, employers). Though these recommendations are mentioned repeatedly, there is no clear evidence of changes or progress in moving forward on the issue.

If workers do not or cannot acquire the requisite soft skills in the course of their standard secondary and post-secondary education, and are not provided with training through their workplace, they may elect to acquire these skills on their own. This approach, however, can be problematic in more ways than one. As stated above, many workers (especially youth and low skill workers) do not know what skills they possess or that certain attributes they have already may actually be the soft skills employers desire. Kwok (2004) attributed the relative differences in awareness of one's employability skills to the type (soft or hard fields, applied or pure fields) of post-secondary program a graduate had attended, with soft and applied program graduates expressing more awareness of the employability skills they had developed. A lack of career education can make it difficult for future workers to access this personal information, using reputable

sources, and to engage in effective self-assessment. There are a few community-driven organizations that provide assistance in the area of soft skill development, however, these tend to exist in an effort to support specific populations such as at-risk youth, newcomers, and marginalized groups. If a worker does not fit the specific demographic, they may not be able to access the services.

This leaves workers with the option to enrol in additional higher education programs or to elect training on their own from skills training businesses. Both of these options come with financial barriers, with training seminars and programs often costing thousands of dollars, sometimes per soft skill addressed. These opportunities often require weeks, if not months, away from or in addition to paid employment, impacting the worker's work/life balance. In response to these obstacles, some programs incorporate evening or online courses in an effort to offer greater flexibility to the worker. A third option that has been shown to be effective in developing skills and self-efficacy, but still expensive, is executive coaching (Baron & Morin, 2010). Many of the training companies in this area focus on business related soft skills. Though the skills learned are often transferable to positions beyond the office and administration roles, this focus may represent a gap for attaining soft skills that fall between business and trade-specific skills.

Methods of assessing soft skills that involve direct observation of interpersonal behavior are widely used in workplace settings (e.g., interviews, work samples, and situational judgment tests) but much less common in higher education admissions situations (Lievens & Sackett, 2012). Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) provides several tools and assessment instruments that are readily available to the public, employment professionals, and employers to evaluate and develop soft skills in the workplace. These include informal indicator assessments that evaluate essential skill abilities for numeracy, reading, and document use as well as self-assessments that are available for each of the 9 essential skills and help highlight learner strengths and weaknesses by skill. *Portfolios* and *Passport* tools assist learners in tracking their essential skills and personal career development by recording skill strengths and identifying areas for improvement. *Tip Sheets* are informational booklets that provide practical tips and activities to improve on essential skills. *Workbooks* for vocabulary building and for problem solving are also available to improve learner vocabulary and problem solving techniques.

ESDC also provides tools and assessments specifically for apprenticeships and trades. Resources are available to demonstrate how the 9 essential skills are used in specific trades, including jobs such as automotive service technician, carpenter, construction/electrician, cook, hairstylist, steamfitter-pipefitter, and refrigeration/air conditioning

mechanic, among others. They also provide a *Self-assessment for trades*, a checklist that helps learners identify their skills and common trade-related tasks toward developing essential skills. For employers there is an *Organization needs assessment*, which is a guide and checklist that helps employers determine if skills gaps are affecting the organization's overall performance. A workplace survey in the form of a questionnaire helps to identify potential skills issues or areas of strength. Employers can evaluate the essential skills of prospective employees by using the *Hiring checklist*, an interview template to collect information related directly to skills. Training activities are available for employers to help incorporate essential skills upgrading into workplace training. The *Job enhancement and essential skills* guide supports management in improving worker skillsets through delegating new responsibilities and opportunities for development. Finally, ESDC provides a *Mentoring and essential skills tool*, which includes tips for employers to develop skills through mentoring relationships.

In addition to assessment instruments like those offered by ESDC, non-government agencies and researchers have developed instruments to assess and foster soft skills. Some research instruments, like Goldsmiths Soft Skills Inventory (Chomaorro-Premuzic, Artech, Bremner, Grevan, & Furnham, 2009), assess broad arrays of attributes (e.g. self-management skills, teamwork) that are regularly equated with soft skills, while others assess a specific skill, like the Feedback Orientation Scale (FOS), which measures an individual's overall receptivity to feedback (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). In Europe, projects like the Measuring and Assessing Soft Skills Project (MASS) have provided evidence of the potential benefits of assessing, teaching and developing soft skills to disadvantaged youth (Kechagias, 2011).

Closer to home, the Employment Readiness Scale (ERS), developed in British Columbia measures five soft skills that play an important role in successful work transitions: self-efficacy, outcome expectancy, social supports, work history and job maintenance (Ward & Riddle, 2012). The ERS has been validated extensively in British Columbia and has been used internationally to assess where soft skills are lacking. Ward and Riddle (2015) also provide suggestions for building the identified soft skills. Futureworx has developed a cloud-based formative assessment tool for assessing, tracking and supporting the development of soft skills. Formative feedback and guided self-assessment have also been used to effectively assess and remediate medical residents' competence in soft skills (e.g. patient-centred care, communication, and professionalism) (Ross, Poth, Donoff, et al., 2011). While the practice of soft skill assessment is increasing, in particular in other parts of the world (Kechagias, 2011), the research evidence to support how it is done is lagging (Gibb, 2014).

Conclusion

The attached annotated bibliography represents an inventory of the research, development and training efforts in Canada in the area of soft skills that were readily accessible by performing a series of internet searches. This is not an exhaustive list and should be used as a starting point for exploring the increasing number of organizations and resources that are focusing attention on soft skills. The literature suggests that many employers are no longer as focused on technical skills as they were at one time and that it is often the soft skills that potential employees possess that set an applicant apart from their peers (Dixon, et al., 2010). Some would go so far as to suggest that the acquisition of soft skills is vital to successful career development and employment.

Organizations like FutureSkills Lab, a national non-government organization dedicated to researching skills development and measurement in Canada, points to the need for supporting pilot programs in skills and competency development that address gaps among workers and the workforce, gathering and disseminating labour market trends and skill needs, defining skills objectives and informing stakeholders on skills programming within education and training contexts. As Heckman and Kautz (2012) point out, soft skills predict and produce success in the workplace and life so programs that enhance these skills are important.

As this national conversation continues to take place, it will be important to acknowledge that some groups in the workforce have been excluded from the soft skills discussion. Klinga (2012) has suggested the addition of a tenth essential skill, namely listening, in recognition of traditional Indigenous knowledge and skills. This raises a key question regarding the congruence between the current essential skills framework and the valued competencies associated with Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge and activities (e.g. survival and land based skills, use of personal and collective memory, multiple literacies, observation of nature, listening, relationship to place). Results of the Conference Board of Canada's survey of 130 000 employees and 854 employers in BC (Stuckey & Munro, 2014) highlighted the fact that employers are more likely to view Indigenous candidates as less proficient in skills such as literacy, numeracy, oral communication, computer use and continuous learning skills than non-Indigenous candidates, and recent immigrants and international students as lacking in literacy and communication skills compared to Canadians. This bias is important to note with regard to non-culturally sensitive hiring practices and work environments as this process of establishing a national consensus begins.

In addition to the barriers for Indigenous workers, other minority groups may not be fully engaged in the soft skill movement. A lack of meaningful work opportunities

and systemic discrimination keep youths from gaining employment, often due to a perceived lack of work ethic, motivation, or other skills on the part of potential employers. Moss and Tilly (1996) reported that, despite professing an increasing need for soft skills when they look to hire, employers rate Black men poorly in terms of these skills. Many myths and misconceptions regarding the disabled dissuade organizations from hiring from this demographic, including the belief that their disabilities negate their ability to possess the necessary skills required by the job or industry, tantamount to the idea that this demographic is unskilled.

While possibly more pronounced with regard to the above groups, employability and employment is a concern for all Canadians. A review of the literature indicates that preparation for employment is not being well addressed at the secondary school level and, while the mandate is becoming more accepted, post-secondary institutions still have work to do with regard to integrating education, learning, work experience and career pathways. This work will require the concerted efforts of stakeholders, including PSE institutions, the public school system, government and non-government organizations and employers. A good starting point would be increased attention to the identification and inter-relationships of soft skills, most importantly those deemed necessary by employers. As these skills are better defined, valid and accessible means to assess soft skills will be required. And finally, best practices for developing the identified skills need to be generated and made widely available. The role of experience in developing employable young people has been considered (UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2012) but this is an area where more research is necessary. One place we might start to look for answers is the work being done with employment in other countries (Quintini, Martin & Martin, 2007).

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Research:

Canadian Career Development Foundation (CCDF)

- <http://www.ccdf.ca/ccdf/index.php/research/reports>
- A wide range of reports, including some on soft skills in relation to improving employment.

CCDF (2014). Career education in Atlantic Canada: Research and recommendations.

Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET). <http://www.camet-camef.ca/images/Career%20Education%20in%20Atlantic%20Canada-Research%20and%20Recommendations%20June%202015.docx>

- CCDF conducted research and provided recommendations on the socio-economic imperatives for action in the area of career development, an environmental scan of successful programs in Atlantic Canada, and a compilation of international best practices.
- From this research CCDF developed recommendations that were integrated into CAMET's *Future in Focus - Atlantic Career Development Framework for Public Education*.

Bell, D., Benes, K. & Redekopp, D. (2016). Improving the school-to-work transitions

of youth in Canada: A scoping review. *The Canadian Career Development Foundation*. <http://www.ccdf.ca/ccdf/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/School-to-Work-Transitions-A-Scoping-Review-FINAL.pdf>

- No province has successfully enacted a comprehensive school-to-work transition strategy.
- No active system exists to support Canadian youth in their school-to-work transitions

Bell, D., Redekopp, D., & Hollihan, K. (2016). Addressing the catch 22: RBC Career Launch applicants recommendations for improving school-to-work transitions.

The Canadian Career Development Foundation. <http://www.rbc.com/careers/careerlaunch/school-to-work-transition-research.pdf>

- CCDF was commissioned by RBC to conduct an analysis of applications to its Career Launch Program for the first three years of its operation. The research within the report is based on a random sample of approximately 5,800 applications submitted during the three years that the Program has been accepting new graduates into paid internship positions.

Frameworks:

Government of Canada

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/essential-skills/definitions.html>
- Understanding 9 essential skills
- Levels of complexity tool

Government of Canada

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-service-commission/services/staffing-assessment-tools-resources/human-resources-specialists-hiring-managers/management-toolkit/competencies.html>

- Lists a variety of competencies that underlie performance at work

YMCA-YWCA Canada

- Building Sustainable Futures: Essential Skills for Employment (ESE)
 - <https://www.ywcatoronto.org/ourprograms/employmentandtraining/essentialskillsforemployment>
 - https://www.ywcatoronto.org/Assets/YWCA/Documents/Our%20Programs/Employment%20and%20Training/ESE/ESE_background_communique_March%202016.pdf
- Learning collaborative made up of YMCA-YWCA across Canada (YWCA Agvvik (Iqaluit), YWCA Halifax, YWCA Hamilton, YWCA Moncton, YMCA/YWCA National Capital Region, YWCA Saskatoon, YWCA Thompson and YWCA Vancouver)
- Compendium of promising practices and curricula in essential skills for employment training that will be shared nationally

Tools/Processes:

Advisory Council on Economic Growth

- <https://www.budget.gc.ca/aceg-ccce/pdf/skills-competences-eng.pdf>
- Building a highly skilled and resilient Canadian workforce through the Futureskills Lab, 2017
 - Support innovative approaches to skills development
 - Identify and suggest new sources of skills information
 - Define skills objectives and inform governments on skills programming
- <https://www.budget.gc.ca/aceg-ccce/pdf/learning-nation-eng.pdf>
- Learning nation: Equipping Canada's workforce with skills for the future, 2017
 - Tracking evolving trends and needs
 - New approaches to adult training
 - New models for funding adult skills development
 - Recommendations:
 - New, federally governed Canada Lifelong Learning Fund (CLLF)
 - Transformation of the government's employment centres

Government of Canada

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/essential-skills/tools.html>
- Inform, assess, support essential skills - a series of tools been developed to help individuals and organizations address workplace essential skills challenges.

Organizations:

Business Council of Canada

- <http://thebusinesscouncil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Developing-Canadas-Future-Workforce.pdf>
- 2016, 90 of Canada's leading employers, looked at hiring trends, and skills.
- Findings:
 - Companies want to recruit new grads with SS
 - More collaboration needed between work force and PS institutions

Government of Canada

- Future Skills Council and Centre
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/funding/future-skills.html>
 - Future Skills Council is a Council, appointed by the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, on emerging skills and workforce trends;
 - Future Skills Centre is an arms-length research Centre focused on developing, testing and rigorously measuring new and innovative approaches to skills assessment and development.

Government of Canada

- The Office of Literacy and Essential Skills
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/essential-skills.html>
- Overview, funding opportunities, success stories, webinars

Government of Canada – Public Health

- <https://training-formation.phac-aspc.gc.ca/course/index.php?categoryid=18>
- Offers soft skill training (note taking, critical thinking, and tactical communications) for Canadian Food Inspection Agency inspectors

NobelProg

- <https://www.nobleprog.ca/soft-skills/training/vancouver>
- Soft skill training, defined as: people/interpersonal/transferrable/social skills that shape relations between people in a work setting
- Canada-wide training

RBC

- Career Launch Program
- <https://www.rbc.com/careers/career-launch-program.html>
- Internship program that works to transition students and their skills from school to real-life projects

RBC

- Future Launch
- <https://www.rbc.com/dms/enterprise/futurelaunch/index.html>
- Pan-Canadian survey of soft skills

Supply Chain Management Association

- <http://scma.com/en/education-accreditation/supply-management-training/soft-skills-development-seminars>
- Offers soft skill development seminars

ALBERTA

Research:

Eaton, S. E. (2010). Formal, non-formal and informal learning: The case of literacy, essential skills, and language learning in Canada. *Library and Archives Canada's Electronic Collection, February 2010*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED508254.pdf>

- This report aims to link formal, non-formal and informal notions of learning to literacy and essential skills.

Frameworks:

Canadian Career Development Foundation

- Career-Decision Making Guide
- <http://www.ccdf.ca/ccdf/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Supplement-5a-CDM-Alberta.pdf>
- Skills Enhancement Guide
- <http://www.ccdf.ca/ccdf/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Supplement-6a-SE-Alberta.pdf>

Organizations:

Bow Valley College (AB)

- <https://bowvalleycollege.ca/programs-courses/english-language-learning/corporate-readiness-training-program>
- Corporate Readiness Training Program
- Offers intensive workplace language, culture, and skills training with a focus on the Workplace Essential Skills.

BRITISH COLUMBIA**Research:**

Stuckey, J. & Munro, D. (2014). Skills for success: Developing skills for a prosperous B.C.. Ottawa: The Conference Board of Canada, 2014. <https://www.rverson.ca/content/dam/politics/docs/degree-career/Skills%20Shortage-ConferenceBoard-FullReport-150205.pdf>

- This report sheds light on the skills needs and issues facing B.C., including the factors shaping skills supply and demand; the economic impacts associated with skills shortages and mismatches; the occupations, credentials, and skills that employers need to meet their workforce needs; and strategies that employers, educators, governments, and individuals can pursue to develop the workforce B.C. requires.

Frameworks:

BC Centre for Employment Excellence

- Time for Essential Skills: An Employer's Guide (Literacy Link South Central, 2011)
- <http://www.cfeebc.org/resource/time-essential-skills-employers-guide/>
- <https://issuu.com/lisc/docs/timeforessentialskills?viewMode=magazine>
- Guidebook for employers

Government of BC - Education & Training

- https://www.workbc.ca/getmedia/4c54646a-93fa-4566-b148-f43a3f27b240/Booklet_BCBlueprint_web_140428.pdf.aspx
- Blueprint for three main objectives:
 - A head-start to hands-on learning in our schools.
 - A shift in education and training to better match with jobs in demand.
 - A stronger partnership with industry and labour to deliver training and apprenticeships.

Organizations:

BC Centre for Employment Excellence

- Escalator Jobs for Youth facing Barriers: Companies and Youth Moving up in the World (CivicAction, Greater Toronto Alliance, 2014)
- <http://www.cfeebc.org/resource/escalator-jobs-youth-facing-barriers-companies-youth-moving-world/>
- Leveling the Playing Field: Attracting, Engaging, and Advancing People with Disabilities (The Conference Board of Canada, 2013)
- <http://www.cfeebc.org/resource/leveling-the-playing-field/>
- Student outcome survey shows apprenticeship training in B.C. pays off (Government of BC, 2016)
- http://www.cfeebc.org/resource/apprenticeship-training-pays-off/?doing_wp_cron=1524665189.6408638954162597656250

The Conference Board of Canada – BC

- PSE (Post-Secondary Education) Skills for a Prosperous British Columbia
- http://www.tupc.bc.ca/pdfs/2016_PSE_Skills_for_a_Prosporous_BC.pdf
- Needs and recommendations

Government of BC – Education & Training

- <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/career-and-skills-training/toolkit>
- The purpose of the Career and Skills Training Toolkit is to provide district-level superintendents, directors of instruction, and career coordinators the support and resources they need to implement effective career and skills training programs.

Langara College (BC)

- www.langara.bc.ca
- Corporate Readiness Training Program Certificate program
- Recent immigrants interested in acquiring an understanding of Canadian corporate culture

Vancouver Island University

- Workplace Essential Skills and Training Program
- 2 year certificate
- Specifically designed for students with developmental and cognitive disabilities, and is designed to assist students' development with the personal, interpersonal, and employment skills required to obtain and maintain employment.

MANITOBA

Frameworks:

Canadian Career Development Foundation

- Career-Decision Making Guide
- <http://www.ccdf.ca/ccdf/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Supplement-5b-CDM-Manitoba.pdf>
- Skills Enhancement Guide
- <http://www.ccdf.ca/ccdf/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Supplement-6b-SE-Manitoba.pdf>

Organizations:

Essential Skills Manitoba

- <http://esmanitoba.ca/>
- Essential Skills Manitoba is a not-for-profit organization that provides a number of Essential Skills assessments and training programs that are designed to help participants develop the skills needed to find meaningful, sustainable employment.

Skills/Compétences Manitoba

- <http://www.skillsmanitoba.ca/>
- A resource to explore career options in the skilled trades & technologies.

NEW BRUNSWICK

Organizations:

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency - Atlantic Growth Advisory Group (2017)

- <http://www.acoa-apecca.gc.ca/ags-sca/Eng/roundtableskilledworkforce-en.html>
- Focus on developing skilled work force for economic growth in Atlantic Canada.
- Lists a series of considerations and ideas.

Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (CCNB)

- <https://continuum.ccnb.ca/skills/finish-high-school/essential-skills-program-for-adults-espa/>
- Essential Skills Program for Adults
- Francophone

NB Jobs

- <https://www.nbjobs.ca/skillsindemand>
- List of current top skills in demand in NB (hard/technical skills and soft skills)

Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour (GNB)

- [http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/services/services_renderer.200971.Workplace_Essential_Skills_Program_\(WES\).htmlv](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/services/services_renderer.200971.Workplace_Essential_Skills_Program_(WES).htmlv)
- Workplace Essential Skills Program (WES)
- <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/petl-epft/PDF/Publications/workplace-essential-skills.pdf>

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Research:

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Nova Scotia

- *Great Expectations Opportunities and Challenges for Young Workers in Newfoundland and Labrador*
- https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office%2C%20Nova%20Scotia%20Office/2015/01/Great_Expectations_Nfl.pdf
- Review of qualitative research on opportunities, skills/experience/training, and organizational challenges.
- Labour market challenges in NF and recommendations on how to retain young workers.

Newfoundland and Labrador Skills Task Force (2007)

- <http://www.aesl.gov.nl.ca/publications/postsecondary/stfreport.pdf>
- Report of challenges from employees/employers
- Recommendations for future, actionable items

Organizations:

Memorial University

- Professional Communication Skills Program
- <https://www.mun.ca/gardinercentre/certificate-programs/Business-Communication>
- Modules:
 - Building and maximizing workplace relationships
 - Presentation skills: Speaking with confidence
 - Essential communication skills for professionals
 - Better business writing: The right approach

Skills Canada Newfoundland and Labrador

- <http://www.skillscanada-nfld.com/home>
- <http://www.skillscanada-nfld.com/programs/essential-skills>
- Essential Skills are especially important to technical training so Skills/Compétences Canada and its member organizations are working together to promote these nine essential skills to Canadian youth.

NOVA SCOTIA

Organizations:

Futureworx: Truro, NS

- <https://futureworx.ca>
- developers of the Employability Skills Assessment Tool (ESAT)

Immigrant Service Association of NS

- <http://www.isans.ca/event/working-with-others/>
- Offers 4-week course to newcomers to enhance communication skills, focus on cultural influences on communication use

Social Enterprise Network of NS

- <https://senns.ca/skills/>
- List of business/mentoring/leadership/skills training centres in the province, primarily business oriented

ONTARIO

Research:

Marketwired; Toronto (Mar 9, 2016).

- New Survey Results: Most Important Hard and Soft Skills; Dependability Is Top Soft Skill for Third Year; Hard Skills: Experience Matters More Than Education.
- <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.hil.unb.ca/cbcacomplete/docview/1772224540/BOE36865699741D4PQ/2?accountid=14611>

Rego, A. (2017). Soft skills: Who says they can't be taught? *Canadian Journal of Medical Laboratory Science*, (79), 2, 11. <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.hil.unb.ca/cbcacomplete/docview/1917630414/fulltextPDF/B0E36865699741D4PQ/4?accountid=14611>

- Soft skills are more important than technical skills.
- Identifies three “critical” soft skills.

Organizations:

Dale Carnegie Training

- <https://www.dalecarnegie.ca/blog/hard-skills-are-awesome-but-soft-skills-are-everything/>
- Toronto based, has locations throughout Canada.
- Blog 2015:
 - Highlights costs of soft skill gaps
 - Offers changes to enhance soft skill development
 - Some free online webinar on communication

Ontario Works Training Program

- <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/employment-social-support/employment-support/training-courses/ontario-works-training-programs-in-toronto/>
- Training programs to prepare for employment/career advancement.
- Participants receive \$250/month for training-related expenses plus \$142/month for transportation to attend classes.
- Caseworker referral required, **eligible programs**:
 - St Stephen's Community House – *Connections Program*
 - <http://www.sschtoc.ca/>
 - Newcomers; business English, customer service, life skills
 - Working Skills Centre – *Essential Skills for Office Professionals*
 - <http://workingskillscentre.com/>
 - YWCA of Greater Toronto – *Administrative Clerk Certificate*
 - Women only; essential computer skills, customer service, communication, and interpersonal skills.
 - <https://www.ywcatoronto.org/>
 - Greater Toronto Apartment Association – *Professional Building Management Development Program*
 - <https://www.gtaaonline.com/>
 - Labour Education Centre – *TradeLinx*
 - <http://www.laboureducation.org/>
 - Polycultural Immigrant & Communication Services – *Excelling in Customer Service*
 - Women only
 - <http://www.polycultural.org/>
 - Rehabilitation Network Canada – *Customer First*
 - <http://www.rehabnetwork.ca/>
 - Customer service soft skills
 - University Settlement – *Customer Service/Call Centre Certificate Program*
 - <http://universitysettlement.ca/>
 - Soft skill development
 - Pathway To Possibilities - Adult Learning and Employment Programs – *Elevate: Exploring the Food Industry*

- <http://www.ptp.ca/>
 - Literacy, essential skills, tech skills, with work placements
- Progress Career Planning Institute – *YES IT Training for Youth*
 - <http://www.ppci.ca/>
 - Soft skills in non-traditional classrooms
- Ability Learning Network – *Avenues to Advancement Work Skills*
 - <http://www.aln.ca/>
 - Persons with mental health issues, long-term unemployment
- Centre for Education and Training – *Next Step: Employability Skills*
 - <https://www.tcet.com/>
 - Young adults and those returning to work
- Gateway Café – *Age Advantage 45+ Program*
 - <https://www.wsnc.org/>
- La Passerelle-IDE – *Employment Essential Skills for Francophone/Bilingual*
 - <http://www.passerelle-ide.com/>
- Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment Training – *Aboriginal Pre Employment Development*
 - <http://miziwebiik.com/>

Prepare for Canada

- <http://www.prepareforcanada.com/>
- http://www.prepareforcanada.com/wp-content/uploads/9SoftSkills_PrepareforCanada.pdf
- Toronto based, business focused, helps prospective immigrants prepare for life in Canada.
- Founder Noorani (2000) *Arrival Survival Canada*, experiential account of own success, also developed document above, *9 Soft Skills No Immigrant Should be Without*.

SkillsCamp

- <https://www.skillscamp.co/>
- Toronto based, training company servicing businesses and schools.
- Soft Skills: relational/people skills in work and life
- Fill the gaps of soft skills in organizations
 - Variety of workshops and specific skills training (taxonomy)
 - Delivered in different formats, workshop, online, retreats, etc.

Skills/Compétences Canada

<https://www.skillscompetencescanada.com/en/>

- To encourage and support a coordinated Canadian approach to promoting skilled trades and technologies to youth.
- Programs: Essential Skills (following Government of Canada 9 Essential Skills); He for She (gender equality skills training)
- Practical, on-the-job skills.

The Soft Skills Group

- <https://www.tssg.ca/>
- Toronto based, servicing businesses.
- Customized workshops on a select few soft skills.
- Use case studies, group, and individual exercises to disseminate.

Train4Career

- <http://www.train4career.net/>
- Toronto based, focus on business soft skills (leadership development, management) but also soft skills falling under personal growth heading.
- Train individuals, onsite groups, and have certification training, including trainer training

University of Toronto

- <http://www.rotman.utoronto.ca/ProfessionalDevelopment/BusinessEdgeforInternationallyEducatedProfessionals>
- Rotman School of Business Management, Business Edge program
- Designed for internationally educated professionals who want to master the tools and strategies needed to break current communication barriers, increase job satisfaction, add value to their organization and advance to more fulfilling roles.

Workplace Communication in Canada (WCC) Program

- <https://ce-online.ryerson.ca/ce/default.aspx?id=2806>
- Course-based offered through Ryerson University.
- Cultural difference in communication, internationally educated professionals.
- Scenarios and interactive, real life activities.

YWCA Toronto

- Skills Development Centre – *Essential Skills and Employability Skills Training*
- <https://www.ywcatoronto.org/ourprograms/employmentandtraining/skillsdevelopmentcentre>

QUEBEC

Research:

- Baron, L. & Morin, L. (2010). The impact of executive coaching on self-efficacy related to management soft-skills. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 37(1), 18-38. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01437731011010362>
- Training of soft skills across three formats: seminar, learning groups, executive coaching.
 - Use of executive coaching, the best gains in coach efficacy in leading training and continuing skill development in an organization.

Organizations:

Commission des partenaires du marché du travail (Gouvernement du Québec)

- <https://www.cpmt.gouv.qc.ca/formation/mutuelles.asp>
- http://www.emploi.quebec.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/00_fdrmo_guide_mutuelles.pdf (guide)
- Sector collaboration, non-profit organizations assisting members by connecting them to low-cost training options for their workers.
- Forma Plus: a Montreal-based mutuelle with more than 150 participating SMEs and 7,000 combined employees, helps its members identify common learning and development needs, then procures training services cost-efficiently and seeks government funding if necessary (Advisory Council on Economic Growth).

McGill University

- School of Continuing Studies
- Professional Development Certificates
 - Business Analysis
 - Interpersonal Skill for Professionals
- <https://continuingstudies.mcgill.ca/search/publicCourseSearchDetails.do?method=load&courseId=505433>

SASKATCHEWAN

Organizations:

Morris Interactive

- <http://morrisinteractive.ca/facilitation-training>
- Workshops on:
 - Sales
 - Communication Cadence
 - Leadership
 - Team Building
 - Customer Service
 - Workplace Culture

SaskAbilities

- https://www.saskabilities.ca/public/CKeditorUpload/pdfs/bulletin/Bulletin_June_2016.pdf
- <https://www.saskabilities.ca/programs-services/employment-services/available-programs>
- Skills training programs for the disabled.

TERRITORIES

Research:

Klinga, S. (2012). State of practice: Essential skills applications with First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Canada. *Canadian Career Development Foundation*. http://www.ccdf.ca/ccdf/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/State-of-Practice-2012-10-30_FINAL1.pdf

- The purpose of this literature review is to describe the current level of need for ES development among First Nations, Inuit and Métis, to explore the state of practice of ES initiatives with these populations in Canada and to examine innovative practices in an effort to determine potential “markers of excellence” in ES programming.

Organizations:

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Essential Skills Inventory Project

- Canadian Career Development Foundation; Employment and Social Development Canada's Office of Literacy and Essential Skills; Assembly of First Nations; Métis National Council; Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, 2014
- <http://www.fimesip.ca/>
- <http://www.cfeebc.org/resource/first-nations-inuit-metis-essential-skills-inventory-project-website/> (overview of project)

- A comprehensive inventory of essential skills initiatives aimed at First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.
- The goal of the project is to gain a better understanding of the state of practice with respect to essential skills initiatives tailored to First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth and adults living in diverse communities throughout Canada and to share these insights and lessons learned with a larger community of practice.
- It also includes any identified factors, or markers of promising practice that contribute to an initiative's success.

OUTSIDE OF CANADA

Research:

- Andrews, J. & Higson, H. (2008). Graduate employability, 'soft skills' versus 'hard' business knowledge: A European study. *Higher Education in Europe*, 33(4), 411-422. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03797720802522627>
- Graduate and employer perspectives of student employability in the UK, Austria, Slovenia, and Romania.
- Chomaorro-Premuzic, T., Arteche, A., Bremner, A., Grevan, C., & Furnham, A. (2009). Soft skills in higher education: Importance and improvement ratings as a function of individual differences and academic performance. *Educational Psychology*, 30(2), 221-241. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410903560278>
- Dixon, J., Belnap, C., Albrecht, C., & Lee, K. (2010). The importance of soft skills. *Corporate Finance Review*, 14(6), 35 – 38.
- Soft skills are the deciding factor for hiring when hard skills are comparable across applicants.
- Gibb, S. (2014). Soft skills assessment: theory development and the research agenda. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 33(4), 455-471. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02601370.2013.867546>
- Critical review of soft skill assessments and their impacts on life and employment opportunities.
- Grugulis, I. & Vincent, S. (2009). Whose skill is it anyway? 'Soft' skills and polarization. *Work, Employment, and Society*, 23(4), 597-615. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017009344862>
- Case studies
 - Difference between job roles and benefit of soft skills.
 - Looks at gender bias in soft skills and impact in the workforce.
- Hurrell, S., Scholarios, D., & Thompson, P. (2012). More than a 'humpty dumpty' term: Strengthening the conceptualization of soft skills. *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 34(1), 161 – 182. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0143831X12444934>
- Case study
 - Soft skills as real skills supported by service contexts that display employer-facilitated worker discretion and requirements for contextual knowledge.

- Laker, D. & Powell, J. (2011). The differences between hard and soft skills and their relative impact on training transfer. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 22(1), 111-122. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.20063>
- Difficulty in transferring soft skills from training into practice.
 - Importance of differentiating soft skills from hard skills and approaching them differently in training/education.
- Lievens, F. & Sackett, P. R. (2012). The validity of interpersonal skills assessment via situational judgment tests for predicting academic success and job performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 97(2), 460-468. <http://psycnet.apa.org/buy/2011-22091-001>
- Mitchell, G., Skinner, L. B., & White, B. J. (2010) Essential soft skills for success in the twenty-first century workforce as perceived by business educators. *Delta Pi Epsilon Journal*, 52(1), 443-453. <https://search.proquest.com/openview/e1e4492ba524f4ae699ab205fc6aafd6/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=34490>
- Business educators have highly endorsed soft skills but there is still low correlation between importance of soft skills and integration of soft skills into courses.
- Moss, P. & Tilly, C. (1996). "Soft" Skills and Race: An investigation of black men's employment problems. *Work and Occupations*, 23(3), 252-276. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0730888496023003002>
- 56 employers interviewed, all recognising soft skills as the competitive edge.
 - Study demonstrates racial bias in black men who were routinely considered lacking soft skills over white men.
- Robles, M. (2012). Executive perceptions of the top 10 soft skills needed in today's workplace. *Business and Professional Communication Quarterly*, 75(4). <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1080569912460400>
- Study identified the top 10 soft skills perceived as the most important by business executives: integrity, communication, courtesy, responsibility, social skills, positive attitude, professionalism, flexibility, teamwork, and work ethic.
- Schulz, B. (2008). The importance of soft skills: Education beyond academic knowledge. *Journal of Language and Communication*, 2(1), 146-154. <http://ir.polytechnic.edu.na/handle/10628/39>
- Focus on educators to include soft skill training, beyond academic/technical training.
- Weedon, E., & Tett, L. (2013). Plugging a gap? Soft skills courses and learning for work. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 32(6), 724-740. doi:10.1080/02601370.2013.773572
- European Structural Funds (ESF)-funded course (one-off) to support soft skill development in low-skill employees.
 - Course was beneficial but workplace culture impacted overall gains of program.

Frameworks:

- Carter, L. (2011). Ideas for adding soft skills education to service learning and capstone courses for computer science students. Proceedings of the 42nd ACM Technical Symposium on Computer Science Education, 517-522. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1953163.1953312>

- Demonstrates how soft skills can be incorporated into learning and how this might be implemented in other course domains.

Del Vitto, C. (2008). Cross-cultural “soft skills” and the global engineer: Corporate best practices and trainer methodologies. *Journal for Global Engineering Education*, 3(1), 1-9. <http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/oigee/vol3/iss1/1>

- Focus on cross-cultural and adaptive soft skills to assist engineering students to work collaboratively in their co-ops, internships and expatriate assignments.

Wats M. & Wats, R. K. (2009). Developing soft skills in students. *International Journal of Learning*, 15(12), 1-10. <http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/articles/40825472/developing-soft-skills-students>

- Hard skills contribute to only 15% of one’s success while the remaining 85% is made by soft skills.
- Focus on how higher education institutions can acknowledge and implement soft skills training within programs as a long-term benefit to students.

Tools/Processes:

Heckman, J. & Kautz, T. (2012). Hard evidence on soft skills. *Labour Economics*, 19(4), 451-464. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.labeco.2012.05.014>

- Achievement tests mismeasure or do not account for specific yet important soft skills.
- Challenging to enhance/teach soft skills when they are not acknowledged.

Kechagias, K. (Ed.). (2011). *Teaching and assessing soft skills*, MASS Project report. School of Thessaloniki, Neapoli. <https://bit.ly/2JOFTQL>

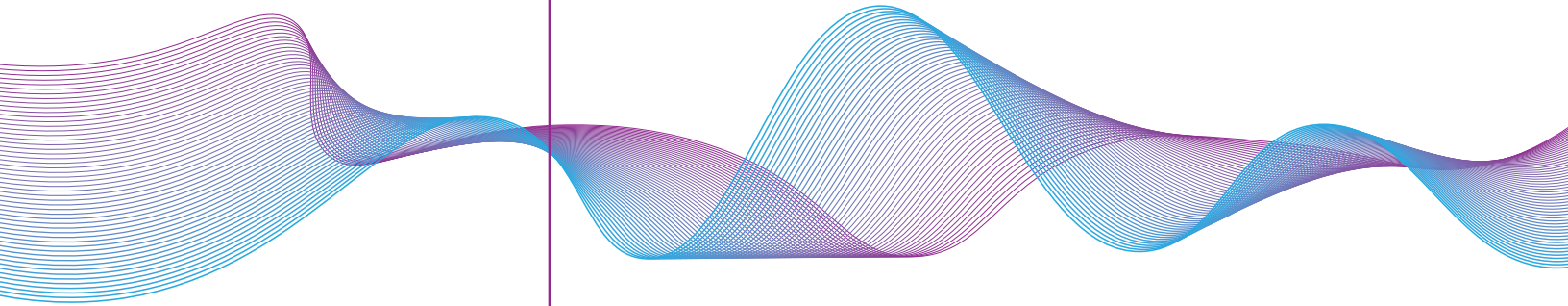
- MASS – Measuring and Assessing Soft Skills project
- Includes a review of:
 - The program and how it’s being taught
 - Assessment theory and practice
 - Assessment criteria and development

Linderbaum, B. A., & Levy, P. E. (2010). The development and validation of the feedback orientation scale (FOS). *Journal of Management*, 36(6), 1372-1405. <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0149206310373145>

- Created a Feedback Orientation Scale
- Regarding employee development and continuous learning to help with retention of quality labour; unique employee needs.
- Performance feedback can help assess further development/learning needs, hence scale.

Petkovic, D., Thompson, G., Todtenhoefer, R., Huang, S., Levine, B., Parab, S., et al. (2010). Work in progress — e-TAT: Online tool for teamwork and “soft skills” assessment in software engineering education. *Frontiers in Education Conference (FIE)*. <https://doi.org/10.1109/FIE.2010.5673130>

- Open source,web-based electronic Teamwork Assessment Tool, e-TAT.
- Teamwork and soft skills assessment in IT (software engineering).



ANNEX B: SHARING PERSPECTIVES ON SOFT SKILLS SURVEY

A Canada-Wide Survey of Key Stakeholders

June 2018

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1.0 Introduction and Background

Futureworx Society is currently supporting a project called “Integrating Soft Skills into the Essential Skills Framework – Building a National Consensus” funded by the federal Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES). The project seeks to enable movement towards a national framework to support the development and assessment of ‘soft skills’ in Canada. The objectives of the project, which are intended to be achieved by November 2018, are:

- To develop a plan to create a common assessment and development approach for ‘soft skills’ in Canada;
- To propose ideas for the integration of ‘soft skills’ into Canada’s existing *Essential Skills Framework*; and
- To identify and develop common terminology around ‘soft skills’ in Canada.

As part of the initial steps of the project, in the spring of 2018 Futureworx Society hired research and evaluation experts at Constellation Consulting Group to solicit perspectives on ‘soft skills’ and the development of a ‘soft skills’ framework from relevant stakeholders, including trainers, educators, service providers, employers etc., across the country via an online survey. The intention of the online survey was to garner information on current perspectives and practices regarding soft skills development in order to advance consensus in planning for recommendations for the integration of ‘soft skills’ into Canada’s existing *Essential Skills Framework* and common assessment and development approaches for ‘soft skills’ in Canada. To this end, the survey included questions on stakeholder perspectives around ‘soft skills’ as well as an opportunity to indicate interest in participating in a collaborative planning session of key stakeholders to be held in August 2018.

The current report highlights results from the Canada-wide survey and provides insights into current stakeholder perspectives on ‘soft-skills’ in Canada. The information presented here can be leveraged towards consensus-building and planning as part of the project going forward.

2.0 Methods

An initial set of desired online survey questions were developed by Futureworx and refined in collaboration with

research and evaluation experts at Constellation Consulting Group in March 2018. The survey questions were designed to seek information on:

- **Organizational demographics** (e.g. province of operation, size, sector, etc.) to ensure an appropriate cross-section of stakeholders were engaged and to provide opportunities for cross analysis;
- **Perspectives on soft skills** within organizations, including definitions, perceptions around the importance of ‘soft skills’;
- **Existing research, frameworks, and tools** to advance understanding of what is influencing perspectives on ‘soft skills’ and ensure the project can leverage and build on existing work rather than trying to create new research/tools;
- **Interest in participating in a planning group** to explore the development of a national consensus on ‘soft skills’ in Canada.

The survey included a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions, allowing participants to add comments to qualify most quantitative questions. See Appendix A for survey questions.

The survey was set up online with a web link used to submit responses. More than one individual within an organization could participate and multiple responses could be received from one IP address.

An initial list of 250 individual stakeholders with a possible interest in ‘soft skills’ development was created based on Futureworx contacts and an internet search for relevant stakeholders. Contacts included a mix of non-profits, trainers, educators, service providers and employers serving groups including youth, adults, Indigenous peoples, women and under-represented groups across the country. Individuals receiving the survey were encouraged to share the link with other relevant contacts and the survey link was available via social media platforms to encourage broad participation beyond contacts initially identified.

The survey process was introduced to contacts via an email sent by Futureworx on April 24, 2018. The survey link was subsequently sent by Constellation Consulting Group to all contacts on April 30, 2018. A reminder email was sent to all contacts on May 7, and personalized reminder emails and phone calls to contacts who had not responded were pursued on May 14. The survey was closed on May 18, 2018.

A total of 235 survey responses were received from individuals at 181 organizations. Of the initial 250 contacts, 134 responded, representing a response rate of 54%.

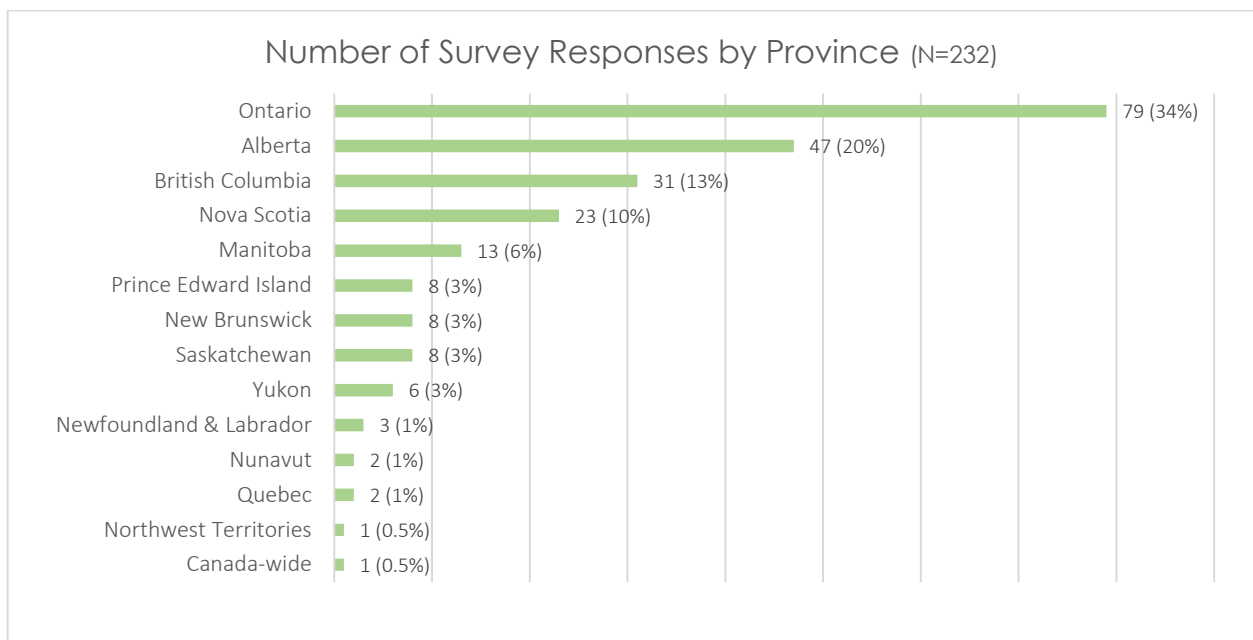
Survey data has been analyzed in aggregate and broken down

by region¹ and organization type.² The current report presents information on the overall data set and, when relevant differences were observed, data broken down by region and/or organization type. Unfortunately, due to smaller sample sizes in regional and organizational breakdown of data, statistical tests to determine the significance of observed differences have not been possible, limiting the generalizability of the findings presented in this report.

3.0 Survey Findings

3.1 Profile of Survey Respondents

In total, 235 unique survey responses were received from individuals at 181 organizations with representation from across Canada. While few responses were received from Quebec, this is not surprising as, due to resource constraints, the survey was not available in French. In the future, targeted engagement of Quebecois/francophone organizations through a French-language survey may be needed to ensure full representation of Canadian perspectives. Future targeted engagement may also be needed within the Northern region (Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Yukon) as the response rate in this region was quite low.

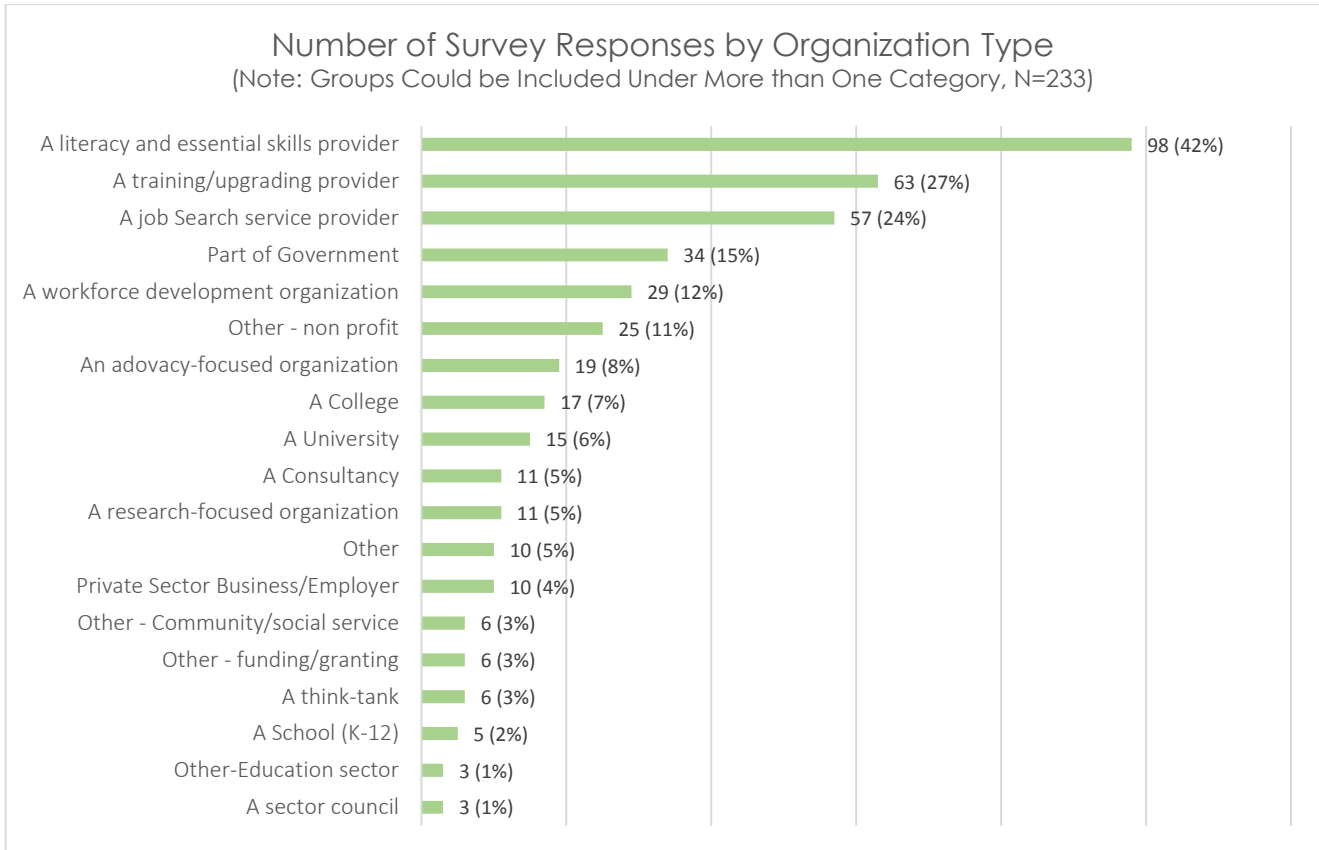


1 'Far West' including British Columbia; 'Prairies' including Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba; 'Ontario'; 'Maritimes' including Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland & Labrador; 'Quebec'; and 'North' including Yukon, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. Note: Since the sample size for 'North' and 'Quebec' regions were very low (5 and 2 respondents respectively) analysis for these regions is not presented in the report.

2 As listed on page 6, with 'university' and 'college' grouped as 'higher education' and those with samples below 20 respondents not included in the broken down analysis.

Organizations represented in the response data included groups from numerous sectors, with the most common types of organizations being:³

1. Literacy service providers (48%)
2. Training/upgrading providers (31%)
3. Job search service providers (28%)
4. Part of the government (17%)
5. Workforce development organizations (14%)



While private sector businesses/employers are somewhat underrepresented in the sample many relevant stakeholders across Canada were able to provide their perspectives through the survey. Future targeted engagement of private sector businesses/employers may increase the robustness of results and further deepen understanding in the field. Notably, there was a higher proportion of business/employer respondents from the Far West region (13% of Far West stakeholders were businesses/employers compared with 4% in the sample overall).

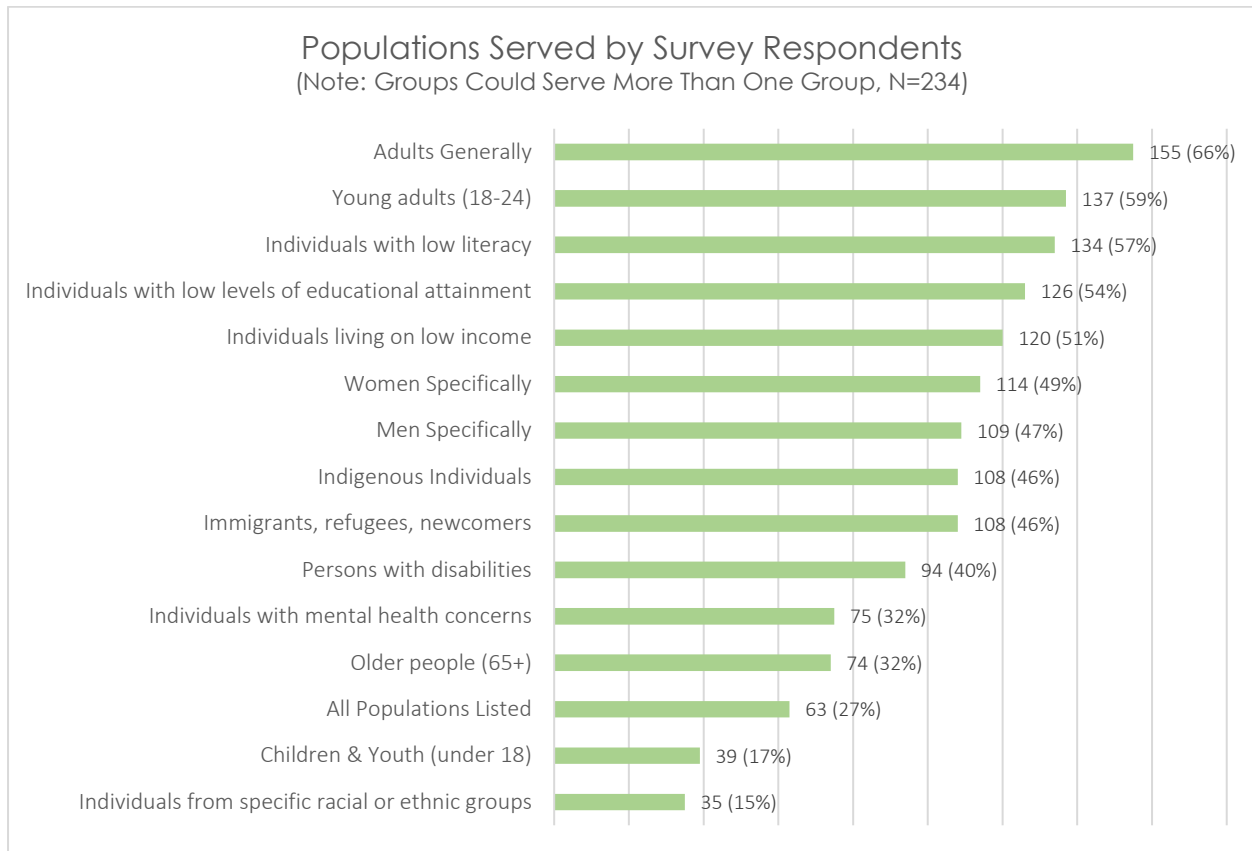
Other notable regional differences in types of organizations engaging in the survey included:

- Fewer Universities responding in Ontario (only 1 response received from a university despite the prevalence of universities in Ontario)
- Lower proportion of individuals from within government responding in Ontario (4% of all responses from Ontario compared with 15% overall)
- No responses from research-focused organizations based in the Prairies
- Higher proportion of individuals from within government responding in the Maritimes (28% of all responses from the Maritimes compared with 15% overall)

³ NOTE: Respondents could choose more than one category; N=233

When considering regional differences based on the current survey results, it is important to keep in mind these differences in the survey respondent sample.

Overall, the organizations/individuals that responded to the survey serve a broad range of stakeholders, with some organizations serving any citizens or marginalized citizens, and others targeting specific populations. Most groups indicated that they serve adults (66%) and young adults (60%), including individuals with low literacy (57%) and/or low educational attainment (54%). Nearly half the organizations (46%) responding to the survey indicated that they have specific services for Indigenous individuals. Similarly, nearly half (46%) indicated they serve newcomers specifically, though only 15% indicated they have specialized services for particular ethno-cultural groups. 40% identified specifically serving individuals with disabilities. Overall 27% of survey respondents indicated that they serve all citizens, including marginalized individuals, non-marginalized individuals, special populations, and individuals with specialized needs/experiences.



Overall, representation within the survey sample covers a broad range of stakeholders across Canada, though ongoing efforts for engagement with private businesses, Northern and francophone organizations could create a more representative sample in the future.

3.2 How Are Organizations Talking About ‘Soft Skills’?

While many use the term ‘soft skills’ to refer to things like attitude, accountability, motivation, adaptability, time management, teamwork, and good communication, in initiating this project it was recognized that different terminology may be used in different contexts. To better understand what terminology is most commonly being used in practice, we asked survey respondents to indicate what terms they most often use to refer to things like attitude, accountability, and so forth. According to survey respondents, the

four most common terms they are 'always' or 'often' using are:⁴

1. 'Employability skills' (78% always or often use this term)
2. 'Essential skills' (74% always or often use this term)
3. 'Soft skills' (72% always or often use this term)
4. 'Life skills' (60% always or often use this term)

Other commonly used terms across the survey respondent cohort as a whole were, 'personal competencies' (43% always or often use this term), and 'personal management skills' (42% always or often use this term). Terms like 'personal attributes', 'life management competencies', and 'personal behaviours' were reported as being less commonly used.

Respondents from all regions indicated they were 'always' or 'often' using these same four most common terms. In the Far West and the Prairies, a greater proportion of survey respondents indicated that they use the term 'life skills' over 'soft skills', with 'soft skills' represented as the fourth most common term used. Prairie region respondents indicated that the most common term that is 'always' or 'often' used is 'essential skills' while in the Far West, 'employability skills' was most common. In Ontario, the most common term 'always' or 'often' used was 'soft skills' and this had the greatest proportion of respondents indicated they are using the term 'soft skills' (84%).

Across sectors, the same four most common terms were also used, though government employees, literacy and essential skills practitioners and workforce development practitioners indicated they use the term 'essential skills' 'always' or 'often'. Though the sample of private sector survey respondents was relatively small (N=9), interestingly these stakeholders indicated they were most likely to use the term 'soft skills' (followed by 'employability skills' and 'life skills'/'essential skills'). Within higher education organizations and job search services, the proportion of respondents indicating they use the term 'employability skills' was the highest.

'Other' terms listed by survey respondents included:

- 'Transferrable skills'
- 'People skills'
- 'Social skills'
- 'Human skills'
- 'Permanent skills'
- 'Foundational life skills'
- 'Self-management skills'
- 'Coping skills'
- 'Workplace skills'
- 'Leadership competencies'

- 'Career readiness competencies'
- 'Teachable learnable competencies'
- 'Social and emotional competencies'
- 'Career management competencies'

One survey respondent provided some insights on the use of the 'soft skills' terminology, saying "I don't really like the term 'soft skills' because it implies that it is not really important relevant and almost like it is a second class skill". Considerations like these should also be taken into account when deciding on the most appropriate and widely-applicable terminology moving forward.

Overall, the survey results indicate that, while the term 'soft skills' is commonly used to refer to things like attitude, accountability, motivation, adaptability, time management, teamwork, and good communication, ongoing debate about terminology may emerge, with 'essential skills' being a possible alternative term organizations would be comfortable using. In the context of employment, 'employability skills' may also be a readily adopted and graspable term for organizations.

For the purposes of the current report, we are using the term 'soft skills', recognizing that as the project progresses a change in terminology may be warranted based on group consensus.

3.3 Perspectives on 'Soft Skills'

After being asked to indicate the terminology most commonly used in their organization, survey participants were informed that, for the purposes of the survey, the term 'soft skills' would be used throughout the remaining survey questions. Survey participants were then asked to rate, on a scale from 1 to 10 (with 10 being 'very important'), how important they felt 'soft skills' are for maximizing individual potential within today's society. On average, survey participants rated 'soft skills' at 9 out of 10, indicating:⁵

Overall, survey respondents felt 'soft skills' are very important for maximizing individual potential within today's society.

Going into the future, nearly all respondents indicated that they think 'soft skills' will be as important as they are today, if not more important. In total, 39% of survey respondents indicated that 'soft skills' would continue to be important within Canadian society, while 60% felt the importance of 'soft

4 N=183; 'most common' meaning more than 50% of survey respondents indicated that they use the term 'always' or 'often'

5 N=184

skills' would increase in the future.⁶ When asked about which 'soft skills' were most important for their organization, the most commonly cited skills were:⁷

- Communication (78% listed as one of the five most important 'soft skills')
- Teamwork (56% listed as one of the five most important 'soft skills')
- Analytical skills (including problem solving and critical thinking) (41% listed as one of the five most important 'soft skills')
- Time management (41% listed as one of the five most important 'soft skills')
- Attitude (31% listed as one of the five most important 'soft skills')
- Adaptability/flexibility (30% listed as one of the five most important 'soft skills')
- Motivation (26% listed as one of the five most important 'soft skills')
- Accountability (22% listed as one of the five most important 'soft skills')
- Work ethic (11% listed as one of the five most important 'soft skills')
- Emotional regulation/personal management (10% listed as one of the five most important 'soft skills')
- Confidence (9% listed as one of the five most important 'soft skills')
- Willingness to learn (9% listed as one of the five most important 'soft skills')
- Conflict resolution (8% listed as one of the five most important 'soft skills')
- Leadership (7% listed as one of the five most important 'soft skills')
- Reliability (7% listed as one of the five most important 'soft skills')
- Cultural awareness (6% listed as one of the five most important 'soft skills')

While 'soft skills' were identified as very important, most survey respondents (80%) observed that the clients/program participants they work with struggle with respect to 'soft skills'. Another 42% felt that they had observed 'soft skills' difficulties amongst employees, and 17% felt volunteers struggled with 'soft skills'.⁸

3.4 How Are Organizations Fostering the Development of 'Soft Skills'?

In recognizing the simultaneous importance of 'soft skills' within Canadian society and struggles employees, volunteers and citizens may face related to 'soft skills' many organizations who participated in the survey indicated that they intentionally seek to foster 'soft skills' amongst clients, program participants, employees, and/or volunteers. In total, 93% of survey respondents indicated that their organization undertakes some form of intentional activity to develop 'soft skills'.⁹

Most commonly, respondents indicated that their organizations provide:

- Short-term, as-needed support (e.g. mentoring, referrals to resources) (64%)
- Coaching/counselling support (e.g. behavioural counselling) (59%)
- Group workshops (59%)
- Short talks or sessions (46%)

Fewer organizations indicated that they offer long-term, in-depth support (e.g. training over three months or more) around 'soft skills' (24%). Despite the general popularity of online learning, only 37% of groups indicated they use online learning opportunities for fostering 'soft skills'. 'Other' types of intentional activities listed by survey respondents included:

- Supporting 'soft skills' development programming of other organizations
- Embedding 'soft skills' development in curriculums and programming
- Group mentoring
- Team building
- Mentorship
- Creating organizational policies that support strong 'soft skills'

Overall, 54% of organizations indicated that they have their own structured training program for 'soft skills' development while 37% indicated they use a training program developed by another organization.¹⁰

6 N=181

7 N=179

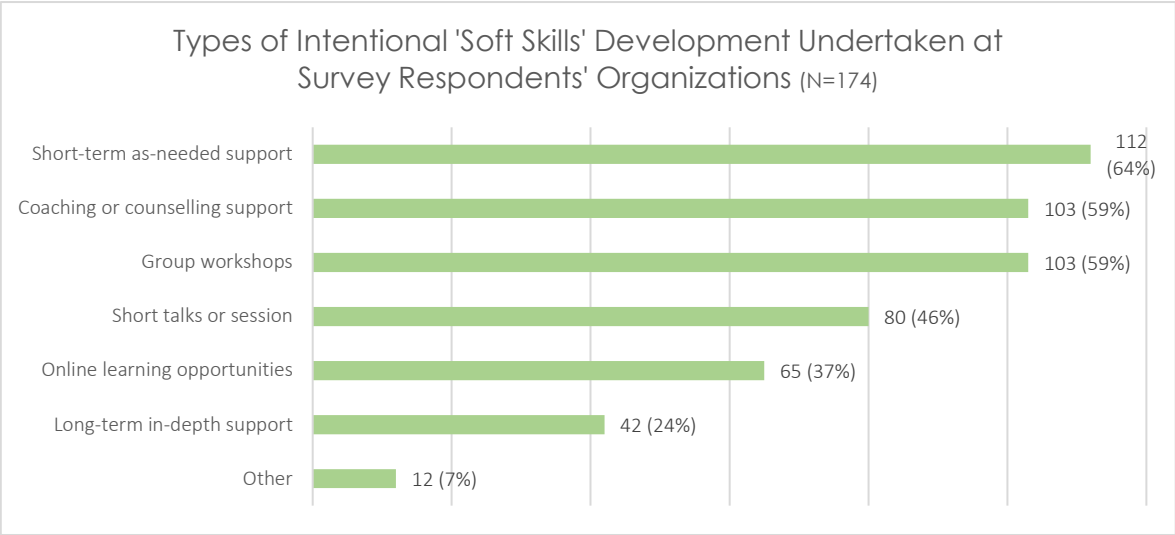
8 N=173

9 N=174

10 Note: 9% of respondents did not indicate whether their intentional activities are developed 'in-house' or externally

Regionally, respondents located in the Maritimes reported a higher proportion of in-house training programs offered, while those in the Far West region reported a higher proportion of no intentional 'soft skills' development activities. A greater proportion of survey respondents across the West (Prairies and Far West regions) reported offering 'short-term as-needed support' around 'soft-skills' compared with other regions and the cohort overall.

When asked to describe the intentional ways in which their organization supports the development of 'soft skills' survey respondents provided a wide range of responses, from general lists of activities like coaching, workshops, training, etc. to detailed descriptions of activities, including activities targeted towards specific populations (e.g. youth, unemployed adults, etc.). Survey respondents listed a variety of formats (e.g. coaching, mentoring, workshops, etc.), formality (e.g. formal or informal support), and depth of involvement (e.g. one-off contacts to 12-week long programs). Overall, it was apparent that groups are dedicating significant time and resources towards 'soft skills' development, though no one common activity or best practice approach was apparent within the response set.

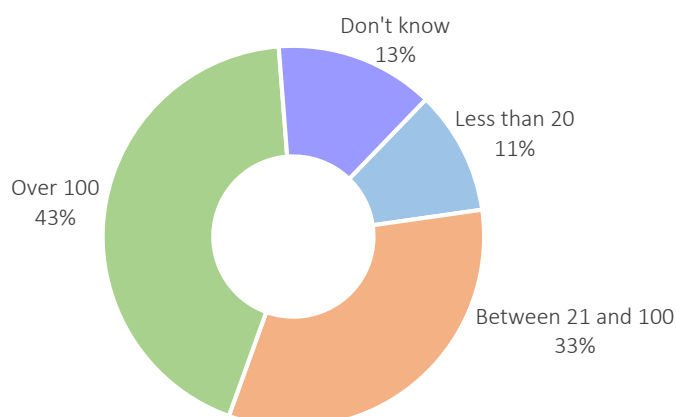


Survey respondents estimated that, as a percent of all the training and other intentional development undertaken at their organization each year, 'soft skills' development accounted for as little as 1% of their training and as much as 100% of their training. On average, respondents estimated that approximately 40% of their intentional training and development activities are dedicated to 'soft skills'.¹¹ Of those organizations providing intentional 'soft skills' development activities, 42% indicated that more than 100 individuals per year are involved, with some survey respondents commenting that the number of individuals they support with 'soft skills' development each year can be in the thousands.¹²

11 N=141

12 N=171

Estimated Number of Individuals Supported in Developing 'Soft Skills' Per Year (N=171)



Approximately half (51%) of all survey respondents indicated that their organization has specific tools or methods that they use for assessing 'soft skills'.¹³ When asked what types of tools or methods they were using, respondents articulated a plethora of methods and standardized/non-standardized tools. They indicated that many of their methods are informal, such as observation, anecdotal, interview, and performance review measures. The most common standardized tools that survey respondents indicated they are using were the *Employability Skills Assessment Tool (ESAT)*¹⁴ and the *Employment Readiness Scale*¹⁵. Several survey respondents indicated that they have yet to find/develop one tool that is appropriate for assessment. For example, one respondent said “We have found no one tool that is appropriate for assessing competencies, but we feel that certain tools could be developed as limited indicators of wellbeing.”

When asked what, if any, factors limit their organization's ability to undertake effective intentional activities to develop 'soft skills', survey respondents most commonly identified:¹⁶

1. A lack of tools or resources (60%)
2. Insufficient funding opportunities (59%)
3. A lack of time amongst practitioners (58%)
4. A lack of staff knowledge/capacity (52%)
5. A lack of best practices (33%)

Approximately a quarter (26%) of survey respondents also indicated that they felt that a lack of connection to a community of practice was limiting their organization's ability to undertake effective 'soft skills' development activities. Only 16% of respondents felt that need/demand for 'soft skills' development was too high, and only 7% identified lack of program space as a limiting factor. Other identified factors included things like:

- A lack of long-term funding commitment
- A lack of government policy commitment
- Remote location
- Disinterested staff, organizational leadership or participants

13 N=175

14 20 respondents indicated they use this tool. For more information see: <https://futureworx.ca/employability-skills-assessment-tool/>

15 5 respondents indicated they use this tool. For more information see: www.EmploymentReadiness.info

16 N=149; NOTE: respondents could choose more than one answer.

While survey respondents across regions indicated similar limitations to their 'soft skills' development work, a greater proportion of respondents from the Far West region indicated concerns around time, funding, tools/resources, and knowledge/capacity than those in other regions. Prairie region respondents were more likely to indicate that a 'lack of connection to a community of practice' was limiting their organization's ability to undertake effective intentional activities to develop 'soft skills'.

Overall, individuals commented that they are committed to advancing 'soft skills' development, despite possible challenges. For example, one survey respondent commented: "While everyone is operating at full capacity we recognize the importance of updating to skills for the future and finding frameworks for this and so our organization is making the time to dedicate to this activity."

3.5 Key Research and Best Practices Around Soft Skills Development

While some respondents felt a lack of best practice research was a limiting factor for 'soft skills' development activities, others suggested that there is an abundance of research upon which programs and organizations can draw. When asked to provide suggestions for soft skills research and best practices, approximately 50 respondents provided suggestions (see list of suggested research in Appendix B and a list of suggested best practice resources in Appendix C).

When asked what research on soft-skill development and/or assessment they would like to see emerge, survey respondents had a number of suggestions:

- Research to support concrete definition of 'soft skills'
- Research on best practices and effective approaches for 'soft skill' development (e.g. specific program structures that promote effective achievement of positive outcomes)
- Research on best practices and effective approaches to 'soft skill' development for specific populations (e.g. newcomers, individuals with low literacy, etc.)
- Research on the impact of 'soft skills' development activities (e.g. trainings, workshops, coaching, etc.)
- Research on the consequences of 'soft skills' deficiencies, and research on the benefits of well-developed 'soft skills'
- Standardized 'soft skills' assessment tools, and 'soft skills' assessment tools for specific populations
- Curriculum/learning materials for 'soft skills' development

- Resources to promote 'soft skills' recognition and recognition of the importance of 'soft skills'
- Research on 'soft skills' as they apply to different contexts (e.g. specific occupations, work, volunteering, etc.)
- Research on the implications of changing technologies and workplace trends with respect to 'soft skills' (e.g. cell phone use, automation in the workplace, etc.)

Overall, while survey respondents identified numerous resources already available in the field of 'soft skills' they nevertheless felt that ongoing research, standardization and advancement of knowledge could support the evolution towards even more effective practices in 'soft skills' development.

3.6 The Future of 'Soft Skills' Development in Canada

Currently in Canada, several provinces have strategies/frameworks that relate to 'soft skills' (see Appendix D). At the national level *Essential Skills Framework* outlines nine key skills that enable citizens to thrive in Canadian society. The nine 'essential skills' identified by the Canadian government within the *Essential Skills Framework* are:

- Reading
- Document use
- Numeracy
- Writing
- Oral communication
- Working with others
- Thinking
- Computer use
- Continuous learning

In initiating the project, it was recognized that some may feel the current *Essential Skills Framework* already incorporates 'soft skills' while others may see gaps in the framework with respect to 'soft skills'. As stakeholders working closely with 'soft skills', survey respondents were asked to consider whether future strategic direction related to 'soft skills' development in Canada could be accomplished within the current *Essential Skills Framework* (or the current framework with some modifications), or whether a separate 'soft skills' framework would better serve the objective of advancing Canadians' 'soft skills' capacity.

Only 6% of survey respondents felt that Canada's current *Essential Skills Framework* already adequately incorporates 'soft skills'.¹⁷ These respondents pointed to essential skills

like 'oral communication' and 'working with others' as areas where the current framework incorporates what would be considered 'soft skills'. For example, one respondent wrote "These categories are broad enough to include the skills I would classify as 'soft' - working with others, thinking, oral communication and continuous learning."

Most survey respondents (61%) felt that 'soft skills' could be more explicitly included within the *Essential Skills Framework* to ensure recognition of the importance of 'soft skills' and to add 'soft skills' that might not be related to the existing 'oral communication' and 'working with others' essential skills. For example, survey respondents said things like:

"Some of the [essential skills] I would classify as soft skills. More could be added to make the list comprehensive."

"I think it's good to keep them within the Essential Skills [Framework] to reinforce the importance so they don't get forgotten."

"My suggestion would be to include the soft skills in the Essential Skills Framework in a more concrete way. We don't need yet another framework to pay attention to."

"I feel a focus on soft skills could enhance [the *Essential Skills Framework*]. There's also lots of overlap: oral communication working with others thinking continuous learning. Having both separate may be confusing and I don't feel it would serve much purpose."

"I think there could be an increase in the soft skills included in the framework and perhaps more emphasis on them but I think that there is still a stigma around the idea of soft skills so separating them out may cause them to be seen as 'less than'."

Approximately a quarter (24%) of survey respondents felt that a separate framework should be developed for 'soft skills' indicating that they felt that would add emphasis on the

importance of 'soft skills' and would enable greater depth of understanding. 9% of survey respondents indicated that they were 'not sure' whether 'soft skills' should be added to the *Essential Skills Framework* or developed into a separate list/framework.

Regionally, a greater proportion of respondents from the Prairie region believed 'soft skills' should be included within the existing *Essential Skills Framework* (76%), while a smaller proportion of respondents from the Far West region believed the same (57%).

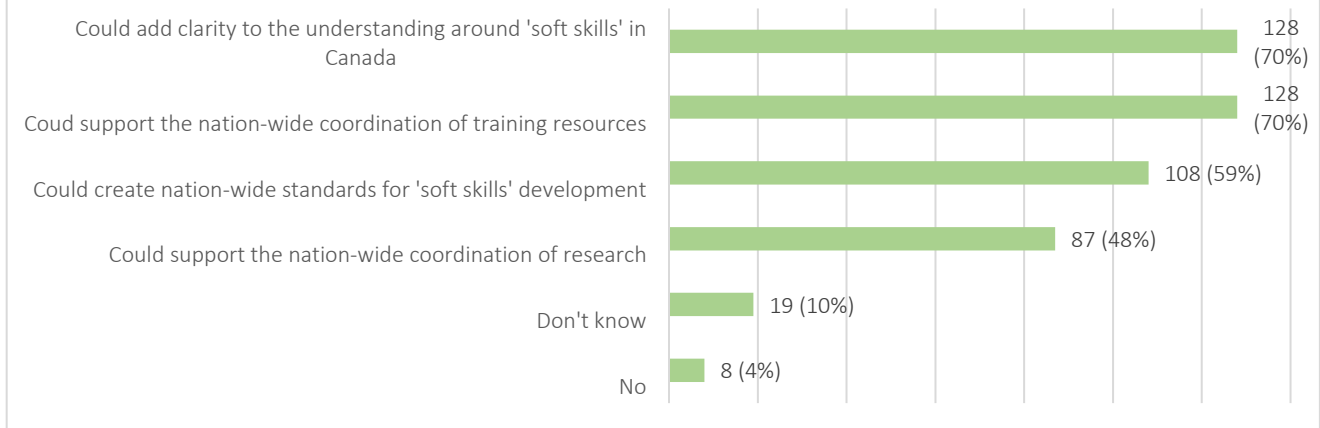
Overall, when asked whether they felt pan-Canadian strategic planning around 'soft skills' in Canada would be beneficial, 86% of respondents felt that it would be beneficial in some way.¹⁸ 70% of respondents felt that a pan-Canadian 'soft skills' framework could support the nation-wide coordination of training resources; and 70% felt that it would add clarity to the understanding of 'soft skills' in Canada. 59% felt such a framework could create nation-wide standards for 'soft skills' development and 48% thought it could support the nation-wide coordination of resources.

10% of respondents were unsure about whether a pan-Canadian strategy would be helpful, and 4% indicated that they did not think it could benefit Canada. Some of these respondents indicated that they felt the *Essential Skills Framework* is already sufficient while others indicated a need/desire for more regionalized strategies to respond to local needs and contexts.

Regionally, a greater proportion of Maritime region respondents felt that a pan-Canadian strategy would add clarity to the understanding around 'soft skills' in Canada while in the Prairie region a smaller proportion of respondents felt it could support nation-wide coordination of resources and/or research.

Survey Respondent Perspectives on the Creation of a Pan-Canadian 'Soft Skills' Framework

(Note: Respondents could choose more than one, N=182)



When asked whether a consensus-based decision making process would be appropriate for the possible development of a pan-Canadian 'soft skills' framework, two thirds (67%) of survey respondents felt that it would. Conversely, the most common reason why survey respondents felt a consensus-based method *would not* work was a perception that there are too many stakeholders/opinions involved and that consensus would be hard to foster. Others felt there may be limitations around seeking consensus due to the amount of time and resource fostering consensus may consume. Comments amongst those in support of a consensus-based model echoed some of these concerns with respondents saying things like:

"I fully support consensus decision-making in principle but the specific process used and its management would be critical to whether this approach would work for such a complex project with so many stakeholders. This must be balanced with evidence-based research."

"Collaboration is a good idea but it would take a lot of time and involve a lot of stakeholders. I also fear that sometimes when "scholars" and/or government gets involved the decisions and definitions miss the mark. As close to front line as possible will give the best input as to definition assessment and creation of material/programming to develop the skills."

"Some degrees of Consensus Decision-making could be used but on a bigger picture this would take too much time. It could be a component but not the master way to decide something."

"I think consensus decision-making would be valuable IF there are a core group of stakeholders willing to lead and pilot this process. Consensus at scale - with stakeholders who may not be willing to invest time in immediate work - is not a functional process."

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The survey results presented in this report begin to provide some insight into directions for moving forward with the “Integrating Soft Skills into the Essential Skills Framework – Building a National Consensus” project facilitated by Futureworx. Information provided by survey respondents can be leveraged as the project moves forward towards developing a plan to create a common assessment and development approach for ‘soft skills’ in Canada; proposing ideas for the integration of ‘soft skills’ into Canada’s existing *Essential Skills Framework*; and identifying and developing common terminology around ‘soft skills’ in Canada. The significant response to the survey and nation-wide representation within the survey respondents suggests that many organizations and individuals are keenly interested in this work. Based on the survey results and in the context of the project agenda, the following recommendations are put forward:

1. Continue to seek opportunities to define and standardize the definition of ‘soft skills’. The survey revealed that there are a variety of terms used to talk about so called ‘soft skills’ and that survey respondents are interested in opportunities for creating common understanding around the concept of ‘soft skills’ in order to advance strategic opportunities in Canada and enable knowledge sharing and development across regions and between stakeholder groups. Awareness of the terms used most commonly by different types of organizations and within different regions of Canada can be leveraged to facilitate the development of mutual understanding.
2. Provide opportunities that enable further discussion about ‘soft skills’ and the advancement of ‘soft skills’ development in Canada. The interest demonstrated by survey respondents through the survey suggests that there is currently an appetite for discussing the topic of ‘soft skills’ and that stakeholders are ready to advance action towards pan-Canadian opportunities for ‘soft skills’ development. This suggests that the current project is well-timed and has the potential to garner significant engagement in the anticipated consensus-building process.
3. Leverage existing research, best practices, and progress towards consensus to avoid duplication of efforts and enhance consensus building. Stakeholders who participated in the survey shared a wealth of knowledge that can be taken forward and built upon to avoid recreating existing efforts such that knowledge and resources are effectively leveraged to advance practice. At the same time, survey respondents repeatedly emphasized a desire to build on past work to move forward into the future.
4. Seek opportunities to further engage francophone, Quebecois, Northern and business/private sector stakeholders. Since the survey sample had less representation from these key groups, it is recommended that further targeted engagement is undertaken to ensure consensus-building involves the right range of key stakeholders representing all regions and relevant sectors.

Appendix A: Survey Questions

Futureworx Society is reaching out to organizations across the country with an interest in the development of ‘soft skills’ for the workplace as part of a project funded by the federal Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES). The project seeks to explore the development of a national framework to support ‘soft skills’ in Canada.

To initiate the project, we are soliciting perspectives regarding ‘soft skills’ and development of a ‘soft skills’ framework through the current survey.

The survey includes questions on your perspectives around ‘soft skills’ as well as an opportunity to indicate interest in participating in a planning session for moving forward in the development of a ‘soft skills’ framework, organized by Futureworx in August 2018.

The survey should only take about **XX minutes** of your time to complete. Your responses will be kept confidential and won’t be shared publicly with your name or any identifying information attached. You are free to stop the survey at any time, and can skip any questions you are not comfortable answering.

The survey is being administered and analyzed by Constellation Consulting Group, a third party Calgary-based research group. For more information on Constellation Consulting Group see: www.constellationconsulting.ca. The results of this survey, without organizational/personal reference, will be shared on the Futureworx website, www.futureworx.ca, in September 2018.

We are seeking a broad base of input and encourage you to pass this survey along to others in your network who may be interested in participating.

If you have any questions or would prefer to engage via phone interview, please contact Anne Miller at anne@constellationconsulting.ca or 403.923.7611.

We’d like to begin by asking you a few questions about you/your organization:

1. Your name (for survey tracking purposes only): <open-ended text box>
2. Name of your organization: <open-ended text box>
3. Province: <open-ended text box>
4. Town/city: <open-ended text box>
5. Email: <open-ended text box>
6. Phone number: <open-ended text box>
7. My organization could be described as: (please check all that apply) <multi-select multiple choice>
 - Part of government
 - A private sector business/employer
 - A university
 - A college
 - A school (k-12)
 - A training/upgrading provider
 - A literacy and essential skills service provider
 - A job search service provider
 - A research-focused organization
 - A sector council
 - An advocacy-focused organization
 - A think-tank
 - A workforce development organization
 - A union
 - A consultancy
 - Other (please specify) _____
8. Please briefly describe your organization’s work: <text box>

9. Approximately what is the size of your organization: <single select multiple choice>

- A. 1 to 9 employees
- B. 10 to 49 employees
- C. 50 to 249 employees
- D. 250 employees or more
- E. My organization is part of the government
- F. Don't know

Comments_____

11. My organization primarily focuses on supporting: (please select all that apply) <multi-select multiple choice>

- Children and youth (under 18 year of age)
- Young adults (ages 18-24)
- Adults
- Older people (ages 65+)
- Women
- Men
- Immigrants, refugees, newcomers
- Indigenous individuals
- Persons with disabilities
- Individuals from specific racial or ethnic groups (please provide details in comments space below)
- Individuals with mental health concerns
- Individuals living on low income
- Individuals with low levels of educational attainment
- Individuals with low literacy
- All of the above
- Other (please specify)_____

Comments_____

<New Page> Now we would like to ask you some questions about perceptions and work within your organization. Your answers will help us to better understand how people are working on 'soft skills' and where consensus might be fostered towards the development of a 'soft skills' framework in Canada.

10. People use different terms to talk about things like 'attitude', 'accountability', 'motivation', 'adaptability', 'time management', 'teamwork', 'good communication' and so forth. Please let us know how often you use the following terms to talk about these things within your organization: <Rating scale: Always use this term; Often use this term; Sometimes use this term; Rarely use this term; Never use this term>

- Soft skills
- Employability skills
- Personal management skills
- Life skills
- Essential skills
- Personal attributes
- Personal competencies
- Life management competencies
- Personal behaviours
- No consistent terminology used <no rating scale>
- Other (please specify)_____

While different organizations use different terminology to talk about things like attitude, 'accountability', 'motivation', 'adaptability', 'time management', 'teamwork', 'good communication' and so forth, for the purpose of this survey, we will call these things 'soft skills'.

11. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is the least important and 10 is the most important, how important do you feel 'soft skills' are for maximizing individual potential within today's society? <rating slider scale>

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

12. Does your province/region currently have a 'soft skills' framework in place? <single select multiple choice>

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. Don't know

If yes, could you please provide a link to the framework? _____

13. For you/your organization, what are the five most important 'soft skills' for employment? <multiple text boxes>

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____
- iv. _____
- v. _____

14. Within your organization, have you noticed any common deficiencies in 'soft skills'? (please select all that apply) <multi-select multiple choice>

- A. Yes, amongst employees
- B. Yes, amongst volunteers
- C. Yes, amongst clients/program participants
- D. No
- E. Don't know
- F. Other (please specify) _____

Comments _____

15. 'Soft skills' can be developed in many ways. Please select any of the ways your organization intentionally seeks to develop 'soft skills' amongst employees, clients, program participants, volunteers, etc.: (please select all that apply) <multi-select multiple choice>

- A. Our own structured training program
- B. A structured training program developed by someone else
- C. Group Workshops
- D. Short talks or sessions (e.g. lunch n learn sessions, presentations)
- E. Coaching or counselling support (e.g. behavioural counselling)
- F. Long-term, in-depth support (e.g. training over three months or more)
- G. Short-term, as-needed support (e.g. mentoring, referrals to resources)
- H. Online learning opportunities
- I. We do not intentionally seek to develop these things
- J. Other (please specify) _____

16. If relevant, please describe the intentional ways in which your organization is supporting the development of 'soft skills'. Please be as specific as possible, letting us know about things like the length and structure of your activities: <text box>

17. Each year, approximately how many individuals would you estimate are intentionally supported in developing 'soft skills' through your organization?
- A. None
 - B. Less than 20
 - C. Between 21 and 100
 - D. Over 100
 - E. Don't know

Comments _____

18. Thinking about all the training and other intentional development activities undertaken by your organization in a year, approximately what proportion would you estimate is dedicated to 'soft skills' development? (Your best guess is fine) <text box validated for % only> _____

19. At your organization, do you use any tools or methods for assessing 'soft skills'? <single select multiple choice>
- A. Yes
 - B. No

Please explain/provide details: _____

20. Is there any research on 'soft skills' development that you feel we should be aware of? If yes, please provide any titles, links, or contacts you feel we should know about: <text box>
21. Do you think research on soft-skill development ad assessment is required? If yes please provide details on research topics you would recommend. <text box>
22. Do you know of any best practices in 'soft skills' development that you feel we should be aware of? If yes, please provide any program names, links, or contacts you feel we should know about: <text box>
23. What factors, if any, limit your organization's ability to undertake effective intentional activities to develop 'soft skills'? (Please select all that apply) <multi-select multiple choice>
- Practitioners do not have enough time
 - Funding does not provide sufficient opportunity
 - Not enough tools or resources
 - Lack of staff knowledge/capacity
 - Demand/need is too high
 - Lack of space
 - Lack of best practices
 - Lack of connection to a community of practice
 - Other (please specify) _____

<New Page> Part of the objective of this project is to plan for a consensus around 'soft skills' development in Canada. The following questions ask about your perspectives on 'soft skills' in general and the possibility of a nation-wide effort to coordinate soft skills development practices.

24. In the future, how important do you think having strong 'soft skills' will be within Canadian society?
- A. As important as they are today
 - B. More important than they are today
 - C. Less important than they are today
 - D. Don't know

Comments: _____

25. Currently, the federal government's Essential Skills Framework identifies nine essential skills for Canadians: reading, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communication, working with others, thinking, computer use, and continuous learning. Do you feel 'soft skills' should: <single select multiple choice>
- A. Be included more explicitly in the existing Essential Skills Framework
 - B. Be a separate list of 'skills'
 - C. Not sure

Comments: _____

26. Do you feel it would be beneficial to develop a pan-Canadian 'soft skills' Framework? (Please check all that apply) <multi-select multiple choice>
- Yes, it could support the nation-wide coordination of training resources
 - Yes, it could support the nation-wide coordination of research
 - Yes, it would create nation-wide standards for 'soft skill' development
 - Yes, it would add clarity to the understanding around 'soft skills' in Canada
 - No
 - Don't know

Comments: _____

27. Consensus decision-making is a group decision-making process in which group members develop, and agree to support a decision in the best interest of the whole. If a pan-Canadian Soft Skills Framework was developed, do you feel a consensus decision-making process involving all stakeholders would be an appropriate approach? (Please select all that apply) <multi-select multiple choice>
- Yes, it would be a good approach
 - No, it would take too much time
 - No, it would take too many resources
 - No, there are too many stakeholders/opinions
 - No, it should be a government-directed undertaking
 - No, for other reasons
 - Don't know

Comments: _____

28. With funding from OLES, in August 2018 Futureworx will be gathering together a group of individuals/organizations to form a planning group to explore the development of a national consensus on 'soft skills' in Canada. Would you/your organization be interested in possibly being a part of this initial planning group?
- A. Yes
 - B. Maybe
 - C. No
 - D. Don't know

29. If you would like to be included, in what capacity would you like to be involved?
- A. As a researcher
 - B. As a reviewer
 - C. As a regional contributor/representative
 - D. As a national backbone organization
 - E. Don't know
 - F. Other (please specify) _____

30. Anything else to share?

This is intended to be a process with broad inclusion of multiple stakeholders. We encourage you to pass this survey along to others in your network so that we can garner a nation-wide dataset on soft skills development in Canada.

Thank you for your time and commitment in completing this survey! The results from the survey and planning meeting in August 2018 will be posted on the Futureworx website at www.futureworx.ca (expected to be posted in September 2018). If you have questions about this survey, please contact Anne Miller at anne@constellationconsulting.ca.

Appendix B: Research Recommended by Survey Respondents

In response to the question: “Is there any research on ‘soft skills’ development and/or assessment that you feel we should be aware of?” survey respondents provided the following suggested resources to explore:

Research/Resource	Web Link (if available)
AWES	http://www.awes.ca/
Brookfield Institute - The Talented Mr. Robot	http://brookfieldinstitute.ca/research-analysis/automation/
Business/Higher Education Roundtable - Navigating Change	http://bher.ca/publications/2018skillssurvey
Canada West Foundation	http://cwf.ca/
CBC - Potential hires coming up short in 'soft skills,' employers say	http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/potential-hires-need-soft-skills-1.4206639
Centre for Literacy - Embedding Literacy and Essential Skills in Workplace Learning	http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca/sites/default/files/Embed_LES_J_Derrick.pdf
Centre for Literacy - Meeting Expectations	http://www.srdc.org/media/199687/mos-final-report-en.pdf
CERIC	http://ceric.ca/
Conference Board of Canada - Getting to Work	http://www.conferenceboard.ca/e-library/abstract.aspx?did=9463
Employment Readiness - Summary of Research	http://www.employmentreadiness.info/sites/employmentreadiness.info/files/files/Organizations/ERS%20Research%20Results_cdn.pdf
Employability Skills Assessment Tool (ESAT)	https://futureworx.ca/employability-skills-assessment-tool/
ERIC - Development of a Proposed Global Work-Integrated Learning Framework	https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1131540
Essential Skills Ontario - Elevating Ontario's Workforce	http://www.essentialskillsontario.ca/research/elevating-ontario
FYA - The New Basics	https://www.fya.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/The-New-Basics_Update_Web.pdf
Grass Roots Press - Soft Skills	https://www.grassrootsbooks.net/ca/catalogsearch/result/?q=soft+skills
HEQCO - The Great Skills Divide	http://www.heqco.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/Skills%20Part%201.pdf
HEQCO - Learning Outcomes	http://www.heqco.ca/en-ca/OurPriorities/LearningOutcomes/Pages/Home.aspx

Research/Resource	Web Link (if available)
Jane Forward – Sociocultural Competency	https://bctéal.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/jane-forward-sociocultural-competency.pdf
Learning Networks – Soft Skills and Literacy and Basic Skills	https://learningnetworks.ca/wp-content/themes/Ino/files/resources/SoftSkillsandLBS-Feb2018-Final.pdf
LMI Canada	http://www.lmicanada.ca/
Morneua Shepell – Navigating Change: 2018 Business Council Skills Survey	https://www.morneuashepell.com/ca-en/insights/navigating-change-2018-business-council-skills-survey
National Children’s Bureau – A rapid review to inform development of tools for project evaluation	http://www.partners4value.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Measuring-Employability-Skills.pdf
National Literacy Secretariat	http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/92148/publication.html
NWT Literacy Council – Storying Progress	https://www.nwtliteracy.ca/sites/default/files/research/non-academic_outcomes_final_report.pdf
Office of Literacy and Essential Skills	https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/literacy-essential-skills.html
OSPE – Kickstart the Careers of the Next Generation of Ontario Engineers	https://www.ospe.on.ca/public/documents/advocacy/submissions/OSPE_Submission_to_Ontario_2018_Budget.pdf
OSPE – Premier’s Highly Skilled Workforce Strategy Expert Panel	https://www.ospe.on.ca/public/documents/advocacy/submissions/2016-OSPE_Submission_Premiers_Expert_Panel.pdf
Overseas Development Institute – A Comparative Overview of Resilience Measurement Frameworks	https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/9754.pdf
People for Education – Assessment and measurement: Beyond testing	https://peopleforeducation.ca/mwm-sharing-the-thinking/assessment-measurement-insight/
People for Education – Beyond the 3Rs: Competencies that matter	https://peopleforeducation.ca/mwm-sharing-the-thinking/competencies-insight/
People for Education – Citizenship domain paper	https://peopleforeducation.ca/report/citizenship-domain-paper/
People for Education – Creativity domain paper	https://peopleforeducation.ca/report/creativity-the-state-of-the-domain/
People for Education – Defining what matters: A common lexicon to support learning	https://peopleforeducation.ca/mwm-sharing-the-thinking/common-lexicon-insight/
People for Education – Equity: Developing competencies, changing trajectories	https://peopleforeducation.ca/mwm-sharing-the-thinking/equity-insight/
People for Education – Health domain paper	https://peopleforeducation.ca/report/health-domain-paper/
People for Education – Social-emotional learning domain paper	https://peopleforeducation.ca/report/sel-domain-paper/
People for Education – Quality learning environments: Creating conditions for learning	https://peopleforeducation.ca/mwm-sharing-the-thinking/gle-insight/

Research/Resource	Web Link (if available)
People for Education - Quality Learning Environments domain paper	https://peopleforeducation.ca/report/qlc-domain-paper/
Psychometrics – Strong Interest Inventory	https://www.psychometrics.com/assessments/strong-interest-inventory/
RBC – Humans Wanted	http://www.rbc.com/newsroom/_assets-custom/pdf/03-2018-rbc-future-skills-report.pdf
Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin – Construction and Field Testing of the Job Seeking Self-Efficacy Scale	http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/00343552060490040201
Simcoe Muskoko Workforce Development Board – Soft Skills Solutions	https://www.smwdb.com/soft-skills-solutions
Skills Competency Canada	https://www.skillscompetencescanada.com/en/
TRACOM – The Social Style Model	https://www.tracomcorp.com/social-style-training/model/
University of Guelph – Job Search Self-Efficacy and the influence of Social support	http://seanlyons.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Quinn-et-al-2014.pdf
University of Kentucky – Cultivate Self-Efficacy for Personal Organizational Effectiveness	https://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Bandura/Bandura2009Locke.pdf
University of Kentucky – Guide for Constructing Self-Efficacy Scales	https://www.uky.edu/~eushe2/Bandura/BanduraGuide2006.pdf
UvA-DARE – Job Search Self-Efficacy	http://dare.uva.nl/search?identifier=751f4632-2eb2-4a27-ba76-6b4ba71fae32
VIA Institute on Character	http://www.viacharacter.org/www/Character-Strengths-Survey
World Economic Forum – Fourth Industrial Revolution	https://www.weforum.org/agenda/archive/fourth-industrial-revolution
World Economic Forum – Towards a Reskilling Revolution	https://www.weforum.org/reports/towards-a-reskilling-revolution
World Economic Forum – What are the 21 st century skills every student needs?	https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/03/21st-century-skills-future-jobs-students/
Workplace Education Manitoba	https://wem.mb.ca/

Book: Rutherford, D. & Laroche, L. (2011) *Recruiting, Retaining and Promoting Culturally Different Employees*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Comment on internally produced research: Yes - we developed our own paper on soft skills in Ontario's Literacy and Basic Skills programs. It's called "Soft Skills and LBS" (March 2018) and we have a good list of soft skills and how often they are mentioned by various provincial, national and international publications. To access these documents, contact Tamara Kaattari at literacylink@bellnet.ca

Appendix C: Recommended Best Practices from Survey Respondents

In response to the question: “Do you know of any best practices in ‘soft skills’ development and/or assessment that you feel we should be aware of?” survey respondents provided the following list of programs, frameworks, and contacts to explore:

Suggested Best Practice Resource	Web Link (if available)
ASPECT - Employability Skills Curriculum	https://aspect.bc.ca/product/employability-skills-curriculum/
Boys and Girls Club - Skilled4Success	http://fmbgc.ca/skilled4success-youth-program.html
Consulting Resource Group	https://www.crgleader.com/
COPIAN	http://library.copian.ca/
Employ!	http://www.futuresbc.com/employ/
Employment Journey on PEI - Helping youth get a new start in life	http://employmentjourney.com/helping-youth-get-new-start-life/
Employment Journey on PEI - Moccasin Ladies Employment Project	http://employmentjourney.com/getting-encouragement-support-starting-new-path-employment/
Employment Journey on PEI - Summer Youth Programs	http://employmentjourney.com/summer-youth-programs-prove-everyone-winner/
Employment Journey on PEI - Three year plan to help youth enter construction field	http://employmentjourney.com/three-year-plan-help-youth-enter-construction-field-pe/
Employment Readiness Scale	https://www.employmentreadiness.org/
Employability Skills Assessment Tool (ESAT)	https://futureworx.ca/employability-skills-assessment-tool/
EPWIC	www.facebook.com/EPWIC
Essential Skills Group	http://www.essentialskillsgroup.com/
GIZ - The Life Skills Approach	https://www.giz.de/expertise/html/12727.html
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada	http://www.ccsd.ca/index.php/friends-partners/item/human-resources-and-skills-development-canada
LEADS employment services	https://leadsservices.com/skills-development/
McBride Career Group - Rebrand	https://www.mcbridecareergroup.com/programs-offered/show/edmonton-rebrand-career-and-employment-initiative-for-youth/6
OSPE - Bridging Programs	https://www.ospe.on.ca/ite-bridging-program
OSPE - Upcoming Courses	https://www.ospe.on.ca/courses#970/PE301-0618

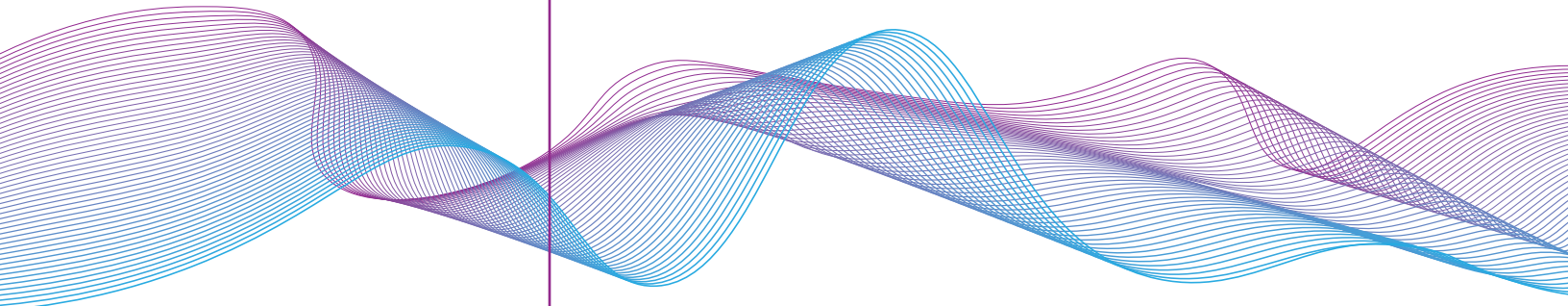
Suggested Best Practice Resource	Web Link (if available)
Oxford County Public Health and Emergency Services – Mapping a Pathway for a Strengths-Based Approach	http://www.oxfordcounty.ca/Portals/15/Documents/Public%20Health/Partners%20and%20Professionals/Reports%20and%20Publications/Final%20Report%20Mapping%20A%20Pathway%20For%20A%20Strengths%20Based%20Approach%20In%20Public%20Health%20Practice.pdf
People for Education – Assessment and Measurement	https://peopleforeducation.ca/mwm-sharing-the-thinking/assessment-measurement-insight/
Simcoe Muskoka Workforce Development Boards	https://www.smwdb.com/soft-skills-solutions
SkillsAdvance Ontario	http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/eo_programming_opportunities/skillsadvance.html
Soft Skills Solutions	www.smwdb.com
SSS Soft Skills	http://www.ssssoftskills.com/
UP Skills For Work	https://upskillsforwork.ca/
VIA Institute on Character	http://www.viacharacter.org/www/
Women’s Economic Empowerment Project	https://www.wnpei.org/Women-s-Economic-Empowerment

In addition to the above resources, survey respondents suggested:

- The Self Esteem Workbook by Glenn Schiraldi
Contact: Norm Amundsen
Contact: Gray Poehnell
- Catching Confidence by Jan Elridge (UK)

Appendix D: Relevant Provincial Frameworks

Province	Relevant Framework/Strategy Web Link
British Columbia	https://www.workbc.ca/Employer-Resources/Skills-Training/Essential-Skills-Literacy.aspx
Alberta	http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/kes/pdf/or_ws_tea_life_02_employ.pdf https://alis.alberta.ca/tools-and-resources/resources-for-employers/workplace-essential-skills/
Saskatchewan	http://saskliteracy.ca/pdf_links/SLn%20Enviro%20Scan%20Sept%202012%20Web%20&%20email%20version.pdf
Manitoba	https://www.gov.mb.ca/wd/ites/is/skills.html
Ontario	http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/pepg/audiences/colleges/progstan/essential.html
Newfoundland	http://www.aesl.gov.nl.ca/empservices/default.html
Nova Scotia	https://novascotia.ca/government/accountability/2016-2017/2016-2017-LAE-Business-Plan.pdf
PEI	http://www.gov.pe.ca/development/strategy/index.php3
New Brunswick	http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/services/services_renderer.200971.Workplace_Essential_Skills_Program_(WES).html
Yukon	http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/pdf/training_and_work_experience/Foundational_Skills_Program_Guidelines.pdf
NWT	https://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/sites/ece/files/resources/skills_4_success_-_10-year_strategic_framework.pdf
Nunavut	http://assembly.nu.ca/library/Edocs/2007/001482-e.pdf



ANNEX C: INTEGRATING SOFT SKILLS INTO THE ESSENTIAL SKILLS FRAMEWORK

FUTUREWORX

Integrating Soft Skills Into the
Essential Skills Framework:
Building a National Consensus

DATE:
August 8-10, 2018

LOCATION:
Toronto, ON

Integrating Soft Skills into the Essential Skills Framework – Building a National Consensus

Project Overview:

In the Spring of 2018, Futureworx engaged the Tamarack Institute to provide design and facilitation services for a three-day gathering of key partners to discuss and begin building a national consensus around the integration of soft skills into the Essential Skills Framework. The design for the three-day gathering consisted of several planning calls with the Futureworx team as well as developing a detailed working agenda and participant package in advance of the gathering. (Attachment A: Detailed Working Agenda)

From August 8-10, 2018, Futureworx convened a gathering of 23 diverse professionals to work toward building a national consensus approach. The following objectives were identified as critical to building the national consensus:

- o To develop a plan to create a common assessment and development approach for 'soft skills' in Canada;
- o To propose the integration of soft skills into Canada's Existing Essential Skills framework; and
- o To identify and develop common terminology around soft skills in Canada

To facilitate the conversation about the integration of soft skills into the Essential Skills Framework, Futureworx provided the following background information and research:

- ESDC LMI Career information, skills and competency taxonomy summary
- A Literature Review including a soft skills summary and a soft skill annotated bibliography
- The summary results of a sector survey about perspectives on soft skills; and additional qualitative data about soft skills

Tamarack Institute provided information and background resources introducing the Collective Impact (CI) model as a possible approach the group could consider when building a pan-Canadian framework for soft skills as part of the Essential Skills framework.

The National Gathering: August 8 – 10, 2018

Stakeholders representing a variety of different perspectives were invited to and participated in the national gathering which was held from August 8 – 10, 2018 in Toronto, Ontario. A full list of the stakeholders can be found in Attachment A: Detailed Working Agenda. The stakeholders represented different regions of the country as well as bringing perspectives from the employer, education, consultant and service provider sectors. All participants were fully engaged throughout the three-day gathering and contributed their perspectives to the conversation.

During the three days of facilitated dialogue, the stakeholder group was engaged in activities which moved them toward the following outputs:

1. To review the results of the survey and literature search. Participants will have been provided a pre-reading pack with this info, so the review will be brief and will focus on questions/observations by the group;
2. To review activities within regions. Participants will be provided time (5 minutes?) to outline significant activities in their region (these could be requested and circulated ahead of time);
3. The remaining activities fall into two categories, defining the starting point for a framework (common goals) and planning. Questions to be addressed include:
 - a. Defining
 - i. Do we need a pan-Canadian framework? Why?
 - ii. What should the framework seek to provide (definitions, exemplars, complexity, tools, training, curriculum, etc.)

- iii. Should the framework be part of, or distinct from, the Essential Skills framework?
- iv. How should LMI taxonomy inform/guide the framework?
- v. What recommendation can we make regarding a name for the framework elements (i.e. soft skills, personal attributes etc.) as a starting point for the framework? Should we list suggested elements (what would they be) as a starting point?

b. Planning

- i. Should we use the Collective Impact model for this project?
- ii. What is the agreed objective statement?
- iii. What are the key activities/steps?
- iv. Timeline?
- v. Cost? (this may be done post session)
- vi. Roles for participants?

4. Conclusion - The session should end with a clear list of expectations and actions for group members related to the review of the project conclusions and report.

The facilitated sessions were designed to include three main sections:

1. Setting the Stage

Tamarack provided an overview of the Collective Impact model and its relationship to the current discussion of a pan-Canadian soft skills framework, and facilitated discussion about Futureworx's field wide survey, as well as an academic literature review.

Discussion Question: What would we need to consider to build a soft skills common agenda in Canada?

2. Defining a Soft Skills Approach

Through individual and group brainstorming, the group began imagining what a pan-Canadian framework for soft skills would include, look like, and achieve.

Groups sketched their approaches, received feedback, and engaged in developing a common agenda.

3. Drafting Elements of a Framework & Next Steps

The group spent time critiquing a draft framework, provided by Futureworx, in groups. Key themes and ideas were drawn, helping identify areas of consensus and disagreement.

The group identified priorities and next steps to pursue

Key Themes Emerging and Conclusions

Several key themes and conclusions were drawn by the group throughout the three-day session, noted below.

Clarity of terms, definitions, and audience

One of the early and persistent conclusions that arose from discussion was the need for clear definition of terms, ranging from soft skills and all that it encompasses, to who the main audience or audiences for this proposed framework would be. These definitions were seen as important for a variety of reasons, including:

Improving engagement with employers, who were seen as key stakeholders and important in practically implementing any proposed framework, by using the language of business, or terms they will easily understand and contextualize;

Improving the landscape for academic discussion and literature review. Currently, it appears that while soft skills are generally under-studied relative to their importance in employment, it is harder to conduct thorough reviews due to the wide variety of language, terms, and definitions present in the literature;

Understanding how soft skills could be integrated into the existing Essential Skills framework, by defining which high-level skills or categories are being proposed for inclusion, and how more context-specific skills or examples could be included at lower levels.

A pan-Canadian framework should be focused on high-level skills to allow for adaptability

It was widely accepted by the group that an adaptive, effective, and rigorous framework was needed to promote soft skills development across Canada. To accomplish this, participants identified that high-level skills should be the focus, which would allow for individual organizations, employers, or people to fill in specific skills, proficiencies, or examples into the framework. This would create a living document that accurately reflected the application of high-level skills across a variety of contexts. An analogy proposed by Futureworx was that of a library - the library framework would create the categories and sub-categories and the space for practitioners to share their content and expertise.

This solution helps avoid potential problems of creating a more rigid set of definitions that might not reflect all stakeholders' experiences and encourage two-way use of the framework - both using the framework to receive information, as well as contribute specific skills or examples.

More voices are needed to ensure a framework that reflects all stakeholders

From the survey, to the literature review, to the 3-day session, there was agreement that more diverse voices and participation were necessary. It was noted that, moving forward, the inclusion of more employer voices, given their role in developing soft skills in employees would be a benefit. This relates to a theme that emerged of shared responsibility among different parties involved in skills development. As well, further Francophone participation would be a benefit to ensuring a truly pan-Canadian approach.

Some voices that were mentioned as underrepresented include:

- Employers
- Francophone organizations, employers, individuals
- Funders

Inclusion in the Essential Skills framework is the best way forward

Participants agreed that inclusion in the Essential Skills framework represented the most likely path to successfully promoting the development of soft skills across Canada. This consensus based on a desire not to needlessly duplicate efforts, and to establish widespread support for common language, although no consensus was reached on a particular method of integration.

The Role of Collective Impact

Much of the first day of discussion was dedicated to exploring the Collective Impact (CI) model, and how it could be suited to helping Futureworx and the assembled group pursue a pan-Canadian framework for developing soft skills. In brief, the five conditions of any CI model are commonly known as:

- A Common Agenda
- Shared Measurement
- Mutually Reinforcing Activities
- Continuous Communication
- Backbone

Liz Weaver, Co-CEO of Tamarack Institute and one of the facilitators of the three-day session, introduced CI and described the model's common use in projects spanning 3-5 years.

The Collective Impact (CI) framework is designed to assist a diverse group of stakeholders to come to agreement on a common or shared purpose and to work collectively to drive systems level change. In the context of integrating soft skills into the essential skills framework, it was acknowledged that a diverse group of perspectives would be required for this common agenda to happen. There are several existing and emerging soft skills frameworks being utilized across Canada. The stakeholder group would have to come to agreement on how to move from idea to implementation.

As well the elements of mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communications and backbone infrastructure are useful strategies for engaging diverse stakeholders. While, on the surface, these conditions of collective impact seem logical and accessible, when trying to work across diverse perspectives a stewarding group (backbone) and continuous communications are essential. Finally, mutually reinforcing activities welcomes the contributions of other to the collective or shared agenda.

Participants communicated that they saw value in the CI model, but they would like to move to action in a quicker timeframe. The participants noted that there was value in having a backbone entity to help coordinate and advance the work and also felt the work would benefit from a shared or common agenda.

A Common Agenda

In Collective Impact 3.0, Liz Weaver and Mark Cabaj write:

“A true common agenda requires leadership to bring key stakeholders together; to review the key data which informs the problem or issue; to develop a shared vision for change; and to determine the core pathways and strategies that will drive the change forward. This is more than a simple planning exercise. Indeed, it requires would-be collaborators to find (or create) common ground despite their very different values, interests, and positions.” (Weaver, L, and Cabaj, M, Collective Impact 3.0, pg. 6)

Participants saw an obvious value in creating, and committing to, a common agenda. The Toronto gathering itself acted as one of the first steps towards a common agenda, and the call for further meetings of the group, or a selection of participants, reflect a desire to continue the discussion as more action towards a framework is taken.

This shared vision for discussion reflects that while participants were eager for quick wins and action, the importance of grounding action in the practical needs of stakeholders was well understood. A framework that doesn't reflect the needs of employers, social service organizations, or individuals would not necessarily be an improvement on the status quo.

The Backbone

The second element of the CI model that was unanimously supported by the group was the backbone support. Weaver and Cabaj write:

“work on community change across organizational and sectoral boundaries must be placed firmly in the centre – rather than on the side – of participants’ desks. It warrants an investment of extra resources in an intermediary or coordinating body whose job it is to see to the day-to-day work of collaboration.” (Weaver, L, and Cabaj, M, Collective

Impact 3.0, pg. 9)

Due partly to the wide range of individuals and organizations assembled, and the further variety of stakeholders not present during the three-day session, participants agreed that the support of a backbone was necessary. Futureworx was widely regarded as a likely candidate for this role, given their capacity, expertise, early involvement in assembling the group for discussion. Further to this point, Futureworx helped facilitate next steps for the group, and has already circulated an updated draft framework to participants for input.

Continued support from a backbone organization or group is essential to the short and long-term success of developing a pan-Canadian framework for soft skills. As more stakeholders are consulted, and as discussion increases in complexity and specificity, more capacity is required to focus efforts, help facilitate decisions, and secure quick wins.

Additional Emerging Themes and Conclusions

The following themes also emerged from the conversation which should be noted.

There's a need to focus on the strengths of those in the room, to use what we have and move forward to keep momentum

If possible, the framework should identify future value to employee/employer, not use the language of deficits

While the target audience is not exclusively young, we need to engage with youth and young adults to ensure that the framework is adaptable for the changing workplace and workforce

Next Steps

The stakeholder group recommended the following next steps essential to continuing the discussion of a pan-Canadian framework:

1. Create Report - include next phase, draft framework, to be reviewed by group
Futureworx has already circulated an updated draft to participants
2. Use our networks to socialize report and share information
3. Conduct an environmental scan - Who else is doing the work?
4. Find or agree on a potential backbone organization, and seek additional partners, end users, stakeholders, and funders for the work
5. Create small steering group - hopefully pulled from this group (reach, representation, and influence)

Attachment A: Detailed Working Agenda

Futureworx Project: Integrating soft skills into the essential skills framework – building a national consensus

OBJECTIVES: The objectives of this project are:

- To develop a plan to create a common assessment and development approach for ‘soft skills’ in Canada;
- To propose the integration of ‘soft skills’ into Canada’s existing essential skills framework; and
- To identify and develop common terminology around ‘soft skills’ in Canada.

OUTPUTS: Principal outputs for the project include:

- A summary of the existing ESDC Competency-based ‘soft skills’ taxonomy;
- An initial draft set of skills suited for initiating consensus discussions;
- Recommendations for integrating ‘soft skills’ into the existing essential skills framework;
- A plan for developing national consensus on ‘soft skills’ development and assessment;
- Recommendations on how to render the taxonomy of practical use to front line application;
- A final report to ESDC.

PLANNING SESSION (See Working Agenda)

A three-day session is planned at which 15-20 participants will be trained in principles of Collective Impact (max 1 day) and conduct a strategic planning session on the development of a pan-Canadian “soft Skills” framework.

Key goals/outputs of the strategic planning session are:

1. To review the results of the survey and literature search. Participants will have been provided a pre-reading pack with this info, so the review will be brief and will focus on questions/observations by the group;
2. To review activities within regions. Participants will be provided time (5 minutes?) to outline significant activities in their region (these could be requested and circulated ahead of time);
3. The remaining activities fall into two categories, defining the starting point for a framework (common goals) and planning.

Questions to be addressed include:

a. Defining

- i. Do we need a pan-Canadian framework? Why?
- ii. What should the framework seek to provide (definitions, exemplars, complexity, tools, training, curriculum, etc.)
- iii. Should the framework be part of, or distinct from, the Essential Skills framework?
- iv. How should LMI taxonomy inform/guide the framework?
- v. What recommendation can we make regarding a name for the framework elements (i.e. soft skills, personal attributes etc.) as a starting point for the framework?
- vi. Should we list suggested elements (what would they be) as a starting point?

b. Planning

- i. Should we use the Collective Impact model for this project?
- ii. What is the agreed objective statement?
- iii. What are the key activities/steps?
- iv. Timeline?
- v. Cost? (this may be done post session)
- vi. Roles for participants

4. Conclusion - The session should end with a clear list of expectations and actions for group members related to the review of the project conclusions and report.

Date: August 8, 9, 10, 2018

Location: Sheraton Centre, Toronto

Pre-Reading: to be distributed in advance of the planning session

In preparation for the meeting to be held on 8-10 August, you are asked to review the following documents. Please also note that you will be asked to provide a short overview of your organization/stakeholder views on 'soft' skills and the creation of some form of pan-Canadian soft skills structure.

A: Collective Impact

1. READY, SET, GO - Building Readiness for Collaborative and Community Impact (Tamarack paper) - <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/library/ready-set-go-building-readiness-forcollaborative-and-community-impact>
2. How to develop a Common Agenda - A 5 Step Guide (Tamarack paper) - <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/hubfs/Resources/Publications/CommonAgendaforCollectiveImpact.pdf>
3. Collective Impact Resource at a Glance - <https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/316071/Resources/Tools/CI%20at%20a%20Glance%20Tool%20April%202017.pdf>
4. Short Video about Collective Impact - Collective Impact Forum - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pzmMk63ihNM>

B. ESDC LMI CAREER INFORMATION/SKILLS & COMPETENCIES TAXONOMY SUMMARY

C. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Soft Skills Summary
2. Soft Skills Annotated Bibliography (info only)

D. SURVEY

1. Sharing Perspectives on Soft Skills - Survey Report
2. Additional Qualitative Data not included in the report (optional reading)

List of Participants:

Jean Pierre Giroux	Quebec	Excellence in Manufacturing Consortium
Debbie Clark	Alberta	ECALA
Jean Metropolit	Yukon	Employment Central
Samantha Timbers	Ontario	COSTI
Lisa Campbell	Northwest Territories	NWT Literacy Council
Shari St. Peter	Ontario	Niagara Peninsula Aboriginal Area Management Board (NPAAMB)
Sarah Mills	Newfoundland and Labrador	Stella's Circle

Brett James Laing	British Columbia	Open Door Group
Gail Gorchynski	Saskatchewan	Parkland College
Marnie Groeneveld	Manitoba	Manitoba Institute of Trades & Technology
Valerie Ward	British Columbia	Valerie G. Ward Consulting
Sonya Horsburgh	Nova Scotia	Department of Labour and Advanced Education
Jeff Landine	New Brunswick	UNB (Dr Landine)
Randy Lindsay/ Paul Brinkhurst	Nova Scotia	Futureworx
Mack Rogers	Ontario	ABC Life Literacy Canada
Paul Dauphinee	Alberta	Christian Labour Assoc Canada
Konrad Glogowski	Ontario	Pathways to Education
Marisa Sosa	Ontario (Canada)	Skills Canada
Daniel Baril	Quebec	Institute de Cooperation pour l'education des adults

OBSERVERS:

Rachelle Binette	LMI Rep	Government of Canada
Annette Vermaeten	OLES	Government of Canada
Ryan McCarville	OLES	Government of Canada

FACILITATION TEAM:

Liz Weaver	Facilitator	Tamarack Institute
Jane Humphries	Facilitator	Tamarack Institute
Duncan Field	Note Taker	Tamarack Institute

DRAFT DETAINED AGENDA Pre-Meeting: Tuesday, August 7, 2018

Time	Content	Tools, Supplies	Lead
7:00 pm	Pre-Workshop Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-workshop meeting with Futureworx team and Tamarack team to review working agenda Review agenda and other materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visit meeting room space Make sure that we have all the supplies 	Futureworx Tamarack Institute

Day 1: Wednesday, August 8, 2018

Time	Content	Tools, Supplies	Lead
8:30 am	Registration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure room is set up Ensure LCD projector is working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration List Nametags Post it Notes, flip chart paper, markers Agenda for session Coffee, tea, refreshments 	Futureworx Tamarack Institute
9:00 am	Welcome and Setting the Context for the three-day planning session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indigenous Welcome Recognition of Land Welcoming remarks Review the objectives for the planning session and proposed outputs Who is in the room - overview of who is in the room Housekeeping Announcements Introduction of the facilitation team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration List <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPT slide with Objectives of the session PPT slide with the proposed session outputs 	Futureworx Tamarack Institute Randy Lindsay Paul Brinkhurst

9:30 am	Making Connections Small Group: Think Pair Share - Why is it important that I am here? What do we hope to accomplish together?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPT slide with the Think Pair Share questions 	Tamarack Institute Liz Weaver
9:45 am	Setting the Stage: Building Soft Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OLES provide a brief history of how the Essential Skills Framework came into being Each organization /stakeholder group provides their perspectives about soft skills. How representative is this of your organization/ stakeholder group area? - participants given 3-5 minutes to highlight their view 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OLES presentation - Annette Vermaeten, Government of Canada Stakeholder group presenters 	Tamarack Institute to facilitate Liz Weaver

Time	Content	Tools, Supplies	Lead
10:30 am	<p>Collective Impact: A Framework for Community Change - Part 1 and 2</p> <p>The presentation will be broken into three parts with small group dialogue between each of the parts.</p> <p>Part 1: Building Readiness for Collective Impact</p> <p>Part 2: The Pre-Conditions of Collective Impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPT slide deck about Collective Impact Link to the Tackling Complex Problems through Collective Impact Video <p>CI Part 1 - Slides 8 - 17</p> <p>CI Part 2 - Slides 18 - 21</p>	<p>Tamarack to lead presentation and facilitate conversations</p> <p>Liz Weaver</p>
11:00 am	Break and Networking	Coffee, tea, snacks	Futureworx
11:15 am	<p>Collective Impact: A Framework for Community Change - Part 3</p> <p>Part 3: The 5 Conditions of Collective Impact, Mindset shifts in CI</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPT slide deck about Collective Impact <p>CI Part 3 - Slides 22 - 39</p>	<p>Tamarack to lead presentation and facilitate conversations</p> <p>Liz Weaver</p>
11:45 am	<p>Collective Impact and Developing a Soft Skills Framework</p> <p>Small Group Conversation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can a collective impact approach help to advance soft skills in Canada? <p>What would we need to consider?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 groups of 5 or 6 - flipchart discussion PPT slide with the question Flip chart paper and markers for the groups <p>CI slide - 41</p>	<p>Tamarack to facilitate conversations</p> <p>Liz Weaver</p>
12:00 pm	<p>Collective Impact and Developing a Soft Skills Framework</p> <p>Large Group Conversation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each group shares what they discussed. Tamarack to build common themes 	Flip chart paper and markers for the groups	<p>Tamarack to facilitate conversation</p> <p>Liz Weaver</p>
12:30 pm	Lunch and Networking	Lunch	Futureworx
1:30 pm	<p>Building Urgency around Soft Skills - Part 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review the results of the survey and literature search. the survey and literature search results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants will have been provided a prereading pack with this info, so the review will be brief and will focus on questions /observations by the group <p>Soft Skills - Slides 43 - 48</p>	<p>Paul/Dr Landine to present survey and literature results</p> <p>Tamarack to facilitate conversation</p>

Time	Content	Tools, Supplies	Lead
2:00 pm	Building Urgency around Soft Skills – Part 1 Large Group Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observations and Questions: What observations do you have about the survey and literature search results? What questions do you have about the survey or literature search results? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tamarack to develop common themes that emerge 	Tamarack to facilitate conversation Jane Humphries
2:45 pm	Break and Networking		
3:00 pm	Building a Common Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A brief overview of what it takes to build a common agenda in collective impact Large Group Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What would we need to consider if we were to build a common or collective agenda to advance soft skills in Canada? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPT slides about common agendas PPT slide with the question Tamarack to develop common themes that emerge Common Agenda – Slides 51 - 56	Tamarack to present and facilitate conversation Jane Humphries
3:45 pm	Final Thoughts and Reflections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Design and Agenda for Day 2 Any final announcements 		Tamarack Institute Liz Weaver
4:30 pm	End of Day Huddle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the day Identify the highlights for the next day Trouble shoot any elements for the next day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flip Chart paper and markers 	Paul, Randy, Liz, Jane and Duncan

Day 2: Thursday, August 9, 2018

Time	Content	Tools, Supplies	Lead
8:30 am	Registration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure room is set up Ensure LCD projector is working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post it Notes, flip chart paper, markers 	Futureworx Tamarack Institute

Time	Content	Tools, Supplies	Lead
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coffee, tea, refreshments 	
9:00 am	<p>Welcome and Setting the Context for Day 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcoming remarks Review the objectives for the planning session and proposed outputs Housekeeping Announcements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPT slide with the objectives and outputs 	<p>Futureworx Tamarack Institute</p> <p>Randy/Paul Liz Weaver</p>
9:30 am	<p>Review Day 1 Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key themes arising from day 1 Ask group if anything is missing or if there is anything they would like to add? Review the agenda for day 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPT slides with the key themes from day 1 and the agenda for day 2 <p>PPT Slides - 60 - 63</p>	<p>Tamarack to facilitate</p> <p>Liz Weaver</p>
10:00 am	<p>Defining a Soft Skills Approach - Part 1</p> <p>Small group discussion:</p> <p>Key Defining Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do we need a pan-Canadian framework? Why? What should the framework seek to provide (definitions, exemplars, complexity, tools, training, curriculum, etc.) Should the framework be part of, or distinct from, the Essential Skills framework? How should LMI taxonomy inform/guide the framework? What recommendation can we make regarding a name for the framework elements (i.e. soft skills, personal attributes etc.) as a starting point for the framework? Should we list suggested elements (what would they be) as a starting point? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group breaks into small groups of 5 - 6 to have a conversation about the key defining questions <p>PPT Slide - 64</p>	<p>Tamarack to facilitate</p> <p>Liz Weaver</p>
11:00 am	<p>Break and Networking</p>	<p>Coffee, tea, snacks</p>	<p>Futureworx</p>
11:15 am	<p>Defining a Soft Skills Approach - Part 2</p> <p>Building the Vision</p> <p>Groups are asked to draw a visual of what their approach might look like.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use Kellogg Tool as possible framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flip chart paper and markers for the groups <p>PPT Slide - 66 - Kellogg Framework</p>	<p>Tamarack to facilitate</p> <p>Liz Weaver</p>
11:45 am	<p>Defining a Soft Skills Approach - Part 3</p> <p>Crowdsourcing Knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post it Notes Flip chart paper and markers for the groups 	<p>Tamarack to facilitate</p> <p>Liz Weaver</p>

Time	Content	Tools, Supplies	Lead
	Each group visits the other posters and provides structured feedback on post it notes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What they like about the vision • An idea they have • A question they have • Something else to consider 	PPT Slide - 67 Feedback Slide	
12:30 pm	Lunch and Networking	Lunch	Futureworx
1:30 pm	Defining a Soft Skills Approach - Part 4 Large group conversation - each of the groups presents the key themes that emerged from their conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tamarack to capture key themes of all the groups • Flip chart paper and markers for the groups PPT Slide - 69 Large Group Discussion	Tamarack to facilitate conversations Jane Humphries
2:30 pm	Break and Networking		
3:00 pm	Defining a Soft Skills Approach - Part 5 Large Group Conversation: Reviewing the Defining Questions: What still needs to be considered? What would success look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPT slides with questions • Tamarack to develop common themes that emerge PPT Slide - 71 Large Group Discussion	Tamarack to present and facilitate conversation Jane Humphries
3:30 pm	Final Thoughts and Reflections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Design and Agenda for Day 3 • Any final announcements 		Jane Humphries
4:30 pm	End of Day Huddle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the day • Identify the highlights for the next day • Trouble shoot any elements for the next day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flip Chart paper and markers 	Paul, Randy, Liz, Jane and Duncan

Day 3: Friday, August 10, 2018

Time	Content	Tools, Supplies	Lead
8:30 am	Registration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure room is set up • Ensure LCD projector is working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post it Notes, flip chart paper, markers • Coffee, tea, refreshments 	Futureworx Tamarack Institute
9:00 am	Welcome and Setting the Context for Day 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcoming remarks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPT slide with the objectives and outputs 	Futureworx Tamarack Institute Paul/Randy

Time	Content	Tools, Supplies	Lead
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the objectives for the planning session and proposed outputs Housekeeping Announcements 	PPT Slides - 74 - 78	Liz Weaver
9:30 am	Review Day 1 and Day 2 Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key themes arising from day 1 and day 2 Ask group if anything is missing or if there is anything they would like to add? Review the agenda for day 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPT slides with the key themes from day 1 and day 2 and the agenda for day 3 	Tamarack to facilitate Liz Weaver
10:00 am	Building the Plan for Moving Forward - Part 1 Small Group Conversation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should we use the Collective Impact model for this project? What is the agreed objective statement? (Common Agenda) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group breaks into small groups of 5 - 6 to have a conversation about the first two planning questions Might use the Kellogg Common Agenda Framework or build from discussions on Day 2 PPT Slide - 79	Tamarack to facilitate Liz Weaver
11:00 am	Break and Networking	Coffee, tea, snacks	Futureworx
11:15 am	Building the Plan for Moving Forward - Part 2 Small Group Conversation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the key activities/steps? Timeline? Cost? (this may be done post session) Roles for participants Other issues to consider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flip chart paper and markers for the groups PPT Slide - 81	Tamarack to facilitate Liz Weaver
11:45 am	Building the Plan for Moving Forward - Part 3 Large group conversation - each of the groups presents the key themes that emerged from their conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post it Notes Flip chart paper and markers for the groups PPT Slide - 82	Tamarack to facilitate Jane Humphries
12:00 pm	Lunch and Networking	Lunch	Futureworx

Time	Content	Tools, Supplies	Lead
1:00 pm	<p>Building the Plan for Moving Forward – Part 4</p> <p>Identifying Next Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The session should end with a clear list of expectations and actions for group members related to the review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tamarack to capture key themes of all the groups Flip chart paper and markers for the groups <p>PPT Slide – 84</p>	<p>Tamarack to facilitate conversations</p> <p>Jane Humphries</p>
	<p>of the project conclusions and report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individually first and then in small groups, identify the core next steps for moving forward – including actions, timelines, etc 		
2:30 pm	Break and Networking		
2:45 pm	<p>Wrapping Up</p> <p>Final Thoughts and Reflections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPT slides with questions Tamarack to develop common themes that emerge 	<p>Tamarack to present and facilitate conversation</p> <p>Liz Weaver and Jane Humphries</p>
4:00 pm	Session Concludes		
4:30 pm	<p>End of Day Huddle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the day Identify the highlights for the next day Discuss report requirements and timing for next steps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flip Chart paper and markers 	Paul, Randy, Liz, Jane and Duncan

ANNEX D: DRAFT ESSENTIAL SKILLS LIBRARY SKILL TEMPLATE

SKILL NAME:

SKILL TYPE: FUNCTIONAL SOCIAL BEHAVIOURAL

DEFINITION:

PRIMARY FOCUS: EMPLOYMENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT LIFE

APPLICATION: (List General or specific sectors, regions and/or demographic groups)

EXEMPLARS:

STANDARD	TYPE	DESCRIPTION (tasks or behavioural expectations)
Level 1 of 5 complexity	TYPICAL TASKS	Task descriptions Level 1 complexity
Level 2 of 5 complexity	TYPICAL TASKS	Task descriptions Level 2 complexity
Competent	VERBAL BEHAVIOUR (Sounds like?)	What the employer wants to hear
	PHYSICAL BEHAVIOR (Looks Like?)	What the employer wants to see.
Not Competent	VERBAL BEHAVIOUR (Sounds like?)	What the employer does not want to hear
	PHYSICAL BEHAVIOR (Looks Like?)	What the employer does not want to see.

ASSESSMENT STRATEGY & RESOURCES:

Strategy:

Resources:

NAME	DESCRIPTION
Name: Source: Link:	

DEVELOPMENTAL STRATEGY AND RESOURCES:

Strategy:

Resources:

NAME	DESCRIPTION
Name: Source: Link:	

SPONSOR:

Organization:

Contact:

Email:



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