

2013

Employer-Youth Engagement (EYE)
Project



Final Report

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Without your contributions and support this community project would not have been possible.



Executive Summary

The Cowichan Valley experiences a higher than provincial average rates of unemployment. Youth are represented at a higher than average rate in the Cowichan Regional District. Economic downturn, high competition for employment, more experienced skilled workers in entrance level jobs and identifiable barriers all contribute to youth displacement in the workforce.

The Employer-Youth Engagement (EYE) Project looked at a range of indicators that tell us about barriers and resiliencies to youth employment in the Cowichan Valley. There were four components to the research. A literature review, interviews with employment industry professionals and surveys involving approximately 106 youth and 73 employers.

Through the survey, the EYE project focused on the barriers and resiliencies for youth employment in the Cowichan Valley. What is working and what is not and what kind of recommendations they had for youth, employers and the community.

Employers were able to identify the benefits of employing youth including their energy, enthusiasm, willingness to learn, positive attitudes, open-mindedness and strength in mastering new technologies. Youth reliability and lack of motivation to get job tasks done were most concerning for employers.

Youth identified workplace characteristics that attract them are an enjoyable work environment and learning new skills, feeling valued, having a good boss and being passionate about the work was most likely to influence youth to stay at a job.

Youth identified the challenges faced in the search for work with transportation, lack of certification and training ranked highest and the economy, competition for jobs and lack of experience ranking lower.

Along with a number of recommendations for youth, employers and the community (see the recommendation section on page 25 of this document) the EYE project completed two additional documents; The Youth Employment Guide and Employer Resource Guide.

All documents can be accessed through our website at www.coscowichan.ca

Introduction

The unemployment rate for southern coastal British Columbia, which includes the Cowichan Valley Regional District, is currently 8.4% (Human Resource and Skills Development Canada, 2013). This rate is high in comparison to the average unemployment rate in BC, which sits at 6.3% (BC Statistics, 2013). Alarming, it is male and female youth, age 15-24, who are experiencing the highest rates of unemployment (British Columbia Statistics 2010), a phenomenon that is further explored in the following report.

Some of the major factors contributing to this high rate of local unemployment are no doubt related to the recession of 2008, as well as a substantial decline of work in the forestry sector. However, there are a variety of additional barriers that are influencing the high rate of youth unemployment.

Living in a community with such a high rate of unemployment means that job seekers compete intensely for the few jobs available. When a position is advertised, employers are inundated with applications, and must sift through piles of resumes to find the person most qualified for the job. When faced with a hiring decision, many employers select older, more skilled workers for a position, as they have a stronger attachment to the workforce.

As a result, local youth are experiencing work force displacement. Entry level positions occupied previously by youth are instead being filled by older workers. This displacement has placed youth in a precarious position; they need to develop more employment-related skills earlier, in order to compete with seasoned job seekers.

The Employer-Youth Engagement Project (EYE), also known as the Youth Awareness Project, has conducted community-based research around the issue of local youth unemployment. First, to explore general employment barriers faced by both youth and employers, we reviewed the relevant literature. Next, the Community Options Society interviewed employment industry professionals to gain clarity around issues for local youth unemployment. Finally, these discussions were used to develop and administer two surveys, one focused on youth between the ages of 15 and 30 and the other focused on employers in the Cowichan region.

The research questions guiding the research were:

- 1) **What do Cowichan Valley youth identify as primary barriers to employment?**
- 2) **What do Cowichan Valley employers identify as the primary barriers to employing youth?**
- 3) **What strategies and resources will facilitate increased hiring and retention of marginalized and underemployed youth?**

Results from this research include two resource guides, one for employers and one for youth job seekers. We hope these guides will facilitate increased hiring and retention of underemployed youth in the Cowichan Valley. The guides will be available to youth, employers and other members of the public via Community Option Society's webpage: www.coscowichan.ca

Literature Review

Youth

As one might expect, many youth are introduced to career planning through their educational institution and start to explore jobs of interest at a young age. In fact, children as young as eight begin to consider careers of interest, however, they tend to use more of an association approach to career exploration and fantasize about 'typical' jobs such as being a pilot, fireman or doctor (Howard & Walsh, 2010). Given their age, these children have little actual knowledge about their suitability for a profession or the educational requirements involved in gaining employment in these sectors.

In the middle and high school years, however, significant career development takes place. Rogers & Creed (2011; citing Erickson, 1963 and Super, 1990) noted that adolescents begin to clarify their career identities, develop an awareness of vocational interests and realities and undertake career-related tasks, such as career planning and exploration, as they increasingly think about their futures.

Career planning services are an important component in preparing for life after high school. Studies indicate that career planning among adolescents often leads to reduced drop-out rates in school, improved employment prospects, an increase in self-esteem, more efficient use of resources, a greater supply of skilled workers to employers and increased motivation to continue learning after high school (McCrea Silva & Phillips, 2007; Bell & Bezanson, 2006).

Furthermore, parental support is a strong influence in a young person's career aspiration and development. Children tend to make initial career decisions during early childhood, due to influences in their environment, community, socioeconomic status, family situation and the significant adults in their lives (Sinacore et al., 1999). Adolescents want and need guidance for the future and parental involvement in adolescent career development is important (Middleton & Loughhead, 1993). Young (1994; citing Duesk, 1991) suggests that parents can affect children's self-esteem, self-competence, values and psychological orientation. Studies have shown that youth whose parents support career development and exploration at a young age are more

inclined to develop greater career maturity than those youth who have little or no support at home (Keller & Whiston, 2008).

Parents are often concerned about not knowing specific vocational, educational, and occupational information. They wish they could be more helpful to their children but they themselves do not have the necessary information (Young, 1994). Unfortunately, well-meaning parents, although motivated to facilitate their child's career development, frequently lack the tools, direction, and information necessary to maximize the positive effects they can have on their child's career development (Sinacore et al., 1999).

The most effective way to target large numbers of school-aged youth is through educational institutions. Fortunately, most schools have successfully adopted career preparatory classes into their curriculum. However, research indicates that despite these efforts, youth are still having difficulties making the transition from school to work (Bell & O'Reilly, 2008).

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD; cited in Taylor, 2007), the transition for youth is taking longer than anticipated and part of the explanation for this lies in pathways through education; in particular, concerns have been raised that pathways may be too narrow, too obscure (lack transparency) and too inflexible (lack of bridging mechanisms). Bell and O'Reilly (2008) also point out that there is a lack of support for youth prior to and during this transition.

"A study of transition systems across 14 OECD countries suggested that effective transition systems are characterized by well organized pathways that connect initial education with work and further study and widespread opportunities to combine workplace experience with education." (OECD, 2000; cited in Taylor 2007:1)

Reviews of nearly 200 program impacts from 1995-2007 concluded that the most effective program strategies for youth came from job search assistance programs (ManpowerGroup, 2012; citing Card et al., 2009). Unfortunately, finding access to effective career guidance for young people outside the school environment can be a challenge (ManpowerGroup, 2012). Career services in Canada offering job search assistance programs, which are vital to preparing youth to

enter the labour market, are inconsistent, not widely known or rarely used (Bell & O'Reilly, 2008).

Community employment assistance services are often aimed at assisting individuals who are unemployed or underemployed and who have previously received Employment Insurance benefits. As a result, youth who are not eligible for Employment Insurance, are in school full-time, and want or need to work, are limited to resources available through school.

In this light, job search assistance programs will be more accessible for youth when offered through the education system. However, resources such as job coaching are rarely available through the school system and consequently help for youth navigating job search challenges or job maintenance challenges is similarly rare.

Although schools are equipped with student counsellors and career preparation instructors, many see themselves solely as educators, not employment facilitators (Ovsey, 2012). Consequently, they may approach career counselling with an educational lens and view post-secondary education as the only means to achieving success. This may not always be the best fit in determining students' needs, particularly where those students may not have the resources or desire to further their education.

Additionally, evidence has shown that teachers and school counsellors have difficulty gathering the vast amount of information students require in career planning, and are not able to keep up with the changing nature of careers and technology (Witko et al., 2006). These authors suggest that teachers may be attempting to be "everything to everyone", and this may contribute to needing more time to fulfill their roles more effectively.

Nevertheless, it is vital that students understand their local labour market, as this can not only affect student job searches but also their ability to secure employment, even after obtaining post-secondary education. For this reason, it is crucial that teachers and career professionals stay informed and devote a significant amount of time to understanding their local labour economy.

"The more students (and educators) know about the skills they will require to make their way in life, the more effective they can be in applying themselves to their educational endeavors. And the more employable they will be when they leave school - a consideration that cannot be underestimated in light of statistics that show youth unemployment in Canada to be nearly double that of other demographic groups."
(Partners for life, 1996)

Career information programs are needed at all levels of education and training, especially in high school and at key career decision points for youth (ManpowerGroup, 2012). If school-to-work transitions are to be successful, career development (counselling, information and education) needs to be integrated into the school curriculum and made visible, so that students are better able to access information (Bell & O'Reilly, 2008). Witco et al. (2006; citing Staley & Carey, 1997) recommend school counselling programs place greater emphasis on career awareness, connect life skills to careers of interest and help students understand who they are in relation to the world of work.

Further, for students looking to pursue education after high school, it is important that they discover what they enjoy doing and identify their aptitudes for different kinds of careers. In order to ensure they are able to support themselves after obtaining certification, it is also important that students assess the financial impact of their decision to attend post-secondary school. As stated by ManpowerGroup (2012:18), "new resources need to be developed in helping young people measure the career impact, and the economic value, of acquiring specific education and training credentials."

The Employer

Research suggests the five key barriers that affect an employer's decision to hire a youth include: a lack of work ethic; a lack of work experience; a lack of life experience and maturity; the extra supervision needed when training youth; and other legal restrictions, such as being unable to serve alcohol or having restrictions on a driver's license (Houghton, 2012). Furthermore, job seekers who are considered 'long-term unemployed' face additional barriers such as lack of confidence, low skill levels and transportation difficulties (Houghton, 2012).

When making a decision whether or not to hire a youth, employers may look for previous work experience, in order to be certain the youth knows how to function in the workplace.

Traditionally, young people acquired these “experience” credentials in entry-level jobs, requiring minimal or no previous experience. However, in this competitive economy, many youth are unable to secure these entry-level positions, as employers are instead selecting older, more skilled workers (ManpowerGroup, 2012).

Thus, regardless of the requirement for B.C. graduates to complete a mandatory thirty hours of work experience and/or community service prior to graduation (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2009), they are not gaining sufficient experience to qualify for entry-level positions. Although the thirty hour minimum allows youth to get a general understanding of what a job entails, it doesn't allow them to develop the life skills necessary to navigate workplace challenges and obtain that job.

If youth intend to compete with older, more skilled job seekers, they not only need to gain the required life skills, such as attitude, work ethic, communication and team work (Houghton, 2012), but need to increase the amount of experience and knowledge they have in the field and/or industry they wish to enter. One way this can be achieved is by increasing the amount of volunteer hours needed to graduate. More than two-thirds of 15- to 19-year-old volunteers said they did not dedicate more hours to volunteering because they did not have enough time (Vézina & Crompton, 2012). However, if schools were able to find time to accommodate additional student volunteer hours, students may feel less pressure and be more inclined to volunteer.

Vézina and Crompton (2012) also note that approximately two-thirds of volunteers in Canada benefit from improved interpersonal skills. However, a 2010 pan-Canadian research study commissioned by Manulife Financial in partnership with Volunteer Canada (2012) determined that only a relatively small percentage of the total number of volunteers in Canada are youth.

Another consideration that can contribute to employment challenges for employers (and youth) is intergenerational misunderstanding, frustration and conflict within the workplace (Watt, 2010). Every generation has a different set of values as a result of the era they grew up in. Many employers express concern about the work ethic of the younger generation. However, it is important to consider that the values and practices of these youth are not necessarily a reflection

of individual personality traits but rather the cultural norms and practices which were present through their upbringing. Understanding this will greatly reduce the amount of tension experienced by employers, youth job seekers and youth employees.

The reality is that workplace motivation for Generation Y (youth born between 1982 and 1993) differs dramatically from older generations, such as Generation X and Baby Boomers. Generation Y (also referred to as Generation Next, iGeneration or the Millennials) is technologically savvy and wants companies to embrace and take advantage of technology (The Week Staff, 2012). Additionally, research suggests that Generation Y has become the "live, then work" generation and wants flexibility in work hours, a variety of job tasks and to be a part of the decision process (Grimm, 2013).

Further, this generation of youth will experience a higher job turnover, as 70 percent leave their first job within two years (Experience, Inc., 2008). Given that youth today are intrinsically motivated, their sense of accomplishment will outweigh any desire for monetary reward. Instead, they will seek jobs that are meaningful and will want to know if what they are doing is valuable to the company as well as for themselves (Mayhew, 2010). Additionally, Generation Y will have high expectations for personal growth, even in entry-level jobs (Trunk, 2007).

In their longitudinal study of 1,000 high school students, Staff & Uggen (2003; cited in Wortley et al. 2010) found that the "ideal adolescent job" is one which has age-appropriate benefits, is supportive of school commitments and provides an opportunity to learn new and useful things. Furthermore, youth thrive in the workplace that reinforces good behaviour by offering positive feedback. Immediate, effective feedback allows Generation Y to be more efficient at work and produce better results more quickly (Friese & Jowett, 2013).

In light of the research on barriers to youth employment, our education system is the obvious place to prepare youth to enter the work force. If we intend to aid successful school-to-work transitions, career preparatory classes in schools need to engage students in career succession planning. Ensuring that the volunteer choices students make are relevant to their career goals is one way this can be achieved.

Additionally, career preparatory curriculum needs to be based upon current job search practices and must encourage students to research the viability of their career goals after high school. Given the competitive labour market, it is important that youth weigh the financial impact of their decision to obtain post-secondary training prior to making any commitments.

Further, employers and youth need to understand the generational differences that can create conflict at work. Each generation has a unique way of operating in the workforce and some accommodation must be made on the part of both the youth and the employer to understand, overcome and bridge these differences.

Methods

Industry Professionals

Interviews constituting our preliminary qualitative research were conducted with seven local professionals experienced in working with youth. These professionals were asked to reflect and share any knowledge they had pertaining to youth barriers to employment. Each professional was asked one open-ended question, which was: What do you think has contributed to the high rate of youth unemployment in Cowichan Valley?

Among the experts who participated in the interview were:

- Job Coach
- Certified Career Development Practitioner and Internship Coordinator
- Certified Career Development Practitioner - Social Media Educator - Personality Dimensions Facilitator
- Employment Counsellor
- Local Employment Program of BC (EPBC) service provider
- Local Government Director of Human Resources
- Youth Skills Link Coordinator

Information gathered from these preliminary discussions was used to help develop both the youth and employer survey. The group's expertise and knowledge in the field of employment made them a credible voice.

Youth Survey

The development of the youth survey was influenced by literature on common barriers to youth unemployment, and by discussions with employment experts (as above) as well as discussion with a focus group of eleven local youth between the ages of 15 and 30. Additionally, advice was sought in developing the disclosure statement on the survey as well as to ensure that proper ethical consideration was taken in disseminating the survey to youth.

This survey was conducted by administering a questionnaire to youth in the Cowichan Valley region. Youth between the ages of 15 and 30 were targeted in the survey. All surveys were completed anonymously and consisted of 21 questions. Of these 21 questions, 16 were closed responses and the remaining 5 questions allowed open answers. Given that the questionnaire consisted primarily of closed questions, the survey was mostly quantitative in nature.

Youth completed the survey by filling out a paper copy or by completing the survey online via Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com). A link to the online version of the survey was made available to youth on the Community Options Society website as well as our Facebook page. Surveys were presented to youth individually, online, and in group settings. Group interviews took place through the following organizations:

- Chemainus Neighbourhood House
- Hiiye'yu Lelum House of Friendship Society
- Gay Straight Alliance (*via* Community Options Society)
- Life Skills to Employment Program (*via* Community Options Society)
- Ready to Rent Program
- Cowichan Tribes
- Cowichan Valley Open Learning Centre (CVOLC)
- Youth Caregivers Project
- Coast Salish Employment and Training Society (*via* Vancouver Island University)
- Youth Corner (*via* Cowichan Valley Regional District)

The above businesses and organizations were chosen because they currently provide services for local youth; many were already running programs that target youth between the ages of 15 and

30. Additionally, individual surveys were completed by youth employed through local businesses as well as by individual youth who frequented or attended the Community Options Society.

We received responses from a total of 121 youth; the first six surveys were eliminated due to changes made to the online survey. The following nine were eliminated because they either contained inaccurate information; the applicants were under the age of 15 or were over the age of 30 or there were survey duplications. This left us with a total of 106 youth surveys.

Employer Survey

When compiling questions for the employer survey, consideration was taken on best practices used by employers to hire and maintain youth employees. Attempts were made to ensure the survey would capture the barriers that employers face hiring or maintaining youth employment, and also the benefits and resiliencies that youth display in the workplace. Additionally, advice was sought in developing the disclosure statement on the survey as well as to ensure that proper ethical consideration was taken in disseminating the survey to employers.

This research was conducted by administering a questionnaire to employers in the Cowichan Valley Region. The questionnaire consisted of 13 questions, 8 of which were closed and 5 of which were open. Many of the questions were left open intentionally as we hoped to capture information that might be unique to our community.

The employer survey was accessible to local employers online as well as in paper form. The survey was made available online *via* Survey Monkey. A link to the online survey was handed out with paper copies in case employers preferred to fill out the survey online. Employers had the option of filling out the questionnaire anonymously.

Employers targeted for the survey were generated from a variety of sources. Initially, we targeted the employers whose names were given as a result of questions # 16 and #17 from the youth survey. However, we also approached the Duncan Business Improvement Association and were given a list of ‘community minded’ business professionals in the downtown core, who were also targeted.

One group interview took place at the monthly employer luncheon through the Duncan Chamber of Commerce. Beyond this, individual employers were targeted. Surveys were distributed by canvassing to various places of business as well as by emailing employers. Priority was given to employers who we knew had youth employees. Efforts also were made to get input from employers in a variety of sectors and/or industries.

An estimated 186 surveys were distributed and responses were received from 74 employers; giving us a response rate of approximately 39%. One survey was eliminated from the 74 for inaccurate information, which left us with a total of 73 employer surveys. Distributing the survey in person *versus* online seemed equally effective.

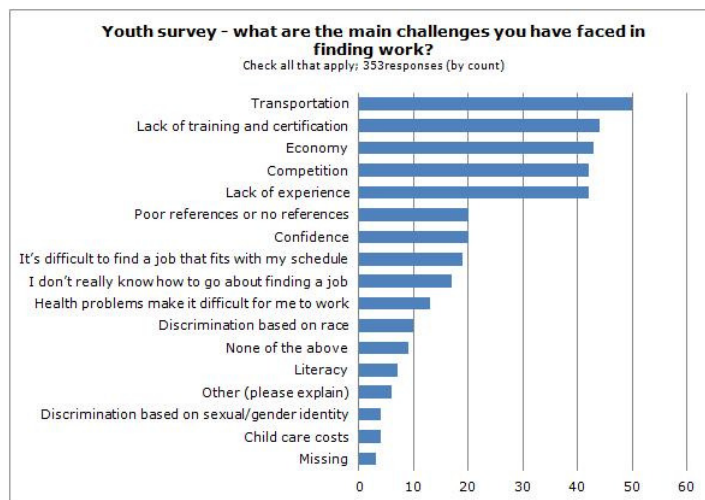
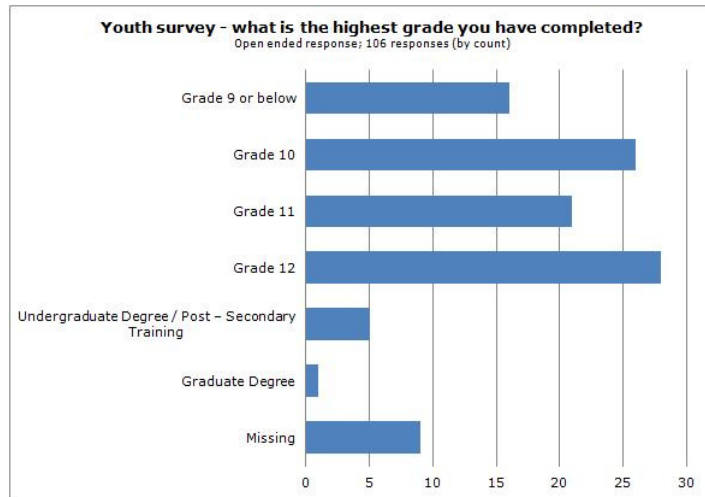
Given the broad nature of some of the open questions; this survey contained a substantial amount of qualitative data which was subsequently analyzed and coded. When analyzing and coding the data, measures were taken in an attempt to achieve objectivity and ensure uniformity. For example, prior to reaching any consensus, data from open-ended questions were coded separately by individual staff members.

Results

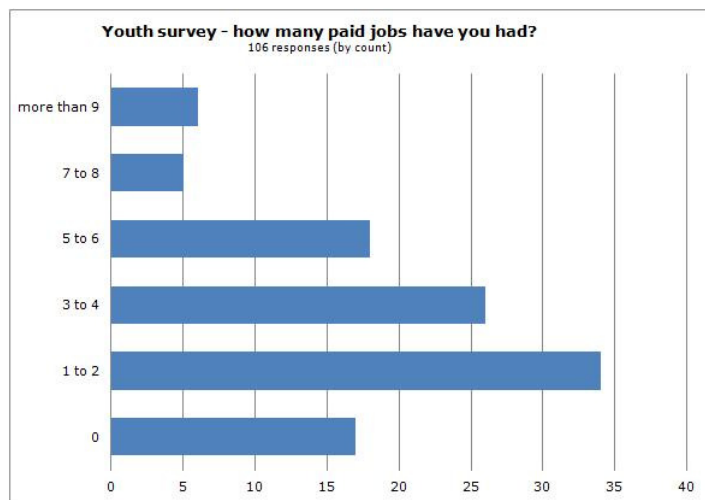
Following survey development, 106 youth and seventy-three employers completed their respective surveys. Results are discussed below; the Appendices contain full results tables for each survey.

Youth Survey (21 questions)

Of 106 youth who responded to the survey, 65 (61%) were attending school, with 46 in one of public, private, alternate or home school and 20 in post-secondary programs. The highest grade completed at the time of the survey was grade 12 for 28 youth (26%); 63 (59%) had completed less than grade 12, while 6 (6%) were in post-secondary programs.



Schools provided help with job search skills in the majority of cases (81 of 106 responses). Asked which schools helped, with the possibility of multiple responses to the question, public and alternative schools topped the list with 63 total responses. Fifty-one percent (54) of youths found this information helpful when looking for work. In addition, most respondents (79; 75%) were aware of additional community resources available for job search assistance.

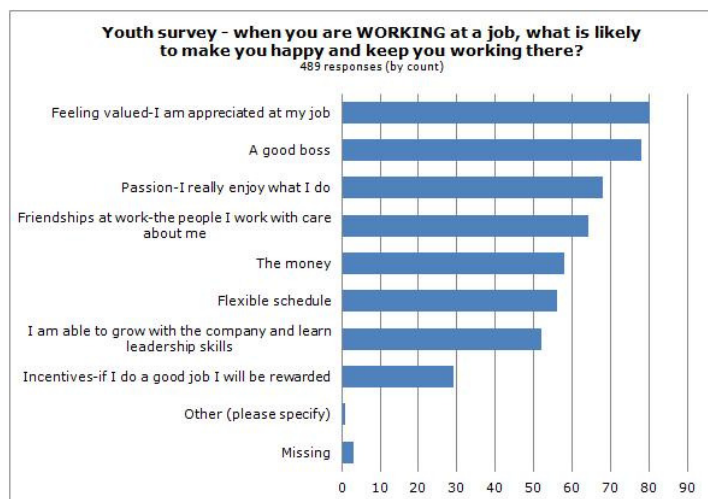
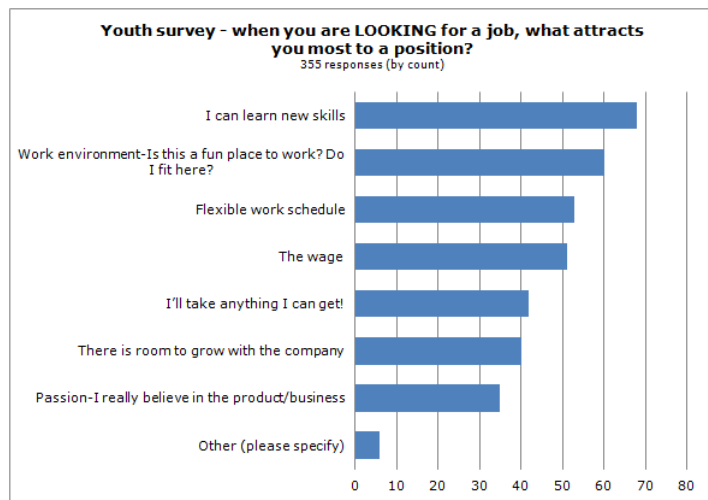
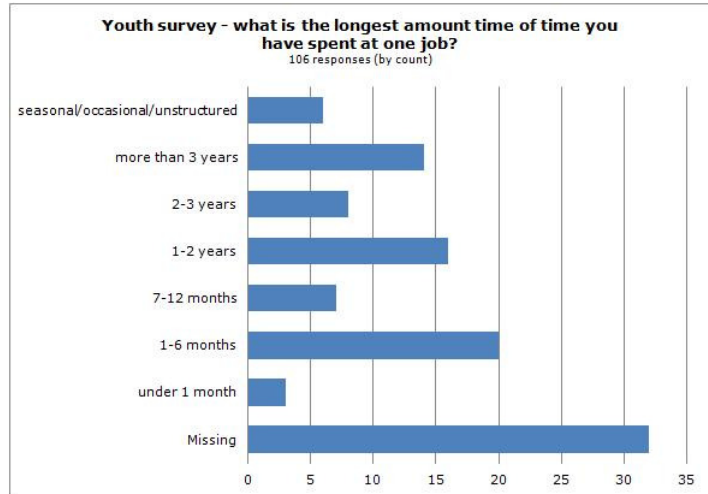


There were 353 responses to the question of the main challenges faced in the search for work. Transportation and lack of certification and training were the most frequent responses, with the economy, competition for jobs and lack of experience following closely behind.

Nearly all youth (96, 91%) had some experience through volunteering.

Thirty-one of the youth survey respondents (29%) were currently employed. When asked a reasonable length of time to spend at one job, the most frequent reply was 3 or more years. Most youths have had 1 or 2 jobs, but 17 (16%) have no job experience. When asked the longest amount of time spent at one job, the most frequent duration reported was 1-6 months.

When looking for a job, among 355 responses, youth reported learning new skills and the quality of the work environment as the most important factors; flexible work schedules and wages followed in importance. On the job, qualities which encouraged youth to stay in the position (among 489



responses) included feeling valued, a good boss and a passion for the job. Forty-four youths (42%) were aware of local employers with a reputation as being a good place to work.

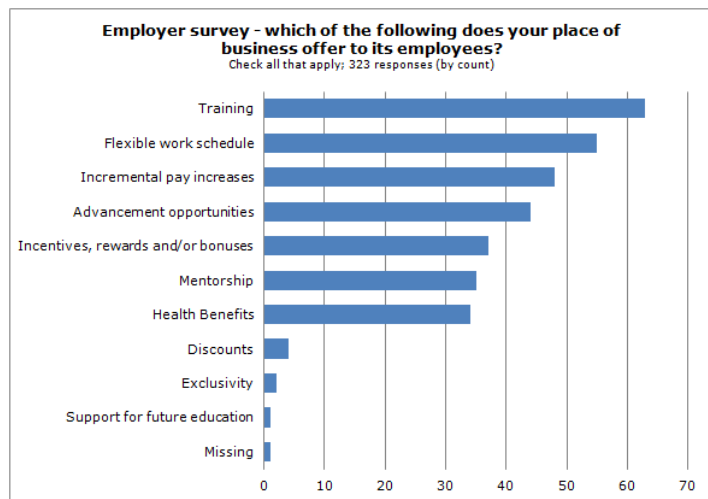
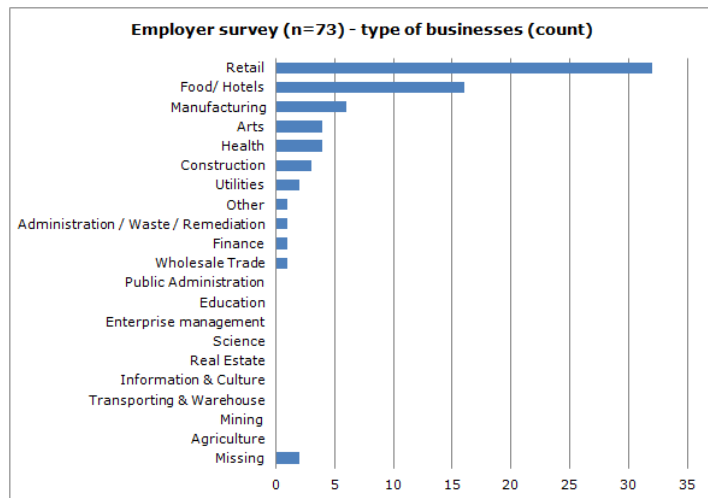
With respect to demographics, the youth sample was 54% male, 45% female and 1% third-gendered (count respectively 57, 48, 1). The mean age was 20.7 years and the median was 20 years of age; the age range was 15-30 years. Ethnic origin, which could span more than one group for any given individual, was 56% EuroCanadian (63 youths), 38% Aboriginal/First Nations (43), 4% Asian (5) and 1% South American (1). Finally, 6% of youths (6) identified themselves as LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered or queer).

Employer Survey (13 questions)

Employers represented eleven of twenty identified types of business, with the majority from retail (32), food/hotels (16) and manufacturing (6), totalling 74% of all businesses. Retail businesses alone represented 44% of respondents. Sixty-six (90%) of businesses surveyed employed youth between 15 and 30 years of age, with 1-2 years the most typical duration for youth employment (32% of businesses). All employers offered general benefits to their employees, with training followed by flexible work schedules and incremental pay raises the most frequent benefits cited.

The majority of employers (44 of 73) reported some form of systematic

employee evaluation. Eighteen employers cited more than one frequency for positive feedback to their employees, primarily “on no set schedule but whenever needed” (49 responses, 67% of

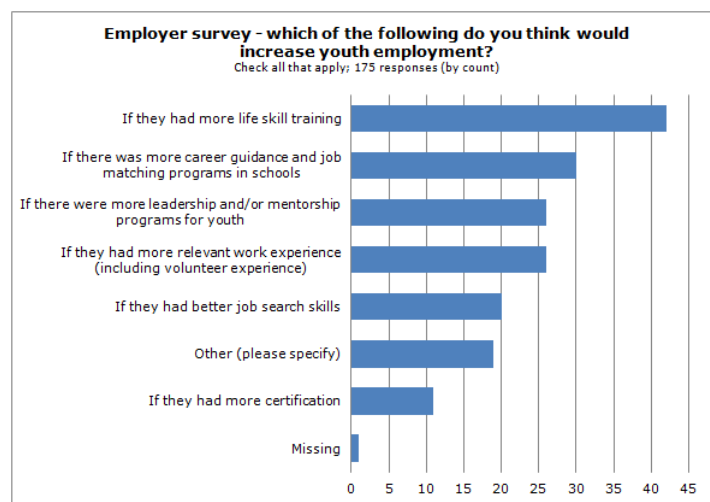
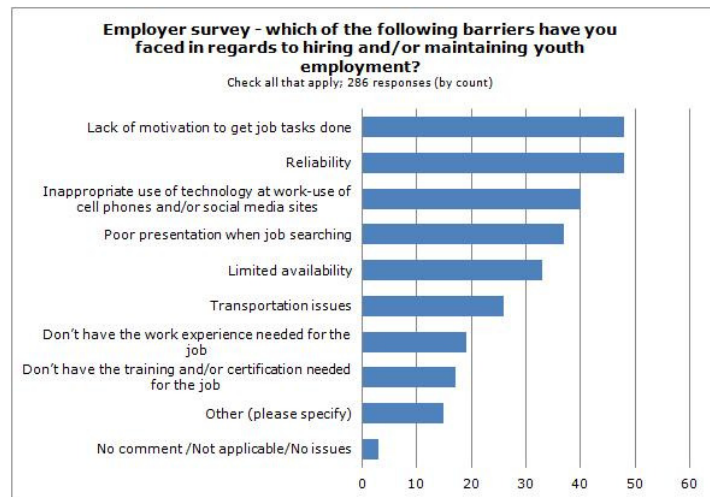
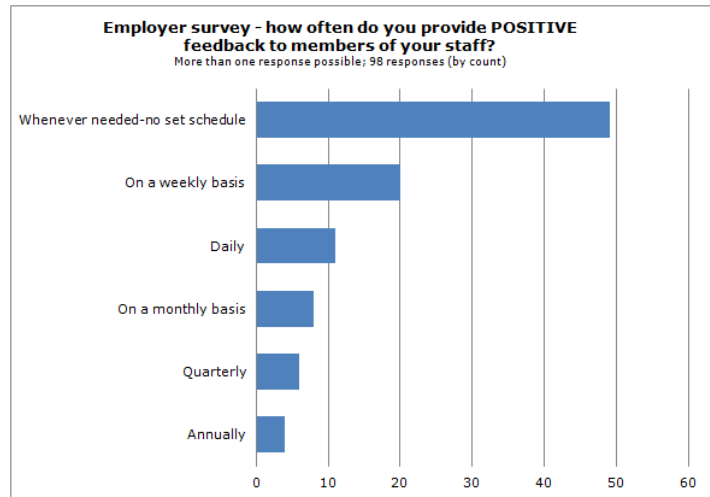


employers). Weekly and then daily positive observations to employees were the next most frequent response categories.

Multiple responses were also given to the question of which human resource practises seem to be successful in hiring or maintaining youth employment, with 73 employers reporting 96 practises. Maintenance practises were most frequently cited, ranging, for example, through strong peer support, extensive training & development plans, clear expectations and flexible hours.

Barriers cited by more than half the 73 employers to hiring and maintaining youth employment included youth’s lack of motivation & reliability, inappropriate use of technology at work and poor presentation when job searching. Youth ages 15-22 presented the most challenge to these employers (36 responses in each category 15-18 & 19-22, of 98 total responses).

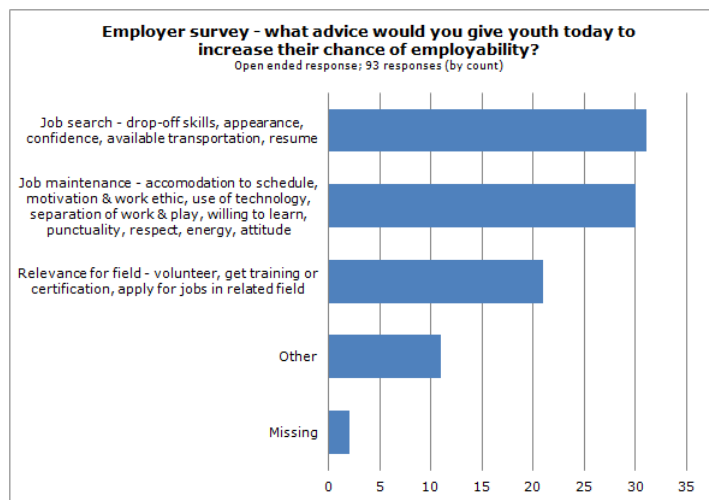
Employers were asked which strategies they thought would increase youth employment, with 175 responses from



the 73 surveys. The most frequent responses included more life skills training, more career guidance and job matching programs, and more leadership or mentorship programs.

Youth also bring benefits to the workforce and employers gave 119 responses to outline these benefits, almost half of which were personality traits. Employers felt the benefits of employing youth included their energy, enthusiasm, willingness to learn, positive attitudes, open-mindedness and strength in mastering new technologies.

Finally, employers gave 93 responses when asked what advice they would offer youth to increase employability. These included demonstrating confidence, motivation, flexibility and work ethic, technology skills and attitude; also included were obtaining related volunteer experience, training and certification.



Discussion

Local employers offered an array of benefits to their employees, some of which are attractive motivators for youth. Specifically, seventy-five percent of employers (55 of 73) included flexible work schedules as a benefit offered to their employees and 60% (44) offered advancement opportunities. In the youth survey, flexible work schedules (53 of 106 youth) and room to grow with the company (40) were ranked third and sixth respectively as factors youth consider important when looking for a job.

Of the fifty-three youth who indicated that a flexible work schedule was an important factor when looking for a job, thirty (57%) were attending school. Additionally, nineteen youth indicated that a barrier to obtaining employment was accommodation to their schedules and of these, fourteen (74%) were attending school at the time of the survey.

As is evident, school commitments are an important consideration for youth when looking for work. Employers able to offer a flexible schedule will certainly attract youth who are looking for this edge.

The literature suggests that youth are intrinsically motivated and view employment as an opportunity to meet their own needs. This principle was substantiated in our research, as the top four factors that influenced youth's happiness at work could be considered intrinsic motivators. These include feeling valued, having a good boss, being passionate about the work and having friendships at work.

Given that there was some confusion as to the meaning of 'feeling valued and appreciated in my job' in question 15 on the youth survey, researchers held a focus group of eight local youth to gain further clarity. From the discussion, it was determined that receiving regular feedback was an important contributor to feeling valued at work. Specifically, youth in this focus group felt it was important to hear regular, positive feedback from their boss or manager.

A question related to giving positive feedback was asked of employers and 67% offered positive feedback 'whenever needed-no set schedule' to their employees. This employer response leaves a lot of room for interpretation as it could mean that employers are giving frequent positive feedback 'whenever needed', however, it could also mean that employers offer positive feedback infrequently-as they may not feel that it is needed. The interpretation lies in how the employer understands the 'whenever needed-no set schedule' response. Consequently, it is difficult to determine whether employers are meeting the needs of youth in this way.

The next most commonly cited response for employers in regard to offering positive feedback was on a weekly basis (27%) followed by on a daily basis (15%). These two responses combined however, were not equivalent to the 'whenever needed-no set schedule' (67%) response. For this reason, we hypothesize that employers may not be giving youth the positive feedback they require in order to feel valued and appreciated at work. As a result, this may affect youths' motivation to maintain employment, as they may be seeking a more rewarding work environment.

Having a good boss was another response from youth survey question 15 that needed more clarity, as a majority (74%) of youth selected this as a response. Some responses from the youth focus group indicated that a good boss is someone who has clear expectations, good communication skills, possesses patience when mistakes occur and understands the requirements of each job. Further, youth felt that a boss who treated everybody equally and did not talk down to them was also considered desirable. We anticipate that if a boss possessed these characteristics youth would be more content in their employment, would work harder and be less inclined to leave their position.

When employers were asked a typical amount of time for youth to remain employed at their establishment, the most common response was 1-2 years (23 employers), followed by 6-12 months (20). These figures support popular research which indicates that youth generally stay at jobs for shorter periods of time in comparison to older generations. What is interesting to note, however, is when youth were asked what a reasonable amount of time was to remain at a job, the most frequent answer was 3 or more years. This indicates that there are some major differences between what youth believe to be a reasonable amount of time to remain employed at a job (3 or more years) versus what employers are actually reporting as a typical amount of time for youth to remain employed (1-2 years).

Even more interesting was when youth were asked about the longest amount of time spent at one job; the most frequent duration reported was 1-6 months. These data indicate that there is a further discrepancy between what youth believe is a reasonable amount of time to remain employed at a given job (3 or more years) and the reality of how long they are spending at a job (1-6 months).

Multiple responses from employers in question 8 cited successful human resource practices used in hiring and/or maintaining youth employment (96 responses from 73 employers). Most of the practices that employers used fell under 'maintenance' practices (30 of 96) and included items such as offering mentorship opportunities, a flexible schedules and a good working environment to youth.

An additional 95 responses were coded from question 13 relating to advice employers would give to youth in order to increase their employability. Most of the employer's advice fell under

the category of job search techniques (42% of employers) and job maintenance advice (41%). Some of the job search techniques employers recommended that would increase youth employment include: dressing appropriately for the job search, having a resume free of grammatical errors, asking for appropriate personnel when dropping off resumes (i.e. management) and showing confidence in the interview by being prepared to answer questions, as well as maintaining eye contact.

Some of the job maintenance advice which employers felt would increase youth employment included showing motivation and enthusiasm at work; reducing (or eliminating) use of phones and social media at work; being reliable and punctual; showing a willingness to learn and being respectful to staff and management. Additional advice that employers offered fell under the category of 'relevance for field' (29%), most of which included obtaining industry specific training and/or certification relevant to their field. Volunteer work was mentioned a number of times as a possible avenue to gain industry specific experience.

We were surprised to learn that nearly all of the youth who answered the survey (91%) had some form of volunteer experience. Interestingly, however, of 42 youth who cited lack of experience as a barrier in obtaining employment, 88% already had volunteer experience. There may be a number of reasons for this. Firstly, it may be that the volunteer experience they gained is not related to the work they are seeking. This would lead us to believe that youth are not engaging in succession planning in order to ensure that the volunteer positions they are committing to are giving them the skills and/or requirements necessary for paid employment. A second possibility is, however, that youth are spending a minimal amount of time volunteering and as a result are not gaining sufficient experience in order to qualify them for the job.

In regard to barriers to employing youth, lack of motivation and reliability tied for the most frequent response from employers, however, inappropriate use of technology and/or social media closely followed, as 55% of employers felt this was a barrier to hiring and/or maintain youth employment. Strangely, however, 36% of employers felt that a benefit that youth bring to the workforce was their modern skills and abilities, and this included their use of technology. This indicates that employers may be experiencing a little bit of a conundrum with youth employees. For on one hand they are great with technology and employers are benefiting from this, whereas

on the other hand, their overuse use of technology and/or social media is impeding their ability to maintain their job. Evidently, employers need to be very explicit with youth around the use of technology at work.

Employers experience the most challenges with the younger demographic, ages 15 to 22. These results came as no surprise as many younger employees and job seekers have limited attachment to the workforce and are in the process of establishing job skills. Teaching life skills to employment in our education systems is one possible avenue to explore in reducing the challenges that the younger group is presenting to employers in the workforce.

In fact, most employers felt that life skills training, career guidance and job matching programs in schools were the most important strategies to increase youth employment. Interestingly enough, employers ranked obtaining more certification as a lesser concern, however, 42% of youth respondent felt that lack of training and certification was a barrier for them in obtaining employment.

In regard to job search support, we were not surprised that 76% of youth indicated that they had received support in school with job searching as this is part of the standard school curriculum. However, 24% stated that they did not receive support. Eighty-five youth responded when asked whether the school job search support was helpful; 54 positively, 16 negatively and 15 did not remember.

Another interesting finding in respect to challenges in finding work, was that 17 youth responded that they did not really know how to go about finding a job and of these 17, 11 (65%) indicated that their school(s) had provided job search help. In order to better support youth to make the school-to-work transition, it is imperative that information related to job search and/or career exploration be useful for youth when seeking employment.

In regard to challenges to employment cited by youth, transportation was listed as the number one challenge to obtaining employment. This came as no surprise to us as we live in a rural community and many communities outside the Duncan city core have struggled with consistent public transportation. Employers also listed transportation as an issue, ranked sixth in barriers to employing youth.

The economy and competition for jobs were both cited as other major challenges by youth in finding work, with 43 and 42 responses respectively. Although we did not ask youth whether or not they were seeking a job at the time of the survey, we felt that these responses indicated youth are aware of the state of the local economy and able to accurately reflect the high rate of local unemployment.

In an attempt to explore how demographics relate to barriers to employment, it was interesting to note that forty-three of 106 youth reported Aboriginal or First Nations ethnicity. Of 10 youth who reported that they found discrimination based on race a challenge in finding work, 9 (90%) were aboriginal-First Nations. Additionally, six youth identified as LGBTQ, and four youth indicated that they found discrimination based on sex or gender identity a challenge in finding work. Of these four, only one identified as LGBTQ. We anticipate that the LGBTQ community may face unique barriers that are exclusive to this demographic. This is an issue that may need further attention as it is largely under-researched.

Project Limitations

The goal of community-based research is to provide insight into regional problems and offer solutions. The Employer-Youth Engagement Project (EYE) used resources from within local health area #65 to guide its development. However, some weaknesses in the study emerged during its execution. EYE faced difficulties in sample size, non-representative demographics and unclear survey questions.

Obtaining an adequate sample size for both youth and employers was our principle challenge. Given time and resource constraints, we were able to survey only 106 youth and 73 employers. As a result, the survey should not be considered representative of all youth between 15 and 30 or all employers in local health area #65. In addition, we obtained employers' responses in only eleven of twenty identified types of business with the majority from the retail sector (44%); the study lacked input from employers in nine other industries.

In regards to response rate, youth were invited while in group settings to complete the surveys in person as well as through an open link on Community Options Societies website. As a result it

was not possible to calculate a response rate to compare numbers invited relative to those who actually completed surveys.

According to the 2006 Cowichan Census District, there are 76, 929 residents in the Cowichan Valley, 7,420 of whom have Aboriginal identity (BC Statistics, 2009); this means that approximately 9.7% of Cowichan Valley residents are Aboriginal. However, 38% of respondents from this youth survey identified themselves as having First Nations-Aboriginal ethnicity. It is worth noting then, that survey responses may over-represent the views of Aboriginal youth among youth in the Cowichan Valley.

Given the majority of the groups of youth that were polled were targeted out of convenience, it is important to note that many of them were considered ‘multi-barrier’ youth- as this was often a requirement in order for them to access these group supports. Although efforts were made to obtain input from youth outside this context, a disproportionate amount of respondents still remained under this umbrella. Also, given that the median age of the youth was 20 years old, the views and opinions may not reflect the experience of youth closer to the age of 30.

Finally, some survey questions, considered in retrospect, were unclear or ambiguous, specifically in the youth survey. For example, the answer relating to ‘confidence’ as a barrier in question #8 was too vague, as were the terms ‘good boss’ and ‘feeling valued/appreciated in my job’ in question #15. We attempted to clarify these issues by hosting a focus group, consisting of eight youth. The results of these discussions are outlined in the Discussion section.



Conclusion

The Employer-Youth Engagement Project conducted community-based research concerning the issue of local youth unemployment. We developed and administered two surveys in our quest to learn more about this issue and were able to connect with industry professionals, and multiple youth and community minded employers. We explored employment barriers faced by youth and employers hiring youth, benefits youth bring to the workplace and strategies and resources to increase hiring and retention of local youth.

In our research we discovered that many of the barriers that youth are experiencing in obtaining employment in the Cowichan region are related to the conditions of the local labour market and the minimal supply of available jobs. Transportation continues to be a barrier to employment, as it is challenging to find consistent, reliable transportation in a rural community without owning a vehicle. Lack of experience, having poor or no references and little confidence are also barriers experienced by youth in seeking employment.

When looking at attractive workplace characteristic for youth, we identified that having an enjoyable work environment and learning new skills was especially important for youth. Furthermore, when maintaining a position, feeling valued, having a good boss and being passionate about the work was most likely to influence youth to stay at a job.

With respect to challenges with youth employees, employers identified that it is generally 15-22 year-olds who present the most challenges at work. Youth reliability and lack of motivation to get job tasks done were most concerning for employers. Some additional concerns were the inappropriate use of technology at work and poor presentation when job searching. Employers offered helpful solutions to overcome these barriers which included advice on job search as well as job maintenance advice.

In relation to benefits and resiliencies that youth bring in the workforce, most employers felt that it was their personality traits that were most valuable. Specifically, employers expressed appreciation for the innovation that youth bring into their workplaces as well as their energy and enthusiasm.

Recommendations

This report puts forward recommendations for youth, employers and the community that stem from the research conducted.

Youth

Most employers felt that life skills training, career guidance and job matching programs were the most important strategies to increase youth employment. The following are some recommendations that could enhance these areas.

Employment related life skills

- Self awareness; confidence, motivation
- Job search etiquette: what to wear and what not to wear, appropriate times to job search, being independent in the job search
- Managing workplace conflict: how to deal with challenging situations at work; work ethic
- Communication; attitude
- Proper disclosure: what is and is not appropriate to share at work, understanding how to balance home/school identity *versus* work identity

Informational interviews

Doing this will greatly increase youths knowledge of that occupation and will also give them a realistic idea as to whether they see themselves in that job. Here are some examples of questions they may ask:

- What type of requirement would I need for this profession?
- What does a typical day look like?
- What courses and /or training would you recommend that I take?
- What would you recommend I do in order to gain experience in this field?
- How often does your agency/company hire new employees for this/these position(s)?

Job Search and Career Decision making

Although schools are successfully incorporating courses related to job search and career decision making into their curriculum, they don't always prepare students for the practicalities of everyday life in the work force. Instead, many schools focus on long range goals and not necessarily the baby steps that are needed in order to achieve these goals. Youth need to

understand how the decisions that they make today can affect their career outcome. Breaking down long term goals into smaller, more manageable and foreseeable goals will help youth appreciate that they can make a difference now!

- Research the career areas you are interested in
- Know the labour market in the geographical area you want to work; what jobs are in demand?
- Understanding the competitive nature of the job market; balance passion and practicality when choosing a career path

Conducting proper research is crucial prior to devoting time, money and energy into any training and education. Getting a realistic idea on the outlook for a profession is key in determining whether youth want to (or should) pursue training or education in that field. Research coupled with sound decision-making will greatly reduce the amount of frustrated, unemployed graduates unable to find work.

Employers

When looking for a job youth reported learning new skills and the quality of the work environment as the most important factors; flexible work schedules and wages followed in importance. On the job, qualities which encouraged youth to stay in the position included feeling valued, a good boss and a passion for the job.

The following recommendations are for employers in hiring/maintaining youth employees:

Hiring practices

- Be aware of the strengths youth bring to the workforce; energy, enthusiasm, willingness to learn, positive attitudes, open-mindedness and strength in mastering new technologies
- Be aware of generational differences that can create conflict at work; every generation has a different set of values as a result of the era they grew up in
- Be specific in job requirement
- Be specific in interview questions

Work environment

- Incorporate mentorship programs
- Flexible work schedule to meet school/other commitments
- Reinforce good behavior by offering positive feedback
- Provide opportunities to learn new and useful things

Motivators

- Incorporate intrinsic and extrinsic motivators
- Give positive feedback often
- Use positive constructive feedback that provides opportunities to grow and learn

Community/Schools

One of the highest ranked barriers for employers in hiring youth was reliability. Both employers and youth identified transportation as a contributing factor to reliability/employability.

Transportation continues to be a barrier to employment, as it is challenging to find consistent, reliable transportation in a rural community without owning a vehicle.

It has also been identified that current career preparation programs at school are not meeting the needs of youth and that youth would benefit from structured school curriculum that has a focus on employment related life skills, career development and information on current labour market trends. It has also been identified that although the school may be the place to reach the most youth, teachers are already stretched attempting to be "everything to everyone".

The following are recommendations to the local government, community and schools:

Transportation

- Advocate for better public transit

Access to programming for youth

- Advocate for accessible programming for all youth
- Develop a consistent approach to programming that meets the needs of youth
- Increase the required volunteer hours for graduation
- Work with youth to ensure volunteer choices are relevant to youth's career goals
- Develop career prep curriculum consistent with current job search practices and labour market information

Further Recommendations

Additional employer and youth recommendations are made in the form of two resource guides- the **Employer Resource Guide** and **Youth Employment Guide**. They will be made available to members of the public in paper form as well as online by visiting: www.coscowichan.ca.

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Appendices

- I. Youth Employment Survey
- II. Employer Survey
- III. Youth Survey Results
- IV. Employer Survey Results

I. Youth Employment Survey

The following survey is designed to gather information on some of the factors that may influence youth unemployment in the Cowichan area. Your input in the survey will be used to develop a resource kit that both employers and job seekers can use to address local unemployment. Your participation in the survey is optional and you have the right to withdraw from the survey at any time without any consequence. Surveys are completed anonymously and all information will be kept confidential. This project has been funded by Service Canada Youth Awareness and Vancouver Coastal Health. Community Options Society is responsible for coordinating this project locally and is partnering with Social Planning Cowichan. Thank you in advance for taking the time to be a part of this survey.

1) Are you currently attending school?

- a) Yes
- b) No

2) If yes, please specify what type of school you are attending:

- Public School
- Private school
- Alternate Education school
- Home school
- Post-secondary school (college/university/trades)

3) What is the highest grade/level you have completed? _____

4) Did any school(s) you attend(ed) provide help with resume and cover letter writing, job search and/or career exploration?

- a) Yes
- b) No

5) If yes, please specify which specific school(s) provided help:

6) If yes, did you find this information helpful and/or useful in looking for work?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I don't remember

7) Are you aware of other resources in the community where you can get help with job search? (i.e. resume and cover letter writing, computer use for job search, employment related workshop)

- a) Yes
- b) No

8) Have you done any volunteer work in the community (this includes babysitting, mowing lawns for neighbors, etc.)?

- a) Yes
- b) No

9) Are you currently employed?

- a) Yes
- b) No

10) What are the main challenges you have faced in finding work? (Please check all that apply)

Transportation-it is challenging for me to get to work.

Lack of training and certification-I don't have the requirements for most jobs.

Lack of experience-I have the training and certification but, don't have the experience they are looking for.

I don't really know how to go about finding a job.

Confidence-I have low self-esteem and I think employers are picking up on this.

Child care costs-I can't afford to pay for day care for my children.

Literacy-I have problems with reading and writing.

Economy-not a lot of jobs out there.

Competition-I'm competing with lots of people for jobs.

Health problems make it difficult for me to work (can be a mental, physical or emotional disability).

It's difficult to find a job that fits with my schedule.

Poor references or no references.

Discrimination based on race.

Discrimination based on sexual/gender identity (i.e. gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, queer, etc.).

None of the above.

Other - please explain _____

11) What do you consider to be a reasonable amount of time to stay at one job?

3-6 months

6-12 months

1-2 years

2-3 years

3 years and over

12) How many paid jobs have you had?

0

1-2

3-4

5-6

7-8

More than 9

13) If you have had paid employment, what is the longest amount of time you have spent at one job?

14) When you are **LOOKING** for a job, what attracts you most to a position? (Please check those that apply)

I'll take anything I can get!

The wage

Work environment-Is this a fun place to work? Do I fit here?

Flexible work schedule

Passion-I really believe in the product/business

I can learn new skills

There is room to grow with the company

Other, please specify _____

15) When you are **WORKING** at a job, what is likely to make you happy and keep you working there?

A good boss

Feeling valued-I am appreciated at my job

Friendships at work-the people I work with care about me

Flexible schedule

Passion-I really enjoy what I do

Incentives-if I do a good job I will be rewarded

The money

I am able to grow with the company and learn leadership skills

Other, please specify _____

16) Do you know of any local employers that have a reputation for being a great place to work?

a) Yes

b) No

17) If yes, what company (or companies) was this? Please share any great things you have heard about this company:

18) Are you:

Male

Female

3rd gendered

19) Age: _____

20) What do you consider your ethnic origin to be? (please check one)

Euro-Canadian

Aboriginal/First Nation

- Asian
- Other _____

21) Do you identify as being gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered or queer (GLBTQ)?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Additional comments about youth unemployment:

Thank you for your time
We appreciate your willingness to share your expertise

II. Employer Survey

In the following survey we are asking employers to share effective human resource practices they employ in their business. We also hope to gain insight into barriers they may face in hiring and/or maintaining youth employees. Our hope in gathering this information is to determine some of the factors that are influencing youth unemployment in the Cowichan area. Your input in the survey will be used to develop a resource kit that both employers and youth can use to address local unemployment. Your participation in the survey is optional and you have the right to withdraw from the survey at any time without any consequence. All information will be kept confidential and no information about individual employers will be publicized in a manner that will allow for specific identification of individual organizations. This project has been funded by Service Canada Youth Awareness and Vancouver Coastal Health. Community Options Society is responsible for coordinating this project locally and is partnering with Social Planning Cowichan. Thank you in advance for taking the time to be a part of this survey and sharing your expertise.

- 1) Type of business: _____
- 2) Name of business (optional): _____
- 3) Do you currently have any youth between the ages of 15 to 30 employed at your business?
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
- 4) What is a typical length of time for a youth to remain employed at your establishment?
 - 3-6 months
 - 6-12 months
 - 1-2 years
 - 2-3 years
 - 3 years and over
 - Not applicable
- 5) Which of the following does your place of business offer to its employees? (Please check all that apply)
 - Health Benefits
 - Incremental pay increases
 - Incentives, rewards and/or bonuses
 - Flexible work schedule
 - Advancement opportunities
 - Training
 - Mentorship
 - Other, please specify: _____
- 6) Do you have a systematic way of evaluating employee performances in your organization?
 - Yes
 - No

7) How often do you provide POSITIVE feedback to members of your staff?

- On a weekly basis
- On a monthly basis
- Quarterly
- Annually
- Whenever needed-no set schedule
- Other, please specify: _____

8) What human resource practices do you employ that seem to be successful in hiring and/or maintaining youth employment?

9) Which of the following barriers have you faced in regards to hiring and/or maintaining youth employment? (Please check all that apply)

- Reliability
- Poor presentation when job searching
- Lack of motivation to get job tasks done
- Don't have the work experience needed for the job
- Don't have the training and/or certification needed for the job
- Inappropriate use of technology at work-use of cell phones and/or social media sites
- Limited availability
- Transportation issues
- No comment /Not applicable/No issues
- Other, please specify: _____

10) Which age range of youth do you experience the most challenges with? (Please check all that apply)

- 15 to 18 year olds
- 19 to 22 year olds
- 23 to 26 year olds
- 27 to 30 year olds
- Not applicable

11) Which of the following do you think would increase youth employment? (Please check all that apply)

- If they had more life skill training
- If they had more relevant work experience (including volunteer experience)
- If they had more certification
- If they had better job search skills
- If there were more leadership and/or mentorship programs for youth
- If there was more career guidance and job matching programs in schools
- Other, please specify: _____

12) What benefits do you think youth bring to the workforce?

13) What advice would you give youth today to increase their chance of employability?

**Thank you for your time
We appreciate your willingness to share your expertise**

III. Youth Survey Results**Youth Survey Summary Tables (n=106)**

Responses may exceed 106 where more than one answer is possible; in this case replies are summarised both as percent of responses and as percent of surveys

Q1. Are you currently attending school?

		106	100%
Total responses		Count	Percent
Attending school?		Code	Count
Yes	1	65	61%
No	2	41	39%

Q2. If yes, please specify what type of school you are attending:

		106	100%
Total responses		Count	Percent
What type of school?		Code	Count
Public	1	23	22%
Private	2	1	1%
Alternate Education	3	19	18%
Home	4	3	3%
Post-Secondary (College/University/Trades)	5	20	19%
Missing	99	40	38%

Q3. What is the highest grade you have completed?

Open-Ended Response

		106	
Total responses		Count	Percent
Highest grade completed?		Code	Count
Grade 9 or below	1	16	15%
Grade 10	2	26	25%
Grade 11	3	21	20%
Grade 12	4	28	26%
Undergraduate Degree / Post – Secondary Training	5	5	5%
Graduate Degree	6	1	1%
Missing	99	9	8%

Q4. Did any school you attend provide help with resume and cover letter writing, job search and/or career exploration?

		106	100%
Total responses		Count	Percent
School provide help with search?		Code	Count
Yes	1	81	76%
No	2	25	24%

Q5. If yes, please specify what school(s) that helped:

Open-Ended Response

		117	100%	
Total responses		Count	% responses	% surveys
Which school(s) helped?		Code	Count	% responses
Public high school	1	50	43%	47%
Private high school	2	8	7%	8%

Home school	3	1	1%	1%
Public middle school	4	1	1%	1%
Alternative education	5	13	11%	12%
Post secondary schools	6	7	6%	7%
Other	7	7	6%	7%
Missing	99	30	26%	28%

Q6. If yes, did you find this information helpful and/or useful in looking for work?

Total responses		106	100%
Was school help useful?	Code	Count	Percent
Yes	1	54	51%
No	2	16	15%
I don't remember	3	15	14%
Missing	99	21	20%

Q7. Are you aware of other resources in the community where you can get help with job search? (i.e. resume and cover letter writing, computer use for job search, employment related workshops)

Total responses		106	100%
Aware of other resources?	Code	Count	Percent
Yes	1	79	75%
No	2	26	25%
Missing	99	1	1%

Q8. What are the main challenges you have faced in finding work? (Please check all that apply)

Please check all that apply

Total responses		353		
Main challenges in finding work?	Code	Count	% responses	% surveys
Transportation-it is challenging for me to get to work	1	50	14%	47%
Lack of training and certification-I don't have the requirements for most jobs	2	44	12%	42%
Lack of experience-I have the training and certification but don't have the experience they are looking for	3	42	12%	40%
I don't really know how to go about finding a job	4	17	5%	16%
Confidence-I have low self-esteem and I think employers are picking up on this	5	20	6%	19%
Child care costs-I can't afford to pay for day care for my children	6	4	1%	4%
Literacy-I have problems reading and writing	7	7	2%	7%
Economy-not a lot of jobs out there	8	43	12%	41%
Competition-I'm competing with lots of people for jobs	9	42	12%	40%
Health problems make it difficult for me to work (can be a mental, physical or emotional disability)	10	13	4%	12%
It's difficult to find a job that fits with my schedule	11	19	5%	18%

Poor references or no references	12	20	6%	19%
Discrimination based on race	13	10	3%	9%
Discrimination based on sexual/gender identity(i.e. gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, queer, etc.)	14	4	1%	4%
None of the above	15	9	3%	8%
Other (please explain)	16	6	2%	6%
Missing	99	3	1%	3%

Q9. Have you done any volunteer work in the community? (this includes babysitting, mowing lawns for neighbors, etc.)

Total responses		106	100%
Any volunteer work?	Code	Count	Percent
Yes	1	96	91%
No	2	10	9%

Q10. Are you currently employed?

Total responses		106	100%
Currently employed?	Code	Count	Percent
Yes	1	31	29%
No	2	75	71%

Q11. What do you consider to be a reasonable amount of time to stay at one job?

Total responses		106	100%
Reasonable stay at 1 job?	Code	Count	Percent
3-6 months	1	6	6%
6-12 months	2	18	17%
1-2 years	3	23	22%
2-3 years	4	23	22%
3 years and over	5	24	23%
Missing	99	12	11%

Q12. How many paid jobs have you had?

Total responses		106	100%
How many paid jobs?	Code	Count	Percent
0	1	17	16%
1 to 2	2	34	32%
3 to 4	3	26	25%
5 to 6	4	18	17%
7 to 8	5	5	5%
more than 9	6	6	6%

Q13. If you have had paid employment, what is the longest amount of time you have spent at one job?

Open-Ended Response

Total responses		106	100%
Longest time at one job?	Code	Count	Percent
1-6 months	1	20	19%
7-12 months	2	7	7%
1-2 years	3	16	15%

2-3 years	4	8	8%
more than 3 years	5	14	13%
seasonal/occasional/unstructured	6	6	6%
under 1 month	7	3	3%
Missing	99	32	30%

Q14. When you are LOOKING for a job, what attracts you most to a position?

Please check those that apply

Total responses		355	100%	
Job attraction when looking?	Code	Count	% responses	% surveys
I'll take anything I can get!	1	42	12%	40%
The wage	2	51	14%	48%
Work environment-Is this a fun place to work? Do I fit here?	3	60	17%	57%
Flexible work schedule	4	53	15%	50%
Passion-I really believe in the product/business	5	35	10%	33%
I can learn new skills	6	68	19%	64%
There is room to grow with the company	7	40	11%	38%
Other (please specify)	8	6	2%	6%

Q15. When you are WORKING at a job, what is likely to make you happy and keep you working there?

Total responses		489	100%	
What makes it worth staying at job?	Code	Count	% responses	% surveys
A good boss	1	78	16%	74%
Feeling valued-I am appreciated at my job	2	80	16%	75%
Friendships at work-the people I work with care about me	3	64	13%	60%
Flexible schedule	4	56	11%	53%
Passion-I really enjoy what I do	5	68	14%	64%
Incentives-if I do a good job I will be rewarded	6	29	6%	27%
The money	7	58	12%	55%
I am able to grow with the company and learn leadership skills	8	52	11%	49%
Other (please specify)	9	1	0%	1%
Missing	99	3	1%	3%

Q16. Do you know of any local employers that have a reputation for being a great place to work?

Total responses		106	100%
Knowledge of good employers?	Code	Count	Percent
Yes	1	44	42%
No	2	62	58%

Q17. If yes, what company (or companies) was this? Please share any great things you have heard about this company:

Open ended response
Not coded

Q18. Are you: (gender)

Total responses		106	100%
Gender?	Code	Count	Percent
Male	1	57	54%
Female	2	48	45%
3rd gendered	3	1	1%

Q19. How old are you?

Open ended response

Total responses		106	100%
How old in years?	Code	Count	Percent
15-18 years old	1	43	41%
19-22 years old	2	24	23%
23-26 years old	3	25	24%
27-30 years old	4	12	11%
Missing	99	2	2%
Mean age	20.7		
Median age	20		
Modal age	16		
Youngest	15		
Oldest	30		

Q20. What do you consider your ethnic origin to be?

More than one answer possible

Total responses		112	100%	
Ethnic origin?	Code	Count	% responses	% surveys
Euro-canadian	1	63	56%	59%
Aboriginal-First Nations	2	43	38%	41%
Asian	3	5	4%	5%
South American	4	1	1%	1%

Q21. Do you identify as being gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered or queer (GLBTQ)?

Total responses		106	100%
GLBTQ?	Code	Count	Percent
Yes	1	6	6%
No	2	96	91%
Missing	99	4	4%

End survey

IV. Employer Survey Results**Employer Survey Summary Tables (n=73)**

Responses may exceed 73 where more than one answer is possible; in this case replies are summarised both as percent of responses and as percent of surveys

Q1. Type of business

Open ended response

Total responses		73	100%
Type of business	Code	Count	Percent
Agriculture	1	0	0%
Mining	2	0	0%
Utilities	3	2	3%
Construction	4	3	4%
Manufacturing	5	6	8%
Wholesale Trade	6	1	1%
Retail	7	32	44%
Transporting & Warehouse	8	0	0%
Information & Culture	9	0	0%
Finance	10	1	1%
Real Estate	11	0	0%
Science	12	0	0%
Enterprise management	13	0	0%
Administration / Waste / Remediation	14	1	1%
Education	15	0	0%
Health	16	4	5%
Arts	17	4	5%
Food/ Hotels	18	16	22%
Other	19	1	1%
Public Administration	20	0	0%
Missing	99	2	3%

Q2. Name of business (optional)

Not summarised

Q3. Do you currently have any youth between the ages of 15 to 30 employed at your business?

Total responses		73	100%
Current employ?	Code	Count	Percent
Yes	1	66	90%
No	2	7	10%

Q4. What is a typical length of time for a youth to remain employed at your establishment?

More than one response possible

Total responses		81	100%	
Typical length?	Code	Count	% responses	% surveys
3-6 months	1	9	11%	12%
6-12 months	2	20	25%	27%
1-2 years	3	23	28%	32%
2-3 years	4	15	19%	21%
3+ years	5	10	12%	14%

Not applicable	6	4	5%	5%
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Q5. Which of the following does your place of business offer to its employees?

Check all that apply

Total responses		324	100%	
General benefits?	Code	Count	% responses	% surveys
Health Benefits	1	34	10%	47%
Incremental pay increases	2	48	15%	66%
Incentives, rewards and/or bonuses	3	37	11%	51%
Flexible work schedule	4	55	17%	75%
Advancement opportunities	5	44	14%	60%
Training	6	63	19%	86%
Mentorship	7	35	11%	48%
Discounts	8	4	1%	5%
Exclusivity	9	2	1%	3%
Support for future education	10	1	0%	1%
Missing	99	1	0%	1%

Q6. Do you have a systematic way of evaluating employee performances in your organization?

Total responses		73	100%
Systematic evaluation?	Code	Count	Percent
Yes	1	44	60%
No	2	29	40%

Q7. How often do you provide POSITIVE feedback to members of your staff?

More than one response possible

Total responses		98	100%	
Positive feedback?	Code	Count	% responses	% surveys
On a weekly basis	1	20	20%	27%
On a monthly basis	2	8	8%	11%
Quarterly	3	6	6%	8%
Annually	4	4	4%	5%
Whenever needed-no set schedule	5	49	50%	67%
Daily	6	11	11%	15%

Q8. What human resource practices do you employ that seem to be successful in hiring and/or maintaining youth employment?

Open-Ended Response

Total responses		96	100%	
Successful practices?	Code	Count	% responses	% surveys
Hiring Practices	1	18	19%	25%
Employee Maintenance	2	30	31%	41%
Training	3	18	19%	25%
Other	4	19	20%	26%
missing	99	11	11%	15%

Q9. Which of the following barriers have you faced in regards to hiring and/or maintaining youth employment?

Check all that apply

Total responses		286	100%
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Barriers?	Code	Count	% responses	% surveys
Reliability	1	48	17%	66%
Poor presentation when job searching	2	37	13%	51%
Lack of motivation to get job tasks done	3	48	17%	66%
Don't have the work experience needed for the job	4	19	7%	26%
Don't have the training and/or certification needed for the job	5	17	6%	23%
Inappropriate use of technology at work-use of cell phones and/or social media sites	6	40	14%	55%
Limited availability	7	33	12%	45%
Transportation issues	8	26	9%	36%
No comment /Not applicable/No issues	9	3	1%	4%
Other (please specify)	10	15	5%	21%

Q10. Which age range of youth do you experience the most challenges with?

Check all that apply

Total responses		98	100%	
Challenging age ranges?	Code	Count	% responses	% surveys
15 to 18 year olds	1	36	37%	49%
19 to 22 year olds	2	36	37%	49%
23 to 26 year olds	3	8	8%	11%
27 to 30 year olds	4	3	3%	4%
Not applicable	5	15	15%	21%

Q11. Which of the following do you think would increase youth employment?

Check all that apply

Total responses		175	100%	
Increase employment?	Code	Count	% responses	% surveys
If they had more life skill training	1	42	24%	58%
If they had more relevant work experience (including volunteer experience)	2	26	15%	36%
If they had more certification	3	11	6%	15%
If they had better job search skills	4	20	11%	27%
If there were more leadership and/or mentorship programs for youth	5	26	15%	36%
If there was more career guidance and job matching programs in schools	6	30	17%	41%
Other (please specify)	7	19	11%	26%
Missing	99	1	1%	1%

Q12. What benefits do you think youth bring to the workforce?

Open ended response

Total responses		119	100%	
Benefits brought by youth?	Code	Count	% responses	% surveys
Personality traits	1	50	42%	68%
Trainability	2	22	18%	30%
Modern skills & abilities	3	26	22%	36%
Other	4	17	14%	23%
Missing	99	4	3%	5%

Q13. What advice would you give youth today to increase their chance of employability?

Open-ended response

		95	100%	
Total responses		Count	% responses	% surveys
Advice to youth?	Code			
Job search - drop-off skills, appearance, confidence, available transportation, resume	1	31	33%	42%
Relevance for field - volunteer, get training or certification, apply for jobs in related field	2	21	22%	29%
Job maintenance - accomodation to schedule, motivation & work ethic, use of technology, separation of work & play, willing to learn, punctuality, respect, energy, attitude	3	30	32%	41%
Other	4	11	12%	15%
Missing	99	2	2%	3%

End survey