



LITERATURE REVIEW

TRAINING, ENGAGEMENT, AND RETENTION: A 'LEARNING REGION' APPROACH TO RURAL YOUTH

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Introduction

Youth are vital to the success and sustainability of communities and, as a result, should be high on the agenda of local government (Andresen, 2009; Government of Canada, Government of British Columbia, Fraser Basin Council, & BC Rural Network, 2015; Hamm, 2012; Heartwood Centre for Community Youth Development, 2013; MacMichael, 2015; Siegel, 2008). Past and current policies and initiatives largely undervalue the contributions youth can make to community renewal (Ryser, Manson, & Halseth, 2013). In the West Kootenay-Boundary region of British Columbia there is an aging population and a continual out migration of youth, which combined with the disconnect between those that are underemployed and/or unskilled and the jobs that exist or are emerging presents challenges for the region (Bollman, Beshiri, Tremblay, & Marshall, 2000; Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute, 2014; Government of Canada, 2011; Ministry of Jobs Tourism and Innovation & Ministry of Advanced Education, 2012).

The project *Training, engagement, and retention: a 'learning region' approach to rural youth* is a partnership between Simon Fraser University, the Lower Columbia Initiatives Corporation, and the Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute that explores rural youth retention, training, and engagement in detail. A literature review was completed as part of this project in order to summarize current literature and provide an overview of the topics, as well as existing examples.

There is a great deal of related research and literature and it is growing. The literature reviewed for this document included academic literature, as well as grey literature (public and private sector) and a review of existing programs. While widespread, it is impossible to claim this review comprehensive.

Youth Defined

There are many definitions of 'youth' that vary based on context (e.g., a specific program or agency) and consideration of different factors (e.g., age, life stage, employment status, education status). UNESCO describes youth as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood, a period between compulsory education and finding employment (UNESCO, 2015). The Canadian federal government has specifically defined rural youth as being age 15-29 in places with a population of less than 10,000 (R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd, 2002). It is worth noting that the age range of youth has been steadily broadening as the once linear transition from youth to adult, from school to employment to starting a family, is no longer linear (Policy Horizons Canada, 2015; UNESCO, 2015). **For the purposes of this project youth includes ages 17-25, but recognizing the need for flexibility in this definition.**

Workforce Development and Youth

A skilled and engaged labour force is critical (Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, 2012; International Labour Office, 2010; Powell, 2002). **Workforce Development is a broad umbrella with every sector having an important role to play.** If you consider workforce development broadly it includes any actions related to education, training, and skills development, such as K-12 education, post-secondary education, professional job training, placements/apprenticeships, career advancement, lifelong learning, and everything in between (Giloith, 2000; International Labour Office, 2010; Meléndez, 2004; Ministry of Jobs Tourism and Skills Training and Responsible for Labour, n.d.; The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 2013). 'Workforce' is defined as those preparing to enter or currently within the workforce, those currently outside the workforce, those who are unemployed, and those who are disadvantaged or marginalized. Youth can fit across this spectrum.

Under the workforce development umbrella is the engagement of key actors from schools to employers to economic development actors to local government, as well as the required supports and resources (e.g., financial resources, information). Workforce development includes or links to community engagement, learning enrichment, skills building, career development, attraction and retention, and much more.

Collaboration is critical to workforce development – including collaboration within and across sectors (Industry and Parliament Trust & UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2014; Ingenia Consulting, 2013a; Leary, 2012; OECD Education and Training Policy Division, 2010; OECD, 2010; Uhalde, 2011). While collaboration can be challenging (The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 2013), workforce development is both broad enough and complex enough that a single initiative or single actor is not enough to affect real change. Workforce development must also be contextually appropriate – there is no one size fits all solution and the nuances of different places should inform local action (Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, 2012; Giloth, 2000; International Labour Office, 2010; Meléndez, 2004). The more partners are involved, the more information can go into designing programs.

When it comes to youth, workforce development is closely intertwined with community engagement, training, skills development, attraction, and retention. Reinforcing the point regarding collaboration, much of the related literature points to initiatives involving youth as requiring a collaborative, multi-partner approach (Gustavsen, Nyhan, & Ennals, 2007; Hamm, 2012; Liu, 2015; Mirza, Vodden, & Collins, 2012; NB Youth Strategy, 2011; Northam, 2014; Peterson, Newman, Leatherman, & Miske, 2014). Learning is a partnership including: youth, parents, teachers, employers, and the surrounding community (Longworth, 2006).

The education sector is increasingly seen as a key part of building a workforce (Leary, 2012). This is seen in many examples, such as partnerships between employers and community colleges, as well as building links between education, business, and industry (Leary, 2012). Other youth specific strategies emphasize the need to ensure youth are aware of career opportunities – something the Province of New Brunswick specifically notes as requiring collaboration between government and educational institutions (Government of New Brunswick, n.d.).

However, while many post-secondary institutions are actively participating in workforce development, the K-12 education system in Canada has untapped potential (The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 2013). Examples from other places demonstrate ideas and areas for development. For example, the rural community of Alta, Norway has a program where elementary schools are given information on business creation and the role of the private sector in the community, as well as initial skills building in the business sector (Gjertsen & Halseth, 2015). In secondary school students are encouraged to gain business skills through practical experience with a youth enterprise program (Gjertsen & Halseth, 2015). In another example, Purdue's Research Park hosts an Entrepreneurship Academy, providing math, science, and technology based skills and experience to high school students (Indiana Council for Economic Education, n.d.).

When it comes to youth and workforce development there is a need to consider: i) retention, ii) training, iii) engagement, and iv) existing examples and lessons learned both at home and away.

YOUTH RETENTION

Introduction

The outmigration of rural youth is a longstanding issue across Canada (Dupuy, Mayer, & Morissette, 2000). For regions like the West Kootenay-Boundary where there are aging demographics, youth retention is increasingly important (Ingenia Consulting, 2013b). Outmigration in general acts as a destabilizing factor that can result in the loss of services and a shrinking local economy (Hamm, 2012). The many consequences of outmigration include fewer young families, fewer professionals, and fewer volunteers – overall fewer people to involve in efforts to sustain rural regions (Bryant & Joseph, 2001; Ryser et al., 2013). Specific to youth, the so called rural ‘brain drain’ sees those with greater academic abilities as more apt to leave, something highlighted as a key issue as talented youth are labelled as a rural export (Carr & Kefalas, 2009; Demi, McLaughlin, & Snyder, 2009; Looker & Naylor, 2009; Looker, 2001; McLaughlin, Shoff, & Demi, 2014; Robichaud, 2014). Rural youth outmigration has raised the question of the need for retention strategies as well as the repatriation of youth (Rural Development PEI, 2010). The literature reviewed suggests a need for strategies that address youth specifically, as youth are at the life stage where they are seriously considering future goals and making decisions, all of which is influenced by their surrounding context (Demi et al., 2009).

While rural youth outmigration is a universal issue, it should be noted that the literature is not unanimous surrounding the benefits of retention strategies. For example, there are those that note that ‘moving up’ requires ‘moving out’, and point to efforts lost retaining youth versus efforts spent attracting newcomers (Looker & Andres, 2001). One paper suggested that out migration in rural areas will continue, if not accelerate, bolstered by negative perceptions held by rural youth related to their communities (R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd, 2002). However, despite these critiques, youth retention strategies remain popular in rural areas.

While rural youth retention is a recognized need, it is rarely clearly defined. **For the purposes of this project youth retention is defined as any initiative resulting in a stable youth population within the West Kootenay-Boundary.** In this way youth retention is not limited to keeping existing youth, but also includes repatriation and attraction.

Key Points: causes and influences of youth outmigration

There has been a large amount of research on what causes and influences rural youth to stay, go, and/or return. The **lack of opportunities related to employment** (e.g., quality opportunities) and **education** (e.g., post-secondary aspirations) are often cited as two key factors that draw youth away (Bollman, 2014a, 2014b; Canning, Power, & Norman, 2010; Donaldson, 1986; Irshad, 2013; Robichaud, 2014; The Ontario Rural Council, 2007; Theodori & Theodori, 2015; Wylie, 2008). However, these are far from the only considerations. The reality is a complex network of different factors.

Quality of life plays a key role (Robichaud, 2014). This includes **limits to or lack of amenities and services** that can push rural youth away, such as transportation and other local infrastructure, as well as recreation, other extracurricular activities, and a clean natural environment (Demi et al., 2009; Hamm, 2012; Irshad, 2013; Looker, 2001; McLaughlin et al., 2014; Robichaud, 2014; Siegel, 2008; Wylie, 2008). Beyond amenities and services, **community acceptance** and **attitudes toward youth** is another factor. This includes youth engagement, community attachment, and sense of community, all of which have an influence on intentions to migrate (Demi et al., 2009; Hamm, 2012; Irshad, 2013; Looker, 2001;

Robichaud, 2014; The Ontario Rural Council, 2007; Theodori & Theodori, 2015). **Personal and socio-cultural factors** also play a role. This includes factors like: relationships (e.g., friends, family), parental role models, financial ability, and gender (Avis, 2013; Byun, Meece, Irvin, & Hutchins, 2012; Canning et al., 2010; Demi et al., 2009; Donaldson, 1986; Government of Canada et al., 2015; Hamm, 2012; Looker, 2001; Mclaughlin et al., 2014; Robichaud, 2014). One study found that local social structural factors are of overriding importance in understanding why people stay (Irwin, Tolbert, & Lyson, 1999).

Perception matters, whether that is positive or negative (Rye, 2006). This can be the perception of available opportunities (e.g., jobs, education), like the negative perceptions of fewer, limited, or low quality opportunities in rural areas (Canning et al., 2010; Looker & Naylor, 2009; Looker, 2001). Both internal and external perceptions of the choice to stay in rural areas is also a factor. For example, the idea that staying is a failure in some respect, or general negative perceptions of rural lifestyle (e.g., dull, non-modern) can push youth away (Davies, 2008; Demi et al., 2009; Donaldson, 1986; Government of Canada et al., 2015; Looker & Naylor, 2009; Rye, 2006). An Australian study found that the negative perception of rural areas made it difficult to fill available skilled positions (Davies, 2008). Perception can also adjust the aspirations of rural youth, a challenge unto itself (Looker & Andres, 2001; Looker, 2001). For example, those who wish to stay may adjust their aspirations to match the opportunities they perceive to be available (Mclaughlin et al., 2014). Additionally, the perception, real or imagined, of opportunities available elsewhere, not to mention wanderlust can both pull youth away (Mclaughlin et al., 2014; Siegel, 2008). Overall there is a need to alter negative perceptions surrounding rural living (The Ontario Rural Council, 2007).

To add to the complexity, while retention and attraction are related, the two can be influenced by different factors. Differences also can be found between new and returning residences. For example, new in-migrants to rural areas cited factors of quality of life, social capital, and the importance of stable employment as reasons to move places (MacMichael, 2015). Compare this to returnees, who were often motivated by their past experiences and the ideas of home (MacMichael, 2015). These are different from factors that were found to anchor people to places (e.g., home ownership, job satisfaction, family) (Irwin et al., 1999).

When considering youth retention it is important to remember the number of factors involved in the decision to stay, leave, or return. Decisions related to education, work, marriage, parenting, mobility, and so on are not made in isolation (Looker & Dwyer, 1998). This highlights the importance of **identifying what youth value** in communities and working to translate these values into a where place youth wish to be (BC Rural Network, 2013).

Lessons Learned

Types of programs

The literature reviewed suggest a variety of approaches to youth retention. Two core elements of retention appear to be i) employment and ii) engagement. While some retention plans focus on one or the other, many are more comprehensive (Irshad, 2013). One article suggested that retention strategies must be all encompassing (e.g., including economic opportunities, quality of life) and must be adopted by all communities in a region in order to be effective (Robichaud, 2014). Another suggested that by focusing only on who is leaving this leaves out the larger picture of who is coming in, arguing that attraction strategies would be more successful if they target individuals with values or interests aligned with rural living and what the community has to offer (MacMichael, 2015). Overall, youth retention

strategies often focus on education, training, career opportunities, as well as youth engagement demonstrating that retention is a combination of efforts (Liu, 2015).

There are regions in similar situations to the West Kootenay-Boundary that can serve as example (see Appendix 1). North Eastern Ontario for example has identified they are “poised to attract and retain youth” via new mineral developments and the retirement of baby boomers (Robichaud, 2014). However it is important to note that i) reliance on traditional industry and ii) the population demographic shift is unlikely to be enough, particularly as neither are particularly forward thinking.

The establishment of youth councils, various collaborative efforts, youth networking, and creation of job opportunities are all recommended types of youth retention strategies (Liu, 2015). Interestingly, studies on the subject have uncovered little differences between the literature and practice, an indication that the body of work surrounding this subject is solid (Liu, 2015).

Success Factors

In order to retain youth you have to **identify and pay attention to the influencing factors** discussed above. For example, through increasing community attachment and sense of place, youth are more apt to stay (Theodori & Theodori, 2015). It is important to **know your youth**, to understand the relationships that youth have with their region and to **educate decision makers about youth needs** (Robichaud, 2014). Retention strategies should identify strengths and promote them (Andresen, 2009). Active social and recreational opportunities, as well as services (e.g., transit) are important (The Ontario Rural Council, 2007).

Education is a critical element of youth retention. It was suggested to keep schools open where possible, as schools are critical in maintaining vibrant rural settings (MacMichael, 2015). Rural school success is tied to economic viability and the sustainability of economic development (Looker, 2001). A strong, integrated education network, **from daycare to post-secondary**, is important (Robichaud, 2014).

There also needs to be a focus on **enhancing youth employment opportunities** through entry level or temporary positions, as well as available funding for training and networking (MacMichael, 2015; R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd, 2002). Job creation, economic development, and investing in a strong local economy are key factors for successful youth retention (The Ontario Rural Council, 2007).

Active engagement with youth increases likelihood of them staying (MacMichael, 2015). This includes involving youth in strategy and decision making (Robichaud, 2014). **Changing** perceptions is also a key factor, including working to promote strengths, raising awareness of opportunities, and eliminating negative perceptions (Robichaud, 2014). Retention strategies share characteristics like being proactive, positive, and deliberate (Robichaud, 2014).

However, it is also suggested youth retention should include **encouraging and supporting youth to leave**, while attracting them to come back, bringing with them new skills and a broader personal and professional network which benefits the region as a whole (Madden, 2012). Remembering those youth who leave and linking and leveraging opportunities to bring people back is a key part of youth retention (Hamm, 2012; Robichaud, 2014).

Summary

What is shown in the above is that youth retention is broad, relating to workforce development, community engagement, assets and amenities, social programming, and so on. Ideally rural youth

retention would include better jobs, better recreation, and better engagement (Madden, 2012). However, the basics of retention also include: community engagement, participation and sense of ownership, and affording youth leadership opportunities within the community (Wylie, 2008). In light of the discussion above two messages are important to highlight.

First, it is important to go beyond jobs. While jobs and education are critical, youth will only remain or return if a rural area is attractive (R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd, 2002). Creating not only job opportunities but an engaged community – a community that has engaged them before they leave – is crucial. Areas with strong civic engagement, civic welfare, and social capital are shown to retain higher proportions of their populations and some researchers suspect that non-urban institutions do not operate effectively to create these types of civic engagement that are central to embedding people to places (Irwin et al., 1999).

Second, leaving can be a good thing. Within the youth retention conversation it is important to consider that leaving can be good – so long as there is thought given to ensuring youth return (Heartwood Centre for Community Youth Development, 2013). Youth retention strategies should be approached with the mindset that retention is not keeping youth locked in place. There are employment opportunities in rural areas that require skills and experience that youth may not be able to get at home, forcing them to leave. Some research suggests that rural youth are more likely to leave home, but are also more likely to return or want to return (Looker & Naylor, 2009). Examples from the literature cite importance of encouraging youth to explore, while invite them to return and, more importantly, creating the conditions that allow them to do so (Avis, 2013; Hamm, 2012). It is important to stay in contact with youth that leave in order to keep in touch and relay opportunities in their home community (The Ontario Rural Council, 2007).

YOUTH TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Introduction

Youth are increasingly at a disadvantage in today's labour market due to an increased emphasis on experience (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996; The Ontario Rural Council, 2007). Across Canada there are persistently high levels of youth employment (The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 2013). In rural areas where the economy is typically less diversified and where there are likely smaller employers, there can be even fewer opportunities for youth and those opportunities that are available can be undesirable (e.g., short term contracts, no benefits, low wages) (Dupuy et al., 2000; Looker, 2001; Texas Workforce Commission Youth Program Initiative, n.d.; The Ontario Rural Council, 2007; Wylie, 2008). Limited employment opportunities can impact the ability for youth to stay or return to rural areas (Looker, 2001). Rural youth are more likely to have lower aspirations, to experience regular bouts of unemployment or not have full time employment, and to lack access to resources and services (Looker, 2001). Youth also increasingly face challenges related to high cost of living and debt (e.g., student loans) (The Ontario Rural Council, 2007). Additionally, scattered or inaccessible services, and few youth specific services can amplify challenges, as can out-of-date marketing of job opportunities, negative perceptions of youth, and logistical challenges (e.g., transportation) (National Employer Leadership Council, 2002; Texas Workforce Commission Youth Program Initiative, n.d.; The Ontario Rural Council, 2007; Wylie, 2008). Within the West Kootenay-Boundary region there are barriers such as cost, negative attitudes, the lack of opportunities for younger and less experienced employees, and that students may have to leave the region for at least part of their training (Ingenia Consulting, 2013b). The impact of these challenges go beyond economics. The inability for youth to successfully engage in the labour force can impact their overall well-being and independence, leading to negative behavior and isolation from the community (Ryser et al., 2013).

The challenges youth face surrounding employment are occurring alongside a shortage of skilled people to fill employment vacancies (The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 2013). The challenge finding the skilled workforce is not uncommon, particularly in many rural areas (Ministry of Rural Affairs, 2014). In fact, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities notes that attracting and retaining qualified employees ranks second only to the economy as a threat to municipalities (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2015). Within the West Kootenay-Boundary region there is a disconnect between those that are underemployed and/or unskilled and those jobs that exist or are emerging (Ministry of Jobs Tourism and Innovation & Ministry of Advanced Education, 2012). While there is an identified need in the West-Kootenay Boundary region for well paying, skilled jobs, these jobs are coming (Ministry of Jobs Tourism and Innovation & Ministry of Advanced Education, 2012). Within the region it is forecast that there will be 4,700 new jobs and 18,100 existing jobs coming available within the next 20 years (Ingenia Consulting, 2013b). In order for the region to take advantage of up and coming economic opportunities labour needs must be addressed (Ministry of Jobs Tourism and Innovation & Ministry of Advanced Education, 2012). The question then becomes one of how to facilitate youth to be able to take these positions.

Strong communities require investment that goes beyond technology and infrastructure – investment is needed in people (The Ontario Rural Council, 2007). Actions and opportunities related to training and education are critical in rural areas (Hamm, 2012). For the purposes of this project **youth related**

training and education are any initiatives that enhance the skills base, employability, and quality of life of youth.

Key Points: factors influencing training and education

Expectations around this type of workforce development need to be managed. Investments in and success related to education and capacity building does not directly correlate with labour market success (Bollman, 1999; Looker, 2001; Ryser et al., 2013; Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996). Simply having well educated or trained people will not create jobs or economic success. However, despite this, investing in training and opportunities is not only good for youth, but for business and the economy generally (Industry and Parliament Trust & UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2014). For example, where youth have higher levels of human capital this has been noted to spark local entrepreneurial activities (Ryser et al., 2013). It is however important not to oversell these programs as impacts are generally modest (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996).

Youth training and education is a broad area that goes beyond skills. Programs need to understand the labour market in order to ensure that supports and incentives are relevant and accessible (Northwest Territories Education Culture and Employment, 2015). **Youth are mobile** (Bollman et al., 2000). Mobility is an increasing challenge in workforce development generally, but more so with youth as they typically lack responsibilities and constraints. Youth engagement programs help youth to feel wanted and involved, strengthening ties to the community, and allowing youth to gain experience.

Consider the changing labour market. There is heavy emphasis in BC on trades, targeting youth, educators, and employers (Government of British Columbia, 2012). However, the aforementioned disconnect between the existing labour and the emerging labour market goes beyond filling immediate needs. The economy is changing, increasingly shifting toward high technology with high pay on one side and low skill with low wage on the other (Anderson et al., 2010). It is a challenge for economic development to create plans and strategies that include changes in the economy, technology, and workforce (Anderson et al., 2010). When moving forward with development it is important to identify what types of development benefit youth (Looker, 2001).

Building digital skills for a knowledge based economy is important for rural youth and there is a need to make emerging knowledge based jobs more visible (Nordskog, 2013). As digital skills continue to grow in importance, tech savvy youth are increasingly an unrecognized resource for business and communities (Nordskog, 2013). One article noted that creating digitally relevant opportunities in rural communities not only helps with training and essential skills building, but serves to contribute to economic development and retention as well (Nordskog, 2013). Technology can also help fill noted gaps within the trades. For example, one approach is to build interest in trades using computer technology to increase interest, skills, and opportunities (Ryser et al., 2013). However this can first mean addressing rural issues of digital access and capacity (Looker, 2001).

Before youth can participate in the labour force or community development they first need foundational knowledge and skills (Ryser et al., 2013). Additionally, the literature indicates that perceptions and decisions are entrenched before the end of high school, even as young as grade seven, with decisions being made early and rarely changing (Demi et al., 2009; Robichaud, 2014). Both these point to **the role of education within workforce development**. However, much of the literature notes that rural youth are at a disadvantage when it comes to education. For example, rural youth have limited access to educational tools, access to technology, specialist teachers, elective courses, and so on (Canadian

Council on Learning, 2006; Corbett, 2005; Looker, 2001; Nielsen & Nashon, 2007; Ryser et al., 2013). While rural schools are noted as being well integrated into communities, the literature indicates that teachers either do not push kids to achieve or push them only to leave their communities (Canadian Council on Learning, 2006; Corbett, 2005; Looker, 2001). At times there is seen to be a push of “the best and brightest” youth to leave rural areas, and an underinvestment in those who stay (Carr & Kefalas, 2009). Shrinking budgets and shrinking enrollment challenge rural school systems (Ministry of Rural Affairs, 2014; National Employer Leadership Council, 2002; Nielsen & Nashon, 2007). The results can be lower attainment relative to urban areas, as well as higher dropout rates (Alasia, 2003; Canadian Council on Learning, 2006). The disadvantages facing rural youth impacts how youth respond to the labour market (Ryser et al., 2013). Those that dropout or are high risk are at even more of a disadvantage in rural areas and are unlikely to be equipped with sufficient knowledge, skills, or learning habits to be successful citizens (Ryser et al., 2013). There is both a need for education policy with a rural focus and for a focus on job search skills and career planning in the curriculum (Hamm, 2012; Ministry of Rural Affairs, 2014). Educators, parents, and schools are critical to communities and to strategies for enhancing opportunities for students while keeping a rural connection (Hamm, 2012).

Access to and awareness of education and training is critical. For example rural Ontario identified a need to increase access to post-secondary and vocational training opportunities (The Ontario Rural Council, 2007). This can include providing information (e.g., increasing awareness of post-secondary options – including distance education), as well as support (e.g., funding) (R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd, 2002). Youth also need to be made aware of all the career opportunities that are available to them (Government of New Brunswick, n.d.; Government of Yukon, 2010). This can include experiential learning, such as mentorship, participation, and job shadowing. However, these types of experiential learning are noted as not commonly available, or limited, in rural and small towns (Ryser et al., 2013). Within the West Kootenay-Boundary there is an identified lack of awareness of opportunities around available careers, training, and supports – particularly among the youth (Ingenia Consulting, 2013b). Additionally, challenges related to low aspirations or ideas of self-reliance can result in youth not using available services (Texas Workforce Commission Youth Program Initiative, n.d.). While there is a volume of programs within the region, as well as support from various agencies there is a recognized need for immediate action related to increasing the awareness and engagement around existing programs (Ingenia Consulting, 2013b). It is important to provide youth access to information to learn about their own communities, as well as opportunities elsewhere (Demi et al., 2009).

Lessons Learned

Types of Programs

A wide range of programs and initiatives exist related to workforce training and education for youth. These can be categorized and described in different ways. For example, **who is offering the program?** School programs can offer help with academic performance, work oriented curriculum, pre-employment training (e.g., co-ops), and so on (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996). Employers can offer on the job training as well as access to third party programs (e.g., government, designated institutions), who can offer initiatives such as training programs, job search assistance, counselling, self-employment assistance, return to school, work experience, etc. (Ministry of Rural Affairs, 2014; Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996).

Another way to categorize training and education is by intent, **what is the end goal?** For example, initiatives can be targeted specifically toward recruitment (e.g., targeting a certain area or at a certain

population – youth, First Nations, graduates) (Government of New Brunswick, n.d.; Government of Yukon, 2010; Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996). Initiatives can also focus on retention, specific skills development, the transition to workforce, mentorship, and others (Government of New Brunswick, n.d.; Northwest Territories Education Culture and Employment, 2015).

Additionally there is both **active and passive programming**. Active programs include initiatives such as direct skills training and connecting graduates with employers, while more passive programs include wage subsidies, other financial incentives, and marketing (Avis, 2013; Government of New Brunswick, n.d.; Ministry of Rural Affairs, 2014).

Program Impacts

A review for Human Resources Development Canada provides an evaluation of the effectiveness of employment related services for youth (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996). It is important to note that the evaluation of programs depends on the metrics used. Impacts and effectiveness vary by programs, but also by execution, as well as by what combination of programs are used. For example, classroom training is effective, but more so when it is paired with work experience programs (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996). It is also worth noting that combinations of separate programs should be seen differently from comprehensive service providers, which were seen to have positive, but not large impacts (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996).

Some training programs were noted as having more benefits than others. For example, wage subsidy programs were shown to have generally positive outcomes, resulting in increasing earnings and productivity (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996). In contrast, high school co-op programs were seen to have somewhat disappointing results with insignificant impacts on labour market indicators (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996). However, those co-op students who did go on to post-secondary benefited from the experience – suggesting that two very different types of students enroll in this type of program (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996). Overall the impacts of workforce development programs are positive, resulting in increased earnings and employability for participants, particularly in the short term (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996). However, it was also found that those high risk individuals who face the most barriers are least likely to obtain long term benefits (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996).

There are examples of where education and training initiatives can have negative impacts. For example, scholarship programs intended to support local youth can inadvertently contribute to outmigration (MOHAMED, 2012). An example from Newfoundland shows that while there is pride in the high quality of education received locally, the locals have no input into education and the physical infrastructure of the school is guarded and prevented from being used by the wider community, which can contribute to educating youth to leave rural areas (Furst, 2014).

Success Factors

There are multiple examples of youth training and education programs (see Appendix 1). These examples can be transferred and amended from their original size or context. While wide ranging, these examples were often found to have factors in common that contributed to success. In no particular order these factors include:

- Early intervention and sustained access (Ministry of Jobs Tourism and Innovation & Ministry of Advanced Education, 2012; Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996; The Ontario Rural Council, 2007; Wylie, 2008)
 - Comprehensive, consolidated, hands-on career planning and education, especially in the senior grades
 - Flexible options
- Working with youth (Dagnino, 2009; Heartwood Centre for Community Youth Development, 2013; Leyshon, 2002; Ministry of Jobs Tourism and Innovation & Ministry of Advanced Education, 2012; Rural Ontario Institute, 2014; Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996; The Ontario Rural Council, 2007)
 - Inclusion in discussion, planning, design, and execution
 - Youth / adult partnerships and networks
 - The need to include youth as well as other at risk or marginalized populations
- Financial support (Department of Business Tourism Culture and Rural Development, 2015; Ministry of Jobs Tourism and Innovation & Ministry of Advanced Education, 2012; Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996; Texas Workforce Commission Youth Program Initiative, n.d.; The Ontario Rural Council, 2007)
 - Funds where municipalities, schools, not-for-profits, and youth groups can apply
 - Longer term funding (e.g., it takes longer than six months for an intern to gain the capacity/experience needed to apply for a job)
- Training that is responsive to the needs of students and industry (Government of British Columbia, 2012)
- Specific participation guidelines and eligibility criteria (Evaluation Services, 2000)
- Multiple efforts, but coordination to avoid duplication and overlap (Evaluation Services, 2000; Heartwood Centre for Community Youth Development, 2013; The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 2013; The Ontario Rural Council, 2007)
 - Promotion of various opportunities (e.g., co-ops, college, entrepreneurship, volunteering, employment)
 - Work together
- Monitoring and evaluation of programs (Evaluation Services, 2000; Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996)
- Marry challenges in order to create solutions (Ryser et al., 2013; The Ontario Rural Council, 2007)
 - For example, where youth interested in community health can gain experience working to meet the needs of their aging communities
 - Use of all current advertising mechanisms to promote and link youth to opportunities

Collaborative Efforts

The literature reviewed is very clear that collaboration is a key factor for success when it comes to training and education, particularly given the need for multiple, different types of initiatives. There are many different approaches as exemplified by the program types described above and the examples in Appendix 1. There are also many different actors. It is important to know what actors are out there in order to integrate services and connect people (Texas Workforce Commission Youth Program Initiative, n.d.). One document explicitly highlighted the need to encourage Community Futures, Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Officers, Recreation Departments, other social organizations, and

youth councils to all work together – illustrating the range of potential actors (The Ontario Rural Council, 2007).

Increasing access and awareness of education and training opportunities requires **government, school districts, and employers (business and industry)** to work together (Government of New Brunswick, n.d.; Industry and Parliament Trust & UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2014; R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd, 2002). For example, active **post-secondary institutions** are key. Colleges are able to play a role in training new workers and partnerships between colleges and employers can improve workforce related curricula (Leary, 2012). Community colleges can help students gain exposure to local industries, as well as helping students better understand the local labour market (Anderson et al., 2010). The example of Ontario Online (<http://cou.on.ca/key-issues/education/online-learning/>) demonstrates a collaborative centre for technology enabled learning that brings together education, employment, research, and other actors (Ministry of Rural Affairs, 2014).

The **Kindergarten to Grade 12 school system** also plays a role in workforce development. Schools play an active role influencing whether students leave or stay, as well as the career paths they follow (Furst, 2014). The K-12 school system is a particularly important partner with regard to early intervention and consistent youth support (e.g., health and wellness) (Ministry of Rural Affairs, 2014; Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996). There are examples of programs targeting specific sectors (e.g., science and technology), as well as school programs specifically targeting certain populations (e.g., at risk youth) (Anderson et al., 2010). One document specifically highlighted the need for government needs to develop connections between high schools and government employment programs (The Ontario Rural Council, 2007). Collaborative efforts within the education system also provide new opportunities. For example, high schools in rural BC (e.g., McBride and Valemout) have experimented with web courses and video conferencing in partnership with urban schools (Ryser et al., 2013). While these attempts have been hampered by various challenges the potential is there (Ryser et al., 2013). Technology can play a role in the solution, but only if there is technical access and capacity (Looker, 2001).

Various examples of **connecting the workplace and the classroom** exist within the literature. School to career programs require public relations and marketing, knowledge of applicable regulations, staff development and training, and high quality experiences (National Employer Leadership Council, 2002). Bringing the workplace to the school can be done via the use of technology in more remote areas, partnering rural schools with urban employers who may be able to provide additional resources and expertise (National Employer Leadership Council, 2002). Partnerships, whether with employers from urban areas or local businesses or other community partners allow for the establishment of a broader base of knowledge upon which you can support education (National Employer Leadership Council, 2002). It was suggested by one article that actions like having students investigate careers in their home communities through provision of information surrounding opportunities as well as through programs that explore the development and implementation of programs pairing students with business owners for training (Theodori & Theodori, 2015).

Examples of **entrepreneurship** and education linking together were found in campus business accelerators and other entrepreneurial activities (Ministry of Rural Affairs, 2014). An example from Norway shows a partnership between businesses, schools, and municipalities to strengthen efforts like young enterprise programs (Gjertsen & Halseth, 2015). Another example from an island community in

Croatia shows an education system where schools have enough autonomy over program structure to allow for the formation of a school based cooperative owned by the students that produces heritage and tourism related products, allowing students to gain entrepreneurial experience while also increasing ties to history and place (Furst, 2014). Entrepreneurial focused programs exist for all levels of youth, often supported by organizations such as Service Canada, the Canadian Youth Business Foundation, Community Futures, and many others (The Ontario Rural Council, 2007). Entrepreneurship training can help youth start local businesses something seen in examples from the Youth Ventures business start-up program in Newfoundland (e.g., 200 youth businesses started per year) and the Youth Mean Business program run by Community Futures Central Kootenay that provides financial support and mentorship for youth to start and run a business (Community Futures Central Kootenay, 2015; Wylie, 2008; Youth Ventures NL, 2011).

Beyond partnering with the education system, **business and industry** can play many roles. In addition to programs related to business mentorship and industry apprenticeships, one document suggested employers could designate 'youth only' positions to facilitate entry of youth into the workforce or provide opportunities specifically designed for new graduates (The Ontario Rural Council, 2007; Wylie, 2008). Subsidizing youth wages, as well as the creation of summer employment for local youth attending post-secondary school elsewhere also link youth to local business and industry (Wylie, 2008). Employers can also develop mentorship programs between new and more experienced workers within a particular field (The Ontario Rural Council, 2007).

Municipal governments can form youth advisory committees or councils that work alongside local government, providing youth input into their local community as well as transferable experience (The Ontario Rural Council, 2007).

Summary

The economy is changing and will continue to do so. This means that labour requirements will continue to change as well, necessitating a range of approaches to the training and education of youth. Initiatives like those noted within Appendix 1 demonstrate the wide range of examples that exist.

The above highlights the particular importance of collaborative efforts. It is important to recognize and acknowledge that collaboration, both between and within organizations, can be a challenge. There are multiple examples of this, demonstrating a lack of integration within a single organization or poor coordination between partners (Evaluation Services, 2000; Ryser et al., 2013). However, **there is a clear need for a coordinated and responsible approach to training and education** – not only within a region but linking with provincial initiatives and organizations (Ministry of Jobs Tourism and Innovation & Ministry of Advanced Education, 2012).

Better preparation for the labour market increases the probability that youth will obtain and retain employment (Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996). Rural places need to be more aggressively and comprehensively focused on building skills, providing the right kind of training, and ensuring access to skills development opportunities (Anderson et al., 2010; Ministry of Jobs Tourism and Innovation & Ministry of Advanced Education, 2012). This includes both the jobs available currently and those that will be available in the future. Additionally there is the need to recognize **the importance of youth engagement** to workforce development. Literature notes that social networks can link youth to a broader range of resources as well as opportunities for development and employment (Ryser et al., 2013).

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Introduction

“The importance of meaningful youth engagement cannot be overstated” (The Ontario Rural Council, 2007). This quote best summarizes the literature related to youth engagement. The survival of rural regions depends on investing in innovative and inclusive ways of engaging people, particularly youth (Mirza et al., 2012; Ryser et al., 2013). Engagement, as noted above, is critical for countering youth outmigration and increasing opportunities for youth (Hamm, 2012). There is a recognized need for a vision and intervention among youth (NB Youth Strategy, 2011). However, youth engagement faces challenges, such as a general disconnect between youth and adults and a lack of youth involvement on essential tasks and processes (Heartwood Centre for Community Youth Development, 2013). There is also a lack of basic knowledge about municipal barriers to youth participation (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2015).

When it comes to engagement there is no agreed upon definition. Engagement can range from meaningful participation and sustained involvement in activities (e.g., arts, music, volunteer, sports, etc.) to opportunities for involvement in planning and decision making (LIRN BC, 2008). Engagement can be defined simply as “the sustained and meaningful involvement of a young person in an activity focussed outside of themselves” (Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health, 2013). There are also more specific definitions, such as the intentional establishment and support for the genuine involvement of young people in the design, creation, coordination, implementation, and evaluation of the processes, practices, and decisions that shape civic life (Shaw, 2012). For the purposes of this project **youth engagement is any meaningful involvement of youth within their community.**

Key Points: Benefits of Engagement

Youth require **foundational knowledge and skills** prior to being able to participate in the labour force or community development (Ryser et al., 2013). This can require educating youth on the importance of participation (Volunteer Action Centre, Volunteer Canada, & Manulife Financial, 2010). Youth engagement affords opportunities for youth to make connections and gain experience (Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health, 2013). Key elements of youth engagement include skills development and capacity building, leadership and decision making, critical analysis, developing a sense of social responsibility (Hamm, 2012). As a result, **engaged youth are a more informed population**, able to gain skills, enhance organizational productivity and innovation (Northam, 2014). Engagement has been linked to benefits like doing better in school, increased sense of responsibility, better decision making, and increased sense of ownership and legitimacy (Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health, 2013; Sheedy, Mackinnon, Pitre, & Watling, 2008). Active engagement of youth can result in decreased substance abuse among youth, lower dropout rates, lower teen pregnancy, lower crime, and lower rates of depression (Centre of Excellence for Youth Engagement, 2007). Informed youth are also more empowered and more likely to vote, volunteer, work, take leadership roles (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2015).

Additionally, effective engagement not only benefits individuals, but positively impacts social networks and the overarching system as a whole (Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health, 2013).

Engagement is a basic principle of youth retention, as engagement offers youth a sense of ownership of the community and active participation (Government of Canada et al., 2015; Northam, 2014; Wylie, 2008). For this reason other jurisdictions have shifted the conversation from keeping and attracting

youth to a conversation focused on youth engagement (The Ontario Rural Council, 2007). Getting youth involved also helps with repatriation, as the more involved youth are prior to leaving the community the higher the likelihood they will return (Heartwood Centre for Community Youth Development, 2013). The involvement of youth in the community also increases the attractiveness of the community to other youth (Heartwood Centre for Community Youth Development, 2013).

Lessons Learned

Types of engagement

Engagement comes in many different forms. **Active engagement** includes interaction directly with youth, such as interviews with students to gain community input (Mirza et al., 2012). **Passive engagement** includes activities like community chalk boards and “I wish this was” stickers in order to solicit input (Mirza et al., 2012). Communities can also invest in the social engagement of youth through the creation of activities (e.g., recreational programs) as well as investment in physical spaces (e.g., drop in centres) (Lægran, 2002; Ministry of Rural Affairs, 2014; Ryser et al., 2013).

The literature reviewed described multiple strategies for youth to become engaged (e.g., volunteering, employment, entrepreneurship), as well as strategies for adults wishing to engage youth (e.g., understanding youth, changing perceptions, organizing experiences, creating networks) (Hamm, 2012; Heartwood Centre for Community Youth Development, 2013) (see Appendix 1). The literature reviewed also includes a number of accessible resources (see Appendix 2).

When getting started on youth engagement holding a **conference or forum** to identify, discuss, and understand youth was a common initiative (NB Youth Strategy, 2011; Rural Development PEI, 2010; Shaw-Raudoy, 2011; The Ontario Rural Council, 2007). These forums can be general or specific to a certain topic (e.g., employment). Such actions have already occurred in some places in the West Kootenay-Boundary region. For example, the youth engagement forum held earlier in 2015 in Warfield (<http://www.lcic.ca/news/in-our-region/warfield-youth-forum/>). The key element with these types of events is the follow up action – building on and seeing through the identified ideas.

Youth councils are another popular form of engagement, used to inform policy and program development, give youth an informed say in decisions, and to increase the participation and community connection with youth (Northam, 2014; Sheedy et al., 2008; The Ontario Rural Council Rural Youth Working Group, n.d.). Examples reviewed includes the New Brunswick Advisory Council on Youth (Government of New Brunswick, n.d.; NB Youth Strategy, 2011) and the San Francisco Youth Commission (Checkoway, Allison, & Montoya, 2005), both of which involve youth in the institutions and decisions that affect their lives. An example from the West Kootenay-Boundary is the city of Castlegar, which identified action items around establishing youth action committees and a youth advisory council to provide a forum for youth participation (Shaw-Raudoy, 2011). These types of initiatives depend on the interests of youth and the willingness of adults to treat their ideas with seriousness and respect. It can be a challenge for local government and other community partners to accept working with youth. However, the importance of accepting youth as capable partners and viewing their ideas as the same as adults is highlighted within the literature (Mirza et al., 2012).

A study found that there are many ways to involve youth, but **all forms can be flawed or inappropriate depending on context and execution** (Matthews, 2001). Positive involvement of youth depends on the use of contextually appropriate methods that are guided by sound ethical principles (Matthews, 2001). Hart’s Ladder, a popular tool demonstrating different levels of engagement, shows that there is a range

of ways to engage youth from those that are shallow and manipulative to tokenism to shared power (Crowe, n.d.; Dagnino, 2009; Northam, 2014). Token forms of engagement in all likelihood will do more damage than doing nothing at all.

While there are many **new forms of engagement**, particularly surrounding social media use, the success of these initiatives varies. There is conflict in the literature over the meaningful impact of social media. An example related to political and civic engagement saw that while youth are willing to engage using new platforms, that did not necessarily lead to sustained engagement (English, 2012). However, in Sweden there is an example of a youth led Facebook group intended to increase youth participation in and contribution to the community (Svensson, 2015). This group successfully raised positive perception around the deliberate choice to stay in the rural community, becoming a meeting point for youth in the area that is creating opportunities for youth involvement (Svensson, 2015). This success was despite a lack of interest, participation, and support from traditional local government (Svensson, 2015). Other examples of newer forms of engagement include the creation of internet cafes as a social space that also allows youth to extend their network within and beyond the community (Læggran, 2002).

Success Factors

There are multiple models of youth engagement and no single one is better or more effective (Dagnino, 2009). Looking to existing examples (e.g., Appendix 1 and 2) can allow you to explore initiatives used in similar areas and learn from others (Mirza et al., 2012). From the various examples of youth engagement there were several common success factors. In no particular order these factors include:

- Make youth a priority (R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd, 2002)
- For your organization or project define exactly what you mean by engagement (Crowe, n.d.; LIRN BC, 2008)
- Youth driven initiatives and leadership (Crowe, n.d.; LIRN BC, 2008; NB Youth Strategy, 2011)
- Partnerships and collaboration (Camino & Zeldin, 2002; Checkoway et al., 2005; Crowe, n.d.; Demi et al., 2009; Government of Prince Edward Island, 2010; Hamm, 2012; Heartwood Centre for Community Youth Development, 2013; Mirza et al., 2012; R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd, 2002; Shaw, 2012; Shaw-Raudoy, 2011; Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996; The Ontario Rural Council Rural Youth Working Group, n.d.; The Ontario Rural Council, 2007; Volunteer Action Centre et al., 2010)
 - Diversity of participants (e.g., youth and adults*; different service providers; government)
 - Create networks
 - Build strong relationships and trust
 - No single effort is enough – multiple, coordinated efforts allows for multiple pathways to participate, for different interests and populations sub-groups to be targeted, and for youth to explore new people and experiences
- Informal efforts, transparency, and flexible structure (Crowe, n.d.; Shaw-Raudoy, 2011; The Ontario Rural Council, 2007)
- Be inclusive and respectful (Government of Nova Scotia, n.d.; LIRN BC, 2008; Matthews, 2001; Pan-Canadian Joint Consortium for School Health, 2013; R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd, 2002; Shaw, 2012; Sheedy et al., 2008; The Ontario Rural Council, 2007)
 - Youth should feel welcome
 - Remove negative stereotypes
- Develop and strengthen sense of place (Robichaud, 2014)

- Have and manage realistic goals and expectations (Mirza et al., 2012)
- Be action oriented (Shaw, 2012)
- Be innovative with existing resources (e.g., facilities, technology) (Crowe, n.d.; Mirza et al., 2012)
- Long term investment and support (Crowe, n.d.; Dagnino, 2009; Mirza et al., 2012; NB Youth Strategy, 2011; Rural Development PEI, 2010; Shaw, 2012; Sheedy et al., 2008; Wylie, 2008)
 - Support youth participation (e.g., training) and access (e.g., transportation to events)
- Monitor, review, and follow up (e.g., opportunities feedback) (Mirza et al., 2012)
- Make it fun (Crowe, n.d.; LIRN BC, 2008; The Ontario Rural Council, 2007)

Summary

There is a recognized link between youth engagement and an overall increase in community vitality and engagement (The Ontario Rural Council Rural Youth Working Group, n.d.). One study noted that the more young people like their environment and get involved in their community the more they will want to live there and pursue studies there (Robichaud, 2014). This was echoed throughout the literature. However, rural communities have been noted or perceived as not offering sufficient extracurricular activities and other opportunities for youth engagement (Wylie, 2008).

Of all the success factors noted above, one near universal point was that youth engagement must be carried out **with** youth, as opposed to creation of programs for youth. This includes the aforementioned points of having youth directed initiatives, having youth as active partners, and youth as decision makers (Camino & Zeldin, 2002; Checkoway et al., 2005; Crowe, n.d.; Demi et al., 2009; Government of Prince Edward Island, 2010; Hamm, 2012; Heartwood Centre for Community Youth Development, 2013; LIRN BC, 2008; Mirza et al., 2012; NB Youth Strategy, 2011; R.A. Malatest & Associates Ltd, 2002; Shaw, 2012; Shaw-Raudoy, 2011; Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, 1996; The Ontario Rural Council Rural Youth Working Group, n.d.; The Ontario Rural Council, 2007; Volunteer Action Centre et al., 2010).

An issue with youth engagement is that while youth are idolized to some extent, they are often discredited or stigmatized for being naïve (Sheedy et al., 2008). However in order to enable youth participation adults are required to relinquish power, something they can be reluctant to do, or prevented from doing (Matthews, 2001). Dominant institutional structures, logistics, attitudes, and power dynamics all act as barriers to youth engagement (Northam, 2014). We see this in the Swedish Facebook example noted above where there was a clear disconnect between youth and the old school traditions and institutional structures of the community (Svensson, 2015). Politicians in this community came across as being uncomfortable with a platform where they could not control the final products, regardless of the high level of interest and participation from youth (Svensson, 2015). To this point it is important to note that creating youth engagement structures without changing the broader social values and institutional structures may achieve little (Matthews, 2001).

Communities need to engage their youth through multiple outlets and in more accessible and interactive ways (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2015). This means engaging youth in ways that make them excited, interested, and invested (Federation of Canadian Municipalities, 2015). True engagement emphasises elements like two way interaction, conversation, power sharing, and mutual respect (Sheedy et al., 2008). Real engagement goes beyond developing and advertising a program, particularly if program development did not include youth. Active engagement extends beyond token gestures. Having youth engage and work with the organizations contributes to full civic engagement (NB Youth Strategy, 2011).

COMMON THEMES

Youth retention, training and education, and engagement are discussed above in three separate sections. However, these topics are directly related. Common overlapping themes can be found across these topics, including the importance of:

Collaboration - No single person or organization should or can do everything. It is important to have a range of actors that communicate and work together. Moreover it is critically important that youth be included.

Integration - Those strategies that are not only collaborative, but are multifaceted and integrative appear to be the most successful.

Context and Place - The needs of youth vary, as do the needs of different communities. Consideration of context and place is critical to ensure success where initiatives are applied.

Accessibility - Reaching out to youth early and often is critical. This provides multiple opportunities for youth to access initiatives and provides continuous support as they progress through education, into the labour force, and into their futures.

Appendix 1: Existing Examples

Name / Type	Scale	Location, Operating Agency	Details	Link
West-Kootenay Boundary & BC Examples				
Kootenay Workforce Development / Employment	Regional	Columbia Basin RDI	Built from the Kootenay Regional Workforce Table to implement the Regional Skills Training Plan 2013 – 2020 . A 2 year pilot project.	http://www.cbrdi.ca/kootenay-workforce-development/
Work BC / Employment	Community / Regional	Work BC	Located in centres throughout the West Kootenay/ Boundary region. Self serve (job boards, computers, etc.) and case managed (career counselling, workshops, training, funding, wage subsidies).	To locate the Work BC office closest to you go to: https://www.workbc.ca/WorkBC-Centres.aspx
Wage subsidies / employment	Regional	Columbia Basin Trust	Three types of wage subsidies available within the CBT region. Student works, summer works, Apprentice subsidy.	http://www.cbt.org/Funding/?view&vars=1&content=Program&WebDynID=3532
ATLAS / Education	High School	Nelson, LV Rogers Secondary School	Career prep program designed for students who have an interest in adventure recreation. Hands on course taught in outdoor settings.	http://www.lvr.sd8.bc.ca/atlas.html
Skills Link / Employment	Community	Offered through Nelson Youth Employment Centre	Program for youth facing barriers to employment. 5 weeks paid in class skills and certificate training. 7 weeks paid work experience. Government funded.	http://www.kcde.ca/index.php/job-board/jaview/1271-skills-link-participants http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/yi/yep/newprog/skillslink.shtml
Project Comeback / Multiple	Community	Multiple	Project to help rural BC understand youth retention and to create community-specific projects. Survey done to assess communities. Projects based on surveys.	http://www.bcruralnetwork.ca/resources/project-comeback-final-report/
Youth Mean Business / Employment	Regional	Community Futures Central Kootenay	Entrepreneurship program for youth under 30. Qualifying youth will receive financial support, business plan instruction, and mentorship. Funded until 2019.	http://futures.bc.ca/yimb/

Name / Type	Scale	Location, Operating Agency	Details	Link
Growing, Learning Opportunities with Science / <i>Education</i>	Regional	Kootenay Association for Science and Technology (partnership)	Brings science and technology related events and activities to youth.	http://kastglows.ca/growing-learning-opportunities-with-science-kootenay/
Beacons Youth Employment Programs / <i>Employment</i>	Community	Beacons Community Services	Provides opportunities for training, work, and volunteering. Participants attend workshops and courses, earn money, and learn the value of communication, networking and involvement.	http://www.beaconcs.ca/pages/youth_employment.html
Technician Entry Level Program / <i>Employment</i>	Individual work places	Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure	Program for recent graduates interested in a career in a technical field. Links graduates with a variety of positions across BC.	http://www2.gov.bc.ca/myhr/article.page?ContentID=47a4d904-fce5-cdf9-4075-81ba1242f610
Take a Hike West Kootenay / <i>Education</i>	Regional	Kootenay Columbia Learning Centre (partnership)	Take a Hike is an innovative education program engaging at-risk youth through a unique combination of academics, adventure-based learning, therapy, and community involvement.	http://www.takeahikefoundation.org/en/chapters/west-kootenay1
Rotary Interact / <i>Multiple</i>	Community	Rotary Club	Club for youth (12-18) who want to collaboratively tackle the issues in their community.	Rossland: http://www.rosslandrotary.org/ Trail: http://erinmclean17.wix.com/trailinteractclub
Rossland Youth Action Network / <i>Multiple</i>	Community	City of Rossland (partnership)	Aim to increase youth directed programs and provide youth with space and programming that is safe, engaging, and relevant. Includes the Makerlab and job connection linking employers and youth.	http://www.rosslandyan.ca/ http://www.rosslandyan.ca/job-opportunities/
Stoke Youth Network / <i>Multiple</i>	Community	City of Revelstoke (partnership)	Network created by youth to increase engagement. Objectives to connect youth to opportunities, give youth a voice, link youth to funding and support youth projects and ideas.	http://stokeyouthnetwork.ca/

Name / Type	Scale	Location, Operating Agency	Details	Link
Get Youth Working / <i>Employment</i>	Regional	BC Jobs Fund (partnership)	Program offers employers \$2,800 wage subsidy to hire eligible youth (15-29) plus up to \$1,000 to purchase training for the youth.	http://www.getyouthworking.ca/
Industry Training Authority / <i>Employment</i>	Provincial	Industry Training Authority	Works with employers, employees, industry, labour, training providers and government to issue credentials, manage apprenticeships, set program standards, and increase opportunities in the trades.	http://www.itabc.ca/
Junior Achievement BC / <i>Employment</i>	Provincial, international	BC Junior Achievement	Organization dedicated to educating young people about business. Partners with educators, donors and volunteers to bring a real world experience into the classroom.	http://british-columbia.jacan.org/about-us
Working solutions for persons with disabilities / <i>Employment</i>	Regional	Kootenay Employment Services	Program to assist persons with disabilities to (re)enter the workforce. Includes skills development and wage subsidy.	http://kes.bc.ca/CMS2/working-solutions
Other Canadian Examples				
Return to Rural / <i>Recruitment</i>	Regional	Alberta Rural Development Network (partnership)	Initiative focused on engaging, attracting and retaining youth. Program leverages the internet, social media and advances in communication technology to connect, engage and connect young people with the abundant opportunities available.	http://returntorural.ca/
Uth / <i>Multiple</i>	Provincial	Provincial Government – Office of Public Engagement	Interactive website - youth engagement program. Includes list of programs (e.g., youth advisory committee) and resources.	http://www.nlyouth.ca/index.html
Youth Ventures / <i>Employment</i>	Provincial scale, coordinated regionally	Community Business Development Corporation (partnership)	Helps students (12-29) start businesses. Est. in 1992, with ~5000 students helped and ~200 businesses started / year.	http://www.youthventuresnl.com/about

Name / Type	Scale	Location, Operating Agency	Details	Link
North Eastern Ontario Study / <i>Multiple</i>	Multiple	Multiple	Identified existing programs. including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christmas brunch with the mayor • Building a youth database of emails (advertise opportunities) • Youth entrepreneurship fairs • Mailboxes for graduates – including a letter from the mayor 	http://pced.uwaterloo.ca/index.php/pced/article/view/48/44
Youth Job Connection / <i>Employment</i>	Multiple	Multiple	Program for youth with barriers to employment. Includes: paid pre-employment training to promote job-readiness; job matching; paid job placements; hiring incentives for employers; mentorship services; education; work transitions support.	http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/eopg/programs/yjc.html
Job Programs For Youth / <i>Employment</i>	Multiple	Multiple	Summer programs for youth including exchange programs and business programs.	https://www.ontario.ca/page/job-programs-youth
Ready-Set-Go! / <i>Employment</i>	Employer scale	ManpowerGroup Canada (in partnership)	Project form 2012 where youth were given a 4 week intensive training program including interview skills, conflict resolution, etc.	http://www.chamber.ca/media/blog/131009_Upskilling-the-Workforce/ (page 29)
International Examples				
Engaging Youth Serving Community Program / <i>Engagement</i>	Rural communities	Collaboration between land grant universities and 4-H clubs	Collaborative program to promote positive youth development. Goals include to provide life skills and experience as well as enabling adult/youth collaboration.	http://www.4-h.org/youth-development-programs/citizenship-youth-engagement/community-action/rural-youth/
Regional Skills Training / <i>Employment</i>	Regional, community, individual, and employer scales	Government of South Australia	Includes multiple programs, accreditation, and free resources for multiple sectors (e.g., agriculture, business retail, health, etc.).	http://www.regionalskillstraining.com/
Purdue Research Park	Individuals and education (K-12)	Purdue University	Program provides math science and technology based businesses and life skills	http://purdueresearchpark.com/

Name / Type	Scale	Location, Operating Agency	Details	Link
Entrepreneurship Academy / Education	and post-secondary)		to high school juniors and seniors. Led by university staff in partnership with teachers.	
Outer islands teaching and learning collaborative / Education	Regional	Maine Educators	Group of educators committed to creating a virtual classroom community where teachers and students will have access to an inter-island peer network.	http://outerislandstlc.org/

Appendix 1: Resources

Resource	Type	Link
West Kootenay-Boundary Region & BC		
Kootenay Region Inventory: Industry Training Initiatives	<p>Inventory of industry programs currently available across the region, includes high school and college programs.</p> <p>Created an inventory of current and publically accessible training available for high demand occupations, of which there are currently programs for 18/25.</p> <p>Inventory of high demand occupations.</p>	<p>http://www.jtst.gov.bc.ca/regionalworkforcetables/docs/resourcepkg/kootenay/Section_5_Industry_Training_Initiatives_Kootenay.pdf</p> <p>http://selkirk.ca/sites/default/files/About%20Us/KootenayRegionalSkillsTrainingPlan.pdf</p>
Columbia Basin Trust's Youth Initiatives Strategic Plan 2011-2016	CBT has a mandate to work with youth and communities to increase youth opportunities and engagement through enhancing capacity, leadership, and participation. Document includes goals and contacts.	https://www.cbt.org/uploads/pdf/YouthStratPlan2011-2016.pdf
Other		
Knowledge Synthesis - Rural Youth Retention: Creating Community Connections	Resource list including employment programs, funding, scholarships and awards, conferences, etc.	https://smith.queensu.ca/centres/monieson/knowledge_articles/Retaining%20Rural%20Youth%20-%20Knowledge%20Synthesis%20Rev%201.pdf
Engaging youth effectively: a case study for volunteer centres	Provides the goals, objectives, process, and results of a pilot project designed to create a framework for youth engagement that could be adapted to suit specific needs.	https://volunteer.ca/content/engaging-youth-effectively-case-study-volunteer-centres
Create a Youth Council in Your Community in 10 Easy Steps!	Document provides a general guide – 10 steps to establish a formal board representing youth within the community.	http://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/file.aspx?id=061706a3-2f32-4d2b-a38a-a5cf2c24c9ec
Population Growth Strategy overview	Video related to official provincial population growth strategy. Example of marketing/education surrounding government policies.	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RIL3DLeq_s#action=share
Evaluating the effectiveness of employment - related	Summarizes available evidence of multiple labour market programs directed at Canadian youth. Individual evaluation of different types of programs (e.g., training, wage subsidies, high	http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2013/rhdcc-hrsdc/RH64-39-1996-eng.pdf

Resource	Type	Link
programs and services for youth	school coops, job creation programs, comprehensive youth services, stay in school programs). Synthesis of evaluation of international examples also provided (US, Australia, UK).	
Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation	Citizen engagement handbook - what it is, why it's important, engaging specific populations (including youth)	http://www.cprn.org/documents/49583_EN.pdf
Youth Engagement Toolkit	Youth engagement toolkit and eBook tutorial. Includes initiating, sustaining, and evaluating engagement, as well as qualities of quality engagement and how to address challenges.	http://www.jcsh-cces.ca/ye-book/
Strategies to enhance the attractiveness of rural communities to Canadian Youth	Overview of strategic options broken down by topic, including: employment, education, training, civic engagement, rural exposure programs, and recreation/social activities and infrastructure.	http://publications.gc.ca/collections/Collection/A22-272-2002E.pdf
Youth Engagement 101 Kit	Free resources tools and tips related to youth engagement.	http://www.nlyouth.ca/resources/YouthEngagementGuide.html
What is youth engagement?	Defined engaged youth, provides strategies (e.g., involving youth in decisions, promoting youth leadership) and resources.	http://www.engagementcentre.ca/files/Whatis_WEB_e.pdf
The Municipal Youth Engagement Handbook	Resource handbook - resources, strategies, tools for municipalities to tailor. For each heading they provide key principles and examples	http://www.fcm.ca/Documents/tools/FCM/Municipal_Youth_Engagement_Handbook_EN.pdf
Practices Manual: A toolkit to support public participation in municipal decision making	Manual of tools and strategies useful for participation and it does include mention of youth (and seniors, etc.) to ensure public participation is representative and inclusive	https://www.fcm.ca/Documents/tools/International/Local_Government_Participatory_Practices_Manual_EN.pdf
Explore Careers by Essential Skills	Breakdown of skills required for different jobs.	http://www.jobbank.gc.ca/es_all-eng.do
Resources for educators	Lesson plans and resources for teachers related to career development. Includes BluePrint Builder, and Work BC Career exploration.	https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Build-Your-Career/Planning-Your-Career/Starting-and-Planning-Your-Career/Resources-for-Educators.aspx
Youth Engagement Resources	Resources from existing projects, and are available to help to support youth participation in programs and decision making.	http://www.mcs.bc.ca/youth_engagement_resources

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