

OUR WORK:

Transforming the Digital Workforce and Empowering Youth

Context: Funded by the Government of Canada's Digital Skills for Youth (DS4Y) program, this initiative helps youth obtain ICT/digital careers, while assisting employers to gain much needed resources in the following in-demand areas: Software Development, Data Analysis, Data Science, Business Analysis, Digital Marketing/Sales, and UX/UI Design.

Case Study & Impacts: Youth Dividend Program

Challenges

Limited Access to Opportunities: Young graduates face challenges in accessing job opportunities in their respective areas of study, hindering their employment prospects and practical experience.

Mismatched Skills: There is a discrepancy between the skills acquired through education and those demanded by employers, with many graduates lacking specific technical skills or industry experience required for suitable employment.

Solution

ICTC's Youth Dividend program connects Canadian employers with university and college graduates between 18-30 years old. The program provides post-secondary students with the opportunity to benefit from valuable work experience. It encompasses a personalized learning pathway, a paid internship, technical skill development, practical soft skills training, and employment support. Additionally, the program fosters equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Results & Impacts

The Youth Dividend Program's success garnered recognition from the Global Apprenticeship Network (GAN), recognizing its effectiveness and the positive change it has brought to the digital workforce:

- **231 interns have completed this program**
- **96% of interns were hired after completing this program**
- **97% of employers and interns were satisfied with this program**
- **54% of interns were from under-represented groups**

The Youth Dividend Program serves as a powerful example of how strategic policy interventions can overcome barriers to employment and ensure the successful transition of young graduates into meaningful careers.

Empowering Youth and Transforming the Digital Workforce

In today's rapidly evolving job market, young graduates often face significant challenges in securing suitable employment. These obstacles arise from a lack of work experience and a misalignment between their skills and industry demands. The repercussions include fierce competition with experienced professionals and limited access to courses that enhance employability, which hinder their professional growth.

Youth, especially women, youth with disabilities, Indigenous youth, and members of racialized groups face various hurdles, including limited access to job opportunities and a mismatch between the skills acquired through education and those demanded by employers. These barriers not only impede their entry into the workforce but also obstruct their chances of gaining relevant experience. Students with less or no experience struggle to find jobs, while employers face challenges in filling high-demand positions. In 2020, ICTC took a comprehensive approach to address these challenges faced by young graduates and employers.

"FANTASTIC! I had never expected it, but the courses were a tremendous addition to the program and have completely transformed Jessica. She has become a great asset to the company, and I wish we could benefit from the Youth Dividend program more frequently."

- LF, President

Solution: The Youth Dividend Program

In response to these challenges, ICTC introduced the Youth Dividend Program in 2020. This innovative initiative aimed to connect Canadian employers with university and college graduates under the age of 30, equipping them with training and meaningful work experiences to facilitate their transition into full-time employment.

The Youth Dividend Program employed a comprehensive approach to address the challenges faced by young graduates and employers. It commenced with rigorous research on labour market demands and skills mapping, identifying the top five areas of expertise in demand: Software Development, Data Science/Data Analysis, Business Analysis, Digital Marketing/Sales, and UX/UI Design. The program offered 26-week paid internships in industries related to the digital economy, providing participants with relevant on-the-job training, technical expertise through third-party partners, and opportunities for soft skills development and networking.

Employers participating in the program were also provided with an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) assessment to promote workplace inclusivity.



“Youth Dividend” has allowed me to work in a field that I am interested in and applies to my degree. It has been an incredible experience so far. I also really appreciate the additional courses that we had to take because I learned something that I would’ve never been able to learn about otherwise.”

*- MRP, Research & Development Coordinator
(self-identified as a woman and member of a visible minority)*

Impact: Empowering Young Graduates and Transforming the Digital Workforce

The Youth Dividend Program has produced remarkable outcomes, significantly impacting both young graduates and employers. An impressive 96% of program participants were hired either by the host organization or another employer upon completing the internship. Additionally, in 2022, 100% of employers expressed their willingness to recommend the program to other organizations, showcasing their satisfaction with its effectiveness.

The program’s success garnered recognition from the Global Apprenticeship Network (GAN), a prominent international organization. The Youth Dividend program was featured in GAN’s 2020 [Annual Report](#), highlighting its effectiveness and the positive change it has brought to the digital workforce.



Key Learnings: Enhancing Employability and Soft Skills Development

The Youth Dividend Program’s success emphasizes the importance of providing practical work experience aligned with industry demands. Furthermore, the program underscores the significance of developing essential soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving to enhance employability.

The Youth Dividend Program has emerged as a catalyst for empowering youth and transforming the digital workforce. By equipping young graduates with the necessary skills, experiences, and networks, the program facilitates their successful transition into career-oriented employment. Through this initiative, ICTC has driven positive change and shaped a future where young graduates have equal opportunities to thrive and make significant contributions to the digital economy.

To learn more about the Youth Dividend program and its impact, please visit etalentcanada.ca. Take a step towards empowering young graduates and shaping the future of the digital workforce.