



The Counselling
Foundation of Canada

2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

A note to readers:

It should be noted this plan was developed and approved pre-Covid19. The elements within remain our focus and intent, however the pandemic will inevitably alter the course of its implementation.

The Counselling Foundation of Canada's Evolving Mission

Founded in 1959 by Frank Lawson, over the past 60 years, the Foundation has established career counselling as a critical part of the post-secondary system through its funding of career counselling centres at many Canadian post-secondary institutions. Mr. Lawson believed that career counselling should be a recognized discipline of applied psychology and that young people should have access to career practitioners who could help them identify their career goals; find the training, education and experiential learning opportunities to build the necessary skills; and have access to mentors in order to reach their goals and emerge as productive citizens. In building the profession and establishing the value and power of career counselling, the Foundation has directly improved the lives of hundreds of thousands of Canadians.

The Foundation is still guided by the ethos of Frank Lawson's initial vision and recognizes continued success in this work requires deep commitment to partnerships, collaborations and the engagement of those representing the communities it seeks to serve. The Foundation must listen and learn from others including its colleagues in the philanthropic sector and, perhaps most importantly, its partners in the charitable and non-profit sector who are supported in *their* work by the Foundation's philanthropy. They are the experts working on the ground who understand what their communities need and how to best meet those needs. The Foundation will achieve nothing worthwhile unless it can support these organizations to deliver programs and projects that have real impact and bring about positive change.

The Plan in Overview

Career development is the key focus of this plan along with goals related to participation in the sector and civil society initiatives that will enhance the reach and effectiveness of its philanthropy.

Career development, like the rest of Canadian society, is under pressure from external factors that are shaping the world around us. As we think of our work, we will seek to understand and be guided by how these external influences are at play and affect career development. These factors include demographic shifts; technological disruption; growing awareness of decent work initiatives that allow for living wage work; the global phenomenon of human migration; and intersections with climate change.

As a signatory of the Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action, which was presented in 2015 at the closing event of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, we continue to be mindful that there will be no chance of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Canada without concerted and sustained action to back up that commitment.

The Foundation works with organizations and their leaders who have the vision and drive to make change happen not just today but for the years, even generations, ahead. This means

accepting that even the best-sounding ideas come with risks, and success — however it is measured — is not guaranteed and may not be well-defined. The Foundation can and will make these decisions, learn from them and work with others to share this knowledge.

Areas of Focus

The 2020 Strategic Plan includes three external areas of focus:

1. The Relationship Between the Foundation and CERIC
2. Career Development in the Fourth Industrial Revolution
3. Supporting the Charitable and Philanthropic Sectors and Civil Society

While financial support may be the primary and most important way in which we can offer to support our grant recipients, there are other types of non-financial or low-cost supports we can provide, such as convening, policy development and advocacy, and making connections to other funders or to other organizations doing similar work across the country. In the coming years, we anticipate a greater investment will be made in the non-financial or low-cost supports to our grant recipients, including through CERIC, and to the sector as whole.

Outlines of some of the work we envision for each of these areas follows.

1. The Relationship Between the Foundation and CERIC

The Foundation's relationship with CERIC continues to be central in terms of breadth, depth and collaboration within the career development sector. Over the last 15 years or so, CERIC has grown in size, scope, and ambition — governed by the career development sector for the benefit of the sector. Given limited resources of the Foundation, it is not possible to have a granting presence in all communities across the country; however, through CERIC, the Foundation has been able to extend its reach from coast to coast to coast and provide important learning opportunities and resources for career practitioners.

Since its official launch in 2004, CERIC has focused on providing resources, research and programs for Canada's career development practitioners. CERIC receives the majority of its funding from the Foundation to do this work. The relationship between CERIC and the Foundation allows each organization to build on the relationships and work of the other.

As a charity, CERIC has become a national leader in the area of career development. It has developed a successful annual conference, undertaken and published important career-focused research, and offered a range of publications and tools for the profession and broader community. In addition, CERIC has built important partnerships with regional, national and international organizations dedicated to supporting career development practitioners, projects and programs. This pan-Canadian perspective is of significant benefit to the Foundation

2. Career Development in the Fourth Industrial Revolution

The phrase Fourth Industrial Revolution refers to the rapid pace at which technology is both increasing and enhancing productivity and efficiency, but also causing disruption in almost every industry in every country and creating massive change in a non-linear way at unprecedented speed. This seismic shift merits the Fourth Industrial Revolution label because it is seen to be on par with the use of water and steam to mechanize production (first revolution), the use of electric power to create mass production (second revolution), and the use of digital technology to automate production (third revolution).

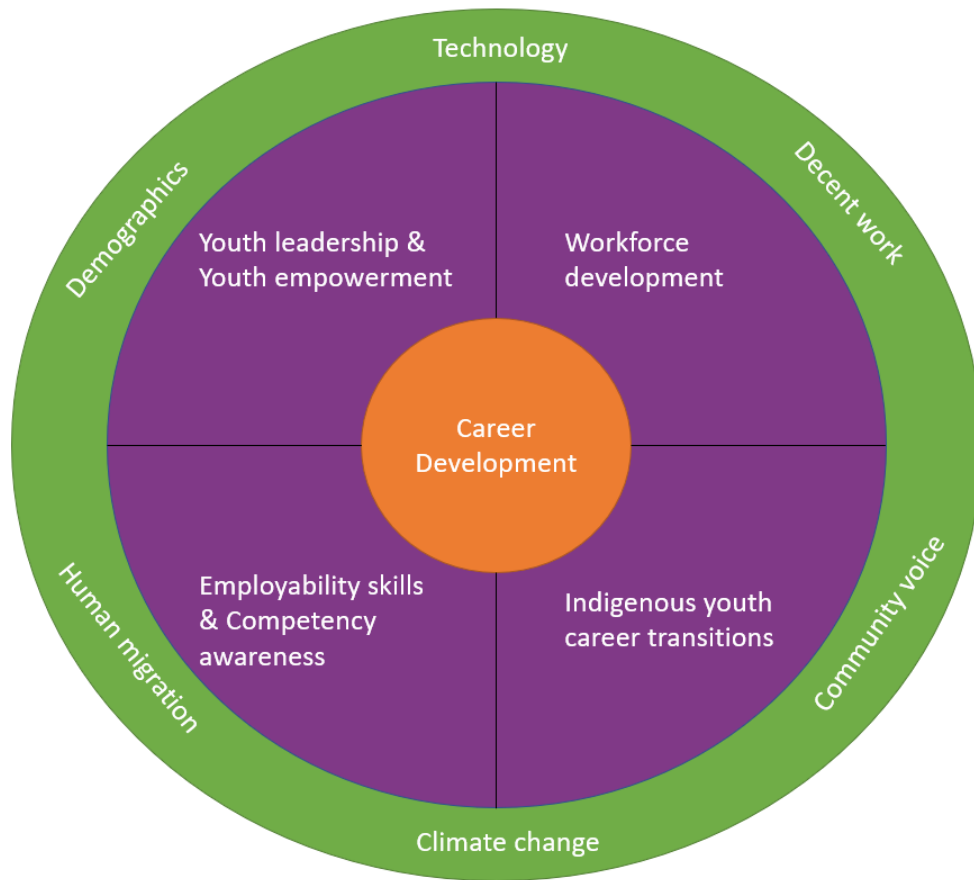
Career development is a multi-dimensional field which is not immune to this rapid change. At the time of writing, the Foundation is planning to focus its efforts on four areas of interest. In some cases, there is history and experience in these areas of interest on which to build; in other cases, there are existing or budding partnerships and collaborative opportunities to extend and expand the reach of our efforts. These areas of interest are not islands unto themselves; they generally cross-cut and overlap one another and all are subject to the rapid pace of change facing society today.

The Foundation is engaged in or has identified these four areas as essential to achieve its Vision and Mission:

- A. Youth leadership and empowerment
- B. Workforce development
- C. The spectrum of employability skills to career competencies or 21st century skills
- D. Indigenous youth career transitions

The challenge, as always, will be to strike the right balance between focus, engaging the community, building strong partnerships, and making the sometimes-tough decisions on what and what not to include in each of these areas.

The graphic below helps to illustrate the connections between these various areas of focus and the external considerations that may affect them in the coming years. We recognize that, while not core focus areas, these external influences will likely affect career development. These factors include demographic shifts; technological disruption; growing awareness of decent work initiatives that allow for living wage work; the global phenomenon of human migration; and intersections with climate change.



A. Youth leadership and empowerment

What this means

Mentorship, volunteerism, leadership development, and other experiential learning opportunities supply the bedrock of career success. Given the evolution of work, youth in the 12–30 cohort may experience several different careers during their work lives. For youth, career paths will be influenced and guided by all four of these building blocks.

What we will do

The Foundation will focus on initiatives that support the development of leadership skills and individual empowerment.

B. Workforce development

What this means

Workforce development has emerged as a significant growth area for Foundation investment and effort since 2012. Unlike career exploration, this is an area that considers skills, education and work opportunities that align to current and emerging jobs in growth sectors.

What we will do

The Foundation will consider programs and projects on demand-led approaches to employment that link job seekers to employers in growth industries, offer living wage work and jobs that lead to identified career paths. In partnership with several other funders, the Foundation will also support a unique Workforce Funders Collaborative to promote workforce development in the Greater Toronto Area. This work will be amplified on a national basis through CERIC's channels.

C. Spectrum of employability skills to career competencies: 21st century skills

What it means

Employability skills and career competencies (also becoming known as 21st century skills) exist along a spectrum. For new entrants and those who have typically been marginalized in the workforce, there are basic skills that allow them to gain and retain employment. For many people, acquiring basic skills continues to be a challenge — often due to lack of access to skills-based education, an historic and ongoing lack of connection to the labour force, and, in some cases, low levels of educational attainment. As people travel further along the spectrum, they develop competencies that allow them to take greater ownership of their career path, particularly when workplaces turn toward contract staffing and other more precarious work structures.

What we will do

In the coming years, the Foundation will support projects and activities that raise the profile and importance of skills and competencies and the linkages to career development in a world that is increasingly more difficult to self-navigate.

D. Indigenous youth career transitions

What it means

Strengthening education and career development opportunities for Indigenous youth is tied to programs and projects that contribute to increased high school graduation rates, post-secondary enrolment and economic opportunities that support youth to remain in their communities if they choose.

What we will do

The Foundation will continue to explore partnerships and funding opportunities that focus on the specific and unique needs of Indigenous youth to establish career paths within their own communities, either through established employment or entrepreneurship options.

3. Supporting the Charitable and Philanthropic Sectors and Civil Society

It takes more than just goodwill and sound ideas to bring about lasting change. To address its mission, the Foundation understands it must engage with sector colleagues that share similar principles of philanthropy, and connect with groups dedicated to policy development that addresses the societal and demographic issues of the organizations the Foundation seeks to support.

Similarly, public discussion about the issues that affect career development and/or the charitable and non-profit sectors can engage people and build a broad understanding of the benefits of change. Working in partnership with others committed to societal change, the Foundation will encourage such discussion in a way that is productive, non-partisan and strengthens society.

Stubborn, long-term problems take time, creativity, perseverance and collaborators willing to take failure along with success. The Foundation commits to find ways to recognize collaborative efforts that help create a better and more equitable society.

Reaching the Destination

The success of The Counselling Foundation of Canada, aside from the oversight of its own operations, is shared jointly with the partnerships created, the programs developed and is in the hands of those who receive grants and do the work in their communities.

The Foundation does not expect its partners and grant recipients to stand still. Through their interactions with the Foundation, including their regular reports or involvement with programs/projects, they are encouraged to identify the gaps that may be holding them back from success, build and adjust their models, act courageously, and celebrate the strengths they bring to their work and the communities they serve.

Are partners and grant recipients expected to identify measures of success? Of course. But these measures will always be rooted in what they require and define as success. The Foundation will set its frame of reference, which it has done with this strategic plan. Grant recipients and partners able and willing to work within this framework can continue to expect the Foundation will be interested in their work. And the Foundation will celebrate its success through the improvements in the lives touched by all of these efforts.