YOUTH EMPLOYMENT NONPROFIT DIGITAL & DATA READINESS R&D CONSORTIUM

Project Report

CANADIAN
CENTRE FOR
NONPROFIT
DIGITAL
RESILIENCE

About Us
Canadian Centre for Nonprofit Digital Resiliency

CCNDR works to create a digitally-enabled nonprofit sector, where Canada's nonprofits use data and tech to multiply their impact. It was co-founded by The Digital Governance Council, Imagine Canada, Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund, NTEN, SETSI, and Tamarack Institute, alongside 180 supporting organizations and 200 individual advisors.

Learn more at ccndr.ca

COFOUNDERS

PROJECT FUNDER

Youth Employment Nonprofit Digital & Data Readiness R&D Consortium
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Project Overview:

Youth Employment Nonprofit Digital & Data Readiness R&D Consortium

The Youth Employment Nonprofits Digital & Data Readiness R&D Consortium embarked on a mission to address the pressing issue of equitable access to resources for nonprofits, enabling them to leverage digital tools and data effectively. Through a collaborative effort, the consortium aimed to co-design interventions that would enhance the digital skills and readiness of youth employment nonprofits. The project involved three key prototypes: Nonprofit Pathway to Digital and Data Readiness, Community of Practice, and Service Provider Connections.

Project Goals & Outcomes

In this section, we outline the primary goals of the Youth Employment Nonprofits Digital & Data Readiness R&D Consortium initiative. By focusing on increasing organizational involvement, fostering engagement through consortium gatherings, providing actionable recommendations for sustainable collaboration models, and strengthening connections among partners, CCNDR aims to drive positive change and improve outcomes for youth employment non-profits. Through these strategic efforts, we seek to create a more supportive and interconnected environment that empowers organizations to navigate digital challenges effectively and better serve their communities. Outcomes include:

- Increase involvement of the organizations engaged overall in building the collaboration model to improve the functioning of the digital and data skills-building ecosystem providing supports to youth employment non-profit practitioners.
- Increase involvement and engagement of organizations and participants through consortium gatherings.
- Make recommendations for at least one collaboration model (with a sustainable business model) to improve the functioning of the digital and data skills-building ecosystem providing supports to youth employment non-profit practitioners.
- Strengthen connections within and among partners across youth employment non-profit, digital/data capacity building service provider, and the broader non-profit digital/data ecosystem.

Project Participants

SERVICE PROVIDERS

- Blueprint ADE
- Data for Good
- NTEN
- Open North
- PolicyWise for Children and Families
- Purpose Analytics
- The Human Stack
- Technology Helps
- TechSoup Canada
- Young Associates

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

- Mentoring Canada
- Woodgreen
- S-Can
- Skills for Change
- Big Brothers and Big Sisters Canada
- BYTE
- Volunteer Alberta
- Y4Y Quebec
- ACBN
- Herr Network

SECTOR ADVISORS

- Chantal Edwards on behalf of Imagine Canada
- Victor Beausoleil on behalf of SETSI
- Nathalie Blanchet on behalf of Tamarack

TECHNICAL ADVISORS

- Aine McGlynn
- Helen Knight

ADDITIONAL CONSORTIUM MEMBERS & PROTOTYPE DEVELOPMENT

- Canadian Council for Youth Prosperity
- CanadaHelps
- Youthful Cities
- Data Orchard
- Impact Organizations of Nova Scotia
- Definity Foundation
- Stand Together Org
- CompanionLink
- Imperative Impact
- Hospitality Workers Training Center
- Hamid Golhasany
- Calgary Homeless
- Ontario Nonprofit Network
- Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy
- Entremission

Evaluation Criteria

To evaluate the project's efficacy, we employed various criteria to assess its success and identify areas for improvement as outlined below:

Increase Involvement of Engaged Organizations:
- Number of organizations actively participating in consortium activities and collaborations.
- Level of engagement, as evidenced by participation in workshops, consultations, and working groups.
- Feedback from participating organizations regarding their level of involvement, perceived value of collaboration, and contributions to model development.

Enhance Engagement Through Consortium Gatherings:
- Attendance rates at consortium gatherings.
- Diversity and representation of participating organizations and stakeholders.
- Observations of interaction, networking, and knowledge-sharing among participants during gatherings.

Recommendations for Collaboration Models:
- Number and quality of collaboration model proposals developed.
- Level of alignment with project objectives and sustainability criteria.
- Stakeholder feedback on the feasibility, effectiveness, and scalability of proposed collaboration models.
- Expert evaluations of proposed models in terms of their potential impact, sustainability, and ability to address identified challenges.

Strengthen Connections Within and Among Partners:
- Number of new partnerships formed within and among youth employment non-profits, digital/data capacity-building service providers, and the broader non-profit digital/data ecosystem.
- Depth and frequency of collaboration between partners, measured through joint initiatives, shared resources, and ongoing communication.
- Stakeholder perceptions of strengthened connections, trust, and synergy among partners.

Assessment

OUTCOME #1

Increase involvement of the organizations engaged overall in building the collaboration model to improve the functioning of the digital and data skills-building ecosystem providing supports to youth employment non-profit practitioners.

Number of organizations actively participating in consortium activities and collaborations.

Target: Engage 10 youth employment nonprofit organizations, 10 digital and data service providers, 2 technical advisors, three sector advisors, and additional general consortium member.

Outcome: Successfully met the target with active participation from all specified groups.

Level of engagement, as evidenced by participation in workshops, consultations, and working groups.

Target: 60+ engaged in consortium meetings

Outcome: 81 engaged in consortium meetings
Consortium Meeting #1 (November 21, 2022): Attended by 21 participants, including service providers, sector advisors, technical advisors, and community stakeholders.

Consortium Meeting #2 (April 17, 2023): Attended by 36 participants, including service providers, nonprofit organizations, sector, and technical advisors. The meeting facilitated productive discussions leading to the identification of three prototypes for development.

Consortium Meeting #3 (January 2024): Attended by 24 participants, demonstrating sustained interest and engagement throughout the project duration.

Feedback from participating organizations regarding their level of involvement, perceived value of collaboration, and contributions to model development.

OUTCOME #2

Increase involvement and engagement of organizations and participants through consortium gatherings.

Attendance rates at consortium gatherings, workshops, and events.
Efforts to enhance engagement through consortium gatherings yielded promising results. Attendance rates at the various workshops and events have been encouraging, with a target on facilitating collaboration among 5-10 organizations involved in building the collaboration model for the digital and data skills-building ecosystem supporting youth employment non-profit practitioners.

Prototype One attracted active participation from a group of seven members, each offering diverse perspectives and experiences. Prototype Two saw even broader engagement, with eleven members contributing valuable insights and feedback. Though Prototype Three had a more focused scope, it was instrumental, with five members providing targeted input and perspectives. These attendance rates underscore the value and relevance of our consortium gatherings, fostering productive discussions and driving progress towards our shared goals.

Diversity and representation of participating organizations and stakeholders.
Our consortium gatherings have been characterized by a rich tapestry of diversity and representation among participating organizations and stakeholders. We have witnessed a wide breadth of diversity across various dimensions, including ethnicity, age, geographical location, and expertise.

The project attracted participants from all provinces, including the Yukon Territory, as well as individuals from the United States and the UK. A diverse range of backgrounds was represented among participants, including those who identify as Black, Indigenous, South Asian, Asian, and European.

Participants from diverse backgrounds have brought unique insights and perspectives to the table, enriching our discussions and enhancing the robustness of our collaboration model. By ensuring representation from a broad spectrum of stakeholders, we have cultivated a dynamic and inclusive community that reflects the multifaceted nature of the youth employment non-profit sector and the digital and data skills-building ecosystem. Moving forward, we remain committed to upholding and celebrating diversity as a fundamental pillar of our collaborative endeavors, recognizing its pivotal role in driving innovation, creativity, and impact within our collective efforts.

Observations of interaction, networking, and knowledge-sharing among participants during gatherings.

Throughout our consortium gatherings, keen observations were made regarding the interaction, networking, and knowledge-sharing among participants, all of which contributed to the collaborative atmosphere and progress of our efforts.

Engagement among attendees was robust and dynamic. Conversations buzzed with excitement as participants exchanged ideas about potential next steps and deliberated on who should be included in discussions to broaden our efforts, deepen insights, and develop prototypes with the potential to effect real change within the ecosystem. Importantly, it was observed that groups appeared to be at ease, fostering an environment where individuals felt comfortable sharing their opinions and contacts to propel the project forward. This open exchange of perspectives and willingness to leverage personal networks underscored the collective commitment and enthusiasm of participants towards achieving our shared objectives. Such interactions not only facilitated the exchange of knowledge and expertise but also strengthened relationships and fostered a sense of camaraderie among stakeholders. Moving forward, it is imperative to continue cultivating this culture of collaboration and knowledge-sharing, as it remains integral to our collective success in driving meaningful impact within the digital and data skills-building ecosystem supporting youth employment non-profit practitioners.
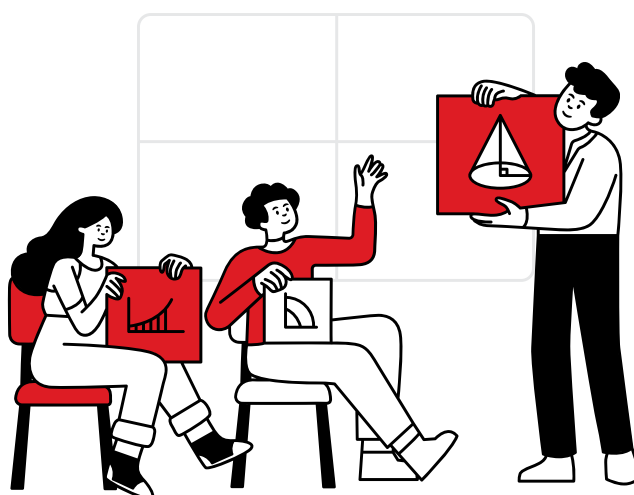
OUTCOME #3

Make recommendations for at least one collaboration model (with a sustainable business model) to improve the functioning of the digital and data skills-building ecosystem providing supports to youth employment non-profit practitioners.

Number and Quality of Collaboration Model Proposals Developed
Three collaboration model proposals were developed as part of the prototypes:
- Prototype 1: Nonprofit Pathway to Digital and Data Readiness
- Prototype 2: Community of Practice
- Prototype 3: Service Provider Connections

Each proposal offers a distinct approach to addressing the challenges faced by youth employment non-profit practitioners in enhancing their digital and data readiness. The quality of these proposals is evidenced by thorough research, stakeholder engagement, and strategic design incorporated into their development.

Level of Alignment with Project Objectives and Sustainability Criteria
All three collaboration models align closely with the project objectives of improving the functioning of the digital and data skills-building ecosystem for youth employment non-profit practitioners.

Sustainability criteria, including scalability, resource efficiency, and long-term viability, have been considered in the design of each collaboration model. Efforts have been made to ensure that the proposed models can adapt to evolving needs and continue to deliver value over time.

Stakeholder Feedback on Feasibility, Effectiveness, and Scalability
Stakeholder feedback on the feasibility, effectiveness, and scalability of the proposed collaboration models has been overwhelmingly positive. Nonprofit practitioners, service providers, and other stakeholders have expressed enthusiasm for the potential impact of the collaboration models in addressing their digital and data readiness challenges.

Stakeholders have provided valuable insights and suggestions for refining and implementing the collaboration models to maximize their effectiveness and reach.

Expert Evaluations of Potential Impact, Sustainability, and Ability to Address Challenges
Expert evaluations of the proposed collaboration models highlight their potential to drive significant impact within the youth employment non-profit sector. The models have been assessed for their sustainability, considering factors such as financial viability, stakeholder engagement, and scalability.

Experts recognize the ability of the collaboration models to address identified challenges and create meaningful change within the digital and data skills-building ecosystem.

OUTCOME #4

Strengthen connections within and among partners across youth employment non-profit, digital/data capacity building service provider, and the broader non-profit digital/data ecosystem.

Three significant partnerships have been established:
- Confirmed: Technology Helps: Joining the initiative to provide expertise and support in digital and data capacity-building efforts.
- Confirmed: Blueprint Ade: Collaborating on joint initiatives and shared resources to enhance evaluation methodologies and frameworks.
- In progress: Charity Growth Academy: Engaging in a joint initiative to bolster capacity-building efforts within the broader non-profit digital/data ecosystem.
- Additionally, numerous discussions and negotiations are underway with consortium nonprofit participants and service providers, indicating a growing network of collaborative relationships.

Depth and Frequency of Collaboration:
- The depth and frequency of collaboration between partners have been substantial, as evidenced by joint initiatives, shared resources, and ongoing communication.
- Partners have actively engaged in collaborative projects, such as developing evaluation methodologies, hosting joint workshops, and sharing best practices and resources to support mutual objectives.
- Regular communication channels have been established to facilitate ongoing dialogue and information sharing, fostering a sense of unity and cohesion among partners.
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Stakeholder Perceptions of Strengthened Connections:
- Stakeholders have expressed positive perceptions of strengthened connections, trust, and synergy among partners.
- Feedback indicates that collaborative efforts have fostered a sense of trust and mutual respect among partners, leading to increased collaboration and a shared commitment to achieving common goals.
- Stakeholders recognize the value of strengthened connections in driving collective impact and addressing complex challenges within the digital and data skills-building ecosystem.

In summary, the initiative to strengthen connections within and among partners has yielded promising outcomes, with the formation of new partnerships, deep collaboration, and positive stakeholder perceptions of strengthened connections. Moving forward, continued efforts to foster collaboration, communication, and trust will be essential to sustain and enhance the collective impact of our collaborative endeavors within the youth employment non-profit sector and the broader digital/data ecosystem.

Overall, the project demonstrated significant success in addressing the challenges faced by youth employment nonprofits in enhancing their digital and data readiness. The prototypes developed by the consortium have effectively empowered nonprofits with resources, support, and networks to navigate the digital landscape more effectively.

Recommendations

In order to ensure the sustainability of the prototypes developed within the project, it is crucial to provide continued support and resources beyond the project timeline. This support will enable the prototypes to evolve, adapt, and thrive in response to changing needs and circumstances. To this end, efforts should be made to secure additional funding through partnerships, private sources, and public funding opportunities. By expanding the financial resources available, we can further develop and test the prototypes with service providers and nonprofit participants, ensuring their long-term viability and effectiveness in addressing the digital and data readiness needs of youth employment non-profit practitioners.

In addition to sustaining the existing prototypes, there is a need to explore opportunities for expansion to reach a broader audience of nonprofits. While the current focus is on youth employment, once the prototypes are proven effective, consideration should be given to expanding their scope to encompass all nonprofits. This expansion would enable a wider range of organizations to benefit from the interventions developed through the project, thereby maximizing their impact and relevance across the non-profit sector.

Furthermore, fostering partnerships with relevant stakeholders is essential to enhance the impact and reach of the interventions. By collaborating with organizations, government agencies, industry partners, and other key stakeholders, we can leverage their expertise, resources, and networks to amplify the effectiveness of the prototypes. These partnerships can facilitate greater outreach, knowledge-sharing, and collective action, ultimately driving positive change and innovation within the digital and data skills-building ecosystem supporting youth employment non-profit practitioners. Through strategic collaboration and partnership development, we can create a more robust and interconnected support infrastructure that empowers non-profits to navigate the digital landscape effectively and achieve their mission-driven goals.

Key Learnings

One of the key learnings from our engagement with participants is the recognition that busy schedules are a common challenge faced by many stakeholders involved in the program. This reality underscores the importance of implementing strategies to maintain engagement, particularly with those who may not be fully committed to the project. A valuable consideration to address this issue is the implementation of a payment structure that includes both an initial payment at the beginning of the project and a subsequent payment upon completion. This approach helps mitigate the risk of participants accepting payment upfront but failing to fully engage or contribute to the project's objectives. By providing payment incentives at both the onset and conclusion of the project, we can incentivize sustained participation and ensure that all stakeholders are motivated to actively contribute throughout the program duration. This dual-payment structure not only safeguards against potential disengagement but also fosters a sense of accountability and commitment among participants, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness and success of the program.

Conclusion

Youth Employment Nonprofit Digital & Data Readiness R&D Consortium

The Youth Employment Nonprofits Digital & Data Readiness R&D Consortium successfully co-designed and implemented interventions to enhance the digital skills and readiness of youth employment nonprofits. Through a collaborative and iterative process, the consortium has laid the foundation for a more supportive and impactful digital ecosystem for nonprofits in Canada.

This evaluation report serves as a testament to the achievements of the consortium and provides valuable insights for future initiatives aimed at empowering nonprofits through technology and data-driven solutions.
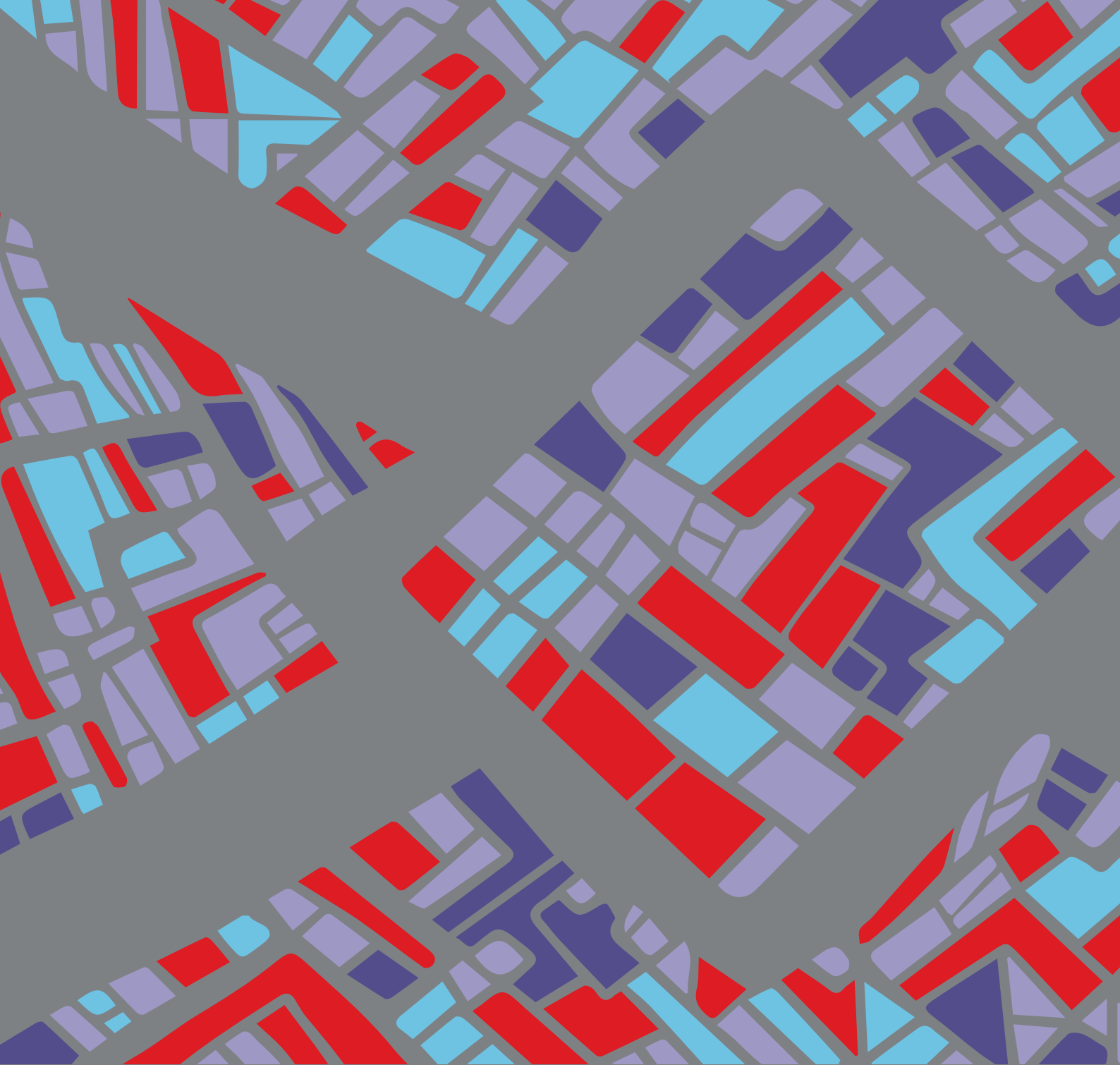
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