

2019 WORK PLAN

OUR SKILLS FUTURE

Changing world markets, automation and artificial intelligence are disrupting every workplace. In 2019, the Human Capital Centre has an ambitious agenda that builds on earlier work to show the way to implement a competency-based approach to workforce development and deployment. This will unlock the potential of our workforce and our education and training investment. The Centre will continue to champion the importance of basic skills to employment for individuals and economic success for the country.

New, different work for laid-off oil and gas workers: Putting competencies back to work

Laid-off oil and gas workers have developed significant competencies that can be useful in other sectors and occupations – the problem is that neither they nor potential employers realize it. In 2019, we will complete the analysis and reporting from our field work into transferable skills of workers displaced from the oil and gas sector. Public policy implications from this work will be identified and disseminated. A number of “What Now?” policy briefs as well as a major paper will be produced in 2019.

A competency approach to economic development

Jobs are being displaced through a variety of causes, from lower commodity prices to automation to changing policy choices that affect the economies of whole communities or regions. The Human Capital Centre will show how a competency-based approach to economic development is a workable – better – method to attract

new jobs to a community or region. Potential regions for study include those affected by the shut-down of the coal-fired generating plants in Alberta and Saskatchewan, and the hubs of industrial activity still affected by the downturn in the price of oil. We will look at the effects on employment and unemployment, and decision-making by employers and training providers. (Pending funding)

Building the competency frameworks Canada needs

The development of a pan-Canadian competency framework remains a priority for the Human Capital Centre. One way to achieve this goal is to develop competency profiles starting with specific jobs in specific sectors and over time, extend to all jobs in all sectors. In 2019, we will be involved in documenting the development of competency profiles and the related policy implications in at least three sectors – two that are new and an established one. Potential sectors include: occupations in drone operation, environmental impact assessment, landscaping and/or petroleum sector data management.

Success in the Making

Effective partnerships between Indigenous communities and resource firms

Indigenous communities are increasingly forming alliances with natural resources firms to create economic opportunity and enhance self-sufficiency. However, too often the stories of these alliances remain untold. Our Natural Resources and Human Capital Centres are working with Indigenous partners to highlight successful examples. In 2018, we completed a series of roundtables, and embarked on deep-dive case

The Human Capital Centre champions
a West that prospers as its people reach their full potential.
A competency-based approach to workforce development and deployment
allows more people and their employers to reach that full potential.

studies in Lac La Ronge (SK) and Lax Kw'alaams (BC) to document some of the ways success can happen. In 2019, we will continue working with a range of Indigenous groups across the four western provinces to help further economic reconciliation through sharing experiences, expectations and plans for resource development partnerships and projects. We will look at how to build the competencies required to achieve those successful alliances.

The economics of basic skills

Our 2018 report *Literacy Lost: Canada's basic skills shortfall* discussed the reasons for literacy skill loss and why that is a problem. Recent international analysis shows the close link between literacy rates of the adult population and GDP growth and productivity. The Human Capital Centre will look at the results for Canada, the policy and programming implications and what it means for economic competitiveness.

The hierarchy of skills acquisition

In Canada, literacy and numeracy are considered “essential skills.” As jobs change, these skills are more important than ever. So too are the so-called “soft” skills of problem-solving, critical thinking and decision-making. Unfortunately, all these skills are in short supply. What should policy-makers and program designers know about the best methods for adults to build these skills in adulthood and the most efficient order in which to learn them?

Adaptation

Getting ready for the challenges of tomorrow

A number of mega-trends are shaping how Canada operates in the world. Climate change. Shifts in geopolitics and global economic power. Demographic changes and a rising – and moving – world population. Technological acceleration. How prepared are we to face these challenges? What resources are needed, or can be leveraged? What new opportunities will emerge as a result of these shifts? This project, a collaboration of all three Centres, will help to answer these questions and lead the way to a sustainable, prosperous future for the West. In 2019, we will begin by examining what these trends are, and what effects they may have. We will then focus in on identifying how selected communities and others can adapt to both the negatives and the positives that these changes will bring.

Human Capital Centre Patrons

- Arthur J.E. Child Foundation Endowment
- Fund at the Calgary Foundation
- The Community Fund at The Calgary Foundation
- Enbridge Inc.
- Government of Alberta
- Government of Manitoba
- Ledcor
- Max Bell Foundation
- Suncor
- Anonymous