



Adding the youth voice in program design with the mining industry

Purpose: This case study showcases a youth co-creation process for the Mining Industry Human Resources Council (MiHR), in partnership with CCYP, to better design a youth engagement strategy for the mining industry.



Background

The mining industry in Canada is a significant employer, with 392,000 direct jobs. In 2019, it contributed \$109 billion to Canada's economy – or 5% of total GDP.¹ The average annual total wage in mining is \$126,000, twice the all-industry average.² Yet, the mining industry's employment pathways are not always clear for youth. The Mining Industry Human Resource Council (MiHR) provides career development programs to help bridge these connections.



Challenge Area

Employers and youth are disconnected on what they are each looking for, and how they

connect. MiHR was looking to better to answer a core design question, “Why are youth not engaging with job opportunities in our sector?”³



Ideas and Solutions

MiHR took youth co-creation to heart, partnering with CCYP to host a co-creation experience with youth to better inform program design.⁴ Together we consulted 150 diverse youth across Canada through 15 virtual focus groups, creating design recommendations and solutions. Hosting co-creation processes with youth in the design phase of a workplace program can yield valuable information and recommendations.



Impact

After the experience, a representative from MiHR shared with us, *“The approach was unique for us and therefore led to some different insights into youth perceptions and youth engagement processes... We learned a lot and have new appreciation for the challenges of youth engagement and the significance of the insights to be gained through this important work.”* The experience fostered a mindset shift alongside tangible program actions and solutions.



Key Learnings

Have a design question – Ensure there is a core purpose and design question in place at the start of the consultation process. All participants need to understand the challenge at hand and the goal of the experience.

Bridging audiences with a facilitator

– For many workplace programs, youth and employers sit on opposite sides of the table or have never even been at a table together. Use an objective facilitator to build trust and dialogue between parties.

Have the right participants in the room

– Co-creation works best when it brings together a group of individuals with various lived experiences that can challenge the status quo. Consider who is in the room and ensure everyone feels welcome and valued.⁵

Plan for disruption – As a facilitator, plan for the unexpected in the co-creation process. You may have individuals who have never done co-creation before. You may bring up difficult conversation areas or notice barriers in collaboration. Be prepared to guide participants through the experience.

Provide Next Steps – After the experience, be clear on how the information will be used and next steps. This can avoid tokenism and ensure the experience was worth everyone’s time.⁶



References

¹ Marshall, Brendan. "Facts & Figures 2020: The State of Canada's Mining Industry", *The Mining Association of Canada*, Sep 2021, <https://mining.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/FF-2020-EN-Web-1.pdf>

² "Mining in Canada: 65+ Facts", *Canada Action*, July 2021, https://www.canadaaction.ca/mining_sector_canada_by_the_numbers

³ "A Guide for Navigating the Future of Work: For Youth and Employers", *Tamarack Institute*, 2022, <https://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/hubfs/Tamarack-v2-6.pdf?hsCtaTracking=933da3cd-7355-4f72-a66a-8fa8154e6bec%7Cb48d5dee-9662-407a-bda9-2ce36af3d2f9>

⁴ "Gearing Up", *Mining Industry Human Resources Council*, 2023, <https://mihr.ca/career-development/gearing-up/>

⁵ "How to Authentically Engage Youth in the Workforce Development Ecosystem", *Canadian Council for Youth Prosperity*, 2022, <https://www.ccyp-ccpj.org/post/how-to-authentically-engage-youth-in-the-workforce-development-ecosystem>

⁶ Mistry, Lauren. "Co-Creation: Youth Voice", *Youth Employment UK*, Feb 2017, <https://www.youthemployment.org.uk/co-creation/>