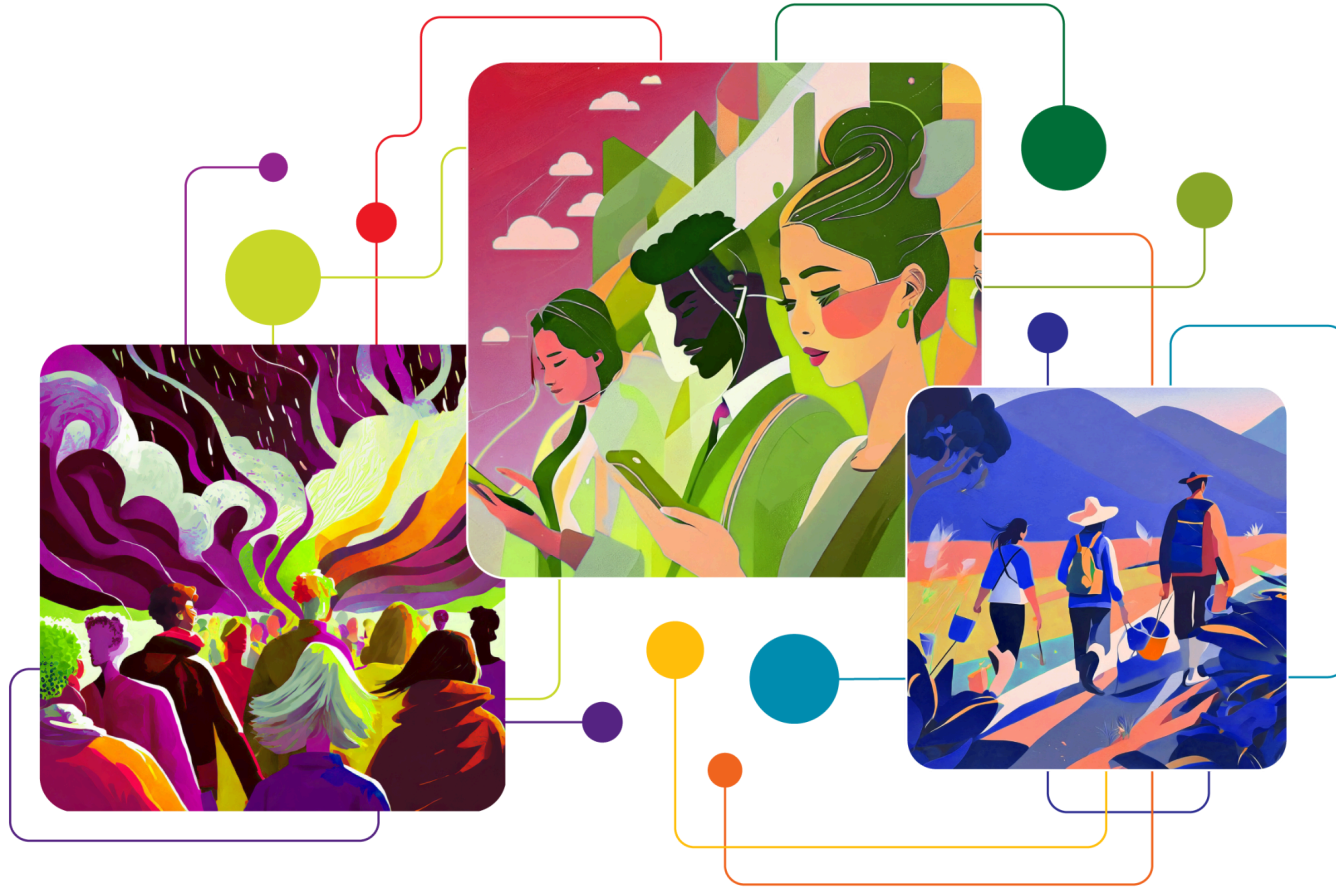


Career Development in 2040



PREPARING FOR POSSIBLE SCENARIOS OF WORK & CAREERS: Career Development Sector Summary

January 2024

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Career Development Sector Summary

As the world grapples with vast labour market changes, career development professionals (CDPs) possess unique capabilities that are critical in helping workers adapt. Unfortunately, not all learners and workers have access to this support due to current funding and service models. Research conducted shows that Canada has a robust career development landscape, but it is vastly underutilized (Bonen and Williams, 2021). At the same time, careers and the nature of work are facing tremendous changes, responding to shifts in modalities, emerging technologies, as well as broader changes such as climate change, geopolitical conflicts, and generational values shifts (Russek and Thornton, 2023). Today, nearly 1 in 4 workers in Canada report being unhappy in their work (Léger and Hamster, 2022), while employers are experiencing labour shortages due to skill mismatches (Statistics Canada, 2023).

All in all, there is a significant need to support current and future workers to adjust to the changing labour market, and career developers are uniquely positioned with the skills, passion, and experience to do exactly this. However, for this to happen, a series of changes are required, shifting away from the current failure-first mode. Failure-first, meaning one must first be unemployed to access publicly funded career development supports. With so many workers needing support to weather the changes ahead, there is a significant opportunity to evolve the career development system in Canada to help ease these changes, transitions, and disruptions.

The main report explores how career development and work may evolve between now and 2040, and what that might mean for career development professionals. This is the focus of the research project *Career Development in 2040*, commissioned by CERIC, and led by Creative Futures. *Career Development in 2040* started with a deep dive into the major changes with the potential to impact career development in 2040, which was published October 2023. *Preparing for Possible Scenarios of Work & Careers* builds on these changes, exploring what they might mean in more detail, and how career development services, and the role of Career Development Professionals (CDPs) themselves may evolve by 2040.



This project used strategic foresight methodology and engaged career development professionals (CDPs) from across Canada through interviews and a bilingual workshop. The approach is described further in the main report, which outlines the methodology (Section 2), major changes impacting the future of career development in 2040 (Section 3), and three provocative scenarios developed to support the interrogation of the futures of career development (Section 4). Based on this exploration into possible changes to career development in 2040, career developers identified ways their profession might change, which are synthesized into a series of insights (Section 5), and inform three recommended focus areas (Section 6). The main report concludes with a look at possible future research topics that may deepen understanding related to this topic.

Reflecting on the major changes and possible scenarios facing work, careers, and career development in 2040, CDPs expressed that career development **services** between now and 2040 may change in the following ways:

- Increased demand for career development as more individuals face disruptions and changes in the labour market;
- Expansion of group-based career development to meet growing demand with available resources; and
- AI-based personalized career development that provides customized information that CDPs help translate.

Based on these service changes and evolving needs of clients, CDPs reflected that their **role** may evolve in the following ways:

- Greater mindset and emotional support, providing personalized advice and ongoing involvement with clients who are navigating a rapidly changing world and labour market;
- Data analyst and interpreter of AI-generated career development research, to support clients to make the best decisions;
- Provider of national and global career development support, as labour markets become increasingly digital, virtual and global;
- Government and program expert advisor, providing unique insights for policy decisions related to education, labour markets, immigration, and more.



CDPs in 2024...

- ▶ Provide individual career development sessions
- ▶ Help individuals to manage learning and employment, acquire and enhance skills, seek and create employment, and access community services
- ▶ Conduct research to identify new job opportunities for their clients
- ▶ Support students with exploring possibilities, newcomers and refugees, individuals facing multiple barriers to employment, and unemployed workers transitioning to new opportunities
- ▶ Support clients within their local geography



CDPs in 2040...

- ▶ Help individuals with the mindset shift and resilience required to navigate a rapidly changing world and labour market
- ▶ Serve as consultants for governments, employers, and post-secondary institutions
- ▶ Provide in-person, virtual, asynchronous, and self-service delivery options
- ▶ Knowledgeable and comfortable with providing AI-supported personalized career development
- ▶ Facilitate group sessions and provide complex individual support
- ▶ Interpret and translate complex data sources and emerging technologies to conduct labour market research, identify new industries and new opportunities within a broader geographic area
- ▶ Support a much broader range of clients from K-12 students to older adults who are proactively managing their work transitions throughout their lifetime
- ▶ Assist clients within local, national, and international geographies

The main report translates the research findings into a series of recommendations for how the career development sector, policymakers, and advocacy organizations can prepare. These recommendations are synthesized into three overarching focus areas, and the focus areas relevant to the career development sector are summarized below.

RECOMMENDED FOCUS AREA 1: Advocate for “preventative” and lifelong career development.

There is a desire to shift away from the current failure-first approach to career development, where in order to access publicly funded career development supports, one must first be unemployed. Instead, there is a desire to take a much more proactive approach to career development and to assist a wide variety of clients, of all ages, *before* they are in a position of need. To advance this focus area, the following are recommended actions for the career development sector:

- Research and quantify the value of career development on other aspects of society such as healthcare expenditures, community engagement, social development, leadership development, identity development, and others to strengthen the case for use and funding;
- Advocate for the importance of career development with governments and employers in order to facilitate changes to funding and delivery models that expand service offerings to broader clients;
- Advocate for governments to increase funding and supports for career development to be integrated across the K-12 system, distinct from the current Guidance program; and
- Proactively recruit the next generation of CDPs to ensure there are sufficient professionals to meet the growing demand for support.

RECOMMENDED FOCUS AREA 2: Advocate for and promote the value of career development professionals.

All career development professionals who participated in this project felt that the complexity of work and careers will increase moving forward. Given the limited awareness and utilization of career development today to help individuals navigate and prepare for this complexity, it is critical that the career development sector takes an active role in



advocating for the importance of career development between now and 2040. To advance this focus area, the following are recommended actions for the career development sector:

- Increase public awareness of career development and the career developer profession to support broader understanding of this critical sector (e.g. conduct research demonstrating the value of career development, launch a public campaign); and
- Work together to refresh the language / terminology of career development that represents this evolving role and demonstrates its value to potential clients and other stakeholders.

RECOMMENDED FOCUS AREA 3: Support and prepare career development professionals for their own futures.

The CDPs who participated in the *Career Development in 2040* project, were open, curious, interested, and committed to learning about how their profession may change in the coming years. As such, a third recommended focus area is that the sector invest in its own future, through ongoing research, information sharing, professional development, and testing of new models. To advance this focus area, the following are recommended actions for the career development sector:

- Support organization(s) or stakeholder(s) to develop and disseminate national resources on regionally specific labour market information through centralized knowledge hubs, to strengthen knowledge building as CDPs work across broader geographies;
- Research and test ways to increase the use of AI in career development practices, to proactively support AI use by the sector;
- Prioritize professional development opportunities that help CDPs stay informed about developments in AI and emerging technology;
- Expand professional development opportunities that help CDPs stay informed about emerging changes impacting the futures of work and workers. This may include training related to:



- a. Supporting CDPs with conducting client skills, abilities, and mindset assessments to identify career transition opportunities;
 - b. Supporting mental health;
 - c. Understanding AI and emerging technologies; and
 - d. Trends impacting the futures of work.
- Support the recruitment of diverse CDP talent that reflect the lived experiences of a variety of different clients, to ensure the career development sector is positioned to support a potentially expanded scope of clients; and
 - Involve CDPs in labour market, immigration, and education policy discussions and program development. CDPs have a bird's eye view that is invaluable to policy makers, and should be seen as a key resource as governments address significant changes facing the workforce.

Overall, the purpose of *Preparing for Possible Scenarios of Work and Careers* is to identify how the career development sector, advocacy organizations, and policymakers need to prepare for 2040 and beyond. While the purpose of this research project was not to predict the future, it is to help create greater understanding of the range of possible futures we might expect. In doing so, the aim of *Career Development in 2040* is to motivate action that ensures workers across Canada have the support they need to prepare and adjust to the futures of work.



This report was written by Creative Futures Studio Inc., commissioned by CERIC. Creative Futures Studio uses applied strategic foresight methodologies to help organizations prepare for their futures.

For more details, see: www.creativefutures.studio

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