

**African-Canadian Career Excellence 2014
Student Survey: The Needs and Challenges of
Educated Black Youth in Obtaining
Meaningful and Sustainable Employment**

Final Summary Report

May 2015



CEDEC

Table of Contents

Introduction and Acknowledgments	2
The ACCE Initiative	2
The Partners	3
A Statistical Profile of the Population of Interest	4
The 2014 Student Survey	8
Data analysis	8
Comparative analysis with 2013 report	23
Conclusion and Lessons Learned	24
Next Steps	26
References	27

Introduction and Acknowledgments

This report provides the final data analysis and interpretation of the 2014 undergraduate student survey on perceptions of transition to employment in Montreal. As one step in the African-Canadian Career Excellence (ACCE) initiative aimed at countering the migration of Black graduates from Montreal, this summary will inform the design of development training for young graduates to facilitate their career launch and advancement in Quebec.

The 2014 African-Canadian Career Survey was administered to Black university students in undergraduate and graduate programs in the Greater Montreal area or those who had recently graduated from such programs and still resided in the Greater Montreal Area. The 34-question survey was completed by 77 student respondents. Currently in the early phases of a 20-year project, ACCE undertook this undergraduate student survey in order to better understand the demographics, career interests, and migration plans of Black graduates, with a view to designing career-launch and advancement support to stay in Quebec.¹

The ACCE Initiative

The ACCE initiative was created from a concern that the ongoing underemployment and out-migration of educated Blacks has been taking a toll on the Black communities in Quebec. Project funding has historically targeted employment remediation at local community organizations and para-government offices to address issues of the Black unemployed or the working poor in Quebec. ACCE's mandate is to facilitate the transition to meaningful local careers for this group by better preparing both the career-seekers and their potential employers.

The ACCE initiative intends to:

- encourage Black graduates, in particular, to stay in the province of Quebec in order to contribute to the vitality of the middle-class community as a whole; and
- assist employers as they move toward diversifying their workforce.

This initiative hopes to mitigate the exodus of educated Black youth by helping them attain meaningful and sustainable local employment that is commensurate with their skills.

All three partners of the ACCE initiative (see box below) are striving to engage key partners and stakeholders to help mitigate the exodus of young educated Blacks from Montreal. More specifically, this partnership aims to:

- encourage networking within Montreal's Black community;
- enhance professional capacity building; strive toward having a civic work force with a representative number of Black employees;
- help Montreal's Black graduates find gainful and sustainable employment in their various areas of specialisation with salaries commensurate to their qualifications; provide potential employers with highly qualified professionals; and
- reduce the unemployment rate in Montreal, especially within the Black community.

¹ In 2013, CEDEC published the ACCE Undergraduate Student Survey 2011-2012 Summary Report.

The Partners

The Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC) is Quebec's only province-wide organization with an economic and labour force development mandate. CEDEC helps communities throughout Quebec identify, assess, and prepare to act on social, cultural, and economic development opportunities.

CEDEC supports communities by lending planning expertise and follows through by brokering the strategic partnerships that make their plans a reality. A volunteer-driven organization, CEDEC sparks economic innovation in building forward-looking, prosperous and confident communities.

BCRC strengthens community capacity by providing professional support to organizations and individuals in need. The Centre is committed to helping visible-minority youth rekindle their dreams and achieve their full potential.

BCRC takes a comprehensive approach to meeting the needs of English-speaking youth and community service (the "Holistic Project"). In recognizing that youth have many needs (socio-cultural, educational, and economic) that must be addressed in order for them to achieve, the Centre's multi-interventionist, holistic strategy is progressive and unique. At its foundation is the idea of leveraging partnerships and encouraging collaboration in order to support individuals, families and organizations.

BCRC provides and implements professional innovative support services to individuals, communities, para-public and public organizations. The Centre also develops and runs heritage, health, education, socio-cultural, and community economic development programs.

The **African and Caribbean Students' Network of Canada (ACSioN)** is the organization pioneering the greatest collaboration of post-secondary students and professionals of African descent in Canada, formally inaugurated in September 2006 and headquartered in Montreal. With a robust organizational framework and common value system supported by its national boards, chapters, and various member-associations, the ACSioN Network provides programs which allow students and professionals of African descent to successfully pursue a united vision and mission centred upon academic, economic, and sociocultural excellence.

The ACSioN Network envisions a community of prosperous, confident, magnanimous, respectable and respected people of African descent, united through their pursuit of the utmost excellence and their willingness to serve the community.

Members of ACCE Committee

Information and insights herein were provided by the following members of ACCE Committee: Dorothy W. Williams of the Black Community Resource Centre (BCRC), Dwight Best of the African and Caribbean Students' Network of Canada (ACSioN), Velda Bourne, and Nina Kim of the Community Economic Development and Employability Corporation (CEDEC).

A Statistical Profile of the Population of Interest

By 2031, Statistics Canada projects that close to three Canadians in ten could be a member of a visible minority group.² In the Montreal census metropolitan area (CMA), it is projected that visible minority persons will account for nearly one person in three (31%), up from 16% in 2006. The corresponding proportion in the Toronto (63%) and Vancouver (59%) CMAs could be two times greater. Therefore, policies geared towards ensuring visible minorities' successful integration into the labour force will assume increasing importance in the coming years.

The Black Community in Canada

Blacks are the third largest minority population in Canada, after South Asian and Chinese people.³ Canada's Black population is concentrated in Ontario and Quebec. Of the 945,000 Blacks that lived in Canada in 2011, over half of them were living in Ontario – with 43% of them in Toronto. About a quarter of Blacks lived in Quebec, with over 90% of them residing in the Greater Montreal Area.

Blacks in Canada have shown continuing progress in attaining a university education. Between 1996 and 2006, the number of Blacks who received a university degree more than doubled. In 2006, 16% of Blacks aged 15 years and over had a university certificate or degree. This percentage is comparable to that of the non-visible minority population, but it is still much lower than the percentage for all visible minorities (28%).⁴

A large majority of Blacks obtained their degree in Canada. In 2006, two-thirds of Blacks reported obtaining their degree in Canada. Thirteen percent of Blacks obtained their degree from Africa, another 7% from Europe, another 7% from the United States, another 5% from the Caribbean, and the remaining 1% from other parts of the world. The most popular field of study for Blacks in 2006 was business, management and public administration.

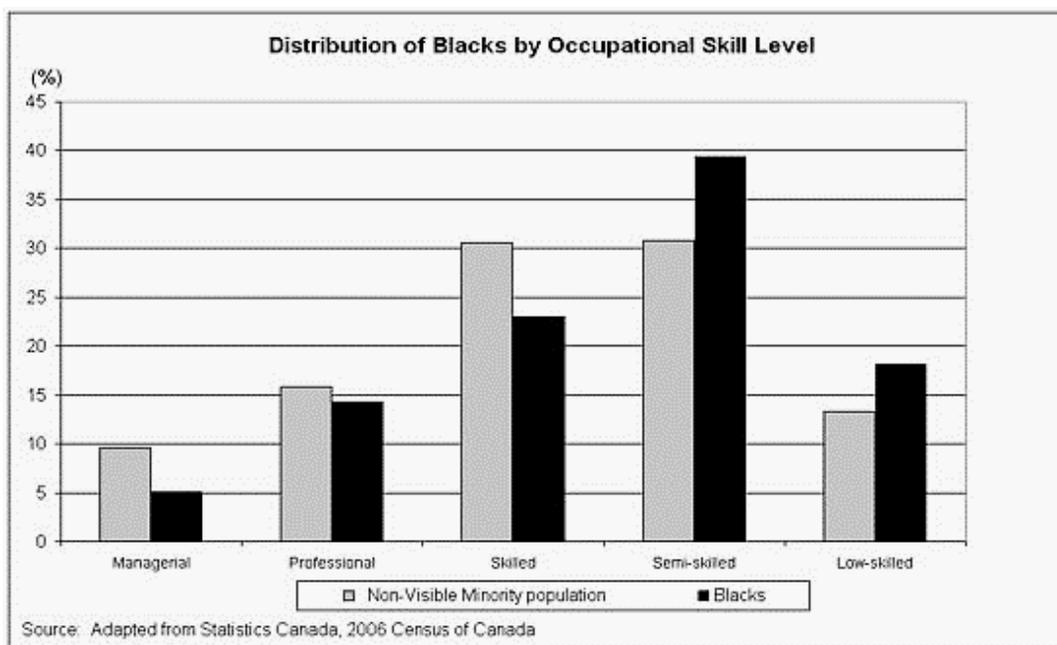
Despite remarkable achievements in terms of educational achievement, Blacks continue to be under-represented in managerial, professional and skilled occupations. As shown in Figure 1, in 2006, there was 9.5% non-visible minorities compared to 5.1% Blacks in the managerial level occupations, 15.9% non-visible minorities compared to 14.3% Blacks in the professional level occupations and 30.5% non-visible minorities compared to 23.0% Blacks in the skilled level occupations.

² The Employment Equity Act defines as visible minorities persons, other than Aboriginal persons, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. The visible minority population consists mainly of the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese. Projection figures are taken from Statistics Canada, Projections of the Diversity of the Canadian Population, 2006 to 2031, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/91-551-x/91-551-x2010001-eng.htm>

³ Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey.

⁴ Statistics Canada, 2006 Designated Group Profiles, http://www.labour.gc.ca/eng/standards_equality/eq/pubs_eq/eedr/2006/profiles/page08.shtml

Figure 1 Distribution of Blacks by occupational level, Canada, 2006



Blacks seem to do worse than other visible minorities. As shown in Table 1, the unemployment rate for visible minority workers is higher than that of workers who are not from visible minorities. For Blacks, the unemployment rate was as high as 14.3% in Montreal in 2011. This unemployment rate is slightly higher than that of all visible minorities in Montreal (13.6%) and is over twice the unemployment rate for people who are not visible minorities (6.4%).

Table 1 Labour Force Participation by Visible Minority Status and Place of Residence, 2011

	Visible Minority		Not a Visible Minority
	All	Blacks	
Canada			
Employed	59.8%	59.3%	61.1%
Unemployed	9.8%	12.9%	7.3%
Not in the labour force	33.7%	31.9%	34.1%
Toronto			
Employed	58.9%	58.4%	63.0%
Unemployed	10.4%	12.7%	7.2%
Not in the labour force	34.2%	33.1%	32.1%
Montreal			
Employed	56.1%	57.5%	61.9%
Unemployed	13.6%	14.3%	6.4%
Not in the labour force	35.1%	32.9%	33.9%

Source: Statistics Canada. (2011). National Household Survey: Public Use Microdata File

Evidence of Discrimination

There is evidence to support the notion that certain groups of workers or newcomers to the labour market may face discrimination, when discrimination is defined as exhibiting lower returns for equivalent qualifications. For example, a number of studies have shown that visible minority immigrants are more likely to be overqualified for their job and experience lower wages than their similarly educated Canadian-born or white immigrant worker (Buzdugan and Halli, 2009; Nakhaie, 2008). Visible minority immigrants have lower earnings than non-visible minority immigrants, which is a finding that holds even after adjusting for differences in socio-demographic, human capital and work characteristics (Buzdugan & Halli, 2009; Hum & Simpson, 2007; Smith & Yoshida, 2008).

In a recent study that examines the earnings gap between Canadian-born visible minorities and Whites in the public and private sectors, Hou and Coulombe (2010) find there is a lot of heterogeneity in this matter. The authors find that South Asians, Chinese and Blacks are quite different in the factors that impact on their earning gaps with Whites. There are also important differences based on gender and whether workers are in the public or the private sector. Black men face a large earnings gap in the private sector while Black women face a large gap in both sectors. For Black men, the disadvantage is multifaceted: the large earnings gap arise from fewer years of experience, greater prevalence of part-time work, higher concentration in low-paying occupations and also lower pay for similar jobs.

Discrimination describes unfair behaviour or differential treatment on the basis of a group characteristic that results in negative consequences for that group (Dion, 2002).

Researchers have found evidence of discrimination by some employers unwilling to hire immigrant employees and, for example, refusing to hire individuals with non-Anglophone or non-Francophone names (Oreopolous, 2009; Wilkinson et al., 2010).

In a study using data from the Ethnic Diversity Survey, Ray and Preston (2009) find that 22.3% of all residents in Toronto report experiencing discrimination, with higher rates for Blacks (55%) and East and South Asians (35%). Among minority groups in Toronto, racial discrimination is reported to be experienced most often and at higher rates than for white people. Compared to Whites, Blacks are 20 times more likely to report racial discrimination while the rate for East and South Asian is 4 times more than the White group (Ray and Preston, 2009).

Using data from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC), Preston et al. (2011) find that visible minority immigrants are more than twice as likely as white immigrants to perceive discrimination after adjusting for differences in gender, education and fluency in Canada's official languages.⁵ It appears that workers with a sense of entitlement to fair treatment and legal knowledge may be more likely to be aware of racial discrimination. In line with results from studies in the United States, (e.g. Hirsh and Lyons, 2010), Preston and her colleagues find that immigrants with a postsecondary education perceive more workplace discrimination than those who have less education. Compared to visible minorities who have limited fluency in an official language, visible minorities with better knowledge of English or French are also more likely to perceive workplace discrimination.

⁵ The LSIC was conducted from 2001 to 2005. It defines discrimination as occurring when people are perceived to be different from others and treated unfairly due to ethnicity, race, skin colour, language, accent or religion.

Evidence of a 'Brain-Drain'

Since the 1990s, Montreal has had a steady out-migration of its educated visible minority immigrants, despite being a major starting destination for newcomers to Canada (Hou & Bourne, 2006; Symons, 2002). After fruitless attempts at penetrating the job market in Montreal, both foreign-born and Canadian-born Blacks often move on to Toronto. Most cite systemic barriers to fulfilling careers in Montreal and the belief that Toronto offers better career opportunities (Hautin, 2008; Krahn, Derwing & Abu-Laban, 2005; Moghaddam & Perreault, 1992).

This 'brain-drain' of educated young people to other cities inevitably has a negative impact on the numbers and vitality of Montreal's Black middle-class community. In the [Learn Canada 2020](#) declaration, the Council of Ministers of Education, representing all Canadian provinces and territories, underscored the direct link between a well-educated population and a vibrant knowledge-based economy and enhanced personal growth opportunities for all Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2009).

The 2014 Student Survey

Recognizing the employment challenges faced by Black youth in Montreal, the Community Economic Development and Employment Corporation (CEDEC) in collaboration with BCRC and ACSioN conducted two student surveys, one in 2011-2012 and the other in 2014. These surveys were designed to learn about their unique needs and the challenges they face in fully integrating the labour market.

The 2014 African-Canadian Career Survey was administered to Black university students in undergraduate and graduate programs in the Greater Montreal area or those who had recently graduated from such programs and still resided in the Greater Montreal Area. The aim of the survey is to help understand the needs and challenges of educated Black youth in finding and gaining sustainable employment in Quebec, so that they could be encouraged to remain in Quebec and contribute to the vitality of the Black Community.

Data analysis

The survey collected the following information on the targeted sample:

- basic demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, citizenship and resident status;
- university enrolment;
- future career plans;
- prior paid and unpaid work experience and its relationship to future career plans;
- beliefs about future career opportunities in Quebec;
- language ability;
- experiences with racial discrimination
- support finding work; and
- willingness to participate in training programs related to finding a job

The results, as presented below, provide a profile of the respondents who participated in the survey, their aspirations and perceptions about schooling and building a career in Quebec.

Demographic characteristics of the sample

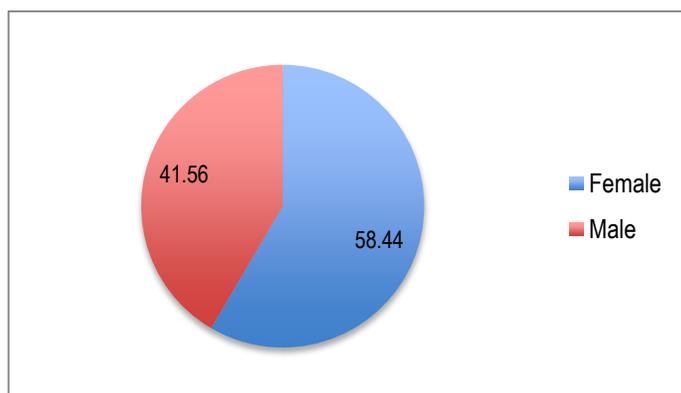
The sample is very similar to the overall Canadian post-secondary population in age and gender composition.

Age: Most respondents were under 30 years of age with almost two-thirds of the sample (74%) in the 21-29 age group, which is typical of the Canadian post-secondary student population. According to Universities Canada/Universités Canada (formerly Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC)) the majority of university students in Canada are under 22 years of age, which is followed by those in the 22-24 age group, then 25-29 age group (AUCC, 2011).

Table 2 Age group of respondents, 2014

	Count	Percentage
17-20 years	10	12.99
21-29 years	57	74.03
30-35 years	7	9.09
36 years and over	3	3.90

Gender: More than half (58.4%) of the respondents were women. This ratio of female to male is reflective of the Canadian university student population, where women represent a higher proportion of this population.

Figure 2 Gender of respondents, 2014

Citizenship and Residency status: The majority of respondents are Canadian citizens (65%) and almost all of them (47 of the 50) reported that Quebec is the province where they have spent the most time. The majority of non-citizens are students from Francophone African countries including Cameroon (8), Ivory Coast (4), Senegal (2) and one each from Burkina Faso, Togo, Mali, and Democratic Republic of Congo. Non-Citizen respondents also included students from Ghana (2), Nigeria (2), Haiti (1), and USA (1). Most respondents have lived in Quebec for five years or more (57%). In fact, about 40 % of them have lived in Quebec for ten years or more.

Table 3 Citizenship status of respondents, 2014

Canadian citizen	Count	Percentage
Yes	50	64.94
No	24	31.10
Not stated	3	3.90

Table 4 Residency status of respondents, 2014

Years lived in Quebec:	Count	Percentage
Less than one year	6	7.79
One to 5 years	24	31.17
5 to 10 years	13	16.88
10 years or more	31	40.26
Not stated	3	3.9

Current and prior university studies

University enrolment: The majority of respondents (74%) are enrolled as full-time students. Most students in the sample are from Concordia University and Université de Montréal. More than half (61%) attended Concordia University, another 25% attended Université de Montréal, while 5.2% are from McGill University, 1% from Université du Québec à Montréal and 8% from other institutions (i.e., Université de Sherbrooke and other unspecified institutions).

Table 5 University enrolment of respondents, 2014

I am currently enrolled as a:	Count	Percentage
Full-time student	57	74.03
Part-time student	13	16.88
Other (no longer student/looking for a job)	3	3.90
Not stated	4	5.19

Table 6 University enrolment of respondents, 2014

I am currently enrolled at:	Count	Percentage
McGill University	4	5.19
Concordia	47	61.04
Université du Québec à Montréal	1	1.30
Université de Montréal	19	24.68
Other/not stated	6	7.79

Level of study: In contrast to the 2011-2012 survey, the 2014 survey was open to graduate students but the majority of respondents continue to be undergraduate students with over two-thirds (71%) of the respondents stating that they were pursuing a bachelor's degree. Other degrees being pursued included 12% in master's degree programs and 7% in doctorate degree programs. Certificates and other programs were being pursued by 5% of the respondents.

Table 7 Current level of study of respondents, 2014

	Count	Percentage
Bachelor	55	71.43
Master	9	11.69
Doctorate	5	6.49
Certificate	3	3.90
Other	1	1.30
Not stated	4	5.19

Program of study: Using the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) primary groupings, which was developed by Statistics Canada and the National Center for Education Statistics, the student's response was categorized into one of the thirteen primary educational instructions groupings, typically used for analysing such information.⁶

As shown in Table 8, students were enrolled in a variety of disciplines, but enrolment was concentrated in Social and behavioural sciences and law (31%) followed by Business Management and Public Administration (22%), then by architecture, engineering and related technologies (14%). Interestingly, these three programs are also the most popular programs of study by university students in Canada at the master's level, as reported by AUCC (2011).

Table 8 Program of Study, 2014

Program of Study	Count	Percentage
Humanities	1	1.30
Social and behavioural sciences and law	24	31.17
Business, management and public administration	17	22.08
Physical and life sciences and technologies	6	7.79
Mathematics, computer and information sciences	5	6.49
Architecture, engineering, and related technologies	11	14.29
Health and related fields	5	6.49
Other	4	5.19
Not stated	8	10.39

Note: Percentage does not add up to 100% because respondents could select multiple responses.

⁶ This grouping also provides a well-known standardized format and therefore allows for comparability with other studies. The thirteen groupings are: personal improvement and leisure; education; visual and performing arts and communications technologies; humanities; social and behavioural sciences and law; business, management and public administration; physical and life sciences and technologies; agricultural, natural resources and conservation; health and related fields; personal, protective and transportation services; and other.

Prior studies and expected year of graduation: For most students (64%), this is their first university education they would be completing. Of the 18 students who reported having prior university studies, 11 of them reported having completed a bachelor’s degree and almost all of them were social science or business-related degrees. Most respondents are expecting to graduate in 2016 or later – 46% in 2016, 13% in 2017 and 3% in 2018.

Table 9 Prior university studies of respondents, 2014

Completed prior university	Count	Percentage
Yes	18	23.38
No	50	64.00
Not stated	9	11.69

Table 10 Expected year of graduation of respondents, 2014

Expect to graduate in:	Count	Percentage
2014	1	1.3
2015	18	23.38
2016	35	45.45
2017	10	12.99
2018	2	2.63
Not stated	10	12.99

Future plans

About pursuing further education: When asked about their future plans, close to half (48%) of the respondents said they intend to pursue further studies after graduating, 26% said they would possibly do so, and about 5% said they would not. One fifth of them did not answer this question.⁷

Table 11 Future plans of respondents regarding pursuing further studies, 2014

Pursuing other studies after graduation	Count	Percentage
Yes	37	48.05
Possibly	20	25.97
Definitely not	3	3.9
No	1	1.3
Not stated	16	20.78

⁷ Note that the English and French versions of the survey are slightly different. In particular, possible responses to question Q12 about future plans in the English version are “Yes, Possibly and Definitely not”, whereas possible responses in the French version are “Yes, Possibly, Definitely not and No”. For this reason, when the French and English responses are combined, for some questions, we end up with five response groups (including “not stated”), not just four. Another difference: question Q11 in the English version asking respondents about any obligations they face to leave Quebec once their studies are completed is not asked separately in the French version. It is asked as part of question Q12, with possible responses “Yes, Possibly, Definitely not and No” as opposed to simple “Yes or No” as possible responses in the English version. Question Q11 in the French version is asking to specify the country in which respondents had completed a university degree or certificate prior to their current studies (if applicable), a question not asked in the English version.

About staying in Quebec or moving elsewhere: Very few respondents (4%) reported any obligations to leave Quebec once their studies were completed. Conversely, 79% said they had no obligations to leave Quebec after graduation. This indicates that any program targeted at this group to help and or encouraged them to remain in Quebec is promising.

Table 12 Obligation of respondents to leave Quebec after graduation, 2014

	Count	Percentage
Yes	3	3.9
Possibly	2	2.6
No	61	79.22
Not stated	11	14.29

When asked about plans to build a career in Quebec, over two-thirds of them (65%) believe that they would possibly or surely do so. Almost a quarter of them did not answer this question. When asked about plans to build a career in another province, 10% said that was not the case. In fact 9% said this was definitely not the case, while 60% said it was possible that they would do so. Similar proportions (53%) said there was the possibility they would be building their career in another country. While information on what would encourage them to stay and build a career in Quebec was not asked of students, this uncertainty about moving to another province augurs well for any program that would encourage them to stay in Quebec.

Table 13 Future plans of respondents about building a career in Quebec, 2014

	Count	Percentage
Yes	13	16.88
Possibly	37	48.05
Definitely not	9	11.69
Not stated	18	23.38

Table 14 Future plans of respondents about building a career in another province, 2014

	Count	Percentage
Yes	4	5.19
Possibly	46	59.74
Definitely not	7	9.09
No	1	1.30
Not stated	19	24.68

Table 15 Future plans of respondents about building a career in another country, 2014

	Count	Percentage
Yes	16	20.78
Possibly	41	53.25
Definitely not	2	2.6
No	1	1.3
Not stated	17	22.08

Prior experiences

Prior paid work: Many of the respondents (40%) held paid work prior to their studies. Among those who worked, their paid positions were most likely to be in the retail trade sector (26%). This was followed by positions in professional, scientific and technical services (19%) or public administration (19%).

Table 16 Experience of respondents with paid work prior to studies, 2014

	Count	Percentage
Yes	31	40.26
No	29	37.66
Not stated	17	22.08

Table 17 Sectors worked by the thirty one respondents with paid work prior to studies, 2014

	Count	Percentage
Manufacturing	1	3.23
Wholesale trade	2	6.45
Retail trade	8	25.81
Transportation and warehousing	1	3.23
Information and cultural industries	2	6.45
Finance and insurance	4	12.90
Professional, scientific and technical services	6	19.35
Education services	4	12.90
Health care and social assistance	4	12.90
Arts, entertainment and recreation	4	12.90
Accommodation and food services	2	6.45
Public administration	6	19.35
Other	5	16.13

Note: Percentage does not add up to 100% because respondents could select multiple responses.

Almost 34% of respondents said that this employment experience helped with preparation for their chosen profession, with 13% saying it definitely helped, and 21 % saying it somewhat helped. However, it is unclear in what way this was helpful, since it was not asked in the survey.

Table 18 Perception of respondents regarding usefulness of paid work experience, 2014

Paid work helped me prepare for my chosen career	Count	Percentage
Definitely	10	12.99
Somewhat	16	20.78
Not at all	13	16.88
Not applicable	20	25.97
Not stated	18	23.38

Prior volunteer work: A similar proportion (42%) engaged in volunteer work prior to their current studies, with 16 % saying it definitely help with their chosen profession and 30% saying it somewhat did so.⁸

Table 19 Experience of respondents with volunteer work prior to studies, 2014

	Count	Percentage
Yes	32	41.56
No	23	29.87
Not stated	22	28.57

Table 20 Perception of respondents regarding usefulness of volunteer work experience, 2014

Volunteer work helped me prepare for my chosen career	Count	Percentage
Definitely	12	15.58
Somewhat	23	29.87
Not at all	7	9.09
Not applicable	16	20.78
Not stated	19	24.68

Prior internship: Compared to the proportions that had paid work and or volunteered, not many respondents (22%) held internships prior to their studies. About 30% of the respondents said prior internships helped with their studies. This is not surprising since internships are usually job or career related placements. These were in a variety of sectors, but positions in professional, scientific and technical services, education and public administration sectors were those most commonly held.

⁸ Respondents were asked about the sectors in which this volunteer work was done, but due to the very low response rate for this question the responses are not being presented. Only seven respondents provided a response. Three said it was in arts, entertainment and recreation, another three said health care and social assistance, and one person said professional, scientific and technical services.

Table 21 Experience of respondents with internship prior to studies, 2014

	Count	Percentage
Yes	17	22.08
No	40	51.95
Not stated	20	25.97

Table 22 Perception of respondents regarding usefulness of internship experience, 2014

Internship helped me prepare for my chosen career	Count	Percentage
Definitely	12	15.58
Somewhat	11	14.29
Not at all	5	6.49
Not applicable	28	36.36
Not stated	21	27.27

Table 23 Sectors interned by the seventeen respondents with internship prior to studies, 2014

	Count	Percentage
Manufacturing	1	5.88
Retail trade	2	11.76
Finance and insurance	3	27.27
Professional, scientific and technical services	4	23.52
Management of companies and enterprises	1	5.88
Education services	4	23.52
Health care and social assistance	2	11.76
Arts, entertainment and recreation	2	11.76
Accommodation and food services	1	5.88
Public administration	4	23.52
Other	2	11.76

Note: Percentage does not add up to 100% because respondents could select multiple responses.

Career plans

Future career fields: The fields in which most respondents intend to make a career after completing their studies includes health care and social assistance (17%), finance and insurance (16%), management of companies and enterprises (16%), and professional, scientific and technical services (14%).

Table 24 Planned career fields, 2014

	Count	Percentage
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1	1.30
Mining, quarry, and oil and gas extraction	2	2.60
Construction	3	3.90
Manufacturing	2	2.60
Retail trade	1	1.30
Transportation and warehousing	1	1.30
Information and cultural industries	4	5.19
Finance and insurance	12	15.58
Real estate and rental and leasing	2	2.60
Professional, scientific and technical services	11	14.29
Management of companies and enterprises	12	15.58
Waste management and remediation services	2	2.60
Education services	5	6.49
Health care and social assistance	13	16.88
Arts, entertainment and recreation	3	3.90
Public administration	8	10.39
Undecided	3	3.90
Other	7	9.09
Not stated	16	20.78

Note: Percentage does not add up to 100% because respondents could select multiple responses.

Desirability of Quebec for future career: When asked the reasons why they believed Quebec is a desirable place to build a career, common responses included those related to availability of jobs, the vibrant multicultural community and proximity of friends and family. The most frequent reasons mentioned were the quantity of jobs that required his/her skills or education (29%), liveable income levels (29%), and a vibrant multicultural community (29%). Proximity of friends and family was mentioned by 26% of respondents.

Interestingly, no one answered that they “believe Quebec is NOT a desirable place to build a career.” However, when in the next question, respondents were directly asked for reasons they believe Quebec is not a desirable place to build a career, the most commonly stated reason was low income levels (22%), followed by lack of jobs that require his/her skills or education (17%) and then poor career mobility opportunity (14%).⁹

Table 25 Reasons Quebec is a desirable place to build a career, 2014

	Count	Percentage
Quantity of jobs that require my skills/education	22	28.57
Career mobility opportunities are numerous	11	14.29
Liveable income levels	22	28.57
Good employer benefits	15	19.48
Good work-life balance potential	17	22.08
Entrepreneurship opportunity	8	10.39
Good workplace diversity reputation/practices	13	16.88
Access to timely and quality health care	15	19.48
Proximity of friends and family	20	25.97
Presence of a cultural community that I identify with	16	20.78
Vibrant multicultural community	22	28.57
Local cultural activities/events	16	20.78
Local sports activities/events	10	12.99
Good geographic location	9	11.69
I believe Quebec is NOT a desirable place to build my career	0	0
Other	1	1.30
Not stated	29	37.66

Note: Percentage does not add up to 100% because respondents could select multiple responses.

⁹ Having these two questions presented one after the other is somewhat confusing. Analyses were done to verify whether the same group of people gave conflicting responses. Only one such case was found. Many of those who responded to the second question about the reasons why Quebec is NOT a desirable place to build a career did not respond to the previous question about the reasons why Quebec IS a desirable place to build a career or chose different reasons for it being a desirable place to build a career.

Table 26 Reasons Quebec is NOT a desirable place to build a career, 2014

	Count	Percentage
Lack of jobs that require my skills/education	13	16.88
Poor career mobility opportunity	11	14.29
Low income levels	17	22.08
Few employer benefits	1	1.30
Poor work-life balance potential	1	1.30
Lack of entrepreneurship opportunity	1	1.30
Distance from friends and family	2	2.60
Lack of local cultural activities/events	1	1.30
Lack of local sports activities/events	1	1.30
Poor geographic location	7	9.09
I believe Quebec is a desirable place to build my career	0	0
Not stated	38	49.35

Note: Percentage does not add up to 100% because respondents could select multiple responses.

Competency in essential skills

Language ability: A number of questions looked at respondents' language ability in French and English, which can be a critical factor in pursuing a career in Quebec, given the importance of bilingualism in the province and French in particular. Just over half of the respondents said they understand English (56%) and French (53%) well enough for their chosen career in Quebec.

Although French is the mother tongue of 43% of respondents, English appears to be the dominant current language, with 71% saying they were able to speak English, compared to 66% being able to converse in French; 69% said they write English well enough, while 62% said they could do so in French, and 75% said they can read English well enough while 66% said that was the case for French. These results may be reflective of the fact that over two-thirds of the respondents are students from Concordia University or McGill University.

Surprisingly, while many more reported being able to speak, write and read in English compared to French, the first official language by a sizable proportion of the sample was French (45%) and only 30% said it was English. More of them (43%) also reported French as their mother tongue, compared to 16% reporting that it was English.

Figure 3 Language skills of respondents, 2014

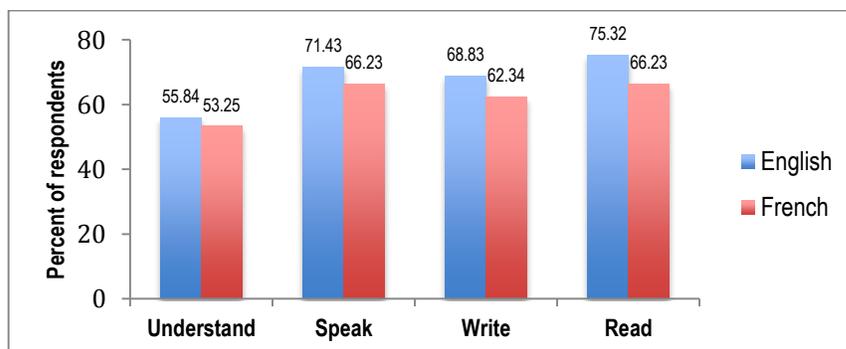


Table 27 Mother tongue of respondents, 2014

	Count	Percentage
French	33	42.86
English	12	15.58
Other languages	16	20.78
Not stated	16	20.78

Table 28 First official language spoken, 2014

	Count	Percentage
French	35	45.45
English	23	29.87
Other languages	3	3.90
Not stated	16	20.78

Computer skills: Given the importance of the use of computers in the workplace today, having computer skills is important to finding a job. More importantly, having the specific computer skills required in a chosen career should be a positive factor in helping secure a position in the chosen career. Respondents were therefore asked to assess whether the level of their computer skills was that required for their chosen profession.

Less than half of respondents (45%) indicated they had the level of computer skills required in their chosen profession. Several (14%) mentioned they were unsure of the computer skill level required for their chosen career in Quebec. While no one said their computer skills needed improvement, it is unclear as to why over 40% of respondents did not answer this question.

Table 29 Level of suitability of respondents' computer skills, 2014

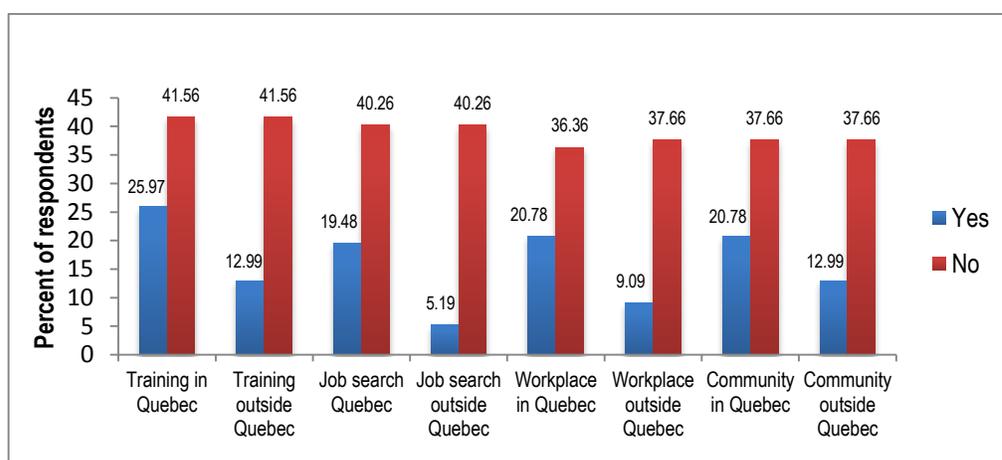
	Count	Percentage
Yes	35	45.45
Needs improvement	0	0
Unsure what skill level is required	11	14.29
Not stated	31	40.26

Experience with discrimination

Respondents were asked whether they experienced racial discrimination in schools or while pursuing training as well as in the workplace and in community settings, in and outside of Quebec. For the most part, many respondents did not report this to be the case in most settings, whether in or outside Quebec. Very low proportions said they experienced discrimination in job search or workplace, which may be because this population have yet to have a career and had fewer opportunities to encounter such discrimination.

The proportion reporting that they have experienced discrimination in Quebec is consistently higher than those reported for outside of Quebec. This result may simply be a reflection of the fact that respondents have spent most of their time in Quebec.

Figure 4 Respondents' experience with racial discrimination, 2014



Job search resources and activities

Awareness of resources: Respondents were also queried about their knowledge of resources in their community that can be used for finding work. For some, such resources would be important in finding a job in their chosen career, especially if their social network is not well connected and/or their networking skills are not well developed. More than half of the respondent either knew (19%) of such resources or were somewhat aware (32%) of such resources.

Table 30 Respondents' awareness of available resources, 2014

Aware of available organization or resources in my area for finding work	Count	Percentage
Yes	15	19.48
Somewhat	25	32.47
No	20	25.97
Not stated	17	22.08

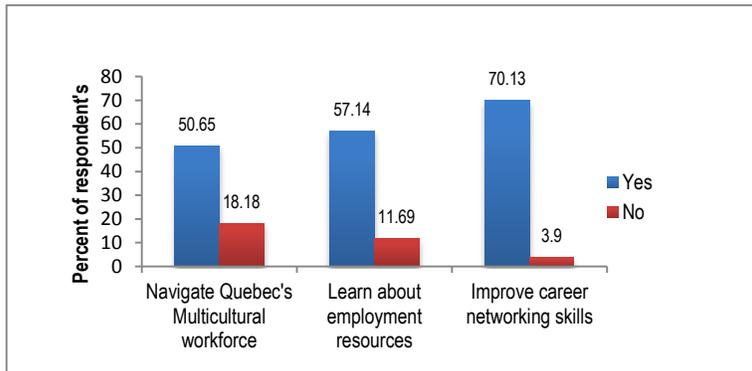
Confidence in networking skills: The majority of them also expressed some level of confidence in their networking skills for making employment contact. Close to 38% of them said they were confident and 26% said they were somewhat confident in this skill.

Table 31 Respondents' confidence in networking skills, 2014

I am confident in my networking skills for making employment contacts	Count	Percentage
Yes	29	37.66
Somewhat	20	25.97
No	11	14.29
Not stated	17	22.08

Interest in participating in job search training: When asked about their interest in participating in training to help them in navigating Quebec's multicultural workforce, to learn more about local resources for finding employment, and/or improve their career network skills, most respondents said they would be willing to do so. By far, training to improve career networking skills was of most interest to respondents (70%). This was followed by learning about employment resources (57%) and then training on how to navigate Quebec's multicultural workforce (51%).

Figure 5 Respondents' willingness to enrol in training opportunities, 2014



Comparative analysis with 2013 report

The CEDEC 2013 report on the ACCE Undergraduate Student Survey was conducted with a similar population to gain insights on the experiences and perceptions of Black students. Many of the questions do not appear to be identical on the two surveys, thus not allowing a direct comparison, question by question. Many questions in the 2013-2014 survey were not asked at all in the previous survey.¹⁰ This section therefore provides a general comparison in broad terms between the two samples, where possible.

A slightly larger group of students (92) completed the 2011-2012 survey, compared to 77 respondents in 2014, but demographic characteristics are quite similar. The survey was most likely to be completed by female students, more likely to be in the 21-29 age group and on average they lived in Quebec for 10 years or more, indicating both samples probably had strong ties to Quebec.

Career plans of both groups show similarities in that most reported planned careers in a business-related field. When asked about in what industry they would like to find employment, only 48 of the total 92 respondents to the 2011-2012 survey (52%) chose to answer this question, perhaps indicating uncertainty as to opportunities or future plans. In contrast, it is almost 80% of the respondents who provided an answer to this question in the most recent survey. In both surveys, most respondents reported having no obligation to leave Quebec upon graduation and both groups said that they were planning on staying (or “probably staying” in the 2014 survey) in Quebec.

The ability to speak, write, read and understand French, a strong determinant to building a career in Quebec, was not addressed in a similar way in both surveys and therefore a direct comparison is not possible. Nevertheless, what is clear from both surveys is that a sizable proportion is able to converse in both languages.

One notable difference between the two surveys is that about half of the 2011-2012 sample reported experiencing racial discrimination either when looking for employment, on the job, or in both situations. Fewer respondents in 2013-2014 reported such occurrences. Sizable proportion of respondents from both surveys expressed an interest in enrolling in further training of some sort. In the 2011-2012 survey, this included training to start a new career or for skills upgrade, while in 2013-2014 they were asked about and expressed interest in further learning opportunities that would help them navigate Quebec’s multicultural workforce, learn about employment resources, and improve career networking skills.

¹⁰ For example, the previous survey did not ask about students’ program of study. Also, possible categories for prior job/internship/volunteer are different between the two surveys, and paid and volunteer work were combined in the 2011-2012 survey. Questions about the desirability of Quebec as a place to build a career was not asked in the first survey; instead, students were asked about what would entice them to stay in the Greater Montreal Area upon graduation, two constructs that are fundamentally different.

Conclusion and Lessons Learned

People investing in higher education do so with the expectation of receiving a return on their investment that will compensate for the direct and indirect costs of pursuing higher education. Since education and earnings are highly correlated, they will seek jobs whose educational requirements match their educational attainment.

However, job search can be a costly and lengthy process, especially for younger workers with little or no experience in the labour market. The challenges in accessing and successfully participating in the Canadian labour market are compounded for visible minorities.

Various reasons may explain why recent graduates entering the labour market – whether from visible minority or not – may find themselves in jobs that do not seem to match their skills. First, young workers may be willing to accept work that is not commensurate with their education, skills or knowledge in the hope that, once they acquire more experience in the labour market, they will progress to higher level jobs.

Secondly, educational attainment only is an imperfect measure of individuals' ability to meet the skill requirements of the job. Some workers may only be able to find jobs with educational requirements below their educational level because, *despite their educational attainment*, they may have relatively low literacy skills or lower levels of other essential skills. Data from the [Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies \(PIAAC\)](#) reveal that, even among the younger generations, a significant portion (about 20%) of university-educated scored at level 2 or lower in the PIAAC tests.¹¹ Foreign-born university graduates are more likely to have lower levels of literacy and numeracy.

Thirdly, because younger workers are relatively inexperienced in finding jobs, they may be more likely to find themselves in jobs that are not what they had expected. In this case, there is an opportunity to correct this market failure by improving their labour market competencies so that they become more skilled at finding the “right” job for them.

Job seekers have access to a lot of information about the labour market, from statistics on general labour market trends and job vacancies, to data on educational and skill requirements, wages and career prospects in various occupations or sectors of the economy. However, labour market information is “coded knowledge”: information needs to be mediated to become useful information that will then be translated into relevant knowledge. Intermediaries can play an important role in converting information into relevant knowledge. “Intermediaries” can be communication vehicles — brochures, websites, DVDs, bulletin boards, statistical analyses — or persons — vocational guidance and career counsellors, human resources professionals, service providers or community development organizations.

In designing policy responses and specific programs to address the employment challenges faced by Black youth in Quebec, it is crucial to better understand the clientele those initiatives will serve and the particular issues Black youth who live in Quebec – mostly in Montreal – face.

¹¹ The PIAAC study uses five levels to assess respondents' proficiency in literacy and numeracy. While PIAAC does not state this, level 3 is widely considered the minimum standard.

From the analysis of the ACCE undergraduate 2013-2014 student survey, a number of lessons-learned emerge.

Designing gender-sensitive interventions: Today, women represent a higher proportion of the Canadian university student population. Not surprisingly, close to 60% of the respondents to the African-Canadian Career Survey were women. In designing policy responses and programs to address the need of the target population, it is important to consider that career path interests and workplace concerns may differ according to gender.

Strengthening ties to Quebec: A majority of respondents have lived in Quebec for five years or more and about 40 % of them have lived in Quebec for ten years or more. The majority of respondents were Canadian citizens and, for those Canadian citizens, Quebec is the place where they have spent the most time. Over three-quarter of them said they had no obligations to leave Quebec after graduation. This suggests that respondents may have family or community attachments in Quebec and are not merely transient students.

Despite this attachment, most respondents seem to be leaving their options open as to where they will pursue their career, Quebec or another province: similar proportions of them said they possibly would build their career after graduation in Quebec or elsewhere. There is certainly an opportunity to increase the probability they would build their career in Quebec by helping to support strong career foundations. It would be useful to continue to highlight elements of Quebec's cultural, political and economic context that are relevant to them in their career planning process.

Building on past experiences: Close to half of respondents have had prior work experience, paid and unpaid, that were helpful to their career choices. Students should be encouraged to market and sell this experience when seeking employment. Building students' awareness of their marketability as well as drawing attention to any skills gaps are key elements of an effective job search strategy.

Addressing potential skill gaps: Over two-thirds of respondents reported they could speak, write or read in French and or English as needed for their chosen career in Quebec. However, just over half of the respondents said they *understand* English (56%) and French (53%) well enough for their chosen career in Quebec. As bilingualism, and the ability to speak French in particular, is of importance when seeking a job in Quebec, career advancement training should emphasize continued improvement of language skills –in French but also English – at a level used in business communications.

While no one said their computer skills needed improvement, it is unclear as to why over 40% of respondents did not answer this question. One could argue that the number of not stated answers does not indicate an insufficient level of computer skills; rather it may demonstrate that the participants were unsure of the exact computer skills they were being asked to evaluate. However, “unsure what skill is required” was an available response choice, so it is not clear why they did not respond. Regardless, career advancement training should encourage students to upgrade their computer skills if necessary.

Raising awareness of potential discrimination: A substantial proportion of respondents did not report encountering racial discrimination in their job search activities, work environment, or in their communities. Career training should raise the group's awareness of discrimination in workplaces. As newcomers to the labour market, they may not have sufficient experience to gain an accurate perception of the challenges they may face.

Sharing strategies for dealing with racial discrimination in the workplace and means of dealing with the stress resulting from discriminatory encounters will be invaluable to all Black graduates.

Building on an expressed willingness to engage in job search training: Of most importance, especially as it relates to this project, is the expressed willingness of respondents to enroll in further learning opportunities that would help them navigate Quebec's multicultural workforce, learn about employment resources, and improve career networking skills. This provides support to the relevance and value of such initiatives as the ACCE initiative.

Next Steps

This research is based on a relatively small non-probability sample that does not allow for generalization to all Black students in Quebec. One way to gain a better understanding of the issues of interest would be to expand the research methodology to include focus groups with a subset of the survey respondents. Surveys work well to get at *how many* and *how much*, but not at the *why*. The issues the ACCE initiative is investigating calls for a more in-depth discussion with the students on what will make them build a career in Quebec and get their input on what they think would help.

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