

McGill School of Continuing Studies

***Professional Empowerment
through Confidence and
Skills Building***

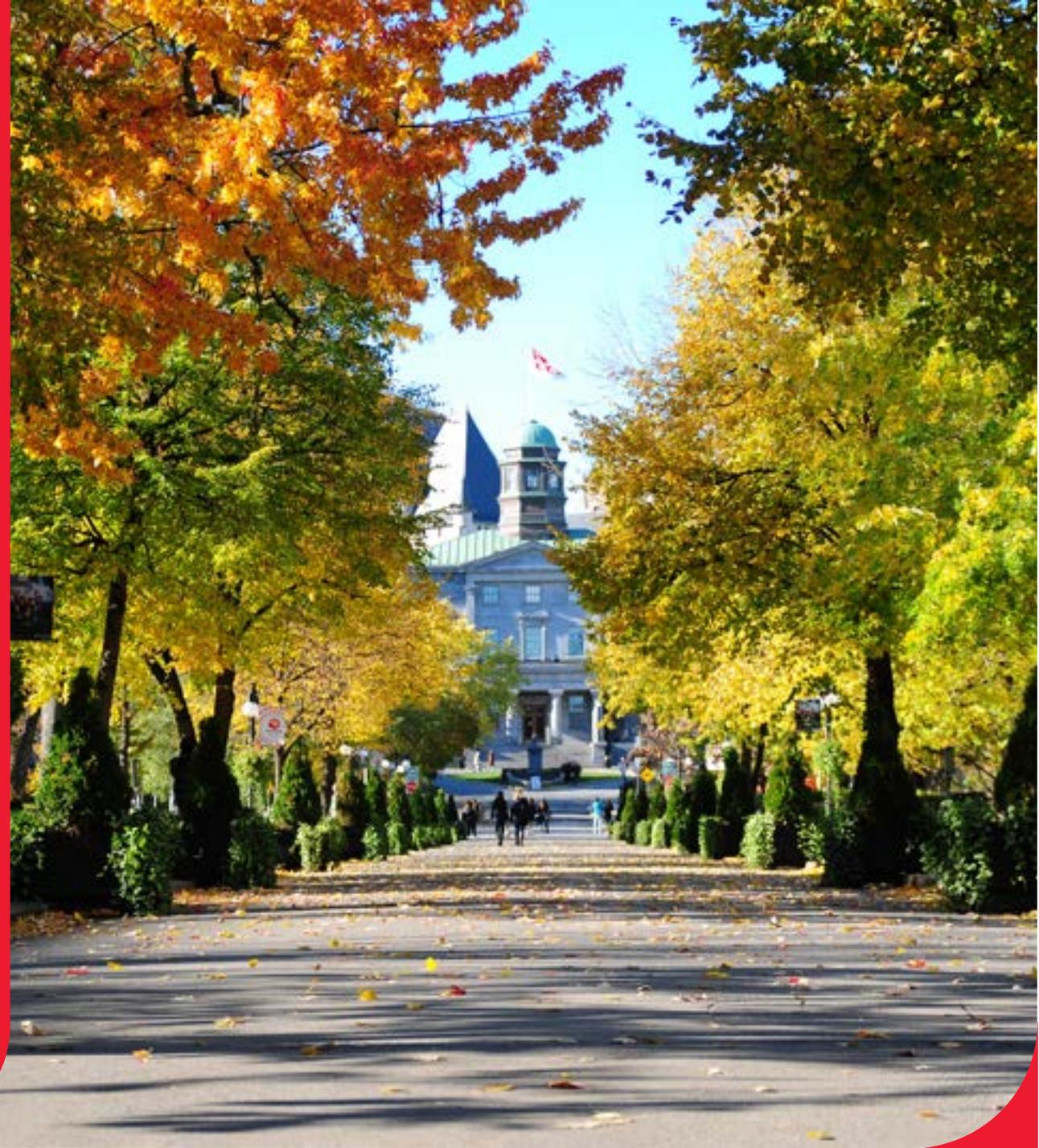
***McGill University's
SEED Fellowship Program***

CAUCE, May 2025

Dr. Carola Weil, Dean, SCS

Inna Popova, Director, Professional and Corporate
Education (PCE), SCS

Dr. Derek Tannis, Associate Dean, Student Success
and Enrolment Management (SSEM), SCS





Session plan

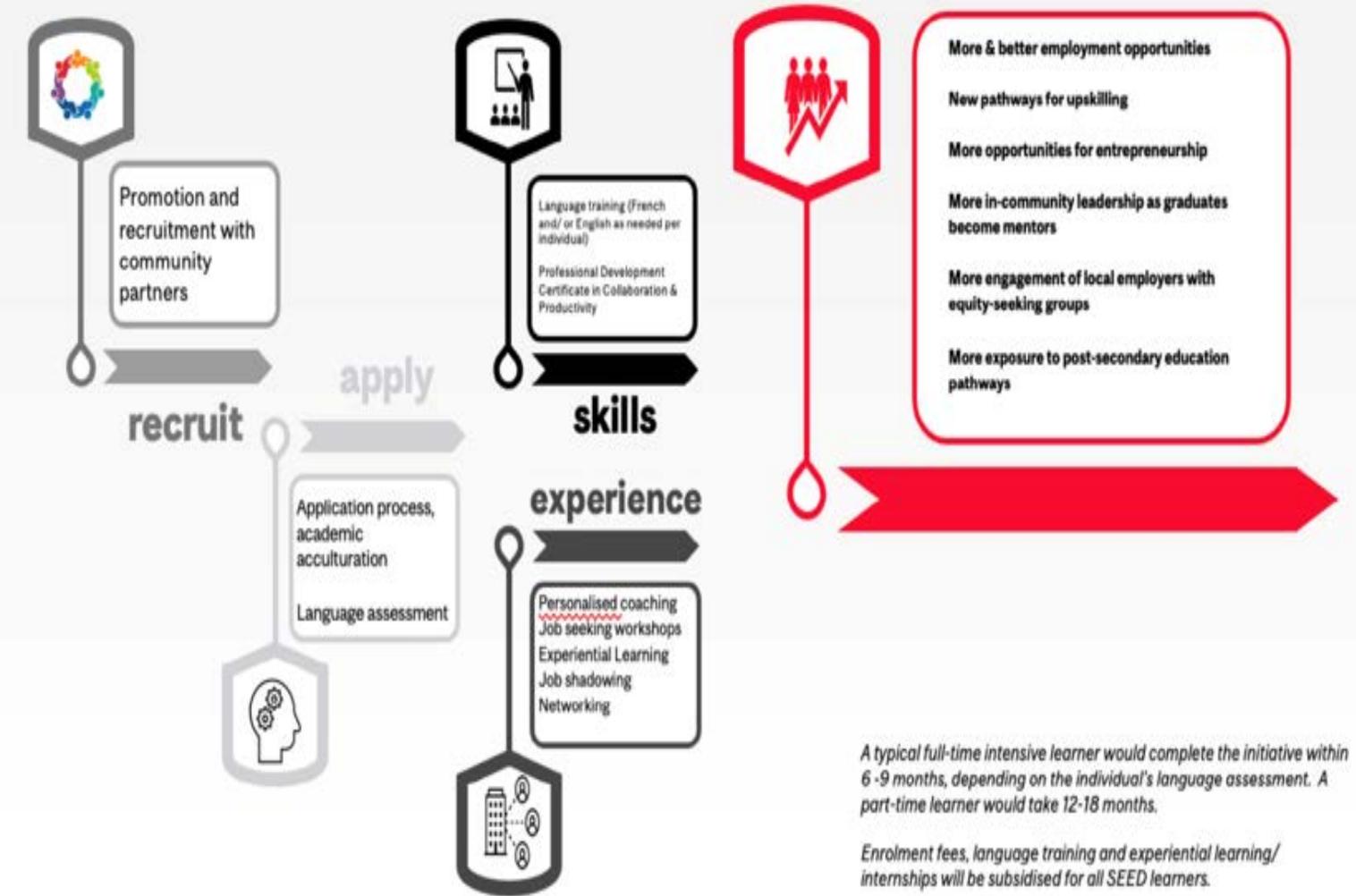
- Introductions
- Description of students
- Assessment and outcomes
- Program structure and partnership model
- Discussion of potential collaborations



SCS Experiential Empowerment & Development (SEED) Initiative

With financial support from Scotia Bank's [ScotiaRISE](#)[™] Community Investment Program, McGill University's School of Continuing Studies launched its SEED Initiative in 2023 to **help remove barriers to economic opportunity and stable employment.**

SEED, powered by ScotiaRISE



It Takes a Village...



- 🦘 Grant Eshoo, Program Administrator, SEED Initiative
- 🦘 Inna Popova, Director, Professional & Corporate Education
- 🦘 Derek Tannis, Associate Dean, Student Success and Enrollment Mgmt.
- 🦘 Professional & Corporate Education unit
- 🦘 Global and Strategic Communication domain
- 🦘 Management & Entrepreneurship domain
- 🦘 McGill Community for Lifelong Learning
- 🦘 SCS Student Success & Advising Team
- 🦘 Communications & Marketing Team
- 🦘 Carola Weil, Dean, and the Dean's Office



OBJECTIVES of SEED

- 🦋 Develop in-demand transferable professional skills
- 🦋 Improve language proficiency
- 🦋 Gain practical experience
- 🦋 Establish professional networks
- 🦋 Clarify career goals & opportunities

Decisions, decisions...

Recruitment & Selection of SEED Fellows:

- Target audience
- Recruitment strategy
- Community outreach
- Application process
- Selection process

Governance & Community Outreach

- Advisory Group
- Community & Employer
Engagement

Program & Support Services

- Format & Schedule
- Career Guidance & Mentorship
- Stipends/awards
- Internships

Measurement, Evaluation, Reporting

- Pre- and Post- program survey
(self-reported)
- Post-course feedback
- Economic Impact survey & report 6
months post-program



Key target populations

Key Target Populations:

- Newcomers (under 5 years in Canada)
- Women re-entering the workforce
- Unemployed professionals in career transitions

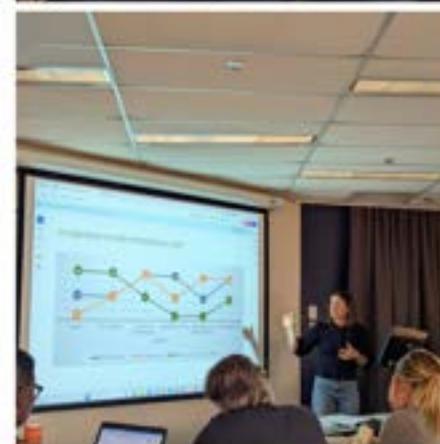
What do you understand to be the typical barriers to workforce integration for these populations in your region / in Canada?

*Typical Barriers to
Workforce
Integration we see
in the SEED
Initiative*

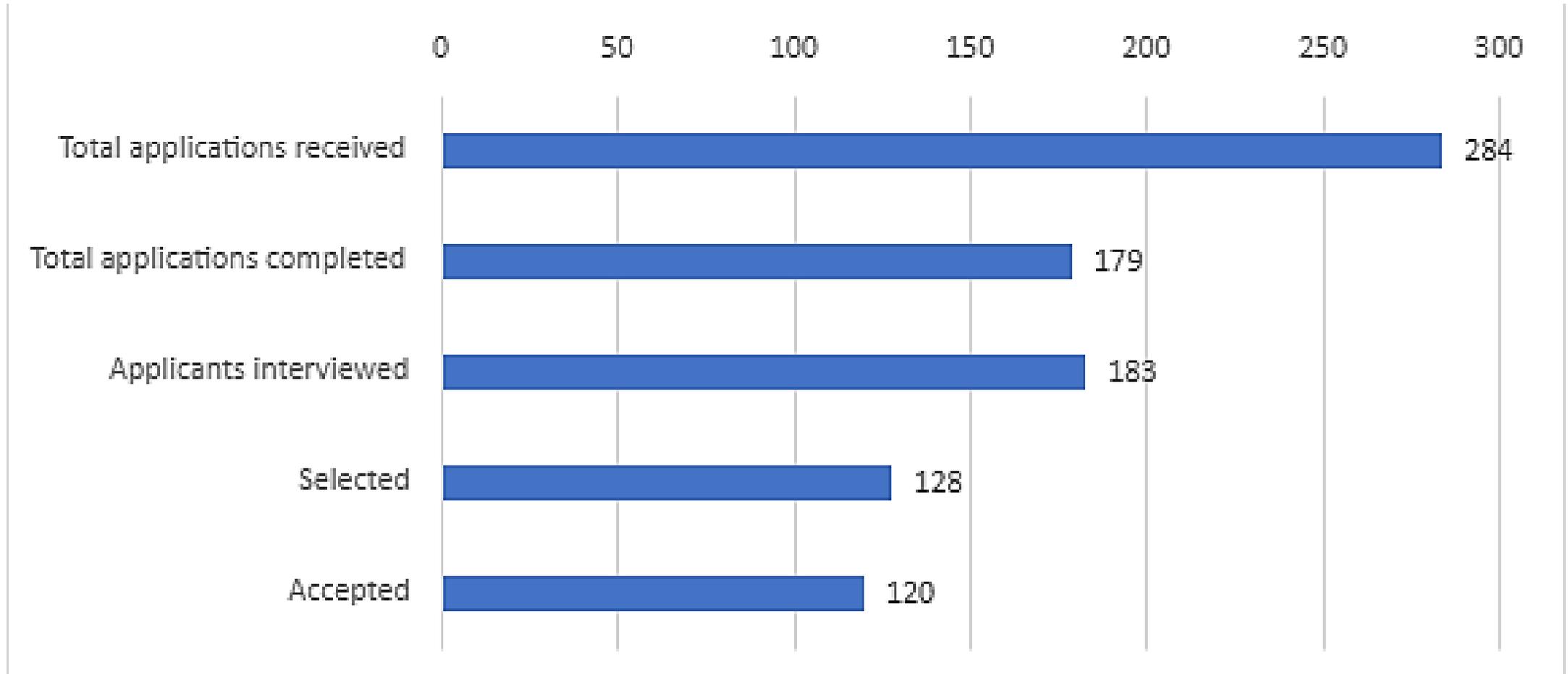
- French (or English) Language Proficiency
- Low Self-Confidence
- Lack of Recognition of Foreign Credentials
- Navigating Career Opportunities
- Limited Professional Network
- “Canadian Experience”
- Understanding the Labour Market
- Understanding Workplace Culture

McGill School of Continuing Studies

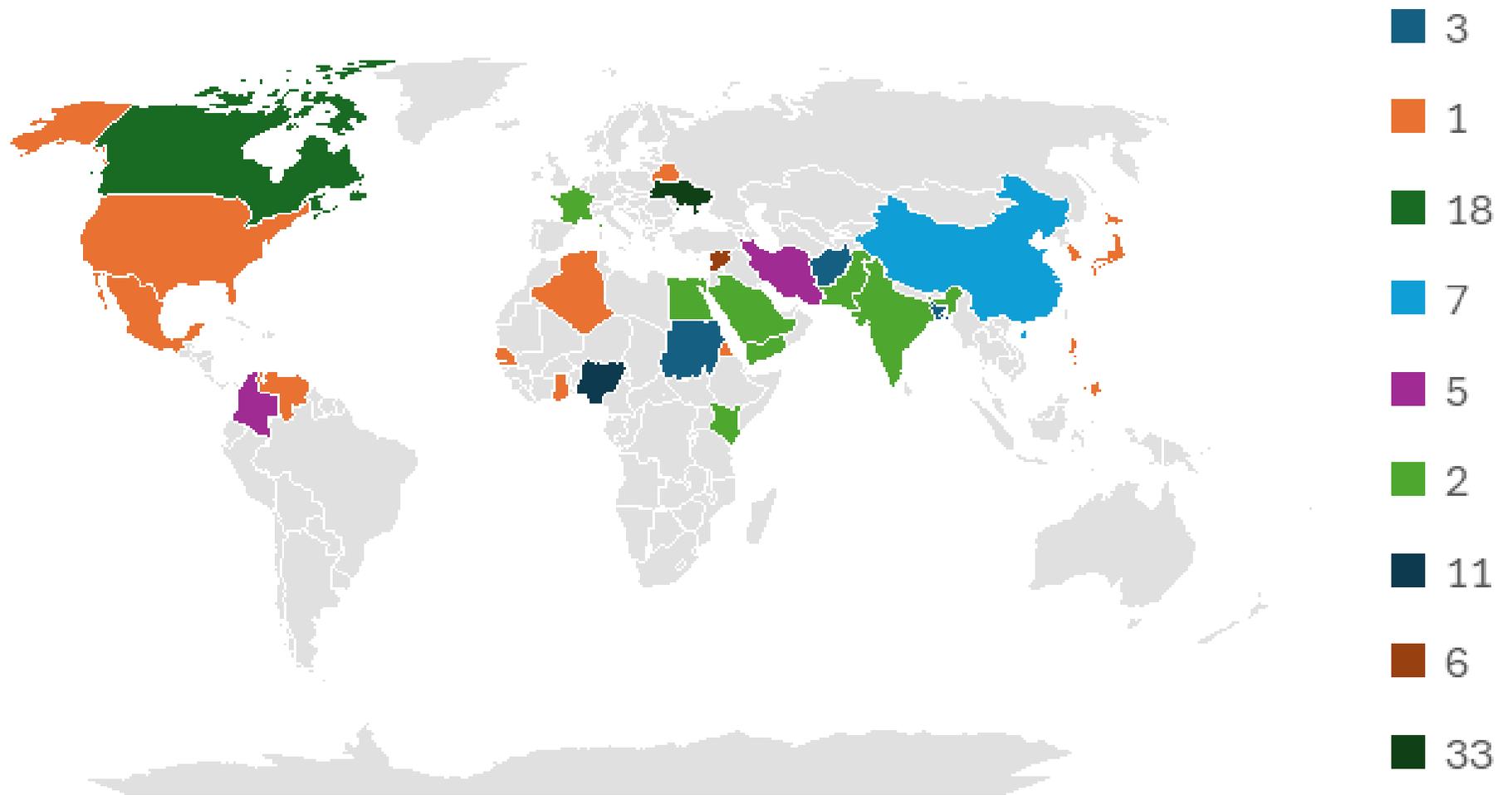
SEED Fellows: Who are they?



SEED 2023 – 2025 in Numbers YTD

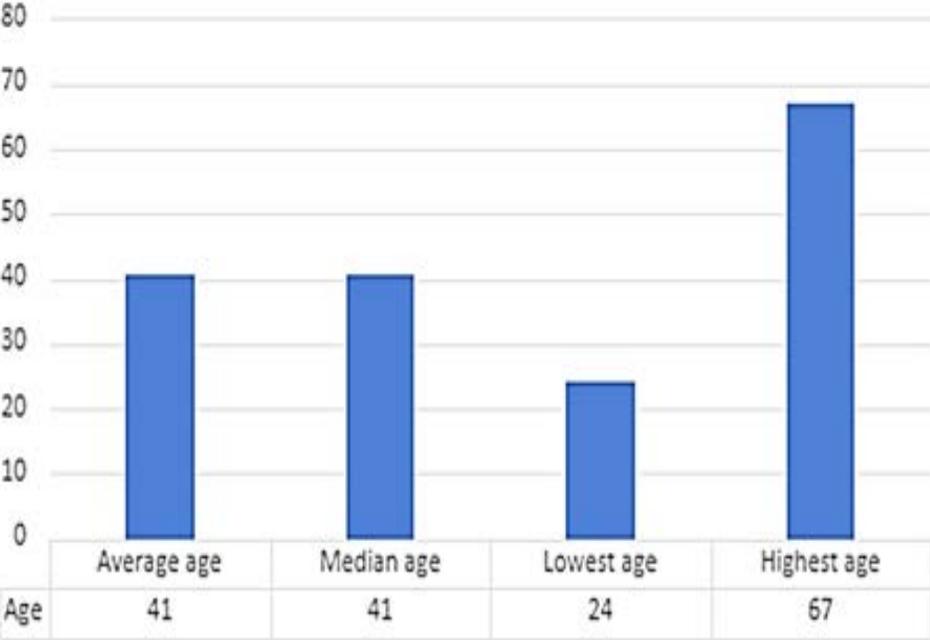


SEED 2023 – 2025 Countries of Origin

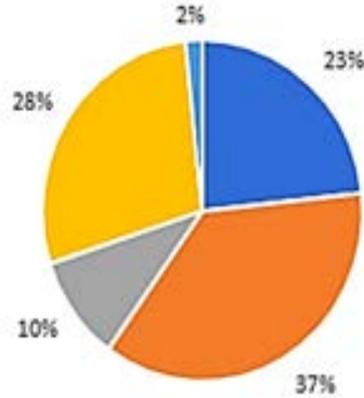


SEED 2023 – 2025 Demographics

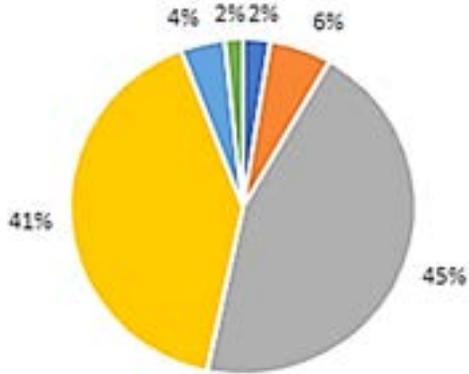
Age



Residency Status

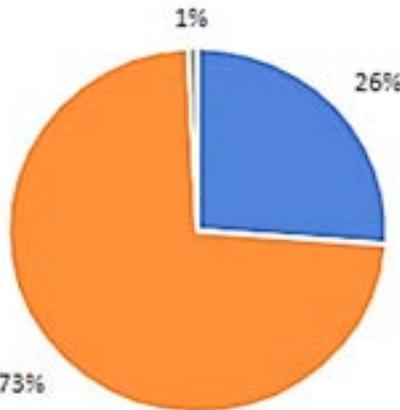


Educational Attainment

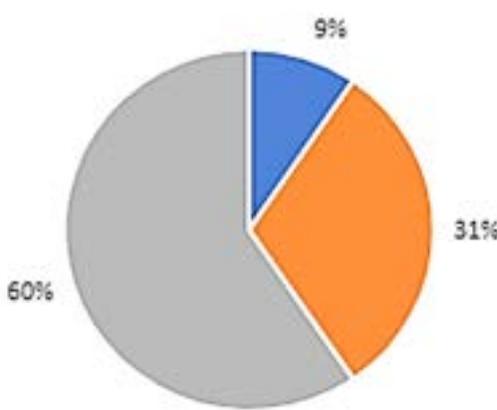


■ Citizen ■ Permanent resident ■ Convention refugee ■ Work permit ■ Other ■ High school ■ College ■ Bachelors ■ Masters ■ PhD ■ Other

Gender



Employment Status



■ Male ■ Female ■ Nonbinary/trans/other ■ Employed ■ Underemployed ■ Unemployed

Recruitment & Application Process

- ✦ [SEED program webpage](#)
- ✦ Outreach through Community Organizations in Montreal
- ✦ Facebook & LinkedIn
- ✦ Information sessions
- ✦ [Online Application Form](#)
- ✦ Referrals Form
- ✦ French Placement Test
- ✦ Individual Interviews with Program Manager & Administrator

Academic Admission Requirements

- ✦ Be 21 years of age or older to be admitted as a mature student
- ✦ A minimum of a DEC or a Bachelor's degree, or equivalent professional work experience (3 to 4 yrs.)
- ✦ Completion of a French language placement test*
- ✦ Proof of citizenship/residency status in Canada and Quebec
- ✦ Priority is given to applicants who score a minimum of low-intermediate French proficiency level*

** For Quebec-based programming*

Selection Criteria

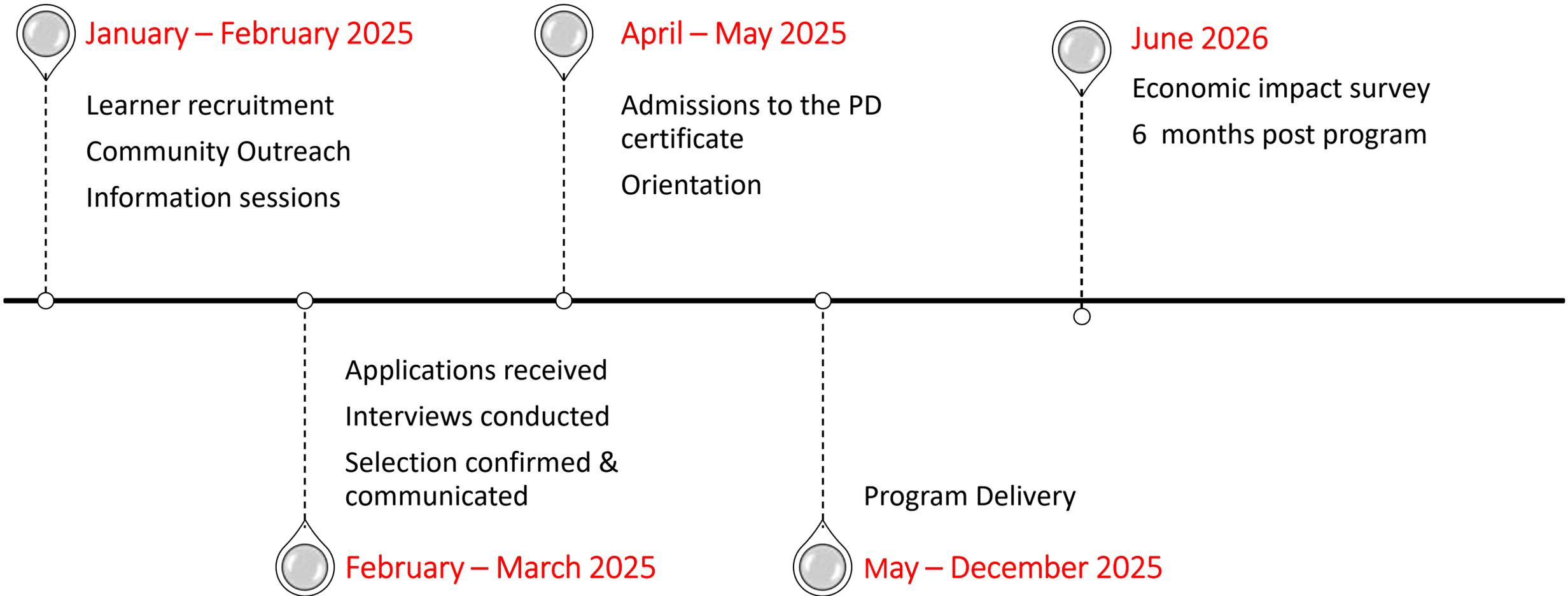


Preference is given to those applicants who can:

- ✓ Meet Residency Status requirements
- ✓ Provide proof of age and education level
- ✓ Demonstrate English Proficiency during the interview
- ✓ Meet minimum French Proficiency (placement test)*
- ✓ Clearly articulate their motivation to join the program
- ✓ Provide a reference from a Community Organization or other recommendations
- ✓ Unemployed or under-employed

** For Quebec-based programming*

Typical Implementation Timeline



Key Performance Indicators for the SEED Initiative

- 🦋 # of SEED Fellows per year - up to 50
- 🦋 Greater Self-Confidence
- 🦋 Improved Language Proficiency
- 🦋 Improved Employment or Further Studies
- 🦋 Improved Clarity of Career Goals
- 🦋 Expanded Professional Network

For SCS:

- 🦋 Identify Effective Workforce Integration Approach
- 🦋 Increase Community Engagement
- 🦋 Enhance Experiential Learning Opportunities

Pre- & Post- Program Survey (self-assessment)

FOCUS AREAS:

- ✓ Self-Confidence
- ✓ Career Planning
- ✓ Workplace Skills
- ✓ Language Proficiency
- ✓ Employment Status

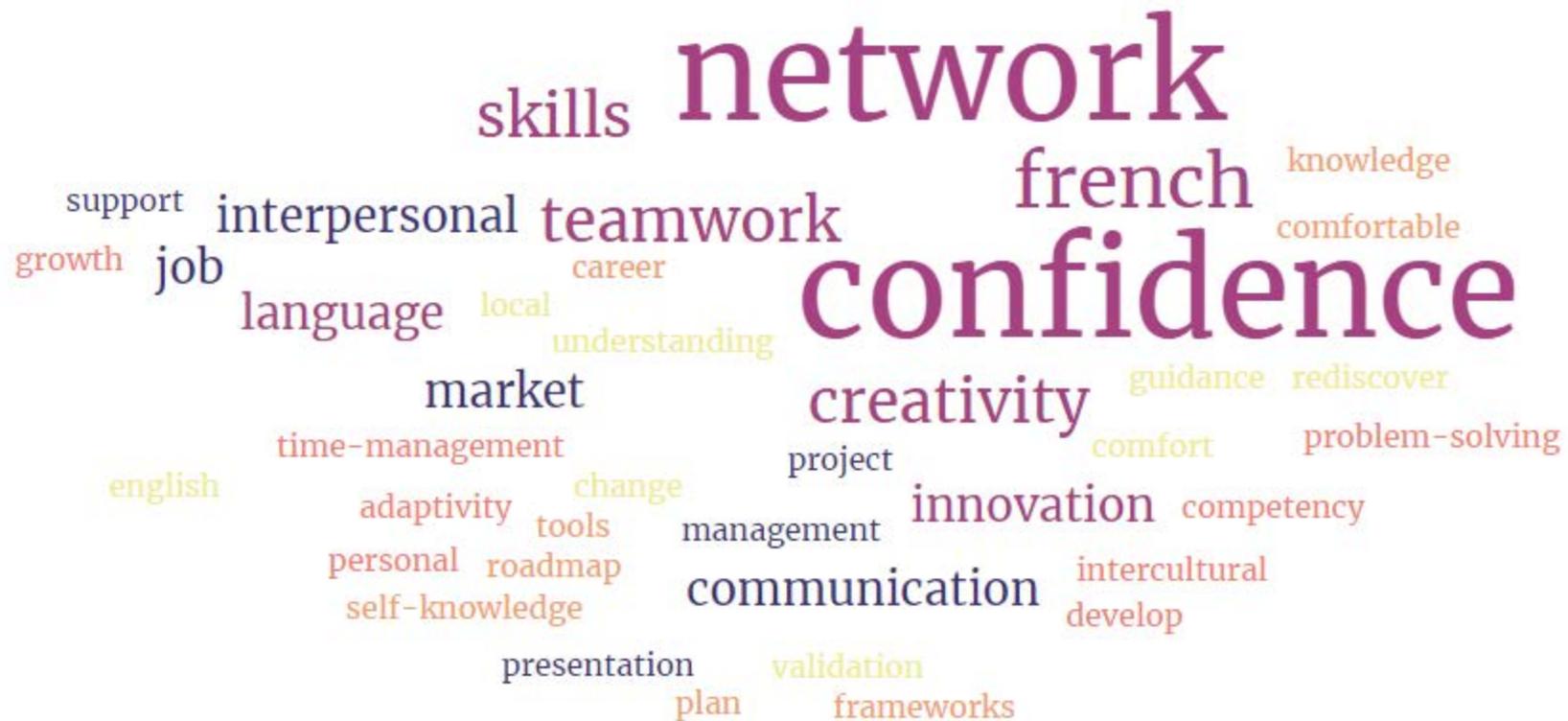
Cohort 2 Start of Program:

What are your top three objectives for participating in the SEED Initiative?



Cohort 2 End of Program:

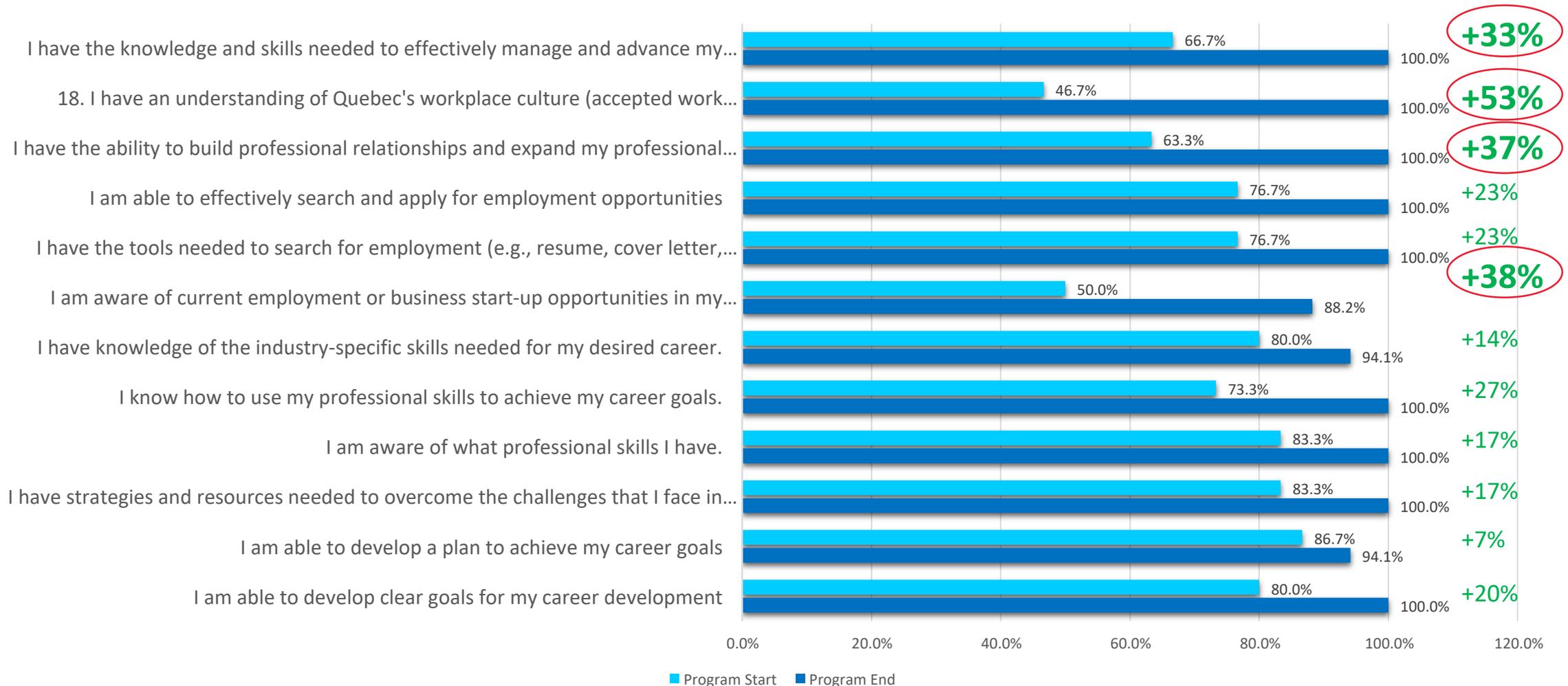
*What are the **top three things** that you gained from participating in the SEED Initiative?*



Example: Pre-/Post-Program Survey Results Cohort 2

Career Readiness

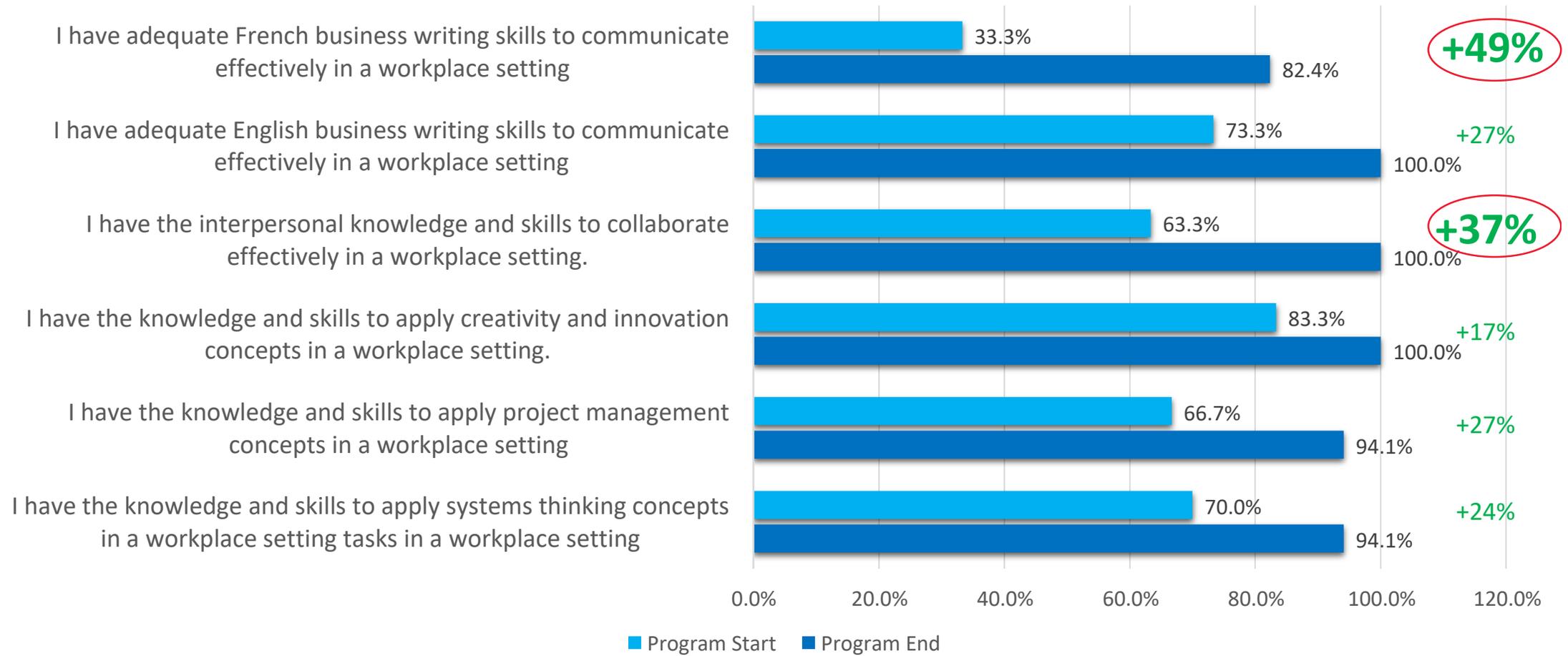
Percentage of respondents who agree with the following statements:



Example: Pre-/Post-Program Survey Results Cohort 2

Workplace Skills

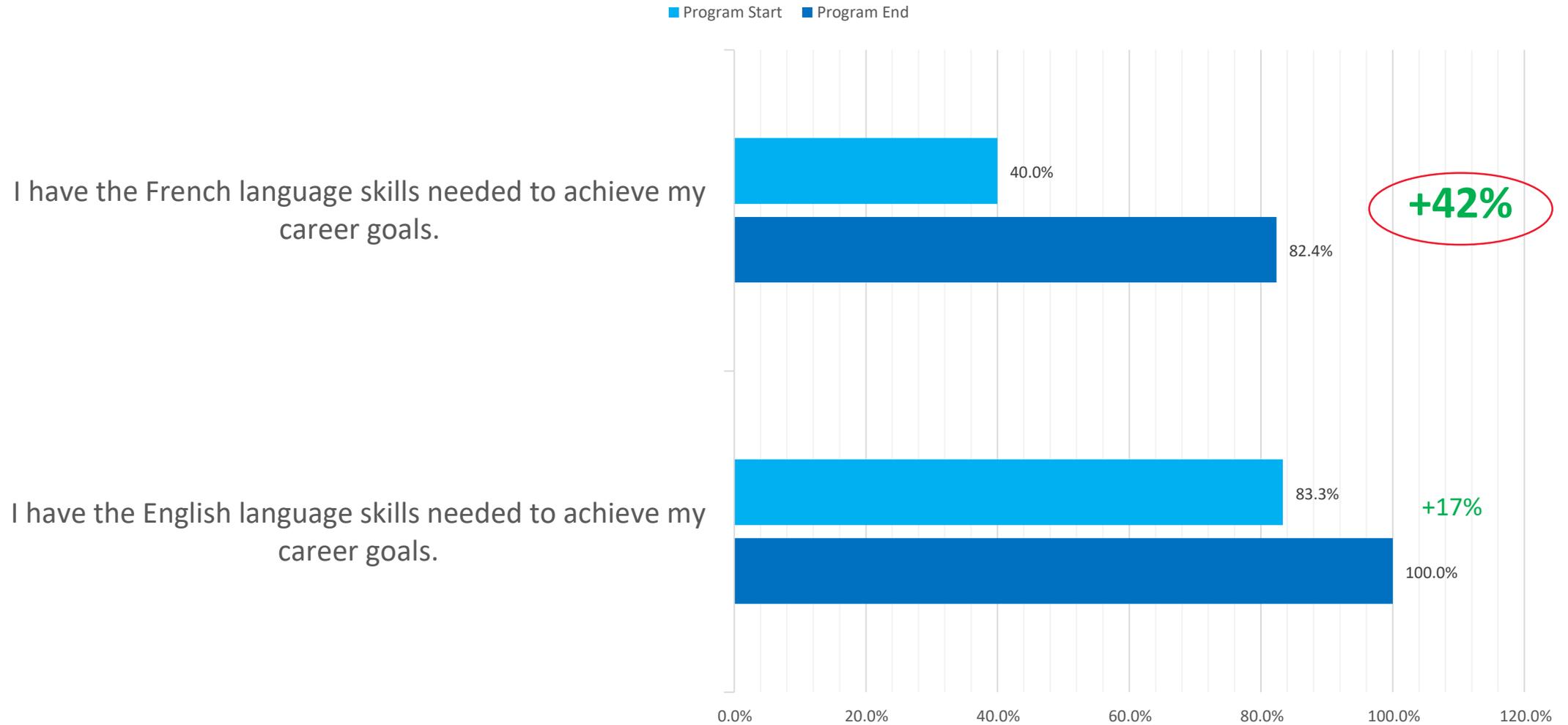
Percentage of respondents who agree with the following statements:



Example: Pre-/Post-Program Survey Results Cohort 2

Language Proficiency

Percentage of respondents who agree with the following statements:

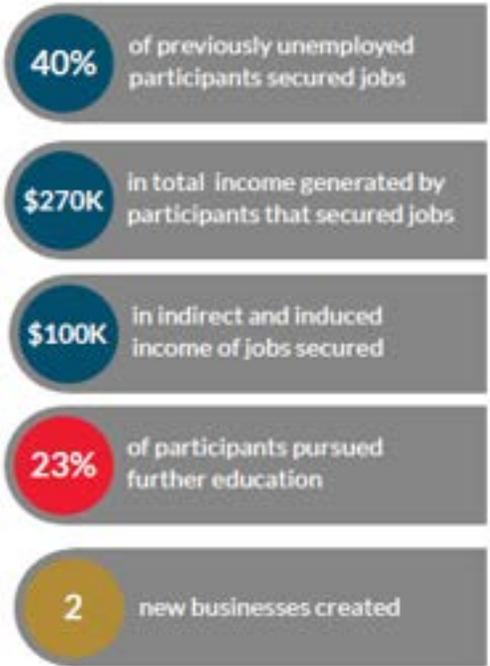


Economic Impact Survey in collaboration with CEDEC

SEED Cohort 1

Key results

Response rate of 81%, based on 26 of 32 program participants having completed the survey



40% of previously unemployed participants secured jobs in these industries

- 36.3% Educational services
- 27.3% Professional, scientific and technical services
- 18.2% Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services
- 18.2% Other services (except public administration)

Employment Status

Full-time	63.6%
Part-time	36.3%

Testimonials

*“Participating in the SEED Initiative was **transformative** for me both professionally and personally. The program offered an incredible blend of **hands-on learning** and **strategic guidance** that helped me sharpen my professional skills and apply them toward sustainable solutions. Through SEED, I connected with a **network of inspiring peers and mentors**, which broadened my perspective and opened doors to collaborative opportunities. The experience of **working on real-world projects** gave me the **confidence** and **practical insights** I needed to **make a tangible impact in my field.**”*

Testimonials, cont.

*“SEED was a **life-changing** experience for me, helping me realize that I **can have an excellent career** even though I’ve just moved to Canada. The professional skills I possess are all relevant; I just need to **boost my self-confidence** to boldly pursue the opportunities that truly appeal to me. I’m grateful to McGill for this opportunity and for its strong brand in my resume, which definitely enhances my credibility in the job market. I also want to thank our amazing teachers, who were so **empowering and genuinely believed in us**. Sometimes, that’s all you need to move forward.”*



What do these SEED program outcomes signify to you?

Are they relevant to your population / context?

What stands out for you?

Program Delivery Formats

In-Person on Campus:

- 🦋 Full-Time Intensive
- 🦋 Part-Time Semi-Intensive

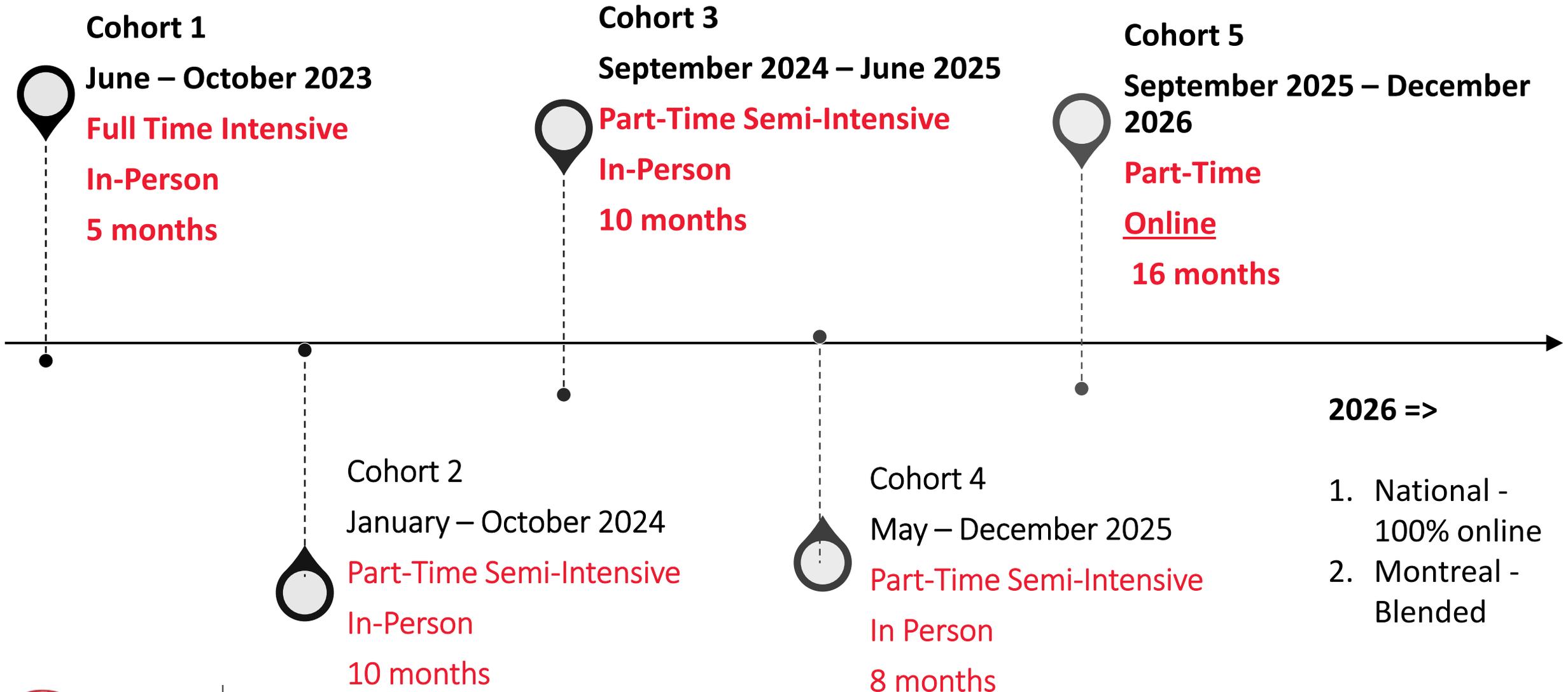
Online:

- 🦋 Part-Time 100% Online

Blended:

- 🦋 Language & Career Guidance In-Person on Campus
- 🦋 PDC 100% Online

Cohorts & Formats



2026 =>

1. National - 100% online
2. Montreal - Blended

Program Evolution: Cohort 1 Intensive In-Person

Professional Development Certificate
in Collaboration & Productivity
(required)

Language Proficiency
French or English according to
level of proficiency
(optional)

Experiential Learning
Capstone Project Course
(required)
Internships (optional)

Career Development

- Career Advising
- Networking & Mentorships
- Skill-building Workshops

(optional)

Financial Support
Monthly Stipends
(based on need and academic standing)

Professional Certification
Prep Courses & Exams
Quick Books Online
MS Excel
(optional)

Program Evolution: Cohorts 2-3-4 - Part-Time In-Person

Professional Development Certificate
in Collaboration & Productivity
(required)

French Proficiency
Intermediate-High (in-class)
Written French for Workplace
Communication (online)

Experiential Learning
Capstone Project Course –
community-based projects
(required)

Work-Integrated Learning
Internship search
support
Job search support

Career Development
Employability Readiness – 30hrs
Career Planning – 30hrs
Mentorship (optional)

Financial Support
\$3K stipend for
internships
\$200 monthly for
transportation

Professional Certification
Prep Courses & Exams
One Optional Certification of
choice: MS Excel /Quick
Books

Optional Online Course
Agile Project Management:
Practice & Certification

What do they learn?



Interpersonal Skills for Professionals

Personality and communication styles
Diversity and intercultural communication
Emotional intelligence
Conflict resolution
Working with and influencing others
Teamwork and team dynamics
Leading & influencing others
Presenting & Facilitating



Systems Thinking & Modelling

Fundamentals of systems thinking, modelling, and change
Structure and behaviours of dynamic systems
Tools for systems thinking
Tools for modelling dynamic systems
Solving challenges and problems in organizations with systems thinking



Innovation & Creativity for Entrepreneurs

Creativity vs. Innovation
Theory U
Innovation Value chain
Design Thinking
The Six Hats
Business Model Canvas
Value Proposition Canvas
Contrarian assumptions
The SPT Prototype
Pentagon
Life-Mapping



Professional Writing in Business

The writing process:
Planning, composing, and revising
Analyzing your audience
Choosing channels and structuring documents for maximum impact
Writing in teams
Controlling and clarifying your message:
Grammar, mechanics, self-editing



Innovation & Creativity Capstone Project

Collaborative project work in groups:
Practical application of learning to real-life projects in collaboration with community organizations or businesses under the guidance and coaching of the course instructor.

Employability & Career Guidance



Employability Readiness

Successful Transitions
Finding and Using Your Voice
Professional Profile & Elevator Pitch
How To: LinkedIn Profile
How To: CV & Cover Letter
Job Search
Job Interview Skills
Managing Rejection
Landing The Job



Career Planning Course

Designing and Managing Your Career
Career Action Plan
The Art of Networking
Personal Branding
Intercultural Communication
Workplace Professionalism
Wellness, Boundaries & Well-being
Vision in Action
Trends, Challenges, Opportunities



Individual Career Coaching

5 hours per Fellow
In partnership with La Passerelle
Employment Help Centre

Career Development Activities



105 HOURS OF CAREER
ADVISING



PROFESSIONAL PHOTO
SESSION FOR LINKEDIN
PROFILES



17 ADVISING & SKILL-
BUILDING WORKSHOPS



6 NETWORKING &
MENTORSHIP EVENTS



97 ORGANIZATIONS - INDUSTRY
OUTREACH TO IDENTIFY
INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

SEED Career Insights Mentorship Event

Join us this week, for a Career Insights Group
Mentorship Session with three incredible professionals
who will share various aspects of their career journeys,
top career advice, and industry insights.

Friday, August 11, 2023
9:30 a.m. – Noon



Caren Carrasco

Managing Partner - Benjamin David Group

Facilitate my career in marketing and business, working within the
Canadian startup ecosystem and supporting the digital
transformation of legacy systems.

Active contributor within the immigrant and startup community,
serving as a mentor to newcomer and aspiring entrepreneurs.

Co-founder of the Benjamin David Group, digital marketing and tech
agency.



Rod Louisa

Senior Manager, Mobile Analytics, IT Digital Customer
Experience, Bell Canada

I am a senior management professional with over 17
years of IT experience, 8 of which focused on IT
consulting, a Chartered Manager (C.Mgr.) and
forward-thinking strategist with a proven track record of
taking a global approach to creating and building
innovative solutions for clients that lead to a
competitive edge. I



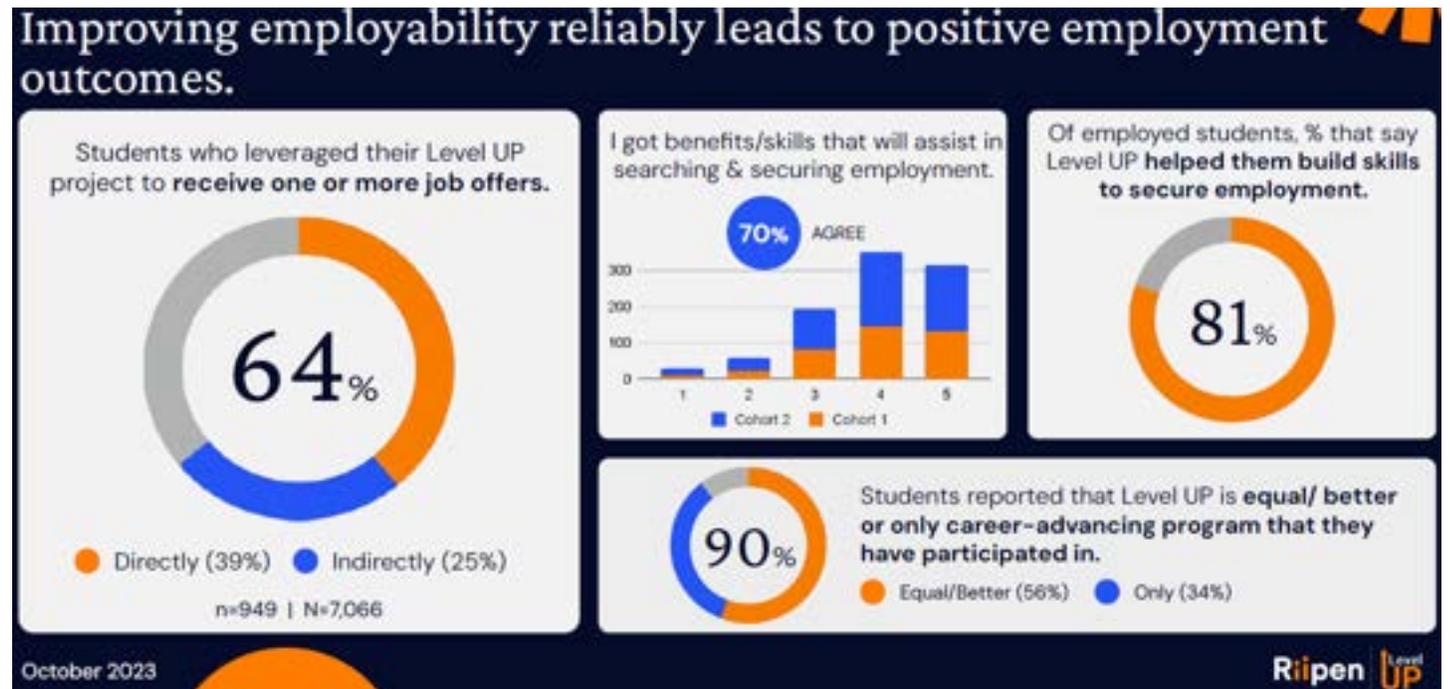
Salvatore Mariani

Branch Manager and Group Strategy Plan Officer
Representative, ExoticWorld

Senior Branch Manager, ExoticWorld, a Small Business
Marketing, Sales Strategy & Retail Services Branch and New
Business Growth "Branch of the Future" on Campus at St. Catherine's
& Exotic Business consulting managers and their respective
teams covering Retail, Small Business/branch Management
and Retail Cultural Marketing, Latin America, France and North
American Countries.

WIL to Improve Employability: Riipen Level Up 2025 Pilot

- ✓ Short-term Remote Internships
- ✓ Access to up to 100 reserved Level Up stipends of \$1,400
- ✓ June 2025 – January 2026
- ✓ Up to 55 projects of 60 hours
- ✓ Co-designed custom program for SCS



Program focus and format

- What are your thoughts on the different versions of the SEED initiative that we have explored?
- What type of program would work / has worked best in your context? Why?

Friends of
SEED:
*Advisory
Group*

- ✦ ACSioN Network of Canada
- ✦ Black Community Resource Center (BCRC)
- ✦ Community Economic Development & Employment Corporation (CEDEC)
- ✦ Centraide, Collective Impact Project
- ✦ Centre Inicio
- ✦ Dress for Success
- ✦ La Passerelle
- ✦ L'Organisation des Jeunes de Parc Extension (PEYO)
- ✦ McGill Community for Lifelong Learning (MCLL)
- ✦ Provincial Employment Roundtable (PERT)
- ✦ YWCA / Y des Femmes

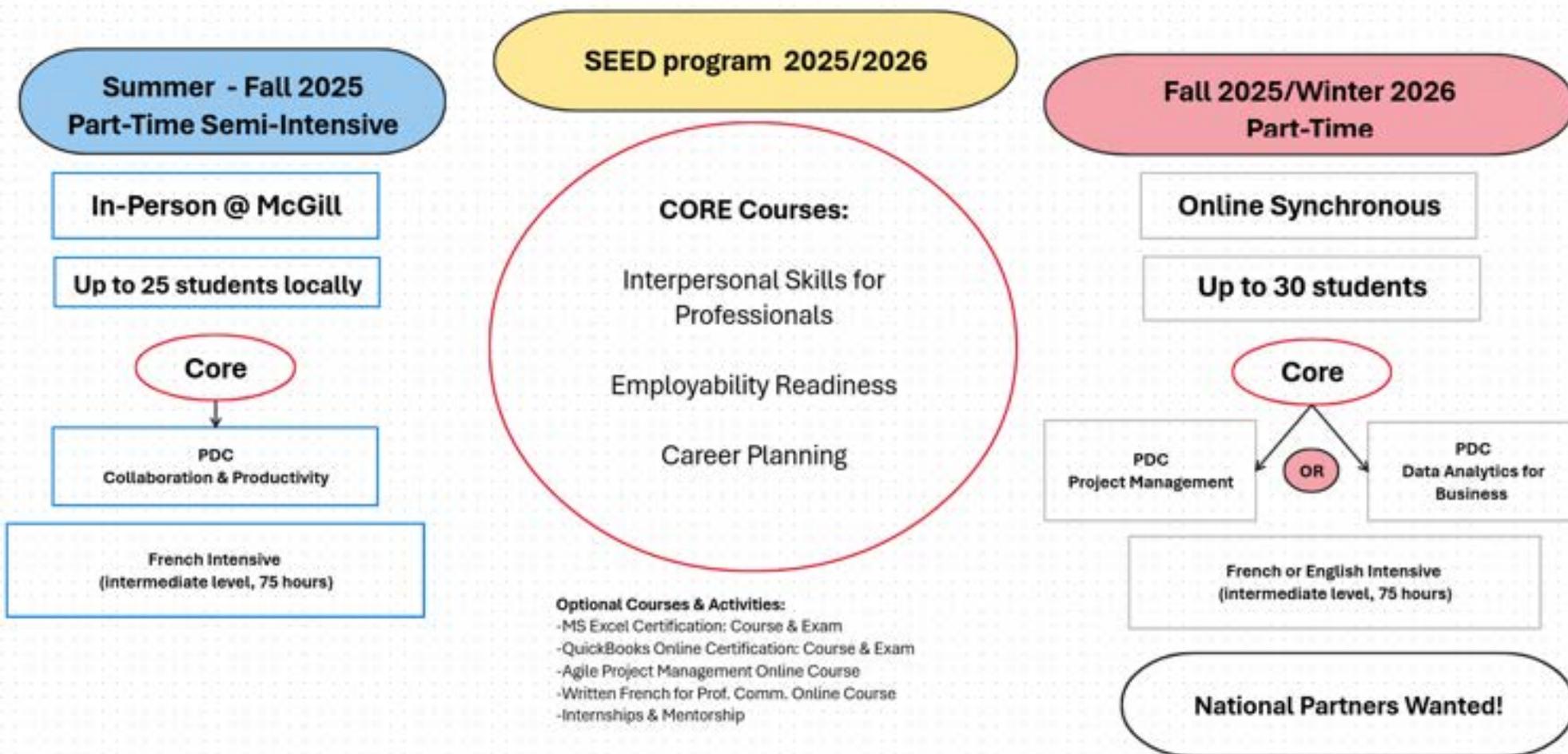
Friends of
SEED:
*Employers &
Community
Partners*

- ❖ ACI World
- ❖ FACE Coalition (Federation of African Canadian Economics)
- ❖ Farrell LLP Immigration Law / Deloitte
- ❖ Peter-McGill Community Council
- ❖ McGill Advancement
- ❖ McGill Branches
- ❖ McGill Human Resources
- ❖ YES Montreal

Community & Industry Engagement

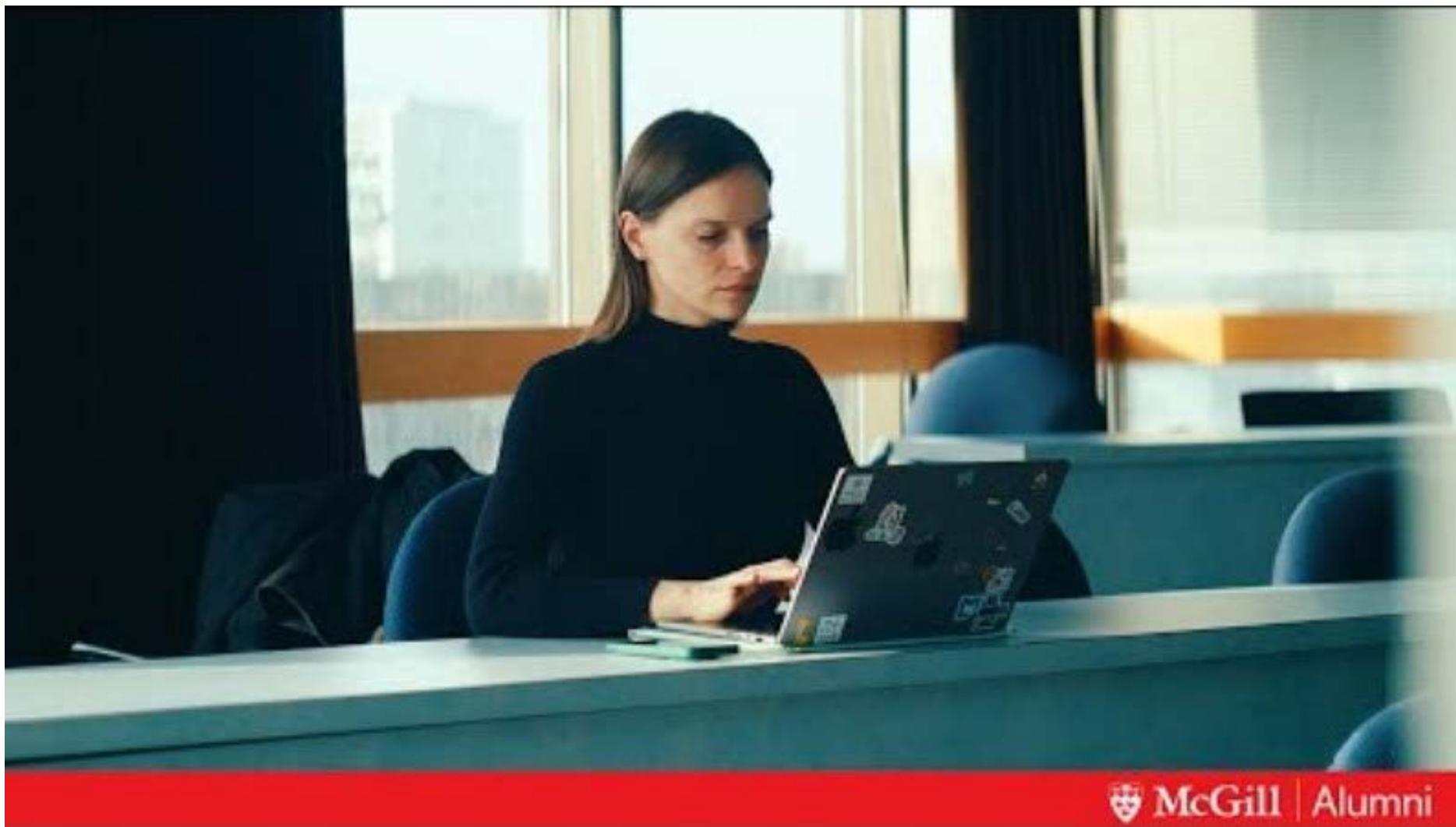
- Referrals of SEED Fellows
- Networking events
- Career Coaching (La Passerelle)
- Mentorship (MCLL)
- Sourcing of Internship opportunities for SEED fellows
- Short-term Capstone projects from community organizations and companies: [Proposal Form](#)
- Economic Impact Survey & Report (CEDEC)

SEED Program Evolution: 2025 & beyond



“Big Picture” Questions

- How might we collaborate ***on a national level*** to develop and deliver programs that create ***locally sustainable income security***?
 - *How would we cover costs?*
 - *How would it add value and not displace other valuable activities taking place?*
 - *What partnerships would be needed?*
 - *What platforms and/or tools could be integrated to connect students with Work Integrated Learning?*
 - *How could we best support learners studying online / remotely?*
 - *How can we reciprocate with local communities in an equitable, mutually beneficial way?*



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_IIS5dO1-Q

Thank you!
Merci!



www.mcgill.ca/continuingstudies



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