Pathways to Professions

2022 Program in Review

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Photo by Tianjiao Yang

Pathways to Professions

Pathways to Professions (P2P) is a 13-week experiential summer research program developed and run by the New Brunswick Institute for Research, Data and Training (NB-IRDT) at the University of New Brunswick. This year, NB-IRDT has partnered with the Government of New Brunswick's Future GNB program to host P2P students working on government research projects - allowing the program to grow even more!

The modern-day workplace is constantly changing and evolving, with employers increasingly looking for employees with high levels of professionalism and interpersonal skills.

P2P helps post-secondary students in New Brunswick gain employable skills through hands-on work experience and workshops, interviews, and tutorials in areas of research, communications, and professional growth. By conducting research on real-world, NB-relevant problems, P2P students are able to affect real change and learn what it takes to create a positive impact in their communities.

Experiential Education

Experiential education focuses on building interpersonal and technical skills in students' fields of study. This form of education uses a hands-on approach where the students learn by doing and then by reflecting on the experience and identifying skills gained from the facilitated experience that can be used outside the classroom. Experiential education is interdisciplinary, drawing on several fields of study simultaneously.

A successful experiential education program like P2P actively uses the four stages of Kolb's Cycle (right):

- Concrete experience (learning by doing)

- Reflective observation (reflecting on the experience)
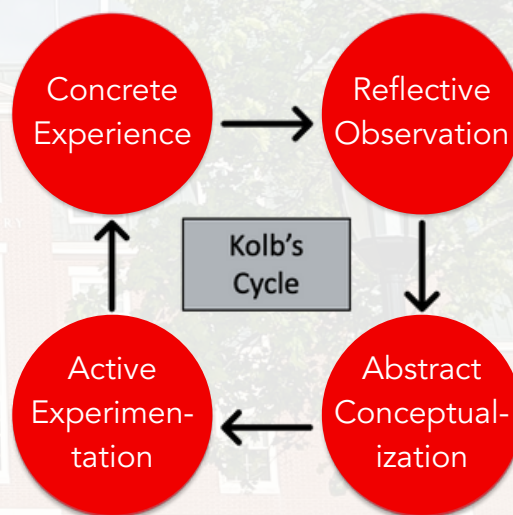
Graphic provided by Sarah King

- Abstract conceptualization (turning observations into conclusions)

- Active experimentation (implementing new knowledge)

A Note from the P2P Program Lead

We are coming to the end of another successful summer of Pathways to Professions, and I am amazed at the growth our program has experienced in such a short time. In close to four years working on P2P, we have consistently found that one of the most powerful ways to deliver experiential training is to provide work that is meaningful. To this end, we always endeavor to place students on New Brunswick-relevant projects backed by stakeholders who care about the results. Our goal is to inspire the next generation of NB-trained academics, civil servants, doctors, engineers, nurses, lawyers (you name it) to choose NB for their future.

When I reflect on P2P 2022, I think one of the key themes that has emerged is the concept of paying it forward. This year we offered more than 30 workshops on everything ranging from personality insights to the art of leadership to telling a story with data. This was all made possible through individuals who gave their time to share their expertise. Every person who has taken time to mentor our students, lead a research project, attend stakeholder meetings, provide feedback or a workshop or a tutorial – we thank you for your selfless investment in our students. We want to spark a train of kindness, social connections and even life changes through your contributions. We hope to see a return on your investment as our P2P alumni take on the future workforce with a spirit of cooperation, partnership, and connection. I encourage all of our students to learn by the example set this summer – share your unique insights with the world, invest in your communities, and continue to make valuable connections. NB is better from having you here.

Finally, thank you students of P2P 2022 for our best year yet. We could not have done this without you.

Sincerely,
Eva Christensen

© Eva Christensen, 2020. Head of the Class: Old Arts Building, UNB.

Editor's Note

My name is Anna Swimm, and I am this year's P2P Student Outreach Coordinator. Coming from Fayette, Maine, I am also P2P's first American student. I am in my fourth year at the University of New Brunswick, with a double major in English and Media Arts and Cultures. After university, I aspire to earn my way into a social media managing position, and I believe P2P has dramatically helped me gain essential skills for that career.
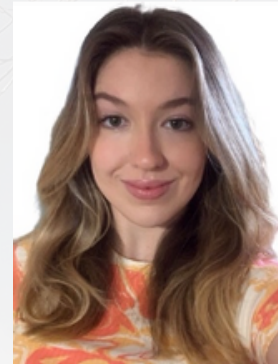
Anna Swimm
P2P Student Outreach Coordinator

I have greatly enjoyed my time working in Pathways to Professions. I am grateful for this opportunity because the program allowed me to make mistakes and grow from them. I could not be the confident, professional woman I am today without NB-IRDT's experiential learning program.

Outreach

Each year, the Student Outreach Coordinator for P2P creates a strategy to communicate what the experiential research program is about while sharing students' research stories with universities, government, businesses, and the NB community.

My primary focus this year was to create compelling digital and print media to market to potential stakeholders and community partners. Using visual media to promote the program, P2P students can have further research and work experience opportunities in the area of communications. Through such media, I aimed to entice potential future speakers or workshop leaders.

Over 13 weeks this summer, I created the Program in Review you're reading right now, as well as P2P research stream videos, an infographic, and presentations. This collection of visual information will aid in P2P's mission to continue growing and connecting students with potential stakeholders and community partners.

Photo by Olivia Hamilton

Meet the P2P & Future GNB Team

Administrators

Eva Christensen
Manager, Research & Training, NB-IRDT

Rochelle Fletcher
Director, Organizational Development, Finance and Treasury Board, GNB

Bethany Jones
Science Writer, NB-IRDT

Jessica Mann
Training Coordinator, NB-IRDT
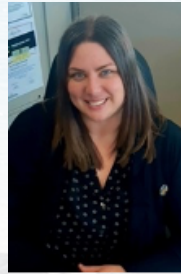
Melanie Sears
Future GNB Program Coordinator, Finance and Treasury Board, GNB

Student Mentors and Program Assistants

Ryan Allain
Future GNB Program Assistant

Madeleine Gorman-Asal
Research Assistant, NB-IRDT

VitalSignsNB Mentor, P2P

Alexa Landry Leblanc
Future GNB Program Assistant

Caroline Pietroski
BoostNB Mentor, P2P

Lee Whelan
PopNB Mentor, P2P

Photo by Ryan Allain

Stakeholder & Alumni Statements

"The P2P program provides undergraduate students with research experience, career readiness training seminars and networking sessions. Since capacity building in health research in NB is one of NBHRF's key priorities, we are pleased to be a partner on a current project involving several P2P students. It is a very comprehensive program encompassing not only research experience but all that goes with it, thereby developing very high quality researchers."
 - *Leah Carr (Director, Programs & Development, New Brunswick Health Research Foundation)*

"My experience with P2P was that it enabled me to sharpen a wide range of analytical skills on real-world data. In doing so, I was able to collaborate with a team of highly motivated professionals whom I have tremendous respect for."
 - *Griffin Higgins (P2P Alumnus 2021)*

"The P2P program is an incredible way for students to get meaningful training and develop research skills that are transferrable to any field. Experiential learning is an integral part of NB-IRDT, which aligns well with NBIF and our mandate to support highly qualified personnel and student training opportunities. The research projects featured in the P2P program will provide significant benefits to New Brunswick. These studies highlight important issues, and the students involved are having a direct impact on the future of our province."
 - *New Brunswick Innovation Foundation*

"I leave P2P with key skills that employers are constantly seeking, such as public speaking, problem-solving, and communication strategies. I am so thankful to have been a part of such an enriching program and look forward to applying the skills I've learned in my future careers."
 - *Hala Nasir (P2P Alumnus 2021)*

"In today's world, we are faced with increasingly complex questions and ever-increasing amounts of data. Programs that teach our students how to utilize and leverage relevant data to come up with new solutions and assist in decision making are, therefore, important for training tomorrow's experts. And by taking this data-oriented research skills development from classroom to experiential learning, participants can benefit even more richly from this education.

More than simply skills training, Pathways to Professions is also an opportunity for our researchers to mobilize their training and knowledge in new ways. The program encourages the spirit of inquiry that is so essential to research, and it demonstrates that we are capable of addressing our society's greatest challenges when we approach them with curiosity, expertise, and understanding."
 - *Dave MaGee, Vice-President (Research), UNB*

NB-IRDT has designed sessions to build students' skills and knowledge in research, professionalism, and career development. Every week, P2P and Future GNB students partake in lectures, presentations, and workshops along with work on their research projects. The research streams congregate over Microsoft Teams multiple times a week to engage in breakout rooms, interviews, and presentations, learning from professionals in various fields. Additionally, each week P2P and Future GNB have a Show & Tell to practice presentation skills and to give everyone a progress report. These training sessions support the student work experience, provide collaborative learning opportunities, and enhance future employability.

Career Connect

Career Connect is a series of meet and greet sessions with industry and government leaders. During these sessions, leaders discuss their personal journeys into research and data, informing students about career planning. The sessions are interactive, casual, and demonstrate to students how to apply their research skills to a variety of workplace settings.

Petra Berger
Acting Vice-President of People & Culture, UNB

John Calhoun
Senior Economist, PETL, GNB

Rochelle Fletcher
Director, Organizational Development , FTB, GNB

Susan Knolla
Head of People & Culture, reSolved

Dr. Dave MaGee
Vice-President (Research), UNB

Adam Peabody
Chief Executive Officer, The Future of You Company Inc. and Event Manager, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Laura Richard
Director of Research, NBIF

Dr. Kelly Scott-Story
Associate Professor of Nursing, UNB

Photo by Ryan Allain

Workshops

P2P Workshops cover a variety of foundational topics to enhance professional practice. These sessions aim to provide students with opportunities to gain (and improve) employable skills. By developing these critical professional skills, students may enhance their experience in the future labour market, bringing with them in-demand skills in areas of knowledge translation, research methodology, team-building, project management, and more.

Administrative Data 101
Eva Christensen (Manager, Research & Training, NB-IRDT)

Before You Start Writing
Dr. Bethany Jones (Science Writer, NB-IRDT)

Cost Benefit Analysis
Dr. Herb Emery (Vaughan Chair of Regional Economics, UNB)

Data Representation
Madeleine Gorman-Asal (Research Assistant, NB-IRDT)
Dr. Bethany Jones (Science Writer, NB-IRDT)
Jessica Mann (Training Coordinator, NB-IRDT)

Effective Writing
Dr. Bethany Jones (Science Writer, NB-IRDT)

Entrepreneurial Development
Adam Peabody (Chief Executive Officer, The Future of You Company Inc. and Event Manager, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce)

Excel 101
Andy Balzer (Data Analyst, NB-IRDT)

Experiential Learning Reflection
Dr. Sarah King (Director, Office of Experiential Education, UNB)

Gender-Based Analysis+ Training
Jessica Gerges (Policy & Strategic Initiatives, GNB)
Kate Amos (Policy & Strategic Initiatives, GNB)

Goal Setting
Dr. Sarah King (Director, Office of Experiential Education, UNB)

Graduate School 101
Laura Gilks (Graduate School Recruitment Coordinator, UNB)

How to (and not to) Assert Yourself
Eva Christensen (Manager, Research & Training, NB-IRDT)

"How to Ace Your Next Job Interview"
Petra Bergner (Associate Vice-President Human Resources & Organizational Development)
Rochelle Fletcher (Director, Organizational Development, Finance and Treasury Board)
Susan Knolla (Head of People & Culture, reSolved)

Insights Training
Julie Melanson (Talent Acquisition & Culture Specialist, Opportunities NB, GNB)
Amy Sharpe (Talent Acquisition & Culture Specialist, Opportunities NB, GNB)

Presentation Skills
Jennifer Hagen (Manager, Relationship Development & Outreach, NB-IRDT)

Project Planning & Task Management
Duncan Gallant (Manager, Risk Advisory Services, BDO Canada)
Andrew Lockhart (Economic Development Specialist, Ignite Fredericton)

Research Ethics
Dr. Donna Curtis Maillet (Privacy Officer & Research Associate, NB-IRDT)

Research Methods
Sandra Magalhaes (Research Associate, NB-IRDT)

Self-Marketing Strategies
Dr. Bethany Jones (Science Writer, NB-IRDT)

Storytelling Through Visualization
Dawn Henwood (Founder, Clarity Studio)

Strengths Finder Workshop
Rochelle Fletcher (Director, Organizational Development, Finance and Treasury Board)

Telling a Story with Data
Dr. Bethany Jones (Science Writer, NB-IRDT)

The Art of Leadership
Karen Masry (Co-Founder, Masry Leclerc Collaborations Inc.)

Workplace Mental Health Strategies
Matt Maclean (Mental Health Strategist, UNB)

Growing P2P With New Partnerships

P2P is officially finishing its third season, and we are so proud of how far we've come - from launching with six students and two research streams in 2020 to hosting 32 students divided among eight research streams in 2022. We've hired P2P student alumni to return as mentors to help us run the program, and we've even brought back a team of student researchers (P2P+) to take their research even further.

Welcoming Future GNB
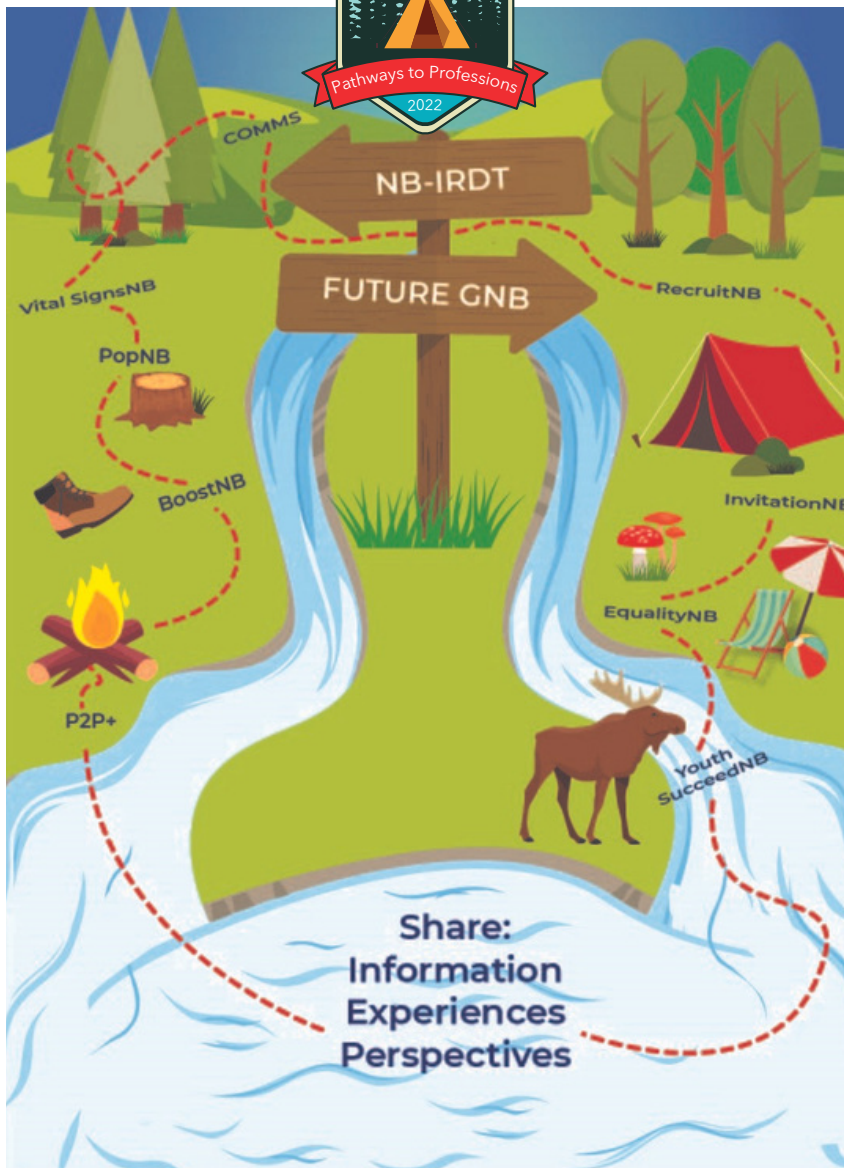
Welcoming Future GNB as a partner and program host in 2022 has allowed us to grow P2P in both size and reach. With Future GNB project leads joining our program, four new research streams were created to contribute directly to ongoing government initiatives.

While working on separate NB-IRDT and Future GNB research projects (left), the student teams shared core P2P skills-building experiences, coming together each week for workplace readiness workshops facilitated by NB-IRDT and to present their work to their peers.

Thanks to our new partners, P2P 2022 was our biggest and best year yet!

Research Projects

The following pages present an overview of this summer's research and student experiences. The students' reports and research articles will be released in a Student Spotlight series through NB-IRDT's DataNB newsletter over the coming months.

Make sure you subscribe to NB-IRDT's newsletter so you don't miss any updates on student research in New Brunswick!

Project Lead

Dr. Herb Emery

Vaughan Chair of Regional Economics, University of New Brunswick

Project Mentor

Caroline Pietroski

Bachelor of Arts Economics and Environment and Society St.Thomas University, 2023

A Reflection

"Pathways to Professions has been a game-changing development in terms of my ability to advance my mission of developing the next generation of policy analysts for New Brunswick.

BoostNB.com is a vehicle where in an experiential way students learn about the statistical history and profile of the provincial economy, and (the part I am most proud of seeing) engages them to dig deeper into understanding the causes of our stagnant economic situation and some solutions for getting the province back to growth."

- Dr. Herb Emery

BoostNB is an online dashboard of economic indicators created by student researchers and updated every year using open-source data to determine whether the New Brunswick economy is progressing towards specific goals and targets.

BoostNB has been a P2P research stream since the program launched in 2020. It provides post-secondary students in NB the opportunity to pursue their passion for economics and create positive change in their communities by making pertinent information about the NB economy available in a straight-forward, factual, and accessible way.

The 2022 BoostNB team spent the summer analyzing data, updating measures of progress, and further developing the data

on existing goals, all of which are available in a new report series on the redesigned boostnb.com website.

As usual, the BoostNB dashboard has been updated to show the province's most recent progress toward its goals in areas of GDP growth, trade, labour force participation, post-secondary enrollments, industry, and more. Along with exploring these measures, the BoostNB team has also added new economic goals to explore. Make sure you check them out!

Check out boostnb.com and follow BoostNB's social media accounts for regular updates on New Brunswick's economic progress.

@BoostNB

@BoostNB

@BoostNB

@BoostNewBrunswick

Meet the BoostNB Team

Jakob Ashfield
Researcher

Joseph Drost
Researcher

Sudhish Poojary
Communications Coordinator

Tianjiao Yang
Researcher

"I was very interested in BoostNB's research, mainly because it allowed me to connect with the province's data and showed me a side of the province that I had never seen before. Many of our research findings were eye-opening as they showed us the intricacies of how the economy is dependent on many different factors such as labour, trade, and non-economic factors like life satisfaction and carbon emissions. I am definitely coming out of the P2P program as an excellent communicator and now feel very comfortable communicating with anyone. I would love to see BoostNB join hands with PopNB and try to see how the indicators are affected by the rural and urban divide within the province. I think this would help us not only learn about the province's economy, but it could also give us a bigger picture of how each different area within New Brunswick is performing economically."

- Sudhish Poojary

"I found my research and collaboration on the BoostNB project this summer allowed me to connect with so many different individuals. I gained a better understanding of how the NB economy works, how it has been and is progressing, and opportunities to make a difference. I would love to see this research continue to be shared with a wider audience. For BoostNB in particular, there is very meaningful, objective research being done that the general public can benefit from!"

- Caroline Pietroski

"I was not familiar with NB's natural resources until we touched down with reports regarding mining, fisheries and agriculture, and forestry. I understood that NB is rich in its natural resources, but I did not know how they contributed to our GDP and economy. This program does not only teach me about the dashboard of economic indicators and the skills needed to update and analyze the data and reports but also allows me to learn from everyone that I have worked with this summer. I am so fulfilled, happy and satisfied to see that people other than my team can recognize our work as a team."

- Tianjiao Yang

"Knowing pretty well nothing about the economy ahead of this summer, the state of different sectors was interesting to me - in particular New Brunswick's exceeding greenhouse gas emission reductions, and how it is intertwined with other industries failing in New Brunswick. It was interesting to see social and environmental issues challenge economic growth. A takeaway for me is my skills development. Primarily, I learned data analysis and front-end website development, as well as a great deal of skills from P2P workshops. Some of my favourites were the Strengths Workshop and Insights Training."

- Jakob Ashfield

Project Lead

Kevin Brown

*Planning Manager,
Department of Tourism,
Heritage and Culture, GNB*

A Reflection

"The Pathways to Professions program is mutually beneficial for the students and the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture. The Department is responsible for many of the experiences that can impact pride in our Heritage, Arts, Culture and other important factors in New Brunswickers' well being and quality of life. Until now, we haven't had a quantitative perspective about how residents feel. The students are learning about how to obtain data through surveys, perform analyses, and develop recommendations. It's very satisfying to help develop skills that will be useful as professionals."

- Kevin Brown

InvitationNB is a Future GNB research stream in P2P that focuses on creating a strategic vision for the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture. This vision includes showcasing New Brunswick as the best place to visit, the best place to live, and ultimately the top vacation destination within Atlantic Canada.

To begin creating this vision, the 2022 InvitationNB taught sought to understand "Pride of Place" across all regions in the province. This understanding will support activities revitalizing the New Brunswick tourism industry while re-establishing a collective sense of pride among New Brunswick residents and communities.

While New Brunswick's tourism contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) currently ranks eighth among all provinces and territories (Statistics Canada), the need to improve tourism product development is immediately necessary. However, New Brunswickers are possibly creating a negative destination brand due to a perceived, or real, net negative Pride of Place or place sentiment scoring. Therefore, InvitationNB strictly focused on sentimental Pride of Place associated with New Brunswickers to help us better
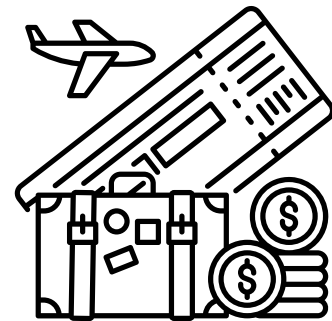
understand how provincial pride may impact provincial visitation at large.

To begin evaluating the current state of Pride of Place for New Brunswick residents, the team conducted a two-part survey that assessed individual net positive and negative opinions/sentiments attached to the province. The corresponding data from these surveys have enabled the InvitationNB team to use market research metrics, including the Net Promoter Score (NPS) and Tourism Sentiment Index (TSI). These metrics measure pride within each regional jurisdiction and assess how individual sentimental pride varies from region to region.

The information collected from these surveys will enable the team to provide valuable recommendations to the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture so that the department can take subsequent action.

Meet the InvitationNB Team

Kevin Abraham
Communications Coordinator

**Pape Oumar Diop**
Researcher

Daniel Moody
Researcher

Ekaterina 'Kate' Saeedi
Researcher

"Our research project was connected to the people who live in New Brunswick and their Pride of Place. It was interesting to discover what New Brunswickers are the most and the least proud of within the province. Throughout our research I learned that people are proud of their community and New Brunswick's beautiful nature. I gained a better understanding in how to conduct research involving people and surveys, as well as learned about various ways of measuring results and analyzing the data. It inspires me to pursue my researching journey. I hope that the future Invitation team will continue the research of Pride of Place concept and can achieve an even better understanding of how it can be improved."

- Kate Saeedi
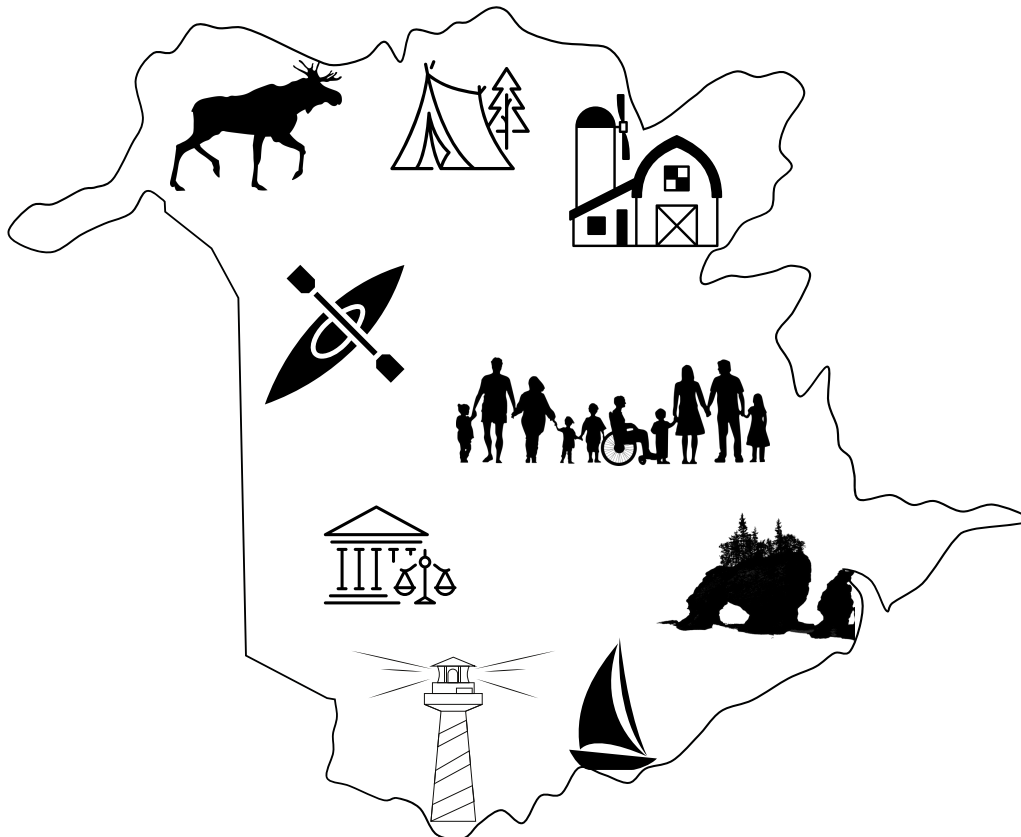
Project Leads

Eva Christensen

Manager, Research & Training, NB-IRDT

Rochelle Fletcher

Director, Organizational Development , Finance & Treasury Board, GNB

A Reflection

I think this project was very exciting for our students, as it addresses a real-world issue facing our province. It also underscores the need for data to help define an issue and solve problems. RecruitNB has been a wonderful opportunity for NB-IRDT to work with GNB to lead a student project this summer. I joined forces with Rochelle Fletcher, Acting Director of Organizational Development in the province's Finance & Treasury Board, to lead this important work. In that sense, RecruitNB has represented well the theme of partnership between NB-IRDT and GNB that has run throughout our P2P program this summer.

- Eva Christensen

RecruitNB is a Future GNB project stream in P2P focused on collecting data on current and future labour gaps within the Government of New Brunswick (GNB). Provincial data on labour gaps exist through reports such as the NB Labour Market Outlook: 2018-2027. However, there is no quantitative data analysis on the provincial government's labour gaps. Collecting this data is imperative, as GNB is one of New Brunswick's largest employers and is crucial to the province's societal structure.

The team's goal this summer was to find out who is leaving GNB, which departments these job vacancies are most prevalent in, and why there is an overall labour shortage in GNB. To collect this data, the team conducted three interviews and produced and distributed a survey to 1,200 GNB leaders across various departments.

From the survey, RecruitNB found that 79% of respondents had difficulties filling vacant positions, and 48% of respondents identified Voluntary Exits as a critical reason for current vacancies. This information contradicted anecdotal perspectives that retirement would be a significant reason for
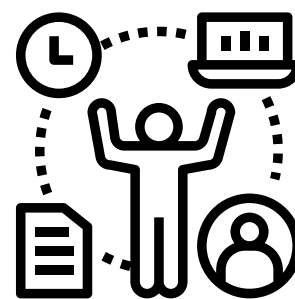
future labour gaps. When RecruitNB asked why employees are leaving GNB, 67% of survey respondents said this was due to GNB's non-competitive salary, and 43% said it was due to inefficient hiring practices. Additionally, RecruitNB conducted interviews with three leaders of various GNB departments to add a qualitative perspective.

Combining responses from these two forms of data can help RecruitNB's government stakeholders create data-driven policies and improve future hiring practices - such as through implementing improvements in all stages of hiring, gathering information on how to transition to a targeted and proactive recruitment style, and researching the connections between access to educational programs within the province and the identified sectors experiencing labour shortages.

Meet the RecruitNB Team

Karan Anand
Researcher

Olivia DeMerchant
Researcher

Rikkie Guillemette
Communications Coordinator

Sana Hashmat
Researcher

"I think this summer was very impactful for me and the way that I perceive the current state of New Brunswick. The province holds so much potential, but it is crucial that New Brunswickers become educated about what they can do to help advance their home. Especially on the GNB side of things, it is important that we take action and have those difficult conversations that will actually induce change."

-Olivia DeMerchant

"Our study is critical because we are not only identifying labor gaps but also attempting to restore the economic future of New Brunswick as a whole by providing qualitative and quantitative data to estimate the magnitude of these gaps. Working as a student researcher with RecruitNB through the Future GNB program was an educational and enriching summer experience for me. As a result of our interactions with stakeholders and Career Connect speakers, I made numerous new connections and enhanced my abilities in areas like as communication, analytics, and critical thinking. The most significant thing I have learned about myself is that by receiving relevant feedback from my team members and project leads, I can truly thrive in those particular area and accomplish great results."

-Karan Anand

"RecruitNB's mission tackled the objective of identifying labour gaps within GNB. We quickly came to realize that the future job market will be faced with a lack of employees who provide major services to New Brunswickers, which will thus create an economic and skills deficit in the province. Our research is fundamental to the restoration of not only the structural integrity of GNB, but also the economic prospects of NB as a whole. Teamwork was instrumental to the success of our research. I've learned so much about how people work towards a common goal with their own perspectives and talents.

I hope in the future our research takes shape to implement critical policies and projects that will elevate GNB as a competitive employer with high rates of retention. New Brunswick has the potential to be an example for the Atlantic region; we only need to nurture its ongoing development from places like GNB and outward."

-Sana Hashmat

"It is imperative that the data from this project be used as a foundation for addressing problems across departments, and that this project lives on in future iterations for years to come."

-Rikkie Guillemette

Project Lead

Dr. Ted McDonald

Director, NB-IRDT
Professor, Department of
Political Science, UNB

Project Mentor

Lee Whelan

Bachelor of Arts
Double Major in Political
*Science and Economics*
UNB, 2023

A Reflection

"P2P is important for several reasons that align with NB-IRDT's objectives. First, we can engage students in work of interest and relevance to the provincial government of New Brunswick, as well as to the wider audience of NB residents. Second, experiential learning is actively promoted by both the province and UNB, and by offering an experiential learning summer program we can demonstrate that we are contributing to those efforts. Third, from a hiring perspective, P2P allows us to engage with students who might be interested in working at NB-IRDT after they graduate."

- Dr. Ted McDonald

Population New Brunswick (PopNB) is a P2P research stream that aims to characterize New Brunswick's demographics through open-source data. This includes looking closely at trends in post-secondary education, immigration and population mobility, and family and household attributes. The purpose of PopNB is to describe various population demographics to provide data-driven policy implications for government and community stakeholders.

This summer, PopNB examined New Brunswick's urban (Fredericton, Moncton, and Saint John) and rural population dynamics and population growth. After all, New Brunswick is almost equally divided between urban and rural populations: 51.17% of New Brunswickers live in urban communities, and 48.82% live in rural communities.

However, despite an almost equal divide between urban and rural populations, their investigation revealed inequities between the two in terms of earning and spending money. A person living in a rural area can expect to make less than the median New Brunswick income, while the province's three metropolitan areas have median incomes over the provincial median. Although a
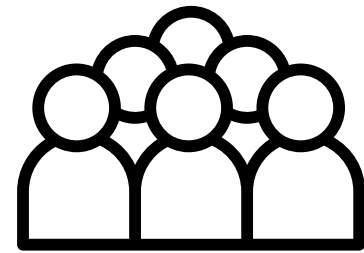
person can expect to make more in New Brunswick's urban areas, they can also expect to spend less. Also, a family in the province's metropolitan areas can expect to spend less than families in New Brunswick's rural areas.

In addition to these inequities, rural areas in the province have struggled to attract and retain immigrants. Meanwhile, urban parts of the province have seen immense success in growing their population through immigration. This success in urban communities may be due to metropolitan areas' access to transportation, healthcare facilities, and housing affordability, which rural communities may lack.

These findings can aid government and community stakeholders in creating data-driven policy implications to allocate resources to best assist New Brunswickers in the repercussions of the pandemic and generate population growth within the province through immigration.

Meet the PopNB Team

Hannah Breneol
Researcher

Evan Smith
Researcher

Courtney Stacey
Researcher

Paige Stewardson
Communications Coordinator

"Learning about the population of New Brunswick proved to be a far more valuable experience than expected! Understanding that half of the population is split almost equally in rural and urban regions but that resources do not have this same distribution opened my eyes to the ways discrepancies in data are valuable in making policy changes.

As Eva always says... everyone puts their pants on one leg at a time! Having this repeated throughout the summer solidified that when starting in a new field, it's important to not be afraid to reach out, even when intimidated. In this program, I was able to send off emails to members of parliament and government officials, so now I have no hesitations in using this confidence to make new connections for my future.

The future of P2P is bright! With students in the program eager to introduce new ways of sharing data and contributing new ideas, the possibilities are endless for P2P."

- Hannah Breneol

"I learned this summer that I really like communications and social media work. I have always been passionate about writing, editing, and design, but this summer has shown me that these passions can turn into work opportunities. Since uncovering this discovery, I have joined one of my dad's businesses as a social media manager in a way, which has been super fun and is providing me with a second stream of income! This summer I am taking away a new passion and future work opportunities."

- Paige Stewardson

"I found it very intriguing look at how income and expenses have different relations than I would have thought. Income in rural areas is lower than urban, but rural areas are spending more than urban regions.

P2P allowed me to blend my hobbies with work. I have always kept my love for money/investing/finances separate, and this project was the first time I've worked with these topics."

- Evan Smith
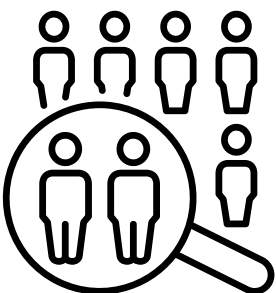
Project Lead

Dr. Chris Folkins
Research Scientist,
NB-IRDT

Project Mentor

Madeleine Gorman-Asal
Research Assistant,
NB-IRDT

A Reflection

"P2P provides a practical and research-based workplace experience in research methods, critical thinking, and knowledge translation that complements the course-based learning in students' academic programs. Students in the VitalSignsNB research stream are working on a project that is very timely and relevant to health care and health policy in New Brunswick. This project is a fundamental component of my research and the larger health research program at NB-IRDT, and the P2P students have played a central role in its development and execution."

- Dr. Chris Folkins

VitalSignsNB is a health-based research stream in P2P that examines the New Brunswick healthcare system. Specifically, VitalSignsNB examines and identifies areas of the healthcare system that require data to accommodate New Brunswickers' needs and to help create data-informed decisions to promote a healthier future for all.

Before the pandemic in 2020, NB had a narrative of low access to healthcare services. In response to this narrative and the new challenges brought on by COVID-19, the VitalSignsNB team improved their understanding of how routine access to primary care can impact the health of New Brunswickers, especially those with chronic conditions.

During the 2022 P2P program, the VitalSignsNB team created three research questions to evaluate continuity of care in New Brunswick:

1) Which social or demographic characteristics are associated with someone's level of access to care or continuity of care?

2) What are the health consequences of low access to or continuity of care?

3) Are the consequences of low access to or continuity of care influenced by social or demographic characteristics?

VitalSignsNB found that 6.9% (23,465) of New Brunswickers with chronic conditions were classified as having low access to care.

They found that low continuity of care affects areas of high healthcare accessibility since it overcrowds and overwhelms healthcare facilities and professionals. As a result, 25.7% (79,470) of individuals living in high access areas are affected by the influx of those with low access. This influx leads to a more significant strain on the continuity of care. Therefore, more preventative care is needed to resolve accessibility to continuity of care.

This data collected by the VitalSignsNB team can aid government and community partners in creating data-driven policy to allocate resources best to assist New Brunswickers in their access to healthcare.

Meet the VitalSignsNB Team

Vanessa Dairo-Singerr
Researcher

Olivia Hamilton
Communications Coordinator

Sofia Mehlitz
Researcher

Kay Mills
Researcher

"The experience I gained at P2P this summer has provided me with insights into the process of designing a research study as well as how to effectively analyze data through the use of various statistical methods. This position has helped me refine my critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and presentation skills to help me succeed in my future career."

- Vanessa Dairo-Singerr

"I think the VitalSigns project has given me a lot of insight into different aspects of the New Brunswick healthcare system that I had not taken into consideration before. Healthcare access and continuity isn't just about getting to see a family doctor or shorter emergency room wait times, but also the ability to access preventative care and having resources available to manage chronic conditions. It is interesting to explore a topic so personal and relevant to many New Brunswickers, myself included! It is exciting to know our findings are also of interest to many people. I would love to see this project expanded to include the state of healthcare during the pandemic. I think it would also be interesting to look at certain chronic conditions that had the lowest access or the most severe health consequences, like dementia and Parkinson's, and further explore that relationship."

- Sof Mehlitz
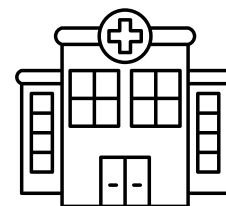
The opportunity to work on New Brunswick specific healthcare research was so meaningful. We are empowering New Brunswickers with data that calls for improvements to healthcare access. Working on this project not only allowed me to ground anecdotal stories in actual research outcomes, but it also brought me behind the curtain to understand the point of view of a researcher. I am ending this summer with such an enriched view of the world of work and of myself. I have expanded my professional skills in research and communications, which has empowered me with a vision for my career aspirations. Best of all, I have been able to grow, learn, and meet challenges alongside my teammates.

The VitalSigns 2022 research can serve as a launching pad both for further research and action. For example, future research could investigate causation and identify the barriers that are preventing New Brunswickers from better healthcare access. The results from this project could also support the embracing of new healthcare models and systemic change, as well as the exploration of best practices."

- Olivia Hamilton

P2P+

NB-IRDT

P2P+ is a health-based research stream examining New Brunswick's healthcare system. The team this summer consisted of alumni from the 2021 P2P program who wanted to enhance their data analysis skills by working with administrative data in NB-IRDT's secure facilities. This summer, the P2P+ team collected data on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health and substance use among New Brunswick residents aged 19 and older.

To understand New Brunswick residents' mental health, the team used results from two population-based, cross-sectional surveys by Statistics Canada that date before and during the COVID-19 pandemic: The Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) and the Survey on COVID-19 and Mental Health (SCMH). Both surveys were designed for respondents to answer various self-report questions concerning sociodemographic characteristics, mental and physical health, habitual behaviours, and, in the SCMH exclusively, COVID-19 pandemic-specific questions. The team used these timepoints to examine pandemic-related changes in mental health and substance use outcomes: depression, anxiety, general mental health, alcohol consumption, and cannabis use. The team used multivariate regression analyses to incorporate sociodemographic, behavioural, and pandemic-specific covariates to identify

Dr. Chris Folkins
Research Scientist, NB-IRDT
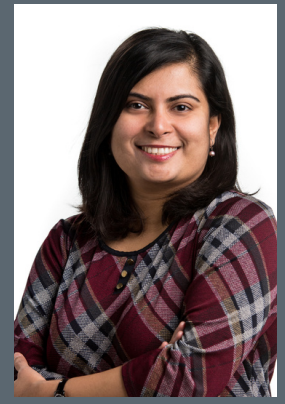
Chandy Somayaji
Senior Data Analyst, NB-IRDT
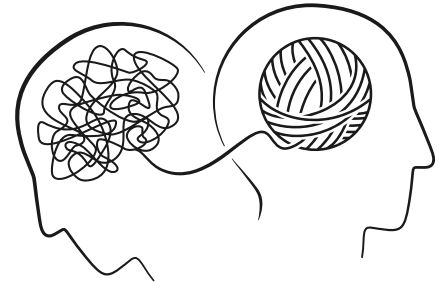
characteristics associated with worsening mental health and increased substance use during the pandemic.

P2P+'s results will help to inform decision-making related to the targeted delivery of support and services for the province's most vulnerable and significantly affected populations.

Mitacs

New Brunswick Health Research Foundation

Fondation de la recherche en santé du Nouveau-Brunswick
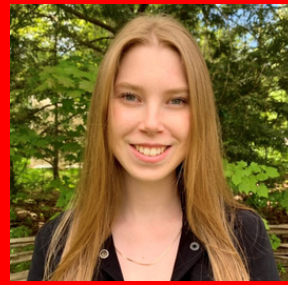
Meet the P2P+ Team

Clark Brewster
Data Analyst

Kelsi Evans
Data Analyst

Rebecca Foster
Data Analyst

Emily Thomson
Data Analyst

"My summer working in the P2P program has given me the opportunity to work with and get to know amazing people. More specifically, it has provided me with the chance to participate in health-based research on a recent and relevant topic in New Brunswick: the COVID-19 pandemic. Working on this project has allowed me to personally have a role in investigating the effects the pandemic has had on New Brunswickers and compare those to my own experiences of the past few years. Throughout this program, I have been able to work on improving pre-existing skills, such as public speaking, and gain new skills and experiences, such as participating in more hands-on data analysis."

- Rebecca Foster

"Our research this summer taught me that mental health in NB has been impacted by the pandemic more than I had realized, and that services that can be used help improve mental health are necessary moving forward.

This summer, by taking on our project, I have improved my analytic skills and feel much more comfortable understanding and working with data. I would like to see this research persist throughout the pandemic, as well as after COVID, to monitor how mental health and substance use continue to change."

- Emily Thomson

"What I found interesting about the study was our design. I've always wondered how researchers went about designing projects that looked at multiple covariates across different comparisons, which we did. I've gained experience applying statistical analysis techniques learned in my undergraduate degree to real-life research for present changes in policy and practice.
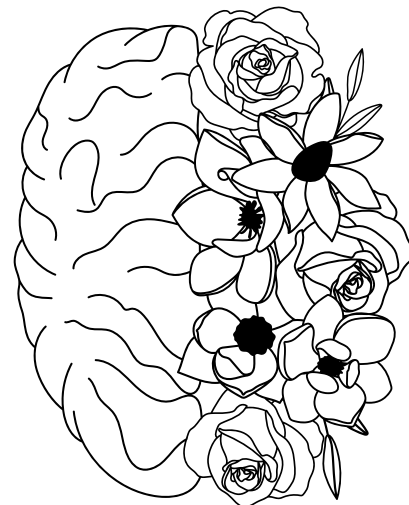
Research that is region-specific should not be overlooked; I hope the people who make decisions take our research to policy action and practices. "

- Kelsi Evans

Project Lead

Dr. AJ Ripley

Director, Policy and Strategic Initiatives, Women's Equality Branch, GNB

A Reflection

"P2P is a mutually beneficial learning opportunity for students and project leads. P2P inspires collaboration and interdisciplinary teamwork, allowing students to envision their professional life after the program. Students in the EqualityNB project are developing an interactive model, reporting on gender equity and diversity in New Brunswick for a critical stakeholder.

The students have been motivated, hard-working, and considerate. Their work has been a tremendous asset to our branch. We are grateful for how they have innovated the design and delivery of a tool many of our stakeholders rely on for education, funding and support, and communicating needs."

- AJ Ripley

EqualityNB is a Future GNB research stream in P2P updating a tool called the Equality Profile. In 2016, the provincial government's Women's Equality Branch created the 145-page Equality Profile - a document with data tables and summaries on diversity and inclusion benchmarks that report on gender equity in New Brunswick.

The Equality Profile has provided evidence for many of EqualityNB's stakeholders who dutifully use the information to inform policy, advocate for equity, and promote equality through their reports and presentations. However, as presented to the team, the tool was too rich in years-old data and used terminology from 2016's political, societal, and social state. As a result, the EqualityNB project was created to help maintain the relevance and usability of the Equality Profile.

The team's first step in improving the Equality Profile involved learning about gender literacy through the Government of Canada's Gender-Based Analysis+ (GBA+) training platform. In this training, EqualityNB team members became aware of their internal biases. After this training, EqualityNB conducted a week-long jurisdictional scavenger hunt across Canada. Through this research, it became evident that not all

provinces are equally fruitful in advocating for gender and racial equality. However, EqualityNB has taken some inspiration from Manitoba, the Yukon Territory, and Newfoundland and Labrador, which offer artfully designed and skillfully disaggregated websites and data tables.

This jurisdictional research led EqualityNB to design and release a survey to stakeholders to gain insight into their needs. The team learned about two main priorities through this survey: the next version of the tool must highlight a more extensively intersectional set of statistics, and the statistics within the tool should be frequently updated.

The NB population has grown and diversified as rapidly as the province itself, and the work that EqualityNB did throughout the 2022 summer program was motivated by the dream to see a province where everyone has an equal opportunity to flourish in life.

Meet the EqualityNB Team

Martina Berko
Communications Coordinator

Raf Gromadzki
Researcher

Kavitha Jagadeesan
Researcher

"The Government of New Brunswick and the awesome people at the Women's Equality Branch provide an impressive number of resources and tools to promote the goal of equality. The resources are among some of the best in the whole country, and the work we were a part of completing this summer will help promote that goal into the future.

The skills and insights I received from this experience allowed me to see what it takes to help enact the positive change that I would like to continue to be a part of during and after my education is completed."

-Raf Gromadzki

"Working on the EqualityNB research team has been really impactful for me as my first experience applying academic interests to 'real-world' work.

P2P opened my eyes to the possibility of finding work that inspires and challenges me both personally and professionally."

-Martina Berko

YouthSucceedNB is a Future GNB research stream in P2P examining New Brunswick's Youth Engagement Services. Specifically, the team analyzed how to ensure the safety of BIPOC and 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in care, explored how to implement kinship services, and considered the changes made to child and youth services in the wake of the new Child and Youth Well-Being Act.

This summer's project centered on how New Brunswick's youth, both in and out of foster care, can be supported as they transition into adulthood. As of now, youth in care lose the support they receive from the province at age 19, which does not allow for the continuum of care everyone needs as they emerge into adulthood.

YouthSucceedNB conducted their research by reviewing previous jurisdictional scans across provinces on kinship services, programs similar to New Brunswick's Youth Engagement Services (YES), and best supports for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and they acquainted themselves with the Equitable Standards for Transition to Adulthood for Youth in Care. In addition, the team administered a survey for social workers, met with employees in the Department of Social Development, and had the opportunity to present their findings to
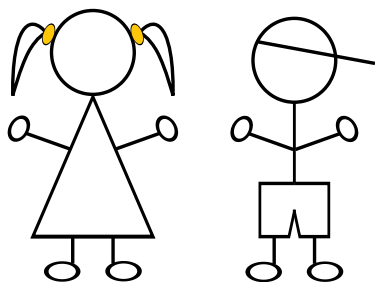
Project Lead

Wendy MacDermott

*Chief Experience Officer,
Social Development, GNB*

multiple stakeholders. This survey allowed them to gather the information required for their research and allowed them put together recommendations for the Department of Social Development.

After researching kinship policies in New Brunswick and the United States, the team noted best practices that can be implemented in New Brunswick. Then, alongside a consultation with Social Development, they created questions for frontline staff in New Brunswick to assess the current state of kinship in the province.

YouthSucceedNB's research also examined ways to ensure the safety of children and youth in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community who are in care. After consulting international and Canadian jurisdictional scans, they conducted an in-depth analysis of the barriers experienced by these young people and the resources available to them.

Meet the YouthSucceedNB Team

Olivia
Gould
Researcher

Janet
Gourley
Researcher

Bhaanvi
Rai
*Communications
Coordinator*

Nina
Smith
Researcher

"As someone new to New Brunswick, I was not quite familiar with the services provided to youth and children. Throughout the summer I got to meet with government officials and learned how hard they are trying to advocate for these youth and children. I realized I was very lucky to be privileged and how life can be so much more difficult for others who are my age or younger than me.

I have had my reservations about being a non-native speaker, because of which I sometimes come across as "shy" or introverted. However, this summer I had an opportunity to work on my public speaking skills, as we had a lot of networking events and weekly Show And Tells. I built so many connections in the summer, which will be beneficial for me professionally, and built friendships that would last for a lifetime. In fact, during my co-op placement interview for the Fall, it was a pleasant surprise to realize I already knew my interviewer because she had delivered a workshop at P2P, and we had connected previously!

YouthSucceedNB is a project that is very close to my heart, as I had an opportunity to provide recommendations that could be implemented and would make a change. With the incoming Act being proclaimed in 2023, I hope the next cohort of students can dig deeper into the Youth Engagement Services offered to BIPOC youth or children, as they may need additional resources while growing up."
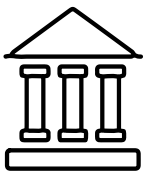
- Bhaanvi Rai

How To Get Involved

Students
Sign up for our newsletter to receive emails when applications and opportunities for future Pathways to Professions positions become available.
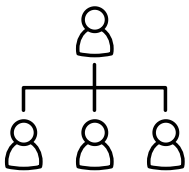
Researchers
Join our team to oversee a research project, mentor students, or lead a workshop.

Educational Institutions
Faculty leaders and professors, share your experiences and knowledge to students through Career Connect presentations. Also, inform students of opportunities with NB-IRDT and Pathways to Professions.

New Brunswick Organizations
Partner with us to design a research project in relation to your organization and help Pathways to Professions students gain workplace experience.

For more information, please contact the NB-IRDT Training team via email at nb-irdttraining@unb.ca.

Sign up for the NB-IRDT monthly newsletter at https://unb.ca/nbirdt/datanb.

Check out Future GNB's website at www.gnb.ca/Avenirgnb or www.gnb.ca/futuregnb.

Follow or subscribe to NB-IRDT's and GNB's social media accounts.

@NB-IRDT	@NB.IRDT	@NBIRDT_UNB	@NBIRDT	@NBIRDT_UNB
@GNB	@GNBCA	@GOVNB	@GOVNB	@GOVNB

We at NB-IRDT respectfully acknowledge that our buildings are located on the unceded territory of the Wolastoqiyik peoples – the People of the Beautiful River. We formally recognize that the land our staff and students work from remotely is traditionally part of the Wabanaki Confederacy, consisting of the Mi'kmaq, Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, and Wolastoqiyik nations. NB-IRDT plays a special role in helping improve our province through data-informed evidence, and we remain committed to tackling the problems that still need to be addressed to make our home a better, more equitable place for all.

Thank you to all our partners, stakeholders, and every person who has given their time to make Pathways to Professions what it is – we could not do this without your continued support, and we appreciate you so much!

Photo by Ryan Allain

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Pathways to Professions is an experiential learning program developed and facilitated by NB-IRDT and run in partnership with Future GNB with degrees of support from our community partners.

If you have any questions, email us at nb-irdttraining@unb.ca.

Thank you | Merci | Wəliwən | Wela'lin