

AMO 2020
Ministry of Education

COVID-19 has impacted the future of work in a profound and historic way. This impact requires a renewed focus on ensuring that educational curriculum are designed to create a resilient future generation. We recognize the innovative work your ministry has implemented into the restructuring of the Ontario curriculum to reflect the skill sets of the future, and we recommend that this work continue to reflect the growing interest in emotional and social skills.

Our Recommendations are:

- Implement OTEC's Service Excellence Program as a mandatory component of the Ontario Grade 10 Career Curriculum.
- Implement broader changes to the Ontario Career Curriculum that reflect the full breadth of skills and training required to future proof the workforce entering the labour market in the years to come.

COVID-19 has caused the largest disruption to interactive service work in history. With this disruption comes the opportunity to ensure that the workforce of the future is resilient and adaptable. Aesthetic labour, emotional, and social skills, are a critical component to successful and resilient workers in all industries. We are available for continued consultation on the ways the future of education in Ontario can continue to reflect the future of work.

Pre COVID-19, Tourism in Ontario

Prior to the historic shutdown of the industry, tourism in Ontario represented more than 400,000 workers and over 200,000 businesses, with a GDP contribution of \$36 billion, and an annual tax revenue of \$5 billion; tourism in Ontario has a greater economic impact than forestry, mining, and agriculture combined.

Tourism in Ontario was experiencing a period of exponential growth, year over year. This growth was a benefit not only to the tourism businesses and workers, but to the communities and people that directly benefited from the tax revenue and community infrastructure.

The Global Health Pandemic & The Indefinite Shutdown of a \$36 billion industry

On the morning of March 12th, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, and the subsequent rolling out of border restrictions, calls for physical distancing, and all necessary state restrictions to protect public health. As an industry we know that the state sanctions were a necessary step to prioritize public health, safety, and to save as many lives as possible.

However, the state sanctions led to the almost total shutdown of our \$36 billion industry. Aside from the health care industry, the tourism industry saw the first and most significant impact, with more than half of tourism businesses having to shut their doors, historic layoffs, the largest decline in air travel in

history, and within months many tourism businesses were facing bankruptcies for once thriving operations.

With re-openings now happening across the province, the month of June has seen a 21% increase in employment over last month. But despite this, roughly 188,000 Ontarians in this sector who lost their jobs due to the pandemic remain unemployed – tourism and hospitality has lost more than twice the number of jobs compared to retail, the second hardest hit industry. The full impact of COVID-19 on our industry remains to be seen; to date we have lost more than \$18 billion in revenue, and many tourism businesses are still at risk of bankruptcy or permanent closure.

Policy in a Pandemic:

At TIAO we have always worked on pressing policy files on behalf of the tourism industry and develop evidence-based policy recommendations that reflect the multifaceted needs of the industry. We apply robust methodologies in our research of the key policy needs of the industry; including, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and thematic coding of key pieces of legislation, qualitative surveys, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and consultations with industry experts and stakeholders.

Prior to COVID-19, our policy work focused on ensuring the political, economic, and regulatory environment allowed for the continued exponential growth of the industry, with recommendations focused around Labour, Investment, and Infrastructure. When COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic, we knew that our policy and advocacy work would need to go into crisis response, and we would need the data to support it. This spurred the launch of our Evidence Generation Strategy (EGS).

Evidence Generation Strategy (EGS):

At TIAO, we immediately began working to ensure that as the voice of the Ontario tourism industry, we had an Evidence Generation Strategy (EGS) in place in order to develop a full picture of the rapidly changing political, economic, and social impact on the Ontario tourism industry.

The EGS is multipronged and includes our standard methodology detailed above, while adding in rolling stakeholder calls, daily industry consultations, strategy development with other networked institutions, and the data collected through our province wide COVID-19 surveys. The EGS enables TIAO to build capacity through other networked institutions and collaborate with applied research institutes. The multipronged EGS directly informs our recommendations to all levels of government to ensure that we are best representing the rapidly evolving needs of the industry.