


# What is a Green Job?

## Defining the Environmental Workforce

If you were to do a quick google search asking the question what is a green job?, right now, you would find hundreds of potential definitions, many of which contradict each other.

I began my research trying to nail down one, and in the process discovered just how varied the environmental field is, and how this definition is ever-evolving. **One of my favourite definitions comes from a youth survey respondent:**



**“Green jobs are careers that focus on the creation of a more sustainable and just future for all”**

Which includes not only environmental scientists, engineers and clean energy specialists, but progressive politicians, urban planners, and community organizers. This would mean that green jobs go beyond just those which directly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and include any job that indirectly contributes to environmental benefits. The environmental workforce includes those “directly employed within the environmental goods and services sector, regardless of occupation, and those requiring specialized environmental competencies (or core workers), regardless of industry employer” (ECO Canada, 2020, 10).

## Why Green Jobs for Youth?

You may ask yourself, why prioritize green jobs for youth when any job is better than none to address high youth unemployment? I argue that this is the perfect opportunity to address multiple issues at once, which is urgent not only because of the climate and youth unemployment crises, but because the next ten years will see large scale retirement of environmental professionals.

*The Environmental Career Organization of Canada (ECO Canada)’s Labour Market Outlook* report estimates that 30% of the current environmental workforce is expected to retire by **2030**, which translates into 183,400 jobs.

**That means that 233,500 new environmental workers will need to be hired by 2030 to compensate for those jobs as well as new job growth in the sector.**

(ECO Canada, 2020, 2)



### So what is preventing youth from entering the green field?

Project Learning Tree Canada, the delivery organization for the Green Jobs in Green Spaces program identifies **three key challenges:**

- 1 Youth don’t know what a green job is;
- 2 They don’t see themselves in a green job and
- 3 They don’t know how to get a green job” (Topping & Chiarella, 2021)

To learn more about how Canada can help more young people enter the green field stay tuned for Sabrina’s advocacy report *Build Back Better: Expanding Green Jobs for Youth Post-Pandemic*

