



Upskilling for Newcomers to Create Sustainable Livelihoods: Virtual Career Coach

Kimiya Missaghi, Yao Mu, Diego Franco and Juan Correa on behalf of PeaceGeeks

Founded in 2011, PeaceGeeks is a non-profit organization dedicated to creating digital tools that strengthen communities to foster peace, resilience, and positive change. Based in Vancouver, we operate on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Coast Salish peoples, including the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. Our team collaborates to develop innovative technology that supports displaced populations and strengthens community-led initiatives. Most of our team members are newcomers to Canada, bringing diverse perspectives to the tools we create.

The Virtual Career Coach (VCC) equips newcomers by offering accessible, tech-driven career resources and complements the vital work of service provider organizations. Offered through the PeaceGeeks platform and in development as a white-label product, the VCC supports Service Provider Organizations serve their clients.

Since launching in summer 2024, over 100,000+ users including all 13 Canadian provinces and territories have joined our growing community of newcomers, actively using the Virtual Career Coach!

Broader Socio-Economic Impacts

Economic Integration and Sustainable Livelihoods

The VCC upskills newcomers, helping them secure meaningful employment, promoting long-term economic integration and building sustainable livelihoods.

Enhancing Employment and PR Opportunities for Newcomers

The VCC combats underemployment by connecting newcomers with jobs suited to their skills, education, and PR objectives. Through the AI-powered NOC code finder, it enables users to secure roles that advance both their careers and PR applications.

Scalable Global Solution

The white-label VCC is adaptable for service providers worldwide, offering a customizable solution for different labour markets. Its scalability makes it effective in both urban and rural areas, supporting displaced populations globally and enhancing economic integration efforts.

Collaborative Development Process

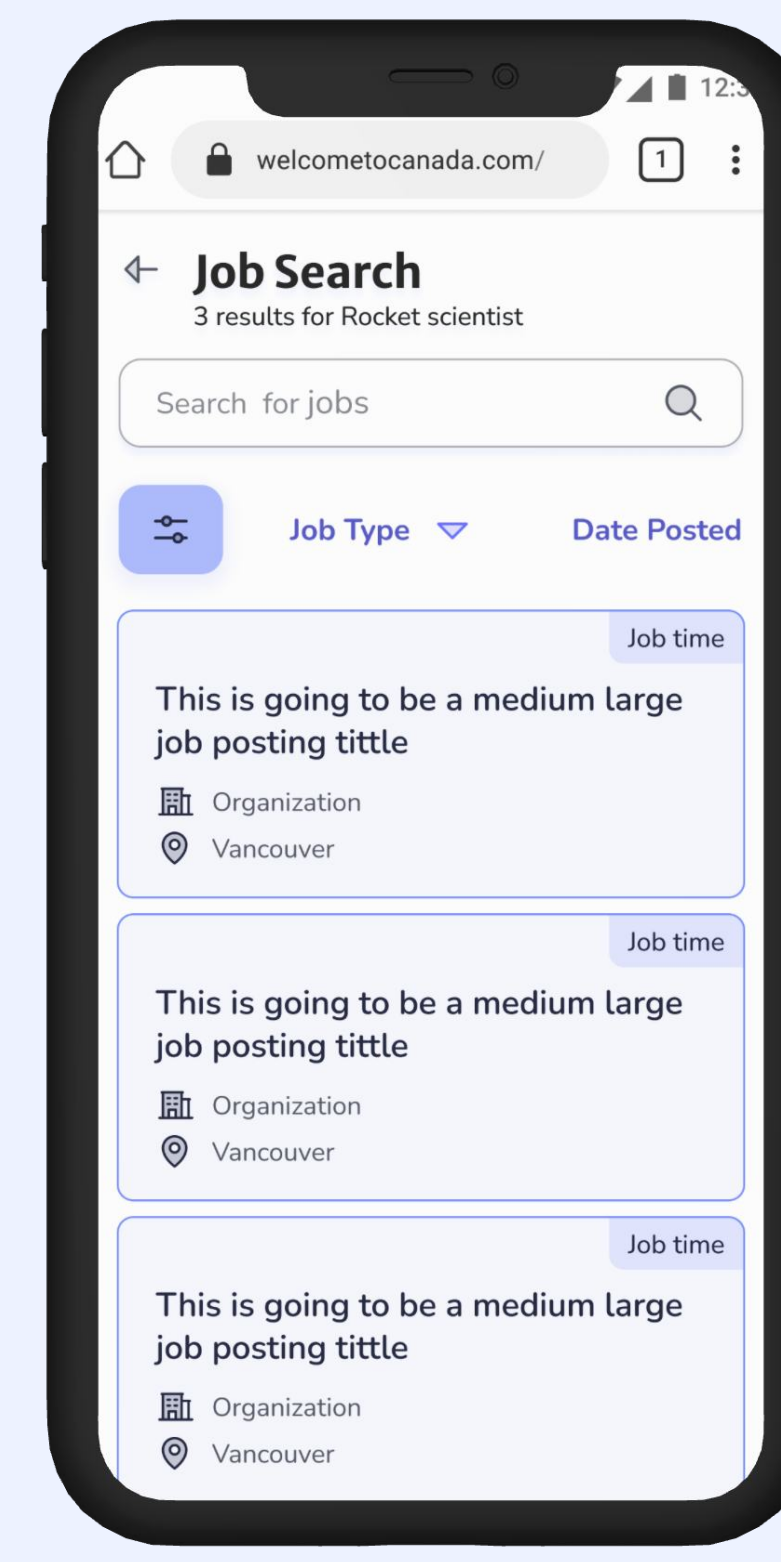


Through discovery sessions and user research interviews, these partners are providing critical feedback that informs the ongoing development of the VCC. This collaborative approach ensures the tool is adaptable across different types of service providers—large, small, local, and international—while remaining practical and impactful for newcomers and individuals facing barriers to navigate various employment landscapes.

The development of the Virtual Career Coach involves close collaboration with a Product Development Council, which consists of a wide range of stakeholders. Through discovery sessions and user research interviews with staff and clients, we continuously iterate and refine the tool to ensure it meets the needs of both service providers and users.

The Virtual Career Coach has been developed in close collaboration with a Product Development Council consisting of four key partners, each representing a diverse range of service provider applicability.

Key Features of Virtual Career Coach

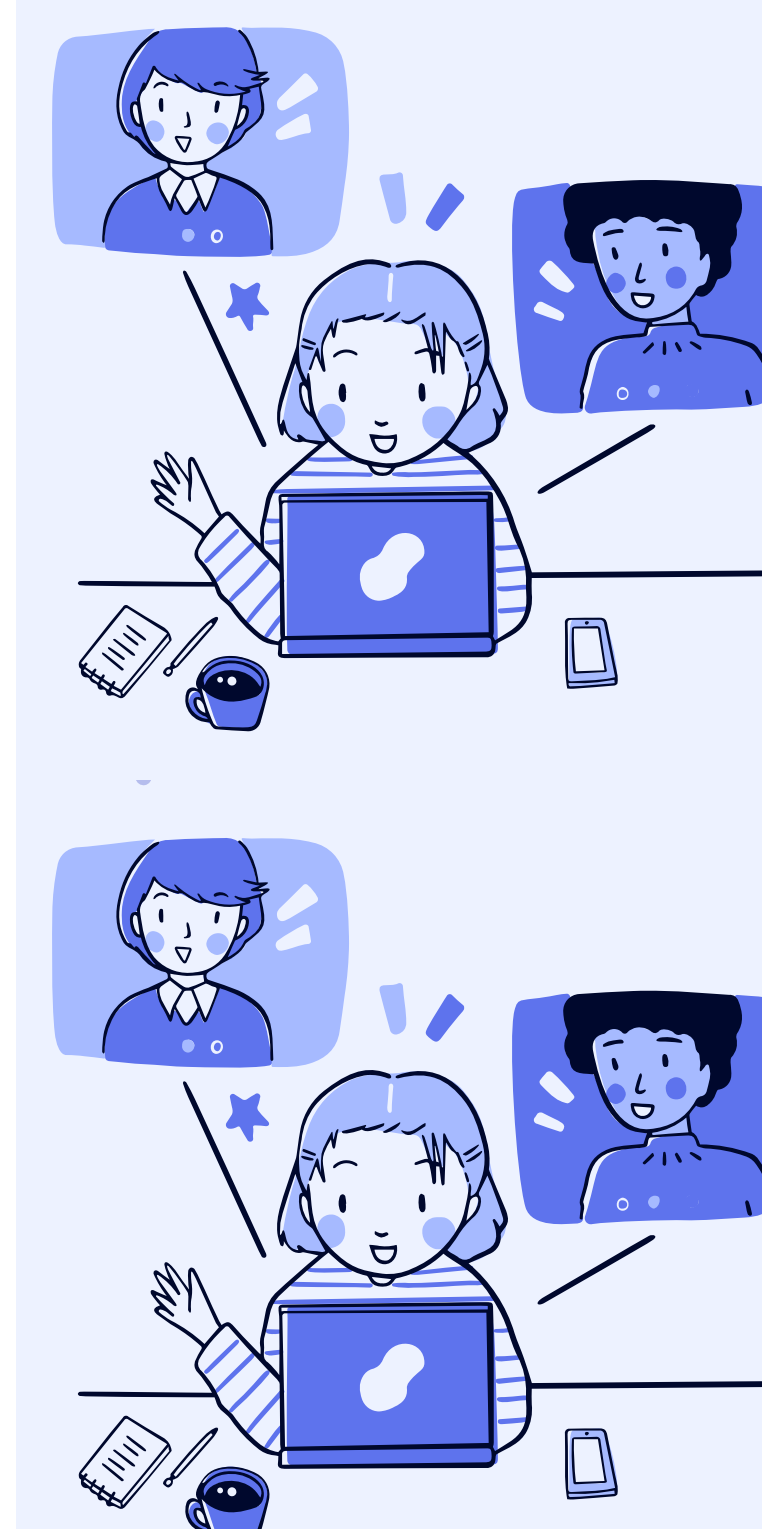
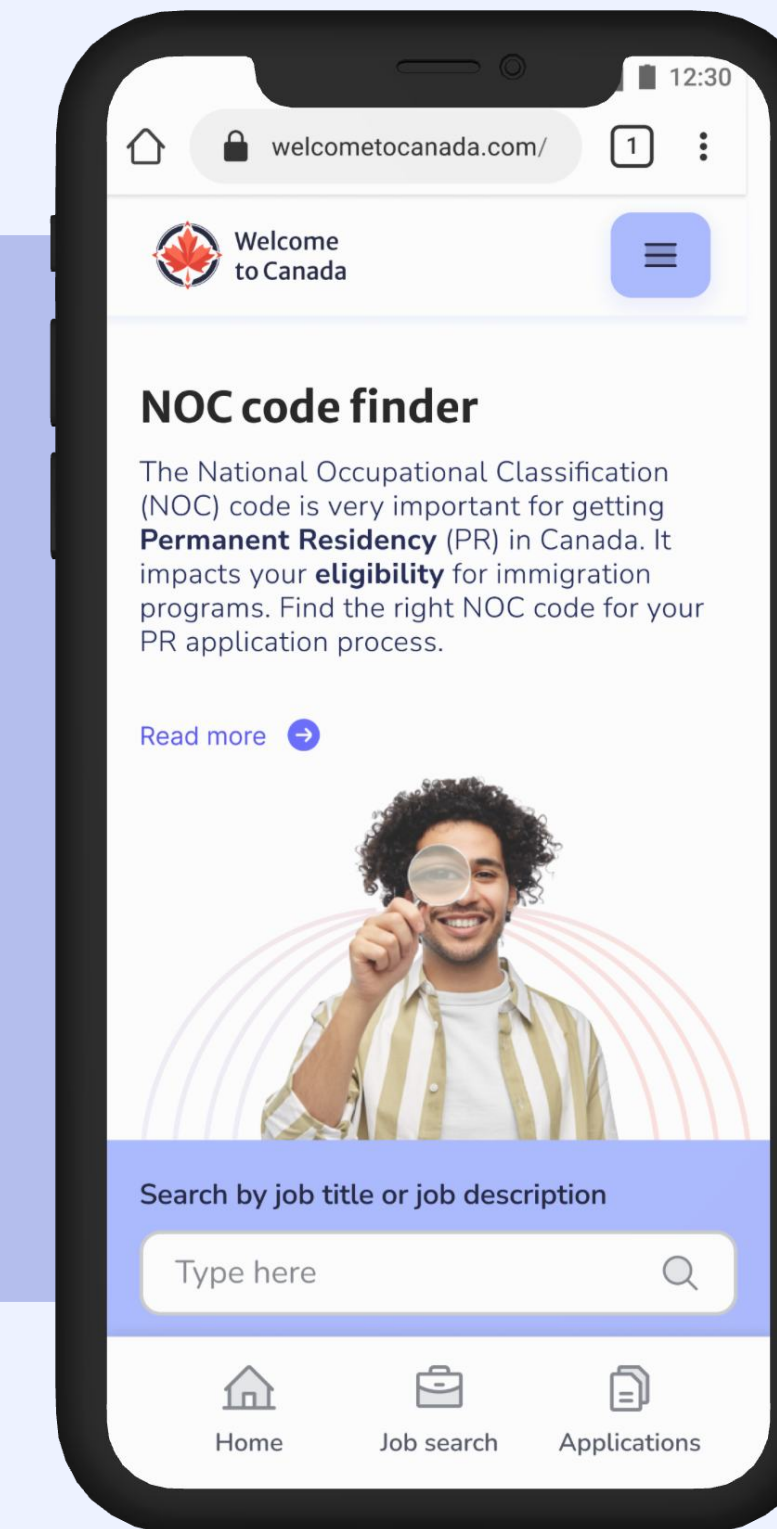


PR-Friendly Job Listings

VCC includes job listings that align with Permanent Residency (PR) pathways, helping newcomers navigate employment that supports their resettlement goals.

AI-Powered NOC Code Finder

The tool assists users in matching their skills with relevant job categories, simplifying job searches and improving the alignment between their qualifications and available opportunities.

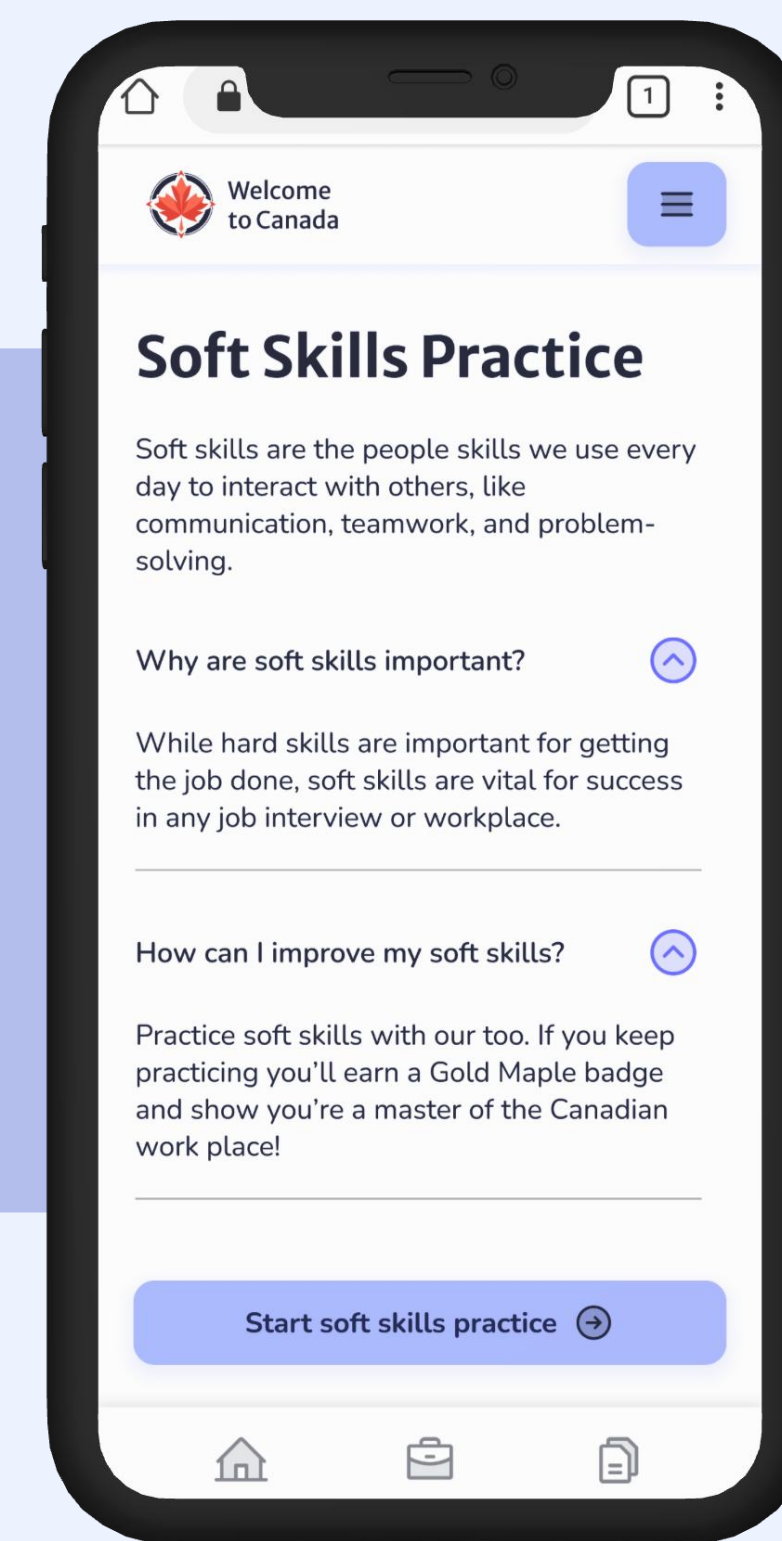


Interview Practice Coach

An AI-driven feature that provides real-time, personalized feedback on interview skills, helping users build confidence in preparation for job interviews.

Soft Skills Quiz

A practice tool designed to assess and improve essential non-technical skills for smoother integration into the Canadian job market.



Dual Offering



The Virtual Career Coach is currently available through the PeaceGeeks platform, where it serves as a tool for newcomers to independently access resources and guidance on navigating the job market.



We are concurrently developing a customizable white-label version. This allows service-providing organizations to adopt and brand the tool, offering tailored services to their clients while benefiting from the robust features of the VCC.

Implications for Newcomers

Supporting Independent Job Search

The VCC equips newcomers with tools they can use independently, providing accessible, tailored support for navigating local job markets.

Overcoming Common Challenges

Many newcomers face challenges understanding the job market. The VCC helps address these obstacles by offering job matching tools, and interview practice sessions that build confidence and readiness.

Complementing In-Person Support

The Virtual Career Coach works in tandem with service provider organizations (SPOs). While caseworkers and SPOs provide essential in-person guidance, the VCC offers a user-friendly platform where newcomers can practice, search for jobs, and access resources between appointments, ensuring they have ongoing support throughout their journey.

Serving Populations Facing Barriers

The platform is especially valuable for individuals with limited mobility or access to transportation, women with caregiving responsibilities, or newcomers located in rural areas. The VCC's accessibility allows these groups to access support, facilitating their participation in the labor market and contributing to economic resilience.

Implications for Service Provider Organizations

Expanding Reach

The white-label version of the VCC allows Service Provider Organizations to support clients not only beyond the physical building but also in between meetings. Through a digital platform, organizations can offer continuous support to newcomers who may need assistance outside of scheduled in-person appointments. This ensures clients have ongoing access to resources, both on-site and remotely.

Enhancing Service Capacity

The tool allows SPOs to offer scalable, automated services that complement their existing in-person programs. This reduces the pressure on staff while enhancing the quality of support provided to newcomers, ensuring that even small organizations with limited resources can deliver high-impact services.

Customizability and Flexibility

As a white-label product, the VCC can be tailored to the specific needs of different client populations, allowing organizations to incorporate branding and customize features to better align with local job markets and client demographics.

The Virtual Career Coach is a impactful tool designed to support newcomers and SPOs in creating pathways to sustainable livelihoods. Through both its PeaceGeeks platform and the white-label product development, the VCC bridges gaps in service provision, expands the reach of organizations, and equips newcomers with the skills and confidence they need to succeed in their new environments.

We extend our sincere thanks to the members of our Product Development Council and the newcomers, staff, and organizations who have contributed to the development of the Virtual Career Coach. Their insights have shaped a transformative tool that is making a meaningful difference in the lives of newcomers.



Extensive experience in supporting marginalized populations, ensuring the VCC meets the needs of diverse urban newcomers.



Focuses on connecting highly skilled refugees to meaningful employment, keeping the VCC relevant for targeted communities.



Provides global expertise in supporting displaced populations, ensuring the VCC is adaptable for international contexts.



Offers insights into challenges faced by newcomers in smaller urban regions, ensuring the VCC is effective in areas with limited services.