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Lancer sa propre entreprise: les jeunes adultes et l'esprit d'entreprise

Results of the National Dialogue and Summit for Young Canadians
from November 25 to 27, 2005 organized by
Canadian Policy Research Networks

Interim Report
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Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

There is no question that entrepreneurship and self-employment have economic and social value in society. They are a source of new jobs and economic stimulation. They also help young people acquire skills and experiences that can be useful for meeting other life challenges and help prevent the economic marginalization of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. In Canada, if we consider the many initiatives that public authorities, the private sector and non-profit organizations have already put in place to promote entrepreneurship among young people, a review of the in-the-field situation revealing a low number of self-employed young people gives cause to wonder.

In this perspective, this report distils the vision of entrepreneurship among Canada's young adults held by the young people who participated in the "National Dialogue and Summit for Young Canadians" from November 25 to 27, 2005, organized by the Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN). It presents the results of discussions held by the young participants during the Summit as well as the views they expressed regarding the discussion forum on the CPRN Internet site and information gathered individually from some of them who are particularly interested in this issue. This report then examines this youth vision through a comparative analysis with selected literature on entrepreneurship among young people in Canada and elsewhere in the world.

Our main findings are summarized as follows. After completing their education, young Canadians do not see entrepreneurship as a career possibility, but do in general aspire to become entrepreneurs or self-employed in the long term. There appear to be several reasons for this. One is the fact that the education system and society in general do not sufficiently encourage creativity in young people, which is a *sine qua non* for contemplating this type of career. Also, upon completion of their education, young people frequently do not have the means or the credibility to secure funding from financial institutions to start their own businesses. The lack of support and technical advice, effective mentors, and business and contact networks is also a difficult issue. Thus, to meet this challenge, all they can do is turn to informal sources of funding, such as support from family or personal contacts, a privilege unavailable to those who also come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Unfortunately, even though initiatives promoting entrepreneurship increase from year to year, very little effort has been made to analyse the issue from young people's perspective. Increasingly, young people between 15 and 24 years old are lumped in with the rest of the population in the higher age brackets through rules of play that completely overlook the specific problems they face.

As such, research is definitely needed that concretely identifies the specific obstacles and constraints young people face and that prevent them from starting their own businesses. Concurrently, suitable measures for nationally harmonizing existing and future initiatives and making them effective are crucial for making entrepreneurship a realistic career choice in the minds of young Canadians.