

In this issue

Canada's Youth	1
Developing Partnerships	3
Vulnerable Workers	4
Raising the Minimum Wage	4
Innovation at Canada's Universities and Colleges	5
Resolving "Fiscal Imbalance"	6
Accessible Health Care	7
Helping Nurses	7
On the Net and In the Media	8
www.e-network.ca	8
People	9
Fresh Ideas Campaign	11
Poverty Rates	11
President's Commentary	12

You can access or download
full reports and presentations
reviewed here from our Web
site at www.cprn.org

CPRN is a national not-for-profit
research institute whose mission is to
create knowledge and lead public
dialogue and debate on social and
economic issues important to the
well-being of Canadians, in order to
help build a more just, prosperous
and caring society.

Canada's Youth – An Untapped Policy Resource

Canada's youth are ready to play a major role in the country's future, despite the evidence of their disengagement from voting and political parties. Changing the country's political practices to facilitate youth engagement will reap significant rewards.

No one taking part in or observing CPRN's National Youth Dialogue and Summit last November could conclude otherwise.

The event brought together 144 randomly chosen, representative young people, aged 18 to 25 to share their vision for Canada and to meet with 40 decision-makers from the public, private and non-profit sectors. In more than three days of discussion they laid out a road map for change and the role they and other social actors should play in achieving it.

Connecting Young People, Policy and Active Citizenship, a new report from CPRN, presents the policy implications of this youth vision for Canada.

The vision is, above all, pan-Canadian. It stresses high quality common standards in public services like education and health,



the workplace, and the environment, and equity of access and mobility across jurisdictions for all citizens. It is guided by the shared values of equity, accountability and transparency, long-term sustainability and prevention, and efficiency in the federation. It values diversity and insists upon both the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

"It is a pragmatic and balanced vision, not pie in the sky," says Sharon Manson Singer, CPRN President. "It dovetails with what citizens in other CPRN dialogues have said."

(Continued on page 2)



The Dialogue and Summit participants crafted an action plan in five key policy areas: learning, work, health, the environment and citizenship. CPRN has distilled the following actions for policy makers and business and community leaders from their proposals:

- **Build connections for a stronger Canada**
 - Increase support for pan-Canadian experiences through exchanges and youth internships;
 - Treat bilingualism as a national and personal asset – study limitations of current approaches and involve youth in reshaping language programs.
- **Update Canadian governance**
 - Make democratic renewal a necessity – provide meaningful opportunities for participation in public policy at the constituency level, with government departments, legislatures and political parties. Tap into the potential contribution of youth;
 - Foster citizenship skills – Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) in collaboration with the federal government should convene a national working group including municipalities, educators, academics and students to find a better way to prepare and support students as active citizens.
- **Sustainability, decisions that reflect a holistic long-term approach**
 - Measure success holistically – with indicators that go beyond economic measures to put sustainability at the heart of decision-making;
 - Need for individuals and businesses to play a larger role and governments to lead stronger action on the environment;
 - Focus on determinants of health and prevention, expand patient-focused interdisciplinary team approach to primary health care, and open up the conversation on public and private roles in health care.

- **An equitable and efficient federation, aligning education, work, health and environment systems to work in harmony**
 - Regular First Ministers Meetings, linked to legislatures;
 - Joint FPT initiatives to develop common standards in critical public services and resolve mobility issues;
 - Convene a meeting on compliance and enforcement of employment standards.
- **Connect education, quality of life and productivity**
 - Governments to create an integrated system of post-secondary financing;
 - Rebalance funding for research and improved teaching may be called for;
 - Strengthen entrepreneurial options in secondary and post-secondary levels;
 - Incentives for greater employer investment in skills upgrading and private/public efforts to develop quality workplaces.
- **Knowledge and information as catalysts for action**
 - Citizen-focused government information and reporting;
 - Public institutions should engage citizens in defining meaningful information, how to deliver and evaluate it.

“It is a substantial agenda with an important dividend – the integration of our younger citizens in the public life of the country,” says Manson Singer. “CPRN intends to shape its research agenda and activities accordingly. We urge other players in the public, private and non-profit sectors to do their part.”

Two companion reports are also available; *Post-secondary Education in Canada: A Vision from Canadian Youth*, by Patrice de Broucker, reports on the discussion of learning issues at the Youth Dialogue, especially PSE. *Lancer sa propre entreprise: les jeunes adultes et l'esprit d'entreprise*, by Alain-Désiré Nimubona, draws on the Dialogue, as well as other research concerning youth entrepreneurship and self-employment, and identifies policy implications.



Developing Partnerships



RBC Foundation

The **Royal Bank Financial Group**, and more recently the **RBC Foundation**, have been long-standing friends and supporters of CPRN. A founding supporter of the Family Network's *Diversity Gateway* project, the RBC Foundation has recently focussed its support on a project by the Work Network: *Pathways for Youth to the Labour Market*. This initiative will explore how young people actually get from high school to jobs – whether it's a direct route, or through some kind of post-secondary education or a “non-linear” path. The project will identify institutional and policy structures that either support or hinder the ability of young Canadians to find their way to sustained employment with decent pay, good working conditions and career potential. It will also examine attitudes and underlying values about alternative routes to good jobs, how they're shaped and how they influence choices, with an eye to developing policy options to promote and develop those “pathways” that actually lead to success in the labour market.

RBC Financial Group (RBC) is Canada's largest financial institution – by market capitalization and assets – with over 14 million clients and more than 60,000 employees worldwide. The company offers services in personal and

commercial banking, wealth management, insurance, corporate and investment banking, and transactional services. For the third year in a row, RBC has been named “Canada's Most Respected Corporation” in an annual poll by KPMG and Ipsos Reid.

CPRN's relationship with RBC is not limited to support of these two projects. In January 2006, Work Network researcher, Richard Brisbois interviewed Zabeen Hirji, Senior Vice President, Human Resources at RBC, about the company's diversity strategy. The interview is posted on CPRN's Job Quality Web site http://www.jobquality.ca/newsroom_e/intvw_rbc.stm



Sharon Manson Singer, President, CPRN, (mid-right) thanks Laura Delaney, Regional Vice-President, Eastern Region, RBC Financial Group (mid-left) for their support. Accompanying Dr. Manson Singer are Patrice de Broucker (left) and Richard Brisbois (right) of the Work Network.

...and other developments

On June 9th, **Lynton (Red) Wilson** attended the Work Network roundtable entitled *Fostering Quality in Canada's Post-secondary Institutions*. Mr. Wilson's interest in Canadian education resulted in a challenge grant from the **Wilson Foundation**, to support the project *Achieving Access and Excellence in Canada's Post-secondary Institutions*. All project funders are invited to attend any roundtables associated with the projects they support.

The Wilson Foundation

Canadian Policy Research Networks is most grateful for the support from our many friends and stakeholders. The second decade of policy discourse is sure to bring with it other exciting opportunities for partnerships and mutually satisfying relationships.



Vulnerable Workers Research Highlights



Research Highlights

Making Work Pay: Findings and Recommendations

Number 6
May 2006

In this Issue

- Who Works for Low Pay?
- How Many Low-paid Workers Live in Low-Income Families?
- Are Low-paid Workers Able to Obtain Employment Benefits and Social Supports?
- How Can We Help Vulnerable Workers Realize Their Potential?
- Will Such Measures Increase Employers' Costs?
- Details of Recommendations

from CPRN's *Vulnerable Workers Series*

by Ron Saunders
Director
Work Network



People who work full-time should be able to live decently. Most Canadians would agree with this simple principle. In fact, they did so in the 2002 *Choice: Outlook for Canada's Future*. Yet, for more than two decades, we have condemned one in six full-time workers to poverty-level wages. This is unfair. It is also a waste of their potential to contribute to the economy, their communities and the future of their families.

Who has this happened? Employers are faced with global competition, so they have shifted risk to employees to reduce costs. As a result, some work is temporary, or part-time, or contracted out, than in the past, and the demands on many regular employees have intensified. At the same time, governments have cut back on social supports and shifted risk to individuals to reduce their deficits.

Even though Canada has been creating millions of well-paid jobs over the

decades, and the overall standard of living rose by 43 percent from 1980 to 2000, too many low-paid jobs were created, many of them part-time, casual, contract and temporary jobs. Efforts to reduce payroll costs and the growth in the service sector have generated these low-paid jobs. And since these people face high risks of job loss or a cut in hours, even families with multiple earners can experience periods of low income.

These highlights are based on an extensive series of studies on 'vulnerable workers' by CPRN. They will give you a description of who is low paid, what makes them vulnerable, and what Canadians can do about it.

'Vulnerable workers' are those whose participation in the labour market leaves their well-being at risk. What makes adult workers vulnerable? The key factor is low earnings over a long period of time. This is often accompanied by one or more of the following:

Employment Insurance, lack access to non-statutory benefits like medical insurance or dental plans, have difficulty obtaining affordable housing or affordable child care, and rarely belong to unions.

The driving principle behind this research is that working people deserve the opportunity to live decently, to realize their potential for personal development, and to contribute to our economy and society. Saunders proposes policy options to that end.

Raising the Minimum Wage – Just the Facts, Ma'am

Making Work Pay: Findings and Recommendations from CPRN's Vulnerable Workers Series, by Ron Saunders, Director of CPRN's Work Network, is a concise précis of the main findings of seven research papers, as well as other recent literature, and their implications for public policy.

Vulnerable workers are those whose participation in the labour market leaves their well-being at risk because they can't get a job that pays a decent wage and/or that offers conditions of work that meet basic social norms. Two million Canadian workers fit this description.

Vulnerable workers also typically lack the opportunity to upgrade skills, lack legal protection or are handicapped in terms of defending their rights, don't qualify for programs like

It's almost as if the Canadian economy couldn't get by without paying a significant proportion of its workforce poverty-level wages. Our standard of living advances, but low-paid work is as persistent and common as ever.

One obvious response is to insist that people be paid a wage appropriate to the cost of living. Unfortunately, Canada's minimum wages aren't high enough to keep full-time workers out of poverty.

The argument against raising the minimum wage is that it will mean fewer jobs. But just how true is that? And does it apply to all workers alike?

As part of the background research for its project on vulnerable workers, CPRN's Work Network commissioned a

review of the relevant research on the employment effects of minimum wage laws.

The Employment Effects of the Minimum Wage: A Review of the Literature, by Olelekan Edagbami, summarizes the theory of minimum wage floors and the traditional evidence of employment impact. Edagbami draws on recent work in the minimum wage literature to challenge some of that evidence.

Edagbami finds, from the range of evidence he considers, that increases in the minimum wage are generally harmful to teenage and youth employment, but have little or no negative employment effect on adults aged 25 and older.

He concludes with suggestions for further research.



In Need of a Boost: Innovation at Canada's Universities and Colleges

Innovation in teaching and learning and research dissemination is widespread on Canadian campuses. But a policy environment of “benign neglect” means we know too little about the impact of that innovation, and are doing too little to sustain it, says a new CPRN study.

Innovation and Differentiation in Canada’s Post-secondary Institutions, by Robert Crocker, of Atlantic Evaluation and Research Consultants, and Alex Usher, of the Educational Policy Institute, argues that provincial and federal governments must take steps to encourage research and innovation in teaching and learning if Canada is to maintain its human capital edge over rapidly emerging international competitors.

Crocker and Usher examine the state of innovation in the country’s post-secondary (PSE) schools, the conditions that foster it and the barriers that hinder it. Their case studies from campuses across Canada help illustrate factors common to successful innovation stories. They also make suggestions for further research.

The study defines “innovation” for its purposes as changes in *general* practice at an institution. It focuses on innovations in teaching and learning or knowledge mobilization, and innovations designed to differentiate an institution from others like it.

“Our results support the conclusion that innovations are more likely to be driven by internal factors, like a facilitating culture or inspired leadership, than by external factors”, says Alex Usher. “In fact, institutional cultural factors are so important that it is often difficult to ‘export’ innovations in one institution to another.”

The authors find that successful innovation depends on widely shared ‘buy-in’ within an institution, a general consensus on the innovation’s desirability, and internal institutional supports.

The study finds universities and colleges use innovation in teaching and learning, and in research dissemination, to distinguish themselves from their competitors. Most strikingly, it concludes that “substantial effort over a long period of time” is needed before an innovation becomes widely identifiable with an institution. The examples of



Acadia University’s high tech “advantage”, Waterloo’s co-operative learning, and McMaster’s problem-based learning confirm that conclusion.

“Serious and successful innovation is a slow-acting process, based as much on culture change as on policy change,” says Robert Crocker. “Culture change at PSE institutions deserves scholarly attention, given culture’s centrality in these issues.”

In survey responses and key informant interviews, the most widely cited barriers to innovation were; limited resources, limited incentives and opportunities, limited rewards and recognition, and resistance to change. The study advises further research to assess the real impact of each of these.

The authors urge governments to create policy environments that will stimulate more innovation and to provide support for research that defines and measures post-secondary outputs.

“We need to determine what knowledge and skills contribute most to the economic and social impact of PSE, how to maximize this impact, and which learning and teaching approaches are most cost-effective,” says Ron Saunders, Director of CPRN’s Work Network. “It is ironic that the area of research where our PSE institutions are weakest is research about teaching their own students. We are convinced that with the right incentives our universities and colleges have the capacity to change that.”



Resolving the “Fiscal Imbalance” – What Citizens Have to Say

The citizens’ perspective on how our governments should share public funds is surprisingly free of jurisdictional jealousies. Citizens argue that a vision of what we are trying to achieve *as a country*, not governments’ fiscal capacity, must be the starting point.

That’s a key finding of ***Strengthening the Federation: Citizens’ Dialogue on Sharing Public Funds for a Better Canada***, by Judy Watling, Judith Nolté and Mary Pat MacKinnon, a new report from CPRN’s Public Involvement Network. It presents the results of a series of intensive citizens’ dialogues in major cities across the country. CPRN conducted the dialogues on behalf of the Advisory Panel on Fiscal Imbalance, established by The Council of the Federation led by Canada’s Premiers.

The citizens, representative of all regions and walks of life, reached a consensus on the values and principles decision-makers should observe when they negotiate terms for sharing public funds:

- **Fairness** – Promote shared national standards/goals to ensure the “same acceptable standards” for all Canadians.
- **Access** – Canadians deserve access to the same acceptable level of service across the country. Support mobility of people across the country.
- **Transparency and Accountability** – Promote greater trust in governments, measure progress and report to Canadians, improve accountability between governments and to citizens, and institute a process to ensure citizen input.
- **Sustainability** – Embrace a long-term vision for Canada, provide continuity of services across changes in government, and ensure affordability.
- **Efficiency** – Collaborate to avoid duplication, reduce waste and share best practices. Coordinate services across provinces, remove inter-provincial barriers, enable skilled newcomers to work in their field and improve Canada’s competitiveness.

“There is a very strong Pan-Canadian message here,” says MacKinnon, Director of the Public Involvement Network. “The message to all governments is: collaborate on a citizen-focused approach and a vision of the level of services each Canadian is entitled to, wherever he or she

lives. Next, collaborate on ensuring they have access to those services, coast to coast to coast, provided in the most efficient way.”

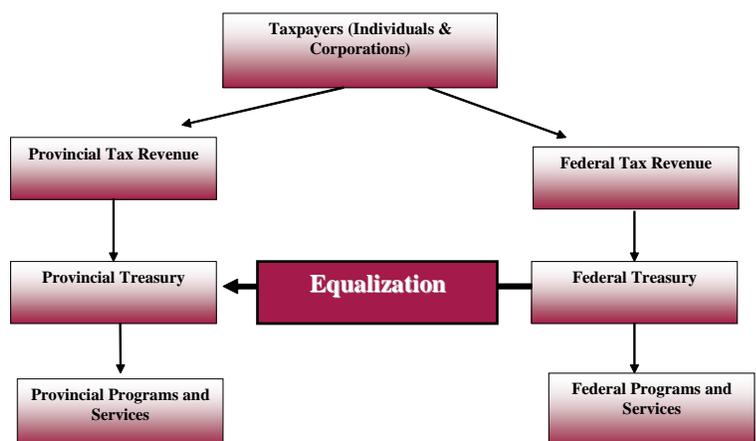
While citizens see the federal government as responsible for articulating a national vision and national standards in essential services like health and education, they are clear that the vision cannot be developed without the participation of all levels of government, citizens and stakeholders.

Also striking is the strong accent on accountability, a product, perhaps, of the low level of trust citizens accord their governments today.

This leads to a demand for citizen input in all major decisions, a preference for conditional and direct transfers over unconditional transfers and transfer of tax points, and regular reporting on progress toward the standards agreed upon in the national vision.

“Trust and accountability are both part of the problem and part of the solution,” says MacKinnon. “The Council of the Federation is well positioned to exercise leadership in developing a vision and standards. If governments think beyond their borders and work in the interests of all Canadians, they will help rebuild public trust.”

Portrayal of Equalization: Sharing Between Taxpayers



Prepared by participants in the Edmonton session on the Citizen’s Dialogue on Sharing Public Funds for the Advisory Panel on Fiscal Imbalance, December 10, 2005.



Accessible Health Care: Wait Times Only Part of the Story

Much of the recent public and political concern over accessible health care in Canada has focused on a narrow range of surgical services provided by a narrow range of health providers. A new paper from CPRN's Health Network seeks to widen the discussion.

Towards a Broader Framework for Understanding Accessibility in Canadian Health Care, by Renée Torgerson, Arlene Wortsman, and Tom McIntosh, a paper prepared for the Canadian Nurses Association, provides a preliminary framework for understanding the host of factors that affect Canadians' ability to obtain a complete range of essential health services.

While access to surgery is important, a truly accessible health system demands much more. It requires us to address real problems with access to a range of services and service providers that are not part of current debate about wait times.

Helping Nurses Get to Where They're Needed

Some have remarked that it is sometimes easier to trade with foreigners than it is to trade across provincial boundaries. An exaggeration, perhaps, but it underlines the continuing existence of barriers to efficiency endemic to Canadian federalism.

As if to underline the point, Alberta and British Columbia have just initialled a bilateral internal "free trade" agreement. Provincial nurses' organizations were among the first to welcome the event. That is not surprising. While there has been progress in making it possible for nurses accredited in one province to practice in another, those transitions are still not as smooth as they are in a number of other countries, or as they should be had we a truly responsive national health care system.

Nursing Skills and Mobility: Facilitating the Transfer and Tracking of Nurses Across Canada

by Renée Torgerson, Arlene Wortsman, and Tom McIntosh, also written for the Canadian Nurses

Similarly, current indicators of accessibility often focus on benchmarks for hospital and physician-based services. Not a bad start, but it isn't enough to gauge accessibility of the overall health system.

The authors advocate a more holistic set of measurements that take into account the concerns of a broad set of stakeholders, including clients and patients. The discussion about accessibility, they argue, also needs to be inter-sectoral and systemic – involving physicians, government, physiotherapists, nurses, psychologists, pharmacists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, and so forth. But this will only happen, they say, if patient advocacy groups, provider groups, unions, governments, researchers and policy makers insist that the current discussion on access be expanded to include a greater range of health services and sectors



Association, assesses the impediments to the free movement of nurses across Canada and explores models here and abroad that could further improve mobility.

Equally important from the perspective of health human resources planning is the need to develop a way to track the movement of nurses and nursing competencies across the country. This becomes all the more pressing as mobility increases. Resolving it will require a high degree of co-ordination among jurisdictions in an effort to reach common standards and consistent data collection.

The authors provide some examples of best practices in this regard.



On the Net and In the Media – June 2006

As of the end of May 2006, the number of discrete visitors to www.cprn.org has reached 1.25 million visitors a year, up 83% year over the year before. Downloads of CPRN publications hit a new record of just under 1.5 million, up 32% from a year ago. Visits to our Web site on workplace indicators, www.jobquality.ca, are at an all-time annual high at 177,000, up 23% in the last year.

We now have 139 publications recording more than 5,000 downloads, and 81 with more than 10,000! Our “best-sellers”, include Ross Finnie and Alex Usher (Work Network), *Measuring the Quality of Post-secondary Education* (74,000 downloads!); Julie Ann McMullin and Martin

Cooke (Work Network), *Labour Force Ageing and Skill Shortages in Canada and Ontario*; Cathy Fooks and Lisa Maslove et al. (Health Network), *Data, Data, Everywhere...: Improving Access to Population Health and Health Services Research Data in Canada*; Nola Ries and Timothy Caulfield (Health Network), *Accountability in Health Care and Legal Approaches*; Frances Abele (Family Network), *Urgent Need, Serious Opportunity: Towards a New Social Model for Canada's Aboriginal Peoples*; Cathy Fooks and Lisa Maslove (Health Network), *Rhetoric, Fallacy or Dream? Examining the Accountability of Canadian Health Care to Citizens*; Richard Chaykowski (Work Network), *Non-standard Work and Economic Vulnerability*; Patrice de Broucker

(Work Network), *Without a Paddle: What to do About Canada's Young Dropouts*; Jane Jenson (Family Network), *Canada's New Social Risks: Directions for a New Social Architecture*; Julia Abelson, François-Pierre Gauvin (Health Network) *Engaging Citizens: One Route to Health Care Accountability*; Joseph Michalski (Public Involvement) *Quality of Life in Canada: A Citizens' Report Card – Background Report*.

As for media coverage, Patrice de Broucker and Karen Myers' paper on the state of adult education in Canada garnered considerable attention on paper and on air. There was also coverage of CPRN's work on wait times, poverty and vulnerable workers. Third party electronic newsletters and networks continue to redistribute notice of our publications with consequent impact on our downloads. This can only grow.

www.e-network.ca

News on your Desktop

Receive weekly notification of the latest publications, speeches, articles and presentations from CPRN researchers.

All of them available free for downloading from the CPRN Web site.

e-network
HTML version

We provide an **HTML** version of *e-network* that is capable of displaying as a Web page.

e-network
TEXT version

We also provide a **text** only version of *e-network* that displays no images, special fonts, or hyperlinks.

Sign up today by visiting
www.e-network.ca



People

CPRN said goodbye to Peter Puxley, Director, Public Affairs, and Denise Séguin, Executive Assistant to the President. We wish them both a well deserved retirement.



From left to right, Peter Puxley and Denise Séguin with Sharon Manson Singer, President and Judith Maxwell, Research Fellow.

We welcome Jennifer Fry, Director, Public Affairs. Jennifer is a journalist of 29 years experience, best known for her documentary work with CBC Radio's flagship program on national politics, *The House*. She has worked in a variety of locations including Quebec City, Fredericton and Ottawa and abroad, in West Germany and the United Kingdom.

Sonia Pitre, Researcher, Public Involvement Network. Sonia has a Ph.D. in Political Science from Laval University. She has worked at the Research Centre on Women and Politics as well as the Research Centre for Sport in Canadian Society at the University of Ottawa. She has also done research for the New Brunswick Commission on Legislative Democracy.

Sylvie Charron, Executive Assistant to the President. Sylvie was previously the Manager, Finance and Administration at Family Service Canada for the past eight years. She has also worked for the Canadian Medical Protective Association, the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, Canada Post and Lanpar Technologies, holding positions as Unit Supervisor of Case Management, Planning and Communication Manager, and a number of Administrative Assistant positions. She is a member of the International Association of Administrative Professionals.

Andrew Robitaille, Help Desk Support Technician. Andrew comes to us from Sitel where he provided customer services since 2004.



We also said goodbye to Joel Francis (middle) Help Desk Support. Seen here with Peter Puxley (left) and Kurt Helgoth (right).



From left to right, Jennifer Fry, Sylvie Charron. Back row, from left to right, Sonia Pitre and Andrew Robitaille.

People (continued)

Staff at CPRN gathered once more for a picnic, enjoying the warm weather. We had new recruits this year for a game of bocce. Many thanks to our hosts Peter Puxley and Lois Sweet for a wonderful afternoon in Almonte.



Refreshing the *Fresh Ideas Campaign*

Transitions are uncertain times. But they are also an opportunity for renewal. CPRN's newly appointed President, Sharon Manson Singer, is adding her experience and boundless energy to refresh the already successful *Fresh Ideas Campaign*.

Since it began in 2001, the *Fresh Ideas Campaign* has increased CPRN's network of friends and support, whether project-specific or directed to the President's Innovation Fund. The growth of this fund shows clearly that CPRN's work and mission are respected and relevant in today's changing social environment. Dr. Manson Singer acknowledges that think

tanks face enormous challenges when it comes to raising money. There are many non-profit organizations out there – all competing for the same dollars.

CPRN has been fortunate to count many foundations, corporations and individuals among its supporters. Dr. Manson Singer spent the months of April and May visiting many of those people to share with them her vision of how CPRN will head into its second decade. A review of the *Fresh Ideas Campaign* is being undertaken by the Fundraising Committee, co-chaired by Courtney Pratt and The Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain. These steps will help chart a strategic direction for the Campaign as it heads into the next phase.

Yes, Poverty Rates Have Declined, But.....

In *No Security Here: The Last-in, First-out Labour Market*, an op-ed in *The Globe and Mail*, Judith Maxwell, CPRN Research Fellow, responds to the latest Statcan data that show a decrease in the country's poverty rates. She argues that the aggregate data hide significant nuances that suggest we are doing rather less well than we might suppose, or we ought. She focuses, in particular, on the situation of the working poor, still condemned to a precarious existence in the absence of public supports that might give them a chance to better their lot permanently in the labour market.

Maxwell argues for better paid and more stable jobs, along with stronger public services.

Maxwell argues for better paid and more stable jobs, along with stronger public services – both the big universal systems like education and health care and community level services like public transit and affordable housing.

CPRN Board of Directors

Gordon Betcherman

Robert D. Brown

Tony Dean

Jim Dinning

Timothy Kennish

Arthur Kroeger, *Chair*

Sharon Manson Singer

Margaret N. McCain

Kyle Mitchell

Courtney Pratt

Janet Riopel

Allan C. Shaw

Elaine M. Todres

NetworkNews is published quarterly by the Canadian Policy Research Networks, an independent policy research think tank.

Subscription rates for *NetworkNews*:

Category	Price per subscription	
	1 year	3 years
Student	\$10	n/a
Individual	\$60	\$150
Corporate	\$120	\$320

For discussion purposes, this newsletter can be photocopied.

Production:
Peter Puxley
Gisèle Lacelle
Louise Coupal Jauvin



Making the Case for Social Inclusion

It's being billed as a case of home grown terrorism – the unthinkable in Canada. Twelve men and five youths are arrested in Toronto, accused of knowingly participating in a terrorist group, and being involved in terrorist training. Police say they were planning to make bombs and attack targets in Ontario. Their targets: the CBC, C-SIS buildings in Toronto, the Toronto Stock Exchange. Most of the accused were born and raised in Canada. But, their religion – they're all Muslim – has become the defining feature of the story. What if we take a moment and look at another common factor among them? Their age. All but two are in their teens or early twenties.

Little attention is paid to how disenfranchised youth can be attracted to radical organizations. And we have learned that the older member of the group deliberately looked for young men who were isolated from the Canadian mainstream. Jordan Bernt, from the University of Toronto, calls these young men: “particularly status hungry”. Belonging to a political movement – especially one that's on a mission – is one way of saying who you are in comparison to everyone else. Feeling excluded from the mainstream either socially, economically or both can send youth looking for other ways to feel included.

And what do we know about those who are excluded from the good life? Our study on ***Making Work Pay: Findings and Recommendations from CPRN's Vulnerable Workers Series***, by Ron Saunders, found that one in six full-time workers is condemned to poverty level wages.

Disproportionately there are more youth, with almost half (45 percent) earning poverty-

level wages. And more than a quarter of recent immigrants are in the same boat. For young people without higher education the situation is also grim with one out of four earning low wages. When you stack the characteristics – young, non-completion of high school or post-secondary education and recent immigrant – we can see a pattern of exclusion from the good life that Canada promises for others.

In our CPRN Youth Summit last November, 144 young people aged 18-25 told us what they want for Canada. We learned that they feel isolated as a whole from their government and do not know how to make their views known or heard. Civic literacy is at an all time low. The Youth Action Plan ***Towards an Action Plan for Canada “Our Vision, Values and Actions”*** called upon the education system to strengthen civic education. Young people want greater citizen participation and transparency in government. They also want the diversity of our country reflected in our institutions and government. Citizenship, they assert, is about more than freedom and rights; it is also about responsibilities. And young people expressed a strong value for shared responsibility between themselves, families, government, and corporations for the Canada we want. Canada should remain an exemplar – globally demonstrating honesty and ethics in all spheres. Understanding how Canada governs itself and how an individual can participate is central to a sense of power and inclusion. Without the basic tools to understand how to participate, we risk creating greater pockets of social exclusion.



The Canada we want is fair. It is a country where no one is left behind and the vulnerable are made safe and secure. Aboriginals, immigrants, young people, and people with disabilities all experience higher rates of unemployment and lower rates of pay than other citizens. That's not fair. And we need to fix it. How do we fix something that is not fair? Employers, workers, governments, and family all need to be a part of the solutions and build a Canada that includes and does not exclude. Our paper on adult workers entitled ***Too Many Left Behind: Canada's Adult Education and Training System***, by Karen Myers and Patrice de Broucker documents what happens to young people who do not finish high school. Permanently left behind in low paying and low skilled jobs, these workers need a second chance. And many of these workers are the parents whose children feel a sense of exclusion from the good life that Canada promised. There are many ways that we can give our adult workers a lift, so that they and their families have a better life, and as workers they are more productive. It will take determination to create a right to learn, services to make that right meaningful.

Sharon Manson Singer, Ph.D.
President

