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Action Needed to Help Canada's Youth Find Rewarding Careers

Ottawa – Canada's youth are not well-prepared to navigate educational and career choices, or to be able to fully use the skills and knowledge they gain through education in the jobs that they find, a new CPRN *Pathways* study concludes.

The study, ***Connecting Supply and Demand in Canada's Youth Labour Market***, examines key issues such as how employer demand is conveyed to students and those in the schools and community who support them and how well the skills that young people gain are used on the job.

"If we want more young Canadians to acquire high-level skills and use them in the workplace, we need to do more than improve the rates of high school completion and participation in post-secondary education," says Sharon Manson Singer, president of CPRN. "We also need to foster an innovative, high value-added economy, so that the jobs available are high quality jobs."

The CPRN study also draws attention to the disconnect between young people's job skills on graduation and the ability to attain rewarding employment in line with their education and training. Research shows that, compared to other age categories, Canadian workers aged 25 and under are more likely to feel overqualified for their jobs and less likely to report that they are satisfied with their jobs.

To strengthen the connection between the demand and supply sides of the youth labour market, Canada needs greater support for vocational options in high school, better bridges between educational pathways, and stronger partnerships between schools and employers in the design and delivery of co-op programs and career information.

The study emphasizes that skills development must be treated as an ongoing process. "With people increasingly changing jobs and having to learn new skills over the course of their careers, our education and training system must support lifelong learning and developing strong career planning skills," says Ron Saunders, CPRN Vice-President of Research.

Produced by CPRN's Richard Brisbois, Larry Orton, and Ron Saunders, the study is the eighth in the *Pathways* series of research papers. It draws on analyses of survey data, key informant interviews and a literature review.

Launched in 2006, *Pathways* examines the ways young people navigate from high school through to the labour market. The goal is to identify policy options to improve young people's ability to identify, select, and navigate the route from school to a good job and a rewarding career.

To read or download a copy of *Connecting Supply and Demand in Canada's Youth Labour Market*, visit www.cprn.org.

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