

**ANNUAL YOUTH PROJECT**

**BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT:  
UNEMPLOYMENT & UNDEREMPLOYMENT FROM A CANADIAN YOUTH LENS**

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The purpose of this report is to provide an academically informed analysis of the gap that currently exists in Canada between the post-secondary education system and the labour market. It is a commonly held belief that more post-secondary or post-graduate education equates to increased employment opportunities and consequently, increased chances of securing stable employment in one's respective field of study; technically, this belief is not unfounded. Data indicates that there is a positive correlation between one's level of education and their prospects of employment, and more specifically, that '[y]oung workers without postsecondary education face substantially higher unemployment rates and substantially lower employment rates than those who have completed a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree' (Geobey 2013). It is therefore arguably concerning that 'national youth employment conditions are worse than those faced by adults' (Geobey 2013) despite Statistics Canada (2018) reports that youth are more educated than ever before whether it be with a college certificate, diploma or degree. The discrepancy made apparent by this data suggests that there is a disconnect between the post-secondary education system and the demands or needs of the Canadian labour market. For this reason, this report seeks to explore this disconnect. However, first and foremost this report will provide some background as to why the gap between the post-secondary education system and the labour market is problematic for Canadian society by describing the relevant criminological theories that highlight the social implications of youth unemployment and underemployment. This report will then provide possible explanations of the causation of youth

unemployment and underemployment as it relates to the post-secondary education system, and also provide some recommendations regarding community initiatives and policies that should be implemented in an attempt to effectively address the gap between the post-secondary education system and the labour market.

### Relevant Criminological Theories: The Social Implications of Youth Unemployment & Underemployment

Several criminological theories suggest that a disconnect between the post-secondary education youth receive and the labour market presents an issue not only to youth but also to the larger Canadian society. To be more specific, Cesare Beccaria's Rational Choice Theory, Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory, Travis Hirschi's Social Bonding Theory and Clifford Shaw's and Henry D. McKay's Social Disorganization Theory all suggest that high rates of unemployment and underemployment are likely to cause an increase in crime rates. According to the Rational Choice Theory, individuals are rational, self-interested human beings who engage in criminal behaviour once they have completed a cost-benefit analysis and determine that the rewards or utility of crime outweigh any potential risk or losses (McCarthy & Chaudhary 2014). Rational choice theorists further claim that the cost-benefit analysis undertaken by potential offenders involves 'estimates of an illegal opportunity's availability, costs and benefits, versus a legitimate opportunity's availability, costs and potential for realizing the same or comparable returns' (McCarthy & Chaudhary 2014). This premise underlying the Rational Choice Theory highlights the potential social implications of youth unemployment and underemployment that occurs as a result of the gap between youth's post-secondary education and the labour market. To clarify, it insinuates that the unavailability of stable, meaningful employment that relates to

youth's field of study and is rewarding in pay may cause youth to rationalize criminal activity as a better and more readily available alternative.

The General Strain Theory interprets youth unemployment and underemployment to cause crime for different reasons. Instead, the General Strain Theory 'focuses...on how objective experiences, subjective interpretations, and emotional reactions can all be linked to crime' (Baron 2008). In the particular context of youth unemployment and underemployment, the General Strain Theory does not posit that unemployment itself causes crime however does suggest that the negative emotional reactions over unemployment which emerge due to experiences of economic strain can lead to one's engagement in criminal activity (Baron 2008). In other words, the General Strain Theory recognizes that 'continuing to search for work, espousing a work ethic, and showing commitment to work while not being able to secure employment...create [feelings of] anger, which in turn can lead to crime' (Baron 2008). The General Strain Theory proves to have merit as Baron's (2008) study on street youth, unemployment, and crime revealed that youth 'who searched actively for employment but were persistently rebuffed were more likely to be angry, and this led to violent crime and drug dealing.' These substantiating findings indicate that the General Strain Theory accurately predicts the social implications of youth unemployment and underemployment, which to clarify, is that unemployed youth experiencing economic strain may turn to crime to relieve themselves from their feelings of relative deprivation that stem from their exclusion from the labour market, or simply to seek monetary satisfaction through an alternative means.

The Social Bonding Theory's perspective on crime provides another approach to understanding the impact of youth unemployment and underemployment on crime. Central to

this theory is the idea that the existence of social bonds and individuals' level of attachment or commitment to them determines rates of criminal deviance in a given community or society

(Krohn, Lanza-Kaduce & Akers 1984). The theory identifies four types of social bonds:

“attachment to conventional others, commitment to conventional goals and activities, beliefs in conventional values” (Krohn, Lanza-Kaduce & Akers 1984), and proposes that when attachment

or commitment to any of the identified social bonds are weak or cease to exist altogether,

individuals feel a sense of freedom to engage in crime (Krohn, Lanza-Kaduce & Akers 1984).

The Social Bonding Theory therefore easily addresses the issue of youth unemployment and underemployment. To elaborate, it is reasonable to assume that obtaining stable, meaningful employment and working to earn an honest living constitute a conventional goal and activity of modern society. Therefore, high rates of youth unemployment and underemployment in a society indicate that youth's bonds to the conventional goals and activities, and conventional others of the society in which they live are weak. To better explain, youth cannot show commitment to a job they do not have and moreover cannot develop attachments to conventional others who exemplify what it means to possess hard work ethic. It is clear then that a probable social implication of youth unemployment and underemployment is higher rates of crime, and more specifically, higher rates of crime perpetrated by youth due to them feeling a lack of commitment or attachment to the conventions of society.

The Social Disorganization Theory's approach to understanding crime, and in turn, to understanding the impact of youth unemployment and underemployment on crime presents similarities to the Social Bonding Theory. According to this theory, the level of social disorganization within a community or society determines rates of crime (Silva 2014). The

theory identifies ‘three structural factors—low-socioeconomic status, ethnic heterogeneity, and residential mobility—[that] disrupt a community’s social organization’ (Silva 2014). The theory further posits that weaknesses in these structural components result in a reduction of social bonds, social control and consequently in high crime rates (Silva 2014). Since youth unemployment and underemployment would inevitably force youth into a low-socioeconomic status, the Social Disorganization Theory would consider youth unemployment and underemployment to disrupt social organization and likely increase crime rates. All in all, each of the criminological theories described above indicate that high rates of youth unemployment and underemployment have clear social implications. Although each theory takes a different approach to understanding crime, there is consensus that there is a high probability that youth unemployment and underemployment will only increase rates of crime and will therefore negatively impact society as a whole.

#### Possible Causation of Youth Unemployment & Underemployment

There are numerous factors that may contribute to the problem of youth unemployment and underemployment in Canada. However, attempts at understanding the underlying causes of youth unemployment and underemployment have generally examined the issue on a global scale and taken one of two stances. The first stance approaches the problem of youth unemployment and underemployment simply as one that emerged due to a lack of job availability (Clark & Summers 1982), while the second stance views the problem of youth unemployment as a ‘byproduct of...structural component[s] within the...labour market’ (Geobey 2013). Although these two views may present plausible explanations of the youth unemployment and underemployment crisis in Canada, this report will focus on an alternative causal explanation.

That is, this report will explore the ways in which the Canadian post-secondary education system may fail to adequately provide youth with the knowledge and skills to succeed in the Canadian labour market.

The gap between post-secondary education systems and the labour market has not been explored as a cause of youth unemployment and underemployment in Canada. Still, some research literature suggests that there is a gap between post-secondary education systems and labour markets around the world and that this gap is part of the reason why young graduates are experiencing significant challenges transitioning from their post-secondary programs into employment and building their labour market careers. Most notable is a report released by the McKinsey Center for Government (2012), which identifies the specific areas wherein post-secondary institutions around the globe may be lacking, and in turn, may be contributing to the problem of youth unemployment and underemployment. Based on its findings, this report determined that post-secondary education is lacking in two important areas: providing students with skills and training for positions in or related to their field of study and helping students find employment post-graduation (Mourshed, Farrell & Barton 2012). The report puts forth the idea that post-secondary education has been unable to provide students with adequate skills and training for positions in or related to their field of study because there is a lack of communication and understanding between education providers and employers (Mourshed, Farrell & Barton 2012).

‘For instance, only 42 percent of employers believe their recent hires were adequately prepared by their pre-hire education for an entry-level position. Similarly, only 45 percent of youth felt they were adequately prepared for an entry-level position in their chosen career field.

Despite this, some 72 percent of education providers believe their graduates are adequately prepared for an entry-level position' (Mourshed, Farrell & Barton 2012).

These findings confirm that there is a clear disconnect between education providers and employers. More importantly, it reveals that this existing disconnect is a direct cause of the post-secondary education system's inability to equip students with the necessary skills and training to find stable, meaningful employment in their field of study, and consequently, is an indirect cause of the gap between post-secondary education and the labour market but also of the overall problem of youth unemployment and underemployment.

As mentioned above, the report released by the McKinsey Center for Government (2012) identified a second area of weakness within post-secondary education, which it described as a lack of focus on helping students find employment in or related to their field of study post-graduation. The report found that 'of those with a job, 27 percent took more than six months to find their initial employment, and only 55 percent found work relevant to their field of study. [In fact], 25 percent of respondents were only able to find interim work. That is, jobs they plan to leave quickly that are unrelated to their field of study' (Mourshed, Farrell & Barton 2012). These findings indicate that the transition from post-secondary education to employment is indeed challenging for young graduates, and thus that youth would benefit from educators providing greater assistance with finding employment in or related to their field of study. However, 'when [education providers were] asked to identify their priorities, helping students find employment ranked sixth out of ten' (Mourshed, Farrell & Barton 2012). Education providers' failure to acknowledge the importance of facilitating smooth transitions for youth graduating from their post-secondary program and entering the labour market, or more specifically, careers in their



field of study is therefore likely another a cause of the gap between post-secondary education and the labour market, and in turn, of the overall problem of youth unemployment and underemployment. Ultimately, the report released by McKinsey Center for Government (2012) provides valuable insight on the way in which education providers at the post-secondary level may fail to provide youth with a smooth transition into employment that is in or related to their field of study, and in turn, reaffirms that such failures may indeed be the underlying cause of the gap between the post-secondary education system and the Canadian the labour market.

#### Recommendations: Changes to the Canadian Post-Secondary Education System and Labour Market

Considering that the existing gap between the post-secondary education system and the labour market has been problematic for Canadian youth and has the potential to be problematic for the larger Canadian society, it is imperative that the gap be addressed. The compelling findings from the report released by the McKinsey Center for Government (2012) make it abundantly clear that first and foremost a closer look needs to be taken at the inadequacies of the Canadian post-secondary education system and the way in which those inadequacies create or widen the gap between the post-secondary education system and the Canadian labour market. As discussed earlier, education providers at the post-secondary level demonstrate a lack of focus in two areas: providing students with skills and training for positions in or related to their field of study and helping students find employment in or related to their field of study post-graduation. It is then obvious that part of the solution to narrowing the gap between the post-secondary education system and the Canadian labour market should include the implementation of a policy that requires education providers to place more emphasis on providing students with skills and

training for positions in or related to their field of study and helping students find employment in or related to their field of study post-graduation. This solution has already been proposed by Washer (2007) who agrees that ‘changes are needed in the focus of university learning and teaching to prepare graduates for employment.’ Washer (2007) specifically argues for the integration of key skills [which refer to job or career-related skills that are relevant to employers’ needs] into the existing curriculum.’ Washer (2007) insists that integrating key skills is the most practical model and that its practicality is exemplified through the ‘[m]any academics [who] have designed a range of practices to equip students with job-related skills to ease their transition to the world of work. Amongst the innovation commonly seen in contemporary undergraduate courses that can be characterized as experiential education are: the use of problem-based learning; the use of simulations, project work, simulations of workplace environments using computer-assisted learning; dealing with ‘mock’ clients and so on.’ Washer’s (2007) support for the integration of key skills stems from his belief that efforts should be made to make graduates more employable by equipping them with the skills employers say they need or want.

The solution proposed by Washer deserves consideration as it has potential to effectively address the two areas of weakness within post-secondary education identified in the report by the McKinsey Center for Government. To elaborate, the integration of key skills would require more communication, and equally important, more understanding between education providers and employers about exactly what skills employers consider to be key for young graduates’ employability. Based on the information provided by employers about what key skills they look for, education providers will be better able to integrate those specific skills into the existing curriculum and therefore be better able to provide students with the skills and training for

positions in or related to their field of study. By working to integrate the specific key skills that are most desirable to employers into the existing curriculum, education providers will essentially produce more employable students and indirectly be helping students to increase their chances of finding employment in or related to their field of study post-graduation.

Although the solution proposed by Washer provides a start to addressing the areas of weakness within post-secondary education, education providers should be required to implement additional initiatives that enhance university teaching and learning in ways that increase the employability of young graduates in their field of study. For instance, the accumulation of experience relevant to one's career path plays a crucial role in determining one's success at securing employment and beginning a career in or related to their field of study. According to the National Association for Colleges and Employers:

‘Nearly 91 percent of employers responding to NACE’s *Job Outlook 2017* survey prefer that their candidates have work experience, and 65 percent of the total group indicate that they prefer their candidates to have relevant work experience... Another 26 percent of respondents prefer work experience of any type. Meanwhile, a mere 5 percent this year say that work experience is not a factor when hiring new graduates’ (NACE 2017).

Another survey by TimeBank through Reed Executive, cited by the World Volunteer Web, revealed that:

‘73 percent of employers would recruit a candidate with volunteering experience over one without. At the same time, 94 percent of employers believe that volunteering can add to skills, and 94 per cent of employees who volunteered to learn new skills had benefited either by getting their first job, improving their salary or being promoted’ (Lerner 2012).

For this reason, education providers at the post-secondary level need to prioritize providing students with experience in their field of study through the opportunity to partake in co-op, internship, employment and volunteer programs. Moreover, the provision of such experiential learning opportunities should be integrated into the existing curriculum in the same way that Washer argues key skills should be. As suggested by Washer (2007), integrating experiential opportunities into the existing curriculum would ensure students' participation and would also increase the likelihood that students embrace and value the skills gained through participation since they are a part of the assessed mainstream curriculum, rather than stand-alone optional opportunities or programs. Ultimately, integrating experiential learning opportunities would ensure that upon completing their post-secondary program, young graduates will have acquired an extensive theoretical education but also the hands-on skills and training that positively speak to their employability for positions in their field of study.

An additional benefit emerges from providing post-secondary level students with experience in their field of study through the opportunity to partake in co-op, internship, employment and volunteer programs. To better explain, the provision of such experiential learning opportunities allows students to develop and exercise their networking skills.

Networking is essentially the process of connecting and interacting with others for the purpose of establishing professional contacts or relationships and advancing one's career prospects through professional association. The ability to network is a crucial skill to possess as it can significantly increase one's chances of securing stable, meaningful employment. In fact, youth have shared that they have had the most success at securing employment when they have called on the people within their network (Social Development Canada 2016). That is likely because the contacts

whom they called on for assistance with their employment search were either able to inform them of job openings or vacancies they were aware of or personally refer them for hire to a professional contact from their own network. Therefore, the integration of experiential learning opportunities into the existing post-secondary curriculum is also needed to help students develop the networking skills required to build relationships with working professionals who can assist them with finding stable, meaningful employment, and essentially, to help students increase their chances of securing employment post-graduation.

Still, it is not simply enough to provide students with experience in their field of study through the opportunity to partake in co-op, internship, employment and volunteer programs. Education providers should also be required to prioritize providing mandatory courses or workshops that aim to equip students with the skills to market themselves to potential employers in or related to their field of study based on the theoretical knowledge and hands-on skills and training they obtained throughout their post-secondary education. Two of the most important determinants of one's success in finding stable, meaningful employment are the resume and the interview. Therefore, one's intellectual intelligence, vast experience, and overall potential as a working professional in their field of study means very little without the resume writing and interviewing skills that are required to convey one's employability, and to secure a job or career in one's field of study. The resume plays such a vital role in the early stages of the hiring process as it is the first point of contact between applicants and potential employers (Knouse 1994). According to Crosby (2009), employers spend as little as thirty seconds screening a resume and quickly make a decision regarding whether the candidate deserves further consideration. This affirms that it is important for young graduates to develop the skills necessary to create resumes

that clearly convey that their qualifications and skills match those required by the job (Crosby 2009) in the field for which they are applying. Once a candidate has successfully passed the screening stage, interviewing skills become integral as it is during the interview that candidates have the opportunity to meet face-to-face with potential employers and provide them with an overall impression that shows their resume is an accurate representation of their verbal, cognitive and professional skills but also that they are a viable candidate for the position or field for which they are applying.

The strategies to integrate key skills, experiential learning opportunities and mandatory resume writing and interviewing skills courses or workshops into existing post-secondary level curriculums effectively address the concerns raised by the relevant criminological theories described earlier in this report. As previously explained, each theory indicates that the gap between the post-secondary education system and the Canadian labour market has clear social implications as youth unemployment and underemployment are highly likely to lead to increased rates of crime. The integration of key skills, experiential learning opportunities and mandatory resume writing and interviewing skills courses or workshops into existing post-secondary level curriculums however would essentially decrease rates of youth unemployment and underemployment by increasing young graduates' employability and marketability in positions in or related to their field of study, and in turn would decrease the likeliness that young graduates partake in criminal activity as a result of their active engagement and participation in the labour market.

The particular way in which the increased employability and marketability of young graduates would result in the decrease of young graduates' participation in crime can be

illustrated by each of the relevant criminological theories identified in this report. To elaborate, if integrating key skills, experiential learning opportunities and mandatory resume writing and interviewing skills courses or workshops into the existing post-secondary level curriculum increased the rate at which young graduates are hired into stable, meaningful positions in or related to their field of study, each of the theories support the reasonable assumption that young graduates would be less likely to consider a readily available alternative, and further less likely that the alternative be crime. As posited by the Rational Choice Theory, individuals are rational beings who engage in crime based on the outcome of a cost-benefit analysis, however, a simple cost-benefit analysis conducted by youth with stable, meaningful employment would reveal that the rewards or utility of crime would not outweigh the potential risk or losses which would include loss of job, income, reputation and one's overall employability for positions in their field of study. From the perspective of the General Strain Theory, increased rates at which young graduates are hired into stable, meaningful positions in or related to their field of study would alleviate youth from any experience of economic strain debilitating enough to ignite their interest in crime to relieve themselves from any feelings of relative deprivation that stem from their exclusion from the labour market or from any feelings of needing to gain monetary satisfaction. Similarly, from the perspective of the Social Disorganization Theory, increased rates at which young graduates are hired into stable, meaningful positions in or related to their field of study is expected to reduce the likeliness that young graduates engage in crime because they would feel alleviated from their low-economic status which is posited by this theory to be one of the three structural factors responsible for crimes rates. According to the Social Bonding Theory's understanding of crime, increased rates at which young graduates are hired into stable,

meaningful positions in or related to their field of study would decrease the likeliness that young graduates engaged in criminal activity because they would feel too much of a commitment to the conventional goal of working to earn an honest living, and too much of an attachment to other working professionals within their network who also demonstrate a commitment to the same conventional goal of working to earn an honest living.

As proved by the solutions proposed above, it is possible to narrow and eventually close the gap between the Canadian post-secondary education system and the Canadian labour market through the implementation of curriculum changes within post-secondary institutions. However, the plausibility and practicality of the proposed solutions have limitations that hinge on the willingness of potential stakeholders to cooperate and collaborate with one another. Based on the proposed solutions, it is clear that education providers and employers are key stakeholders as addressing the gap between the Canadian post-secondary education system and the Canadian labour market presents benefits to both parties. To elaborate, the existence and continued success of the Canadian post-secondary education system and labour market both highly depend on youth. Without the general consensus among youth that there is indisputable value in pursuing higher education, the post-secondary education system and the education providers that make up the system cannot thrive as their will no longer be a sufficient demand for their services. In like manner, the labour market and the employers that comprise it will suffer without a supply of educated and qualified youth to fill positions, especially those that are continuously becoming vacant due to retiring senior employees. Thus, the post-secondary education system and labour market are not only dependent on youth but are also interdependent on one another. It is therefore important that as key stakeholders, education providers and employers cooperatively



play their part in the effort to close the gap between the Canadian post-secondary education system and labour market.

Although seemingly simple, the proposed solutions will require significant operational changes within post-secondary institutions and businesses or companies. For instance, the integration of key skills into the existing post-secondary level curriculums will require education providers and employers to develop a means or system of communication whereby employers can constantly provide education providers with feedback about the key skills they view as necessary for young graduates to possess. Based on the key skills identified by employers, education providers must be willing to assess and adjust the existing post-secondary curriculum accordingly. Further, education providers—specifically professors, teaching assistants, and any other individuals designated to teach students—must be willing to actually abide by the adjusted curriculum. The integration of experiential learning opportunities into the existing post-secondary level curriculums will also require the cooperation of both parties. To be specific, education providers must be willing to create and implement the programs that will afford students the chance to gain experience in their field of study through their participation in co-op, internship, employment and volunteer opportunities, meanwhile employers must be willing to participate in these experiential learning programs developed by education providers by accepting students, and more importantly, by taking an active role in creating meaningful positions within their business or company to accommodate the students assigned temporarily to their organization for placement through the program. Similarly, in order to integrate resume writing and interviewing skills into the post-secondary education curriculum, education

providers must be willing to create, implement and facilitate the mandatory courses or workshops.

#### Local Context: Existing Community Initiatives within Peel Region

Despite the evident need for improvements within the Canadian post-secondary education system and labour market, some community organizations have attempted to address the gap between education and employment through the implementation of programs and initiatives that aim to assist youth, including young post-secondary graduates, with their acquisition of the skills and experience needed to ensure their employability for positions in their field of study, or in other words, with their transition into the labour market. For instance, Safe City Mississauga recently established a Youth Cabinet—Safe City Mississauga’s official volunteer-based youth contributing body that focuses on local crime prevention education, awareness and initiatives in Mississauga. The Youth Cabinet was created with the objective to increase youth engagement on issues related to community safety. Although the Youth Cabinet’s success hinges on its ability to provide an authentic youth lens and perspective on local crime prevention, the objective to increase youth engagement equally stemmed from Safe City Mississauga’s goal to give back to its youth members by providing them with the opportunity—each of which emerge from their participation and contribution to Safe City Mississauga’s crime prevention services and initiatives—to develop or enhance key transferable skills and also to expand their knowledge and network with professionals in the non-profit sector and in other fields such as social work, policing or government. The invaluable volunteer experience offered through participation in the Youth Cabinet is sure to equip youth with the skills needed to work in positions related to their field of study and subsequently, to enhance their employability and marketability for stable,

meaningful employment. Still, the Youth Cabinet and other cabinets or programs alike present a downfall, as they are only able to provide a limited number of youth with such invaluable experience at a time. For example, Safe City Mississauga's Youth Cabinet only consists of five youth members each year, which means that each year interested youth will have to wait for applications to open for the next cohort to apply and hope that they are successful candidates. This downfall is rarely a result of an organization's deliberate choice, and typically is more so a result of logistics. In the case of Safe City Mississauga's Youth Cabinet, one must consider that they are a non-profit organization with limited resources—including funds, and employees to mentor and guide a larger youth cabinet.

Additional community organizations offer specialized youth programs and services that aim to assist youth with their transition into the labour market. For example, Job Skills— a non-profit community-based employment and training agency, has offered the Fast Forward Program in past years. The Fast Forward Program provided youth with minimum wage pay to attend day long workshops on topics that include labour market information, networking and cold-calling, interview skills, resume and cover letter development skills, and social networking that last for the duration of a month. Throughout the month of daily workshops, the program also made available a job developer who was delegated with the task of finding each youth a two-month placement—which is fully subsidized by the Fast Forward Program—within a business or organization related to their field of interest. The Fast Forward Program exemplifies an ideal structure as it simultaneously focuses on youth's development of key skills and their transition into a position related to their field of study. Even with such an ideal structure, the Fast Forward Program encounters limits in its ability to assist a wide range of youth. Since the

program is heavily reliant on the provision of government funds, it is only able to operate when funds are received—however, government funding for such programs is not always consistent and often depends on the type of government in power at that time.

There are also community organizations within the Peel Region that offer more general programs and services that aim to assist individuals, including youth, with their transition into the labour market. For instance, the Next Steps Employment Centre and other comparable employment centres around the region offer employment search support by providing various workshops and one-on-one assistance that cater to individuals' needs regarding resume and cover letter development, interview skills, job or career exploration, etc. Although employment centres such as the Next Steps Employment Centre surely help individuals improve their general marketability, they are not necessarily ideally structured to help individuals develop the skills required to ensure their employability for, and consequently their ability to secure, a position related to their field of study.

Through the above exploration of existing community programs within Peel Region that could be useful in addressing the gap between education and employment, it has become apparent that existing community organizations encounter similar barriers. In particular, the Safe City Mississauga's Youth Cabinet and the Job Skills Fast Forward Program both encounter barriers related to the lack of resources including funding available to them, whose availability would otherwise allow these organizations to structure and facilitate their current programs in a way that is more beneficial in assisting youth with their acquisition of key skills and experience working alongside field-specific professionals so that they can easily transition into a position related to their field of study. The fact that a significant barrier experienced by both

organizations revolves around the lack of resources available to them indicates that there may be larger issues at play that need to be explored. Most notably, it begs the question of whether organizations attempting to address youth's employment needs are supported enough by government bodies or agencies through the provision of resources and funds. Considering the national youth employment conditions, it is plausible that the Canadian government has demonstrated negligence towards the changing needs of youth, particularly as it pertains to education and employment, in today's economic climate. On the other hand, it also begs the question of whether organizations attempting to address national youth employment conditions are simply using the resources and funds provided to them by government bodies or agencies inefficiently.

Although each of the above potential realities are undesirable and moreover disappointing, they prompt reasonable solutions. For instance, the determination that the government has in fact failed to support organizations attempting to address youth's employment needs through the provision of resources and funds would suggest the obvious solution that the government prioritize the current gap between education and employment, and that the government demonstrate this by supporting organizations already prioritizing the issue. Additionally, the government could encourage other organizations to cater to youth's employment needs, and in turn, to work towards closing the gap between education and employment by developing an incentive program wherein monetary incentives—determined based on an organization's innovativeness and success rates—are provided for their efforts. To further their efforts to prioritize the gap between education and employment contributing to national youth employment conditions, the government could also facilitate initiatives that aim to

educate the public about the employment problems faced by youth. These campaigns should include information to increase general public awareness however should more importantly include information for youth about the resources and programs available to them that can assist with their transition into the labour market. As mentioned above, there is also the potential reality that organizations attempting to address national youth employment conditions are simply using the resources and funds provided to them by government bodies or agencies inefficiently. Fortunately, this potential reality presents the solution that government bodies and agencies providing resources and funds administer detailed rules and regulations on the use of said resources and funds. By giving specific instructions for the use of resources and funds by organizations, government bodies and agencies would help to eliminate any improper use of the resources or funds and conversely would encourage the proper use of the resources or funds provided to them. Therefore, the ability of government bodies or agencies to control the use and direction of its funding could be integral to the government's overall prioritization of the gap between education and employment as it would ensure that youth's employment needs are sufficiently met.

To conclude, this paper provided an in-depth analysis of the current disconnect between the Canadian post-secondary education system and the demands or needs of the Canadian labour market. By identifying the relevant criminological theories, this paper highlighted the fact that the social implications of youth unemployment and underemployment are highly unfavourable as there is consensus among the relevant criminological theories that high or increasing rates of youth unemployment and underemployment will only increase rates of crime and will therefore negatively impact society as a whole. Further, an inquiry into the causation of youth

unemployment and underemployment revealed that the current disconnect between the Canadian post-secondary education system and the Canadian labour market exists because the Canadian post-secondary education system is lacking in two important areas: providing students with skills and training for positions in or related to their field of study and helping students find employment post-graduation. Highlighting the failures or inadequacies within the Canadian post-secondary education system provided the basis for the recommended changes to the Canadian post-secondary education system and labour market put forth in this paper. The recommendations to integrate key skills, experiential learning opportunities and mandatory resume writing and interviewing skills courses or workshops into the existing post-secondary curriculum would effectively address the two areas of weakness within the Canadian post-secondary education system. Although there are existing community organizations that work to address the disconnect between the Canadian post-secondary education system and the labour market through the implementation of programs and by undertaking initiatives that aim to assist young post-secondary graduates with their transition into the labour market, this paper has revealed that the potential of such programs and initiatives to close the gap between education and employment is limited for several reasons. As a result, it has become abundantly clear that the current disconnect between the Canadian post-secondary education system and the Canadian labour market would improve if education providers and employers worked cohesively together to make the recommended changes so that youth can be afforded the opportunity to acquire the skills and experience needed to ensure their employability for positions in their field of study while simultaneously earning their post-secondary credentials. It has also become clear that the youth programs and initiatives currently offered by existing community organizations have the

potential to further mend the gap between the Canadian post-secondary education system and the labour market if and when the barriers discussed are appropriately addressed. Therefore, this paper is ultimately intended to function as a call for action among all education providers, employers, community organizations and government bodies to acknowledge the existing disconnect between the Canadian post-secondary education system and the Canadian labour market, and more importantly, to prioritize efforts to support youth in their transition from post-secondary education to employment.



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