



Community Works Report Summary

Goodwill's Community Works Report draws attention to the need for universal access to work as a key determinant of the health of individuals and communities. It is our hope to continue the dialogue, spark debate, and incite action within the Ontario community on this very urgent, public issue: work access.

The report demonstrates that when more people work, our communities work better. Work access is not simply an individual issue. It affects community participation, political engagement, health and the economy.

Increasing access to permanent work for those who are marginalized is a civic responsibility that will serve to benefit individuals, as well as the community as a whole.

Power of Work

Work is the lifeblood of healthy, vibrant communities and can be a catalyst in revitalizing marginalized communities. A community that offers diverse and plentiful work opportunities becomes a magnet that draws in both people and investment.

In turn, this economic and social vitality supports livable neighbourhoods and healthy cities enriched by cultural, recreational, educational, artistic and community resources and services.

Work also builds social cohesion by including rather than excluding the citizens of society. When more citizens have access to work opportunities, they contribute and participate more fully in the life of their communities and country.

The Current Situation

Studies have shown that globalization, technological change, deregulation and a growing emphasis on competitiveness at all costs have transformed the landscape of work immeasurably. These trends have had a disproportionately harmful effect on traditionally marginalized groups, making barriers to work even more formidable. But beyond that, profound changes in the world of work have also marginalized and excluded many other groups in society, including the "working poor" and immigrants, who historically have been upwardly mobile but are particularly vulnerable in the new labour market.



"More people are excluded from many of the social and economic benefits that decent work can offer, and there is a greater divide growing between those for whom work is a positive and rewarding experience and those for whom it is a negative experience. Also, as traditionally marginalized groups tend to have more negative experiences, inequities are perpetuated and exclusion becomes entrenched."



Working to Solutions

Unemployment and the importance of work are public issues that affect communities and society as a whole. There is clearly a symbiotic relationship between communities and work. An individual who is employed in a paid job is more likely to engage socially, politically and economically in the community. Increasing access to work for those who are marginalized is a civic responsibility that will serve to benefit individuals and the community as a whole.

To turn the threat of increased marginalization into an opportunity for increased universal access to work, four key questions need to be answered:

1. What is success?

- Our expectations must be clearly defined, and must range from short to long-term.
- Success must be defined as actual achievements relative to expectations.

2. What will it take?

- Resources, including dollars, programs, buildings, staff and events.
- A powerful expression of ideas that captures everyone: from the man on the street to the provincial legislature, and which actually incites action.
- Leadership.

3. Where will the leadership come from?

- All four points of the “welfare diamond” need to be engaged: families, businesses, government and the community sector.

- Each of these groups will need to show leadership.
- Individuals and families can engage in “civil society”.
- The private sector must begin to think more strategically and longer-term.
- The community sector must lead by exploiting its connections, independent of government, but willing to partner.

4. What are the solutions?

- Dialogue and action are a beginning.
- Compelling visions.
- Partnership building.
- Sustained study and action

“Clearly, we are past the point where lack of work can be dismissed as a collection of ‘private troubles’...Work is definitely a public concern.”

Goodwill Community Works Report, pp.4

Community at Work

Goodwill believes in the “power of work”. In essence, when more people work, our communities work better. Goodwill is committed to universal access to work. We believe that anyone who wants to work can work, and should earn income from work adequate to meet their needs. But our vision is not the current reality.

The easiest thing for us to do is ignore the reality to wear blinders and pretend we don’t see it. But the costs are far too high, for all of society. That leaves us with one alternative: to come together on various levels and take action. Action in this case means thinking as a community and working as a community to create more jobs and opportunities, all with the same goal in mind: creating stronger, healthier, more cohesive communities.

Goodwill has launched the R.E.A.C.H. (Real Employment to Achieve Community Health) Initiative. R.E.A.C.H. offers paid transitional employment to marginalized members of our communities, who face serious barriers to employment, including persons with disabilities, youth at risk, chronically unemployed, Aboriginal people and newcomers to Canada. Goodwill’s goal is to create at least 1,000 Transitional Employment jobs annually by 2010.

