

PRECARIOUS WORK IN THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION

TORONTO REGIONAL REPORT

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On unpaid internships you said

- Many are required to complete thousands of hours of unpaid work in order to fulfill qualifications for a degree. This takes away from paid work opportunities for students, many of whom need to work to support themselves.
- Unpaid internships are putting students in difficult financial situations, including accumulating more debt.
- Articling jobs and other professionally accredited positions need to be a part of the conversation about unpaid work.
- Professional placements leave people vulnerable because they are often exempt from labour laws.
- Attendees felt that employers think of young workers as a flexible work pool and that they don't *need* their jobs, therefore jobs are allowed to be casual.
- **Possible solutions:**
 - **Need to end unpaid internships now.**
 - **Establish minimum standards for all federal agencies on compensation for internships.**

On barriers for immigrant families you said

- Immigrant families face economic, social, and emotional barriers.
- Those added barriers often force immigrant parents to take on multiple low-waged jobs to get by and provide for their family.
- Immigrant families are facing numerous consequences on their health and family lives, and often struggle to get out of this precarious working cycle.
- Families often make difficult choices of whether to buy a bus ticket to get home or buy food to feed their family.
- Immigrant families feel like they have no choice but to comply with employers' demands and get caught in this harmful cycle out of fear of losing their jobs.

On rising inequality & exploitation you said

- Attendees felt that employers have too much influence over the government.
- Working contract to contract, involuntary part-time, or low-wage jobs limits peoples' dreams, happiness, and ability to achieve their career desires.
- Food is increasingly becoming more expensive and wages are not adequately adjusting to compensate.
- Unionized jobs often have higher wages, more job security, and benefits. Unionization has decreased, resulting in fewer good jobs for young people.
- People are struggling to find full-time work. Our economy continues to lose full-time jobs which are replaced with part-time jobs.
- People have to work multiple part-time jobs to make ends meet.
- People are reported to be hired as part-time, which doesn't allow them to qualify for workplace benefits, even if they end up working full-time hours.
- **Possible solutions:**
 - **Need to come together as movement of non-unionized and unionized workers alike to pressure all levels of government to act now to protect workers.**
 - **Build a movement of workers to hold bad employers who employ precarious workers accountable.**
 - **Government to reject unsustainable business models that depend on exploiting precarious workers in order to succeed.**
 - **Remove any incentive at any level of government for employers to offer precarious jobs.**
 - **Organize: must expand unionized workplaces to protect workers and give workers the ability to collectively fight back against their bosses.**

On workplace protections and the social safety net you said

- Many people need access to EI between contract jobs, but qualifying can be challenging as current EI requirements are written as if it is assumed that they are working full-time with one employer. That unfortunately isn't the workplace reality for a lot of people today.
- People are working under the table jobs to survive, but they don't contribute to the social safety net and therefore can't access it when they need it.
- Social program such as EI and labour laws are being reviewed by the province of Ontario. This is an opportunity to advocate for positive systemic change.
- Only 6% of people are hired by the federal government.

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- Temp agencies shift the burden to learn about workplace safety, employee rights, and employer responsibilities onto employees.
- Gap in workplace protections: employees can't qualify with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) at the workplace they are placed in as they are not technically an employee.
- **Possible solutions:**
 - **Federal leadership. Leadership to tackle precarious work will provide the credibility needed to push the provinces to follow the federal government's lead.**
 - **Restructuring social program qualifications to account for and protect workers from precarious working conditions such as contract and temporary positions, zero-hour contracts, etc.**

On community organising you said

- Young people must be empowered to organize in their workplace.
- A lot of people aren't aware of their human and labour rights. There's a disconnection between expectations set out by employers and the rights of employees. Informing employees of their rights and following labour laws should be the employer's responsibility.
- We must act now to ensure our rights for today, tomorrow, and our future.
- **Possible solutions:**
 - **Our organizing efforts must focus on long-term shifts in peoples' social consciousness and systemic change.**
 - **Must unite many groups and work at all levels to create change: in and outside organized labour as well as in and outside government structures.**
 - **Empowerment of young workers must be a major focus.**

On Post-Secondary education you said

- Education is far too expensive. All levels of government must work together to end rising tuition fees.
- The high cost of education leads to more students graduating with unprecedented debt levels.
- People are feeling uncertain about how to pay off student debt.
- Students are graduating post-secondary education into a precarious job market. Fewer and fewer people are able to pay off student loans.

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- **Possible solutions:**
 - **Need a national strategy to help eliminate tuition fees, reduce student debt, and create good jobs for youth.**
 - **Creating a fully accessible system of post-secondary education is possible. One possible option is to generate revenue by raising the corporate tax rate.**

On medical and dental care you said

- Low wage workers are afraid that they can't afford pharmaceuticals.
- Increases in Ontario Disability Support Program signups are making it difficult for people to afford their medicine.
- Employment based insurance is not there for people working multiple part-time or contract jobs.
- **Possible solutions:**
 - **Universal dental care, eye care and pharmacare**
 - **Reverse cuts to health care and end plan to tie federal health care transfers to provincial GDP growth.**

On wages you said

- Wages have been relatively stagnant with only a 20% increase in the past 10 years.
- Attendees are concerned about rising inequality and growing wage gap.
- **Possible solutions:**
 - **Basic Annual Income: would help to offset student debt and pay for living expenses.**
 - **Canada needs a \$15 minimum wage.**
 - **Wage security through Employment Insurance for freelancer and contract workers.**