



Join the Conversation

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THE NEW ECONOMY

This isn't the economy your father or mother knew. The reality is that decades of globalization, technological advances and other factors have made certain that western economies like ours have changed almost unrecognizably. Getting a decent full-time job just isn't that easy anymore. That's because the vast majority of employers have moved to a part-time, contract, and temporary jobs model, often without benefits, as companies around the world look for any competitive edge – usually at the expense of people.

We call this new jobs reality 'precarious work.'

In Canada, our millennials and workers over age 55 account for a shocking 50% of unemployment. Both these groups are vulnerable, as the first group hasn't yet developed many job skills and experience and the second group is financially vulnerable, with disabilities showing up, or difficulty retraining for new kinds of jobs.

Focusing only on the hope of creating new jobs takes away the need to think and talk about other realities about our economy. No government is able to guarantee a stable supply of good employment for people any longer.

Automation

Along with and part of globalization, automation has also played a huge role in changing the way our economy works. We now have artificial intelligence (AI) that can accomplish incredible, complex tasks and even manage complex networks with a speed that can't be matched by human standards.

For instance, the self-driving car will replace human drivers because the cost will be significantly lower. Service-oriented jobs are not safe either. Kiosks at McDonald's have already been taking orders. The truth is, most jobs can be broken down into specific tasks and automation can usually replicate what needs to be done at a fraction of the price. In fact, about 42% of Canadian jobs are at high risk from automation in the next 10 to 20 years.

Obviously, the unemployment rate could cause the breakdown of our existing economic system. We'll need a new system that could provide income -- but not necessarily from labour. We would need better distribution of income and wealth, which is the role of government.

The 'Other' Work We Do

When most people talk about work they think of paid labour – the jobs we're employed at. But we also need to have a discussion about all the uncompensated work most people do every day. All those caregivers, volunteers, interns, and moms and dads who look after kids are all doing work but not getting paid. They are not sitting idle. They add value to our society, economy and democracy – with no pay cheque, sick leave, or pension plan. Caregiving is too often unrecognized by governments, unsupported and usually stressful.

It's important to realize that basic income is not just for that small cross-section of people who are unable to find or do paid

labour. Basic income can also help those who are working for less than a living income.

Creative Work and Entrepreneurs in the New Economy

Artistic and creative work is important to any society, as are our entrepreneurs. With basic income, everyone engaged in artistic and creative work has a basic cash flow which can help people make financial plans. People will also be more likely to start a business and take risks if they know they will have some kind of income floor. Canada needs more of these risk takers in the creative economy.

KEY FACTS

- Basic income gives people in precarious positions an unbroken, guaranteed income to help them over between periods of unemployment.
- Basic income provides some economic security, but most people will still want to do paid work to earn a higher income and use their skills and talents.
- Part-time positions accounted for 89% of job creation in Canada between October 2015 and October 2016.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many workers are now part of the precarious work culture – short-term contracts, temporary jobs, seasonal employment or fewer hours than they would like. They often face unpredictable hours and are expected to be available at short notice.

This has really affected the balance of power between employers and employees. Many employees lack negotiating power about their pay and work conditions.