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NEWS RELEASE

Young Canadians face worst job market in decades, says annual report card

Canada's Vital Signs also highlights trends in aboriginal education, violent crime

OTTAWA (Oct. 6, 2009) – Canada's youth jobless rate has soared under the economic pressures of the past year and even the lucrative summer months were a bust, with young people's hours of work hitting 30-year lows, according to [Canada's Vital Signs 2009](#), the annual report card on quality of life from [Community Foundations of Canada](#).

"The report shows us how the impact of the recession has been immediate and severe for vulnerable groups, such as youth," said [Monica Patten, President and CEO of Community Foundations of Canada](#). "It also shines a light on inequities that pre-date the recession, such as the disturbing high school completion rates among the aboriginal population."

The snapshot of how Canadian communities are faring in [10 key areas](#) also highlights a continuing paradox. Although violent crime was the top concern among Canadians in a recent poll, statistics show that our safety record continues to improve, with significant declines in the most violent crimes such as homicide, sexual offences and child abduction.

Statistics from *Canada's Vital Signs 2009* show:

- [Youth unemployment](#) rose from 10.7 per cent in January 2008 to 16.3 per cent by this summer. As of August 2009 employment among youths is falling faster than in any other age group. Among students looking for summer jobs, 19.2 per cent were unemployed this summer and for those who found work, the average number of work hours, (23.4 per week) was the lowest in more than 30 years.
- [Aboriginal students](#) (15 and over) are attending and completing high school at much lower rates than the non-Aboriginal population. The Aboriginal high school completion rate was 56.3 per cent in 2006, as compared to a rate of 76.9 per cent among the non-Aboriginal population. The numbers were even lower among Aboriginal Canadians on reserves (40.5 per cent) and in Nunavut (39.3 per cent).

- [Violent crime has fallen](#) 12 per cent since 1991 with the largest declines in the most violent offences, including a 32 per cent drop in homicides, a 36.4 per cent decrease in sexual offences and a 64.5 per cent decline in abductions.
- [Low birth weight](#), which is linked to child health concerns such as learning difficulties, vision and respiratory problems, is on the rise in Canada. Between 2002 and 2008, the incidence of low birth weight increased from 5.7 per cent to 6.1 per cent, in large part due to a rising incidence in pre-term births linked to the increase in maternal age, C-sections and fertility treatments.

Sixteen Local Reports Released Today

Vital Signs is part of a growing nation-wide initiative by [Canadian community foundations](#) to measure quality of life and take action to improve it. Today, [16 local Vital Signs report cards](#) are being released by community foundations across Canada. A full list of this year's participants and their local reports can be found at www.vitalsignscanada.ca.

Vital Signs collects [data from recognized sources](#) to make connections between key quality of life issues in our country. It is designed to share important research in a reader-friendly way that is accessible to all Canadians. The national Vital Signs project is based on [Toronto's Vital Signs](#),[®] an extremely successful indicator report developed by Toronto Community Foundation, which was first published in 2001.

"Vital Signs has become a platform for local action among a wide range of community leaders, including governments, not-for-profits, philanthropists, the private sector, and individual citizens," said Patten. Impact stories from across the country can be found at <http://www.vitalsignscanada.ca/nr-2008-impact-stories-e.html>.

Polling to be released on Oct. 14

This year, for the first time, [Community Foundations of Canada](#) has also conducted national polling about the quality of life in our communities. The polling, conducted by [Environics Research Group](#), will be released on Wednesday, Oct. 14 and featured in an insert in [The Globe and Mail](#).

For ongoing updates, follow Canada's Vital Signs on Twitter at www.twitter.com/CFCvitalsigns or visit our blog at <http://www.vitalsignscanada.blogspot.com/>.

About Community Foundations

Canada's 165 community foundations are local charitable foundations that help Canadians invest in building strong and resilient places to live, work, and play. They are one of the largest supporters of Canadian charities, providing \$169 million to local organizations in 2008. Find out more at www.cfc-fcc.ca.

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