

Executive Summary

There is an epidemic directly affecting 40,000 young Canadians annually, and each year, these youth levy a lifetime cost of \$5.5 billion. **Ci** believes charitable giving can make the largest impact within the education sector when it is directed toward addressing **Canada's high school drop-out epidemic**.

In 2006, Canada's **high school drop-out rate was 9.5%**. While this number may appear relatively low, it masks the human numbers. With 40,000 drop-outs each year, **there are 210,000 Canadians aged 20-24 without high school diplomas. A third of all drop-outs leave school with a Grade 9 education or less.** High school drop-outs rarely go on to further education, with **only 16% continuing education through alternative programs.**

The future for Canadian high school drop-outs is bleak. They are the lowest wage earners, live on the edge of, or in poverty, and incur high social costs. High school drop-outs are 2.5 times more likely to be unemployed than those who finish high school, receive 85% of government welfare spending, and account for 80% of inmates in federal jails. High school drop-outs are the leading burden on Canada's welfare, health care and prison systems.

Ci believes that funders can have the greatest impact in addressing this epidemic by donating to effective charities that work with the most vulnerable groups with the highest drop-out rates. These groups include aboriginals, immigrants, inner-city Black, English as a Second Language (ESL) students, students in rural communities and boys.

Ci views tackling Canada's drop-out rate as an urgent need in order to break the cycle of failure. The greatest challenge is to get the first generation through high school. Left to fester, the drop-out epidemic perpetuates itself on the next generation. On the other hand, if effective action reduces the number of school drop-outs, the problem diminishes with each generation.