Introduction to ““At Risk” Young People and Preparedness for Work: The Youth Choice Project”

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In early 2014, more than 6 years after the onset of the Financial Crisis of 2007–2008, unemployment remains relatively high in many of the world’s countries. Many workers older than 40 years of age who have lost their jobs within this economic downturn have been having difficulty obtaining full-time employment. Moreover, university graduates who have entered the job market in recent years have been having trouble landing jobs that require a college degree. Given how hard it is for people with years of labor market experience or college-educated young people to find employment, what does this mean for the employment opportunities of youths who lack the requisite education and, in the words of the two co-authors of this issue’s “Perspectives” Section article, exist “on the margins of criminality”?

In this timely, interesting and well-written “Perspectives” Section article, Louise Ridley, Senior Lecturer in Criminology in the Department of Social Sciences at the University of Northumbria (United Kingdom) and David Wray, a Senior Visiting Research Fellow at the Work and Employment Research Unit, University of Hertfordshire (United Kingdom), examine how what came to be referred to as the Youth Choice Project greatly helped troubled, or “at risk,” youths through providing them with directed support and work experience. The authors demonstrate that through the youths’ involvement in the project, the participants obtained many benefits including an enhancement of their life skills, increased confidence and improved self-esteem. Furthermore, the youths’ participation in the program resulted in the participants developing future ambitions with regards to the world of work.

If any of the journal’s readers are interested in responding to any essays published in the “Perspectives” Section or would like to write articles on any topics in the field of employee relations, please do not hesitate to contact me with your proposal. I welcome both practitioner-based and scholarly-based articles written from any one of a variety of theoretical perspectives. I hope that you enjoy this article and find it most illuminating.

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