



Transition to Common Work: Building Community at The Working Centre

Joe Mancini, Stephanie Mancini

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The Working Centre in the downtown core of Kitchener, Ontario, is a widely recognized and successful model for community development. Begun from scratch in 1982, it is now a vast network of practical supports for the unemployed, the underemployed, the temporarily employed, and the homeless, populations that collectively constitute up to 30 percent of the labour market both locally and across North America.

Transition to Common Work is the essential text about The Working Centre—its beginnings thirty years ago, the lessons learned, and the myriad ways in which its strategies and innovations can be adapted by those who share its goals.

The Working Centre focuses on creating access-to-tools projects rather than administrative layers of bureaucracy. This book highlights the core philosophy behind the centre's decentralized but integrated structure, which has contributed to the creation of affordable services. Underlying this approach are common-sense innovations such as thinking about virtues rather than values, developing community tools with a social enterprise approach, and implementing a radically equal salary policy.

For social workers, activists, bureaucrats, and engaged citizens in third-sector organizations (NGOs, charities, not-for-profits, co-operatives), this practical and inspiring book provides a method for moving beyond the doldrums of “poverty relief” into the exciting world of community building.

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