



Non-residential Supports and Intellectual Disability:

A Review of the Literature on
Best Practices, Alternatives and
Economic Impacts

Prepared by the Community Living Research Project

School of Social Work and Family Studies
2080 West Mall, The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1Z2

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Research Team: *Tim Stainton (Principal Investigator), Rachelle Hole, Grant Charles, Carrie Yodanis – University of British Columbia; Susan Powell – Kwantlen University-College; Cameron Crawford – The Roeher Institute*

Project Coordinator: *Leah Wilson*

Research and drafting assistance on this review: *Cameron Crawford*

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For additional information and copies please contact:

Community Living Research Project
School of Social Work and Family Studies
2080 West Mall, University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z2
CANADA
clrs@interchange.ubc.ca

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Executive Summary

This report will review the literature on non-residential supports for people with intellectual disabilities, much of which focuses on employment. People with intellectual disabilities experience persisting low levels of employment. Supported employment has emerged as a major approach for addressing this issue, an approach that is fairly well established in Canada and other jurisdictions. However, while there have been improvements in implementation of supported employment in recent years, in the US context segregated employment outstrips its continued growth.

A range of systemic factors create disincentives to the employment of people with intellectual disabilities, including provincial income programs that penalize people for earning above capped limits and difficulties that people with intellectual disabilities face in qualifying for ongoing employment supports under generic and specialized labour market programs and services.

The market orientation that has been driving agencies in the developmental disability sector in recent years has led to a 'commodification' of disability and competition among agencies for clients who are easier rather than harder to serve. Researchers have begun to articulate financing strategies, however, for dealing with such issues.

While negative employer attitudes can deter the hiring of people with intellectual disabilities, once contact is established between employers and individuals such attitudinal barriers can be overcome. NGOs in the developmental disability sector have an important role to play in establishing such contact, allaying employer concerns, building trust, reducing risks for employers, providing advice and so on. Larger firms may present greater opportunities than smaller firms for placement and hiring of people with intellectual disabilities and may be more predisposed to take advantage of the favourable public image and diversity in the workplace that is likely to accrue.

For their part, people with intellectual disabilities may need to avoid attracting attention to themselves and develop a range of work-related and social skills. A variety of issues stemming from disability may need to be accommodated in the workplace, in particular behaviours that may seem inappropriate but that serve functional purposes. Assisting employers and coworkers to understand why people behave as they do can help in making needed changes to the work environment and to work tasks so such behaviours are less necessary.

Job coaches intent on helping their clients achieve successful supported employment need to match individuals' abilities and interests to jobs, foster and leverage natural supports in the workplace, maintain ongoing contact with employers and help tailor job accommodations to individuals' needs.

Workplaces more likely to yield positive outcomes for supported employees are characterized by multiple context relationships that are not focused solely on work tasks, opportunities for informal social interaction among co-workers, management that takes personal interest in their employees and who foster teamwork, and interdependent job designs. Finding such workplaces requires ongoing reconnaissance by employment agencies and support workers. Where workplaces do not exhibit such traits, employment support workers may have to engage in problem solving with employers, facilitating communication, addressing myths and stereotypes about disability with coworkers and helping people with intellectual disabilities find their own 'voice' and confidence in the workplace.

Ongoing career development activities can help people with intellectual disabilities move away from a succession of entry-level jobs. This requires building on individuals' career interests, helping them develop transferable skills and helping them to capitalize on the positive aspects of what may be limited employment opportunities.

For many people, a combination of the above strategies may be needed.

Some researchers have developed robust core values, indicators and performance measures to assist employment agencies to develop more effective and consistent practices for people placed in employment in regular businesses in the community.

Self-employment and self-directed employment may be viable options for some people. Typically this involves helping the individual to: develop and implement a business plan; establish contact with mentors, business incubators and other contacts in the community; and find the necessary financing. Key to success is the individual and others believing in their capacity to be successful.

Seizing on general opportunities presented by community economic development initiatives is one approach to furthering the employment of people with intellectual disabilities. Another is creating a specific community economic development strategy for people with intellectual disabilities in a given community.

In securing the financing needed for self-employment or community economic development, a variety of models of microfinancing can be tapped, including the Urban Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Initiative of Canada's Western Diversification, which is managed by the Mennonite Central Committee. "Peer lending circles" and various other models may also be useful. Owing to funders' concerns about the capacity of people with intellectual disabilities to manage money and to achieve successful business, people with intellectual disabilities are likely to need assistance accessing such financing.

Worker cooperatives are another approach to creating new employment opportunities. Cooperatives involve partnerships among various stakeholders, including disability organizations, and the sharing of risks and responsibilities.

Generally there are favourable economic and social returns to individuals with intellectual disabilities who are involved in supported employment. While no research was found on the benefits of self-employment, much the same is to be expected.

A clear 'business case' needs to be built for employers if they are to be persuaded that the benefits of supported employment outweigh the potential costs to their firms.

The financial benefits of supported employment to society at large are contested ground and difficult to establish if what is sought are higher financial returns than the amounts invested by governments. That may not be a reasonable expectation, particularly concerning people with complex and challenging needs who would be reliant on publicly funded programs in any event.

A. Introduction

This report provides a review of the literature on best practices in non-residential program supports for people with intellectual disabilities. It was anticipated that the literature would span employment-related programming as well as other ‘day programs’. As it turns out, however, there is little in the way of research on day programs that are not somehow employment-related for working-age adults (15 to 64 years) with intellectual disabilities. Various search strategies were pursued in Google concerning people with intellectual disabilities¹ and “research” and “best practice”, excluding the terms “child”, “children”, “seniors” and “employment”. The searches yielded few results, with fewer still providing links to research *per se*. Much of the research that was found related to medical and other treatments. Accordingly, the research focuses mainly on employment-related programs.

The present report uses the term ‘intellectual disability’ and ‘intellectual disabilities’ interchangeably. In the references the term ‘mental retardation’ was unavoidable as that term is still widely used in the American research literature.

Section B of this report provides an overview of demographic information and the policy and program context. Section C discusses best practices and key issues, including employer attitudes, characteristics of potential supported employees, job coaching and other human supports, the culture of the workplace, the role of self-determination in employment and multi-faceted approaches that involve a range of considerations and practices. Section D examines alternatives to traditional supported employment, including Community Economic Development, the use of various types of Microfinancing and Worker Cooperatives. Section E provides an overview of studies that have performed cost-benefit analyses of supported employment programs in the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Korea and Canada. These studies have examined monetary benefits to supported employees, taxpayers, and society as a

¹The terms “intellectual disabilities”, “intellectual disability”, “developmental disability” and “mental retardation” were all used.

whole in limited economic terms, and as such provide important quantitative support to arguments for the benefits of supported employment. Section F provides a summary of key findings. The body of the report ends at Section G, which outlines some policy and program implications. References are provided in Section F.

B. Demographics and Context

This section of the report provides general demographics concerning people with intellectual disabilities, an overview of their employment level, earnings and educational attainment and a brief sketch of the policy context for employment programs.

1. General Demographics

According to Statistics Canada, there are about 109,000 working-age persons with developmental disabilities in Canada – 0.5 per cent of the working-age population (Statistics Canada, 2002a).² That figure no doubt understates the actual prevalence of intellectual disability because the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) from which the data were drawn seems to have focused people with fairly severe levels of disability (Crawford, 2005a). For example, 71.5% of working-age people with intellectual disabilities are classified by Statistics Canada as having a severe or very severe level of disability compared with 40.1% of other people with disabilities (CACL, 2006). General prevalence estimates of intellectual disability tend to range between 1% and 3% of the general population (Horwitz et al., 2000). As pointed out in a recent report by the Surgeon General of the United States, the condition of most people with intellectual disabilities is “relatively mild, and once they leave school, they disappear into larger communities, untracked in major national data sets” (Office of the Surgeon General, 2002, xii). In 2001 there were 420,750 adults 15 years and older with memory disabilities in Canada – 1.8 per cent of the adult population³ – as well as 522,950 adults

² Developmental disability is defined by Statistics Canada as “cognitive limitations due to the presence of a developmental disability or disorder, such as Down Syndrome, autism or mental impairment caused by a lack of oxygen at birth.” There were 120,140 people 15 years and older (including seniors 65 years and older) with developmental disabilities. (Statistics Canada 2002, 15 --16). See Crawford (2004a, 5) for a more detailed description of related limitations.

³ Memory disability is defined by Statistics Canada as “limited in the amount or kind of activities that one can do due to frequent periods of confusion or difficulty remembering things. These difficulties may be associated with Alzheimer’s disease, brain injuries or other similar conditions (Statistics Canada 2002, 16).”

with psychological disabilities – 2.2 per cent of the adult population (Statistics Canada, 2002b).⁴

Working-age people with intellectual disabilities are younger on average than people with other types of disability, with 38.2% per cent in the 15 to 34 age group compared with 16.5% per cent among others with disabilities. In addition, working-age males constituted a larger share of this population than females by about 15 percentage points in 2001 (CACL, 2006).

Persons with intellectual disabilities are also more likely than persons with other kinds of disability to experience multiple disabilities: 77.2% versus 52.1%. These co-existing disabilities are particularly likely to be problems of agility, mobility, speech, and mental health. Crawford (2004a) notes that, given the high proportion of people with intellectual disabilities who also have other disabilities, job accommodation and other supportive measures need to be framed with a view to addressing multiple needs, particularly agility, speaking and emotional/psychiatric in addition to cognitive issues.

2. Employment and Earnings

People with disabilities continue to experience some of the lowest rates of employment in Canada. According to PALS 2001, 43.7% of people with disabilities were employed at the time of the survey, compared to 78.4% of persons who did not have disabilities. Nearly 60% of persons with disabilities were either unemployed or not in the labour force – that is, not looking for work – at the time of the survey. People with disabilities who are in the labour force work half as many weeks per year as people who do not have disabilities, are unemployed longer, and spend three times as long outside the labour force (CACL, 2006).

⁴ Psychological disability is defined by Statistics Canada as “limited in the amount or kind of activities that one can do due to the presence of an emotional, psychological or psychiatric condition, such as phobias, depression, schizophrenia, drinking or drug problems (Statistics Canada 2002, 16).”

People with intellectual disabilities experience even lower rates of employment: only 27.3% were employed when PALS was conducted and 40.1% had never worked. While the figures for PALS probably capture the situation for a fairly severely disabled population of people with intellectual disabilities, the predecessor Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS) of 1991 showed that only 38.1% of people with intellectual disabilities were employed at the time of that survey compared with 49.0% of other people with disabilities. Some 38.2% with intellectual disabilities had never worked. The persisting general pattern, then, is one of low employment for people with intellectual disabilities as reflected in Statistics Canada's disability surveys (CACL, 2006).

In the US context, Olney & Kennedy (2001) have found that, compared with others with disabilities, people with intellectual disabilities have much lower rates of competitive employment and are much more likely to be employed in segregated work settings.

In 2001 the average earnings of people with intellectual disabilities employed at some point in 2000 were about \$14,000; about 50% received provincial social assistance (Crawford, 2005a). Average earnings of adults with disabilities as a whole were \$26,760 in 2001 and for people without disabilities, \$32,085 (Human Resources Development Canada, 2003). Nearly 50% of people with intellectual disabilities have incomes below the Statistics Canada low income cut-off, a widely-used measure of poverty (Crawford, 2004a).

3. Education

The education level of adults (15 years and older) with intellectual disabilities tends to be low overall, with 69.5% having attained less than high school graduation compared with 45.9% of other people with disabilities.⁵ Some 62.5% of working-age people with intellectual disabilities have attended special education, defined as a special

⁵ The figures on highest education level were derived using data from the Census of 2001.

education school or special education classes in a regular school. Only 12.7% of other people with disabilities have attended special education (CACL, 2006).

Owing to data suppressions on PALS 2001 it is not possible to gauge the extent to which people with intellectual disabilities have taken training to learn new or improve existing employment-related skills. However, based on the Health and Activity Limitation Survey (HALS) of 1991 only 34.7% had taken such training, with program inaccessibility and cost as key deterrents. There is no available evidence to suggest a significant turn-around in that state of affairs (CACL, 2006).

4. Policy and Program Context

Crawford (2004c) provides an extensive description of employment policy and program arrangements concerning the employment of people with disabilities in Canada. Generally, people with intellectual disabilities would not be eligible for 'mainstream' employment programs because they do not qualify for Employment Insurance, a key eligibility requirement. In some jurisdictions there are exceptions to that rule, however (Crawford, 2006b). Many people with intellectual disabilities continue to participate in sheltered workshops away from the economic mainstream and many others participate in supported employment programs; global Canadian statistics are not available on participation levels.

Simply defined, 'supported employment' is competitive work in integrated work settings for individuals for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred, or for whom it has been interrupted or intermittent, and who need support services in order to perform such work (adapted from the Centre for Continuing Education and Rehabilitation, 2006).

As Beyer et al. point out, the supported employment model recognizes that people with disabilities may need a combination of skilled teaching and social support to

help them adapt to the workforce. Defining features have been direct placement into real workplaces and training on the job by skilled job trainers (Beyer et al., 1996).

The work of such trainers (i.e., job coaches) and support organizations is in turn supported by wage subsidies and other supports for employers (e.g. tax breaks, technological upgrading). Blessing & Jamieson (1999, 217) have noted that wage subsidies and financial assistance can be major incentives for employers to hire people with intellectual disabilities.

In 2000, supported employment programs using a 'job coach' model were fairly well established in the four provinces that Neufeldt et al. studied – Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta (Neufeldt et al, 2000). Based on a regional study in British Columbia and focusing on people with severe mental illness, Corbière et al. (2005) have concluded that wide-scale adoption of supported employment is feasible in the Canadian context.

Canadian supported employment programs are funded by the federal government under the Opportunities Fund, some Labour Market Development Agreements (LMDAs) and by provincial/territorial governments using their own financial resources or cost-shared with the federal government under Federal-Provincial Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities.

Supported employment typically involves long-term and even ongoing interventions for people with complex needs or severe levels of disability (Corbière et al., 2005; Wehman & Revell, 2000; Wehman et al., 2003). As presently structured, LMDAs are inconsistent across jurisdictions in their focus on disability and tend to be non-committal overall. Employment Benefits and Support Measures (EBSMs) under Employment Insurance (EI) Part II programming per the LMDAs have generally not been widely used to finance supported employment; the percentages of people with disabilities receiving Employment Benefits as distinct from Support Measures have historically been quite low. Employment Benefits (i.e., targeted wage subsidies, self-

employment assistance, job creation partnerships and support for skills development) involve longer-term interventions than Support Measures such as employment assistance and counselling. Some Employment Measures are funded for up to 78 weeks, but the general rule is up to 52 weeks. Given the employment profile of people with intellectual disabilities and the focus of LMDAs in reducing long-term dependency on government programs, a great many people with intellectual disabilities tend to be systematically excluded from accessing EI and the related EBSM programming (Crawford, 2006b).

Programming under the Opportunities Fund is intended to address this problem. However, eligible projects are typically financed up to 52 weeks -- 78 weeks in some exceptional circumstances (Human Resources and Social Development Canada, 2006). The average investment per person is about \$7,500 per year.⁶ This program is not ideally suited, then, to people who require ongoing or extensive employment assistance.

Anecdotal reports indicate that the access of people with intellectual disabilities to programming under the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities (and predecessor agreements under Employability Assistance for Persons with Disability) has been inconsistent from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, with some jurisdictions placing little attention on the employment needs of people with intellectual disabilities.

In the US context, Mank et al. (2003) found that there have been improvements over the past decade in the implementation of supported employment practices when looking at the job roles and compensation, performance of job tasks, comparable rates and quality of work and positive coworker relationships. However, Rush & Braddock (2004) have found that, while supported employment has made significant gains since its formal introduction in 1984, the growth of supported employment has all but stalled since 2000 in the US. Segregated employment services continue to outpace the growth

⁶ (\$30 million per year X 9 years) divided by 36,000 people served since the Fund was established. See HRSDC, 2006.

of supported employment at what the researchers call an “alarming” rate. Current estimates indicate that segregated day programming outstrips supported employment by a ratio of 3 to 1 (Wehman & Revell, 2005; see also Brooks-Lane et al., 2005).

Crawford & Martin (2000) note that, while severity of disability may preclude active participation in the labour force for some individuals the employment of many others is hampered by a range of factors not directly attributable to disability. Such factors include disincentives to employment arising from income and disability support programs, lack of accessible information about job availability, inadequate training and comparatively low education levels, lack of accessible transportation, employer discrimination and a range of other factors. Neufeldt et al. (2000) have also pointed to punitive ‘tax back’ rates in provincial social assistance programs for earnings above low earnings ceilings, risk of loss of income support and limited encouragement to build up personal asset bases as disincentives to employment for people with intellectual disabilities, problems that persist in Canada (Crawford, 2004c). Disincentives arising from the social security system are a persisting problem in the US as well (Mank et al., 2003).

Tracing changes in developmental disability agencies in recent years in Canada, Pedlar et al. (2000) have detected shifts from traditional congregate care to more individualized approaches. They also found that non-profit organizations are more involved than for-profit agencies in advocacy and education at the community level. However, in other research Pedlar & Hutchison (2000) found that the emergence of for-profit organizations in the developmental disability sector has furthered market-oriented approaches to service provision and the ‘commodification’ of disability, with increased competition among agencies for clients who are easier to serve.

In terms of the effect on employment-related services, Crawford (2004c) has found that this kind of competition has served as a disincentive for employment agencies to work with individuals with complex needs, which would include many people with intellectual disabilities. In the US context O’Brien et al. (2005) and Wehman & Revell

(2005) address this problem ('creaming') and discuss potential solutions at some length, pointing to fiscal strategies to create incentives for employment agencies to work with people who present complex employment challenges. O'Brien et al. (2005) explore the effectiveness of person centred funding (personal budgets and vouchers) in improving the employment situation of people with psychiatric disabilities.

C. Best Practices in Supporting People with Intellectual Disabilities in Employment

This section of the report focuses on best practices and key issues concerning the employment of people with intellectual disabilities. It addresses employer attitudes, characteristics of potential supported employees, job coaching and other human supports, the culture of the workplace, the role of self-determination in employment and multi-faceted approaches that involve a range of considerations and practices.

1. Focusing on Employer Attitudes

In a survey of 360 employers of persons with disabilities, Tse (1993) found that there were four major factors affecting the decision to employ members of this population: (1) the personality of the worker, particularly whether an emotional problem was present; (2) the person's ability to do the job; (3) the availability of low-level jobs; and (4) the person's productivity as a worker.

With the exception of "availability of low-level jobs," Tse's findings emphasize the characteristics of workers at the expense of structural variables. That structural variables may have a greater effect than Tse's research would suggest is borne out by findings that negative employer attitudes can be a barrier to acquisition, maintenance and advancement of employment positions by persons with intellectual disabilities (Johnson, Greenwood & Schriener, 1988; Schloss & Soda, 1989). Blessing & Jamieson (1999) found that, given an opportunity to hire a person with an intellectual disability, employers who had previous experience with such employment were likely to perceive more advantages and few disadvantages than were employers without such previous experience (see also Unger, 2002).

Employer-employee interaction is a primary hurdle that, once overcome, could have a snowball effect on the availability of job opportunities: seventy-eight per cent of experienced employers described their past experience hiring a person with a developmental disability as a predominantly positive one (Blessing & Jamieson 1999).

Experienced employers can also be expected to understand the limitations that may be characteristic of many employees with intellectual disabilities (e.g. difficulty dealing with pressure and/or sudden change).

Blessing & Jamieson (1999) point to the importance of service agencies as mediators between employers and potential employees. Employers were found to value the provision of information about skills and 'deficits' of a potential worker, but had negative attitudes concerning being contacted by a worker with a developmental disability without the assistance of a social service agency (Fry 1997). Employer attitudes toward hiring an employee also changed depending on the efficacy of particular social service agencies: while service agencies were important, they could harm chances of hiring if they were thought to force employment without regard to the readiness of the potential employee, or to the fit of employee to position. There is, then, an interaction between employer attitudes, job type, the characteristics and abilities of a potential employee, and the efficacy of service agencies in building relationships with potential employers.

Hernandez et al. (2000) have found that, while employers tend to have positive general attitudes towards potential employees with intellectual disabilities because this has become the socially accepted norm, attitudes are likely to be less positive when specific hypothetical issues are assessed.

Hernandez et al. also found studies addressing intellectual disabilities revealed mixed to negative attitudes, with potential employees living in the community valued more than those who had been living in institutions. The authors found a clear tendency for employers to hierarchize potential employees according to type of disability, with employers more likely to express positive attitudes toward individuals with physical or sensory disabilities than with intellectual or psychiatric ones (see also Unger, 2002). This suggests that employer attitudes may be more positive if the independent living skills and support circles of an individual in question are emphasized.

Levy et al. (1993) present findings that show that employers have expressed more favourable attitudes toward employing persons with severe disabilities, viewing them as dependable, productive workers who can interact socially and foster positive attitudes on the part of their coworkers.

Minskoff et al. (1987) found that three fourths of employers in their study were willing to give individuals with intellectual disabilities special considerations that they would not afford to coworkers without disabilities. Similar findings by Olson et al. (2000) show that employers are realistic about the increased amount of training and supervision needed for employees with intellectual disabilities, and are likely to perceive these accommodations as being offset by positive attributes of employment, such as enhancing their organization's public image and promoting diversity in the workforce.

Greenwood & Johnson (1987) found that employers with higher educational attainment express more favourable attitudes to the hiring of persons with disabilities than do those with lower academic attainment. Though corroborated by other research, this trend has not consistently been found by similar studies.

Hernandez et al. (2000) state that "it is unclear to what extent employer attitudes toward workers with disabilities... stem from personal experiences, lack of information, or from global myths and stereotypes. Researchers need to address the source of these views... It is also unclear to what extent these attitudes generalize to actual employment settings." The authors also found that "the expressed willingness to hire applicants with disabilities continues to exceed employers' actual hiring," though this gap may be narrowing (see also Unger, 2002).

Gilbride et al. (2000) introduce an addition to this discussion by analyzing employer attitudes outside the usual focus on attitudes toward disability, and point out that employers generally tend to avoid risk. Thus, a major goal of vocational service agencies is to reduce the risk, and employers' perceptions of risk, related to the hiring of an employee with an intellectual disability. The authors' report quotes several studies

that have found service agencies that have successfully addressed attitudinal, perceptual and procedural barriers typical of potential employers. Success has stemmed from the ability to develop and maintain working relationships with employers that lead to confidence and trust (see also Fry 1997).

This entails more than merely locating employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. It involves addressing the work needs of the employer and demonstrating to the employer genuine concern and help toward accomplishing the employer's goal of a stable, competent workforce. The work of third parties can help overcome that barriers outside the direct control of potential employees with disabilities.

However, the work of Blessing & Jamieson (1999) suggests that once initial barriers are overcome and the first person with a disability is hired, ongoing relationships with employers can be expected to be fruitful. Greenwood & Johnson (1987) report that employers in larger companies are more likely to have positive attitudes than those in smaller ones. It would appear that relationships with larger businesses may offer both more positive attitudes and more opportunities for multiple positions for persons with intellectual disabilities.

2. Focusing on Characteristics of Potential Employees with Intellectual Disabilities

While structural and attitudinal barriers to the employment of persons with intellectual disabilities undoubtedly exist, characteristics of potential employees themselves may also need to be addressed. Riches et al. (2003) found that people with disabilities were generally well accepted by supervisors and coworkers in open employment settings. However, such acceptance seems to be contingent, at least in entry-level jobs, on people with disabilities 'blending in' and not drawing attention to themselves. Skills needed for positive non-task related social interactions with

coworkers as well as skills needed to complete work tasks are essential conditions of meeting the basic requirements for success in entry-level jobs.

People with intellectual disabilities can be expected to have a range of specific needs that may require attention within the employment context. For example, Crawford (2004a) writes:

People with intellectual disabilities are likely to be dealing with a range of cognitive difficulties. For instance, on average they have had difficulty with 3 out of 4 basic academic tasks such as learning how to read, write, spell or do basic mathematics (e.g., adding and subtracting). Others with disabilities have had difficulty with only one of these tasks on average. As well, on average people with intellectual disabilities have difficulty with 4 out of a total of 7 tasks that include: telling right from left; doing the right thing at the right time; explaining ideas when speaking; doing activities that involve many steps (such as following a recipe); solving day to day problems; understanding people they don't know very well; and talking to people they don't know very well. Others with disabilities have difficulty with only one of these tasks on average.

Unger (2000) has found that, in addition to intellectual impairments, concerns with deficits in social skills can be a major issue for employers in a position to hire an employee with an intellectual disability. Employers have expressed concerns regarding the social skills of workers with mental, emotional or communication disabilities and the workers' ability to function as part of a team. Employers were least concerned with the ability of persons with physical disabilities to socialize with coworkers and work as part of a team.

Blessing & Jamieson (1999, 219) state that "remedial efforts in programs for training persons with a developmental disability should focus on altering worker characteristics such as: poor attendance, unsafe work behaviours, and inappropriate social interactions, all of which were found to most strongly discourage an employer from hiring a worker from competitive employment."

Biersdorff (2002) expands on the concept of “inappropriate social interactions” and elaborates it into (1) aggressive (e.g. interpersonal violence, destruction of property), (2) socially disruptive (e.g. “non-compliance, loud or lewd speech or actions that are inappropriate to the social context), and (3) internally maladaptive (e.g. self-injury, self stimulation such as hand flapping or rocking) behaviours. While self stimulation is not universally seen as maladaptive, it is included here owing to its presence in the literature.

There is a wide consensus that so-called ‘problem behaviours’ among persons with intellectual disabilities should be considered functional, i.e. serving a definite purpose or need: it may communicate boredom, frustration, lack of personal control or a desire to change the current situation (Biersdorff, 2002). Such behaviours, when interpreted as communication, can be addressed and the need in question resolved (Umbreit 1997; Carr & Durand 1985; Iwata et al. 1994; Northup et al. 1991; Rowland & Treece 2000). Umbreit (1997, 129), outlining a methodology informed by Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA), writes that addressing such behaviour “typically has involved identifying the consequences that problem behaviours produce (e.g. attention or escape), teaching alternative socially appropriate behaviours, and then making the consequences available only when the alternative behaviour occurs.”

Building on experiences gained through the work of the Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute in Calgary, Biersdorff (2002) outlines a number of best practices, based on the “functional analysis” indicated by Umbreit (1997). Problem behaviours can be analyzed by

varying the situation systematically and seeing whether the challenging behaviour increases or decreases in frequency or severity. When we know why the person behaves as he or she does, we can plan around it. For instance, Iwata, Dorsey, Slifer, Bauman, and Richman (1994) looked at how self-injurious behaviour varied for nine individuals when each one

- had nothing to occupy his attention,

-
- had objects to explore freely with a staff partner,
 - had a staff partner directing his work on a task, or
 - had a staff partner who only attended to him when he was engaged in self-injury.

These conditions were chosen because they reflected the kinds of situations or interaction patterns commonly found in institutional living. A few individuals did not vary the amount of self-injury across these types of situations. For some, self-injury was more common when the person was otherwise unoccupied. For others, self-injury was more common when staff were making demands to perform a task a particular way or when staff only attended to self-injury. In short, people differed in the type of function that self-injurious behaviour served for them.

By establishing patterns through a functional analysis, interventions for some focused on ensuring that the environment provided sources of stimulation. For others, interventions focused on restructuring work situations to reduce demands and power struggles or to ensure that staff interacted with the person when there was no self-injury occurring.

3. Building on Individual Interests

Chadsey et al. (1997, 281) express scepticism about some behavioural interventions: “While there have been successes reported utilizing social skill training procedures, the outcome measures typically used to define success have been narrow in scope, primarily showing increases in the frequencies of particular social behaviours trained.” The authors refer to this approach as the “deficit-remedial model,” and while they admit that this model has merit, “it may not always be the best model to use.”

The “ecological model” Chadsey et al. put forward emphasizes emphasis the importance of the congruence or fit between the individual and the environment, and changing the environment – or finding the right environment – rather than changing a particular social behaviour.

Based on their research, Pierce et al. (2003) conclude that matching abilities and interests to jobs, rather than focusing on individuals’ intelligence or behaviour, can

reduce problems in job retention. In the particular state in which the research was conducted (South Carolina), decisions about job training and job seeking include the preferences of the individual and job coaches who understand the preferences of the individual. Wages rather than person-level factors (race, gender, age, residence, emotional behaviour, IQ) were a key predictor of job retention, with those losing jobs tending to have lower wages than those who remain in jobs. Wheman et al. (2003), Rogan et al. (2000) and other researchers also point to the importance of building on individuals' interests and preferences and ensuring adequate remuneration.

4. Job Coaching and other Human Supports

A focus on environmental in combination with personal factors gives particular relevance to the role of the job coach, and to the availability of “natural supports” in the workplace. Chadsey et al. (1997, 286) found that, even when a job coach was not actively interacting with an employee with an intellectual disability, “the average number of interactions between the participants and coworkers were low.” Interactions between coworkers increased significantly in the absence of a job coach. However, there was a large degree of difference in number of interactions from person to person, and the authors do not specify whether the interactions were universally positive.

The fact that job coaches can hinder workplace inclusion/integration is not new. The title of an article by Rogan, Banks & Howard (2000) sums up this fact nicely: “Workplace Supports in Practice: As little as possible, as much as necessary.” The authors provide a valuable outline of the issues most relevant to creating an inclusive workplace:

1. natural supports
2. social relationships between supported employees and their coworkers
3. workplace climate/culture
4. business practices used to support diverse workforces
5. roles and strategies of the employment consultant

Mank, Cioffi & Yovanoff (1997, 1998) have found that, as Rogan et al. (2000, 2) write, “the more typical (or natural) the process of job acquisition, training, and support, the better the outcomes for supported employees in terms of wages, integration, and benefits. Furthermore... the greater the integration, the higher the wages and benefits of supported employees.”

The Rogan et al. (2000) study – which examined four major supported employment organizations in the United States – found several factors that can be put forward as “best practices” in human supports. For example:

- individuals should be able to choose the kind of job they enter
- work should allow individuals to obtain independence from paid support
- supports should be tailored to each individual’s needs
- “getting to know the person well is the key to successful workplace support (5)”
- the possibility that a person may not be ready for work should be accepted when appropriate
- existing contacts and other natural supports should be used as inroads into the workplace

The authors emphasize the role formal human supports play external to the workplace, e.g. maintaining relationships with prospective employers (“We can meet your needs to fill high turnover jobs or jobs you can’t fill; “I come in and help you with training, help you understand their needs and get to know the person”) and providing relevant training to job seekers.

The four organizations involved in the study approached job coaching as a temporary support in which “job coaches typically trained supported employees, then faded from the job site once the individual had learned his or her job (Rogan et al. 2000, 6).” The employer’s role as supervisor and trainer is emphasized, with the promise of initial help from the supported employment organization. This initial help may consist of asking coworkers for input and ideas; suggesting positive adaptations and choices the

supported employee can make to increase access to natural supports and to aid integration as an accepted member of the workplace; and paying attention to the coworkers willing and able to support the employee from day to day.

Even with these kinds of supports, Mautz, Storey & Certo (2001, 257) maintain that adults with significant support needs who live, work, and recreate alongside their nondisabled peers continue, in many cases, to be socially segregated.

In their study of a man with very high support needs, the authors came to the conclusion that social integration in the workplace will be enhanced by using a variety of support and accommodation measures tailored to the individual, rather than using single strategies across individuals. This could include job coach social facilitation training of key coworkers, and eliciting general coworker social support. It appears that coworker training is of the utmost importance, particularly for employees with very high needs. In a perfect situation, employees would take on job coach-type duties, allowing the paid support worker to fully fade from the scene. This could begin, as Blessing & Jamieson (1999, 218) note, by establishing “a graduated, direct, and concrete routine for the employee at the outset of training, preferably having him/her work alongside an assigned coworker.”

The Mank, Cioffi & Yovanoff (2000) team discuss the situation of supported employees who unavoidably need a high level of direct supports in the workplace: “Will some individuals, by virtue of their level of disability and severity of their behaviour issues, who require high levels of direct support (4 or more hours per week), be destined to realize poor employment outcomes (508)?”

The authors come to the conclusion that the presence of natural supports can moderate the negative effects of direct supports. Using the criteria of typicalness (of job acquisition, of job compensations, of job roles, and of job orientation), worksite integration, and wage levels, it was found that, although higher amounts of direct support from job coaches was correlated with lower typicalness, integration and wage

level, the presence of coworker training and involvement in the work setting moderated these affects. By involving coworkers as much as possible, the employment outcomes of supported employees with high support needs can be expected to approach those of employees with fewer support needs.

In a review of the literature on natural supports in the workplace, Storey (2003) found that natural supports is a promising method of increasing integration of and support for workers for disabilities in workplaces. However, he points to the need for more research on this issue and concludes that a combination of job coaching and natural supports may be needed, depending on individual circumstances and needs.

Mueller et al. (2003) make a case for a differential approach to job coaching for people with Asperger Syndrome and other autism spectrum disabilities (ASDs). Attention is needed to difficulties people with ASDs may experience in the areas of social cognition and habit formation. Job matches should accommodate individuals' limitations while exploiting their strengths. Ongoing support is needed beyond the job application process to assist with handling workplace social interactions and communication. Job coaches need to provide social skills training specific to the needs of individual people and worksites. People with ASDs may require intensive one-on-one instruction and practice concerning work-related tasks, and may have to write these out for individuals' reference.

5. The Culture of the Workplace

Continuing with a dual focus on the individual and the work environment, a discussion of the role of job coaching and coworker training cannot end without discussion of the culture of the workplace in general. Beyond the availability of coworkers to take on training, supervisory, and/or unpaid job coaching roles, Butterworth et al. (2000) write of four important characteristics of supportive and interactive workplaces: (1) multiple context relationships; (2) specific social

opportunities; (3) a personal and team-building management style; and (4) interdependent job designs. Such characteristics have important implications for the types of workplace features and opportunities on which supported employment organizations should focus.

1. Multiple context relationships – defined as relationships that cross over life areas and contexts. This can include going out for dinner or drinks after work and on weekends, giving and receiving advice with work and non-work related issues. Butterworth et al. (2000) note a correlation between workplaces characterized by high levels of interaction and support and multiple context relationships.
2. Specific social opportunities – workplaces with higher levels of support and interaction tend to have specific sites and times when/where social rather than work-oriented actions take place; this can include enforced, scheduled, universal break times; designated lunch/break rooms; picnic tables in an outside area; company sponsored gatherings outside the workplace. Workplaces that have such spaces are contrasted with, for example, those whose employees take breaks at different times, who have few workplace customs for breaks, or which do not have designated non-work spaces.
3. Personal and team-building management style – characterized by an “overt concern by work-site management for the personal experiences of its employees (Butterworth et al., 2000, 349).” Managers with this style tend to build a sense of teamwork among employees and operate with looser management practices (e.g. working side-by-side with employees as equals). These kinds of managers also tend to take a personal interest in their employees, and schedule shifts around workers’ personal strengths and needs.
4. Interdependent job designs – shared job responsibilities are correlated with higher levels of support and interaction in the workplace. This includes “cross-training” employees on several different jobs. In this kind of setting, all employees can and

do perform each other's tasks when necessary, creating many opportunities for worker control and agency. According to Butterworth et al. (2000), this type of environment is likely to lead to similar cross-training for an employee with an intellectual disability, as there are many opportunities for learning from other staff.

The authors also note that supportive, interactive workplaces with the above characteristics are more likely than non-supportive environments to lead to strong social relationships between workers with and without disabilities. Such relationships are characterized by the presence of humour, "kidding around," etc. These environments are also more likely to lead to the maintenance of an employment position by an employee with an intellectual disability.

Implications of these findings include the necessity for employment support workers to visit potential workplaces and speak to employees rather than meeting strictly with management – this should happen more than once, and at different periods throughout the day. Evidence of team-building strategies can also be seen in the use of billboards to advertise formal and informal staff events, and in other written documentation that lays out the policies of the organization.

Fabian et al. (1993) have suggested that, in workplace environments not characterized by supportive/interactive practices, job support workers and coaches can take steps to address problems. For example, a worker could assist "the employer to identify ways to make better use of work time, schedules, and available personnel, or assisting the employer to procure additional personnel if intensive training is necessary (32)." This focus on the employer rather than employee is typical of the suggestions made by Fabian et al., based as they are in a "hands-off" philosophy of supported employment. The support worker's priority is, after ensuring that an employee with an intellectual disability has sufficient training, to facilitate the match between employee and workplace, with an emphasis on eliminating barriers in the environment.

This “match facilitation” is particularly important if coworkers are to be made comfortable with the idea of working with a person with an intellectual disability – negative attitudes are often cited as a major problem for job retention. Fabian et al.’s (1993) study found that “negative attitudes were often the result of inadequate employer resources or use of resources (32).” The authors state that addressing negative attitudes requires

intervention strategies at... three levels: the individual coworker/supervisor, the work group, and the whole organization. Employment consultants found that communication skills training to coworkers and supervisors, particularly as the training focused on responding to the employee with a disability as an individual rather than focusing on the disability, improved attitudes. In other instances, employment consultants discovered that simply convening a work group to discuss issues of myths and stereotypes about disability in the workplace improved attitudes and morale as the group became aware of its own sources of power and influence in the work environment (Fabian et al. 1993, 32).

In their 1996 discussion of natural supports, Rusch & Hughes point to the fact that, as has been the case so far in this report, emphasis is often on how an employer or supported employment consultant can work to accommodate a particular individual with an intellectual disability. According to Rusch & Hughes (1996), employment supports and services need to grow out of the philosophies of the first and second waves of the disability movement. The first wave was “marked by only professionals making major life decisions for persons with disabilities (the period marked by the introduction of normalization), whereas the second wave is characterized by parents demanding that they be included in the decision-making process (187).”

The authors envision a third wave of the disability movement, “focused upon system wide change among persons with disabilities and, equally important, persons without disabilities (Rusch & Hughes 1996, 187).” The basis of this third wave is the priority of the voices of self advocates, building on the example of previous forms of group consciousness such as the civil rights and women’s equality movement. They argue that “introducing and continuing to argue over ‘natural supports’ must be viewed

more as a perpetuation of our control over persons with disabilities than the introduction of a concept worthy of devoting research interest.” The idea of natural supports maintains and “us and them” mentality rather than viewing individuals with disabilities as a natural part of the workplace. They assert that “people with disabilities must assume a position of control, and we should recognize that our best position is also to recognize how much we hate to be controlled by comparison (187).”

Following Rusch & Hughes’ suggestion, the next section focuses on self-directed and self-employment of persons with intellectual disabilities.

6. Self-Determination and Employment

While the discussion so far has been based in a philosophy emphasizing “individual planning and functional supports” rather than a “service delivery or program model perspective (Luckasson & Spitalnick, 1994, 88),” it has not addressed the role of the individual in issues such as work type and workplace choice, personal preferences for job supports and friendships, and personal wishes for amount and length of job coaching. Much of the literature in this area assumes that, regardless of individual preferences, persons with intellectual disabilities should be provided with opportunities for training, after which they will be aided in finding employment, at which time they will be able to make use of job coaches, after which time the job coach will gradually remove him/herself from the job site, and the individual in question will come to rely on “natural supports,” or be fully integrated into the workplace.

Building on this paradigm, other authors have begun to do more work in self-directed and self-employment, which imbues the individual with an even greater amount of autonomy and self-determination. Work in this area must maintain a balance, according to Wehmeyer & Bolding (1999), between ensuring choice for individuals and promoting best practices in community living and employment supports.

Until recently, the self-employment and self-directed employment of people with intellectual disabilities has received little attention in practice or research, with developing countries seeming to have more practical experience with this approach than developed countries. Neufeldt defines self-directed employment as

income generating work where disabled people, to a significant degree, have a prime decision-making role in the kind of work that is done, how time is allocated, what kinds of investment in time and money should be made, and how to allocate revenue generated (Neufeldt, 1998, p. 6).

The Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute in Calgary has found that lawn care and delivery (e.g. newspapers, courier, flyers) services are the most common types of businesses run by entrepreneurs with disabilities (Duce & Biersdorff, 2002). Craft-making businesses, food stands, cleaning services, and recycling businesses are also common.

Business considerations for individuals with intellectual disabilities are little different than those for persons who do not have a disability. Duce & Biersdorff (2002) list five major steps: (1) developing a business plan; (2) obtaining the required skills; (3) securing start-up capital; (4) implementing the business plan; and (5) expanding the business. For simple businesses such as delivery services, a business plan may be helpful but unnecessary.

The role of the support worker may be more complicated in self-employment compared to supported employment. For example, workers may be restricted from handling client money or working at nights or on weekends, and a third party family member or guardian may have to be involved.

At the same time, the skills necessary to support self-employment will be very similar to those needed for supported employment in general: task analysis, skills training, and ongoing provision of support as needed once the business is off the ground. The support worker can also provide contacts to unpaid volunteers and mentors

(e.g. who have experience as entrepreneurs) that can act as an ongoing resource for the self-employed individual. There may also be an ongoing need to use the invoicing and accounting services of the employment agency, the marketing skills of the support worker and his/her colleagues, or simply the communication skills of a worker for individuals who are non-verbal. The needs will vary with the individual (Duce & Biersdorff, 2002).

The University of Montana Rural Institute (2004) lays out eight components of combined individual/support agency responsibility vis-à-vis self-employment:

1. Assessment of an individual's business potential – according to Okahashi (2001), this can be accomplished through a combination of techniques, including vocational profiling, person-centred career planning, functional assessment and conversations
2. Development by the individual of a business idea, exploration of feasibility of the idea, and conducting analysis of whether there is a market for the proposed business
3. Enrolment in courses or other kinds of training to obtain necessary skills
4. Individual obtaining technical assistance to develop a business plan
5. Individual writing a business plan
6. Individual determining the availability of, and applying for, funding from outside sources
7. Support agency review of the business plan
8. Support agency monitoring the progress of the business.

Okahashi (2001a) emphasizes that the more strategies used, the more likely people will become successful entrepreneurs. The best strategies were acquisition of small business skills training, business advisory services and funding and development of training materials that address disability issues. The Rural Institute stresses the fact that, especially in rural areas, jobs may be scarce and may require physical effort. People who want to work may have to create a job for themselves. This emphasizes the

business development side of the equation and choosing training opportunities that most closely match the needs of a region or community.

Okahashi (2001a) notes that, as in all supported employment endeavours, the resources available within the community should be a major source of aid – as they would be for any entrepreneur. Such resources could include existing business owners, small business incubators (which may take the form of buildings and infrastructure that offer office space and technologies at reduced cost), and the budding expertise of senior high school as well as college and university students.

Okahashi (2001b) has also written of the major barriers to the success of entrepreneurial strategies. The number one barrier, according to the author, is the lack of a belief among supported employment service providers that persons with disabilities can be successfully self-employed. As outlined above in the discussion of Blessing & Jamieson (1999), the most valuable solution to this barrier is the experience of seeing an individual who has been successful. Thus, the use of the media, newsletters, etc. by service agencies could be valuable tools for advancing the acceptance of entrepreneurship among persons with intellectual disabilities.

7. Ongoing Career Development

Wadsworth & Cocco (2002) have concluded that lifelong career development activities may assist persons with more severe forms of intellectual disability in achieving occupational tenure, a key condition of moving away from a succession of entry-level employment. They argue the need to build on the individual's career interests, assisting individuals to develop transferable skills and helping individuals to focus and build on the positive aspects of what may otherwise be limited employment opportunities.

8. Multi-faceted Approaches

Kiernan (2000) provides a helpful overview of recent changes in approaches to enhancing employment outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities. In recent years these include recognition of the importance of natural supports in the workplace, ecological approaches that seek to match individual interests with the needs and requirements of employers, the importance of job change and career development instead of job stasis, the need for ongoing availability of job coaching and support for job change, as well as the emergence of self-employment and joint-ownership as options for some people.

He makes the case that integrated rather than segregated employment should be an integral element of all transition plans, that performance standards for agencies should require integrated employment as a key goal, that flexible funding models should be devised to allow use of non-traditional support resources and that partnerships are needed between and among people with intellectual disabilities, employers and community service providers. He maintains that these approaches together with lifelong learning for people with intellectual disabilities, career development, inclusive workplaces and universal application of job modifications and supports for the benefit of all employees, will result in improvements in employment outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities.

Focusing on people with significant cognitive and physical disabilities, Wehman et al. (2003) call for the cessation of segregated program services and the expansion of competitive employment opportunities consistent with core values, namely:

- The presumption of employment, regardless of the level or type of disability;
- Competitive employment for all within the local labour market in regular community businesses;
- Self-determination and control by people with disabilities concerning their own employment supports and services;
- Wages and benefits commensurate with those of coworkers performing the same or similar jobs;
- Focusing on people's abilities, strengths and interests rather than disabilities;
- Fostering community relationships both at and away from work to further mutual respect and acceptance;
- People with disabilities determining their own goals and having access to assistance to assemble needed supports for achieving personal ambitions;
- The change of traditional systems to ensure consumer control by people with disabilities; and
- Ensuring people are connected to the formal and informal networks of a community for acceptance, growth and development.

These researchers also provide useful quality indicators and functional measures for assessing program consistency with core values (2003). These include:

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- Meaningful competitive employment in integrated work settings where the employee with a disability is hired, supervised and paid commensurate wages directly by the business where the job setting is located;
 - Informed choice, control and personal satisfaction concerning the employee's self-selected service provider, job coach, job and work conditions;
 - Work support options, and the level and nature of supports required, identified and developed by programs with the necessary skills-base;
 - Individuals with significant disabilities employed through programs that serve individuals whose intermittent competitive work history, disability profile, functional capabilities and other barriers to employment reflect the need for ongoing workplace supports to retain employment;
 - Programs consistently achieving 30 hours of employment or more per week for participants, with individuals receiving support indicating satisfaction with their hours of competitive employment;
 - The majority of program participants regularly working in competitive employment, with individuals receiving support indicating satisfaction with their program of services;
 - Well-coordinated job retention systems that maintain regular contact with employed customers to monitor job stability and to respond effectively to both planned and unplanned job retention support needs, with individuals re-placed who do not retain employment;

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- Monitoring and tracking of employment outcomes by programs that maintain information systems that provide information to customers on employment status, longevity, wages, benefits, hours of employment and jobs;
 - Integration and community participation of employees with a disability who work in jobs where work environments facilitate physical and social interaction with coworkers and where the employees are satisfied with the quality of their work and community integration.
 - Employer satisfaction ensured by programs that are framed as employment service agencies rather than as human service providers and that see employers as customers of the services that are to be provided consistent with policies and procedures responsive to the business community.

D. Supporting Employment through Individual and Community Development: Examining Alternative Options

Outside the system of supports provided by agencies dedicated to facilitating the supported employment of persons with intellectual disabilities, other types of initiatives have developed that are supportive of self-directed and self-employment: Community Economic Development, Microfinance, and Worker Cooperatives.

1. Community Economic Development (CED)

McCall has written that Community Economic Development (CED) “means different things to different people, including *institutional building* at the community level, economic development in a specific geographical area, *bottom-up* rather than top-down development or the development of a *community enterprise* (McCall, 2003, from abstract, author’s italics).”

All four of these meanings have relevance for persons with disabilities and the organizations that serve them. For institutional building to take place, the builder must understand the kinds of employment that will fit within a specific region and which kinds will not. To overcome attitudinal barriers to the employment of an individual with a disability, or a group of persons with disabilities, links must be made into existing networks of people with the means to enable acceptance. This is the essence of institutional building and of community enterprise. For employment opportunities to fully meet the needs of potential employees, decision-making must take their perspectives into account as much as possible; it must be “bottom-up.” As Wilson (1996, 617) writes, “... community economic development, if it is truly to empower people, must build community from the inside out – i.e. from the individual’s realisation of self-efficacy and interconnectedness with the larger community.”

Community Economic Development has become increasingly popular as a solution to regional poverty, and as “a strategy to increase the employment of incomes of socially and economically disadvantaged people (The Roeher Institute, 2000, 1).” However, it has not been widely used, and is apparently not widely understood, within the disability community. Nor have CED practitioners generally utilized the strategy to include persons with disabilities in development initiatives.

Building on McCall’s schema outlined above, The Roeher Institute (2000, 2-3) states that CED operates on many levels. These include (1) organizing at the “micro level around a particular individual or cluster of individuals who are not personally acquainted with one another. Here, the focus is typically placed on helping individuals develop an understanding of their interests and abilities and on helping the individuals translate that knowledge into a plan for personal development;” (2) organizing “around a community of people who share common experiences and values” (e.g. poverty, marginalization, living with a label such as disability or mental illness); (3) Organizing “in reference to a geographic region... to help people in the region map and reach their social and economic goals;” (4) targeting “broad-level policy and systems changes with a view to fostering general conditions that will favour the social and economic development of individuals, communities of common interest or entire regions.”

Many authors who write in the area of CED base their research in a philosophy that has much in common with Community Living. For example, McCall (2003) contends that CED depends on equity of services in regional communities. There is a need for governments to “support indigenous socio-economic issues, enhance the skills base, promote stronger leadership, particularly within volunteer groups, and ... solutions need to address particular circumstances and not revert to the ‘one size fits all’ solution (McCall, 2003, 100).”

McCall stresses the importance of two contentious issues lying at the heart of community economic development models: capacity and opportunity. It is the issue of

capacity that is most relevant to a discussion of the employment of persons with intellectual disabilities.

Capacity refers to a community's "ability to identify, enhance and mobilize its human potential, economic opportunities, social relationships and ecological resources for the purpose of improved community stability. Perhaps under the challenge of globalization, community stability should make way for either community resilience or adaptability (McCall, 2003, 101)."

Markey & Roseland (2001) present eight outcomes to provide a framework for measuring community capacity:

- Expanding diverse, inclusive citizen participation
- Expanding the leadership base
- Strengthened individual skills
- Widely shared understanding and vision
- Strategic community agenda
- Consistent, tangible progress towards goals
- More effective community organizations and institutions
- Better resource utilization by the community

McCall (2003, 102) states that the significance of *capacity* within CED is that if a community is unable to generate viable development initiatives based on an understanding of its strengths and capabilities, external forces are more likely to have a larger role in determining the future of the community. This often creates or repeats conditions of dependency.

Kretzman & McKnight (1993) outline the difference between *needs-based* community assessment and *asset mapping*. Asset mapping moves away from a needs-based focus that treats a community as a consumer or client. Needs are often based on community problems such as unemployment, poverty, housing shortages etc.

“Asset mapping, unlike a focus on needs, looks to *community assets* with the purpose of building communities, developing and advancing community aspirations through community relationships and mentoring links. Here the community, rather than being a client or a customer, is seen as a producer and owner of assets – regarded as community treasures – such as youth, the elderly, artists, churches, parks, libraries, clubs, hospitals and schools (McCall, 2003, 103).”

Asset mapping is not reliant on professionals outside the community, and is driven by relationships between community members, both as individuals and as components of associations and institutions. Because the goal of community economic development is ‘endogenous development’ that will allow communities to become *development makers* rather than *development takers*, success requires comparative advantage fostered and supported by entrepreneurs, administrative capacity and strong political advocacy within and outside the community (McCall, 2003, 107).

The majority of CED literature focuses, as does Hopkins (1995, 50), on the need to avoid viewing CED “just as job generation for poor people and poor communities... what community businesses must grasp is that wealth and work can be created by them taking action in the local economy to meet social, as well as individual, needs that are widespread and have commercial potential.”

Fresh Start Cleaning and Maintenance is one business that has used CED to serve the needs of a marginalized community – in this case psychiatric survivors. Church & Creal (1995) write that “Fresh Start... along with A-Way Express Courier [profiled in The Roeher Institute, 2000]... is a fairly well-established ‘flagship’ for consumer/survivor businesses in Ontario.” While it more closely fits the model of self- rather than supported employment, these authors’ analysis of the company provides an interesting real life example of the kinds of steps outlined in section C6, above.

The group began with a group of psychiatric survivors based at the Parkdale Activity and Recreation Centre (PARC) in Toronto. One activist initiated meetings because she “thought there were people who needed work (Church & Creal 1995, 8).” The group’s first idea was to start a printing business, but then realized that start-up costs would be too high. It was decided that a cleaning and maintenance company would be much more feasible. There was a connection with a crisis centre that was opening and that would need cleaning staff, which provided an opportunity for work.

The group enlisted the services of a well-known community development person who had had success in the past with a similar organization. They met with him on a regular basis over a four month period, enlisting new potential employees along the way. The group quickly found funding (both loans and grants) from three major sources: (1) a local mission whose mandate was service to marginalized populations, (2) the City of Toronto, and (3) the Ontario Ministry of Health.

Through active networking, the group secured cleaning contracts with three large service organizations, who are predisposed to be interested in businesses run by members of marginalized populations. Soon after, an office/centre of business was established, as was a board of directors, an important and contentious issue faced by Fresh Start in those early days (Church & Creal 1995). Eventually a permanent director was hired and the organization continued to grow – in 2006 it is still viable and employs only psychiatric survivors (Fresh Start Cleaning and Maintenance, 2006).

This short outline of Fresh Start’s history illustrates a successful implementation of Duce & Biersdorff’s (2002) list of five major steps in business planning: (1) developing a business plan; (2) obtaining the required skills; (3) securing start-up capital; (4) implementing the business plan; and (5) expanding the business. Members of a marginalized community were able to build on the expertise of an “outsider” and create and maintain a viable business accessible to many types of employees.

2. Microfinance

In developing and initiating a business plan, one of the most important steps – as discussed above in sections C6 and D1 – is establishing financing. For persons with intellectual disabilities who may have little work experience and a non-existent credit rating, microfinance may be one option. This type of program has been in use for decades in developing countries, particularly in the funding of female-run small enterprise (Grameen Foundation USA, 2004). It has found increasing use within Canada as well, for example through the Urban Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Initiative in Calgary (The Business Link, 2004), and the Ottawa Community Loan Fund (OCLF, 2004). In addition to providing loan services, these types of organizations also offer counselling, mentoring, training and ongoing support.

Microloans can be administered in a number of ways. The OCLF, for example, is supported by an annual grant of \$100 million from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, as well as funds from the city of Ottawa, RBC Royal Bank, and others. The funds are then distributed to eligible individuals and groups who apply directly to the OCLF.

Funding from the Urban Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Initiative (UEDI) comes from the Government of Canada's Department of Western Diversification, and is administered by the Mennonite Central Committee – Employment Development Society (MCC) in Calgary. The MCC also provides non-monetary supports to those who are in receipt of small business loans.

Another microfinance option that has been explored apart from government intervention is the loan pool, in which several organizations (e.g. banks, municipalities) contribute to and manage a fund. In the case of municipalities, the agglomeration of municipal funds may allow a fund to leverage federal backing and loan guarantees, as has happened in Pennsylvania with the HUD 108 Loan Pool (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 2001).

A similar type of program has been used to finance down payments for potential home buyers in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The Kalamazoo County Local Initiatives Support Corporation Home Ownership Program (HOP) is a consortium of “nine local lenders, seven neighbourhood associations, the City of Kalamazoo, [Local Initiatives Support Corporation], Kalamazoo Neighbourhood Housing Services (KNHS), local foundations, and the Michigan State Housing Development Authority (Local Initiatives Support Corporation, 2004).” The HOP is directed at low and moderate income neighbourhoods, and has been in operation since 1989. The fund attracts private lenders by lowering the risk involved in lending, and supports its clients by providing access to counselling and development supports.

Loan circles are another method used in microfinance. In this formulation, a small group of people (usually under ten) band together to share responsibility for repayment of a loan to one member. The group decides on who will apply for a loan first, and coordinates repayment. Once the first loan is repaid, another can be made, and so on (Okahashi, 2001). The Bangladesh Grameen Bank is most often credited with initiating these kinds of loans, and they are widely used in the developing world.

The Lifespin Community Development Loan Association in London, Ontario, also uses loan circles (referred to as “peer lending circles”). Lifespin’s mission is to “build a healthy capital base that will be used for social justice, community reinvestment and ecological revitalization. This capital base will be invested for the creation of community-based projects and businesses that will empower its citizens, protect the environment and invigorate the local economy (Lifespin, 2004).”

The Grameen Bank programs are based in a human rights framework that promotes access to credit as a human right. Loans are not based on collateral, or on legally enforceable contracts. Credit is only offered for income generation, and not for consumption. It revolves around the loan circle form of microfinance, as one can only access loans by joining a group of borrowers. Above and beyond the simple activity of providing loans for income generation, Grameen’s philosophy is based in the idea that

the program will facilitate group development, leadership quality through election of loan circle leaders and board members, and social capital in general. Both the process and outcomes of the loan program are meant to be inherently community-building (Yunus, 2003).

Anecdotal reports not reflected in the research literature suggest that, owing to funders' concerns about the capacity of people with intellectual disabilities to manage money and to achieve successful businesses, people with intellectual disabilities tend to face difficulties accessing microfinancing.

3. Worker Cooperatives

The emphasis on community building specific to micro lending is also evident in the University of Montana Rural Institute's (2004) Rural Disability and Rehabilitation Research program. Initiated in response to a prevailing idea that economic development should focus on luring large corporations to stagnating areas of the state, the program is based on a philosophy of "indigenous business development," wherein development is locally driven, and builds on resources already in place in a particular community. The emphasis is on sustainability rather than infusions of cash and jobs from an outside source. Quoting Reid (1999), the Rural Institute (2004) states that "while communities may require some form of external intervention to get started, beyond that it is essential to empowerment that the remaining steps be climbed by the community itself, with government and other outside entities contributing technical and financial help to meet community-determined goals."

The Rural Institute maintains that, because people living with disabilities tend to experience such an extraordinarily high rate of unemployment, the self-empowerment and economic justice opportunities available through the worker cooperative may be even more relevant than for the remainder of the working population (University of Montana Rural Institute, 2004). The Institute recommends the use of a

stewardship model in which one or more organizations sponsor the creation and establishment of the cooperative. When rehabilitation providers and policymakers choose to investigate the possibilities inherent in worker cooperatives, they move away from the model of sheltered workshop employment and advance toward a workplace characterized by self-determination.

Partners in such a venture could include an existing business incubator, and independent living centre, or an agency already specializing in supported employment. Joining with other groups spreads risk and responsibility, just as in microfinance lending. Partner groups could include other disability service providers, job developers, and lending institutions located inside or outside the community. There is also no reason not to employ workers who do not have disabilities, thereby creating an inclusive work situation staffed by persons who may be more likely – given their interest in joining such a cooperative – to have positive attitudes towards persons with intellectual disabilities.

Worker cooperatives for people with intellectual disabilities have been developed in Kingston, Ontario (The Roeher Institute, 2000).

E. Economic and Other Impacts of the Supported Employment of Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities

This section of the report provides an overview of research that has looked at the economic and other impacts of the supported employment of people with intellectual disabilities. While more research is needed in this area the general impression left by the research is that benefits to individuals are significant, despite net – albeit reduced – costs that may remain to society as a whole.

Kober & Eggleton (2005) recently found that ‘open’ (i.e., competitive) rather than sheltered employment yields significantly higher quality of life scores, a finding more clearly noticeable for people with higher rather than lower functional work ability.

Studies of the *economic* impact of supported employment for persons with intellectual disabilities must deal with a range of issues. These include income generated as a result of competitive employment, as well as differences between earned income and income received through income support programs, including health benefits that may be lost if an individual begins to earn “too much” income. The loss of non-monetary benefits that individuals receive when considered unemployed or out of the labour force must be considered in cost-benefit analysis of the worth of working compared with not working.

Some researchers also examine the costs to “society as a whole.” For example, in a study of two Welsh supported employment agencies, Beyer & Kilsby (1998, 303) found that “supported workers generally benefited financially as a result of their uptake of paid work but... costs outstripped financial benefits for the taxpayer and society as a whole.”

This finding goes against much of the cost-benefit research that has been performed in the United States. Beyer & Kilsby (1998, 304) report that

cost-benefit studies of supported employment programmes have shown positive financial benefits for workers and the government when compared to the cost of funding. The general conclusion from these studies has been that the benefits of supported employment schemes outweighed their costs, due to the increased wages generated in supported employment programmes, reduction in welfare benefit and increases in taxable income.

Rusch et al. (1993) studied the costs and benefits of supported employment with respect to (1) society, (2) taxpayers, and (3) supported employees. Between 1987 and 1990, the Illinois Supported Employment Project collected information on aggregate annual earnings of supported employment participants throughout the State as well as the costs of providing these services. The authors also took into consideration significant 'intangible' benefits (e.g. increased inclusion in the community, formation of friendships, increase in self-esteem) that accrue to individuals apart from financial gain.

There are two facets of the Rusch et al. (1993) study. First is the benefit seen overall in the four years examined. Second is the improvement of benefits from year to year that may indicate that, though there were more costs than benefits overall, in the fourth year there were more benefits than costs. To illustrate, the authors report that

Society⁷ received an average return of \$0.91 for every \$1.00 invested during the entire four-year period. Yearly benefit/cost ratios demonstrated that while costs exceeded benefits during the initial year (0.75), benefits began to increase more rapidly than costs during the second year (0.88) and continued to do so during the third year (0.90). By the fourth year, benefits had exceeded costs (1.09) (Rusch et al., 1993, 35).

As for the taxpayer, while benefits did not overcome costs over the four-year period, the benefit/cost ratio did rise substantially. For supported employees, individuals increased net earnings by an average of 42%. Total disposable income increased by

⁷ Societal benefit is defined by Rusch et al. (1993, 33) as "social benefits... measured by the increase in earnings of supported employees over what they would have earned in an alternative program, and the costs that would have been incurred if placed in an alternative program. A key assumption was that all participants would have been placed in an alternative program if not engaged in supported employment."

28% during the initial year, 30% in the second year, 52% in the third year, and 57% by the last year [each increase based on year 1 figures] (Rusch et al., 1993, 35). These findings led the authors to characterize the program as “viable,” though employees’ net incomes were still low enough that they were not made ineligible for public income support (average annual earned net income in the fourth year was \$2,406).

In a similar, early study in Illinois, it was found that, based upon the benefits and costs detailed, society realized a \$0.75 return for every \$1.00 invested in supported employment. Supported employees realized a 37% increase in their earnings over a comparable period (Conley et al., 1989, 441). These findings led the researchers to state that, despite the increase in net income for supported employees, and despite the fact that 80% of the benefits of supported employment were based on savings or reductions in the costs incurred for alternative programs, cost-benefit ratios would need to increase if the program is to continue to receive widespread support.

A 1992 study also found beneficial wage effects for supported as opposed to sheltered employees in Michigan (Thompson et al., 1992). In this study, wages were also seen to increase over time – a longer study would probably have seen larger wage increases as time went on. Supported employment was shown to have a positive effect on both hourly wage and number of hours worked, both of which contributed to positive wage pressure. The authors state that “in general, overall wages of supported workers are likely to be more than double those of workers in work activity and workshop programs after correcting for the effects of IQ, number of disabilities, and other factors (93).” The researchers did find that individual placements are likely to provide higher net incomes than enclave or mobile work crews where several persons with intellectual disabilities work at the same employment.

A 1987 study by Hill et al. (supported by Hill, Wehman et al., 1987; also Hill & Wehman, 1983) found much more positive results for both individuals with disabilities and taxpayers than the studies discussed above. Individual supported employees saw a benefit-cost ratio of 1.97 (based on supported employment earnings versus forgone

taxes, supplemental security income, and sheltered workshop earnings), while taxpayers saw a ratio of 1.87: “for every \$1.00 expended for the funding of supported competitive employment programs and in lost tax revenues realized by the provision of targeted jobs tax credits, \$1.87 was accumulated in benefits; the net yearly benefit to the taxpayer was \$4,063 per consumer (71).” This early study suggested

a major redistribution of adult service tax dollars to supported competitive employment programs. A second logical conclusion drawn from the analysis is that placement of persons with developmental disabilities into non-vocationally oriented day centres is not the most lucrative alternative. It is indeed rare for consumers and taxpayers alike to prosper financially through the implementation of a social program. For a similar, or reduced, amount of money expended by taxpayers, many adults with retardation can be competitively employed as opposed to attending segregated day centres. The challenge to social service professionals to provide financially efficient programs to consumers and taxpayers alike is irrefutable. The question remaining is not whether we *should* provide these services, but how to provide them in an efficient and fiscally sound manner (Hill et al., 1987, 88).

In a more up-to-date study, Beyer et al. (1996) provide a useful analysis of the productivity levels and typical jobs of supported employees. In this study of all Supported Employment Agencies in Great Britain, 43.9% of people supported were reported to be working at productivity levels in the 30%-80% range compared to non-disabled workers, and 30.6% to be working at the same level as their non-disabled colleagues. Almost twenty per cent of jobs in the study were as domestics, cleaners or laundry workers, followed by kitchen helpers or waitresses (15.3%). Jobs in shops accounted for nearly 14.7%, clerical and administrative jobs 9.4%.

Following the U.S. studies discussed above, the U.K. group studied the costs and benefits to the supported employee, the taxpayer, and society as a whole.⁸ The study found that, although supported employees gained £2.47 for every £1.00 lost in the

⁸ In this case, “society as a whole” is defined as “the sum of the other two perspectives, leaving out any transfers of resources between them (e.g. tax or welfare benefit reductions). This level represents the net change in resources available within society as a result of supported employment.”

transition to employment, tax and national insurance yields were lower than might have been expected from the level of gross income earned by supported workers. This was due to the large number of people who earned only up to their therapeutic earnings disregard limit, retaining their welfare benefits, and paying no tax. Society did receive some benefit from reductions in welfare benefit payments, and from a decline in costs for day programs in which supported employees would have been enrolled had they not been competitively employed. These findings are much less positive than those found ten years previous by Hill and his various colleagues in the United States.

In a much more detailed analysis of the net costs and individual benefits of the United Kingdom Supported Employment Programme (SEP), Beyer, Thomas & Thornton (d/u) were particularly aware of the fact that, “like any other labour market intervention, as SEP helps disabled people obtain employment it impacts on others within a closed system who wish to work and do not have this form of assistance (61).” The impetus behind the study seemed to be the government’s wish that a net benefit was being realized from supported employment programmes.

The authors found that “there are substantial financial returns from the SEP to the Exchequer in terms of income tax flow-backs from employed disabled people, and through a reduction in national welfare benefit expenditure” (61). However, the program posed a net cost rather than net economic benefit (an admittedly narrow view of ‘benefit’) for society. There are three major aspects of the programme: (1) a number of “Remploy factories” (a form of sheltered factory employment); (2) Local authority and Voluntary Body factories; and (3) various kinds of individual supported employment placements. None of these programs saw a net gain on funds spent in their support, though they were substantially less costly than if employees had been supported by public income support rather than being employed. This indicates at least that the employment schemes are, with regard to cost to the public purse, less costly than existing alternatives (e.g. Disabled Person’s Tax Credit, Occupational Pension, Statutory Sick Pay, Housing Benefit, Job Seeker’s Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Unemployment Benefit).

Beyer, Thomas & Thornton came to the conclusion that individual supported employment placements resulted in the greatest benefit to society, though less inclusionary factory positions may have provided higher wage levels. Schneider (2003), in another U.K. study, has looked at the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment for persons with mental health issues. The author reports that “little doubt remains about the effectiveness of IPS... IPS proved more effective with respect to employment outcomes than the other models [e.g. vocational rehabilitation, a standard state-federal supported employment programme, day treatment, sheltered workshops], but it did not seem to affect non-vocational outcomes (e.g. symptoms, self-esteem) (Schneider, 2003, 146).” Though IPS costs more, it is also likely to produce more competitive employment.

In New Zealand, James (1998) has studied the Mainstream Supported Employment Program and found positive net benefits from the first year of Mainstream, which accumulate further over time. The financial analysis showed a positive net present value even with comparatively high levels of unemployment of former participants. In her almost universally positive analysis of the program, the author found positive results for all parties involved in the program. This extended beyond economic benefits to attachment to the workforce, greater social participation, increased self-esteem, reduced needs for hospitalization and other health care, and a more diverse and representative state sector.

A recent Korean study (Lee, Yoo & Peters, 2003) found results similar to those reported by Beyer & Kilsby (1998). From a social perspective, benefits (employee income, tax paid and program savings) showed a net gain over costs (cost of the program, program fees, cost of a foregone alternative program) of 1.39 – this also increased from year to year. However, there was a net cost for the taxpayer – for every Korean won paid toward the program, 0.72 won were paid back into the system. This also increased from year to year. Supported employees realized a substantial net gain from the program – for every Korean won put out by participants, 2.58 were realized

over the three years of the study. Like the two other indicators, this figure increased each year of the study.

Using intellectual disability prevalence estimates of 1% to 3% a Canadian study estimates that a shift of 30% of people with intellectual disabilities from outside the labour force into paid employment could save millions of dollars annually in provincial social assistance payments and could significantly increase provincial/territorial and federal income and sales tax revenues (Crawford, 2005).

Though these studies tend to throw a positive light on the economic potential of supported employment programs, Cimera (2000) reminds us that, at least in the United States, enrolment in sheltered workshops continues to climb. Cimera lays out a number of shortcomings and assumptions of the research done to date that he feels must be addressed if the case for supported employment is really to be made. If employers themselves are not convinced of the benefits of supported employment, potential employees will have little choice but to remain in sheltered workshops. In order to secure supported employment's future, more must be learned regarding the monetary benefits and costs that employers [i.e. rather than supported employees, society, or taxpayers] incur.

In the Canadian context, Neufeldt et al. found that, although earnings were low, supported and self-directed employees with intellectual disabilities experienced high levels of satisfaction with their work, their workplaces and colleagues. Cost-benefit analysis was inconclusive, however. (Neufeldt et al., 2000).

Gallant and Associates (2001) found that the supported employment initiative of Newfoundland and Labrador assisted 461 clients to obtain/maintain employment during the fiscal year 2000 – 2001. Most clients (93.7%) had a developmental disability as the primary disability. Overall the research found that, as the number of hours of employment increased, the extent of client reliance on provincial and federal funding sources decreased. Clients were generally making more money through employment

than would have been the case had they relied solely on provincial social assistance. However, taking into account total program costs and savings to both provincial and federal treasuries, and income taxes paid by supported employees and the program staff who supported them, the research found a modest net annual cost of approximately \$1,532 per client.

Several considerations point to the complexity of conducting cost-benefit analysis of programs with a focus on the employment of people with intellectual disabilities. For instance, the program in Newfoundland and Labrador was originally designed to serve people with fairly severe levels of disability and complex needs, i.e., people who had left large congregate care institutions in the 1990s. While the program was serving such people in 2000 – 2001, it had also ‘drifted’ more recently towards serving people with less intensive support requirements but on similar terms and conditions. Accordingly, the level of paid job support provided was likely in some instances greater than the level of support actually needed to address issues of disability, though that support was provided for other pragmatic reasons such as to allay parental anxieties and to meet employer demand.

Moreover, data were not available for analysis of costs and benefits in relation to the duration of client involvement in the initiative. Was the net cost greater, or less, for people with similar profiles who had chances to develop job skills over several years as compared with over only one year?

Nor was there a reasonably precise measure of severity of disability. Holding other client profile characteristics constant, how did the net costs look by duration of involvement and by severity of disability?

Further, the quality of available data did not allow for comparative tracking of utilization of publicly funded health care services or behavioural support services for people in and beyond the initiative. Intuitively it makes sense that, if people’s quality of life, income and general satisfaction is higher when in employment than when

unemployed, use of emergency medical, mental health and behavioural support may decrease. Were people involved in the initiative more, or less, likely to use such services than people with a similar profile who were receiving only social assistance?

As well, the research was not able to look at the opportunity costs to families (e.g., forfeited family earnings) had clients stayed at home with one or both parents instead of working in supported employment.

It may not be reasonable to assume or appropriate to hope that a supported employment program that focuses mainly on people with a significant level of disability could ever 'break even' or make a profit from a strict cost-benefit perspective. However, it seems plausible that the modest net cost that Gallant and Associates attributed to the Newfoundland and Labrador initiative may overstate to some degree the actual net cost had other factors been included in the analysis.

F. Summary of Key Findings

This report has reviewed the literature on non-residential supports for people with intellectual disabilities, much of which focuses on employment. It found that people with intellectual disabilities experience persisting low levels of employment. Supported employment has emerged as a major approach for addressing this issue, an approach that is fairly well established in Canada and other jurisdictions. However, while there have been improvements in implementation of supported employment in recent years, in the US context segregated employment outstrips its continued growth.

A range of systemic factors create disincentives to the employment of people with intellectual disabilities, including provincial income programs that penalize people for earning above capped limits and difficulties that people with intellectual disabilities face in qualifying for ongoing employment supports under generic and specialized labour market programs and services.

The market orientation that has been driving agencies in the developmental disability sector in recent years has led to a 'commodification' of disability and competition among agencies for clients who are easier rather than harder to serve. Researchers have begun to articulate financing strategies, however, for dealing with such issues.

While negative employer attitudes can deter the hiring of people with intellectual disabilities, once contact is established between employers and individuals such attitudinal barriers can be overcome. NGOs in the developmental disability sector have an important role to play in establishing such contact, allaying employer concerns, building trust, reducing risks for employers, providing advice and so on. Such agencies need to make sure, however, 'goodness of fit' between what the employer needs and the skills and other traits that individuals bring into the workplace. Larger firms may present greater opportunities than smaller firms for placement and hiring of people with

intellectual disabilities and may be more predisposed to take advantage of the favourable public image and diversity in the workplace that is likely to accrue.

For their part, people with intellectual disabilities may need to avoid attracting attention to themselves and develop a range of work-related and social skills. A variety of issues stemming from disability may need to be accommodated in the workplace, in particular behaviours that may seem inappropriate but that serve functional purposes. Assisting employers and coworkers to understand why people behave as they do can help in making needed changes to the work environment and to work tasks so such behaviours are less necessary.

Job coaches intent on helping their clients achieve successful supported employment need to match individuals' abilities and interests to jobs, foster and leverage natural supports in the workplace, maintain ongoing contact with employers and help tailor job accommodations to individuals' needs.

Workplaces more likely to yield positive outcomes for supported employees are characterized by multiple context relationships that are not focused solely on work tasks, opportunities for informal social interaction among co-workers, management that takes personal interest in their employees and who foster teamwork, and interdependent job designs. Finding such workplaces requires ongoing reconnaissance by employment agencies and support workers. Where workplaces do not exhibit such traits, employment support workers may have to engage in problem solving with employers, facilitating communication, addressing myths and stereotypes about disability with coworkers and helping people with intellectual disabilities find their own 'voice' and confidence in the workplace.

Ongoing career development activities can help people with intellectual disabilities move away from a succession of entry-level jobs. This requires building on individuals' career interests, helping them develop transferable skills and helping them to capitalize on the positive aspects of what may be limited employment opportunities.

For many people, a combination of the above strategies may be needed.

Some researchers have developed robust core values, indicators and performance measures to assist employment agencies to develop more effective and consistent practices for people placed in employment in regular businesses in the community.

Self-employment and self-directed employment may be viable options for some people. Typically this involves helping the individual to: develop and implement a business plan; establish contact with mentors, business incubators and other contacts in the community; and find the necessary financing. Key to success is the individual and others believing in their capacity to be successful.

Seizing on general opportunities presented by community economic development initiatives is one approach to furthering the employment of people with intellectual disabilities. Another is creating a specific community economic development strategy for people with intellectual disabilities in a given community.

In securing the financing needed for self-employment or community economic development, a variety of models of microfinancing can be tapped, including the Urban Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Initiative of Canada's Western Diversification, which is managed by the Mennonite Central Committee. "Peer lending circles" and various other models may also be useful. Owing to funders' concerns about the capacity of people with intellectual disabilities to manage money and to achieve successful business, people with intellectual disabilities are likely to need assistance accessing such financing.

Worker cooperatives are another approach to creating new employment opportunities. Cooperatives involve partnerships among various stakeholders, including disability organizations, and the sharing of risks and responsibilities.

Generally there are favourable economic and social returns to individuals with intellectual disabilities who are involved in supported employment. While no research was found on the benefits of self-employment, much the same is to be expected.

A clear 'business case' needs to be built for employers if they are to be persuaded that the benefits of supported employment outweigh the potential costs to their firms.

The financial benefits of supported employment to society at large are contested ground and difficult to establish if what is sought are higher financial returns than the amounts invested by governments. That may not be a reasonable expectation, particularly concerning people with complex and challenging needs who would be reliant on publicly funded programs in any event.

G. Policy and Program Implications

Several public policy and program changes could improve the employment prospects of people with intellectual disabilities. These include the following:

- A more explicit and consistent focus could be placed across Labour Market Development Agreements on furthering the employment of people with disabilities in generic labour market programming under Part II of the *Employment Insurance Act*. People with intellectual disabilities should have equitable access to the programming. Ideally, access to Employment Benefits would not be so tied into eligibility for income support under EI, which disqualifies many with intellectual disabilities. Employment Benefits would ideally be available for extended periods of time for people who require this.
- Alternative programming such as that available under the Opportunities Fund could be made more fiscally robust to serve more people and to enable significant levels of ongoing employment support for people with challenging and complex needs. Again, eligible support would ideally be extended well beyond 52 weeks for people with ongoing support needs.
- Provincial social assistance programs could be designed such that people with low-income employment and part-time employment could continue to receive extended health and other disability-related benefits indefinitely. Presently, the prospect of losing such benefits that may be crucial to health and well-being can deter people from moving off social assistance into paid employment. The advantage of encouraging and positively assisting people to make this transition is that provinces and territories stand to save on income support transfers to individuals, even if expenditures for other benefits would continue.
- With federal assistance, provinces and territories could be encouraged to establish programs for disability-specific supports outside of social assistance

programs so that even people with higher earned incomes would qualify for a significant measure of ongoing public assistance for disability-related needs. This is a particularly important consideration for employees whose workplace-based insurance plans do not provide adequate coverage for disability-related expenses. Such employees are at risk of exiting employment in order to secure the needed in-kind supports (e.g., medications) available through social assistance.

- Organizations that focus on furthering the employment of people with complex employment-related needs could be given positive financial incentives to work with this population instead of competing to serve people with less challenging needs who can be quickly and successfully placed in paid employment. These organizations could also be provided incentives to adopt core values discussed in this paper and use performance indicators and measures to ensure greater consistency with what is known about effective practices.
- Small and mid-sized companies that need external financial assistance in order to make workplace modifications available (e.g., modified equipment or workstations) could have readier and more ample access to such support from governments through an 'accommodation fund'.
- Organizations that need to provide intensive pre-placement support or ongoing support to employers interested in hiring/retaining people with intellectual disabilities could be more adequately financed to undertake such activities. Presently, once a person is placed in employment the case is typically closed and no longer eligible for ongoing financial support from governments, even though such support may be required in order for the individuals to maintain their employment.
- Post-secondary educational institutions, adult literacy programs and employment training programs could be encouraged and financially supported to ensure

accessibility and to adapt curricula and instructional practices to address the adult learning needs of people with intellectual disabilities. NGOs with expertise in the area of curricular and instructional adaptations could be financed to work over the long-term with colleges and other post-secondary programs and institutions to assist in making programs more inclusive and effective. People with intellectual disabilities could be provided the financing they require to undertake educational upgrading and training.

- NGOs could be assisted to scout out and profile 'success stories' in the employment of people with intellectual disabilities. NGOs could also be encouraged to continue innovating such as under the Community Inclusion Initiative (Crawford, 2006a) to tease out 'lessons learned' and to build effective business cases for employers to consider hiring people with intellectual disabilities.

There are no 'quick fix' solutions for the difficulties that people with intellectual disabilities face in the Canadian labour market. However, adoption of the interventions proposed in this paper would go some distance towards closing the gap between employment sought and actually secured. Significant benefits would accrue to people with intellectual disabilities and their families, not to mention federal and provincial/territorial governments, employers and society at large (CACL 2006).

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