

# Closing the Gap

Workshop at the OBA Conference Centre-November 1, 2004

---

Working Papers Number 2

Literature Review

Prepared by:

**Stuart-O'Hara Inc.**

**Knowledge Management Services**

Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities –  
Intergovernmental Partnership

This project is funded by  
the Government of Canada

**Canada**

# LITERATURE REVIEW

1. ANNABLE, GARY, COLLEEN WATTERS, DEBORAH STIENSTRA, ANNETTE SYMANZIK, BRENDA LEA TULLY, NADIA STUEWER (2003). **Students with Disabilities: Transitions from Post-Secondary Education to Work: Phase One Report** Canadian Centre on Disability Studies, Winnipeg, September

This report presents findings from the first phase of a study examining the transition experiences of university and college students with disabilities as they graduate and enter the labour force. Forty students with disabilities who graduated or expected to graduate from universities and colleges in four Canadian cities during 2002 participated in interviews for the study. The report also presents findings from interviews with nine university and college staff who provide services to students with disabilities, and nine career and/or employment advisors who assist students with and without disabilities.

Appropriate accommodations and supports are important in assisting graduating students with disabilities making the transition from post-secondary education to work. No formal transition services existed for students with disabilities at the seven post-secondary institutions that officially participated in this study. However, disability services and/or career and employment services staff at a few schools indicated that they were informally providing services intended to encourage successful transitions for students with disabilities. In some cases, disability service providers offered career and employment services to students with disabilities. In others, disability services and career/employment services offices jointly offered some transition services to students with disabilities. The absence of formal transition services for graduating students with disabilities indicates an opportunity for more work in this area.

There was a significant difference between students, and career and employment service providers, in their perceptions of how useful post-secondary career and employment services were for students with disabilities. Most of the students who participated in the first phase of this study made little or no use of these services, either because they were not aware the services existed, they found them unhelpful, or because they obtained career and employment services from disability service providers.

Career and employment service providers, however, felt the services they provided were equally accessible to students with and without disabilities, and that they did a good job of providing career and employment supports to students with disabilities. In describing their services and supports, many of the career and employment service providers overlooked how at least some of their services were inaccessible to different groups of students with disabilities. For example, most career/employment centre library resources were not available in multiple formats for students with print disabilities. As well, assistive technology that many students with visual or learning disabilities utilize to access the World Wide Web and other on-line resources

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

*Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

were not available at most career and employment services offices.

2. ARTHUR, S., A. CORDEN, A. GREEN, J. LEWIS, J. LOUMIDIS, R. SAINSBURY, B. STAFFORD, P. THORNTON, & R. WALKER (1999). **New Deal for Disabled People - early implementation**, UK Department for Work and Pensions, Research Report No. 106

This report presents the interim findings of the evaluation of the New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) Personal Adviser Service pilot in the UK. The NDDP is targeted specifically at people with disabilities, particularly those receiving benefits on the grounds of incapacity for work. The Personal Adviser Service pilots began in September/October 1998 and ran for two years. The aims of the evaluation are to assess how well the NDDP Personal Adviser Service helps people find, or remain in work, and to advise about what is effective in the programme and what is not.

The report draws on research conducted during the first year of the pilot including: depth interviews with clients, Personal Advisers, and employers; a survey of clients and non-participants and labour market studies. Research is ongoing and further findings will be published in the future.

The report covers a range of topics including: organisation and operation of the Personal Adviser Service; survey of participants and non-participants; the work of the Personal Advisers; the views and experiences of clients; and the views and experiences of employers.

*Client Satisfaction*

Clients differ in terms of their motivation and readiness for work. About a third of clients reported a mental health condition as their main health problem, and the same proportion had been out of the labour market for 5 years or more.

High levels of satisfaction were recorded among clients. Most said that the Personal Adviser Service had made some positive difference. They perceived the Service as helpful when it: raised their confidence or self-esteem as when their Adviser had a real grasp of the everyday effects of an impairment or a medical condition; opened new options which appeared or proved useful; enabled access to something already identified as necessary; or intervened to prevent or divert something perceived as unhelpful.

Clients appreciated the opportunity to discuss their employment prospects with experts, and welcomed the access to training, work experience and other services made available throughout the service. Communications with Personal Advisers were generally good, though sometimes clients felt frustrated when they thought they had received inadequate benefits advice or the options suggested were unsuitable.

Employers said they required specialist advice, financial support, in work support and

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

opportunities for work trials from the Personal Adviser Service. Employers sought or received different types of help from the Service including: help with understanding whether a participant and post were well matched; whether any particular help or support was needed; access to or support for equipment and training; wage subsidies or other payments and other in-work support. There were different views about whether these needs were met and about satisfaction with the service, though those who had contact with it were generally keen to continue to be involved.

### *Organisation and Operation of the Personal Adviser Service:*

Most pilot managers had established a steering or advisory group. Overall, these groups had performed a useful and valuable role. However, a few managers were ambivalent about the usefulness of their steering or advisory group and some had changed the membership because of a perceived lack of support.

Mapping services in the area for persons with disabilities was important. Not all Pilots had mapped the service provision for persons with disabilities available in their areas.

Training of Personal Advisers was important. Personal Advisers were generally appreciative of their training, although some gaps were identified, particularly in relation to information technology, mental health issues, and benefits advice. Occupational Psychologists were available in all areas and, in addition to conducting psychometric tests and employment assessments, offered mentoring and advice to Personal Advisers.

### *Barriers and Constraints*

Personal Advisers identified a number of structural and institutional barriers for clients ready to take up paid work. Local job opportunities often did not suit their clients' needs and some clients were unable or unwilling to travel to work. Some clients rejected the 'disabled' label, constraining the help Personal Advisers were able to give. Personal Advisers perceived obstacles in the structure and operation of the benefits system. Also some employers were not sympathetic to employing disabled people.

### *Employer Attitudes to Employing Disabled People*

The study identified two broad groups of employers. The first had a strong commitment to employing disabled people. They were mostly larger organisations with specialist support departments and access to external sources of support. The second group did not have the same active commitment to employing disabled people, but said they did not discriminate. They generally had little experience of employing disabled people or specialist support, either internally or externally. Both groups identified a range of issues involved in employing disabled people, which tended to be seen as problems or barriers by employers in the second group and

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

as challenges by those in the first. Some were concerned that impairments might conspire to limit the productivity of disabled people and that there could be difficulties relating to the working environment, raising issues about both safety and access. Their views seemed sometimes to be influenced by limited experience, and narrow definition, of disability. Some respondents found it difficult to envisage the type of support or adjustments that could make a post accessible. Employers were also concerned about financial costs, and employing disabled people was generally seen to involve uncertainty and risk.

### 3. BLACKFORD, KAREN, HENRY ENNS, JANALEE MORRIS (2000). **Employment for Youth with Disabilities: Issues and Experiences**, Canadian Centre on Disability Studies, March

Recognizing the lack of information on the experiences of young people with disabilities regarding education, training, and employment, the Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (CCDS) initiated a pilot project with which to examine these issues. This two-part project included the training of 9 young people for employment, and an examination of the issues faced by young people in searching for employment.

#### *Systemic Barriers*

Data collected from this study identified a number of systemic barriers to the participation of youth with disabilities in the labour force. These barriers included problems with transportation, attendant care services, education, accessibility, and financial disincentives. While the identification of these barriers is certainly not unique to this study, the fact that these issues continue to pose problems for youth seeking employment indicates that they must continue to be raised and addressed.

#### *Employer Attitudes*

The CCDS project indicated that many employers express interest in employing people with disabilities. However, the resources required for employers to support youth with disabilities in their work place are poorly understood. Although some youth were placed as interns, they were sent back after a few weeks due to a lack of training staff and a poor fit between participant and business. Although employers and managers often express interest in employing people with disabilities, those who are ultimately responsible for the productivity of the employee seem to lack the knowledge, support, and resources to turn a work placement into a successful employment opportunity. As one participant commented: "Some of the employers said they would commit to letting us have a chance, but once they realized the barriers to making it accessible, they just quit."

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

**4. BLOCH, FRANK S & RIENK PRINS, EDITORS (2001). *Who Returns to Work and Why? A Six-Country Study on Work Incapacity and Reintegration*, Transaction Publishers**

Work incapacity has become a major social problem in most industrialized countries, resulting in increased social expenditures for sickness and disability programs and declines in labor force participation rates. A unique comparative study of work incapacity and reintegration (the WIR Project) was undertaken in the mid-1990s under the auspices of the International Social Security Association. Drawing on data compiled in six longitudinal studies of day-to-day practices and experiences in Denmark, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United States, the Project permitted researchers to measure the effects of such factors as the duration of work absence, medical and vocational interventions, labour market policies and practices, and other social or demographic aspects such as living alone or the availability of social supports.

The Project also examined a wide range of interventions directed at work incapacity and reintegration that are used currently by social security institutions, health care providers, and employers in an effort to address two key questions: do the various interventions (by social security and health care systems) found in different countries make a difference as to work resumption patterns; and if so, what are the most effective interventions?

*Key results of the WIR Project.*

In each of the six countries participating in the study, between 300 and 600 persons who were out of work for a period of at least 3 months due to lower back pain were followed for two years. The most striking finding was the large difference in return-to-work rates among the various national cohorts: from 32% to 73% after one year and from 35% to 72% after two years. Other important observations concerned the different patterns of work resumption, which occurred mostly in the early stages, great variations in income replacement for non-workers, and the fact that similar pain intensity can lead to quite different work resumption rates.

*Policy Implications*

These and other findings raise important policy implications:

- in contrast to current practices, early intervention is essential for successful work resumption; although older age and limited education make return to work more difficult,
- workplace adaptation and flexible work hours are significant overall determining factors for increased work reintegration;
- job protection rules greatly facilitate return to work; and

*Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

- while the effect of health care on work reintegration is very limited, often the best therapy is early work resumption.

5. BLOCK, S.R., K. ATHENS, & G. BRANDENBURG (2002)"Using performance-based contracts and incentive payments with managed care: Increasing supported employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities", **Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation**, 17(3), 165-174

Managed care delivery systems is one of the primary vehicles that policy makers in the US have selected to control the accelerating costs of public programs, including services to persons with disabilities. This article provides a case example of a Colorado managed care organization that developed a performance-based funding system to improve supported employment services for individuals with developmental disabilities.

Contractors were given incentives for reaching certain milestones, such as job placement and job stabilization. To strengthen the milestone system, a three-day intensive skill-building training program was developed for the staff of service agencies to become supported employment consultants and to enhance the skills of existing consultants. The presence of achieved outcomes and quality indicators led to additional funding for service agencies

Over a period of 3 years, this payment system led to a 37% increase in the number of long-term placements in the community.

6. BRUYÈRE, SUSANNE M. (1999). **A Comparison of the Implementation of Employment Provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the United States and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in Great Britain and Northern Ireland**, Cornell University, Program on Employment and Disability, School of Industrial and Labor Relations - Extension Division, Ithaca, NY, October

In both the US and UK, legislation has been passed to protect the rights of persons with disabilities to equal access in the workplace and community; in the US, this is the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and in the UK, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

The purpose of this study has been to identify the impact of the ADA and DDA in their respective countries, in terms of employer policies and practices, and to identify remaining barriers to the employment of people with disabilities.

Results are based on the feedback from surveys of 2,000 US and UK employer representatives, mostly HR representatives.

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

*Findings*

- The results of this survey confirm the significance of the role of human resource professionals in lessening disability discrimination in the workplace. In the US, the HR staff, either alone or in combination with others, makes the final decision on accommodations. In the UK, this decision is most often made by managers or directors other than HR. In all countries it is the HR professional who has received the greatest degree of training on the topic of employment of people with disabilities, and is therefore in the best position to assist in informing the rest of the workplace.
- Many of the organizations surveyed are responding to their respective disability non-discrimination legislation by making accommodations/ adjustments needed by applicants and employees with disabilities, including being flexible in HR policies and making existing facilities accessible to people with disabilities.
- Across both countries, it is evident that further information on assistive technology in the workplace for persons with visual and auditory impairments is needed. Areas that respondents indicated were more difficult to respond to were making information accessible for people with visual or learning impairments and making information accessible for hearing impaired people.
- Across all organizations, there appears to be an impact of this legislation on sickness absence and ill health leaves and policies. In the UK, organizations report making changes to absence management and ill health policies. Although in the US employers do not report making the same degree of changes in similar such absence/ leave policies, an area of reported significant uncertainty is how the ADA interacts with other federal and state pieces of employment leave legislation,.
- Most respondents seem to see training, supervision, adjustment/ accommodation costs as far less of a problem than attitudes in the workplace about people with disabilities and supervisor knowledge of accommodations/ adjustments.
- British and Northern Ireland respondents saw grants and financial assistance to employers for adjustments as of more importance in removing barriers to employment for people with disabilities than US respondents. It is difficult to determine if this is also a function of employer size, or of experience with the existing systems of supports.
- Across all areas, the visible support of top management is seen as imperative to removing barriers to employment for people with disabilities.
- Attitudes toward people with disabilities continues as a workplace integration problem, as reported by survey respondents both in the US and UK. Survey results indicate that a great

*Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

deal of training by organizations has been done across both countries in response to our respective disability non-discrimination legislation; this is particularly true for human resource personnel. Training for health and safety staff, as well as for supervisors, will be a helpful addition to internal training on these issues. This is supported by the perception of the lack of knowledge of supervisors in how to make needed adjustments/ accommodations as a continuing barrier to employment for persons with disabilities.

- When asked about areas for further information and technical assistance, across all areas, respondents indicated needing assistance and further resources in the area of adjustments/ accommodations for people with mental health disabilities.
- Across both countries, respondents indicated that on-site consultation and technical assistance were seen as one of the preferred mediums for assistance. This points to the benefit of alliances between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and organizations to access needed on-site consultation and technical assistance, whether in the area of accommodations for persons with mental health disabilities, or for accessing assistive technology to make adjustments for persons with visual and hearing impairments.
- Return to work/ retention/ disability management programs contribute to the presence of an organizational structure for accommodation/ adjustment, a greater understanding of the supervisor in the accommodation/ adjustment process, of the importance of confidentiality of medical information, and the improvement in attitudes toward persons with disabilities.
- This research has also pointed to the need for disability and employment public policy that advances the interests of people with disabilities in the employment and training arena. One of the areas across both countries that is seen as a remaining barrier to the employment of people with disabilities is their lack of requisite training, skills, and related work experience. It is imperative that national training initiatives take into account the unique service delivery needs of such system users. This requires skilled professionals who will understand and be able to identify the service needs of persons with disabilities to assist them in making meaningful choices for training and subsequent employment. This also necessitates physical and communication accessibility of such service systems.

7. BRUYÈRE, S. (2000) **Disability Employment Policies and Practices in Private and Federal Sector Organizations**. Cornell University, School of Industrial and Labor Relations Extension Division, Program on Employment and Disability, Ithaca, NY April, 2000

This report identifies how private and federal employers are responding to the employment disability non-discrimination requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act.

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

The report is based on two parallel surveys covering issues dealing with the employment provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) or the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. A random sample of the membership of the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), the entire membership of the Washington Business Group on Health (WBGH), and the human resource (HR) and equal employment opportunity (EEO) personnel in all US federal agencies were surveyed. Responses were received from a total of 1268 organizations.

### *Barriers to Employment*

The results indicate that while much progress has been made, barriers remain to the recruitment, hiring, retention, and career advancement of adults with disabilities in the workforce that warrant consideration

- The largest continuing barriers to employment and advancement for persons with disabilities reported by both federal and private sector employers were lack of related experience (49 percent reported by private and 53 percent by federal), and lack of requisite skills and training in the applicant or employee with a disability (39 percent for private respondents and 45 percent for federal).
- The next most often cited was supervisor knowledge of how to make accommodations (31 percent in the private sector and 34 percent in the federal). Attitudes or stereotypes among **co**-workers and supervisors towards persons with disabilities was seen as the third most significant barrier among federal respondents (43 percent), and fifth among private sector respondents (22 percent).
- Interestingly, in both the federal and private sectors, cost of training, supervision, and of accommodations for applicants or employees with disabilities were least likely to be rated as significant continuing barriers, compared to other areas.

### *Employer actions to Reduce Barriers*

Respondents were also asked to rate the effectiveness of six listed means of reducing such barriers.

- Visible top management commitment (81 percent for the private respondents, 90 percent for federal) was ranked most important.
- The next three most popular means to reduce barriers were ranked very closely within both respondent groups. These means were: staff training, with 62 percent of private and 71 percent of federal reporting this as an effective or very effective way of reducing barriers; mentoring (59 and 71 percent for private and federal, respectively); and on-site consultation or technical assistance (58 percent and 71 percent, respectively).

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

- Since supervisors are an integral part of the accommodation process in most workplaces and reportedly make the final decision on accommodations in most federal workplaces, it is imperative that they have the training needed to be able to make appropriate decisions and access needed resources for particular accommodation requests.

In both sample groups, those surveyed were asked about whether they had made certain changes in the workplace in order to meet the needs of employees with disabilities, and asked to rate the degree in difficulty in making those changes. The majority of organizations from both sectors report having made changes in their existing recruitment, pre-employment screening, testing, and orientation procedures in order to comply with disability non-discrimination and civil rights laws.

- In both groups, the change most often made but also seen as the most difficult to make was changing co-worker or supervisor attitudes toward the employee with a disability (32 percent of private and 33 percent of federal representatives indicated this change was "difficult" or "very difficult")
- Making information accessible for a person with a visual or learning disability, or a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, were areas reported more difficult than others.
- Respondents in both the private and federal sectors indicated a need for further information on accommodations for persons with psychiatric disabilities.
- In workplaces that had unions, whether private or federal sector, when unions were involved, they were reportedly beneficial in the accommodation process.

### *Job Readiness of Persons with Disabilities*

One of the areas across both private and federal organizations seen as a remaining barrier to the employment of people with disabilities is the lack of requisite training, skills, and related work experience in persons with disabilities. These identified barriers have implications for employment and disability social policy changes that advance the interests of people with disabilities in the employment and training arena. National employment and training policies that provide persons with disabilities with training and experience resulting in skills that are marketable in a labour market that needs skilled workers are imperative.

### **8. CANADIAN CENTRE ON DISABILITY STUDIES (2001). *Building Bridges between the Corporate Sector and the Disability Community*, Final Report, March**

While there has been an increasing interest in strengthening the relationships between the corporate sector and the disability community, there remain a substantial number of social,

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

economic and systemic barriers preventing many persons with disabilities from fully participating in the Canadian economy. One of the key barriers continues to be negative attitudes towards and stereotyping of persons with disabilities.

The Canadian Centre on Disability Studies (CCDS) received funding from Human Resources Development Canada to undertake a project exploring the relationships between corporations and disability. CCDS undertook an extensive literature review of academic, policy, business and popular sources. In addition, CCDS surveyed corporations about their recruitment record, policies and practices related to the employment of people with disabilities, their contributions to disability organizations, and the barriers they saw to addressing disability issues.

In the CCDS survey, the majority of companies said they had hired persons with disabilities and had made their workplaces more accessible through reasonable accommodation. When employers did hire people with disabilities and made the necessary accommodations, they found there was little difference between employees with and without disabilities. Despite these initiatives and the fact that most job-site accommodations cost very little, the percentage of people with disabilities as a proportion of corporate work forces remains very low.

### *Barriers to employment*

A significant barrier to employment for people with disabilities continues to be the attitudes of society, including employers. Several companies indicated that the attitudes of managers and supervisors were significant barriers. Some human resources people who responded to the questionnaire reflected stereotypical attitudes towards people with disabilities in their answers. For example:

- One commented that employees with disabilities were less productive than other employees as they “are not able to work a full 8 hour day, have permanent restrictions”. This suggests that there is only one way to work, and indicates an unwillingness to create work arrangements that may better accommodate an employee’s requirements.
- Another suggested that they didn’t need to have a written policy on disability because “Our building is set up for handicapped employees/students”. This answer indicates the perception that all disabilities can be accommodated by ensuring physical or mobility access. It fails to recognize that there may be sensory disabilities (including blindness, deafness), learning disabilities, and mental health issues among other disabilities.
- Several respondents suggested they did not have a policy on disability because they had no disabled employees. This suggests that businesses without employees with disabilities have no responsibility for addressing disability within their workplace. It also fails to see any link between lack of policy and lack of success in hiring people with disabilities.

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

### *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

- One indicated that the biggest barrier was that the employees with disabilities prefer to be on benefits. This answer fails to recognize the complexity of living with disability within our society. Many people with disabilities have significant medical costs associated with their disabilities that may be covered when they are on benefits, but are not covered when they are employed. This provides a significant disincentive to obtaining paid work.

### *Job Readiness of Persons with Disabilities*

The CCDS survey also reaffirmed that there were continuing barriers to employment for people with disabilities because they did not have the right training or skills for the job. At least one-quarter of the employers in the CCDS survey indicated that they were unable to hire people with disabilities because they did not have the right qualifications, because no one with disabilities applied or because the employer was unable to accommodate the persons with disabilities.

### *Building Bridges*

Some employers in the CCDS survey hoped to use partnerships with disability organizations to recruit new employees. The results of the Building Bridges project suggest areas where corporations and disability organizations can strengthen their capacities to deal with each other and promote better responses to disability. One of the key gaps is in information shared between the corporate sector and the disability community. Without this shared information, it is difficult to build bridges between these two communities. In addition, corporations need to create equitable relationships with disability organizations in decision-making, not just using them to provide support or services.

9. CARPENTER, MORGAN (1998). **The Employment of People with Disabilities in Small and Medium Sized Enterprises: Summary**, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Dublin.

Despite constituting a major proportion of the business sector, there is little data on the role and experience of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in the employment of people with disabilities. SMEs, those that employ less than 500 employees, provide more than two thirds of EU employment and are regarded as the greatest potential job creators.

The study takes a qualitative approach, focusing on the perceptions and experience of employers and their employees. A case study approach was adopted to examine these issues, providing ideas and identifying issues which promote or hinder the access of people with disabilities to employment. It considered the process by which an employer identifies a need to employ someone, a person with a disability seeks employment, and a contractual relationship is established and maintained. The focus was on successful examples of the integration of disabled people in employment to enable the identification of good practice as well as barriers.

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

Studies were conducted in six Member States, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom, in late 1996 and early 1997.

### *Study Findings*

The study findings allow a clear development in the understanding of the way employers make decisions, the reasons behind their decisions and their impact.

- There is no blueprint for an effective legislative and regulatory framework. Employment quotas or anti-discrimination legislation appear to have little practical effect on SME employer behaviour. Small and medium sized enterprises are often excluded from statutory obligations due to their size.
- Financial incentives have a key facilitative role but, as they currently operate, do not necessarily meet the needs of either employers or employees, and do not reflect technological or labour market trends.
- Health and safety and insurance regulations are perceived by employers as an impediment to the employment of people with disabilities.
- Educational attainment is low among people with disabilities.
- Women, older people with disabilities and those with more severe disabilities appear to face additional barriers in accessing employment.
- Recruitment practices rarely recognize the value of equal opportunity and other good recruitment practices.
- Low confidence and self-esteem among employees with disabilities, together with attitudes of both work colleagues and employers can limit the degree to which an employee successfully integrates and progresses within a firm.
- The attitudes of employers of people with a disability demonstrate the striking importance of personal experience of disability.
- Mediating organizations (i.e. those that specialize in placing people with disabilities in employment) play a pivotal role in promoting a positive awareness of both disability and the regulatory framework, providing training and personal support to people with disabilities.

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

*Policy Implications*

The key role of personal experience as a motivational factor for employers has been highlighted, as has the prevalence of perceptions of disability based on fears of risk, incapacity (rather than ability) and absenteeism. These point to the need for positive and tightly-focused educational and awareness raising measures applicable to small and medium sized enterprises.

Broad and positive awareness-raising initiatives should challenge the perceptions of small employers in three areas:

- Absenteeism: i.e. using evidence to challenge perceptions of sickness and absenteeism among people with disabilities;
- capacity and ability: i.e. demonstrating the abilities of people with disabilities;
- risk: i.e. stressing ways in which the risks of employing people can be reduced through the use of mediating organizations.

SMEs also need access to better information on recruitment, training and advancement. Information should focus on positive examples appropriate to small and medium sized enterprises. Information is needed in the following areas:

- information to promote good recruitment, training and employment practices and procedures;
- information related to subsequent induction and developmental stages in employment.
- information related to specific disabilities: practical information, where necessary, to enable the making of informed judgments and decisions about a candidate's suitability.

There is a clear role for mediating organizations to play in the process of information provision and dissemination.

The use of specialist mediating organizations appears to significantly improve the chances of employment for people with disabilities.

- Mediating organizations function by matching their clients to vacancies in enterprises. By adopting a proactive approach, making the initial contact with companies, the level of perceived risk to employers is reduced.
- Employers are saved many of the time and financial costs of advertising and recruiting, and of securing any necessary aids and adaptations.

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

- By approaching the employer directly, the mediating body can ensure that there is less competition for their own clients.
- They also assist clients to overcome barriers arising out of low educational attainment, poor confidence and low self esteem.

10. CHRISTIE, LAURIE AND BRIAN H. KLEINER (2001), "New developments concerning reasonable accommodation of disabilities in American organisations", **Equal Opportunities International**, Vol. 20, Issue 5-7, p. 152

### *Recent Court Decisions*

Recent court cases have strengthened the spirit of the ADA law, while also sometimes soothing the fears of employers who see that the cases are being tried in a just manner and setting precedents to be used as guideline. Recent critical ADA cases have calmed the fears of employers who were concerned that they might be forced to make expensive acquisitions to accommodate the disabled. Recent court cases involving requests for job duty modifications have made it clear that there is no duty to restructure jobs, modify a job by delegating essential functions to other jobs, or eliminate key duties. Further, an employee who cannot perform all essential functions with reasonable accommodation is not "qualified" under the ADA.

Many court cases already exist that prove employers need not provide indefinite leave as an accommodation under the ADA. On the contrary, many cases have established the general rule that an absent employee has a responsibility to provide a prognosis and an expected time of return to work. If these are not provided, there is substantial case law to support the proposition that an employer may terminate the absent worker without violating the ADA.

### *Temporary Staffing Agencies*

One of the most exciting trends in the hiring of disabled workers is the use of temporary staffing agencies. These agencies are beginning to work more closely with human resource professionals, and are themselves taking on more functions of training, evaluating, and matching candidates with a job. People with disabilities are finding these agencies to be a gold mine of opportunity, while employers are finding a large pool of skilled employees with a strong incentive to work. According to a recently released independent study by Manpower, the nation's largest employer, using a temporary staffing agency as a transition into full-time employment for people with disabilities is an excellent way to see if such a match would work. With some employers, this makes it easier for disabled workers to get a job because the employer feels less locked in to the match, and can see if the situation would be feasible before making a commitment. Further, the temporary agency has tested the employee's skills, making the selection "skills based", and the disability is secondary if it is a consideration at all. For

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

Manpower, all applicants are treated the same in their assessment, whether or not they are disabled. Once Manpower knows the basic skills and interests of the individual, they are put through a very aggressive training program and even given on-the-job training. Their findings indicate that people with disabilities move from temporary to permanent positions at about the same rate as people without disabilities.

11. COLELLA, ADRIENNE (2001). "Coworker distributive fairness judgments of workplace accommodation of employees with disabilities", **Academy of Management Review**, Vol. 26, Issue 1, p. 100

This article presents a model of when and how co-workers judge the distributive fairness of workplace accommodations of persons with disabilities. Consideration of co-workers as stakeholders in the accommodation process has been minimal, with most researchers focusing on the cost and legal issues of accommodation

### *Importance of Co-worker Involvement*

Co-workers are an important group of stakeholders in workplace accommodation situations. Co-worker reactions are important for several reasons:

- First, co-worker reactions may influence the successful implementation of an accommodation. For example, accommodations such as restructuring work, change in shift schedules and trading tasks would be difficult to implement without involving coworkers.
- Second, potential co-worker reactions can influence the likelihood of a person with disability requesting the accommodation.
- Third, co-worker responses may be one factor that supervisors consider when deciding whether to grant an accommodation.

### *Findings on Distributive Fairness*

Fairness judgements are governed by both equity and need considerations. Fairness judgements are made when accommodations are salient and relevant to coworkers. Co-workers concern for others, empathy and liking toward the accommodated person, scarcity of resources and outcome interdependence will impact the extent to which the need rule is evoked to judge the fairness of accommodation.

12. CORDEN, ANNE AND PATRICIA THORNTON (2002). **Employment Programmes for Disabled People: Lessons from research evaluations**, UK Department for Work and Pensions, In-house report 90

This report reviews evaluations of government programs to assist disabled people claiming benefits to move into employment or to support retention of employees who became disabled. The focus was on programs using a case-management approach, involving personalized assessments of need and coordination of service packages. The report reviews six programs for disabled people across five countries (UK, USA, Canada, Australia, and Austria). Evidence from these six programs was supplemented by the wider research literature on case-managed employment programs for disabled people. Key findings:

*Program Effectiveness*

- Increasing incentives to participate in rehabilitation and reducing fears of negative consequences are likely to be important.
- There was evidence that client motivation was important, as is the relationship with the case manager, but both are fragile and easily reduced by poor communication, delays and perception of bureaucracy or unsuitable services.
- There was evidence of the importance of continuing in-work support. There are arguments for extending the scope of programs to include maintaining participants in work and for equipping them with skills for advancement.
- There was little strong evidence from the review of programs about which factors contributed to positive outcomes for clients. Evidence from the wider literature suggests that the more successful programs tend to take an individualized approach, incorporating basic skills and supports, formal training and one-on-one support alongside practical assistance, for example with childcare or transport. Looking at specific pre-employment activities, there is evidence from the wider literature that assistance with job search was effective in increasing placement rates and placement planning was related to improved placement outcomes.

13. CORDEN, ANNE AND PATRICIA THORNTON, **RESULTS-based Funded Supported Employment: Avoiding Disincentives to Serving People with Greatest Need**, Social Policy Research Unit, University of York

Supported Employment is a long-established and important element of Government programs for disabled people, aiming to provide support in jobs for disabled people who face more complex barriers to finding and keeping work. In the UK the new WORKSTEP program took effect from April 2001, with emphasis on increasing the proportion of people who move from

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

supported to mainstream employment. Under the new funding arrangements, local authority, voluntary body, and now private, providers of supported employment services are now funded via a structure which combines results-based payments for development planning, placement, progression and sustained progression with post-placement ongoing monthly payments for training and support. This structure aimed both to provide incentives to providers to work with clients towards mainstream employment, and to provide safeguards for supported employees who need long term support.

One concern of policy makers was that the new funding model could discourage providers from working with supported employees with the greatest support needs. The Department for Work and Pensions asked the Social Policy Research Unit at the University of York to conduct a review of results-based funding in supported employment systems.

Since results-based funding appears to be applied to employment services for disabled people only in USA, Australia and UK, the researchers drew on published and unpublished material on supported employment in USA and Australia.

### *Rationale for a Results-Based Funding Approach*

The underlying principle is that, following assessment of individual need for employment support, the provider supplies services to enable progression towards placement in a sustainable job. A small number of defined service outcomes, and in some cases additional process outcomes, serve as benchmarks, achievement of which results in payment to provider.

Results-based funding compensates providers for measured outcomes of service - the impact on participants of the program results. The ultimate outcome reflects a change in the person, addressing initial assessment of their need. Intermediate outcomes may reflect contributory services. Outcomes must be valued by the client and measurable. Potential advantages include increased emphasis on valued outcomes; increased accountability; greater efficiency and effectiveness in delivery; and greater choice and satisfaction for clients. For these advantages to be realized requires agreement between actors about clients' needs and desired outcomes, and what the program can deliver; appropriate and achievable outcome measures; and payment levels which enable financial viability for providers.

Potential disadvantages have also been identified. A results-based funding scheme creates incentives to serve those clients who can most quickly and easily be brought to the payment points ('creaming'). A related problem is leaving behind clients thought likely to need more services to reach outcomes, and sacrificing later outcome payments ('parking').

### *Results-Based Funding Models*

In the US, models of results-based funding are widespread. 'Milestones' was developed in

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

### *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

Oklahoma in 1992 and was adopted state-wide in 1997. Variants of this model are being used in Massachusetts, Kentucky, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and Alabama. An enhanced model to meet specific needs of services for people with mental health problems began in New York in 2000.

Australia's Case Based Funding Trial for Disability Employment Assistance was part of a broad reform of rehabilitation and employment services. The US experience was influential in the design of the Australian model.

### *Addressing the Challenges*

Structural approaches to the problems of "creaming" and "parking" aim to maintain providers' confidence that they can manage the perceived economic risk. Different approaches to these challenges can involve:

- setting different benchmarks for clients with greater needs
- providing higher compensation for providing services to client groups or individuals with greater needs, for example in a tiered structure
- providing additional fee-for-service funding to meet needs of individuals, for example in blended models
- requiring 'quotas' of people with greater needs among outcomes
- external control and management of referral of clients to providers.

### *Reviewing the Evidence*

The Oklahoma Milestones was reviewed via a series of interviews with key vocational rehabilitation personnel and provider surveys. The approach is generally reported as a success. Reduction of clients assessed but not placed in work suggests that the model has some effect in reducing 'parking'.

The interim report from evaluation of the Australian trial concluded that there was no pattern of 'under-servicing' clients who do not achieve an outcome, but the model had not entirely eliminated either creaming or parking. Suggestions for reducing parking further included replacing the ongoing payments with more milestone payments; adjusting weightings of both ongoing and outcome payments; and improved client tracking and audit.

#### **14. CRAWFORD, CAMERON (1998). *Persons with Disabilities: Disability-Status Transitions and Labour Force-Activity Transitions*, HRDC, September**

This report sets out to confirm whether the factors that contribute to transitions as reported in the literature review are supported by the statistical evidence, and whether Statistics Canada's

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) for 1993 and 1994 yields any other evidence about key factors.

The report finds that employability of persons with disabilities depends on the severity and the type of the disability—the less severe, the more likely the person is to have a job. People with work-caused disabilities tend to participate more actively in the labour market than people with other disabilities. The women are more likely to be unemployed than men. The older the person with disabilities, the less likely he or she is to participate in the labour market, particularly if he or she was educated before the disability onset. People with disabilities who are from a visible minority background are even more likely to have difficulty in the labour market.

Employer attitudes are critical as to whether people with disabilities can secure employment. Procurement of work-related supports is a factor that influences the labour force participation and self-perception of ability to work.

### **15. DAWN ONTARIO (2003). *Access to ODSP Campaign: Summary of Forum Reports*: Disabled Women's Network, Ontario, January**

In November 2000, the Social Planning Council of Ottawa and the Financial Assistance Committee of the Canadian Mental Health Association (Ottawa-Carleton) held a public forum and companion focus group sessions on the Ontario Disability Support Program [ODSP]. Inspired by the work done in Ottawa and recognizing the systemic nature of many of the problems identified in the Ottawa report, the Steering Committee on Social Assistance [SCSA], which represents social assistance advocates in community legal clinics around the province, launched a concerted public campaign in the fall of 2001 to work for changes in the ODSP disability determination process.

The concerns voiced at the *Access to ODSP* forums touched on many and varied issues. However, three main areas of concern related to the application process, client service and employment.

#### *Issues with the Application process*

Forum participants described problems at all stages in the application process.

- Many people called the application process too slow and too complicated, and pointed out that just obtaining the necessary application forms was difficult.
- Many observed that these problems are compounded, and can become insurmountable when an applicant with disabilities is facing other barriers as well. Some described the process as "discouraging" and "demoralizing".

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

*"When you set up a system that has at least four steps in it, in which the person who has the least ability-the person with disabilities-has collect all the information and run around and make sure doctors and ministries and tax departments send in all these papers, is it any wonder why so many people give up even before a decision is made?" [Quote from Parkdale Town Hall]*

- A recurring theme was that the intent seemed to be to keep people off ODSP, rather than serve persons with disabilities in need of assistance.
- There were many criticisms of the Disability Determination Package [DDP] itself. Participants described the application forms as overly lengthy and complex, and very often confusing to both applicants and the health professionals who have to complete them.

### *Problems with Client Service*

The way in which individual applicants and recipients are treated by ODSP staff appeared to be the most significant area of concern for agency workers and individuals alike. Specific issues included:

- The implementation of new computer technology and the shift away from individual case management to a call-centre or "team" style of case management have created a client service system that is impersonal, isolating, inefficient and inadequate - the system appears to be used to avoid dealing with client problems rather than to resolve them - an individual does not have a specific caseworker who knows him or her
- The automated telephone system is very problematic - clients have difficulty using it (particularly where they have any language or communication barriers), messages are often not returned in a timely fashion, and special access needs are not adequately addressed - many clients do not even have telephones
- There are too few staff members in the ODSP offices to answer questions and the staff members who are there appear stressed
- Attending at ODSP offices can be a stressful experience for clients both because of the office design and staff attitudes - some clients reported harsh and inappropriate treatment from ODSP workers - others reported a lack of privacy because of open doors or a feeling of being in a "jail cell" environment - still others reported a lack of understanding and respect for disabled individuals and psychiatric survivors in particular
- Clients are sent too many computer-generated form letters, and too often these letters are either incomprehensible or inaccurate - contact information is rarely included and

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

follow-up can be difficult and frustrating, particularly as ODSP offices will not give out lists of staff phone numbers and extensions

- ODSP workers show little flexibility and little willingness to find solutions to problems
- Clients are expected to understand and comply with their rights and responsibilities and are given little guidance or assistance by ODSP staff, even where medical documentation indicates that they need additional support - it is assumed that clients have ID or other necessary documents, and that they are able to obtain requested information on their own

### *Employment Issues*

Concerns with the employment provisions of the program included:

- ODSP Employment Supports are difficult to access and not well explained to recipients - not enough job coaching services and ongoing supports to maintain employment are available - recipients are afraid to try to work for fear that they will lose their drug cards and will not get back on ODSP if they are unable to manage . Current policies make it difficult for ODSP recipients to find and maintain housing - in particular, recipients are unable to obtain "pay directs" for shelter and utilities, and are unable to obtain timely responses to community start up benefit (CSUB) requests
- The ODSP benefit rate is inadequate to meet basic needs of food and shelter and the STEP deductions offer very little incentive to individuals to work even on a part-time basis

16. EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2000). **Benchmarking employment policies for people with disabilities**, prepared by ECOTEC Research and Consulting for the Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs, European Commission, August

The study comprises 17 national reports from 15 EU Member States, together with Australia and the USA and provides a comparative analysis. It reviews the current position of disabled individuals in the national labour market, examines the institutional framework for active and passive policy interventions and identifies key policies aimed at improving the situation of disabled workers. The study includes summary tables of the main programs and their objectives, methods and outcomes.

## *Key Findings*

### *Employment policies*

- Employment policy for persons with disabilities is undergoing considerable changes in most countries, and all are seeking an increase in active policy. Most are also moving away from passive policies, although these have not been abandoned altogether, nor will they be in the near future.
- The move from passive to active measures is not a simple process and there is much evidence to show that conflicts in policy objectives may result.
- Disabled people and disability organizations do not always support reduction in passive measures and encouragement of active employment focused measures. There is therefore a need for such policy shifts to be better thought through, better coordinated, and better communicated to disabled people and disability organizations
- In all countries policy related to disabled people and employment is highly complex. It includes many different measures, different definitions, different implementing organizations and even different objectives.
- It is not possible to assess the precise impact of any one policy or measure, since all interact with each other. It is however possible to assess the extent to which the policy 'packages' used by countries achieve the broad aims of policy. In all cases these seek to encourage and support disabled people to find and retain work. In no cases can they be said to be fully effective – in all 18 countries in the study, the proportion of disabled people in the workforce, the extent of unmet demand for work, the unemployment rate of disabled people, and the quality of the jobs they occupy is significantly worse than that for able bodied people.
- There is indicative evidence to suggest the shift from passive to active labour market policies is beginning to enable more disabled people to obtain or retain employment, however such evidence is patchy.
- The likelihood of disabled people obtaining or retaining employment appears to be as closely correlated with other factors as with explicit policy towards disabled people's employment. These factors include cultural attitudes, particularly amongst employers and disabled people themselves; the state of the economy and the labour market as a whole; and demographic change in the labour force. The impact of non disability specific policy is also highly influential, particularly in relation to general employment measures, the benefits and particularly the pensions system, and macro economic policy.

### *Effectiveness of Specific Policy Initiatives*

*Anti discrimination measures and legislation* play an important role in 'setting the tone' for disability and employment policy. Their impact in isolation however is hard to detect at the macro level. Enforcement is a major issue and is not an effective remedy for most individuals. Legislation is more effective for those already in employment than those seeking to access employment.

*Quota systems* are seen as not effective in some countries, and as more effective in others. The evidence suggests they are rarely complied with to any great extent, though they maybe a means of raising addition revenues through levy systems.

*Persuasion measures* are widely used but their impact is very hard to assess. They are important in creating a more positive environment for disability and employment, but on their own cannot be expected to achieve major impacts on employment levels or access. Persuasion measures should continue, but should focus more on practical solutions and a credible business case

*Job subsidies* can be very useful for individuals and may be an effective way of ensuring legislation and quotas are complied with. In general however take-up is not high.

*Rehabilitation* is one of the most important measures. It covers a number of different areas, but the most effective at individual level appear to be training, retraining and employability. These directly address the most significant issue from the point of view of employers that is the abilities of individuals (as opposed to their disabilities). Effective rehabilitation measures which are individually tailored, effectively delivered, and combined with other measures to ensure employers are exposed to individual candidates is probably the most effective policy combination. It does however demand adequate resources, access to specialist services and perspectives, and good links to employers.

*Sheltered employment* continues to be a major employer of disabled individuals, although is increasingly concentrated on more severely disabled people, due to its inability to achieve significant levels of transition to open employment. As a policy measure it is often very popular with disabled people themselves.

*Aids and adaptations* are made available in all countries, but in general take up is not as high as might be expected. The most effective policies are those which are flexible, easily administered, and devolve responsibility to employers and disabled people themselves.

*Enterprise strategies* targeted on disabled people are very rare. Policies for general enterprise development should be reviewed to assess their accessibility, whilst the support measures available for disabled people in employment should be made available to disabled

entrepreneurs.

### *Monitoring and Evaluation*

There are very few examples of policies in action which have been satisfactorily monitored and evaluated – measures and indicators are often weak and unhelpful, and what information is available tends to relate to policy which no longer pertains.

It is even more difficult to make cross national comparisons since no two countries use the same definitions, policies, output measures and indicators of success.

#### **17. FEDERAL TASK FORCE ON DISABILITY ISSUES (1996), *Equal Citizenship for Canadians with Disabilities: The Will to Act*, Ottawa, October 21.**

Chapter 5 of the Report addresses the opportunity to work. The Task force emphasizes that ..."Work is important. Our consultations and research told us that this is among the top concerns of Canadians with disabilities". The full labour market integration of persons with disabilities remains a major challenge. The task Force notes that "despite the struggle to create employment programs and supports that respond to the needs of workers with disabilities, and of some potential employers, there remain significant barriers to employment for Canadians with disabilities. The environments of the Canadian workplace and our economic system have a greater impact on the extent to which people with disabilities become employed or find themselves out of the workforce than does the nature of any individual's particular disabilities. Working age women and men with disabilities face attitudinal, systemic and physical barriers that make it difficult for them to prepare for, find, get and keep jobs. While quotas are not the answer, fairness is. It must be acknowledged that many of the barriers to employment and independence are the result of policies, regulations, guidelines and administration that simply ignore the individual circumstances of women and men with disabilities".

The task force report addresses and makes recommendations with respect to the following issues:

- Its vision of inclusive labour market;
- Employment Insurance measures;
- The Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Program;
- Getting into the workforce;
- Adjusting existing labour market programs;
- Policy and program expertise;
- Service delivery.

With respect to programs and services for persons with disabilities, the task force notes that as Canada's labour market needs change, so will the need for new programs and services for

*Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

Canadians. This means that the Department of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) will require a continuing ability to plan and design programs that are inclusive and accessible to people with disabilities. The Department must, therefore, build its policy and program expertise in disability issues. An important facet of the process of developing and maintaining this expertise is to develop ongoing consultative relationships with organizations of and for people with disabilities. These organizations can undertake the innovative research and analysis that are critical to building successful integration strategies. An expertise in disability issues will enable HRDC to include these issues in all negotiations with the provinces and territories and, ultimately, to achieve the goal of designing inclusive programs, not "mainstream" programs and "parallel" programs for Canadians with disabilities.

The full and equal inclusion of people with disabilities in Canada's labour market will not be achieved simply by correcting defects in program design. The way programs and services are delivered in the community is a critical indicator of the federal government's commitment to its vision of the inclusive society.

All sites offering employment services and programs to unemployed Canadians and those who are out of the workforce must be fully accessible. This includes architectural and safety considerations, accessibility of technology, information and services, and the attitudes of staff and contract service providers. Human Resource Development Canada's corporate culture must support openness to the needs of this population. Staff, particularly in Human Resource Centres of Canada (HRCCs), but also in headquarters and regional offices, must be able to create strategies to reach out to the community, serve individuals with disabilities effectively, and make resources accessible to all. All HRCCs must make accessibility an operational norm.

Similarly, all organizations under contract with the federal government to provide programs and services must be required to operate as fully accessible operations. Any improvements in program design and standards for service delivery must be communicated effectively to HRCC managers and agencies under contract to serve Canadians. Service manuals must reflect the fact that all labour market programming is required to conform to the federal government's designated group policy and the principles of employment equity. Where programs and services in a community are delivered by third parties, the federal government should ensure that local organizations of and for people with disabilities are among the service providers.

18. GILBRIDE, D., STENSRUD, R., VANDERGOOT, D., AND K. GOLDEN (2003). "Identification of the characteristics of work environments and employers open to hiring and accommodating people with disabilities", **Rehabilitation Counselling Bulletin**, Spring, 46(3), p. 130-137

This article examines the characteristics of employers who are open to hiring and supporting individuals with disabilities. Interviews were completed with 17 employed persons with disabilities, including mobility limitations, cognitive disabilities, psychiatric disabilities, substance

*Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

abuse and AIDS. They were asked about their employment experiences, employer behaviours, employment policies and procedures, and workplace characteristics that affected their feelings of acceptance and their ability to be a successful employee. Focus groups and interviews were also held with employers, employed persons with disabilities, and rehabilitation placement professionals.

The results showed that employers who were open to hiring and accommodating persons with disabilities demonstrated a number of key characteristics, the most important of which are culture, job match, and employer experience and support.

19. GOLDSTONE, CAROL, NIGEL MEAGER (2002) **Barriers to Employment for Disabled People**, UK Department for Work and Pensions, In-House Report No. 95, March

The report is based on a survey conducted with 2,008 employers carried out in spring 2001. This examined whether employers had existing policies on the employment of disabled people, whether they actually employed disabled people with any adjustments which may have been necessary for their working. They also looked at the employer's attitude to employing the disabled and the awareness and attitudes to legislation and government initiatives.

*Findings*

Just over half the employers surveyed had a policy which covered the employment of disabled people. However, only one in five employers reported actively encouraging applications from the disabled. Active encouragement of applications from disabled people was more common from large organizations and those in the public sector.

The presence of staff with a disability increased significantly with organization and workplace size. Disabled workers who were already employed were found in a wide variety of occupations, but new recruits were more likely to be in clerical and unskilled routine jobs than existing employees. The most common disability for both new recruits and existing employees were problems of mobility or dexterity.

Many employers had made adjustments to the job or working environment for disabled employees. Without being prompted, the adjustments mentioned by employers most frequently were the provision of special equipment, modification of the workplace and allowing flexible hours. After prompting, special leave, on the job support, training and counseling also featured.

The survey attempted to uncover attitudes to employing disabled people. The responses from employers strongly suggested that employers would attempt, where possible, to find creative solutions if they felt the individual concerned was, or would be, a positive asset to the organization.

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

20. GRAFFAMA, JOSEPH, KAYE SMITH, ALISON SHINKFIELD AND UDO POLZINA  
**Employer benefits and costs of employing a person with a disability**  
Institute of Disability Studies, Deakin University, Burwood, Vic, Australia  
School of Psychology

Benefits and costs experienced by employers when employing a person with a disability have received very little attention by researchers thus far. Most of the work that has been done focuses on cost effectiveness, cost of accommodations and adjustments, or employer subsidies and incentives. This study investigated employer benefits and costs associated with employing a person with a disability. Unlike earlier studies that have tended to focus purely on individual performance, this study also looked at the impact of the employee with a disability on organization performance.

This paper derives from a national Australian study of employer outcomes when employing a person with a disability. Questionnaires were completed by 643 Australian employers who had employed a person with a disability through a funded disability employment service during the preceding three years. Participants presented a mixture of major metropolitan (43.8%), regional centre (29%), rural (19%), and multiple (8%) locations across all states and territories. Approximately three-quarters were from very small or small organizations (0–49 employees), with approximately 15% from medium sized organizations (50–199 employees) and 10% from either large or very large organizations (200+ employees). Industry distribution was broad with manufacturing (17%), health and community services (14%), hospitality (14%), and trade/sales (13%) most prevalent. The size and industry spreads are very typical of Australian organizations in general.

### *Individual performance*

The most basic consideration of employer benefits and costs is in terms of individual performance. In general, employees with a disability were rated lower than average employees on productivity factors (speed and accuracy) and better than average employees on reliability factors (attendance and sick leave) and employee maintenance factors (recruitment, safety, insurance costs).

### *Organizational performance*

Organization performance was considered in terms of reported benefits and costs associated with workplace modifications and changes to general staff training and supervision resulting from employing the person with a disability. The employer-reported value of employer subsidies and/or incentives was also investigated. In each domain, employers identified more organization benefits than costs, a large majority considering the financial effect of modifications and changes cost-neutral, with financial benefit more common than net cost.

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

There are at least three possible reasons for the widespread reporting by employers of such significant benefit advantages to the organization as a whole.

- Integrating an employee with a disability into a work environment may raise awareness of previously less than optimal conditions in that work environment including training and supervisory practices, basic work practices, and health and safety issues. This heightened awareness may lead to improved practices by workplace trainers, supervisors, health and safety representatives, and all employees.
- Another possible reason for the generally positive reported effect that an employee with a disability has had on overall organization performance relates to improved co-worker and customer relations. Improved relations may contribute to improved performance within the work group or organization as a whole, since high morale has often been associated with high performance within organizations.
- A third possible explanation is that the individual performance of an employee with a disability, in terms of reliability and productivity measures, especially those who are average or above average performers, may raise expectations and standards for performance for all employees, thereby improving work group or organization performance. In any case, an employee with a disability can be seen as a catalyst for positive change, a catalyst for improved organization performance.

### *Effect of Subsidies*

Research on financial incentives to the employer has found that subsidies have little impact on an employer's decision to employ a person with a disability. Factors such as ability to perform the job and a low risk of absenteeism are more powerful determinants for employers than financial incentives. This study likewise found that, although more than half of employers had received a subsidy and/or incentive, they reported short-term, but no long-term or broader benefits from employer subsidies and/or incentives.

21. GRAFFAM, JOE, ALISON SHINKFIELD, KAYE SMITH AND UDO POLZIN (2002) **Factors that influence employer decisions in hiring and retaining an employee with a disability**  
Institute of Disability Studies and School of Psychology, Deakin University, Australia  
Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation 17:3 p175 -181 (2002)

This paper is based on results of a national study in Australia. Questionnaires were completed by 643 employers, each of whom had employed a person with a disability between 1996-1998. Employers rated the importance of 38 different factors to decisions about hiring and retaining a person with a disability.

Although distributed randomly in the questionnaire, the factors fell into four categories, namely

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

individual factors (11 items), management factors (9 items), cost factors (9 items), and social factors (9 items).

### *Findings*

When considering hiring and retaining a person with a disability, factors related to the individual were rated most important by employers. Six individual factors ranked among the ten highest. Appropriate grooming and personal hygiene was the factor rated most important of all. Working to a satisfactory standard and ability to undertake most assigned tasks were each also rated as important

Management factors were the second most important category for employers. Consultation with disability support professionals, the employee and co-workers was the management factor rated most important. Employer involvement in planning work integration was also rated as important.

Factors related to costs were the next category in terms of importance to employers. Possible need for extra supervision was the cost factor rated most important. Availability of training to co-workers to support the employee with a disability was also rated as important. Possible need for extra training was likewise rated important

Social factors were rated least important by employers. Ability of staff to work with the person with a disability was the social factor rated most important (That factor may well refer as much to management as it does to social interaction.) Belief in social responsibility was also rated as rather important.

### *Conclusions*

There are several conclusions that can be drawn from the results.

- Employers want someone who can perform to standard in a job. Reliability and productivity were clearly important to their judgments about hiring and retaining a person with a disability.
- Factors that were directly business-related were rated as more important by employers; factors that were only indirectly business-related were rated as less important.
- Employers rated factors that were linked to individual performance, matching a person with a job, and individual integration as more important; factors related to previous experiences with people who have a disability, social pressures, and reactions of others were rated less important.
- Employers also consider the impact on the whole organization. They consider an employee

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

### *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

and employee performance in terms of factors such as acceptance, inclusion, and workplace morale, as well as directly job-related behavior as part of work performance. This also includes considering work group and organization effects and not just individual performance effects.

- Employers want the employment outcome to be cost efficient, but appear to consider this broadly in terms of impact on the organization or work group, not simply individual productivity and one-off expenses.
- Employers also generally want to "do the right thing" in terms of social responsibility, although not in a shallow sense of appearances, community image or social pressure.

### *Partnerships: Employer Expectations*

- The "partnership" concept is central to current business practice, and, therefore, more or less expected by employers generally. In this case, employers rated their participation with disability employment services and employees in planning, implementation and maintenance of a job/employment as among the most important factors. Employers want to be part of the process of planning, organizing, and managing the employment "placement". They want individualized assistance from a disability employment service; assistance that may be intermittent or continuous over time.

### *Implications for Disability Service Organizations*

Recommendations for disability employment service managers and job developers are related to job matching and developing and maintaining employer partnerships.

- Job matching is recognized as an important feature of placing a person with a disability into a job/employment. The emphasis by employers in this study on individual performance supports that view. However, it is important to realize that simply matching the person to the present requirements of a job is not sufficient. Employers in this study also emphasized effects on group and organization performance. The concept of job matching should be expanded to include consideration of matching the person with the conditions and needs of the employer workplace and organization. This implies not only a broader focus of attention, but consideration of changes to jobs and workplaces over time as well.
- Developing and maintaining a partnership approach with employers starts with sensitivity to the beliefs, values, attitudes, and needs of the employer and the employing organization. Developing a partnership approach goes beyond acknowledging differences in the values and assumptions held by employers, and disability employment service providers. It is likely to include ongoing informal support and may well include features such as coworker training, job safety nets, and other joint activities.

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

- A lack of understanding of the issues from the perspective of employers can seriously compromise employment outcomes for people with a disability. The identification of any impediments and strategies to address impediments from the perspective of employers is critical for effective employment outcomes, keeping in mind that a "successful" outcome for an employee is also a successful employer outcome. Treating employers as partners in the employment process is an obvious ingredient to success.

22. HAGNER, DAVID, KELLY MCGAHIE, HEIDI CLOUTIER. (2001). "A model career assistance process for individuals with severe disabilities", **Journal of Employment Counselling**. Alexandria: Dec 2001. Vol. 38, Issue 4; pg. 197, 10 pgs

This article describes a model process for providing career services to individuals with severe disabilities and presents the outcomes of a 3-year demonstration project. Career Enhancement Opportunities (CEO) was a federally funded 3-year demonstration project designed to develop and validate service approaches that allow individuals with severe disabilities - those who require multiple supports over an extended period of time - to access a wider range of job opportunities and to pursue individualized career choices.

Most project participants were young adults who entered the project in their final year of high school or in the year or 2 following high school. Participants had various disabilities.

Individuals received services in three phases. First, participants learned career planning and job search methods through a career workshop series at the Community Technical College. A supported job search process was then used to implement career plans and continue the job development efforts begun during the workshop series. Finally, follow-up consultation with participants and with their employers assisted in maintaining employment and in facilitating job advancement beyond entry level.

### *Community College Career Workshops*

Project career specialists conducted two 8-week non-credit workshops each semester at each of two community college locations. College represents a positive and valued setting for career-focused activities and instruction, and attending the workshop in a college setting does not stigmatise an individual as having a disability in the way that attending at a rehabilitation facility may. The community college setting also offers a variety of resources such as job notices and job fairs, career centre materials, tutoring and self-paced instructional software, Internet access, and a variety of occupational training programs for investigation, informational interviewing, and course shadowing.

The first workshop, Career Planning, focused on analyzing work-related values and past experiences and interests and on formulating a career goal and action plan.

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

The second workshop, Employment Connections, taught methods of researching the labor market and obtaining and pursuing job leads. Students learned to state their marketable skills and personal qualities and to provide concrete examples of these. Students also learned to prepare resumes, cover letters, and thank-you letters. Personal networking through family members, friends, and acquaintances was emphasized as the primary strategy for obtaining labour market information and job leads. Students were given the opportunity to practice contacting network members to obtain leads, conducting informational interviews with employers, having mock job interviews, and requesting accommodations if needed on the job.

A key to the success of the career workshops was a curriculum that could attract participation from the typical college and community population while also meeting the needs of individuals with a variety of disabilities. This was accomplished through activity-based lessons, multiple ways to complete assignments, assistance outside of class, and the use of model students and supplemental instruction.

### *Job Search Support*

In most traditional rehabilitation programs, job development is largely conducted by staff, and most of the job selections are made by staff. Job developers often use a "labour market approach." In this approach, investigation of employer needs and job openings is conducted independent of individual consumer career goals, and when a receptive employer is found, staff attempt to place the consumer who best matches the job requirements into the position.

A networking or personal contact job development strategy has been associated with a more efficient job search and higher wages when employment has been achieved. Therefore CEO departed from traditional rehabilitation approaches by assisting participants to conduct their own job search. After the workshop series, the career specialist met individually with project participants to help them implement career plans.

Assistance was tailored to each individual's support needs as participants continued the process of informational and job interviewing begun in class until a job was obtained. Instructor assistance ranged from a weekly meeting or telephone contact before and after an interview to accompanying and coaching the individual through each step of the process. The instructor helped participants to send resumes, purchase and mail thank-you cards, and arrange transportation.

### *Follow-Up Consultation*

Employees with severe disabilities often require accommodations and supports to succeed on the job. In most cases, employers are able to arrange and provide the needed supports if they are assured of the availability of assistance and consultation. In addition, employees themselves often require ongoing support and guidance both to succeed at a job and to

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

advance in their careers beyond their first job

### *Employer Supports*

In the CEO project, once an individual was offered a job, with approval from the participant, project staff made themselves known and available to an employer. The first order of business was to assess the employer's support capacity. Employers needed different degrees and kinds of assistance. Most employer consultation was on an individual basis, but occasionally, staff held a group in-service training workshop where information about disability and accommodations were presented, and questions were addressed.

Project staff were also able to help employers access evaluations and accommodation recommendations from the state assistive technology centre. Project staff sometimes also advocated with employers for a change or addition to an employee's job tasks. When possible, employees were assisted to make requests on their own; but some employees did not have the required communications skills, and staff would intervene and take a more active role.

### *Employee Supports*

The CEO project provided ongoing assistance to participants in ensuring that home support and transportation were adequate and in resolving problems. Staff also worked with participants to assess their satisfaction with jobs and to periodically re-examine their career goals. As with employees in general, participants seldom began with what they considered an ideal job.

But each job experience provided a wealth of information, and participants were assisted to process and interpret the information in the context of merging personal goals. Because a career is an ongoing process rather than a single job each participant was encouraged to continue to explore and pursue his or her interests.

### *Project Outcomes*

All 40 project participants achieved paid employment, with 74.4% employed midway through the third year. Jobs represented a wide range of occupational areas, and most jobs paid over the minimum wage and included benefits. The time needed to gain employment varied; 68% of project participants were employed within 3 months of completing the Career Workshop series, and 88% were employed within 6 months. The longest time to obtain paid employment was 22 months.

CEO has achieved promising employment outcomes with a population of individuals with severe disabilities. Perhaps most striking is the wide array of job fields represented in the project. Location at a community college and active participation in the job search by the participant and his or her social support network, as an alternative to the "placement" approach used by many

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

*Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

community rehabilitation programs, may have contributed to these outcomes. The project accommodated career planning and job search strategies widely used by individuals without disabilities and with a variety of ability levels, as opposed to engaging in a different job development process that is unique to individuals with disabilities. The CEO project also provided participants, their social networks, and their employers with many of the resources they needed to continue to advance in their careers.

The services provided by the project, including hands-on assistance in the job search and ongoing contacts with consumers, are far more intensive than those usually provided by college-based learning and career centre services. However, the employment service funding levels of many state mental health and developmental disabilities and vocational rehabilitation offices are adequate to support this level of service. Intensive career services for individuals with severe disabilities can add an additional dimension to a community college's workforce development efforts as well as providing needed employment opportunities for individuals who have been seriously underrepresented in the labour market.

23. HEENAN, DEIRDRE (2003). "Does delivery matter? Users' perceptions of the significance of trust in the delivery of the Personal Advisor Service in the New Deal for Disabled Persons", **Disability & Rehabilitation: An International Multidisciplinary Journal**, August, 25(16), p. 863-890

The government in the UK has been contracting a number of public services out to a range of private and voluntary sector organizations. The aim of this study is to explore the extent to which decisions to become involved in employment support programs are affected by the users' perceptions of those delivering the service.

Two focus groups were employed to examine the attitudes and perceptions of participants in the government's New Deal for Disabled Persons. The study sample was purposefully selected from client records of Shaw Trust a national charity for disabled persons, one of the organizations who have been contracted by the government to provide this service.

Two distinct but related themes emerged from the focus groups: disillusionment with the government, and the importance of trust. Overall, the data suggests that the identity of those delivering the service significantly influences the decision to participate. As Shaw Trust is a voluntary organization promoting the rights of disabled persons they were deemed to be trustworthy. The users were skeptical about the government's commitment to improving the lives of disabled people and were reluctant to engage with the state.

Making the transition from dependency on disability benefits to paid employment is a quantum leap. For many the decision to put themselves forward for voluntary support schemes is affected by the extent to which they believe they can trust the agency delivering the service. It is

important that government listens to service users who have been involved in these projects and learns from their experiences.

24. HILLS, DIONE, CAMILLA CHILD, VICKY BLACKBURN, PENNY YOULL (2001). **Evaluation of the NDDP Innovative Schemes Pilots**, DSS Research Report No 143), Leeds, CDS

The New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP) Innovative Schemes project in the UK was set up in late 1998 to identify and test different approaches to helping disabled people move into or remain in work. Twenty-four schemes were commissioned over a two-year period, representing a wide range of different approaches.

This evaluation aimed to assess how well the pilots helped disabled people to find or remain in work, and to advise about what was effective in the program and what was not. The report present findings from research carried out with a range of key stakeholders including clients, managers and staff, partners and employers.

*Service delivery*

Services involved three broad types of activities: mobilizing clients (encouraging active participation of clients in services); mobilizing employers (encouraging the involvement of employers, and increasing work opportunities for disabled people); and matching (finding suitable employment opportunities for clients).

A pathway model was developed which focused on mediating, mobilizing and job-matching activities. The key was to provide clients with a smooth 'pathway' to employment. This often meant filling gaps in service provision. Services included recruitment, marketing of activities to potential referrers and employers, assessment of client's whole situation, including work readiness and planning a program of activities and services, and helping to identify suitable employment opportunities for clients.

*Partnerships*

Partnerships were an important source of additional resources, advice and credibility in new areas. They also helped to ensure that existing services were 'joined up'. They were set up to compliment the experience and networks of schemes lead organizations. Partner organizations often had very different agendas and priorities, which were mediated and managed through steering and advisory groups, or on a one-to-one basis.

### *Specialization*

The role of frontline staff emerged as crucial in building trust with clients, as well as delivering training, providing individual support for clients and ensuring they underwent a smooth 'pathway' into employment. Staff within the pilot services needed to have a wide range of skills. Although, the majority of staff worked 'generically' with clients, some service providers decided to specialize the functions of their staff so that they carried out specific client activities - e.g. initial client interview, job-matching, working with employers etc. – or provided specialized support for clients with particular types of disability.

### *Clients*

The pilot schemes covered work with a whole range of eligible clients. Some targeted those who were more job-ready and thus easier to place, however others targeted those who were some distance from the labour market. Clients with more complex needs tended to require a longer period of time to progress and also more attention and support. Some client groups could require specialized support (e.g. those with learning difficulties, mental health problems, and brain injuries). Clients appreciated the highly individualized approach provided by the schemes and the sense of progressing along a 'pathway' towards employment. The work focus was welcomed; however intermediary benefits like social gains were also highly valued. Many of the clients who moved into employment felt in need of continued support from services.

### *Employers*

Service providers were more successful when they had a good understanding of the local business environment, and viewed employers as 'customers' with their own varied needs. This involved working directly with employers to achieve job-outcomes, raise awareness and include them as partners in the scheme. It also involved using employer's 'language' and responding to their individual business needs.

Employers appreciated general advice on employing disabled people. Employers particularly appreciated advice on relevant legislation, enhancing the skills of personnel staff and managers in managing sickness absence, and information on services to support employees at risk of losing their jobs because of ill-health and/or disability. Some employers found that their fears about employing disabled people diminished after involvement with pilots.

The approach to engaging employers varied according to individual employers' willingness to become involved with schemes. Three 'types' of employers were identified:

- 'closed' employers – these had limited understanding of disability issues and were unwilling to engage.

*Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

- 'open to change' employers – these understood disability issues and viewed disabled people as employable.
- 'engaged' employers – these were committed to strategic change, and often contributed time, money and knowledge to the schemes.

*Factors associated with success*

The main factors which influenced job placement in the most successful schemes were:

- Comprehensive pathways being established from the point of entry into the scheme through to employment;
- Employment opportunities being integral to the scheme i.e. there was a job to go to; and
- Carefully targeting opportunities in the local labour market where there were skills gaps or labour shortages.

Schemes which appeared less successful were:

- Less selective in terms of job readiness.
- Working with a client group with complex needs;
- Having long start up times due to lack of experience in the field; having to build up referral and employer networks, and having weaker partnerships;
- Weaknesses in the client pathway – primarily at the transition from scheme to work - because of poor links with employers.

**25. HRDC (2001). Summative Evaluation of the Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities**, Evaluation and Data Development, Human Resources Development Canada, Ottawa, August

The Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities (OF) was established in 1997 to "assist persons with disabilities in preparing for, obtaining and keeping employment or becoming self-employed, thereby increasing their economic participation and independence." OF is the responsibility of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC). The purpose of this summative evaluation was to measure the effectiveness, impacts and effects of OF, particularly for participants, but also for employers and organizations.

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

The Report is organized into five chapters. The first sets out the context and program description. Chapter Two presents a profile of OF participants and their program activities based on the survey sample. Chapter Three addresses program rationale, design and implementation issues. The impacts and effects of OF are examined in Chapter Four. Conclusions are presented in Chapter Five.

### *Key findings:*

- An important perceived strength of OF program delivery was the use of individualized and flexible approaches for delivery of services to clients. The inclusion of the disability community was viewed as another positive feature of the program, if somewhat uneven in its implementation at the local level.
- The program is strongly committed to partnerships, and this was considered to be innovative and a key strength of OF. The vast majority of project sponsors were involved in partnered delivery arrangements. Partnerships with other community organizations were most common and employer involvement has increased significantly since the formative evaluation.
- The need for fuller participation of employers — and to ensure a parallel focus on the attitudinal and systemic barriers that remain in the workplace were noted during the course of the evaluation study.
- A strategy for persons with disabilities that would encompass existing components such as OF, Employability Assistance of People with Disabilities (EAPD) and mainstream programs serving persons with disabilities. A key aspect of a labour market strategy would be ensuring that income and disability support programs do not work at cross-purposes with employment initiatives (e.g., by removal of disincentives to employment or seeking employment, and recognition of the sometimes intermittent nature of disabilities).

### **26. HRDC (2002). Promising Practices in Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) Funded Programs and Services – Final Report, Evaluation and Data Development, Human Resources Development Canada, Ottawa, August**

The Promising Practices Project was a multilateral EAPD research project designed to provide a core base of knowledge on what works for whom in employability programming for people with disabilities.

Provincial representatives identified organizations in British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island that provided programs and services that were successful in improving the employability of people with disabilities.

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

The Promising Practices organizations have produced positive results. Clients' satisfaction with the service provided by the Promising Practices was high. The following represents the core findings on what works in employability programming for people with disabilities:

- All Promising Practices organizations (PPs) are highly client focused. The basis for their success and high client satisfaction come from the fact that programs are flexible or tailored to the needs of each individual. This allows clients to enhance their learning and employment preparations. Employment or educational plans are created according to each client's abilities and limitations. Client centered services also tend to raise clients' self-esteem and confidence, an issue for all clients interviewed for this study.
- All PPs look at their clients in a holistic way. They consider a person's likes and dislikes, abilities and limitations, housing and family situations, technological needs for school and work, and social and interpersonal skills. Clients appreciate this approach. The approach also allows for trust between the client and the Promising Practice organization.
- All PPs recognize the importance of education and/or on-the-job training as a starting point in clients' employment pursuits. Many clients have few or no marketable skills. As a result, initiatives to encourage people with disabilities to further their education and develop their skills are essential to their acquiring gainful employment.
- Staff in all PPs mentioned educating and raising awareness of employers and the general public on the value that people with disabilities bring to our society and workplaces as highly important. Many staff members as well as the employers themselves indicated that educating employers is one of the most important activities to undertake for the purpose of increasing the representation of people with disabilities in the general workforce.
- Staff in the PPs emphasized partnerships with employers as one of the most important tools to allow clients a chance to get a job placement as well as increasing their chances of employment after the placement.
- PPs that have work placements as part of their programs facilitate on-going communication that assists both employers and clients for the duration of the placement. Clients and employers alike value this three-way communication as it provides both parties a point of contact to discuss issues that arise. Employers indicated that this support is often a catalyst for them to provide job placement opportunities for PP clients.
- Dedicated and committed leadership and experienced staff are both very important. The ability to develop client trust impacts on both the success of the programs as well as the employment opportunities the programs facilitate. Staff is highly knowledgeable about employability issues as they pertain to people with disabilities and see it as essential to be

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

up-to-date on the latest approaches, methods and research to be able to continue providing the best services possible.

- The PPs straddle the line between being supportive and challenging in their interactions with their clients. PP staff indicated that it is important to allow clients to make their own decisions (i.e., they are allowed to make their own mistakes) and assume certain responsibilities (i.e., showing up on time to courses and work placements).

### **27. HRDC (2002), EAPD National Report 2002 - Ontario**

This report describes the Ontario programs for persons with disabilities during the period of April 1, 1999 to March 31, 2001. It addresses 10 programs in two Ontario ministries (Health and Long Term Care, and Community and Social Services) that were cost-shared under the Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities (EAPD) Agreement. Some programs - like the Ontario Disability Support Program, Employment Supports - offer a full range of goods and services to assist people with a wide range of disabilities. Other programs serve specific target groups (such as the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care's programs for people with mental illnesses) or provide specific services (such as the Supported Employment programs funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, since April 2002, the Ministry of Community,

The report notes that between 1996 and 1998, the Ministry of Community and Social Services undertook an extensive consultation with people with disabilities, consumer and advocacy groups, service providers and employers to assist the ministry to develop a new system of employment supports for people with disabilities. In all, over 200 individuals and groups were consulted. During the consultations, the ministry heard that consumers and advocates wanted a system of supports that eliminated or reduced disability-related barriers to employment. People with disabilities wanted access to real jobs at minimum wage or better, quick and responsive service, and the ability to control the services they receive.

As a result of these discussions, the ministry developed the following principles for the Employment Supports component of the Ontario Disability Support Program:

- participation in the program is voluntary;
- where possible, clients can design and manage their own employment planning and job-finding strategies;
- clients who are self-directed receive quick service and are not required to engage in lengthy approval processes;
- clients should be able to choose their service providers

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

*Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

- clients are accountable for achieving the goals set out in their employment plans.
- Ministry staff are accountable for ensuring that clients receive the supports they require under those plans, and are also responsible for the Employment Supports Funding Agreements.

28. HURSTFIELD, JENNIFER, BECKY ALLEN, JOHN BALLARD, JACKIE DAVIES, PETER MCGEER AND LINDA MILLER (2003) **The extent of use of health and safety requirements as a false excuse for not employing sick or disabled persons** Prepared by IRS Research for the Health and Safety Executive and the Disability Rights Commission , Research Report 167, London

In March 2002, IRS Research was commissioned to conduct a research project to establish the nature and extent of the problem of health and safety requirements being used as a false 'excuse' for not employing or continuing to employ disabled people or people with an ill-health condition or injury

The research was conducted between April 2002 and February 2003 and comprised several interrelated elements. This included a literature review of UK and international studies; a review of UK employment tribunal cases; a telephone survey of 500 smaller employers; a postal survey of HR managers in 1000 larger organisations; a postal survey of over 1000 occupational physicians and occupational health nurses ; a postal survey of 8000 safety representatives; 20 employer case histories; 20 individual case histories; interviews with key informants from a range of organisations, including disability organisations and employers' organisations; and a workshop to discuss the findings, and possible ways forward, with stakeholders.

Overall, both the survey and the case study research provides evidence of organisations taking steps to overcome health and safety barriers to the recruitment or retention people with a disability, ill health condition or injury. Equally there is evidence of a substantial number of organisations who responded to the survey deciding not to recruit someone with a disability or ill health condition on the grounds of a health and safety risk. Many organisations also cite examples of dismissing an existing employee on the grounds of a health and safety risk.

What this research has highlighted is:

- Health and safety is frequently being used as the rationale for non-recruitment or dismissal of a disabled person.
- There is considerably more evidence of employers overcoming health and safety difficulties to retain rather than recruit someone with a disability, ill health condition or injury.

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

*Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

- Organisations vary considerably in their recruitment procedures towards people with a disability or ill health condition and there is no consensus regarding the stage at which applicants should be asked to disclose a disability or ill health condition. Impairments are not viewed or treated the same by all employers. For example, an impairment such as epilepsy may be viewed as a health and safety concern by some employers and not by others.
- Employers in particular sectors, such as manufacturing, are also more likely to express health and safety concerns about employing people with any impairment.
- There is a lack of understanding among some employers over what constitutes a health and safety risk. Lack of knowledge about the impact of particular conditions or disabilities can result in overly cautious assessments of the individual's capacity to do a job.
- The surveys point to a widespread tendency on the part of the responding employers to identify the health and safety risk in terms of a risk to the individual applicant or employee. This may result in paternalistic or excessively cautious approaches. Further guidance may be required to ensure that employers are clearer about the range of options and adjustments open to them to consider when faced with an applicant or employee with a disability or ill-health condition.
- A significant proportion of all participants in the research expressed the view that there was a conflict between the DDA and the health and safety requirements.

29. LEWCHUK, WAYNE (2002) **Workload, Work Organization and Health Outcomes: The Ontario Disability Support Program**, McMaster University, January 31, 2002

This assessment was prepared for the Ontario Public Service Employees Union. It examines the conditions of work in the offices of the Ontario Disability Support Program. While the focus of the assessment was on the impact of organizational changes on ODSP staff, the study made important observations on the impact of organizational changes on clients of the program:

*Work Organization under the Family Benefits Act (FBA).*

Many of the staff of ODSP formerly administered the FBA. Under the FBA, staff faced a heavy workload. However, they enjoyed sufficient control and support at work to minimize negative health impacts. There were significant intrinsic rewards from their work that kept effort and rewards in balance.

Under FBA, much of the contact between Ministry employees and their clients was through Income Maintenance Officers (IMOs). IMOs worked under a caseload system. They were assigned a specific number of cases, from 400-500 individuals, for whom they were the main

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

### *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

contact. The IMO would process the initial application for benefits, have access to local medical officials regarding the extent of disability, maintain the files should there be a change in status and periodically review them for errors, omissions or unreported changes in status. They were accessible to clients over the phone, at the office, or during home visits. They became well versed in the special needs of their clients, and could advise them not only of FBA programs but of other forms of support for which they might be entitled. They got to know many of their clients; their clients got to know them.

Workloads were heavy under FBA. Often, there were more demands than time to satisfy these demands. However, staff had a high level of control over how work was performed, reported adequate support and access to resources to do their jobs, and enjoyed a balance between effort and rewards. Work organization was compatible with workloads. The IMO's sense of control was a function of the caseload system which resulted in them having a personal and long-term relationship with their clients. They got to know their clients and their needs making it easier to do their jobs. In addition, medical assessments were done locally and IMOs had access to medical information needed to perform their jobs efficiently. They had access to information needed to assess potential risks that clients might pose for case workers. Staff reported they were consulted by management about how best to organize the workplace and that there was sufficient flexibility in the system to allow local offices to adapt to local conditions. Staff reported that they were supported in doing their jobs and that they worked as a team with management with the common goal of serving the needs of their clients. They drew a sense of satisfaction in knowing they were doing a good job and that clients recognized this. The work was intrinsically rewarding contributing to the balance between workload and rewards. In short, they liked their jobs

#### *Work Organization under ODSP*

For many of the staff formerly administering the FBA, their world of work was fundamentally altered with the introduction of the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) in 1998. Single parents became the responsibility of Ontario Works and social support for low income disabled Ontarians was left to ODSP. More important, the IMO position was eliminated and replaced by Client Service Representatives (CSR) and Income Support Specialists (ISS). Tasks were further fragmented by creating specialist CSRs and specialists ISSs who performed one small component of the overall CSR or ISS job. The IMO job, which had involved most of the tasks needed to administer benefits to clients, was reassigned to five or ten specialists, each responsible for one component of the task. A third type of worker, the Income Support Clerk (ISC) provides office support under ODSP.

At the same time the tasks of the IMO were being divided, there was a shift from the caseload system to a pooled case management system. Under the latter the personal link between case worker and client is broken. Clients are now the collective responsibility of all ODSP staff. Each person in the office is responsible for their specialized task, but no one spends enough time with

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

a client to really get to know them. Further changes in work organization were introduced in 2000 with the adoption of the Business Review Process (BRP), and in 2001 with the introduction of a new computer software system referred to as the Service Delivery Model Technology (SDMT).

### *Impact on Client Service*

One problem is that the breaking of the personal bond between IMO and client has created a situation where clients lack confidence in the decision of any one CSR or ISS. Under FBA, clients would contact their IMO with whom they had a long standing relationship. The IMO would either approve or deny a benefit and the client could appeal if they disagreed. In most cases this did not happen as the IMO and the client had established a sense of trust based on repeated contact. Under the new system a client who phones at 10:00 and is dissatisfied with the outcome can phone in the afternoon and speak with a different CSR and perhaps get a different outcome. It was reported during the interviews that clients may phone as many as four times on the same issue where before they would phone once. Repeat calls are increased by the decision to turn CSRs into specialists in a specific benefit. When on the phones, or doing office interviews, requests for all types of benefits may come their way. If the CSR does not feel capable of dealing with the request, a situation which is itself embarrassing to the CSR, they have to pass it on to the appropriate CSR, or in some cases and ISS, where upon the client has to repeat their story.

The shift to the pooled case management system reduces staff control over client support. Under the case load system the IMO had control of the majority of the support package offered to a client. Under ODSP, a number of CSRs and ISSs are involved in each client's file, some granting the initial benefits, others responsible for one or more supplementary benefits, others for case management and others for case review. Staff has lost control over the overall support a client receives, while at the same time becoming more dependent on each other to accomplish the objectives set out for them in the procedures manuals.

The depersonalization of relations between ODSP staff and the clients they serve increases workloads by creating more frustration with clients who are then more hostile in their dealings with staff. The organization of work under ODSP has fundamentally changed employee experience of work.

### **30. THE LEWIN GROUP INC., BERKELEY POLICY ASSOCIATES, CORNELL UNIVERSITY ( 2001). Research on Employment Supports for People with Disabilities: Summary of the Focus Group Findings U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

The Lewin Group and its subcontractors completed a unique multiyear examination of the employment experiences of people with significant disabilities. The project is distinctive among the many investigations of the factors affecting the employment of people with disabilities

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

### *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

because it focuses on individuals who have achieved some measure of success in employment and examines the factors contributing to that success.

The study's findings are based on comments from nearly 300 participants in 45 focus groups conducted in 2000. All participants were 18 years old or older, had a significant disability with onset prior to first substantial employment, and had annual earnings of at least \$8,240 before taxes and transfers. The largest impairment category was mental illness (30 percent), followed by communication (21 percent) and mobility (19 percent) impairments.

They reinforce the primary role played by health insurance in employment decisions. They also reveal that employers' behavior might constitute one of the most important factors in determining employment success.

### *Individualized Supports and Services*

Participants highly valued supports and services that were individualized, and that enabled them to participate more fully in mainstream society. For example, participants were most pleased with VR providing or paying for equipment and services, such as computers, assistive technologies, transportation, education, and third-party training. Such supports targeted specific needs and promoted independence. They were less satisfied with services received in a "sheltered" or segregated environment, such as job training provided through the state VR system.

### *Job Coaches*

Particularly for people with mental retardation/developmental disability, job coaches provided through VR services play very important roles in securing and maintaining employment. Such coaches provide motivation and support, serve as a source of information about services, mentor and counsel individuals, in some cases accompany individuals on job interviews, and even help resolve employment disputes and difficulties. Because the role of the job counselor can be so critical, participants' perceptions regarding VR may be heavily influenced by behavior of the job coach or case manager.

### *Knowledgeable Staff*

Participants noted that the levels of knowledge, compassion, and skill of VR staff are important to the success of VR services, and in the absence of a qualified counselor, it is important to self-advocate and have a clear idea of what you want.

### *Workplace Factors*

Employers provided some accommodations through formal disability integration policies, and other employers provided supports more informally. In all cases, participants regarded the workplace accommodations as important, or even essential. Among building modifications, the installation of ramps and other features to accommodate wheelchairs were most often cited. A number of participants said that flexible work schedules were a particularly important accommodation. Flexible scheduling allows them to work efficiently, keep doctor appointments and stay healthy. Participants, particularly those with hearing or vision impairments, also commonly reported access to assistive devices and technologies. A number of participants cited substantial difficulties in gaining access to needed accommodations. In some cases, they were able to prevail, and in other cases they worked around the lack of accommodations.

Many participants said that the behavior of immediate supervisors played a major role in job entry and career development. Participants also said that supervisors need to understand the nature of the disability and the required accommodations, and when they do not, employment situations often fail. Having a supportive supervisor aided in securing accommodations, educating co-workers about accommodations and disability, protecting confidentiality, and ensuring that co-workers provide tools and information necessary for the individual to complete tasks.

Several participants cited co-worker or supervisor attitudes that made gaining access to needed accommodations very difficult. Many participants said that lack of understanding about disability sometimes led to anxiety and fear among their co-workers: Participants also reported that the willingness of co-workers to learn about the nature of the disability was also important for ensuring a comfortable and productive work environment:

A number of participants, particularly those with a mental illness, discussed a reluctance to disclose their disabilities to employers and potential employers because of concerns regarding employer reaction, fears about being treated differently by co-workers, and consequences for employment.

### *Personal Motivation*

One factor apparent throughout all of the focus groups and across all disabilities was the importance of both purpose and determination in contributing to successful employment outcomes among participants. Many participants made explicit references to the value of being motivated and resourceful, both to secure benefits and later to secure employment.

Numerous participants described the challenges in learning the complex set of benefits available to adults with disabilities. For many, success in navigating this structure was related to desire:

*Peer Mentors and Role Models*

A number of participants mentioned the value of having role models and mentors available to provide advice during difficult periods. Participants described receiving support from others with similar disabilities following an injury, during the transition from school to work, and while seeking employment.

31. LOUMIDIS, J., ET AL (2001), **Evaluation of the New Deal for Disabled People - Personal Advisor Service Pilot - Technical Report**, Research Report No. 144,

The New Deal for Disabled People Personal Adviser Service pilot began in six areas administered by the Employment Service in September 1998 and in another six areas under contract to private, public and voluntary sector partnerships in April 1999. The Personal Adviser Service aims both to assist disabled people and those with a long-standing illness who want to work to do so, and to help those who are already in work to retain their employment. Through local partnership, the Personal Adviser Service also seeks to promote the abilities of disabled people and to extend the range of services available to them.

The research for this evaluation consisted of large-scale telephone and interview surveys of both participants and non-participants, together with a large program of qualitative research including in-depth interviews with clients, personal advisers, service managers, occupational psychologists, employers and representatives of partner organizations.

The report covers a range of topics including: organization and management; service delivery; engagement of client group; client experience; client outcomes; employer experience; services for job retention; and lessons to be drawn.

*Services*

The main reason respondents contacted the Personal Adviser Service was to receive help to move into work. The in-depth interviews also show that getting information and advice about benefits and tax credits was sometimes why clients contacted the pilot service. Being too ill was the main reason given by non-participants for not getting in touch with the pilot service.

Clients were assisted with a range of activities including: confidence building courses, vocational and educational training, interview preparation, work experience and in-work support. In most of the pilots, Personal Advisers could refer clients to an Occupational Psychologist who administered psychometric tests, and cognitive and behavioural assessments, and provided professional support to the service more generally.

### *Partnerships*

Establishing effective partnerships required a considerable investment of time and energy. Partnership working developed in a number of ways with a tendency to move towards a smaller number of active partner organizations. Few pilots were able to establish effective partnerships with representatives of health services, and this is an area for further development. Effective partnerships were built upon shared aims and a clear understanding of roles, commitment to partnership working and collaboration, effective communication and management, and involvement of key individuals and decision-makers.

### *Specialization*

The predominant model, particularly in the early stages, was for PAS pilots to adopt a holistic and personalized approach. Over time there was a greater trend towards specialization, partly in response to the wide range of client and employer needs, but also in response to the greater emphasis on outcomes. Types of specialization included: specialization by function, with staff specializing in different stages in the process; and specialization by client group, with staff focusing on work with employers, or with clients with different types of disabilities. Staff seconded from partner organizations were often a useful source of specialist advice.

### *Creaming*

Some concern was expressed that the focus on employment outcomes had led to a reduction in the range of assistance given to those clients further from the labour market, and a reduction in in-work support

NDDP is generally reaching clients who are closer to the labour market. For example, participants in PAS tend to be younger, better qualified, less severely disabled, have spent less time on benefits and have better access to transport than non-participants. Nevertheless, the pilots have worked with, and achieved positive outcomes for, people who are quite severely disabled. There were a large number of clients with mental health problems or who were some distance from the labour market. As pilots became more outcomes focused, personal advisers had become more selective in who was accepted onto the caseload. Clients requiring longer-term help were more likely to be referred to an external agency

### *Clients*

Clients were heterogeneous in their characteristics, needs and motivations. Overall clients were generally satisfied with the help received from the Personal Adviser Service. For example over four-fifths said that their adviser had listened to and understood what they said (84%) and were happy with the time spent with their adviser (84%), and about three quarters were pleased with the pace that things were moving (74%). However, two fifths (41%) felt that the service had

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

been able to offer them the help and support they needed, although an additional 26% judged it too early to say. While clients welcomed the personalized approach, they did not always experience the Service as seamless. Accurate and timely information and advice about benefits, tax credits and financial support for moving into work could be critical in decisions made about working.

### *Employers*

Employers were heterogeneous in their experience of employing disabled people and in their needs from the Personal Adviser Service.

Employers' approaches to employing disabled people fell into two distinct groups: those who were already actively committed to employing disabled people and those who were not. The former group included large public and private sector organizations that had in place a number of systems and structures to support the employment of disabled people. Employers who were not actively committed included smaller public and private sector organizations with little experience of working with disabled people, and little knowledge of the type of adaptations or support that would make a post accessible to them.

### *Employer Needs*

Personal Advisers' work with employers fell into four distinct categories: (i) assessment and preparation of both client and employer prior to a post or work placement; (ii) access to wage subsidies and placement payments; (iii) facilitating adaptations to the workplace environment and other financial support to help the client to undertake the post or placement; and (iv) in-work support to clients and employers.

32. MACDONALD-WILSON, K.L., E.S. ROGERS, J.M. MASSARO, A. LYASS, T. CREAN (2002). "An investigation of reasonable workplace accommodations for people with psychiatric disabilities: Quantitative findings from a multi-site study", **Community Mental Health Journal**, February, Vol. 38, Iss. 1, p. 35

Despite the requirement of many employers to provide accommodations in the workplace for individuals with disabilities under Section 504 of the US Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the preponderance of accommodations that have been described in the literature concern physical rather than psychiatric disabilities.

This article describes an exploratory, descriptive, longitudinal, multi-site investigation of reasonable workplace accommodations for individuals with psychiatric disabilities involved in supported employment programs. It discusses the functional limitations and reasonable accommodations provided to 191 participants and the characteristics of 204 employers and 22 service provider organizations participating in the study. Thirty-nine percent of the individuals

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

participating had a primary chart diagnosis of schizophrenia or other psychotic disorder, 23% had an affective disorder (including bipolar and depressive disorders), 19% schizoaffective disorder, 16% other (anxiety disorders, personality disorders or miscellaneous),

### *Key findings:*

Results suggest that individuals obtaining employment through the supported employment programs studied here were working largely in the service and retail industries, in relatively low level jobs for entry level pay.

When examining jobs comparable to those in this study, such as retail and service positions, participants experienced lower job tenure. In addition, given the unemployment rate among this sample (53% at the 12-month observation point), it is clear that these participants do not enjoy the same job prospects as the general population even when workplace accommodations and job support are provided.

In terms of the functional limitation that might create the need for an accommodation, individuals with psychiatric disabilities participating in supported employment programs such as these appear to have difficulties in the interpersonal domain, specifically interacting or conversing with others, interpreting the social cues of the work environment, and the like. In addition, cognitive deficits were mentioned fairly often, including being able to concentrate and learn job tasks. Working independently, maintaining work stamina and managing symptoms and stress were also frequently mentioned limitations.

Cognitive deficits and interpersonal skills are two important types of limitations that frequently require the accommodation of job coaches.

Unlike many accommodations for persons with physical disabilities, accommodations for persons with psychiatric disabilities tend to involve human assistance of some kind, usually a job coach, and tend to have few if any direct or tangible costs to the employer. The costs tend to be indirect and incurred in extra supervision or training, flexible scheduling, allowing the presence of a job coach, and modifying job duties. The need for an accommodation was most often identified by the job coach or the employee him or herself. The role of the job coach in providing accommodations in this study was pivotal: job coaches were instrumental in obtaining most of the accommodations.

Supported employment personnel need assistance and training in conceptualizing and operationalizing the functional limitations that they may be observing in their employees. They need training to determine the best way to proceed from the limitation to the accommodation, and in how to creatively consider various accommodations that may work for various limitations.

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

**33. NATIONAL COUNCIL ON DISABILITY (2000) Promises to Keep: A Decade of Federal Enforcement of the Americans with Disabilities Act** June

This report describes federal compliance, enforcement, technical assistance, and public information activities for the four main titles of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It also assesses the effectiveness of these activities.

Findings on the effectiveness of current technical assistance activities include:

- The technical assistance programs that answer questions from the public appear to provide significant amounts of information and materials to diverse audiences. New materials are being developed to meet evolving needs to the extent resources are available. Coordination and legal review of new materials, however, does not always take place consistently.
- The enforcement agencies do not make sufficient effort to evaluate the effectiveness of their technical assistance programs, although they may require their grantees and contractors to do so. Every agency can show it has distributed high volumes of materials, and answered hundreds of thousands of telephone questions, yet most have not evaluated the impact or outcomes of these activities. Such evaluation efforts are not necessary to justify the need for continued technical assistance and public education, because the demand for such programs can be readily demonstrated, but there is a critical need to understand how effective various activities and programs are so future technical assistance can be targeted for the greatest impact.
- Researchers identified one problem or tension that community advocates have long been aware of. Technical assistance, an important component in any successful disability rights enforcement strategy, has historically been defined as a fundamentally neutral or passive endeavor. This view presupposes that information is power and leaves it to the recipient of the technical assistance to take the information provided and use it on his or her own behalf. At times, however, self-advocacy may be insufficient to solve the problem or end an act of discrimination. Trained and compensated advocacy assistance is needed to bridge the gap for many people with disabilities between problem solving through information dissemination and the alternatives of filing a complaint or litigating.
- Web-based information offers new opportunities for increasing technical assistance. Those programs that have moved to Web-based technologies are increasing their contact with potential customers and are making it easier for information seekers to find what they need quickly.

**34. ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (2003). Transforming Disability into Ability: Policies to Promote Work and Income Security for Disabled People**, OECD, Paris

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

This OECD study provides a systematic analysis of a wide array of labour market and social protection programs aimed at people with disabilities. Analyzing the relationship between policies and outcomes across 20 OECD countries, it seeks to provide a better understanding of the dilemmas of disability policy and of successful policy elements or packages.

### *Findings and Policy Conclusions*

No single country in this review can be said to have a particularly successful policy for disabled people.

Different employment policy approaches (rights-based anti-discrimination policy, obligations-based employment quotas, or incentives-based voluntary action) all tend to promote primarily job retention of current employees.

Proper sanctions on employers who do not fulfill their obligations and adequate instruments to enforce these sanctions are crucial for an effective employment promotion policy.

While the approach to vocational rehabilitation and training differs markedly between countries, this type of intervention is usually used too little, and often initiated too late. More can be done to involve the employers in this process.

The report concludes that a promising new disability policy approach should move closer to the philosophy of unemployment programs by emphasizing activation, promoting tailored early intervention, removing disincentives to work, introducing a culture of mutual obligations, and involving employers. In particular:

- Societies need to change the way they think about disability and those affected by it. The term “disabled” should no longer be equated with “unable to work”. Disability should be recognized as a condition but it should be distinct from eligibility for, and receipt of, benefits, just as it should not automatically be treated as an obstacle to work.
- Introduce a culture of mutual obligations. Most societies readily accept their obligation to make efforts to support and (re)integrate disabled persons, but it is less common to expect disabled persons themselves and, if applicable, their employers to contribute to the process as well.
- Each disabled person should be entitled to a “participation package” adapted to individual needs and capacities. This package could contain rehabilitation and vocational training, job search support, work elements from a wide range of forms of employment (regular, part-time, subsidized, sheltered) and benefits in cash or in kind.

*Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

- Introduce new obligations for disabled people. Benefit receipt should in principle be conditional on participation in employment, vocational rehabilitation and other integration measures. The disabled person is expected to make an effort to participate in the labour market. Failure to do so should result in benefit sanctions.
- Involving employers is crucial to the successful reintegration of disabled persons. Different approaches exist, ranging from moral suasion and anti-discrimination legislation to compulsory employment quotas. The effectiveness of the measures depends on the willingness of employers to help disabled persons stay in or enter work (which can be influenced through incentives aimed at raising labour demand), but also on the effectiveness of sanctions for non-compliance.
- Promote early intervention. Early intervention can in many cases be the most effective measure against long-term benefit dependence. As soon as a person becomes disabled, a process of tailored vocational intervention should be initiated, where appropriate including, e.g. job search, rehabilitation and/or further training.
- Make cash benefits a flexible policy element. Benefit entitlements should be designed such that the disabled person is not penalized for taking up work.
- Reform program administration: A more individual approach will place a wide range of new demands on disability caseworkers. They will need an extensive knowledge of the range of available benefits and services. More time will be required to assist individuals and follow each case. Implementation of a one-stop approach will help caseworkers manage the full menu of available interventions and promote equal access to all programs for all people.
- Design disability program as active programs. Often, disability benefit systems function as early retirement programs, providing a route for quasi-permanent exit from the labour market. Emphasizing activation and the mutual obligations of both society and the disabled person moves disability policy closer to the underlying logic of unemployment programs, which expect an active contribution and effort from beneficiaries.

35. O'REILLY, ARTHUR. (2003) **Right to decent work of persons with disabilities** ILO In Focus Program on Skills, Knowledge and Employability. Geneva.

The ILO commissioned this paper as a contribution to the deliberations taking place in preparation for the development of a United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The paper provides a summary overview of the principal international legal instruments and policy of relevance to the rights of people with disabilities, with a particular focus on employment

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

and work, is given at the outset. This is followed, by a more detailed description of international instruments, policies and initiatives, including reference to the debates which have taken place about their effectiveness in practice.

The paper reviews the different options open to people with disabilities who wish to work, such as open/ competitive employment, sheltered employment, supported employment and social enterprises. The available evidence is examined on the trends in each of these categories and key issues highlighted in each case. The paper notes that based on a review of available information, reasons given for high unemployment rates among persons with disabilities include:

- Low level of education and training
- Declining demand for unskilled labour
- Reductions in the workforce of large enterprises and the public service
- Concern about accidents and insurance costs
- Reluctance to register as having a disability

The paper also reviews the main approaches which have been adopted at national level to assist people with disabilities in securing, retaining and advancing in employment and work. These include legislation; employment services; training for employment; disability management; financial, technical and personal supports; and/ persuasion measures. Key observations include:

- While ignorance and prejudice may have a part to play in employee selection, a key factor is often the inability of persons with disabilities to compete on the basis of relevant skills or qualifications. What an employer will look for in recruiting a new employee is, first and foremost, the capacity to do the job (given reasonable accommodation, where necessary).
- The mismatch between training and the skill requirements of the labour market hinders job placement possibilities and may well contribute to negative perceptions by employers of the ability potential of many disabled persons
- Applicants who can show that they have the necessary competence, or have the capacity to acquire it after suitable training, have an advantage over applicants who cannot. Training, which should encompass skill, knowledge and attitudes, is very often the key to success in finding a job. For persons with a disability, professional training – under qualified instructors, and leading if possible to some form of recognized certification – is an essential passport to gaining employment.
- Physical accessibility remains a major barrier to many disabled persons seeking work or training. This applies not just to the training or work place but to the local built environment – including public transport, housing, shops, restaurants, places of

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

recreation – used to a greater or lesser degree by other employees. Considerable improvement has been made in many places, but in general progress is slow, and many disabled persons remain excluded as a result.

- Other barriers to training include the distant or inconvenient location of training, courses which are not relevant, inadequate transportation, availability or cost of child care, little flexibility in course design or delivery.
- The history of the European quota systems amply demonstrates that an employment system which is based on the idea that the protected group of workers is inferior cannot achieve permanent and significant success, since employers will attempt to evade their obligations to employ such workers.
- Perhaps the greatest seismic shift in the area of employment for people with disabilities has been the move to anti-discrimination legislation. Like quota systems and other government-sponsored schemes, anti-discrimination legislation assumes that specific measures are needed to promote the employment of disabled people. Unlike quotas, however, such legislation says that people with disabilities are able to compete for jobs on their merits, provided the environment in which they do so does not discriminate against them because of their disability.

The report proposes provisions for the proposed UN Convention.

**36. PARLIAMENTARY RESEARCH BRANCH (2002), *Current Disability Issues in Canada: A Background Paper*, Ottawa, May 9**

This background paper provides an overview of how disability issues fit into the Canadian system of government. In addition it provides a brief overview of the demographic and social characteristics of Canadians with disabilities, disability programs and the overall policy framework for governments. This analysis was prepared by the Parliamentary Research Branch as background material for use by Members of the Sub-Committee on the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

With respect to employment and training, the paper notes that the disability community has identified as one of its priorities the preparation of a labour market strategy for people with disabilities. Such a strategy would involve federal, provincial and territorial policies and programs, as well as a federal-only component. The disability community has identified the following elements of a complete strategy:

- measures required to provide for access to post-secondary education;
- effective employment equity measures at the federal and provincial levels;

*Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

- access to labour market training and information that is not dependent on eligibility for employment
- insurance (since many people with disabilities have no previous attachment to the labour market); and
- transition programs from school to work and from training to work.

Some of these measures are currently in place, such as the Opportunities Fund. However, the paper notes that as it stands, the Opportunities Fund, an initiative that is popular with community organizations of persons with disabilities, has a huge load to carry. When the fund was established there were approximately 186,000 people with disabilities who were unemployed, of whom an estimated 50% were ineligible for the benefits offered through Employment Insurance Part II. This number can be contrasted with the 4,000 to 6,000 people each year that the Opportunities Fund was designed to assist. This gap is more pronounced because the money is divided regionally and guidelines for recipients vary from region to region. Moreover, the Opportunities Fund measures for success are based on full-time jobs created. Thus, the measures do not fully take into account the longer orientation required for those who have been outside the labour market for long periods of time or those who have never had a strong attachment to the labour market.

**37. RINALDI, MILES, ROBERT HILL (2000) *Insufficient concern: the experience, attitudes and perceptions of disabled people and employers towards open employment in one London borough*, Merton Mind, Surrey UK**

Based on a sample of 241 disabled people and 56 employers in the London borough of Merton, the report discusses individual experiences of those in work and those seeking work as well as employers' attitudes and experiences of employing disabled people. The disabled participants represented a range of disabilities--102 had a physical impairment, 98 had a mental health problem, 19 had a visual impairment, and 22 had a hearing impairment.

The negative stereotyping uncovered in this research may be leading to businesses rejecting candidates who could offer great skills, experience and loyalty to their business. The attitudes shown could also be considered discriminatory. For example, a third of employers stated that their employment criteria would be different for people with mental health problems as opposed to disabled people generally. Over 40 percent of employers thought that they could not make changes and/or adjustments to their workplace for a disabled person, and 17% did not feel they were able to employ a disabled person.

Of disabled respondents reporting that they had experienced barriers, 53% reported discrimination, 25% focused on the structure of the work/work environment, and 9% on their

*Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

experience, education or potential being discounted. Not surprising, 57 percent of respondents felt that their career development was limited by their impairment

With respect to government services, the report recommends:

- There needs to be a greater understanding by the national disability employment program team of employers' needs and attitudes to disabled people. This can only be gained by working directly with employers on these issues.
- The Employment Service tends to work more with employers who come to them; however, our research has shown that in Merton, a large number of employers do not take this route. The agency needs to develop a proactive role in working with employers rather than expecting employers to come to them.
- The Employment Service needs to be aware that a large number of disabled people surveyed had not used its services. Therefore, the Employment Service needs to establish why disabled people are not using their services and to question how they are going to reach out to disabled people who are unaware of their services.
- The research highlights a set of generic skills that are prioritized by both employers and potential employees. Employers are looking for self-confidence skills, assertiveness skills, coping with stress, communications skills, and work experience. Such skills should therefore be prioritized in both vocational programs and work search programs.
- There is a need to challenge employers on their perceptions of the skills and abilities of those classified as long term unemployed, as this undoubtedly results in a form of indirect discrimination against certain members of the population.
- Ignorance and stereotyping, particularly regarding mental health, needs to be continually challenged.

38. ROBERTS, S., C. HEAVER, K. HILL, J. RENNISON, B. STAFFORD, N. HOWAT, G. KELLY, S. KRISHNAN, P. TAPP, & A. THOMAS (2004). **Disability in the workplace: Employers' and service providers' responses to the Disability Discriminations Act in 2003 and preparation for 2004 changes**, Department for Work and Pensions, Research Report 202,

This research explores how employers and service providers are responding to both previous and forthcoming provisions of the UK Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA).

The report presents findings based on around 2000 telephone interviews and case studies of 38 employers and service providers.

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

*Key findings*

- Employers (particularly small employers and/or those who have not employed a disabled person) are lacking in knowledge of disability and still have a relatively narrow perception of disability. Disability still carries connotations of physical and visible impairments and there are misunderstandings and prejudices around mental illness.
- Knowledge of the employment provisions (Part II) of the DDA was higher among larger organizations, and in public and voluntary sector organizations, as well as among employers at workplaces where there had been disabled employees. Smaller employers in particular (those with fewer than 15 employees) were unsure of the implications of the Act for their organization.
- The case studies showed that there was also greater awareness at Head Office rather than the local office level
- Few organizations had a separate disability policy for employees. Larger organizations tended to have some form of written policy, most commonly an all-embracing Equal Opportunities policy, but even in these organizations, the case studies suggested that staff at the local workplace often had limited knowledge about its content.
- The voluntary and public sectors were more likely to have disabled staff than the private sector. Employment of disabled people was more common among larger workplaces.
- Many employers (particularly those with fewer than 100 staff) felt that it was difficult to employ somebody with a disability. Nearly one-half of all employers said that their workplace would find it difficult to keep on an employee who became disabled.
- One-third of employers (33 per cent) stated that taking on disabled employees was a major risk for the employer. Encouragingly larger workplaces were significantly less likely to state that employing a disabled person would be a major risk;
- The cost of making adjustments was of concern to some employers in the case studies, especially small ones. It was felt that certain adjustment could be expensive. Even large companies considered themselves to have financial constraints.
- Workplaces where there had been disabled employees were also less likely to see employing disabled people as a risk. Also, workplaces which had employed disabled people were more likely to report that it is easy to employ a disabled person.

Over four-fifths of employers that have had disabled employees (83 per cent) and nearly

*Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

three quarters of service providers said that adjustments to assist disabled people had been made or were planned.

- The cost of making adjustments was of concern to some employers, especially small ones, in the case studies. However, 72 percent of employers in the survey who had made changes said that it had been easy to make the adjustments while only 14 per cent said it had been difficult
- Just over one-third (35 per cent) of employers who had made changes to their workplace for disabled employees said they did so partly as a result of legislation. The most common reasons cited for making changes were that it was the right thing to do for the disabled employee (98 per cent) and that they anticipated that the benefits would outweigh the costs (78 per cent).
- There was a degree of uncertainty as to what constitutes 'best practice' in making adjustments and respondents reported that practical examples would be welcome.

These findings point to the need for government to counter the myths and misconceptions about disability, the potential for a more general education and awareness campaign about the breadth of disability, and the need for easily accessible, concise and practical examples of best practice..

39. TATTRIE, DOUG, COLIN STUART, ROY HANES, REUBEN FORD, AND DAVID GYARMATI (2003). **The Disability Supports Feasibility Study: Final Report**, Social Research and Development Corporation June

The Disability Supports Feasibility Study (DSFS) pilot project provided supports to unemployed people with disabilities to help them find work and keep working. Unlike many support programs, DSFS did not assess an individual's need for a particular support. Instead, people with disabilities could purchase any support they wanted from a list of eligible supports (up to a monthly maximum expenditure). Half the project participants were given credit cards to purchase supports. The rest were issued cheques made out to the support suppliers. Both payment methods allowed participants to purchase eligible supports very quickly with minimal paperwork and only routine administrative problems. The study concluded that it was feasible to operate a DSFS-type program offering disability and employment supports.

40. THORNTON, PATRICIA AND NEIL LUNT (1988). **Worlds Apart? Employment Policies for Disabled People in Eighteen Countries: A Review** *Asia & Pacific Journal on Disability* Vol. 1, No. 2, March 1998

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

National policy-makers are increasingly looking cross-nationally for "solutions" to the "problems" of employment of disabled people, and disabled people and their allies are drawing on experience elsewhere to promote, and sometimes achieve, radical change nationally.

*Employment Policies for Disabled People in Eighteen Countries: A Review* sought to provide an overview of legislation, schemes and services aimed at integrating disabled people into the workforce. The study covered 18 countries: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United States, and United Kingdom

The study found a range of policy approaches aimed at integrating disabled people into the labour market.

### *Employment Support Services*

A major trend is the incorporation of disabled people within mainstream labour market measures. Labour market authorities have become increasingly important providers of training and placement services, as well as of financial incentives. Countries vary in their attachment to mainstream employment services. Specialist provision is stronger in those countries with traditions of assessment and classification of disability and of registration.

Alternatives to publicly provided support services are emerging. Private and non-governmental organizations, including disability organizations, now provide counseling, training and placement services, independently or under contract. Proliferation of providers and fragmentation of responsibility for employment support services have highlighted the need for co-ordination on the ground.

There is a move towards making training more responsive to the needs of employers and the market, and there is an emerging trend in favour of on-the-job training, rather than training as a forerunner to placement.

### *Legal Obligations and Rights*

Surveying the countries, there is a range of legislative approaches.

1. Quota schemes set out obligations to employ a target number of disabled people, represented as a percentage of the workforce. For those employers that fail to meet this quota there are financial penalties. Quota schemes are a feature of most EC countries. There are influential factors which have favoured the quota scheme in Europe, dating back to the aftermath of World War I and World War II and based on ideas of compensation for war casualties.

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

2. The second major approach is human rights, anti-discrimination or employment equity legislation. Anti-discrimination legislation has quite a different historical background, based on concepts of individual rights, rather than compensation. The introduction of anti-discrimination legislation is a recent policy measure for those countries that have it, and bases itself on the civil rights legislation of the 1960s. Anti-discrimination legislation and employment equity are features of Australia, USA, Canada, and, most recently, the UK. Generally quotas and anti-discrimination measures are not found side-by-side.
3. Countries such as Germany and Sweden have protection against dismissal. In Germany this means the employer has to seek permission from the authorities to dismiss a person.

Alongside both anti-discrimination and quota measures there can be requirements to make 'reasonable accommodation' for the known limitations of disabled individuals.

### *Persuasion policies*

Voluntary action is increasingly promoted alongside legal obligations. There are several government-led campaigns to increase awareness of the employment potential of disabled people, including encouragement, and the use of symbols and schemes.

### *Financial initiatives*

There is a range of financial measures for the employer and employee. Often these are referred to as 'incentives' although their precise purposes are not always clear. Some countries, for example, give rewards for exceeding the quota obligation. Subsidies may take the form of tax credits, as in the USA, while relief of employers' social security contributions is a popular European approach. Another kind of financial support is to meet some or all of the costs of adapting the work or work place to meet the disabled employees' needs. All countries have grants or loans of this kind.

### *Sheltered Workshop Provision*

Sheltered provision has been well established in Europe. Many countries are debating the future of sheltered work because of the lack of transition despite it being a stated aim, and the costs of employment and welfare subsidies.

De-institutionalization and changing conceptions of work present new challenges. Individuals with learning or psychiatric disabilities often had services provided through sheltered employment workshops which focus on manufacturing tasks. However, this type of work is disappearing and there is a move to services and outside workshop environments.

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

Sheltered sectors remain in some countries. Indeed, in some countries the sector is very well organized and productive, for example Netherlands and Sweden. Often sheltered provision goes hand-in-hand with quotas (Germany, France and Netherlands).

### *Supported employment*

Supported employment is defined as competitive, employer-paid work and continuing on-the-job support to those that need it to maintain employment. Initially developed in the USA and followed in Canada, Australia and the UK. Supported employment initiatives are also proliferating across the European Union. There is no single model of supported employment and often different approaches operate side-by-side.

### *New forms of the provision and service*

Provision does not stand still. Any review of policy approaches highlights diversity and change. Self-employment initiatives are seen as offering flexible opportunities for disabled people, and there are a number of financial incentives available to promote this. Social enterprises or self-help firms are another option. Best established in Germany, and run by NGOs, they provide normal jobs with regular contracts and wages for disabled people in economic enterprises where non disabled people are also employed.

41. UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE (1996). **Social Security Disability Programs Lag in Promoting Return to Work**, Statement of Jane L. Ross, Director, Income Security Issues Health, Education and Human Services Division GAO, Testimony Before the Special Committee on Aging, U.S. Senate, June 5, 1996

This testimony is based on *SSA Disability: Program Redesign Necessary to Encourage Return to Work* and a forthcoming GAO report on return-to-work strategies in the U.S. private sector, Germany, and Sweden.

To develop this information, GAO surveyed people in the private sector generally recognized as leaders in developing disability management programs that focus on return-to-work efforts. GAO also interviewed officials in Germany and Sweden because the experiences of their social insurance programs show that return-to-work strategies are applicable to a broad and diverse population with a wide range of work histories, job skills, and disabilities. We also conducted focus groups with people receiving disability benefits and convened a panel of disability experts

At one time, the common business practice was to encourage someone with a disability to leave the workforce. Today, however, a growing number of private companies have been focusing on enabling people with disabilities to return to work. Moreover, medical advances and new

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

technologies provide more opportunities than ever for people with disabilities to work. We found that the DI and SSI programs are out of sync with these trends. The application process places a heavy emphasis on work incapacity, and it presumes that medical impairments preclude employment. And SSA does little to provide the support and assistance that many people with disabilities need to work.

In contrast to SSA's disability programs, which have changed little over the years, some firms in the private sector are developing new approaches to manage the size and composition of their caseloads. Known as disability management, these approaches embody a proactive strategy for controlling disability costs by helping employees with disabilities return to work as soon as possible. Social insurance programs in Germany and Sweden also invest in return-to-work efforts, and their experiences show that the utility of return-to-work strategies is not limited to the private sector.

Our analysis of practices advocated and implemented by the U.S. private sector and other countries reveals three common strategies in the design of their return-to-work programs:

- Intervene as soon as possible after a disabling event;
- Identify and provide necessary return-to-work services and manage cases; and
- Structure cash and medical benefits to encourage return to work.

Disability managers we interviewed emphasized that these return-to-work strategies are not independent of each other and work most effectively when integrated into a comprehensive return-to-work program.

### *Early Intervention Critical to Return to Work*

Disability managers we surveyed stressed the importance of early intervention in returning workers with disabilities to the workplace. Advocates of early intervention believe that the longer an individual stays away from work, the less likely return to work will be. Studies show that only one in two workers with recently acquired disabilities who are out of work 5 months or more will ever return to work. Disability managers believe that long absences from the workplace can reduce motivation to attempt work. Setting return-to-work goals soon after the onset of disability and providing timely rehabilitation services are believed to be critical in encouraging workers with disabilities to return to the workplace as soon as possible. Contacting a hospitalized worker soon after an injury or illness and then continuing to communicate with the worker recovering at home, for instance, helps reassure the worker that there is a job to return to and that the employer is concerned about his or her recovery.

### *Identifying and Providing Return-to-Work Services Effectively*

Another common strategy is to effectively identify and provide return-to-work services. This approach involves investing in services tailored to individual circumstances that help achieve return-to-work goals for workers with disabilities while avoiding unnecessary expenditures. In an effort to provide appropriate services, many in the private sector strive to identify the individuals who are likely to be able to return to work and then identify the specific services they need. In doing so, each individual should be functionally evaluated after his or her medical condition has stabilized to assess potential for returning to work.

When appropriate, the private sector uses case management techniques to coordinate the identification, evaluation, and delivery of disability-related services to individuals deemed to need such services to return to work. Transitional work allows workers with disabilities to ease back into the workplace in jobs that are less physically or mentally demanding than their regular jobs. The private sector also stresses the need to ensure that physicians and other medical service providers understand the essential job functions of workers with disabilities. Without this understanding, the worker's return to work could be delayed unnecessarily. Also, if an employer is willing to provide transitional work opportunities or other job accommodations, the treating physician must be aware of and understand these accommodations.

### *Work Incentives Facilitate Return to Work*

Finally, disability managers responding to our survey generally offered incentives through their programs' cash and medical benefit structure to encourage workers with disabilities to return to work. Disability managers believe that a program's incentive structure can affect return-to-work decisions. The level of cash benefits paid to workers with disabilities can affect their attitudes toward returning to work because, if disability benefits are too generous, the benefits can create a disincentive for participating in return-to-work efforts. Disability managers also believe employer-sponsored medical benefits can provide an incentive to return to work if returning is the way that workers with disabilities in the private sector can best ensure that they retain medical benefits. Although the structure of benefits plays a role in return-to-work decisions, disability managers emphasized that well-structured incentives are not sufficient in themselves for a successful return-to-work program. Incentives must be integrated with other return-to-work practices. Disability managers also generally advocated including a contractual requirement for cooperation with a return-to-work plan as a condition of eligibility for benefits. They believed such a requirement helps motivate individuals with disabilities to try to return to work.

### *Return-to-Work outcomes could be Improved through Restructuring*

Return-to-work strategies used in the U.S. private sector and other countries reflect expectations that people with disabilities can and do return to work. Return-to-work strategies and practices may hold potential both for improving federal disability programs by helping

people with disabilities return to productive activity in the workplace and, at the same time, for reducing program costs.

42. VAN LIN, MICHA, RIENK PRINS, JAN DE KOK (2002). **Active Labour Market Programs for People with Disabilities: Executive Summary** Zoetermeer, September 2002

Labour market programs that are aimed at improving the integration of people into the active labour force are described as active labour market programs or ALMPs. In contrast, passive labour market programs mainly provide income replacement, either through early retirement programs or through programs on out-of-work income maintenance and support.

In 2000, the European Commission contracted EIM to create and manage a European Expert Group on Employment for Disabled People. One goal of the project was to provide a comparative descriptive analysis on the use of active labour market programs for people with disabilities. The research questions included: Which ALMPs are carried out in EU Member States? What is the scope, in terms of expenditure and participation, of the ALMPs in which disabled people participate? What is known about the impact of these programs on the employment situation of people with disabilities?

*Features and Scope of ALMPs for Disabled People:*

Labour market programs for disabled people can be grouped into the following categories:

- *Intensive counseling and job-search assistance* have been identified in about half of the Member States as a separate program. Counseling also forms an integral part of other programs (such as combined measures).
- *Vocational rehabilitation* is implemented in almost all Member States. The number of participants and budget spent vary considerably. Vocational rehabilitation is especially important in Denmark, Finland, Greece and Ireland. Not all countries have specialist ALMP on vocational rehabilitation: in Germany, disabled people participate in various mainstream ALMPs on vocational rehabilitation, and in the Netherlands vocational rehabilitation is part of various combined measures, combining vocational rehabilitation with either supported employment or intensive counseling.
- *Subsidized employment* is intended to mitigate (financial) barriers to the hiring of people with disabilities. Subsidies are most often provided to employers. However, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom also have programs that provide subsidies to employees. Subsidized employment is substantially applied in the Nordic countries, as well as in Austria and Germany. The average amounts spent on wage subsidies are relatively low, but in some countries (e.g., Spain and Germany), in specific

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

programs substantial amounts are provided per person with a disability in employment.

- *Supported employment* includes personal support and workplace adaptations for people with disabilities. Despite the importance of overcoming external barriers to employment, the number of persons benefiting from these types of program seems to be rather low for all Member States.
- *Sheltered employment* occurs in different forms (for instance, different mandatory percentages of people with disabilities participating compared to other participants) and objectives (integration into the regular labour force or not) across the European Union. It seems to be wide-spread in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Sweden.
- *Incentives for starting enterprises* by disabled people only exist in a limited number of countries, with very low numbers of participants.
- *Combined measures* include elements from vocational rehabilitation, subsidized employment, supported employment, and - in most cases - intensive counseling. In some cases, programs included in this category do not merely offer a combination of measures, but also an integrated approach. Often, this is combined with intensive counseling and a tailor-made approach in which people with disabilities are offered a variety of programs that should lead them (back) to the labour market. Major programs have been identified in Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

### *Employment Effects of ALMPs*

One major finding of this study is that in most countries little or nothing is known about the effect on employment of the application of the measures reported. Evidence-based conclusions on employment effects are mostly lacking, due to poor program-participation statistics, lack of monitoring and follow-up studies, as well as general weaknesses in evaluation methods.

If conclusions are reported from Member States, they mostly seem to be based upon participant and provider surveys, conclusions drawn from evaluations in other target groups (e.g., long-term unemployed), or from conclusions drawn in other studies.

### *Lessons for better effectiveness of ALMPs*

Based on a number of evaluation studies and the views from experts, a number of lessons for better effectiveness of ALMPs can be drawn.

The following *organizational aspects* have a positive impact on the success of employment

*Working Papers Closing the Gap Workshop – November 1, 2004*

*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*

*Knowledge Management Services*

## *Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

measures:

- Investments in better and closer working relationships with local employers and recognizing the importance of pro-active relations with employers
- Encouraging partnership and coordination between agencies; local coordination committees or networks and cross-organizational partnerships (including employers)
- Individual case management puts more emphasis on the individual's needs and on assistance in job finding.
- Effective training and employment measures also require sufficient personnel resources, which could be more effectively achieved through training and accreditation of personal advisors.

ALMPs are not only relevant to help them move people with disabilities into employment, but may also help to retain current employment. Disability policies should also include measures that provide support to workers with long-term illness to stay employed.

For the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands, a shift to demand-driven provision of services is aimed at better incorporating the needs of clients and employers.

Finally, in some countries, financial disincentives which discourage people with disabilities have been removed so as to stimulate take-up of measures (e.g., Ireland, United Kingdom). Moreover, incentives to service providers and administrators, such as payment-related measures (including milestone payments), are considered.

43. WRIGHT, RUTH (2001). **Tapping the Talents of People with Disabilities**, Conference Board of Canada, in partnership with the Ministry of Citizenship - Government of Ontario

The material for this resource guide for employers was developed from information gained through a survey of Ontario-based employers, a multi-stakeholder roundtable, interviews with organizations that have retained persons with disabilities, and seminars held across the province.

The guide notes that, most employers have policies and practices in place that encourage the hiring and retention of a diverse workforce.

- However, employers need help finding candidates with disabilities for job openings.

*Intergovernmental Partnership – Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities*

- The research also found that employers need help to accommodate employees with disabilities, especially in restructuring jobs due to the nature of work, and with perceived cost-related factors.
- Employers reported a need to dispel myths and stereotypes about workers with disabilities, both among co-workers and within society at large.

The guide sets out practical steps an employer can take to improve the workplace representation of people with disabilities as well as recruitment strategies, including practical checklists, resources and contacts. Leading organizations such as IBM Canada, Motorola, Canadian Tire and Casino Niagara are cited as "good practice" examples.