

# Closing the Gap

Developing Community-based Strategies  
for a new Employment Supports Delivery Model

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Report on Workshop at the OBA Conference Centre-November 1, 2004

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Employment Supports for Persons with Disabilities –  
Intergovernmental Partnership

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# WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

## ***PROJECT OVERVIEW***

### **BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES**

Employment Supports of People with Disabilities-Intergovernmental Partners (IGP) is an informal group of federal, provincial and municipal government representatives who are working toward improving employment outcomes for persons with disabilities in Toronto.

In January 2004 Stuart-O'Hara Inc. was engaged to assist the IGP through the development and implementation of a research and consultation program designed to:

- Validate a common frame of reference on issues related to the employment of persons with disabilities
- Expand existing community partnerships around the shared objectives of providing effective support to persons with disabilities in achieving workplace goals
- Provide a basis for subsequent joint action on key issues

### **ACTIVITIES**

The research and consultation program includes three components:

- A literature review of recent related work in Canada and in other jurisdictions and a chronological overview of legislation related to persons with disabilities (Completed April 2004)
- Qualitative research and consultation with organizations and individuals in the community to validate key findings from the review and to explore options for effective response (In process)
- A roundtable to be held with community partners in Toronto to share the information derived from the research and consultation process, validate the findings and develop a joint action plan to address key issues. (2004-2005)

### ***WORKSHOP DESIGN***

The workshop was a meeting of stakeholders representing persons with disabilities, agency front-line workers and representatives from the three levels of government.

The morning focused on sharing the participants' experiences with Employment Supports and then comparing that experience with the results of the literature review summarized in the document entitled Workforce Participation of Persons with disabilities.

In the afternoon the group identified the elements of a new model in a brainstorming session to respond to the question:

What are the Elements of an Effective Community-Based Employment Supports Delivery Model?

The group took the results of the brainstorm and drew diagrams of the new model. Then they focused on the principles and values that would under gird the model to ensure it was different from our current models.

The Workshop Proceedings is a "pull together" of the work of the group in their own words.

*Proceedings of the Closing the Gap Workshop - November 1, 2004*  
*Prepared by: Stuart-O'Hara Inc.*  
*Knowledge Management Services*

# WORKSHOP REPORT SUMMARY

The following summary is a pull together of the key themes from the workshop. They are not ordered in any priority. Details of each item can be found in the pages following the summary.

## **CLIENT-CENTERED DESIGN**

- Persons with disabilities have input to the whole process and each of its steps from design to evaluation
- Involve the persons with disabilities in designing work place accommodations. One size does not fit all. The actual person requiring the accommodation knows best what he or she needs.
- The support system for persons with disabilities should be designed for the possibilities of choice of full-time, part-time, self-employment, or volunteer work
- Persons with disabilities involved in developing policies and practices attached to programs.

## **HORIZONTAL INTEGRATION OF POLICY AND PROGRAM**

Alignment of policy and program across all governments priorities – regardless of the level of government so that

- Program guidelines are consistent and coherent, and the current contradictions across programs are eliminated
- The local community is empowered to work through the challenges it faces. Each community is best qualified to identify and respond to its own needs

## **SHIFT THE CULTURE TO CUSTOMER/CLIENT-FOCUSED**

Shift the culture of government and agencies to Customer/Client focus

- Move from the current focus on agency sustainability and ease of application to focusing on the uniqueness of each local situation.
- Design everything to make it easy for persons with disabilities and Employers to succeed.
- Make the box fit the client (persons with disabilities or Employer) rather than the client fit the box
- Eliminate the silos across agencies and across government departments to facilitate increased integration of services and ease of access
- Focus on cooperation across agencies to get the real job done rather than competition for resources or success
- Create an enabling environment rather than a gate-keeping environment

## **NETWORKING PARTNERSHIPS FOR INFORMATION SHARING**

Healthy Networking partnerships across community agencies are needed to provide:

- Persons with disabilities access to the total pool of potential employers
- Potential employers access to the total pool of persons with disabilities seeking employment
- Timely access to information, support, advice and interventions for employers & persons with disabilities
- A network of best practice employers
- Awareness of the skills and abilities of persons with disabilities to employers

## **SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Supports systems for persons with disabilities are needed that recognize individuals and can customize their support.

- E.g. persons with disabilities due to injury who are returning to work and persons born with a disability may have different needs and require different solutions
- Focus on developing a career path not just static employment or entry-level positions.
- Employers tend to look at persons with disabilities for entry level positions while many persons with disabilities have higher level skills
- Establish Peer Employment networks
- Streamline the access to program support by removing the screening criteria such as lack of transportation and/or housing and changing the fixed step-by-step process
- Access to free expert advice on accommodation by SMEs
- Self-employment should be supported as viable employment (as in the USA)

## **SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR EMPLOYERS**

Support systems for employers are needed that provide:

- Easy access to service providers who can provide a range of supports employers need.
- Sensitivity and awareness training for employees and managers
- Support that is respectful and inclusive
- Timely interventions on issues that may arise during employment. Employers need easy access to advice and support on an ongoing basis.
- Sustainability incentives such as tax breaks or subsidies to promote long-term employment
- Reduction of barriers through:
  - Coverage of long-term accommodation costs especially the high cost services and supports.
  - Reduction of paperwork and its complexity.

## **THE MEASURES USED IN RESULTS-BASED PROGRAMS**

Currently results-based programs measure the numbers of job placements rather than the longer-term measures that really indicate solid employment. The measures used affect the program results

- “You get what you inspect not what you expect”
- Current measures result in “creaming” (working with the easiest-to-employ) and “parking” of those who require more time. E.g. People who can self-advocate require fewer resources and thus are easier to place than those who can’t self-advocate
- Assessment of the effectiveness of job-placement programs could include
  - Quality measures like type of job or career development
  - Sustainability – the length of time the person keeps the job
  - Assessment of level of preparation required to prepare someone for employment

## **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND CERTIFICATION**

Professional standards and certification are needed for front line workers

- Training needs to be standardized.
- Ongoing Professional Development is important
- Define ‘Job Developer’ and establish the job standards

This would be supported by:

- Redefining and refocusing the function of ‘job coach’. It currently has discriminatory connotations. It needs to be refocused on supporting the person with disability
- Professional knowledge of the labour market thus helping people get employment

- Increase networking between job-developers to share employers, job seekers, and knowledge will increase employment.
- Persons with disabilities can be effective Job Developers because of their experience and can act as positive role models

## **MARKETING**

Currently, marketing is not seen as a direct service to clients and thus not funded – even though it is key to changing attitudes towards persons with disabilities and to opening new employment opportunities. An employer's awareness of persons with disabilities issues increases the chance of persons with disabilities being hired. Expanded marketing is a key to opening the environment to increased employment of persons with disabilities

- The image of employers and general public about the employability of persons with disabilities needs to shift to change the employment prospects
- Really getting employers to understand the added value to their organizations of hiring persons with disabilities.
- Continuous marketing is key to letting employers know of the programs available and the issue Program and resource availability information need to be made widely available to employers and persons with disabilities
- Public recognition of good employers boosts the employment opportunities
- With the current shortage of skilled labour, persons with disabilities are a large pool of still un-tapped skilled labour.

## **EDUCATION**

### Pre-Secondary

- More support staff in schools – better designed educational system. While children with disabilities have been integrated in the school system, specialized educators have not and most schools have no idea what to do with the children. Many schools give the young adults with disabilities a high school diploma just to get it over with.

### Post-Secondary

- The issue of employment of persons with disabilities starts much earlier than when they graduate from college or universities. Coop programs for persons with disabilities need to be considered.
- Colleges and Universities have a tendency to direct students with disabilities into courses that are easier to accommodate without taking into account what the students would like to do. Majority of college and university students with disabilities are in social sciences courses.

### Pre-Employment

- There is a great need to have activities for persons with disabilities to foster a clear understanding of the issues such as 'competing labour market', expectations of the employers, etc. At the end of the day, employers expect the same level of performance from persons with disabilities as they do from all their other employees.
- School to work transition innovations - when young adults with disabilities leave school, they no longer have any support system.
- Persons with disabilities need education on work life skills and what it means to be in a competitive labour market.

### Professionals

- More training is needed for professionals involved in designing buildings and services for persons with disabilities. They do not have the depth knowledge to understand the intricacies of the requirements.

## **CHANGE INTERPLAY BETWEEN MEDICAL AND OTHER SUPPORTS**

The focus on medical history and reports needs to change.

- It is often used as a gate keeping mechanism. It is experienced as very intrusive.
- People are assessed to death. Mental disability requires a lot of doctors to sign-off. Psychiatrists are often not the best persons to check with on the issue of return to work.
- Doctors are not well trained in labour requirements and thus are not the best assessors.
- The focus on medical history reinforces the image of disability rather than focusing on the person's ability.

## **BRING UNIONS ON BOARD**

Unions need to be brought into the picture.

- Unions strongly support return to work of employees
- Unions can inadvertently block hiring of other persons with disabilities by not allowing changes in job content, time of work, job flexibility etc.

## ***NEXT STEPS***

Participants suggested the following steps:

- Expand the consultation to include employers (federally regulated and others)
- Conduct a survey to quantify and describe the resources available to persons with disabilities in Toronto region
- Host a meeting of frontline people in Toronto to discuss ways to link and support persons with disabilities in returning to or seeking work
- Focus on innovative approaches and creative solutions of known problems, and explore new ways to address these e.g. through community-based linkages, partnerships and portals.

# WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

The following pages are the details from the workshop.

## ***EXPECTATIONS***

During the introductions the group talked about what they hoped to gain from participating in the workshop. Some of those expectations were:

- Learn more from the participants
- What services are there to get people into the workforce
- More understanding of the gaps that exist in getting people into or back into the workforce
- The City expects there to be a shortage in the labour force. In working on this issue, I hope to connect the dots by seeing similarities for integrating persons with disabilities into the labour force and strategies aimed at integrating other marginalized groups like immigrants and at-risk-youth, for example.
- I know employers need assistance. I am hoping to get better ideas on how the Government can be helpful
- Hope to create something for employers
- Improve the employment outcomes of persons with disabilities
- How do we make the programs more coherent and thus make the Opportunities Fund more effective

# THE CURRENT SITUATION

## **WHAT WORKS:**

- Partnering with employers to make them aware of the skills and abilities of persons with disabilities
- Individualized flexible support for persons with disabilities One shoe does not fit all
- Helping people work on gaining confidence through work on resumes and life skills
- There is a complex interplay between medical and other supports. It only seems to work for those injured at work.
- Research into people who are marginalized with no connection to the workforce, indicates that people may need up to three years to gain the ability to work effectively.
- Abilities and awareness workshop for employers– including the famous people who have had a disability.
- Support for employers in preparing worksite/integrating persons with disabilities

## **WHAT IS NOT WORKING:**

- Arbitrary time limits. It takes longer than a year to get people through a program. It takes a while to get everything working. It is a full time job to get a job.
- Front line workers may not have the specific skills needed by their clients
- In the wide range of disabilities from severe to moderate, the same problems exist over the whole perspective. There is a lack of long term supports – e.g. chiropractor, massage etc. Many of the supports are being cut back. Some of the supports are not applicable to all people.
- Accommodations for computer support are prohibitive in cost.
- Those without lengthy work experience lack of computer skills and experience/need training
- Current legislation.. A stronger provincial ODA that talks with employers and makes them accountable is needed.
- There is a complex interplay between medical and other supports. Physicians do not have training or support to learn about the workforce. Doctors can influence the return to work or not. They have no or little information and/or support to help people in making the decision.
- Those injured at work and those born with a disability are in different cultures and may require different interventions.
- It takes too long to get services to take the next steps in pre-employment preparation. Delays are demoralizing and de-motivating
- Employers want just-in-time people. How do we marry this need with people needing 2-3 years to prepare?
- General information gap about where to go for assistance.
- The person identifying what is needed is the person with disabilities who is already struggling with many other issues. The other point of identification is the manager who does not have the time or capacity to think it through. They are just too busy.
- Many participants in pre-employment and life-skills programs are in dire poverty. We need to acknowledge that poverty is itself a disability. They need incentives to keep going.
- People are assessed to death. Mental disability requires a lot of doctors to sign-off. Psychiatrists are the most absurd persons to check with on the issue of return to work.
- From client perspective it is best to read and forget the psychiatric report since it does not tell you about your potential
- Employers do not know what a person with disabilities' capabilities are

- The context in which the work is done is one of “get people employed and off benefits” –i.e. programs are driven by cost savings – rather than enabling people to make a contribution of worth.
- The policy side requires measurement of numbers employed. The measurements have to be tangible. It is hard to include social indicators. “You get what you inspect not what you expect.”
- Current funding and programs pay lip service to needs of clients are not structured to effect real change in status quo

# REVIEWING RESEARCH DONE TO DATE

The workshop broke into three small groups to review the document Workforce Participation of Persons with disabilities and compare it to their own experience. Each group was given a different section of the document to work on. They were asked to indicate what they agreed with, what they thought should be changed, what they would add and what other insights this section gave them.

This served to validate the work of the Literature review and to bring in the Ontario/Canadian experience

The following is the report from each group.

Group 1 looked at the sections on

- Assessment of Recent Approaches
- Issues and Influences – Persons with disabilities

Group 2 looked at the sections on

- Issues and Influences –Employers
- Effective Programs and Services (1<sup>st</sup> 3 sections)

Group 3 looked at the sections on

- Effective Programs and Services (last 3 sections)
- Future Directions

## GROUP 1

### ***ASSESSMENT OF RECENT APPROACHES AND ISSUES AND INFLUENCES – PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES***

#### **GENERAL AGREEMENT BUT THE FOLLOWING CAUGHT OUR EYE:**

- Re: Growing Priority: Yes, but ....
  - Ontario is still behind other countries and some provinces
  - Need programs that are individual, flexible and designed to generate sustainable employment
  - There are “pockets of change” such as Federal Government, some employers e.g. RBC
- Re: Program Developments:
  - This is not occurring in Canada.
  - Service organizations are competing for scarce dollars
  - There is a lack of standards, consistency, accreditation of agency workers/ counselors working with persons with disabilities
  - On-the-job training is not well developed in Canada
  - The group thought things might have been better on some dimensions in the 80’s (e.g. on-the-job training) but not certain as many factors effect perception  
e.g. some thought that persons with disabilities are now more visible in the workplace
- Results based funding – Yes! However it often means “creaming” the easiest employable people off the top and “parking” the others – to keep their agency stats up.
- Here in Canada have to promise unbelievable results to get money

- Recognition of the value of an individualized approach is growing but government is not putting money behind this approach.
- Re: Overall Effectiveness:
  - Agree that legislation supports job retention
  - “Cause and effect” are not established. It is a hard call.
  - Agree that voc rehab and training often too little and too late
- Re: Issues and Influences
  - Yes, we agree
  - Information is there. Need more access and integration
  - Funding for marketing of information is essential but seldom available
- Re: Workplace Barriers
  - Agree with main points but note that our programs do not provide support /incentives for employers
  - Needs greatest among SMEs that lack the infrastructure of the large federally regulated employers

## **CHANGES WE SUGGEST**

- More funding
- Support for and funding of initiatives to support self employment for persons with disabilities
- Eligibility – we need to move beyond an arbitrary definition of eligibility. Eligibility criteria need to be changed so programs respond to individual needs.
- Policies need to be integrated /consistent/coherent
- Program Developments
  - Advocacy – less reliance on self-advocacy (People who can’t self-advocate need the resources. Those who can self-advocate are part of the ‘creaming’.)
  - Results based programs need to be relevant to the population
    - How are measures being defined?
    - Evaluation/ accountability =use of resources
- To increase the effect on the whole population and avoid ‘creaming’, there needs to be a shift from narrowly defined ‘results-based’ stats to increase depth of funding, program duration, general structure, qualifications. etc.
- Do qualitative analysis of who is being employed
- More emphasis on sustainability
- Since everyone is not ‘equal’ in what they need (time, funding etc) customized programs that recognize and respond to individual differences are needed
- Consider self-employment as a viable option – USA is a model.
- Support more self-employment options
- School staff need more training to deal with mainstreaming. Rehab/ employment development staff need more training in order to deal effectively with clients and with employers.
- Need more support for small and medium sized employers to prepare work site/work force and facilitate integration of persons with disabilities
- Improve evaluation models and funding
- More pre-employment activities for those with limited labour-market experience
- Longer ‘life-skills’ programs in communities because changes (in habits, attitudes) can take up to 3 years in real life
- Much earlier career-orientation programs for persons with disabilities in secondary schools

## **ADDITIONS**

- Horizontal integration across government priorities
- Employer 'best-practices'
- Free job-accommodation advice for employers
- Active incentive programs for employers – subsidies, tax breaks

## **OTHER INSIGHTS**

- Accommodation costs are huge disincentives for employers.
- Incentives – realize there is going to be a cost to have everyone realize their potential and make their full contribution.
- Canada has legislation but programs are not designed/funded to foster changes in attitudes of employers

## GROUP 2

### ***ISSUES AND INFLUENCES – EMPLOYERS – AND EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES (FIRST 3 SECTIONS)***

#### **WE AGREE WITH:**

- An employer having awareness of persons with disabilities issues increases the chance of a person with disabilities being hired
- Support must be respectful and inclusive
- Employers need help finding the right employee(s) from service providers
- Employers find it difficult hiring a person who is deaf and/or visual impaired because of higher accommodation costs.
- Generic skills are important but they need to be employment focused.

#### **CHANGES WE SUGGEST**

- The name 'job coach' has discriminatory connotations. It should be changed and the function redefined and refocused on supporting the person with disability.
- Funds to cover the high cost accommodations for employers
- End the requirement by agencies to access medical history before receiving employment service

#### **ADDITIONS**

- Employers need a timely accommodation intervention
- Public recognition of good employers
- Peer employment networks
- Common understanding of "readiness"
- More persons with disabilities working throughout the organizations that support them, i.e. March of Dimes, CNIB etc.) for more effective services
- Professional development to support Agency staff. There is a disconnect between labour market realities and the job developers' knowledge. This limits their ability to access job opportunities.
- Define 'Job Developer' and prerequisites for the job i.e. establish a job standard
- Being a person with disabilities is an asset for Job Developer positions

#### **OTHER INSIGHTS**

- Within small businesses there is more of a personal commitment for hiring a person with disabilities
- Minimize the paperwork that needs to be filled out by small businesses. This is also true for large businesses.
- Within 4 years more persons with disabilities will be shopping in the downtown core due to the amended ODA. Use this as a marketing tool It will be an advantage for a businesses to have a person with disabilities on sales staff
- Networking among Job Developers – to share employers, job seekers and knowledge and thus increase employment.
- Individualized job development
- Do not use pre-requisites such as lack of transportation and/or housing to screen out people for employment support and employment

- Increase skills training for persons with disabilities in colleges and universities, using George Brown College as a best practice example of how to integrate programs for persons with disabilities effectively into the curriculum.

## **GROUP 3**

### ***EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES (LAST 3 SECTIONS) AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS***

#### **GENERAL AGREEMENT BUT THE FOLLOWING CAUGHT OUR EYE:**

- Subsidies/Incentives – Government services are hard to get at.
  - Design return to work incentives ...such as keeping ODSP benefits.
  - What incentives are there for an employer to keep staff after the subsidy ends. ...A lot of persons with disabilities get hired because of wage subsidy but are let go after the subsidy ends.
- Unions are missing from the discussions. Use union arguments to assist clients gaining employment...Unions fight very hard for employees injured on the job but their rules and regulations are such that persons with disabilities cannot be accommodated as far as changing job content or time of work, etc – there is little flexibility.
- Where is sustainability around inclusiveness? What happens to short-term interventions when incentives end? Hiring persons with disabilities should simply be part of doing business not an afterthought. Persons with disabilities have marketable skills that can add value to the organization.
- The client is not involved with workplace accommodations...Accommodations are not one size fit all and the person who needs the accommodations should be the one who says what he or she needs.
- **Gaps:**
  - Unions: See above.
  - Strategic Leadership at corporate level champions who know that persons with disabilities are a source of skilled labour who can be an asset to the organization.
  - Ability to link Government policies, Ministry to Ministry e.g. Various ministries have programs for persons with disabilities but since they don't consult each other, often the policies attached to one program are in contradiction to the policies in another program of another ministry.
  - Most of the research and recommendations in the report seems to address the issue of return to work. There is nothing about persons with congenital disabilities who have never accessed the labour market. The interventions needed are much different and time frame often needs to be much longer.

#### **CHANGES WE SUGGEST**

- Horizontal integration of Government services across levels of government and across ministries.
- Need to market new policies wider population. Governments use large marketing campaign for many of their programs but never for programs for persons with disabilities. Many people don't know about the existence of the programs.
- Integration of all services within the community. Many professionals, such as architects, city designers & planners, city employees, are not trained well enough to understand needs of persons with disabilities

- Education of employees –persons with disabilities need education about work life skills and what it means to be involved in a competitive labour market.
- Language of report – too much jargon
- What does “new obligations” mean (page 16) in OECD section? It looks like it suggests that benefits for people with disabilities should be link to their willingness to access the labour market. It sounds like a threat and needs clarification. (*There was general agreement in the plenary that they did not agree with this OECD recommendation*)

## ADDITIONS

- Need to add Union input
- Link to educational institutions (post-secondary) e.g. coop placements. The issue of employment of persons with disabilities starts much earlier than when they graduate for college or universities.
- Students should not be limited by accessibility issues (choice of program/ location). Colleges and Universities have a tendency to direct students with disabilities into courses that are easier to accommodate without taking into account what the students would like to do. Majority of college and university students with disabilities are in social sciences courses.
- Employers to be open to creating opportunities in all areas - Employers often look at persons with disabilities only for entry level positions while many persons with disabilities have high level skills.
- Need points made on initial integration/inclusion. Integration means that someone has to adapt to what is already there while inclusion means that one fits in as a natural order of things.
  - Integration = have to adapt
  - Inclusion = everyone fits
- We need to be actively involved with employers to create options and opportunities for employees – “new innovative opportunities.” With changes in demography and the up-coming shortage of skilled labour, persons with disabilities are a large pool of still un-tapped skilled labour source. New ideas are needed on how employers could be involved including creating incentives such as tax credit etc. on hiring persons with disabilities rather than short term incentives.
- School to work transition innovations - when young adults with disabilities leave school, they no longer have any support system. They should have transition programs such as the one that exist for youths but none of them know what to do with youths with disabilities.

## OTHER INSIGHTS

- Road to employment starts early and is not a straight line... For young adults with disabilities, the road to employment might take a long time and they may have to take different routes before arriving at being ready to access the labour market.
- More support staff in schools – better designed educational system... While children with disabilities have been integrated in the school system, specialized educators have not and most schools have no idea what to do with the children. Many schools give the young adults with disabilities a high school diploma just to get it over with.
- Need to focus on re-integration and inclusion (Re-integration is for worker injured in the workplace or for those who have a long employment history prior to an acquired disabilities. Inclusion is for people with congenital disability.)
- All enabling programs/agencies/government have to work together to provide an easy continuum of services, ‘one-stop shopping’
- Work local-think global (Local agencies should be tied to all other levels of government). It is like a power grid. Power is lost en route to users – up to 30%. Power cells in each home gets rid of that loss and even allows a home to become a power source for others.

- Make box fit client. Client doesn't need to fit the box. Some agencies try to preserve their existence and don't care about clients' needs - especially national or provincial agencies that have policies and practices in place that don't fit different regions.

## ***REPORT REFLECTION***

Each group reported on their work after lunch.

They indicated there were some common themes:

- Developing consistent job descriptions for job developers for persons with disabilities.
- Front line workers need to be well educated. Compare with USA re training and certification
- Who do we go to, to get advice
- More support is needed for employers – both in terms of access to information and incentives
- Marketing of programs for persons with disabilities needs to be broader. It is not funded as it is not defined by government funders as a direct service to clients
- Marketing – we need to approach businesses in a business-like fashion
- More support is needed to assist persons with disabilities to sustain positions. Help is needed on the path of growth and development for the employee. Are people acknowledged for their contribution? Do they have a career path?
- Need qualified input from persons with disabilities and other stakeholders into policy and legislation.

# New Employment Supports Delivery Model

After lunch the group brainstormed individually and in small groups their answers to the question:

## **What are the Elements of an Effective Community-Based Employment Supports Delivery Model?**

Each small group was asked to work from one of four different perspectives:

1. A Person with Disability
2. An Employer
3. An Agency
4. Government Department/ Initiative

“Community-based” was defined as primarily focused on persons with disabilities who are job seekers and on employers.

The ideas/concepts generated by each group were synthesized into columns of common elements as shown in the following table.

## What are the Elements of an Effective Community-Based Employment Supports Delivery Model?

Commitment to Employment of Persons with Disability	Simplification of Service Delivery- Integrated, Coordinated, Accessible	Client Centered Design	Education & Awareness	Professional Standards	Enabling Activities – for Client/ Employer	Enabling Employers	Networking Partnerships for Information Sharing
<p>Sustainable funding Multi-year funding envelope to client Accountability based on ROI (Social/ Economic) Policy empowers the client</p>	<p>All three levels of Government Integrated service delivery (target) Flexibility in program application Horizontal holistic approach – no silos Single point of access/ contact No additional paperwork</p>	<p>System supports choice of full, part-time, self-employed, volunteer work Self-direction/ accountability Responsive to client Persons with disabilities have input into evaluation process Government work with &amp; take direction from employees and employers Build the support package around the client Agency should reflect the people it serves: persons with disabilities Persons with disabilities &amp; employers involved in developing policies &amp; practices attached to program</p>	<p>Marketing system to the public – continuous Recognition of employer Sensitivity &amp; awareness training for employees &amp; managers Raise the bar floats the boat</p>	<p>Staff training certification, ongoing, up-grading</p>	<p>Follow-up services Effective job matching Integrated planning &amp; career development Peer networks &amp; supports Serve needs of both employers &amp; employees</p>	<p>Appropriate insurance benefits/ HR practices &amp; collective agreement flexibility Employer accommodation fund Top-up on salaries Tax incentives</p>	<p>Synergistic center Employer resource center – timely access to info, support and advice Network of best practices employers Healthy partnerships among all agencies</p>

# VALUES/ PRINCIPLES

After the brainstorming workshop, the plenary worked in two groups. Each person was asked to draw their view of the new Employment Supports Delivery model. Then the groups talked about the values and principles that would make this model operate differently from the current model.

The following is the list that each group brainstormed. They are aligned to show the common principles/values. The reflection conversation is included at the end and points to some other values/principles that would make the new model different.

<b>Group 1</b>	<b>Group 2</b>
Inclusive	Inclusiveness
Operates from an empowering context	Economic empowerment
Client centered. (Client is person with disability and employers) Needs-based and responsive to changes in client population and in the labour market	Use expertise of persons with disabilities to design, deliver, monitor, evaluate etc. (from beginning to end)
Non-jurisdictional	Partnerships (engaging at all levels)
Long term vision versus short term fix	
Just-in-time	
Economically reality-case based	
Incentives to participate are inherent including post-hiring support	
Drives/shifts cultural, social change	Combine social & economic principles
	Government role is to nurture and to enable
	Willingness to learn
	Respect
	Citizenship rights
	Innovation and continuous improvement
	Valuing differences – flexibility
	Adaptability – need new language and terminology

The group was then asked:

**What would be different if the Model operated this way?**

- Silos would be gone
- Cooperation would be the operating mode instead of current competition for resources
- Government/agencies would focus on enabling rather than gate keeping
- Increasing numbers of persons with disabilities would have jobs
- Customer service orientation would exist in agencies instead of a social services orientation
- An enabling environment versus a gate-keeping environment
- Client needs would come first versus current emphasis on program eligibility criteria
- Employment of persons with disabilities would be defined as a labour market issue not solely as a social issue. (There was some discussion on this indicating that the two – economic and social – are deeply intertwined.) Where do you put programs for persons with disabilities under the economic or the social umbrella? We need a both/and solution not an either/or approach.
- The local community has the power to work through challenges more effectively than national/provincial levels. Each community is best qualified to identify and respond to its own needs
- It is difficult to integrate everything outside a specific geographic area. e.g. you can have the GTA integrated but it is an added level of difficulty to have Halton Peel or adjacent municipalities integrated with it as well.

# CLOSING REFLECTION

At the end of the day the group reflected on their experience and suggested the following as Next Steps for the Project Team.

## **Next steps:**

Participants suggested the following steps:

- Expand the consultation to include employers (federally regulated and others)
- Conduct a survey to quantify and describe the resources available to persons with disabilities in Toronto region
- Host a meeting of frontline people in Toronto to discuss ways to link and support persons with disabilities in returning to or seeking work
- Focus on innovative approaches and creative solutions of known problems, and explore new ways to address these e.g. through community-based linkages, partnerships and portals.
- Identify the breakthrough opportunities where there are openings.
- The constellations are different with the new Provincial Government, the new City mayor and a new Prime Minister.
- The City is emerging as the power center. The energy is there.

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