

*Strategic
Initiatives
Evaluation*



**Student Work
And Service
Program
(SWASP)**

Newfoundland
and Labrador



Human Resources
Development Canada

Développement des
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Government of Newfoundland
and Labrador

Canada

Evaluation of the Student Work and Service Program (SWASP) - Newfoundland and Labrador

Final Report

Prepared for:

*Strategic Initiatives Evaluation Committee
Human Resources Development Canada
and Province of Newfoundland and Labrador*

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The Student Work and Service Program (SWASP) is a jointly funded federal-provincial Strategic Initiative being managed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Departments of Education and Training, Employment and Labour Relations, and Social Services in cooperation with Human Resources Development Canada--Newfoundland Region.

This evaluation study was conducted by the Goss Gilroy Inc., the Institute for Human Resource Development and Omnifacts Ltd. under the direction of the Evaluation Committee comprised of representatives from the four partners.

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Executive Summary

The Student Work and Services Program (SWASP) represents a joint response by the Government of Canada (through Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)) and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (through 3 departments: Employment and Labour Relations (ELR), Social Services (DOSS) and Education and Training (DET)) to the challenges faced by current and potential post-secondary students in Newfoundland.

SWASP was jointly funded by the provincial and federal governments and was implemented as a pilot project in the summer of 1994. Federal funding was provided under the Strategic Initiatives Program announced in the February, 1994 budget. Strategic Initiatives was established to support experiments relating to new and emerging ideas about social security which will improve job opportunities for Canadians and enable those facing serious labour market problems to overcome barriers to successful adjustment, while also reducing their dependence on the social security system. Evaluation of the projects sponsored under Strategic Initiatives forms an integral part of the program.

The Newfoundland proposal under Strategic Initiatives (SI), *Transitions: The Changes Within*, includes three pilot projects of which SWASP was the first to be implemented. In fact, SWASP was the first pilot project to be implemented under SI anywhere in Canada and is the first to be evaluated.

Project Description

The objectives of SWASP are as follows:

1. to test the impact and effectiveness of the stipend/tuition voucher approach in assisting participants to attend full-time studies;
2. to assist participants, particularly rural participants, to acquire career-related experience;
3. to assist socially disadvantaged youth to participate equitably in education and training;

4. to provide more effective and efficient client service through partnerships among the various levels of government, employers and local community groups; and,
5. to provide a model of successful transitions from education to work and work to education which may be used in Newfoundland and in other parts of Canada on an expanded basis.

To address these objectives, program designers developed two primary components, Paid Employment (PE) and Community Service (CS). Within the Community Services component there were two streams, one for students and the other for social assistance recipients (SARs).

The Paid Employment (PE) component was a revised version of a pre-existing program provided by the provincial department of Employment and Labour Relations (ELR). Under SWASP, employers received a wage subsidy of \$2.00 per hour (compared to \$3.00 per hour under the old program), to hire a student for up to 40 hours per week, for a maximum of eight weeks. In addition, at the end of the work assignment, the student received a \$50 tuition credit per week of work in the form of a tuition voucher (maximum \$400) The tuition voucher was redeemable at any recognized post-secondary education institution in Canada.

The CS component was designed to provide students with career-related experiences within community agencies. Students were placed for a maximum of eight weeks (or 280 hours) in community agencies. They received a \$50 per week stipend and a tuition credit of \$150 per week to a maximum of \$1200. SARs were targeted for about half of the CS positions and continued to receive social assistance throughout their placement. Community agencies were involved in placing both SARs and students.

Evaluation Issues and Methodology

This evaluation was conducted between December 1994 and March 1995. In this time frame it was not possible to assess the long term impacts of the project and therefore, the evaluation is primarily formative in nature. The Terms of Reference identify 19 issues grouped into four categories:

- relevance;
- implementation;
- success; and,
- cost effectiveness.

The 19 issues and detailed evaluation findings for each are provided in Chapter 3 of the Evaluation Report.

The methodology applied to this evaluation has been described in the Methodology Report submitted on January 14, 1995. In brief, the following methodologies were applied to the study:

- a **document review**;
- **key informant interviews**;
- **focus groups with selected community groups, employers and youth participants**;
- a **literature review**;
- an **analysis of administrative data**; via program-specific data bases;
- a **follow-up survey of 1,007 participants**; and,
- a **follow-up survey of 460 sponsors/employers**.

Project Relevance

The evaluation results are generally positive in relation to program relevance.

For Social Assistance Recipients,

- they are an appropriate target group under Strategic Initiatives;
- the program defined appropriate criteria for participation. In particular, the Department of Social Services was heavily involved in identifying potential candidates and their criteria focused on the individual's readiness for post-secondary education;

- the program was innovative in that it allowed SARs to "earn" in order to reduce their future education costs without impacting on current assistance levels. The barrier presented by "claw-back" provisions of social assistance was thus overcome;
- potential future savings to government if these individuals are successful in pursuing post-secondary education would justify the small investment made under SWASP;
- the potential exists for adaptation of the initiative into a regular program; and,
- program design was judged, by key informants, to be consistent with the objectives **given that the program focused on those SARs who demonstrated willingness and readiness for post-secondary education.**

For other students, program relevance is not as clear. At a time of declining government expenditures, a new program targeting post-secondary students may be difficult to justify. In Newfoundland, given the severe school-to-work transition difficulties of post-secondary graduates and the limited number of summer employment opportunities, they are a relevant target group. In most other locations in Canada, the needs of post-secondary students may be less severe than those of other segments of society.

Project Implementation

The project was designed and implemented within 8 weeks. In the case of Paid Employment, a predecessor provincial program provided an effective model. In this component of the program, the new partnerships developed under Strategic Initiatives did not have a major impact on implementation. Two departments of the provincial government worked effectively together but with distinct responsibilities. Federal officials had minimal involvement with the project. The project relied on partnerships with the private sector which had been formed as part of the predecessor provincial program. No significant attempts were made to expand the provision of career-related experience under the program.

In the case of Community Services, the programming was entirely new. The design and implementation of this component in a short period of time is a remarkable accomplishment. The development of partnerships was largely responsible for this success. In particular, the support for and belief in the validity of the program at both an organizational level and by many individuals resulted in the achievement of what would normally be considered impossible in such a time frame. Nevertheless, there are numerous opportunities for improvement which could be implemented if the pilot is extended in the summer of 1995. For example,

- partnership roles were generally not well defined. Instead, individuals pitched in and did what was required. Given the high support for the program, this worked effectively on a one-shot basis. However, it is unlikely that the approach of 1994 could be successfully repeated. More clearly defined roles and responsibilities would, however, lead to stronger and more effective partnerships;
- partnerships with sponsors represents a particular opportunity for improvement. We found that most sponsors were unaware of project objectives and their own responsibilities (or how to fulfil them). To sponsors, the program provided students with earnings and a tuition voucher and was worth supporting on that basis. Career-related experience, quality of work assignments, and school-to-work transition difficulties were not issues that they addressed.

The only significant barrier which was encountered and not overcome was the involvement of SARs in the Paid Employment Component. This is a complex matter which cannot be easily resolved. Since Paid Employment provides wages, SARs would experience little if any gain from their work. Program designers support the placement of SARs with private sector employers but have been unable to design an approach which offers some incentive to individual SARs and also ensures that firms pay for the services they receive.

Other opportunities for improving implementation include program promotion and follow-up with sponsors and participants. As well, the program did not provide any career counselling to participants. Many key informants considered that this was required for SARs especially if they did not have prior plans to pursue post secondary education.

While the program was designed to provide more career-related experience than it did, this may not be a major flaw. Many key informants, as well as the literature reviewed, indicate that providing a realistic work experience may be more important than career-relatedness, especially for younger students.

Project Success

At this early stage, it is not possible to assess the success of the program in terms of assisting individuals to complete their post-secondary education and easing school-to-work transition difficulties. Nevertheless, the evidence collected in this evaluation offers signs of encouragement and identifies opportunities to refine the program to increase the likelihood of success. In summary,

- virtually all participants are pursuing (or intend to) post-secondary education;
- most non-SAR participants (about 90%) who are currently attending school indicated that they would be attending school even if they had not been involved in SWASP. The financial support provided under SWASP replaces support from other sources (e.g. family, student loans) in most cases;
- for SARs currently attending school, about 1/3 indicate that they would not have done so without the SWASP assignment.
- the voucher system was effective in terms of ensuring that government expenditures under SWASP resulted in lower education costs for students and was highly regarded by every group consulted in the evaluation;
- the program did not attempt to influence students' career choices towards occupations in demand. Any guidance provided was due to the initiative of an individual sponsor or administrator, and not to the program design which did not incorporate career counselling;

- comparisons to other programs were limited. Most key informants and employers preferred SWASP to SEED due to greater assurances that students would actually return to school. Employers with experience with ELR's predecessor program were not concerned that their wage subsidy was reduced and generally preferred SWASP;
- desirable changes to the program include:
 - a clear definition of the employer's responsibility to provide realistic work experience in order to facilitate the school-to-work transition;
 - a definition of how and to what extent the program is to provide career-related experience;
 - a clear definition of the responsibilities of the various partners in the delivery of the Community Services component, as well as ensuring that organizations are adequately resourced to fulfil their responsibilities;
 - the program should provide access to career counselling for SARs who require this service; and,
 - the program may offer opportunities for greater cost efficiency.

Overall, a much greater focus on the quality of the work experience is necessary. Primarily this can be achieved by bringing employers into the partnership, informing them of the program objectives and employer responsibilities, providing them with assistance as required and improving follow-up procedures with employers and participants.

Cost-Effectiveness

Key informants considered the investment under SWASP to be modest and worthwhile. They pointed out that due to the tuition voucher, government expenditures were more targeted than with alternate and past programs, making SWASP more cost-effective.

Since the program was more likely to be incremental for SARs than non-SARs, cost-effectiveness is likely greater for this group. This is true even if their prospects for success are lower since the savings on future social assistance payments will be substantial for those who do succeed.

For non-SARs, key informants still considered the investment to be cost-effective. The Evaluation Report provides evidence that SWASP is more cost-effective than other programs targeted at post-secondary students and identifies potential opportunities to improve cost-effectiveness for this group.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

In summary, the evidence indicates:

- the transition from school to work is a significant problem in Newfoundland. Since effective strategies for dealing with this difficulty are not clearly identifiable from past research, the need for an experimental program is strong. SWASP offers the potential to assist in this transition by providing meaningful work experiences but needs to be improved by focusing more on the quality of work experience provided;
- SWASP provides encouragement that government can be more cost-effective by working in partnership (with other governments and with non-government organizations). However, significant opportunity remains for improving the partnership approach. Learning from such refinement and continuing experimentation could be very useful within the context of Social Security Reform;
- the program would benefit individuals in other parts of Canada. Consideration should be given to regions which offer limited summer employment opportunities for students and/or which have significant numbers of high school educated SARs who are ready and willing to pursue post-secondary education. Based on fine tuning of the SWASP pilot project in 1995 in Newfoundland, proposals to transform it into a regular program and extend it to other regions could be developed.

1.0 Introduction

Goss Gilroy Inc. (GGI) is pleased to submit this report in cooperation with the Institute for Human Resource Development (IHRD) and Omnifacts Research. The report describes the results of the Evaluation of the Student Work and Service Program (SWASP). While GGI has been primarily responsible for the preparation of the report, it represents the results of the efforts of all three firms. The analysis of the results of the various methodologies and the preparation of the findings on the evaluation issues was the joint responsibility of GGI and IHRD.

1.1 The Student Work and Service Program (SWASP)

Program Rationale

The SWASP program represents a joint response of the Government of Canada (through Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)) and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (through 3 departments: Employment and Labour Relations (ELR), Social Services (DOSS) and Education and Training (DET)) to challenges faced by current and potential post-secondary students in Newfoundland.

The Newfoundland Strategic Initiatives proposal cited the following challenges faced by this group:

- obtaining a summer job is more difficult in Newfoundland than in other provinces especially since the collapse of the groundfish industry;
- obtaining career-related work experience is difficult especially for those living in rural communities. The lack of related experience is perceived as a possible barrier to the transition from school to work;
- a significant increase has occurred in the number of young Social Assistance Recipients (SARs) who have a high school education;

- the rate of participation in post-secondary education by Newfoundland youth is well below the national average¹; and
- the return from post-secondary education (in terms of enhanced employability) may be greater in Newfoundland than in other provinces. In particular, university graduates have an almost equal chance of securing employment in Newfoundland as their counterparts in other provinces. By contrast, those with less education, are much less likely to obtain employment than individuals with similar education in many other provinces.

Framework

The SWASP program is a pilot project implemented under the federal government's Strategic Initiatives (SI) Program announced in the federal budget of February 22, 1994. Like other elements of SI, SWASP has been implemented in a single province on a cost- shared basis with the provincial government. SI allows the federal government to experiment with new and emerging ideas about social security supported by provincial governments. By implementing projects on a pilot basis in a single province, HRDC is able to:

- implement projects more quickly than is possible for national programs;
- learn about the potential applicability of a large number of program options within a limited budget; and
- work in cooperation with provincial governments.

In view of the experimental nature of the program, an essential part of the SI Program is that each pilot project be evaluated on a timely basis.

While the Strategic Initiatives Program was only announced in the Budget Speech of February, 1994, it was decided to implement SWASP for the summer of 1994. Indeed, SWASP was the

¹ However, examination of enrolment data indicates that enrolment in university programs is at similar levels to other provinces. Enrolment in colleges is lower than elsewhere in Canada. However, enrolment in colleges in Newfoundland is restricted by available capacity.

first program implemented under SI. The summer component of SWASP was implemented within eight weeks of approval.

1.2 The Context of the Evaluation

SWASP was initiated less than one year ago. It was the first program implemented under the Strategic Initiatives Program and is the first to be evaluated. The evaluation, due to its timing, has been primarily formative and was not able to assess long term impacts. The evaluation has been conducted not only to answer the issues identified in the terms of reference but also to assist officials of the Canadian and Newfoundland governments to make decisions relating to continuation of the program in the short term. In particular, we have dealt directly with the issue of whether the initiative provides opportunities for further experimentation and refinement which might justify extension of the pilot under Strategic Initiatives. To the extent possible, we have addressed the potential applicability of the initiative in other jurisdictions.

1.3 Evaluation Issues

The Terms of Reference identify 19 issues grouped into four categories:

- Relevance;
- Implementation;
- Success; and
- Cost Effectiveness.

The 19 specific issues and detailed evaluation findings for each are provided in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4 we provide conclusions in relation to the four issue categories.

1.4 Evaluation Methodology

The methodology applied to this evaluation has been described in detail in the Methodology Report submitted on January 14, 1995. In brief, the following methodologies were applied to the study:

- a **document review** relating to the SWASP program, in particular, as well as to the Strategic Initiatives Program;
- **key informant interviews** with federal/provincial officials responsible for the design and implementation of this initiative, delivery agents, private sector organizations and NGOs involved in the project. As well, interviews were held with HRDC officials at headquarters, a representative of the National Anti-Poverty Organization, student representatives, and, officials from Memorial University and Cabot College²;
- **Focus groups** with selected community groups, employers and youth participants³;
- a **literature review** addressing the policy objectives and program design of the initiative⁴;
- **analysis of administrative data** via program-specific data bases;
- a **follow-up survey of 1,007 participants** to obtain information on their post-program activities and perceptions of the program. The survey design incorporated stratification by the three streams of the program and the five regions of Newfoundland and Labrador. Data analysis⁵ involved weighting of responses to reflect their appropriate representation relative to a randomly selected sample of the same size; and

² See "Technical Report B: Key Informant Interviews".

³ See "Technical Report C: Focus Groups".

⁴ See "Technical Report D: Literature Review".

⁵ See "Technical Report E: Analysis of Survey of Participants" and "Technical Report F: Self-Esteem and Motivation Data".

- **a follow-up survey of 460 sponsors** divided equally among the three streams and stratified by region. Data analysis⁶ incorporated weighting on the same basis as the participant survey.

⁶ See "Technical Report G: Analysis of Survey of Sponsors".

2.0 Program Description

2.1 Program Objectives

The objectives of SWASP, reformulated in the terms of reference to make them more measurable for evaluation purposes, are as follows:

1. To test the impact and effectiveness of the stipend/tuition voucher approach in assisting participants to attend full-time studies;
2. Assist participants, particularly rural participants, to acquire career-related experience;
3. Assist socially disadvantaged youth to participate equitably in education and training;
4. Provide more effective and efficient client service through partnerships among the various levels of government, employers and local community groups; and
5. Provide a model of successful transitions from education to work and work to education which may be used in Newfoundland and in other parts of Canada on an expanded basis.

To address these objectives, program designers developed two primary components, Paid Employment (PE) and Community Service (CS). Within the Community Service component there were two streams, General and Social Assistance Recipients. Each will be discussed separately.

2.2 Paid Employment

The Paid Employment (PE) component was a revised version of a pre-existing program provided by the provincial Department of Employment and Labour Relations (ELR). Employers received a wage subsidy of \$2.00 per hour (compared to \$3.00 per hour under the old program) for student employment up to 40 hours per week, for eight weeks. In addition, the student received a \$50.00

tuition credit per week of work through a tuition voucher (maximum \$400.00) issued at the conclusion of their employment. The tuition voucher could be used at any recognized post-secondary education institution in Canada within 12 months of its date of issue.

PE was administered through the head office of ELR in St. John's, as was the previous program on which it is based. The administrative workload required under SWASP was two to three times greater than for delivery of the similar provincial program in 1993. This greater administrative workload was associated with the development of forms, preparing new contracts with employers and students, and considerable contact with the Department of Education concerning the issuing of tuition vouchers. This occurred in the summer months, when staff complements are generally strained through annual leave, and involved no additional administrative staff. Furthermore, the accelerated time frames of implementing SWASP resulted in an immediacy and singular focus on this initiative that was described as taxing ELR resources to the limit.

The program was primarily marketed to employers through the offices of individual members of the House of Assembly (MHA's). Employers applied to ELR's office in St. John's. Under PE, the employers selected their student employees, with guidelines supplied by ELR. The key requirement was that students had to have been attending school in the current calendar year and demonstrate an intent to attend post-secondary school in the fall of that year.

As mentioned, employers received a lower wage subsidy (\$2.00 per hour instead of \$3.00) than under the previous program; the other dollar went to fund the tuition vouchers. There was some question as to whether this might impact on employer involvement, although employer recruitment was not problematic.

Typically, ELR dealt primarily with the employer. The contact was focused on approving placements and offers of assistance, and was conducted by phone. There were deliberate attempts to keep paperwork for employers to a minimum. No mechanisms exist for ongoing monitoring or follow-up of placements. Students were also contacted via telephone by ELR staff subsequent to their placement. They were encouraged to use ELR as a resource if problems arose. Further, the voucher was discussed and arrangements made to send it directly to the student after their employment was completed.

For many PE students, SWASP was considered a last resort, after not obtaining summer employment or other project-related jobs. However, students in the focus groups suggested that they would prefer a mix of pay and voucher, with one student declaring "I'd take the voucher as a first choice next year if I could".

2.3 Community Service

The CS component was designed to provide students with career-related experiences within community agencies which required the expertise the students had but did not have the resources to hire them. Students were placed for a maximum of eight weeks (or 280 hours) in community agencies. They received a \$50.00 per week stipend and a tuition credit of \$150.00 per week to a maximum of \$1200.00. Social assistance recipients were targeted for about half of the CS placements. Community agencies were involved in placing both SARs and students.

This component was delivered by the Community Services Council of Newfoundland and Labrador (CSC) under a contract with HRDC. CSC is a social policy and planning organization that advocates on issues of social policy in Newfoundland, as well as coordinating volunteer services and delivery of programs. CSC hired two part-time coordinators with considerable administrative and program development experience to coordinate the program's initial summer phase. They were responsible for hiring field staff, which due to time and budget constraints was done by telephone. Five staff were hired to work in various regions. They also used an anti-poverty group to conduct a province-wide mail-out to inform non-profit and voluntary organizations of SWASP. Community agencies were enlisted to be involved through the mail-out and via the networks of the CSC staff involved. Considerable support was provided by Canada Employment Centre for Students (CEC-S) and DOSS staff. CEC-S offices were described as being inundated with SWASP clients over the summer months and their staff played a critical role in the implementation of SWASP. In some instances, CEC-S staff assisted in the approval of student placements. DOSS social workers referred students to the SAR stream. According to informants, some workers dedicated considerable effort to the program, assisting in referral, identification of placements and selection.

It appears that CSC staff worked long hours in the first several weeks to initiate data systems, identify procedures, develop protocols, link with community sponsors, and respond to an over-subscribed program. This period is described as stressful by those involved, requiring evening and week-end work and involving other CSC staff in ensuring timely delivery. One field staff person reported appearing at her job for her first day only to find fifty-two students waiting to be seen by her. Another spoke of several hundred phone calls per day coming through on SWASP. As the lead agency, CSC staff consulted with CEC-S staff, DOSS staff, sponsors and students. They also had to field enquiries from other sources (i.e., parents, politicians, agencies) regarding the status of placements.

2.3.1 General Stream

This stream of the Community Service component was intended primarily for students in rural settings where it is unlikely that summer employment is available. As with PE, students had to demonstrate an intent to pursue post-secondary education. As mentioned earlier, this stream was over-subscribed to a great degree, with an estimated 50% of applicants being turned down in each of the regions (except Labrador).

It was expected that CSC would do some matching of students with agencies but the initial time pressures meant that this occurred only to a limited degree. There was more reliance than expected on the community agencies themselves to locate and involve students in the program. Procedures varied from one region to another. This resulted in some uneven and inconsistent practices in placement approval. In one instance, a west coast services agency was granted eight placements, while in another instance, two St. John's students who designed their own placement had to be turned down because by the time they found a sponsor, the General spaces had been filled. An environmental group in Corner Brook was approached by three students to be placed, but although their initiative was supported by the sponsor, they were also initially turned down because of quota limits on the General stream.

2.3.2 Social Assistance Recipient (SAR) Stream

This stream was directed at SARs, and those from SAR families. Students received the same benefits as General students in terms of stipends and vouchers and continued to receive social assistance.

Referrals of eligible SARs to SWASP involved several players. It was believed that SARs were less likely to go to a CEC-S though this may be more of an issue with older individuals with weaker ties to school and summer employment. Department of Social Services assessment centres (mostly in St. John's), and community organizations were encouraged to identify eligible SARs.

While the General Stream occupied a majority of CSC's time during the summer, most of the SAR stream was not placed until the fall or later. CSC staff suggest that this allowed for greater involvement of DOSS and community organizations in identifying appropriate students and placements. Strict criteria for choosing SARs were not articulated: some social workers targeted young SARs with an existing or recent connection to school, some focused on single mothers, and others made no distinction. In some instances, social workers were merely referral agents; in others they were active in the selection process and also assisted in finding placements. DOSS social workers have varying responsibilities for programs like SWASP. In some of the larger offices, workers with exclusive responsibility for employment opportunities are in place, while in other offices the worker is responsible for several programs (i.e., child welfare, adoption, etc.) in addition to employment opportunities. This may have affected the time available to identify and refer clients to SWASP.

In the fall, the number of CSC staff was pared down to one coordinator and no field staff, with all placements being arranged from the St. John's offices for CSC. As a result, most contact was by phone and there was little to do in the way of monitoring or follow-up of placements.

2.4 Statistical Profile of the Program

Based on administrative and survey data, the following profile of the program has been prepared.

2.4.1 Regional Involvement

The program was designed and implemented to provide assistance to students and Social Assistance Recipients in all five regions of Newfoundland and Labrador. Tables 2.1 and 2.2 are based on administrative data provided by Employment and Labour Relations and the Community Services Council. Actual targets for the number of participants for each of the three streams are:

Paid Employment	875 ⁷
General	800
Social Assistance	1,000

A comparison of regional targets versus the actual number of placements achieved is provided in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 Final Distribution of Participants by Region

Distribution of Participants by Region	Paid Employment		Community Services			
			General		Social Assistance	
	T	A	T	A	T	A
St. John's	264	276	200	199	250	366
Eastern	227	212	174	177	218	155
Central	171	172	164	197	205	236
Western	159	158	194	180	242	205
Labrador	54	49	68	49	85	18
Total	875	867	800	802	1000	980

T= Targetted A= Actual

⁷ This was modified downwards from an original target of 1,200 and associated funding was reallocated to the Social Assistance Stream.

The above distribution conforms to regional targets for the Paid Employment and the General Stream of Community Services. For the Social Assistance Stream, regional targets for Labrador (8 - 9% of total spaces) were not achieved. As well, the program involved more placements in the St. John's Region⁸ than had been anticipated. However, in key informant interviews, we were told that the allocations achieved roughly conform to the distribution of SARs in the province.

Due to the placements of more than one student with some sponsors (especially under Community Services), the distribution of employers/sponsors is somewhat different.

Table 2.2 Distribution of Sponsors by Region

Distribution of Sponsors by Region	Paid Employment	Community Services	
		General	SAR
St. John's	240 (31.8%)	100 (26.1%)	143 (38.7%)
Eastern	196 (25.9%)	100 (26.1%)	60 (16.2%)
Central	141 (18.7%)	73 (19.1%)	90 (24.3%)
Western	141 (18.7%)	79 (26.3%)	68 (18.4%)
Labrador	38 (5.0%)	31 (8.1%)	9 (2.4%)
Total	756	383	370

2.4.2 Characteristics of Participants

Table 2.3 provides information on the following characteristics of participants:

- gender;
- age and prior education;
- use of the voucher; and,

⁸ The St. John's region includes the Eastern Avalon peninsula and is not limited to the St. John's metropolitan area.

- study choices.

Gender

A larger share of SWASP participants is female. This is consistent across the three streams of the program with about 60% of participants being female.

Age and Prior Education

In terms of these characteristics, the three program streams differ somewhat.

In Paid Employment, participants with some post-secondary education slightly outnumber high school graduates. Only 3.4% of participants are aged 25 and older⁹.

⁹ This is consistent with the program design which targeted youth (i.e. individuals 24 years of age or less).

Table 2.3 Statistical Profile of Participants

Characteristic	Paid Employment	Community Services	
		General	Social Assistance
Gender			
Male	42.1%	42.5%	38.5%
Female	55.1%	57.5%	61.5%
Age			
18-19	42.3%	66.8%	36.5%
20-21	32.7%	25.8%	27.4%
22-24	21.6%	6.1%	13.3%
25+	3.4%	1.2%	22.8%
Has some post-secondary education	61.4%	42.6%	41.8%
Use of Voucher			
Already used	87.0%	94.3%	56.4%
Intending to use	12.8%	5.7%	40.4%
Unlikely to use	0.2%	-	3.2%
Registered at Institution			
In Newfoundland	91.3%	94.6%	94.9%
Outside Newfoundland	8.7%	5.4%	5.1%
Institution Type Attended (post program)			
University	67.0%	63.2%	36.9%
College	26.3%	28.3%	34.1%
Private	6.7%	8.5%	27.9%

In the General Stream of Community Services, the opposite pattern is seen with high school graduates dominating but 42.6% of participants having some post-secondary education. On average, participants in this stream were one to two years younger than those in Paid Employment. As in Paid Employment individuals 25 or older were rare.

In the Social Assistance Stream, individuals aged 18 or 19 comprised only about 1/3 of participants. An estimated 41.8% had some post-secondary education. Older individuals were much more common in this stream and 22.8% of participants were 25 or older.

Use of the Voucher

As indicated in Table 2.3, almost all participants have used (or intend to use) the voucher to pursue post-secondary education. In Paid Employment, 87.0% of participants have used their voucher and all except for one student surveyed intend to use the voucher if they have not already done so. In the General Stream, 94.3% of students have already used the voucher and the rest intend to do so. Only 56.4% of participants in the Social Assistance Stream had used the voucher when surveyed in January, 1995. However, this is partly attributable to a number of factors:

- SAR participants were less likely to have completed their SWASP assignment during the summer of 1994;
- some SAR participants were not planning to pursue post secondary education prior to their participation in SWASP and thus required more time to make arrangements to use their voucher; and,
- SAR participants were more likely to select Colleges and Private Training Institutions. The former is characterized by waiting lists and the latter by flexible start dates.

Only 3.2% of SAR participants indicated that they were unlikely to use the voucher.

Educational Choices

Among those participants who have already used the voucher, educational choices differ between the SARs and other participants. Almost all participants in the three Streams have registered for further education in Newfoundland (90 -95%). About 2/3 of participants from Paid Employment and the General Stream of Community Services attended University. Most of the remainder attended college with less than 10% of each group attending a private training institution. SARs, on the other hand, were equally divided between the three options.

2.4.3 Characteristics of Sponsors

Table 2.4 provides information about sponsors in terms of

- sector;
- community size;
- number of employees;
- previous use of students;
- number of students employed under SWASP; and,
- willingness for greater involvement in the program.

Sector

As expected, under Community Services, most sponsors identified themselves as being in the public sector¹⁰. For both the General and Social Assistance Stream, about 8% of sponsors were in the private sector. Paid Employment involved largely, but not exclusively, private sector sponsors. About 20% of sponsors under PE were from the public sector.

Community Size

Community Service sponsors were more likely to be from smaller communities. Nevertheless, 12% of sponsors under PE were from communities with a population of 1,000 or less and over half were from communities with a population of 1,000 to 10,000. This contradicts the generally held view that the private sector can only be used to employ students in larger cities.

It is especially surprising that private sector sponsors were no more likely to be from communities with a population of 10,000 or more (St. John's and Corner Brook).

¹⁰ Public Sector was defined as including all not-for-profit organizations.

Table 2.4 Statistical Profile of Sponsors

Characteristic	Paid Employment	Community Services	
		General	Social Assistance
Sector			
Private	80.3%	8.7%	8.3%
Public	19.7%	91.3%	91.7%
Community Size			
100 or less	1.0%	2.0%	1.2%
100 to 1,000	11.0%	24.2%	19.5%
1,000 to 10,000	53.2%	39.6%	38.3%
10,000 to more	34.8%	34.3%	41.0%
No. of Current Employees (Jan.95)			
0	-		
1	11.0%	31.7%	13.9%
2	11.8%	15.8%	13.2%
3-5	20.6%	17.9%	22.2%
6-9	25.6%	15.0%	16.3%
10-19	14.1%	7.8%	10.3%
20+	16.9%	4.6%	12.6%
		7.2%	11.5%
Previously Hired Students	85.6%	78.3%	75.2%
Number of Students Employed Under SWASP			
1	78.5%	42.5%	36.7%
2	15.1%	29.1%	24.9%
3	3.6%	11.9%	13.9%
4	1.2%	10.0%	8.4%
5	1.1%	0.7%	6.0%
6 or more	0.5%	5.8%	9.9%
Willingness to:			
Sponsor more students	69.4%	88.0%	78.6%
Sponsor longer assignments	75.0%	86.1%	90.6%

Number of Employees

Community Organizations involved in the program tended to be smaller than private sector organizations. In fact, about 1/3 of those contacted from the General Stream had no employees in

January, 1995. Community organizations which placed SARs were likely to be larger and active year round.

Previous Employment of Students

Over 3/4 of the sponsors from all three streams had previously employed students. Data in Technical Report G: Analysis of Survey of Sponsors indicates that most had accessed government supported student employment programs such as SEED or ELR's predecessor program.

Number of Students Employed Under SWASP

Under Paid Employment, most sponsors (78.5%) engaged only one student. ELR officials indicated that most applications for more than one student were reduced to one approved position because of high demand and to:

- ensure an appropriate regional distribution;
- maintain the involvement of the historical network of sponsors; and
- avoid unfairly subsidizing a business relative to its competitors.

Under Community Services, over half of the sponsors engaged 2 or more students.

Willingness for a Greater Involvement in the Program

Sponsors in the Community Services component are not obliged to pay students and, not surprisingly, were very willing to either sponsor additional students or be involved in longer assignments. Within Paid Employment, a substantial majority of sponsors were also willing to undertake a greater commitment either in terms of more students (69.4%) or longer assignments (75.0%).

2.5 Program Expenditures

Expenditures under SWASP consisted of:

- tuition vouchers;
- wage subsidies paid to employers under PE;
- stipends paid to participants under CS; and,
- administrative expenses.

Tuition Vouchers

As of April 14, 1995 2,669 tuition vouchers had been issued with a total value of \$2,503,850. By the same date the total value of vouchers redeemed was \$1,457,117:

Component	Number of Vouchers Issued	Value of Vouchers Issued	Value of Vouchers Redeemed
Paid Employment	8,791,790	\$355,850	\$257,764
Community Services		\$2,148,000	\$1,199,353
Total	2,669	\$2,503,850	\$1,457,117

It is anticipated, based on the survey of participants, that most of the unredeemed vouchers will be redeemed in the coming months.

Wage Subsidies

Wage subsidies totalling \$564,372 were paid to employers in the Paid Employment Component.

Stipends

Stipends paid to participants under Community Services resulted in expenditures of \$722,200.

Administrative Expenses

The Community Services Council (CSC) was contracted to deliver the Community Services Component at a cost of \$212,000. Employment and Labour Relations incurred expenses of an estimated \$90,000 for delivery of Paid Employment.

The Department of Education and Training also incurred administrative expenses associated with issuing and processing of tuition vouchers. As well, staff of the Department of Social Services and Human Resources Development Canada were involved in the delivery of Community Services. No detailed accounting of related expenses was done for 1994. We estimate expenses of the three departments roughly at:

Education	\$100,000
DOSS	\$ 50,000
HRDC	\$ 50,000

Total Expenditures

As indicated in the table below, expenditures to date under the program amount to \$3,155,689.

Item	Expenditure
Redeemed Vouchers	\$1,457,117
Wage Subsidies	564,372
Stipends	722,200
Administrative	502,000
Expenditures to Date	3,155,689
Unredeemed Vouchers	1,046,733
Maximum Expenditures	4,202,422

As of April 4, 1995 vouchers with a total value of \$1,046,733 had not yet been redeemed. If all of these are redeemed (and the survey of participants conducted for this evaluation indicates that most will be) total expenditures under SWASP would be an estimated \$4.2 million.

Expenditures under SWASP have been shared equally by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Government of Canada.

3.0 Evaluation Findings

A total of 19 issues were identified for the evaluation of the SWASP Program. The issues fall under four categories:

- Program Relevance;
- Program Implementation;
- Success; and,
- Cost-Effectiveness.

Detailed findings for each issue are presented below. Findings have been prepared using multiple lines of evidence which draw from all components of the evaluation methodology (see Section 1.4). Evidence supporting the findings directly follows the findings with reference to detailed information in the Technical Reports as required.

3.1 Program Relevance

Evaluation issues relating to program relevance address:

- whether the program targetted groups identified for Strategic Initiatives;
- the appropriateness of criteria for participation;
- the extent to which the program was new and innovative;
- whether expansion and replication of the initiative is likely to be feasible within the context of social security reform; and,
- whether the program design was consistent with its broad objectives (refer to page 6).

Issue 1

Does the program satisfy the criteria for Strategic Initiatives?

a) Does it serve one of the groups identified for Strategic Initiatives?

Finding:

The program serves two groups identified for Strategic Initiatives (i.e. individuals potentially affected by Social Security Reform): post-secondary students facing school-to-work-transition difficulties and social assistance recipients.

b) What criteria are being used to select individuals for participation in the program? Are they appropriate to meet

Two different sets of criteria were used to select participants - one for students in Paid Employment (PE) and the General Stream of Community Services, and the other for social assistance recipients (SARs). Each group is discussed separately.

***Students in Paid Employment and Community Services
(General Stream)***

Finding:

The sole criterion for participation in Paid Employment and the General Stream of Community Services was the individual's intention to enrol in Post-Secondary Education. This group is appropriate relative to Objectives 1, 2 and 5 although the risk of including individuals not needing assistance exists given this broad criterion. Objective 3 is not relevant for this component.

Since the work assignments occurred in July and August, participation was implicitly limited to individuals with lower chances for summer employment; i.e. post-secondary students who had not

yet obtained summer work and graduating high school students. This lowered the risk of providing work to individuals who would have obtained work without the program and also keeps expenditures on a per capita basis at minimal levels. In the literature review, we cite the views of authors who emphasize the importance of keeping program support at minimal levels so that individuals who don't need the support will not choose to participate.

Community Services (Social Assistance Stream)

Finding:

A number of criteria existed for participation in this stream of the program:

- **intention to enrol in a post-secondary program;**
- **a historical attachment to social assistance; and,**
- **readiness to succeed and benefit from post-secondary education as judged by DOSS officials.**

This combination of criteria was essential to providing a group of participants for whom the project objectives were realistic.

The first criterion (combined with the relatively low value of the stipend) was intended to minimize the risk of SARs participating primarily to increase their short-term income support. The second was intended to minimize the risk of individuals applying for Social Assistance in order to qualify for the program. The third was intended to exclude individuals who were unlikely to benefit from SWASP. DOSS officials emphasized that the SAR population includes individuals who would be unlikely to succeed in post-secondary education and other individuals who would require additional supports - not provided under SWASP - in order to succeed. The involvement of DOSS officials in the selection of individuals who met readiness criteria was important.

The initial rationale for this stream was based on growth of SA cases headed by young, high-school educated individuals. However, the design did not include this as a criterion. As a result, the average age of SARs who participated in the program was higher than for other participants. For example, 22.8% of SAR participants were 25 years or older (12.6% were aged 30 or older). Only 3.4% of Participants in PE and 1.2% of participants in the General Stream of Community

Services were 25 years or older. The literature does not provide any evidence on the prospects for success for these older individuals. It will be important to follow-up on this group to assess their success in acquiring further education and employment relative to their younger counterparts.

c) *To what extent does SWASP represent a new/innovative approach to meeting the needs of youth in transition?*

Under this issue we have addressed the degree of innovation associated with:

- i) the tuition vouchers;
- ii) stimulating the creation of incremental work assignments;
- iii) easing school to work transition difficulties; and,
- iv) supporting the ambitions of SARs by addressing disincentives inherent in Social Assistance programming.

i) Tuition Vouchers

Finding:

Providing tuition vouchers in lieu of wages to students is innovative; we have not found evidence of its use in other jurisdictions.

- the use of tuition vouchers, as many key informants noted, provided less risk of leakage of funds away from the target group relative to approaches which have been used for other student employment programs (i.e. wage subsidies or grants to community organizations).
In particular:

- employers are more accountable to actually hire individuals who intend to pursue post-secondary studies since other individuals would be compensated less and therefore be less likely to participate; and,
- similarly, participants are more likely to be sincere about attending a post-secondary institution since otherwise the voucher is useless.

This innovative approach was well received by participants, as indicated in the table below.

Student Perceptions of Compensation Mechanism

Student Perceptions	Paid Employment	Community Services	
		General	Social Assistance
Liked arrangement as it was	77.7%	87.3%	71.8%
Would have preferred higher wages/stipend and a smaller voucher	5.1%	5.5%	11.7%
Would have preferred lower wages/no allowance and a larger voucher	13.6%	3.1%	5.3%
Would have preferred to receive only wages	3.6%	4.1%	10.7%

These statistics were supported by the focus groups in which participants expressed strong support for the forced savings inherent in the tuition voucher.

Employers also expressed support for the tuition voucher both in the survey and the focus groups. For the most part, employers expressed a strong motivation to assist young people pursuing their education. Since the tuition voucher minimized the appeal of the program to non-students, employers believed that the jobs they provided truly went to students as they had intended.

The specific use of tuition vouchers differed among the three streams of the program:

Paid Employment

Participants in Paid Employment received a relatively small tuition voucher (\$400 based on a typical eight week assignment). The need to pay participants minimum wage constrained the amount that could be paid in voucher form if the program was to be cost-effective. The data above suggest that students would support a higher voucher value and lower wages; however, ELR officials believe this would violate provincial minimum wage legislation.

Community Services - General

Participants received virtually all of their compensation in the form of a voucher. They received only \$50 per week in cash. The intent was to provide enough cash to meet expenses associated with "working" and minimal spending money as compensation for their efforts, while ensuring that most of the funds provided by government would go towards post-secondary education. Key informants indicated that it was difficult to determine the appropriate mix and that the consequences of an incorrect mix - i.e. lack of student participation - would have been severe. However, as indicated above participants were very supportive.

Community Services - Social Assistance

Participants in this stream were compensated in the same way as those in the General Stream of Community Services. However, they were also able to continue receiving social assistance benefits. Neither the cash stipend nor the voucher was "clawed back" through reducing benefit levels. This approach was well received by participants and is extremely innovative. In the focus groups, participants talked of the opportunity to improve themselves through their own efforts. The recognition by program designers that there are SARs who are ready to pursue post-secondary education, but were unlikely to do so because of disincentives in existing programs, combined with a relatively low-cost approach to combat these disincentives was clearly innovative.

ii) Incrementality of Work Assignments

Finding:

The design of SWASP recognized the limited ability of the private sector and community organizations in Newfoundland to provide summer employment opportunities, but capitalized on their enthusiasm to assist young people. As a result, summer work which otherwise would not likely have existed was available. The private sector and community organizations proved willing to absorb a greater share of the costs than they were asked to in the past, thus allowing government to be more cost-effective.

As indicated by the survey responses, most employers would have been somewhat unlikely or very unlikely to have employed the student(s) without the support provided under SWASP:

Paid Employment	72.8%
Community Services - General	97.4%
Community Services - SA	95.0%

However, through providing incremental work, SWASP established that government can be more cost-effective than it has been in past programs:

- under Paid Employment, the wage subsidy was reduced to \$2 per hour compared to \$3 per hour in a pre-existing provincial program. Employers did not indicate that the reduced subsidy was problematic for them; and,
- community organizations (which generally have quite limited resources in Newfoundland) incurred no direct costs but were not compensated for related administrative expenses as they are, for example, under the Challenge Program. Again, no major concerns were expressed by these groups about this change and the demand for students far exceeded the available placements.

iii) School to Work Transition

Finding:

The underlying causes of school-to-work transition difficulties and effective strategies for assisting are not well understood and no time was available to develop innovative approaches. The program objectives assumed that providing career-related work would be effective. Key informants and the literature indicated that realistic work experiences may be just as important. In the limited time available to initiate the program and arrange specific placements, the quality of work assignments was given little attention. The program, failed in its first year to find approaches that would address school- to-work transition.

Although providing career-related work experience was a program objective, we found little evidence that the program attempts to provide such experience. We also found evidence that employers (especially community organizations) were not informed of their responsibility of ensuring that students experienced the working world in a realistic way. Under Paid Employment, the costs borne by employers likely ensures that the work done is useful. However, there was a risk in the Community Services Component of make-work assignments and there is no evidence that this risk was addressed in program design or implementation¹¹. The program was viewed by all parties (students, employers, and officials) as primarily intending to ensure that participants could afford to pursue post-secondary education. The objective of increasing the chances for success in seeking employment after graduation was not addressed by the program. Significant opportunities exist for improvement in this area.

¹¹ Responses to the surveys (Technical Report E: Analysis of Survey of Participants and Technical Report G: Analysis of Survey of Sponsors) indicate that the work done was useful and meaningful. However, in the focus groups, examples of make-work were identified. As well, most participants in the focus groups had not been interviewed by employers and lack of supervision and feedback were each frequently mentioned.

iv) Supporting Ambitions of Social Assistance Recipients

Finding:

The component of SWASP targeting to Social Assistance Recipients demonstrates a level of innovation that has seldom been achieved by government programs aimed at this target group.

Governments in Canada and elsewhere have struggled, mostly unsuccessfully, to redesign social assistance programs to ensure that:

- support is set at a level which reduces hardship to individuals;
- individuals who are able to work, give up social assistance and return to the labour force; and,
- scarce resources are not expended on individuals who are not genuinely in need.

As has been noted by many authors cited in our literature review¹², attempts to deal with the third objective have resulted in disincentives for SARs to try to better their situation. While other views exist, the key informants we interviewed indicated that most SARs wish to leave social assistance as quickly as possible. Their views are supported by the literature we examined. At this early stage in the SWASP program, it appears that an innovative approach has been developed which rewards individual initiative at a relatively low cost to government. In particular:

- SWASP encourages SARs on a voluntary basis to make an effective contribution to their community and also prepare themselves to attend a post-secondary institution;
- SWASP is a unique example of allowing SARs to enhance their lives (through more education) and make a contribution (through community service) without being penalized (neither the voucher nor the stipend were subject to claw-back);

¹² See "Technical Report D: Literature Review".

Participants in the focus groups saw SWASP as allowing them to take back control of their lives: "working hard all summer so that you can work hard all year at school". Others noted that SWASP allows SARs to demonstrate in a tangible way that they don't want to take advantage of the system.

Finally, a number of key informants noted that the fact that program "earnings" could not be used to apply for UI gives SWASP a different focus than other programs focusing on SARs.

d) *Will replication of the initiative be feasible in the context of social security reform?*

The "feasibility" of replication of this initiative has been looked at relative to the two distinct client groups:

- post-secondary students facing school to work transition difficulties; and,
- SARs who are ready for post-secondary education but face barriers to entry due to their lack of financial resources.

For each group, feasibility of replication has been addressed based on:

- the existence of an appropriate target group;
- the need for government to be involved; and,
- the potential for government's involvement to be cost-effective.

Finding:

For post-secondary students in Newfoundland, the replication of the program is feasible due to high unemployment among post-secondary graduates and the limited employment opportunities for students. To the extent that these conditions exist in other locations, replication of the program in those locations may also be feasible.

HRDC officials expressed concern about the apparently middle-class¹³ focus of Paid Employment and the General stream of CS, and the difficulty of justifying programming targeted to this group in the context of Social Security Reform. However, given the poor employment prospects for graduates and the very limited summer employment opportunities in Newfoundland, key informants were concerned about Newfoundland students who would graduate never having held a summer job. In the focus groups, most students indicated that they expect to leave the province for their first job after graduation; many of them hope to later return. However, key informants noted that graduates with no work experience may have great difficulty competing in the job market.

Our review of the literature indicates that school to work transition difficulties are less severe for individuals who have a realistic understanding of the labour market. Such understanding can come from experiences other than work¹⁴. Nevertheless, the literature indicates that realistic work experiences are beneficial. Key informants strongly supported this point of view.

The evaluation did not include an analysis of which other locations in Canada share a combination of high unemployment of post-secondary graduates and limited summer employment opportunities. To the extent that other areas share these circumstances, replication of SWASP would be feasible.

In other areas where graduates face better prospects of employment and students are likely to find a summer job on their own, the above-noted concerns of HRDC officials reflect a strong reason not to replicate the program since the needs of post-secondary students would not be substantial enough to justify their designation as an appropriate target group. However, if proposals, to substantially increase tuition for post-secondary students are implemented, variation of SWASP focusing on individuals who are otherwise unlikely to receive summer employment may be warranted even in areas where employment prospects are generally good.

¹³ Most post-secondary students come from the "middle-class".

¹⁴ For example, Goss Gilroy's evaluation of HRDC's Job Development Program noted successes with Job Finding Clubs.

In terms of the need for government involvement, this evaluation provides strong evidence (see Issue 1 (c) above) that this resulted in the creation of summer employment opportunities which otherwise would not have existed. However, this incremental impact is clearly attributable to current economic conditions in Newfoundland. In areas where economic conditions are stronger, the risk that a program like SWASP would merely subsidize employers is greater.

Finally, the pilot project provides evidence (see Issue 18 (b)) that government involvement evaluation in SWASP was cost-effective and that opportunities exist to be even more so.

Finding:

The Social Assistance Stream of SWASP, based on evidence at this early stage of the experiment, should be considered for replication across Canada.

As indicated under Issue 1(c) above, this component of SWASP represents a truly innovative response to the needs of SARs. The major risk associated with replication of the program elsewhere, or even expanding it in Newfoundland, is to apply it to an inappropriate target group. This risk can be minimized by using the criteria identified under Issue 1 (b).

While this evaluation did not examine the characteristics of SARs across Canada, it is our understanding that the growth in the number of SARs who are reasonable candidates for post-secondary education is not limited to Newfoundland or even to the poorer provinces¹⁵. As well, the disincentives inherent in social assistance regulations are not unique to Newfoundland¹⁶.

¹⁵ In fact, the increased difficulty of qualifying for UI in provinces such as Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, and the large population of those provinces likely have the effect of providing a larger target population.

¹⁶ In fact, the opposite may be true in the future. The Income Supplementation Proposals of Newfoundland's Economic Recovery Commission address the disincentives inherent in current social assistance programming and, if implemented, might reduce the need for a program like SWASP.

Finally, the cost-effectiveness of the Social Assistance Stream has the potential to be extremely positive (see Issue 18 (b)) due to limited expenditures and the potential for high returns. There is no reason to believe that costs would need to be higher in other provinces. Since levels of taxation and costs of social assistance do not vary substantially among the provinces, neither would the potential for high returns.

Prior to replicating this stream in other provinces, further evidence of the effectiveness is required¹⁷ and additional investigations to confirm the existence of the target population in other provinces are necessary.

Issue 2

Is the project design consistent with its broad objectives? If not, how has it changed and why? Have the objectives changed since inception? If so, how and why did they change?

Finding:

The basic program design is consistent with its broad objectives: it has targetted the appropriate clientele and, by using the voucher, minimized leakage to unintended individuals; it has involved government, the private sector and community organizations in addressing the needs of the target clientele; as a pilot, it has generated knowledge which can be applied to other programs; and it has prudently allocated scarce government funds. It did not, in its initial implementation, devote adequate attention to the problems related to the school-to-work transition.

The evidence to support this finding was presented under Issue 1 and is not repeated here. It is important to note, however, that while the basic project design is consistent with its objectives, the design of the program is still at a skeletal stage. As noted under Issue 3, for example, partnerships have been established but are not yet fully defined. A second example is that the

¹⁷ This evidence can be obtained through follow-up surveys of the 1994 participants.

program was not focused as highly on career-related jobs as had been planned. Continuing refinement of the basic design currently in place is necessary to ensure achievement of the project objectives.

3.2 Implementation

Evaluation issues relating to program implementation address:

- partnership development and the effect on program delivery;
- definition of roles and responsibilities of various partners;
- barriers encountered and their resolution;
- the extent to which career-related experience was received;
- level of expenditures; and,
- adequacy of record keeping.

Issue 3.1

How did the project develop partnerships among various levels of government, employers and community groups to cooperate in serving the needs of youth facing transitions?

Finding:

Partnership between Human Resource Development Canada, three departments of the provincial government and the Community Services Council was instrumental to the design of a program which responded to the needs of the target group. The partnership approach also facilitated problem-solving in the implementation of the program.

Key informants from all three provincial departments emphasized the true partnerships that existed in this program and the lessons learned which are now being applied in other activities. Specifically,

- partnership resulted in individual departments finding ways around rules and barriers inherent in existing processes;
- the partnership approach was applied at all three levels (management committee, working committee and program delivery);
- ELR, DOSS & DOE have since formed a committee to look at educational disincentives for SARs, largely as a result of the effectiveness of partnerships on SWASP; and,
- ELR agreed to re-allocate funds for approximately 400 positions originally assigned to PE to the Social Assistance stream of CS which resulted in 200 additional spaces under the latter stream.

While all three provincial departments have historical partnerships with HRDC, both they and HRDC noted the increased effectiveness as a result of the three departments working together.

The Community Services Council was viewed as a partner by other stakeholders and contributed to the design by virtue of their understanding of the needs of SARs¹⁸.

Finding:

Employers (private sector and community organizations) were excluded from the partnership, which will limit the extent to which the program assists with school to work transition.

Generally, the quality and nature of the work assignment were not important factors in approving applications. This left employers responsible for providing participants with work experience which might reduce school-to-work transition difficulties in the future. However, employers were generally not aware (as indicated in the focus groups) that this was a program objective. Some observed that they could have provided more meaningful work assignments if they had been

¹⁸ See interviews with officials from DOSS, DET and HRDC officials in "Technical Report B: Key Informant Interviews".

provided with more notice of the program and their participation in it. HRDC and CSC could also have provided a matching service to identify students with appropriate academic backgrounds for assignments. This only occurred in isolated instances. CSC officials noted that they were able to do better matching for SAR placements in the fall and winter due to the increased time available.

In order to move towards a partnership approach with employers, program delivery must be modified to include:

- clear communication of employer responsibilities and how these relate to the program objectives; and,
- improved procedures for matching employers and students so that both will benefit.

Issue 3.2

How did these partnerships affect service delivery?

Finding:

Partnerships played a limited role in the delivery of the Paid Employment component. By contrast, the delivery of the Community Services component involved substantial cooperation and consultation between the Community Services Council and government partners.

Paid Employment

Partnerships generally did not affect the delivery of the PE component. ELR was solely responsible for service delivery and, in essence, delivered the program in the same fashion as the provincial predecessor program. Spaces were allocated to employers based on applications submitted to ELR, and employers identified students to fill the positions.

- 49.1% of participants indicated that they were approached by the employer regarding the SWASP position;
- 20.4% were told about the position by a friend;
- 8.5% responded to an advertisement; and,
- 5.2% approached the employer.

DOE was responsible for administering the tuition vouchers and worked with ELR to perform this function effectively.

Community Services

Under Community Services, the responsibility for delivering the program was contracted to the Community Services Council. At the start of the program, CSC had no regional infrastructure. They engaged individuals in the five regions to administer the program. Outside of St. John's, these individuals were situated in Canada Employment Centres for Students (CEC-S).

CSC undertook to promote the program to community organizations. The government partners also promoted the program to community organizations which had been involved in delivering previous programs. DOSS officials were primarily responsible for identifying participants for the Social Assistance Stream.

The high level of demand for the program and the lack of a pre-existing regional infrastructure made program delivery very difficult. CEC-S employees and DOSS officials became more heavily involved in the program than they had expected. These same individuals and the CSC staff had to work many long days and weekends. Responsibilities and roles evolved differently in each region and working relationships were sometimes strained. Despite these chaotic conditions, program targets were achieved and neither the participants nor community organizations noted significant administrative problems.

Issue 4

Have the roles and responsibilities for various partners and service providers in the project been clearly enunciated and

Finding:

Roles and responsibilities for the various partners and service providers were not clearly defined.

Overlapping and unclear responsibilities was a characteristic of the program as was indicated in the key informant interviews. This created resentment and necessitated above-average levels of effort. Key informants consistently identified that additional time should be provided for better planning if the program is to be repeated. They also suggested that individuals involved in delivering the program in 1994 should be debriefed to ensure that lessons learned are incorporated.

Issue 5

What policy, regulatory and other barriers were encountered in implementing the program, and how were these

Finding:

DOSS regulations regarding clawback of earnings were initially seen as a barrier to the participation of SARs. This was overcome for the Community Services Component but not for Paid Employment. As well, individuals receiving both UI and SA were excluded from the program due to UI regulations. The limited time available to design the program was also a significant barrier to pursuing program objectives.

Barriers which were overcome

Initially the \$50 stipend for participants in the Community Services component was perceived as income by DOSS which would have inhibited SAR participation. However, the department chose to loosely interpret its own policy which eliminated this difficulty. In the end, this provided a positive incentive since SARs could pursue sound, future-oriented choices and maintain their assistance with small gains in income.

Barrier to SAR participation in Paid Employment

It did not prove possible to get SARs into the PE component, since PE paid wages. Private sector representatives and DOSS officials indicated that such placements would benefit some SARs. ELR is willing to include SARs in the program but cannot overcome the disincentives unless DOSS changes its regulations. DOSS officials expressed the concern that employers would likely not hire SARs unless pressed to do so by ELR. In summary, DOSS regulations, possible employer discrimination, and ELR's practice of allowing employers to select participants are all barriers to increased participation by SARs in PE.

Barrier to participation of individuals receiving both UI and SA

Joint recipients of SA and UI were ineligible for the program since HRDC would have cut them off UI, and the province was unwilling to assume the liability of being solely responsible for future income support.

Inadequate time to design program

The very quick implementation of the program was identified as a barrier in many respects:

- appropriate roles for various stakeholders were not clearly defined;

- strategies to maximize the impact of work assignments on school-to-work transition difficulties were not developed;
- community organizations indicated in the focus groups that their use of students was less creative than it could have been if more time had been available;
- student initiative in seeking sponsors was inhibited both by the lack of program promotion to students, and limitations in the number of available spaces. Some students who did successfully locate a sponsor were then told that no more spaces were available (unless they were SARs); and,
- limited capacity of regional CSC operations (which were put in place with little advance planning) constrained its ability to handle initial volumes. CEC-S staff provided assistance, which caused some difficulties since it distracted them from performing their regular duties. Also, CEC-S staff complained that FAX and telephone lines were tied up.

Issue 6

Did students receive career-related experience? If no, why not?

Finding:

Providing students with career-related experience was not designed into the program.

Based on focus groups and key informant interviews, it is clear that providing career-related experience was not a major criteria in program implementation. The limited time to develop the program was cited by key informants as the major reason for this failure.

In Paid Employment, ELR elected to maintain its partnership with many employers who had participated in the predecessor provincial program. Given that many of these employers had previously offered low-level skill positions, mainly in the service sector, as well as the immediacy

required by the time frame of SWASP, priority was not given to providing career-related assignments.

In the focus groups with PE students and employers, there were some striking examples of how a brief summer job experience can influence career choices. A biology student, placed in a gardening/farming environment, was encouraged to take considerable responsibility for managing the crop, reporting on progress, and managing their own time. This student developed a keen interest in the business of farming/gardening and in business management generally, and spoke of combining this in the future with his love of biology.

A secretarial student, placed in an engineering firm with international business contacts, reported that she quickly became a valuable asset to the organization, which wanted her to stay on when the placement ended. She now intends to pursue office management training to increase her employment choices, and while she didn't continue with the firm, she believes she made the best choice for herself, and also helped the agency identify its need for support staff.

Some students in the focus group reported being placed in low-skill service positions with employers seemingly interested only in their own benefits from SWASP. Notably they reported that the experience taught them how to work hard and reinforced the importance of continuing their education.

Community Services

Community organizations have traditionally been involved in community-service activities in other programs where career-related issues were not seen as important. It is clear that those organizations participating in SWASP were, in general, not informed that they were expected to provide career-related experience. Even if these organizations had been informed of this responsibility, key informants noted that many of them would likely require assistance in identifying career-related opportunities in their communities. This assistance was not provided in the program. In some cases, students identified opportunities to apply their education after being placed. However, in projects involving placements of a number of students, this outcome was rare.

In the General Stream of CS, sponsors utilized the students' specific skills to varying degrees. Several in the focus groups lamented that with no lead time (often, it appears, placements were put together in a day or a weekend) they were not able to offer the quality of placement they would have liked. However, in some instances work described as being of great benefit was completed that would not have otherwise been done. For example, the Corner Brook Women's Centre updated its literature and brochures through the student, while the YM-YWCA of Corner Brook hired a student as a part-time receptionist-typist during the school months. Several students continued to volunteer in these agencies.

Survey Results

However, many participants indicated that employment experience gained through SWASP would be useful in their intended careers, school work and in determining what type of career they wished to pursue.

Beneficial Impacts Reported/Anticipated by Participants

Nature of Impact	Paid Employment	Community Services	
		General	Social Assistance
Work provided relevant experience for your intended career . very relevant (somewhat relevant)	13.7% (47.8%)	19.7% (41.4%)	18.8% (42.0%)
Extent to which things learned on SWASP job assisted in school work . a great deal (somewhat)	15.9% (51.2%)	12.7% (49.7%)	16.0% (41.2%)
Extent to which work experience has helped determine type of career desired after completing school . a great deal (somewhat)	24.7% (35.7%)	20.6% (32.4%)	21.2% (42.0%)

Other Evidence

Key informants generally were not concerned with the limited career-related experience provided by the program. They saw the application of earnings to education and the access to work experience as the primary benefits. Career-related experience was seen by most as "nice to have" but not essential. Key informants, especially those directly involved with the program, saw opportunities to expand the career-related aspects of the program. However, this would likely focus the program more on older students. While career-related employment may ease the school-to-work transition for those individuals (the literature is inconclusive), it may reduce program accessibility for younger individuals who may be more vulnerable to dropping out.

As well, the literature search did not find significant evidence of beneficial impacts from career-related work experience. Post-secondary cooperative education has positive impacts on earnings and employment, and also produces graduates who have more realistic expectations for their first job and make more appropriate job choices (i.e. choose jobs which will help in their future career). Whether these impacts can be anticipated from the limited (in terms of time working) work experience provided under SWASP, and the extent to which these impacts derive from career-related aspects of work experience is not at all clear.

In the focus groups and key informant interviews, the lack of career-related experience was not seen as a major difficulty. The value of holding a regular job was considered the main benefit, especially in a province where without such a program, students may graduate with no actual work experience. However, focus groups indicated that, for many students, the experience gained was not typical of an actual job experience. In the student focus groups, only Paid Employment participants indicated that they had been interviewed for the position. For all three groups, students indicated that they did not receive on-the-job training, supervision or performance assessments.

Issue 7

What federal /provincial /community resources are being expended on the initiative? How are they allocated among the

Finding:

Direct costs to government consisted of payments to participants and a contract with Community Services Council to administer the Community Services Component of the Program. All four of the government partners were able to perform their duties with regular staff.

Payments to participants

Direct costs to government of an 8 week full-time assignment under PE were \$1,040. This consisted of a \$400 tuition voucher and \$80 per week provided to the employer as a wage subsidy.

Under CS, costs per student for a typical full-time 8 week assignment were \$1,600. This consisted of a \$1,200 tuition voucher and a stipend of \$50 per week paid to the students.

Administrative Costs

The CSC contract for administering the Community Services component was \$212,000. This represented 7% of total expenditures on the community services component (approximately \$100 per student). This was beyond the target of 5% for administrative costs. As well, the burden on CEC-S staff/resources and regional DOSS staff was beyond what had been anticipated. However, no additional hiring or contracting was undertaken by either HRDC or DOSS to perform their responsibilities under the program.

ELR administered PE with regular full-time staff. Paperwork was higher than under the predecessor program but was handled without incremental expenditures.

DOE administered tuition vouchers for both components with existing staff.

The support provided to the program by the regular staff of the four government partners may be difficult to replicate in a second year of the pilot since:

- the enthusiasm for the pilot which motivated individuals to work extra hours will likely diminish; and
- the refinement and development of SWASP to provide better work assignments and improved partnerships may increase the level of effort required.

If the program is made an annual program, administrative costs will likely be higher than experienced in the 1994 pilot.

Issue 8

Are adequate records being kept to enable proper measurement of the results of the project?

Finding:

The design of data collection forms and supporting information systems is appropriate for the measurement of results of the project. Opportunities exist to improve the actual collection of data.

The design of project registration forms for both students and sponsors and associated databases was based on previous ELR experience, and was thorough and well done. One exception is that no baseline information was collected on self-esteem and motivation, which has limited the effectiveness of measuring the impact in this area¹⁹.

Some data are incomplete for both the PE and CS components, and similar items are not always consistently defined across the two components. For PE, data on labour force activity prior to the program and on past academic achievement (approximately half of the variables in the database

¹⁹ See "Technical Report E: Analysis of Survey of Participants".

are devoted to these two issues) was missing for approximately one third of the cases. Similar data for CS participants was more consistently available but was defined somewhat differently. Also, the combined data base maintained by DOE is incomplete in relation to CS participants. All these issues caused significant difficulties for the evaluation.

The occupation coding of job descriptions represents a significant expense which may not be worthwhile. Firstly, the job descriptions come from application documents and may bear little resemblance to what was actually done. Secondly, the complexity of the occupation coding systems and its orientation to the mainstream labour market makes the data difficult to analyze in the context of summer employment. Thirdly, it is not helpful in assessing career-related aspects of the work since this is more an issue of appropriately matching students to work assignments. We did not find this data helpful in addressing the evaluation issues. If this exercise is to be repeated, it should be based on post-assignment work descriptions provided by students.

Finding:

The identification of a comparison sample in order to assess the impact of the program on participants was not done.

The evaluation terms of reference called for the identification of a comparison sample during the placement of participants. It had been anticipated that the comparison sample could be drawn from rejected applicants. This was not feasible for Paid Employment since individuals did not apply directly to program officials but instead were identified by employers. It was also not feasible for the Social Assistance stream of Community Services since the selection criteria included readiness of individuals for post-secondary education. A comparison sample of equally prepared individuals with similar backgrounds could not be identified. The option of selecting apparently similar individuals from DOSS administrative records was rejected in Phase 1 of this evaluation due to concerns about being able to identify individuals who met the readiness criterion from administrative data.

Identification of a comparison sample for the General Stream of Community Services from excess applicants was viable and could still be done based on application forms on file with the

Community Services Council. This was rejected in Phase 1 of the current evaluation for a number of reasons:

- the data was not available in machine-readable form and the evaluation was required to be completed within a very tight schedule;
- the current evaluation - conducted early in the program - did not address long-term impacts for which comparison samples are most worthwhile; and,
- since no comparison sample was available for the other two streams of the program, use of a comparison sample for the General stream would have meant the application of differing evaluation methodologies to different streams. In addition to the difficulties of comparing results, this would have required more time and resources for the evaluation than had been allocated.

We have not found that the lack of a comparison sample has limited our ability to address the issues identified for this evaluation. It will limit the ability to measure the intended long-term impacts of SWASP such as completion of post-secondary education, easing school-to-work transition difficulties, and success in the labour market. However, it is not clear that these impacts could be successfully measured if a comparison sample was available. In the literature review, we cite research which indicates that success in post-secondary education depends on a number of factors which are, for the most part, immeasurable (e.g. quality of early education and home life). As well, econometric models addressing labour market impacts of government programs²⁰ generally find that the best predictors of post-program employment success are pre-program employment. Application of these models to young people who have no pre-program labour market experience is likely to be unsuccessful²¹.

²⁰ See, for example, Goss Gilroy's 1989 evaluation of HRDC's Job Development Program.

²¹ Researchers have observed that pre-program labour market success is not only important itself but also serves as a proxy for other (immeasurable) variables such as initiative and adaptability. The absence of this information when modelling for young people results in a high degree of unexplained variation in the models developed to measure the impact of the program. In such circumstances, it is much more likely that the models will find that the program has no significant impact when such impacts do exist. An example of the failure of comparison sample methodology to answer evaluation questions is the Evaluation of the Canada-Newfoundland Youth Strategy.

Should SWASP be extended, comparison samples should be incorporated. However, a well planned strategy will be required to increase the prospects for success in modelling impact measurement. This strategy will need to address what impacts are to be assessed and what predictive variables are likely to be important in terms of the impact addressed. For example, if the intent is to measure the impact of SWASP on completion of post-secondary education, relevant explanatory variables may include²²:

- educational achievement of family members;
- family income;
- attitudes towards higher education; and,
- aptitude as measured by basic skills testing.

Unless data on these and other important predictive variables are obtained for both participants and the comparison sample prior to participation in the program, models to measure the impact of the program are unlikely to be effective.

Similarly, if models are to be used to measure impacts on employability, collection of data which acts as a proxy for individual initiative and other factors is critical in view of the lack of data on pre-program labour market success for the young clients of this program and an appropriate comparison sample.

Unless these steps are taken, the modification of program design to include a comparison sample is unlikely to be worthwhile.

3.3 Success

Issues relating to program success address the:

²² See "Technical Report D: Literature Review" for a review of the literature on explanatory factors relating to completion of education.

- extent to which the program assisted participants to begin or continue their post-secondary education;
- extent to which it overlapped with existing student aid programs;
- effectiveness of the voucher system;
- extent to which students have pursued studies for occupations in demand;
- differences between the work experiences in the two components;
- impacts on self-esteem and motivation of SARs;
- adequacy of supports for SARs;
- comparisons to other student employment programs; and,
- desirable changes to the program and lessons learned.

Issue 9

To what extent has the project assisted participants to begin or continue their post-secondary education? Did it complement existing student aid programs? How? Did it duplicate/overlap

Finding:

Virtually all participants have used or intend to use their tuition voucher to pursue post-secondary education. For SARs, about 34% of those currently enrolled indicate that without SWASP they would not be in school. For other participants, only about 10% of currently enrolled students indicated that without SWASP they would not be enrolled.

Survey results indicate that enrollment rates are high and that many who have not yet enrolled are intending to do so:

Use of SWASP Vouchers

Use of SWASP Vouchers	Paid Employment	Community Services	
		General	Social Assistance
A. Used some or all of the voucher	87.0%	94.3%	56.4%
B. Very likely (somewhat likely) to enrol in the next 12 months (% of those not yet enrolled)	57.7% (31.1%)	69.1% (30.9%)	71.3% (19.4%)

As can be seen from the table, about 90% of participants from Paid Employment and the General Stream of Community Services had used some or all of the voucher. For the Social Assistance Stream, only 56.4% of participants had used some or all of the voucher. This is attributable to three factors:

- only half of the placements under Social Assistance occurred during the summer and not all of these placements would have been completed prior to the fall semester;
- many SARs did not have plans to pursue post-secondary education prior to their participation in SWASP and required time to make choices and submit applications; and,
- SAR participants were more likely to choose a college or private institution (see table below). The former is characterized by waiting lists while the latter is characterized by flexible start dates. In both instances, later use of the tuition voucher is to be expected.

Type of Institution Attended by Participants Pursuing Post Secondary Institutions

Type of Institution Attended	Paid Employment	Community Services	
		General	Social Assistance
University	67.0%	63.2%	36.9%
College	26.3%	28.3%	34.1%
Private Institution	6.7%	8.5%	27.9%
Unknown			1.2%

Of the 1,007 participants interviewed in the survey, only 17 have not used and don't intend to use the voucher. Of these, 5 indicated that they never intended to use the voucher. Of the remaining 12, 4 were not accepted into their intended program, and 4 have obtained a job.

Incrementality

The survey indicates that most of those now in school believe that they would be in school even if they had not worked on SWASP.

Incremental Impact of SWASP Employment

Percent of those currently enrolled who would be pursuing various activities if they had not had the SWASP job	Paid Employment	Community Services	
		General	Social Assistance
Attending school	90.9%	87.9%	66.0%
Working	5.1%	6.3%	5.8%
Unemployed	3.5%	4.5%	26.4%
Doing something else		0.8%	1.2%

For the Social Assistance group, incremental enrollment at a post-secondary institution is high and seems to clearly justify the expenditures.

For the other two groups, incrementality is low (about 10%). However, students in these two groups may have greater prospects for success and have predominantly chosen university education. Nevertheless, with such low levels of incrementality, governments need to make efforts to limit its investment (see Issue 18(b)).

Finding:

As implemented in 1994, SWASP may overlap with existing student aid programs for non-SARs. Further development of the SWASP program to directly address school-to-work transition difficulties would differentiate SWASP.

Participants in SWASP remained eligible for student aid but received lower loans thus reducing their future indebtedness. This is to the advantage of participants but, in itself, is of minimal benefit to society. The fact that most non-SARs indicate that they would be attending school even without SWASP indicates that the program may duplicate student aid programs in terms of facilitating enrollment at a post-secondary institution. However, student aid programs do not address school-to-work transition and in this way, SWASP is unique.

Issue 10

How effective and efficient was the voucher system in supporting students in training/education for occupations in demand within the allowable period of 12 months?

Finding:

The voucher, while highly regarded, only had an impact on the decision of SARs to attend post-secondary school.

The voucher was extremely well-received by everyone: students, sponsors and key informants. The system was universally viewed as ensuring that students would truly attend school. However, non-SARs indicated that they would have attended school if they had received the same total compensation in wages. For SARs, about 20% of those currently enrolled indicated that they would not be enrolled if they had received wages instead of the voucher:

Incremental Impact of the Voucher

Percent of those currently enrolled who would be pursuing various activities if they had received the same total compensation in wages	Paid Employment	Community Services	
		General	Social Assistance
Attending school	98.5%	96.8%	79.3%
Working	1.2%	1.5%	3.0%
Unemployed	0.2%	1.7%	16.9%

Finding:

The SWASP program did not attempt to influence the study choices of participants. In the absence of definitive information on "occupations in demand" in Newfoundland, this decision by program designers was appropriate.

Technical Report F: Self-Esteem and Motivation Data provides data on the study choices of participants. However, these data cannot be used to answer this issue since no definitive analysis is available on occupations in demand. The evaluation has had access to research conducted by the Newfoundland Department of Education, a Provincial Working Group on Education and Training (established as part of the Economic Renewal Strategy) and for the Income Supplementation Proposal. This research indicates that participation rates for university education in Newfoundland are equal to those in other parts of Canada. Participation rates for college programs are well below national averages but this is attributable, at least in part, to lack of capacity. Most students wishing to attend college face a one to two year waiting list. On

average, the college system in Newfoundland has two individuals on the waiting list for every student registered (total registrations, not first year registrations). As well, the college system sees relatively high dropout rates.

The research also indicates that unemployment rates among the most educated residents of Newfoundland are only slightly higher than among similarly educated individuals elsewhere in Canada and are **much lower** than for less-educated residents of Newfoundland. However, this is complicated by interprovincial migration. Over 40% of in-migrants to Newfoundland and a similar percentage of out-migrants have completed post-secondary education. The research suggests that many of the out-migrants are new graduates especially those with a university degree. Among college graduates in 1989-90, approximately 40% were unemployed 10 months later - well above the provincial average. Unemployment rates among university graduates depends largely on their specialty (0% for Pharmacy, 3% for Commerce (honours), 8% for Engineering; 11% for Commerce (co-op), 13% for Social Work, 5% - 19% for Education, 25% for Arts (honours), 28% for Arts (general), 35% for Science (general) and 45% for Science (honours). However many of the graduates in specialties with low unemployment have left the province (e.g. 48% of engineering graduates). Only pharmacy and education graduates had reasonable employment success in related careers within the province.

Issue 11

How did the paid work experience differ from the community service experience?

Finding:

Participants in both components described their work experiences as useful and fulfilling. However, the Community Services component was less successful in providing students with realistic work experience.

In the survey, most students described their work experience as "useful and fulfilling" in all three components:

Student Description of Work Experience

Student description of work experience	Paid Employment	Community Services	
		General	Social Assistance
Useful, fulfilling work	78.0%	81.8%	79.6%
Useful, but boring	19.8%	16.8%	16.3%
Unnecessary	2.0%	1.4%	4.1%

However, other data from the evaluation makes us inclined to discount these very positive results especially for the Community Services component. In focus groups, both employers and participants expressed concern that experiences did not parallel those of a regular employment situation. Individuals involved in program administration have indicated that the quality of the work assignment was not an important criteria in the approval of applications. As well, employer responsibilities were not clearly communicated. In the focus groups most participants indicated that they were not interviewed for the positions they obtained and that on-the-job training, supervision, and performance feedback were frequently not provided. Employers in all components indicated that with more notification of a placement under the program, they would have been able to provide higher quality assignments. Finally, the high incidence of placing a number of students with a single community organization under Community Services likely inhibited the ability of the organization to provide individuals with a realistic job experience.

However, some students in a focus group of SARs described their experiences in Community service as "like a job". The activities described were not dissimilar from the General or Paid Employment streams. One student was placed with the Newfoundland Cancer Society and is now a full-time employee of that organization as a fund-raiser. A single parent student was essentially an office manager for a provincial association and is now contemplating a degree in business, on the premise that if she could run that organization's day to day affairs, she could also run her own business. Another student, completing an education degree, worked as a teacher's assistant with the Skills for Success program, assisting others in upgrading their education levels. He noted that, as a short-term recipient of social assistance, SWASP was the first program he had encountered that was incentive-based.

Even though students have described their work experiences as useful and fulfilling, there appears to be significant opportunities to improve this aspect of the program.

Issue 12

To what extent did the project enhance the self-esteem and motivation of SAR participants?

Finding:

The criteria for selection of SARs (see Issue 1 (b)) led to the selection of individuals who did not have low self-esteem and motivation.

Interviews with DOSS representatives established that willingness and readiness to pursue post-secondary education were important criteria for participation by SARs. These criteria and the completely voluntary aspect of the program ensured that participants had high self-esteem and were well-motivated. The focus of the program was to intervene with these individuals before lengthy unemployment and dependence on social assistance had negative effects on their self-esteem and motivation, and was thus preventative in nature rather than curative.

The self-esteem and motivation questions in the survey²³ confirm what we were told by key informants. The analysis of this data indicates that the levels of self-esteem and motivation of SARs are similar to those of other participants, and that programming to improve their self-perception was not required.

Representatives of DOSS and the National Anti-Poverty Organization (NAPO) questioned the theory that SARs have low self-esteem and motivation. They noted that many SARs do not have difficulties in these areas and are indeed highly motivated to be productive members of society.

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See "Technical Report F: Self-Esteem and Motivation Data".

U. S. research noted in the literature review²⁴ supports this point of view and provides evidence of large numbers of single mothers trying to get off social assistance despite the significant disincentives in current programming.

The motivation of the SARs to contribute was cited by several sources (CSC, DOSS, students, sponsors), and was seen as antithetical to the stereotype of SARs as uninterested in work. Indeed, several in the focus group were volunteering time with their placement agencies and were anxious to continue their education.

Issue 13

Were the supports provided to SAR participants adequate to ensure successful participation?

Finding:

Adequate supports were provided to SARs to allow them to participate in the Community Service component of SWASP. The program did not, however, provide participants with counselling to assist in making informed decisions regarding their future education. Further research is required on whether additional supports are required to maximize the chances of SARs successfully pursuing post-secondary education.

Based on the key informant interviews and the focus groups with SAR participants, we found that the following supports were in place which made it feasible for most candidates to participate in the community service assignment:

- SARs were provided with a \$50 per week stipend to cover expenses associated with "working" (e.g. travel, child care). Neither the stipend nor the tuition voucher resulted in a reduction of the assistance payments which were provided.

²⁴ See "Technical Report D: Literature Review".

- the program existed throughout the province; DOSS, CSC or the individual candidate were generally able to locate sponsors in the community of an eligible candidate.
- DOSS staff identified candidates who would likely benefit from the program and encouraged them through direct contact. All information indicates that participation was entirely voluntary. (NAPO emphasized the importance of the voluntary aspect). DOSS regional staff described their efforts to bring candidate SARs and sponsors together, and indicated that where additional support was required it was available.
- continuous intake in SAR stream allowed for the recruitment of new SARs. A program which operates only in the summer would mean that some individuals may spend up to a year on social assistance even if they were aware of the program and motivated to participate.

Possible Supports Which Were Not Provided

While key informants emphasized that SAR candidates were generally well-motivated and had sufficient education to have a good chance of success in a post-secondary environment, they also noted that the special circumstances of SARs suggest some additional supports which were not provided in 1994:

- career counselling, job preparation and follow-up were, in general, not provided to participants. Although this applied across the whole program, it may have the greatest impact for SARs e.g. incremental impacts of the program for SARs makes career counselling especially important. The need for career counselling was cited by a number of participants in the SAR focus group as well as by key informants. A shortage of field staff in 1994 would have made it impossible to provide such support.
- information about support available to some groups of SARs while at school was not consistently provided. For example, DOSS informed us that single parents can receive social assistance and student aid. However, in the focus group, one single mother indicated that this was not possible and was the reason she had not yet used the voucher.
- communication about the program to SARs was limited and uneven. As a result, SWASP may have been unknown to individuals who would have been eager to participate.

- while the voucher was well received in the SAR stream and seen by several individuals in the focus group as having particular relevance to their circumstances because of the difficulty of saving money while on social assistance, there were indications that other mandatory educational costs (i.e., books) were prohibitive. SAR experiences resulted in some expanded uses for the voucher; for example, one student used the voucher to pay-down outstanding fees. However, flexibility of this nature was not generally available to SAR participants.

Issue 14

What are the characteristics of individuals who participated in the work/ community service program and who used the voucher?

Detailed statistics on the characteristics of participants are provided in Section 2.4.2 of this report.

Issue 15

How do the results of the project compare with those of other programs for students, such as SEED?

Finding:

SWASP was universally viewed as being as good as or better than other programs for students, such as SEED and ELR's predecessor program.

Specifically,

- community organizations with experience with both SWASP and SEED preferred SWASP (54%) or rated them the same (41%).
- employers under the PE component with previous experience with student programs rated SWASP as slightly better

SWASP was better	26.5%
the same	64.1%
SWASP was worse	9.4%

- overall, 63.9% of employers who rated SWASP as better attributed this to the tuition voucher.
- key informants preferred SWASP since the tuition voucher provided greater assurances that sponsors would hire individuals truly intending to go to school and that the participants would actually return to school.
- under SEED, participants have to have been in school the previous year. Presumably, this is required in part to ensure that program abuse is minimal. The tuition voucher (which reduces the appeal to individuals who don't intend to apply their earnings to education) offers the potential to expand eligibility to individuals who wish to return to school but did not attend in the previous year. This may increase the incremental impact of PE and the General component of CS. It was possible for individuals who did not attend school in the previous year to participate in these components. However, this was not a focus on the 1994 implementation of SWASP.

It has not been possible to compare the potential impacts of SWASP to those which have actually been achieved by other programs. The most recent evaluation of SEED was done in 1986 and was not useful for this purpose since it primarily related to issues not included in this evaluation (e.g. incrementality of employment). ELR's predecessor program has never been evaluated.

Issue 16

What program features would need to be changed if the program is to be continued?

Finding:

The following program features require improvement:

- clear definition of employer responsibility to provide realistic work experience in order to facilitate the school-to-work transition;
- definition of how and to what extent the program is to provide career-related experience;
- clear definition of the responsibilities of the various partners in the delivery of Community Services as well as ensuring that organizations are adequately resourced to fulfil their responsibilities;
- the program needs to provide access to career/education counselling for SARs who require this service; and,
- there are opportunities for greater cost efficiency.

The first three areas for improvement are described below. The remaining two have been described under Issues 13 and 18(b) respectively.

Employer Responsibilities

As identified under other issues, employers were generally unaware that easing the school-to-work transition was an objective of the program. Informing them of this objective; advising them on how they can assist in satisfying this objective; providing employers with more advance notice, in order to identify useful and rewarding assignments; and, improving procedures to recruit

candidates with suitable backgrounds and interests for specific assignments will all improve the quality of the work experience.

Career-Related Assignments

As noted under Issue 6, the program was not designed to provide career-related experience although this was a program objective. Nevertheless, some employers did take advantage of the education of participants and provided career-related experience. The clarification of employer responsibilities and related changes suggested above should increase the incidence of career-related assignments.

Other changes can be made to the program to increase the incidence of career-related assignments. The most extreme approach would be to make this a condition of application approval. This approach, however, would represent a major change to the program in terms of the profile of participants as well as the nature of the assignments. In particular, many of the participants in 1994 (especially in the General stream of Community Services) were recent high school graduates. Refocusing the program totally on career-related assignments would exclude most of these individuals in favour of those with some post-secondary education. Since it is not clear that the needs of this latter group are as great (e.g. their prospects of completing their education are better without any assistance) this may not be warranted. A better alternative may be to assign a given number of spots to individuals with certain characteristics and to define different criteria for assignments based on those characteristics. For example, a certain number of spots could be reserved for university students about to enter their graduating year. Assignments for such individuals would need to provide actual experience in their area of specialty.

Improved Planning for Delivery

The shortage of time for implementation in 1994 resulted in a lack of clear definition of roles and level of responsibilities in each region based on the capacity of various partners.

Based on evidence from key informant interviews, while there does not seem to be a need to make fundamental changes to program delivery, many areas require improvement. For example, the continuing involvement of Community Services Council seems warranted. Their participation was overwhelmingly viewed as advantageous in 1994. They were able to operate without the constraints of government and implement a complex program in a short period of time. They were able to involve community organizations across the province. Also, their responsibility for the program emphasizes the voluntary nature of SAR participation. Alternatively, if the program is administered directly by DOSS or HRDC, some SARs may feel that they must participate.

Program administration can be improved; better partnerships and clearer definition of responsibilities can be achieved. Better training of the field staff of all partners in program objectives and how to achieve them would provide benefits. CSC may be uniquely positioned to communicate to sponsors their responsibilities and to provide assistance with fulfilling these (although this would involve additional costs). A rapid decision is required on who will be responsible for delivery so that debriefing can be conducted relative to lessons learned in 1994. For example, should program delivery staff be located at CEC-S locations? Other alternatives would be DOSS field offices or storefront operations. The best approach may differ from region to region. Reassessment of workloads is required to determine appropriate levels of resourcing. Engaging students (or SARs) to assist in program administration might be considered. Those involved in administering the program were universally surprised that no debriefing was done on last summer's pilot. It is critical to do this. The implementation of the program worked well last summer because everybody believed in it and was willing to make efforts well above normal. These conditions will be difficult to replicate.

Finding:**The SWASP program offers opportunities for additional testing and refinement.**

SWASP was originally approved under SI as a pilot project with the intention of learning about the potential value of new approaches. The initial results based on this evaluation are promising but longer term impacts are unknown at this stage. Extension of the SWASP pilot in order to

further test and refine the approaches is warranted **so long as it is done in a way which will ensure that additional testing and refining will actually occur**. Repetition of the same approach would not seem to warrant continuing support under SI.

Additional directions for testing and refinement include the following:

- examination of ways to achieve the same objectives at a lower cost to government;
- examination of approaches to increase the contribution to the partnership of CSC and other non-government organizations. For example, several key informants raised the issue of community needs assessments. This could increase the value of the work assignments to both the communities and the students since it would increase the likelihood that their work is related to identified community needs. In focus groups, a number of participants mentioned the satisfaction associated with making a contribution to their community. The focus group with participants in the General Stream of CS produced an interesting example of the potential benefits of SWASP. A pre-med student from Point May, a small community on the South Coast, was placed in a local community development association and given the task of researching and writing the history of the community. It was seen by the student as a great experience where she learned about her heritage, used her research, interviewing and writing skills, and delivered a product that is of great interest and potential benefit to her community. Efforts to make this experience more universal would be beneficial. CSC in partnership with development agencies and associations may be able to pursue this approach.
- examine the willingness and ability of employers and community organizations to take on more clearly defined responsibility for providing students with a meaningful work experience. For students with two or more years of post-secondary education, career-related experience should be sought.

It is unclear whether SI funding can be used to support research or just experimental programming. However, this evaluation has confirmed that the transition from school-to-work is an extremely important issue for young people in Newfoundland **and** that very little knowledge is

available on what should be done to ease this transition. Additional research beyond what could be conducted under this evaluation may identify further opportunities for experimentation.

Issue 17

What lessons can be learned from this project on interventions to assist individuals facing transitions from education to work and work to education?

Finding:

At this early stage, the SWASP program has not increased our knowledge of what strategies are effective in assisting individuals facing transitions from education to work. However, all lines of evidence in this evaluation point to the importance of acquiring realistic work experience.

Key informants, and the writings of policy analysts and researchers described in the literature review emphasize the importance of realistic work experiences as an aid to moving from school to work. In the focus groups, students and employers attached significant value to acquiring realistic work experience.

The program does not address the transition from work to education.

3.4 Cost-Effectiveness

Issue 18 a)

What are the benefits to society, participants and the government as a result of the projects (considering SA/UI savings, net change to income tax revenue and other factors)?

This issue was not addressed as the Evaluation Committee judged that it could not be effectively done at this early stage.

b) *Is the pilot project a cost-effective way of achieving project objectives? Are there more cost-effective methods of achieving the same objectives? How do results compare with the results of other programs with similar objectives?*

Finding:

This issue could not be addressed in a rigorous fashion, since the full impact of the projects are not yet available. However, available evidence suggests that SWASP offers the potential to be a cost-effective way of meeting the project objectives. The basic design of the program is appropriate relative to the project objectives and the cost per student is low relative to other programs directed at students. Lessons learned from the initial year can improve the effectiveness of the program and possibilities to lower the cost can be explored.

Key informants consistently indicated that they considered program costs minimal in relation to its benefits in terms of promoting education with expected financial gains to government. These gains consist of reductions of income support to unemployed individuals **and** higher transition revenue. Many key informants believed this point to be especially important for SARs but also considered the expenditures to be worthwhile for PE.

While the costs under PE are lower than for CS, they may be higher than necessary. Employers expressed little concern about the reduced wage subsidy relative to the predecessor provincial program²⁵. However, the program design did not take full advantage of employers' willingness to pay a larger share since the costs to government remained the same. In effect, the tuition voucher was a bonus to the participants rather than an alternate form of compensation since participants also received a fair (government-subsidized) wage. An alternate approach would be to allow

²⁵ See "Technical Report C: Focus Groups" and "Technical Report G: Analysis of Survey of Sponsors".

employers to pay \$2/hour below minimum wage (or whatever wage would otherwise be appropriate) and to provide an equivalent tuition voucher to students. This would reduce the cost to government, provide better targetting of government expenditures and, based on available evidence, still be acceptable to both students and employers. As well, program administration would be easier due to the removal of the wage subsidy. ELR officials believe that minimum wage legislation may be a barrier to such an approach even though participants would be receiving total compensation equivalent to a minimum wage. However, even if this revision cannot be made in Newfoundland, it may be viable if the program is expanded to other provinces.

The relatively high costs to government (\$1,600 plus \$100 administration costs) for participants in the General component of CS may not be justified. This group does not -based on program design criteria - have a higher level of need than other students. Given the high level of demand, the costs to government might be reduced by requiring community organizations to contribute. This should increase the inherent value of the work assignments and would likely reduce the incidence of block placements. Block placements were raised as an equity issue in the focus groups ("how come you got 8 students?") and likely inhibit the ability of the sponsor and student to tailor the work experience to the intended career of the student. Due to the very limited resources of many communities in Newfoundland since the collapse of the groundfish industry, it is likely that some community organizations could only bear a small share of the costs. However, in more prosperous communities, the strategy of shared costs is worth exploring. As well, if the program is expanded to other provinces a shared cost approach may be viable.

While there is potential for increased cost-effectiveness in Paid Employment and the General Stream of Community Services, the current design provides better targetting of government expenditures than with SEED because of the tuition voucher and because employers are not compensated for administrative costs.

Key informants universally considered that the Social Assistance Stream offers the potential for very impressive cost-effectiveness. Early results (based on the Survey of Participants - see Issues 9 and 10) indicate that SWASP has resulted in individuals pursuing post-secondary education who would not have otherwise. **If** these individuals complete their education **and** successfully integrate into the labour market, the investment of approximately \$1,700 per individual will be repaid many times over in terms of reduced income support and increased taxes on earnings. The

selection criteria used for this stream of the program were appropriate and thus it is realistically possible that these impacts may be achieved. However, it will be important to continue to monitor this group to determine if the desired impacts are achieved.

This "issue" is essentially a synopsis of all the other issues and has been thoroughly addressed throughout this chapter. In summary, the evidence indicates:

- the transition from school to work is a significant problem for young people in Newfoundland and limited knowledge exists on how to address it;
- SWASP offers the potential to assist in this transition by providing meaningful work experiences but needs to be improved by focusing more on the quality of work experience provided;
- SWASP provides encouragement that government can be more cost-effective by working in partnership with other governments and non-government organizations. However, significant opportunity remains for improving the partnership approach. Learning from such refinement and continuing experimentation could be very useful within the context of Social Security Reform; and
- the program would benefit individuals in other parts of Canada, specifically where the summer employment opportunities for students are limited and/or areas with high school educated SARs who are ready and willing to pursue post-secondary education. Based on fine tuning of SWASP in the summer of 1995, proposals for an expanded version of the program could be developed.

Issue 19

What lessons can be learned from this project on interventions to assist the target group? How and to what extent does it contribute to the development of a policy framework for social security reform? Does the project lead to a more efficient delivery of services? To what extent can this project be successfully expanded or replicated in other

4.0 Conclusions

Detailed findings for each of the 19 issues identified for the evaluation are provided in Chapter 3. In this chapter these findings are summarized according to the four major issue categories.

4.1 Program Relevance

Generally, the evaluation results are positive in relation to program relevance.

For Social Assistance Recipients,

- they are an appropriate target group under Strategic Initiatives;
- the program defined appropriate criteria for participation. In particular, the Department of Social Services was heavily involved in identifying potential candidates and their criteria focused on the individual's readiness for post-secondary education. We found evidence that some SARs had little knowledge or awareness of realistic career options and that career guidance (not consistently provided by the program) would be beneficial;
- the program was innovative in that it allowed SARs to "earn" in order to reduce their future education costs without impacting on current assistance levels. As well, SARs received a stipend to cover, at least partially, incremental costs associated with their "employment" (e.g. transportation, child care);
- large numbers of SARs have used or intend to use their vouchers. About 34% of these indicate that they would not have pursued post-secondary education if they had not been involved in SWASP;
- potential future savings to government if these individuals are successful in pursuing post-secondary education certainly justify the small investment made under SWASP. The potential exists for expansion and replication of the initiative within the context of Social Security Reform; and,

- program design was judged, by key informants, to be consistent with the objectives **given that the program focused on those SARs who demonstrated a willingness and readiness for post-secondary education.**

For non-SAR students, program relevance is not as clear. At a time of declining government expenditures, a new program targeting post-secondary students may be difficult to justify. In Newfoundland, given the severe school-to-work transition difficulties of post-secondary graduates and the limited number of summer employment opportunities, they are a relevant target group. In most other locations in Canada, the needs of post-secondary students may be less severe than those of other segments of society.

4.2 Program Implementation

The program was designed and implemented in an 8 week period. In the case of Paid Employment, a predecessor provincial program provided an effective model which was used, not surprisingly, given the limited time frame. In this component of the program, no real partnerships were developed. Employment and Labour Relations (ELR) and the Department of Education (DOE) worked together effectively but with disjointed responsibilities. ELR made use of partnerships with the private sector which had been during the predecessor program. No significant attempts were made to develop the provision of career-related experience under the program.

In the case of Community Services, the programming was entirely new. The design and implementation of the program in this period is a remarkable accomplishment. Development of partnerships was largely responsible for this success. In particular, support for and belief in the validity of the program at both an organizational level and by many individuals resulted in the achievement of what would normally be considered impossible in such a time frame. Nevertheless, we found numerous opportunities for improvement which could be implemented if the pilot is extended in the summer of 1995. For example,

- partnership roles were generally not well defined. Instead, individuals pitched in and did what was required. Given the high support for the program, this worked effectively on a

one-shot basis. However, it is unlikely that the approach of 1994 could be successfully repeated. More clearly defined roles and responsibilities would, however, lead to stronger and more effective partnerships.

- partnerships with sponsors represents a particular opportunity for improvement. We found that most sponsors were unaware of project objectives and their own responsibilities (or how to fulfil them). To sponsors, the program provided students with earnings and a tuition voucher and was worth supporting on that basis. Career-related experience, quality of work assignments, and school-to-work transition difficulties were not issues that they addressed.

The only significant barrier which was encountered and not overcome was the involvement of SARs in the Paid Employment Component. This is a complex matter which cannot be easily resolved. Since Paid Employment provides wages, SARs would experience little if any gain from their work as social assistance benefits would be "clawed back". Both DOSS and ELR support the placement of SARs with private sector employers but have been unable to design an approach which offers some incentive to individual SARs and also ensures that firms pay for the services they receive. Placement of SARs with private sector sponsors will likely require a different approach than was used under either Community Services or Paid Employment. One possibility may be that SARs are compensated by government in the form of a stipend and tuition vouchers, with their employers providing payment to government for a share of the associated costs.

Other opportunities for improving implementation include program promotion and follow-up with sponsors and participants. As well, the program did not provide any career counselling to participants. Many key informants considered that this was necessary for SARs especially if they did not have prior plans to pursue post secondary education.

While the program was designed to provide more career-related experience than it did, this may not be a major flaw. Many key informants, as well as the literature reviewed, indicate that providing a realistic work experience may be more important than career-relatedness, especially for younger students.

4.3 Success

At this early stage, it is not possible to assess the success of the program in terms of assisting individuals to complete their post-secondary education and easing school-to-work transition difficulties. Nevertheless, the evidence collected in this evaluation offers signs of encouragement and identifies opportunities to refine the program to increase the likelihood of success. In summary,

- virtually all participants are pursuing (or intend to) post-secondary education;
- most non-SAR participants (about 90%) who are currently attending school indicated that they would be attending school even if they had not been involved in SWASP. The financial support provided under SWASP replaces support from other sources (e.g. family, student loans) in most cases;
- for SARs currently attending school, about 1/3 indicate that they would not have done so without the SWASP assignment.
- the voucher system was effective in terms of ensuring that government expenditures under SWASP resulted in lower education costs for students and was highly regarded by every group consulted in the evaluation;
- the program did not attempt to influence students' career choices towards occupations in demand. Any guidance provided was due to the initiative of an individual sponsor or administrator, and not to the program design which did not incorporate career counselling;
- survey responses rate the quality of work experiences very highly but other evidence indicates significant opportunities for improvement. Employers and sponsors may be able to offer better assignments if given more time for planning and if program objectives and employer responsibilities are clearly communicated to them;

- the evaluation found that the levels of self-esteem and motivation of SAR participants were similar to those of other participants. This is attributable to the selection of SAR candidates who had reasonable prospects for success in post-secondary education. We noted some gains in self-esteem and motivation from the SWASP placement (for both SARs and non-SARs) but our primary finding is that low self-esteem and motivation were not a problem for the SARs who participated in the program;
- supports for SARs were generally judged as adequate given that participants were willing and ready to pursue post secondary education. The program was viewed as an innovative way to reward SARs for individual initiative. Inclusion of career counselling for SARs is considered to be worthwhile if the program is repeated. As well, clearer communication regarding entitlements to social assistance for single parents while at school is required;
- comparisons to other programs were limited. Most key informants and employers preferred SWASP to SEED due to greater assurances that students would actually return to school. Employers with experience with ELR's predecessor program were not concerned that their wage subsidy was reduced and generally preferred SWASP;
- desirable changes to the program include:
 - a clear definition of the employer's responsibility to provide realistic work experience in order to facilitate the school-to-work transition;
 - a definition of how and to what extent the program is to provide career-related experience;
 - a clear definition of the responsibilities of the various partners in the delivery of the Community Services component, as well as ensuring that organizations are adequately resourced to fulfil their responsibilities;
 - the program should provide access to career counselling for SARs who require this service; and,
 - the program may offer opportunities for greater cost efficiency.

Overall, a much greater focus on the quality of the work experience is necessary. Primarily this can be achieved by bringing employers into the partnership, informing them of the program objectives and employer responsibilities, providing them with assistance as required and improving follow-up procedures with employers and participants.

4.4 Cost-Effectiveness

Key informants considered the investment under SWASP to be modest and worthwhile. They pointed out that because of the tuition voucher, government expenditures were more targeted than with alternate and past programs, making SWASP more cost-effective.

Since the program was more likely to be incremental for SARs than non-SARs, cost-effectiveness is likely greater for this group. This is true even if their prospects for success are lower since the savings on future social assistance payments will be substantial for those who do succeed.

For non-SARs, key informants still consider the investment to be cost-effective. In Chapter 3, we provide suggestions to improve cost-effectiveness for non-SARs.

4.5 Summary of Findings and Conclusions

In summary, the evidence indicates:

- the transition from school to work is a significant problem in Newfoundland. Since effective strategies for dealing with this difficulty are not clearly identifiable from past research, the need for an experimental program is strong. SWASP offers the potential to assist in this transition by providing meaningful work experiences but needs to be improved by focusing more on the quality of work experience provided;

- SWASP provides encouragement that government can be more cost-effective by working in partnership (with other governments and with non-government organizations). However, significant opportunity remains for improving the partnership approach. Learning from such refinement and continuing experimentation could be very useful within the context of Social Security Reform;
- the program would benefit individuals in other parts of Canada. Consideration should be given to regions which offer limited summer employment opportunities for students and/or which have significant numbers of high school educated SARs who are ready and willing to pursue post-secondary education. Based on fine tuning of the SWASP pilot project in 1995 in Newfoundland, proposals to transform it into a regular program and extend it to other regions could be developed.