

Evaluation of Employment Programs

Final Report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Saskatchewan Learning and the former Department of Social Services (DSS) (now the Department of Community Resources and Employment) commissioned an evaluation of Employment Programs (EPs). EPs offer a broad range of programs and employment assistance services intended to help Employment Insurance (EI)-eligible and Social Assistance Plan (SAP) clients obtain training and work experience leading to sustainable employment. The component programs that were evaluated comprised: Bridging, Community Works (CW), Work Placement (WP) and Self-Employment (SE). Just over \$9.2 million was spent on the four programs in the fiscal year 2001/2002.

Methodology

The evaluation of EPs was based on multiple lines of evidence, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods, as follows:

- ❑ *Review of program documentation.* Program documentation related to the development and implementation of EPs was reviewed to provide context for the study. Analyses were also conducted of program administrative data (based on the One Client Service Model (OCSM)).
- ❑ *Key informant interviews.* In total, 25 key informant interviews were conducted for this evaluation. Respondents included provincial officials from Saskatchewan Learning and DSS and representatives from community-based partners and training institutions.
- ❑ *Staff survey.* An Internet-based survey of DSS staff involved in the delivery of EPs was conducted to gather input on effectiveness, and strengths and challenges of program delivery. In total, 83 staff members submitted completed questionnaires.
- ❑ *Survey of program participants.* A telephone survey was conducted of participants in EPs. In total, 750 interviews were conducted with participants: 293 with Bridging participants, 216 with CW participants, 140 with WP participants and 101 with SE program participants. The population of participants were defined to comprise the 7,536 individuals who had participated in an intervention between April 2000 and March 2002.
- ❑ *Survey of employers/organizations.* A telephone survey was conducted of 118 employers/organizations that had accepted a participant for placement under the CW (n=60) or WP (n=58) programs. The timeframe of program participation was April 2000 to March 2002, during which 1,355 employers and organizations participated.

- *Survey of service delivery partners.* The views of partners delivering projects under the Bridging and SE programs were sought through a telephone survey of service delivery partners. Out of 150 delivery partners participating, 82 interviews were completed: 70 with those delivering Bridging projects and 12 with organizations delivering SE projects.

Evaluation Findings

This evaluation study examined issues related to rationale, delivery, impacts and effects, for Employment Programs (EPs). Overall, the evaluation has pointed to a number of program strengths. Relevance of the program objectives is supported and priority groups valid. The program design is viewed as sufficiently flexible and features such as the inclusion of partners in delivery and the availability of different program options are seen as strengths. The delivery of EPs is also well-supported by its administrative processes and information systems (e.g., the Program Agreement System), though some weaknesses were observed in such areas as coverage of persons with special needs, reaching employers, and the exemption and screening processes.

Most participants benefited from their participation in EPs, in terms of employment, skill acquisition, quality of life, self-sufficiency and participation in further education and training. Program factors contributing to success include rigorous screening, adequate income and other employment supports during the placement, ongoing contact with an employment consultant, and follow-up on the part of program staff.

CW was found to be weaker than the other EPs in a number of ways. CW participants experienced poorer employment outcomes, which is at least a partial reflection of their greater labour market barriers. Some design and delivery elements of the program were also seen to be weaker. This is not to say that there are not positive elements of CW, however, including a large degree of program incrementality (hiring that would not have occurred in the absence of the program), high levels of organizational satisfaction with program delivery, and benefits for the participating organization and the community.

The following summary findings are organized thematically by each evaluation issue:

Rationale

Relevance. There is general approval for the relevance of the EPs' objectives. Programs are perceived to be meeting the needs of participants by providing a spectrum of options. Together they offer a sensible and flexible response to a range of client needs, though each program is more or less relevant to specific participant groups (e.g., EI-eligible *versus* SAP recipients),

Overall, the needs of EI-eligible clients tend to be well-addressed by EPs and these clients also have access to other intervention programs such as the Skills Training Benefit (STB). It should be noted that EI clients' profile (e.g., established work history) pre-disposes them to successful employment outcomes.

For SAP recipients and for clients with multiple barriers, however, key informants, particularly representatives of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), perceive there to be gaps at each of the far ends of the services spectrum – basic skills/preparatory training at one end and occupational skills training at the other. In addition, there were some doubts registered about the responsiveness of EPs to this group generally (e.g., potential for those who are most job-ready to be selected for participation in some programs, project timeframes that are too short, lack of appropriate outreach into communities).

Mixed views were heard regarding relevance of EPs for organizations and delivery partners. Key informants and staff perceive EPs to be relevant to the needs of both participating employers/organizations and service delivery partners. Employers participating in WP, however, provided only modest ratings of the program's relevance to their needs (further reflected in their modest ratings of the benefits of WP to their organization).

Program Usage/Demand. During the period under study, the greatest activity under EPs occurred in the Bridging program. This program also tends to be oversubscribed, with several Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services (CSCES) offices reporting running short of funds for this program toward year-end. WP was under-subscribed at some offices.

There are significant variations in the client profile across the different EP components, reflecting the unique objectives of each. Clients who experience greatest barriers to employment are generally well represented in the Bridging and CW programs. These participants tend to have lower levels of education and work experience and are more likely to be collecting SAP benefits. There is a higher proportion of Aboriginal clients in Bridging and CW, and, for the former, youth and single parents. SE participants, on the other hand, have the highest levels of education and resources. The profile of WP participants falls in the middle.

Targeting. There was no clear answer to the question of appropriateness of current eligibility criteria. Certainly, the current target groups – EI claimants, reachback and SAP recipients – are viewed as valid. Yet, a significant portion of staff and stakeholders/partners view other client groups as potentially benefiting from EPs.

The impact of broadening the eligibility criteria on program demand is unclear, however, and would depend on the types of clients to which programs are opened (e.g., the general public *versus* recent immigrants). At the very least, there may be a need for examining the flexibility of EPs in this area and the extent to which staff and partners are aware of and using the exemption process to address the needs of ineligible clients in exceptional circumstances.

Overlap and Duplication. Few significant concerns were expressed about potential overlap between EPs and other programs offered by the province or other orders of government. Eligibility criteria for the various programs often differ. As well, collaboration and co-ordination among program deliverers prevents duplication of services at the field level.

Design and Delivery

Marketing. Marketing of EPs has not been a strategic or a significant priority for CSCES offices. Participation levels of individual clients have been generally sufficient and, based on participants' sources of awareness of their intervention, cross-referrals among organizations have been effective. Most evaluation participants are not of the view that there are significant

gaps in awareness/participation of client groups. Service delivery partners appear well aware of project opportunities under EPs and communications between the Department and CBOs are viewed as effective.

Some weaknesses in awareness/participation were observed with respect to clients with special needs (e.g., persons with disabilities, new immigrants, rural dwellers – a challenge for most programs). Weaknesses were also identified in marketing to the employer client group, and the underutilization of WP in some offices reflects challenges in reaching this group.

Administrative Aspects of Program. Program administrative aspects such as the application/approval processes, timeliness, disbursement of payments, and project monitoring are generally viewed as effective by staff and found to be satisfactory by participants, and service delivery partners. Few participants indicated any barriers to participation in EPs.

An exception is the extent to which participants felt well-informed prior to participating in their program. Also, staff rated the client assessment and referral process among the less effective elements of EPs.

The Program Agreement System (One Client Service Model, OCSM) received high marks from surveyed delivery staff. The system supports the contracting and analysis/reporting processes within the Department. Sufficient supports are available to assist staff in their use of this system. Few modifications to the OCSM were recommended.

The majority of employers/organizations too expressed satisfaction with all administrative aspects of the program. Satisfaction was generally higher among CW organizations than WP employers.

The lowest levels of employer satisfaction were reported for monitoring requirements (submitting cost reports and receiving on-site monitors) among WP employers and for the quality of workers among CW organizations and WP employers, though a majority reported being satisfied with these elements (66-73 per cent).

Funding Levels and Placement Wages. Views offered on program funding levels were mixed. Key informants generally saw current per participant funding levels as sufficient, though some recommended standardizing wage subsidies. On the other hand, staff and service delivery partners assigned relatively low satisfaction ratings to the level of EP funding available for wage subsidies and, particularly, employment/business supports to address clients' barriers. Adequacy of supports for special needs clients was also raised as an issue. CW and WP participants expressed only moderate satisfaction with placement wages (though this is typical of employment programs).

Flexibility. Key informants identified program flexibility as a strength of EPs and this is also an area where the satisfaction ratings of service delivery partners were high. Staff provided more modest ratings of program flexibility to meet client and partner/employer needs (42-58 per cent), with CW being seen as somewhat inferior in this respect. The Bridging program (particularly individual contracts), coupled with the exemption process and funds for employment supports, were seen as providing significant flexibility to address client needs.

Though use of exemption provisions has been fairly low, there is likely to be greater use of it in the future, as administrative processes for exemption approvals are streamlined and staff become more familiar with the programs to best meet the needs of clients.

Non-Completion of Intervention. Discontinuation of the intervention prior to completion occurred in 20 to 30 per cent of cases. Personal or health reasons most often interfered with completion, though a significant portion of Bridging participants indicated they left to take a job.

Program Incrementality. Program incrementality (the extent to which activity would not have occurred without the program) is considered strong by Bridging participants and by CW participants and participating organizations. For WP, however, less than one in three employers (31 per cent) and less than one in two participants (43 per cent) feel that hiring would not have occurred without the program. SE is even less incremental – only one in three participants felt the program was necessary for them to start a business.

Partnerships. The close connection between Career and Employment Services and EPs makes it difficult to isolate the effects of EPs on partnerships. Still, most evaluation respondents – key informants, staff and service delivery partners – agreed that EPs have resulted in the development or enhancement of partnerships (e.g., with CBOs, participating employers/organizations and Human Resources Development Canada), though it should be noted that the term “partnership” could have been considered to include mere funding arrangements. Partnerships were said to lead to improved client service and outreach, and understanding and awareness of available resources and community needs.

Use of Other Services and Supports. About half or more of EP participants are using other Departmental services to complement their EP intervention (CSCES resource area, Career Employment Consultants (CECs), web-site). However, with the exception of Bridging participants, the proportion of participants who reported having developed an action plan (or recall doing so) was fairly low (one-third). Fewer CW and WP participants reported receiving follow-up contact.

Use of employment supports varied across programs. Bridging participants were most likely to have received additional assistance for supports (40 per cent), while 20-30 per cent of participants in other programs accessed employment supports (e.g., to cover training costs, equipment or tools, business costs).

Impacts/Success

Program Usefulness. Participants tended to rate the usefulness of EPs higher in softer areas (e.g., confidence, motivation) and lower for outcomes directly related to employment. Bridging participants tended to provide higher ratings of program usefulness compared to other participants and SE participants provide the lowest ratings.

Quality of Life. The majority of participants indicated that their personal quality of life improved compared to before their intervention.

Being Hired. Two-thirds of WP participants were hired by their employer once the subsidy had ended, most on a full-time basis. Hiring was often short-lived, however, as only 27 per cent were working for their WP employer at the time of the survey interview.

As for the CW program, despite the fact that there are fewer expectations that participants in this program will be hired by the sponsoring organization, a significant portion of participants (four in ten) reported being hired beyond the subsidy period. Again, however, job tenure was relatively short, with only 17 per cent still employed with the organization at the time of the interview.

The reasons cited for why hiring did not take place following the subsidy tended to differ between participants and employers. While participants most often cited lack of work or inability of the organization to afford wages, employers themselves infrequently cited this reason (being more likely to have indicated that they “don’t know” or that hiring did not take place owing to the actions/qualifications of the participant).

The degree to which hiring would have taken place without the program (incremental hiring) was considerably higher among CW organizations than WP employers (71 *versus* 31 per cent).

Employment. Considering impacts 18 months, on average, following the intervention, Bridging and CW participants had similar employment outcomes, with just over half employed at the time of the survey. This is at least a partial reflection of the similar socio-demographic characteristics of these two program groups.

Employment results were generally stronger for WP than for CW or Bridging and most positive for SE participants. WP and SE groups had a greater likelihood of being employed and spent less time jobless during the post-program period. The unemployment rate at the time of the survey ranged from just six per cent for SE clients to 36 per cent for CW participants.

While SE clients had the most positive employment outcomes, many participants had not, in fact, been involved in *self*-employment. Just over half classified themselves as self-employed at the time of the interview and SE participants often experienced a decline in earnings from their pre-program job.

Among those participants who had not found employment in the post-program period, the most frequent reasons cited were a lack of jobs and a lack of skills/education.

Entering Further Education/Training. A significant portion of participants in all program groups went on to further education and training after completing their intervention (26 to 40 per cent). Bridging participants, in particular, were likely to go on to further training.

Self-Sufficiency. Participants from all program groups exhibited increased self-sufficiency following their intervention, measured by a reduction in the proportion collecting EI or SAP benefits and a greater propensity to have employment earnings in the post-program period compared to before the intervention. Being a single parent or separated or the presence of many dependents increased the chances of social assistance receipt.

Factors Associated with Positive Outcomes. The multivariate analysis indicated that having a post-secondary education or prior work experience was associated with positive labour market

outcomes for participants, as was having a longer post-program period. Weaker results were recorded for older workers, persons with disabilities, SAP recipients and rural dwellers.

Program variables such as speaking with a CEC and follow-up contact were also identified in the multivariate analysis as important success factors. Key informants and staff further identified proper client assessment/action plans, client screening and good client-employer matches, adequate income/employment supports, and ongoing support/monitoring during the placement as key ingredients in a smooth transition to employment. A positive employer environment and community involvement were also seen as important success factors.

Employer/Organization Assistance Provided to Participants. Virtually all CW/WP organizations/employers indicated that they had provided on-the-job training to participants, as well as feedback on performance and job coaching. However, the training was likely to have been informal and job-specific. Participants in CW and WP were less apt to report receiving this kind of support than employers reported providing it, and, in the case of WP, the training rarely occurred on a formal basis. Staff and service delivery partners recommended that training form a more important focus in placements. A minority of CW and WP participants reported that their organization had provided them with job search advice (an expectation of the programs).

Organizational/Community Benefits. Majorities of organizations and employers reported *organizational benefits* of participating in CW and WP, with CW organizations more likely to observe benefits than WP employers did. Representatives of CW organizations also observed *community benefits* of their projects. For both CW and WP, being able to provide *high-quality on-the-job training* and *fill job vacancies* were seen as benefits of participation.

Jobs Created. Sixty to 70 per cent of employers/organizations participating in CW and WP rated the program as having a positive impact on the number of jobs created. Another potential avenue for job creation was through businesses created under the SE program: 33 per cent of SE participants reported hiring 2.3 employees each, representing 0.75 employees hired per participant considering all SE participants (not just those hiring employees).

Strengths and Challenges

Following is a summary of key findings of the evaluation of EPs, organized according to program strengths and challenges.

Program Strengths

The *objectives* of EPs are seen as relevant, by offering a spectrum of options addressing a range of client needs. EPs are also viewed as relevant to the needs of participating employers/organizations and service delivery partners.

The current program *target groups* – EI claimants, reachbacks and SAP recipients – are perceived as valid.

Program *marketing* appears sufficient for the most, though some weaknesses were observed. Client participation levels are adequate, cross-referrals among organizations are effective, and few gaps in awareness/participation of client groups are apparent. Service delivery partners are well aware of project opportunities under EPs.

Administrative aspects of the programs, such as the application/approval processes, timeliness, disbursement of payments, and project monitoring, are generally viewed as effective by staff and are found to be satisfactory by participants, employers/organizations and service delivery partners. The Program Agreement System (OCSM) received high marks from staff as effectively supporting delivery of EPs. Large majorities of employers/organizations (typically 80 per cent and higher) also expressed satisfaction with most *administrative aspects* of WP/CW, but more so for organizations participating in the latter than the former.

A strong *assessment process* to determine clients' motivation level, strengths and barriers, was seen as a key ingredient of a smooth transition to employment for participants. The current *screening* process for SE participants is perceived as quite rigorous (though perhaps does not focus sufficiently on incrementality). The majority of Bridging participants reported developing an *action plan*, though this process was less evident among other program groups.

An ongoing *connection* with participants during and following the intervention was seen as another important success factor, with follow-up in particular viewed as a key ingredient of a smooth and successful transition to employment. The multivariate analysis showed that *contact* with a Career and Employment Consultant (CEC) and *follow-up* contact are associated with more positive employment outcomes.

Program *flexibility* was identified as a strength, attracting high satisfaction ratings from service delivery partners. Individual Bridging contracts, coupled with the exemption process and employment supports, provide significant flexibility to address client needs.

Most agreed that EPs have resulted in the development or enhancement of *partnerships* or other forms of cooperation (e.g., the government funding organizations to deliver services to clients). These arrangements were said to lead to improved client service and outreach, and increased understanding and awareness of available resources and community needs.

There is little *overlap* perceived between EPs and other programs offered by the province or other orders of government. Eligibility criteria for the various programs often differ, while co-ordination among program deliverers prevents duplication of services at the field level.

Program *incrementality* (the extent to which an activity would have taken place if the program did not exist) was perceived as strong for Bridging and CW.

Participants rated the *usefulness* of EPs higher in "soft" areas (e.g., building confidence, motivation) compared to "harder" areas (e.g., employment outcomes). Bridging participants tend to provide higher ratings of program usefulness than those in other EPs.

The majority of participants indicate that their personal *quality of life* has improved since before their intervention.

Most WP participants were *hired* by their employer after the subsidy had ended, most on a full-time basis. About 40 per cent of CW participants were hired by the sponsoring organization – despite this not being an expectation of the program.

Employment results are generally stronger for WP participants and most positive for SE participants. These two groups have a greater likelihood of being employed and spend less time jobless during the post-program period, than participants in the other programs.

A significant portion of participants in all programs (26-40 per cent) (highest for those participating in Bridging projects) went on to *further education and training* after completing their intervention.

Participants in all program groups show increased *self-sufficiency* following their intervention, as measured by a reduction in the proportion collecting Employment Insurance (EI) or Social Assistance (SA) benefits and a greater propensity to have employment *earnings* in the post-program period compared to before the intervention.

Employment and other outcomes are most positive for clients with a *post-secondary education* and *prior work experience*.

CW organizations reported greater *organizational benefits* than WP employers did. Representatives of CW organizations also observed *community benefits* of their projects. For both CW and WP, being able to provide *high-quality on-the-job training* and *fill vacancies* were seen by a majority of deliverers and employers as benefits for sponsors.

The majority of CW and WP employers/organizations rated the programs as having a positive impact on the *number of jobs*, while a third of SE participants hired 2.3 employees each.

Program Challenges

For SAP recipients and clients with multiple barriers, there are perceived to be *gaps* in the EPS at each end of the services spectrum – basic skills/preparatory training at one end and occupational skills training at the other. There were some doubts about the responsiveness of EPs to these groups generally, in terms of appropriate approaches and the length of time needed to address complex needs.

The *relevance of WP and SE to certain groups* was questioned. The relevance of WP to employers' needs received a tepid rating by employers. Some evaluation respondents questioned the appropriateness of the SE program being an EP given its limited applicability and virtually exclusive draw of clients from the EI-eligible pool, a significant proportion of whom would have started their business without the program.

There may be a need to examine the flexibility of EPs to consider *inclusion of non-targeted groups* and the extent to which staff and partners are aware of and using the *exemption process* to address the needs of ineligible clients in exceptional circumstances.

A significant portion of evaluation respondents believed that *ceasing WP funding* has created a gap in the program array that cannot be successfully addressed by the Work-Based Training (WBT) option under Job Start/Future Skills. At the same time, *overlap/duplication* between the

WP and WBT programs was an area of concern when both programs were funded. This is an area for scrutiny if a program like WP is re-established.

Bridging tends to be *oversubscribed*, with several Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services (CSCES) offices reporting running short of funds for this program toward year-end. For Bridging projects, there were also calls to enhance *accountability* of contracts and to ensure a closer connection between the intervention and employment.

Some gaps in *awareness/communications* were observed. Participation and awareness tended to be lower in groups with *special needs* (e.g., persons with disabilities, new immigrants, rural dwellers) and lower levels of satisfaction were reported for the extent to which clients felt *well-informed* prior to participating in their program. Weaknesses were also identified in *reaching employers*, as indicated by the underutilization of WP in some offices. Strengthened employer recruitment efforts will be needed if a program like this is re-introduced.

Client *assessment/referral* is an area that staff rated as being less effective than other design/delivery elements. *Screening* was seen as lacking rigour in CW and WP. Participating employers and organizations indicated a need for better screening (e.g., in terms of attitudinal and less so skill attributes) of clients for placements to improve the match between client and employer/organization.

Staff and service delivery partners assigned relatively low satisfaction ratings to the level of WP and CW funding available for *wage subsidies* and, particularly, *employment/business supports* to address clients' barriers. Adequacy of supports for *special needs clients* was also raised as an issue.

The *linkage* between EPs and other programs providing funding support, such as the PTA and the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement, should be assessed and communicated clearly.

Employers' *monitoring requirements* (submitting cost reports and receiving on-site monitors) elicited relatively low levels of satisfaction among WP employers.

Employment outcomes were weaker for CW and Bridging participants than those in other EPs. Just over half were *employed* at the time of the survey, partly reflecting the socio-demographic characteristics of these client groups. CW participants had a high "official" *rate of unemployment* at the time of the survey (36 per cent).

Lack of skills/education was one of the most frequently cited reasons by participants why CW participants had not found employment in the post-program period. The multivariate analysis shows that weaker EP results are recorded for *older* workers, persons with *disabilities*, *SAP* recipients and *rural* dwellers.

Program *incrementality* (the extent to which an activity would have taken place if the program did not exist) is particularly low for WP and SE.

WP and CW participants were less likely than their sponsoring employers/organizations to indicate that *training* was provided during their placement. Training, when it occurred, was often informal and job-specific. Staff raised doubts about the transferability of skills learned

during CW placements particularly. Few CW participants were provided with *job search advice* by their sponsoring organization (which is an expectation of the program).

Post-subsidy *hiring* of WP and CW participants by employers/organizations tended to be short-lived.

Areas for Improvement of Individual Programs

Implications of the evaluation for improvement of each of the components of Employment Programs are discussed in turn below.

Community Works

Impacts related to CW on a variety of aspects tend to be weaker than for other programs, pertaining to job tenure, likelihood of employment, and duration of joblessness. The poorer employment outcomes for participants is at least a partial reflection of the greater barriers to employment this client group faces.

Some CW design and delivery elements were also found to be relatively weak, for example, its flexibility, client screening and follow-up contact. The relatively weak screening could partly explain organizations' perceptions of low quality participants. Participants generally were not satisfied with the wages they were paid during their placements, which, however, is a complaint often heard in evaluations of other similar programs. As well, staff and service delivery partners assigned relatively low satisfaction ratings to the level of CW funding available for wage subsidies and, particularly, business supports to address clients' barriers to employment.

An expectation of program participation for CW placements is that the work experience be accompanied by training for clients and job search advice. While virtually all CW organizations indicated that they had provided on-the-job training to participants (as well as feedback on performance and job coaching), this training was likely to have been informal and job-specific. Moreover, participants in CW were less likely to report receiving this kind of support than employers reported providing it. In particular, training was reported by only four in ten CW participants and this rarely occurred on a formal basis. Staff and service delivery partners also recommended that training be a more important focus in placements. A minority of CW participants reported that their organization had provided them job search advice.

Bridging

Bridging represents a significant portion of EP activity. Yet, the program has been oversubscribed in the past and concerns were expressed about the extent to which Bridging has been able to adequately address the needs of clients with multiple barriers. The latter issue may be leading to Bridging projects designed to address basic skill needs. The effectiveness of the link among Bridging, Basic Education and PTA should be examined, as well as the sufficiency of funding for these programs. Finally, while Bridging was praised as a flexible program, there

were also calls to ensure accountability of contracts and ensuring a closer connection between the intervention and employment.

Work Placement

A significant portion of evaluation respondents believed that ceasing funding of WP has created a gap in the program array. The Work-Based Training (WBT) option under Job Start/Future Skills does not currently cover this gap given its differing objectives, its location in a different Department from delivery of EPs and a funding allocation that has not been increased since funding ceased for WP. Program renewal (or expansion of WBT) is supported by the fact that most participants were hired by their sponsoring employer on a full-time basis after the subsidy had ended and by high incidence of training that occurs during the placement, though participants were less likely to have said the latter had occurred than employers were to have said they provided it.

If the program were renewed, certain measures would have to be taken. There is a need to ensure harmonization between the new initiative and WBT, as overlap/duplication between WP and WBT had raised concerns. Also, while staff provided high ratings of the effectiveness of its design and delivery elements, the satisfaction ratings of WP employers were modest at best (though all said they would participate again). As well, staff and service delivery partners were relatively dissatisfied with WP funding available for wage subsidies and, particularly, employment/business supports to address clients' barriers. The incrementality of the program is questionable in some cases, from the perspective of both the participant and the employer.

A re-introduction of WP or expansion of other options would require greater effort in the area of program marketing, particularly given that the program experienced challenges in recruiting employer participants. Personal contacts and networking, and highly targeted local efforts are strategies that have proven effective in the past.

The match between the participant and the employer is viewed as a key element of success. WP employers were critical of the quality of workers, however, though weaknesses were more often identified in the areas of attitude/motivation than work skills or experience. Thus, screening is an area for improvement should a program like WP be re-introduced.

As well, attention would have to be paid to the fact that WP participants were not as likely to say they had received training as part of their placement as employers were to say they had provided it to the client. Also, the importance of coaching and mentoring throughout the placement period was stressed as an ingredient of success.

Self-Employment

The SE Program provides a useful option for a narrow segment of the EI-eligible client group. While employment outcomes for this group were the strongest of all the programs, many SE participants did not enter *self*-employment. Also, participants generally rated the program less useful and less important in helping them to get their current job. Program incrementality was judged as low – 70 per cent would have started the business in SE's absence.

While SE screening processes were seen effective in selecting those with solid credentials (experience, education, resources and maturity), this may have had the paradoxical effect of selecting those who needed assistance the least. Some evaluation respondents wondered about the appropriateness of including SE as an Employment Program given its limited applicability and virtually exclusive draw of clients from the EI-eligible pool.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Saskatchewan Learning and the former Department of Social Services (DSS)¹ commissioned an evaluation of Employment Programs (EPs).² EPs are targeted at Social Assistance Plan (SAP) recipients and Employment Insurance (EI) clients (claimant and “reachback³”). They offer a broad range of programs and employment assistance services intended to help clients obtain training and work experience leading to sustainable employment. Under the umbrella of EPs, there are five individual programs or components, four of which are the subject of this evaluation.⁴

¹ A list of acronyms is presented in Appendix A.

² On April 1, 2002 the Saskatchewan Government reorganized several of its departments. As a result of the restructure, the delivery of Employment Programs through the Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services (CSCES) offices, which were part of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training (PSEST), became part of the Department of Social Services, which, on April 1, 2003, was renamed the Department of Community Resources and Employment (DCRE), in recognition of the changing emphasis of the social services system from the traditional provision of welfare to the promotion of independence through a variety of supports for families and individuals. The PSEST Programs Branch, which was and continues to be, during a transition period, responsible for policy development and support, systems support and evaluation was retained in the new department of Saskatchewan Learning.

³ Human Resources Development Canada defines a reachback client as an unemployed individual for whom: (a) an unemployment benefit period has been established or has ended within the 36 months prior to the date of requesting assistance; or (b) a benefit period that included a maternity or parental claim has been established within the 60 months prior to the date of requesting assistance, after which the individual remained out of the labour market in order to care for a newborn or newly adopted child and is now seeking to re-enter the labour force.

⁴ A fifth component, *Job Development Services*, provides support to employers and organizations to help match job opportunities with the skills of individuals on SA or on EI who are looking for work. This component is not included in this evaluation.

A full description of the EP components that were evaluated is presented in Appendix B, but they can be briefly described as follows:

- ❑ *Work Placement* (WP) provided wage subsidies or subsidies covering other employment-related costs for employers who in turn provide on-the-job training and work experience for participants.⁵
- ❑ *Community Works* (CW) is a similar wage subsidy program focused on community-based organizations (CBOs) and municipalities.
- ❑ *Bridging* provides funding to CBOs, businesses, or public or private training facilities to assist participants to move to employment (through counselling, employability training, or work experience).
- ❑ The *Self-Employment* (SE) *Program* delivers entrepreneurial training and support to individuals seeking to set up their own business.

A total of \$9,225,345 was spent on the four programs in 2001/2002⁶. CW and Bridging each accounted for 35 per cent of total EP expenditures, while WP accounted for 21 per cent and SE nine per cent. Overall, 2001/2002 spending represents a decline of 19 per cent from the previous fiscal year, attributed to 52 and 45 per cent declines in SE and WP expenditures, respectively.

The purpose of this Final Report is to present the findings from the evaluation of the Employment Programs. The report draws together the various lines of evidence to address the evaluation issues that have defined the scope of the study.

1.2 Evaluation Issues

The evaluation of EPs has addressed 22 specific issues grouped into the four broad areas of: (1) rationale; (2) design and delivery; (3) success and impacts; and (4) alternatives.

⁵ Note that the funding to the Work Placement Program ceased in April 2002. The program regulations remain and it is possible the program could be funded if a need for it were confirmed.

⁶ The discussion of expenditures and budgets is based on administrative data obtained from Career and Employment Services.

a) *Rationale*

The issue of rationale includes evaluation questions related to: relevance - the extent to which the objectives of the programs are relevant to the needs of clients, comprising participants, employers, service delivery partners, and the community; usage levels or demand for the programs; and targeting – whether or not the stated client targets (EI recipients, “reachbacks”, and SAP recipients) are still appropriate. Related to the issue of targeting is representativeness of the client profile, specifically the extent to which EP participants represent the overall SAP client profile.⁷ The extent of overlap with other programs is also considered under relevance (need for the programs).

b) *Design and Delivery*

Under the category of design and delivery are issues comprising: adequacy of marketing; flexibility and responsiveness of the programs to client needs; efficiency of administrative processes; the impact of the Program Agreement System; and sufficiency of wage-subsidy levels, and the degree of partnerships/cooperation with other parties.⁸ In this set of issues, the goal is to identify aspects of the program and services that are and are not working well, for purposes of suggesting possible modifications.

c) *Success and Impacts*

A number of potential impacts of EPs are considered including employment and training outcomes, the impact on self-sufficiency in terms income-support dependence and earnings, non-economic impacts (quality of life), being hired by the sponsoring employer and organization, factors contributing to success, employer and delivery partner effects, impacts on the community, and unintended outcomes.

⁷ Note that this issue and the next issue (partnerships) were originally categorized under design and delivery, but were thought more apt as relevance issues.

⁸ Note that with the restructuring of Saskatchewan Learning, a question pertaining to the consistency of design and delivery with the Sector Plan is less relevant. A Departmental Plan is being developed at Saskatchewan Learning, but not finalized during the study period. The evaluation will take into consideration Department of Social Services planning documents.

d) **Alternatives**

To address the issue of alternatives, findings from all lines of evidence are examined to identify what approaches and design features best help participants, delivery partners and employers.

1.3 **Methodology**

The evaluation of EPs was based on multiple lines of evidence, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods. Lines of evidence included:

- ❑ *Review of program documentation.* To provide context for the evaluation and to address study issues related to implementation and planning, a review of documentation was conducted. This included, for example, documentation related to the development and implementation of EPs, program brochures/fact sheets, and strategic plans. Analyses were also conducted of program administrative data (based on the One Client Service Model (OCSM)).
- ❑ *Key informant interviews.* In total, 25 key informant interviews were conducted for this evaluation. Respondents included provincial officials from Saskatchewan Learning and DSS and representatives from community-based partners and training institutions.
- ❑ *Staff survey.* An Internet-based survey of DSS staff involved in the delivery of EPs was conducted to gather input on effectiveness, and strengths and challenges of program delivery. In total, 83 staff members submitted completed questionnaires out of 98 who were invited to participate.
- ❑ *Survey of program participants.* A telephone survey was conducted of participants in EPs. In total, 750 interviews were conducted with participants: 293 with Bridging participants, 216 with CW participants, 140 with WP participants and 101 with SE program participants. Participants were defined to include the 7,536 clients who had participated in an intervention between April 2000 and March 2002 and on whom contact information was provided to the consultant. The survey interview covered issues such as program satisfaction, perceived usefulness of interventions and impacts. A profile of EP participants is included in Appendix C.
- ❑ *Survey of employers/organizations.* A telephone survey was conducted of 118 employers/organizations that had accepted a participant for placement under the CW (n=60) or WP (n=58) programs. The timeframe of program participation was April 2000 to March 2002 during which 1,355 employers/organizations participated. Issues covered in the survey interview included satisfaction with the programs and benefits for the organization.
- ❑ *Survey of service delivery partners.* The views of partners delivering projects under the Bridging and SE programs were sought through a telephone survey of service delivery

partners. In total, out of 150 partners on whom contact information was available, 82 interviews were completed: 70 with those delivering Bridging and 12 with organizations delivering SE projects. The survey included questions pertaining to the nature of project activities, satisfaction with program design and delivery, and impacts.

While this evaluation of EPs provides a strong combination of qualitative and quantitative research evidence, it should be noted that the participant sample size for the WP and SE programs are relatively small (representing a margin of error of between eight and nine per cent).⁹ Sub-group analyses, therefore, are limited to the Bridging and CW programs. As well, the sample size for the employer and partner surveys are also quite small and, for the service delivery partner survey, heavily weighted in favour of partners delivering Bridging (as there are few organizations in the province that are involved in Self-Employment projects). A final caveat should be noted. Outcomes data presented for program participants are not based on an analysis of *incremental* outcomes — that is, by comparison to what would have happened had the programs *not* been available. A comparison group analysis was not considered to be feasible for this study.

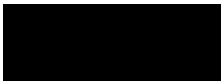
1.4 A Note on Presentation of Results

How the results for scaled questions are presented in the tables of this report should be noted. For questions where the seven-point scale ranges from negative to positive where there is a distinct mid-point (e.g., where 1=extremely dissatisfied and 7=extremely satisfied, with the mid-point 4=neither dissatisfied or satisfied), the responses are aggregated and reported in three groups as follows: 1-3 (=dissatisfied), 4 (=neither), and 5-7 (=satisfied). Conversely, where the seven-point scale ranges from low to high and there is an indistinct mid-point (e.g., where 1=to no extent, 7=to a great extent, and 4=to a moderate extent), the results are aggregated and reported somewhat differently, as follows: 1-2 (=little/no extent), 3-5 (=moderate extent), and 6-7 (=large extent).

⁹ Given limited project resources, the decision was made during the research design to limit the number of cases for these two programs since: (1) the Work Placement program was no longer in operation at the time of the evaluation; and (2) the Self-Employment program accounts for a relatively small proportion of EP activity.

1.5 Organization of the Report

Chapter Two of the report presents findings related to the rationale and continued relevance of EPs, from the perspective of those involved in the design and delivery of programs. Findings with respect to the implementation of EPs are discussed in Chapter Three. Chapter Four describes the impacts of EP for program participants. Chapter Five presents the perspective of employers/organizations. Suggested alternatives and avenues for improvement are explored in Chapter Six. Chapter Seven presents summary observations and conclusions.



2 RATIONALE

2.1 Relevance

In general, both government key informants (DSS and Saskatchewan Learning) and other stakeholders indicated approval for the specific objectives of EPs and generally believed programs to be meeting the needs of the various constituencies that they serve – participants, employers/ organizations and service delivery partners.

a) *Participants*

According to key informants, EPs meet the needs of participants for services to assist in their transition to the labour force. A significant portion of EP clients lack recent or relevant work experience. Programs such as CW and WP provide for structured work experience and training to lead to long-term employment. The activities available under Bridging such as pre-employment training address the needs of clients who have multiple barriers to employment and are not yet job-ready. SE meets the needs of a narrower segment of the client population who are interested in building a business.

According to surveyed staff, the needs of social assistance recipients are met to a great extent by the Bridging program (Table 2.1). Almost eight in ten (78 per cent) indicated the program is meeting needs for this client group. The CW and WP programs are also viewed as being relevant to the SAP client group. For EI-eligible clients, staff more often identify WP and SE as relevant and meeting needs (58 and 78 per cent, respectively, say to a great extent). SE is more often viewed as meeting the needs of EI clients, whereas few staff indicate the program as relevant to the social assistance clientele. The needs of external

organizations (partners, employers) are most apt to be seen as being met by the CW and WP programs. Two-thirds of staff rate the CW program as being relevant to the needs of communities.

TABLE 2.1
Rated Relevance of EPs: Staff,
Per Cent Indicating Program Relevant/Meeting Needs to a Great Extent*

“To what extent do you feel that the <EP> is/was relevant and meeting the needs of the following groups?”				
Client Group	Bridging (n=69) (%)	Community Works (n=65) (%)	Work Placement (n=64) (%)	Self- Employment (n=51) (%)
El clients (claimants and reachback)	49	42	58	78
Social Assistance recipients	78	65	74	8
Employers, project sponsor organizations, community-based organizations, training institutions	49	72	69	20
Communities	n/a	65	n/a	n/a

* Percentage responding “to a great extent” (6 or 7 on a 7-point scale).
Source: DSS Staff Survey, 2002

b) *Employers/Organizations*

For participating employers and organizations, WP and CW are perceived by key informants as contributing to addressing job vacancies and to meeting job or project requirements at a reduced cost. The subsidy available under the programs offsets a portion of the cost of training a new employee.

According to employers/organizations themselves, EPs are rated more relevant to the needs of CBOs using CW than for private sector employers involved in WP. For example, 62 per cent of CW organizations rate CW as being relevant to addressing their organization’s need for workers to a large extent and more than eight in ten (83 per cent) believe to a great extent that it is important for government to continue to provide wage subsidy programs to encourage hiring. One in four WP employers, however, indicated that the program had been relevant to addressing their organization’s need for workers and just over half (52 per cent) thought it important that the government provide wage subsidies to encourage hiring.

c) Service Delivery Partners

According to key informants, for service delivery partners, EPs provide a source of funding to allow organizations to address the employment needs of the particular client group(s) that they serve (e.g., persons with disabilities, social assistance recipients). CW can also provide the means for CBOs to hire participants on a short-term basis to address their own needs for workers.

d) Gaps

In terms of where needs are not being met, key informants from DSS and other stakeholders generally agreed that the elimination of WP from the EP array has left a gap in programming for both participants and for private sector employers.

A second area identified by Departmental key informants where needs are not being met is in the area of occupational skills training for SAP recipients. EI-eligible clients have funding support for training available through the Skills Training Benefit (STB). A parallel program that off-sets training tuition and book costs is not currently available to social assistance recipients. The Student Loan (SL) program is one possible funding option. The SL program has limitations for SAP recipients, however, in that: (1) many are unwilling to take on debt or are perhaps not best-served by incurring debt; (2) in some cases, clients have previously defaulted on a student loan and are, therefore, not eligible for this program; and (3) the SL program does not provide the type of client assessment and supports that may be required by clients on social assistance; and (4) many SAP recipients do not have the prerequisites to get into the SL program.

Several CBO key informants noted a deficiency in interventions aimed at improving clients' *basic* skills; that is, interventions that would *precede* participation in, for example, a Bridging project. Clients with multiple barriers are often not sufficiently literate or lack life skills to succeed in EPs. Preparatory interventions for clients to acquire prerequisite skills are viewed as lacking. Key informants described these interventions as ideally encompassing a longer timeframe, based on a sensitive and holistic approach that considers

other barriers clients may be experiencing, and occurring outside of traditional institutions which may have failed participants in the past.

Finally, several key informants emphasized the need for more follow-up support during and following a placement or intervention to support clients and to promptly address any issues that arise that could compromise success.

2.2 Program Utilization

During the period under study¹⁰, there were 8,794 recorded interventions under EPs. The number of individuals involved in EPs during this time was 7,536 (a smaller number than total interventions owing to the possibility of participation in multiple interventions). Fourteen per cent of EP participants were involved in more than one intervention during the study period.

Much of the activity under EPs occurred under the Bridging program (51 per cent of interventions), followed by WP (22 per cent) and CW (19 per cent). SE accounts for only eight per cent of EP interventions. In terms of the utilization of programs across regions, CW is used more heavily in Region 1 (North) and less in Region 5 (Southeast) (Table 2.2). WP is used more often in Region 3 (Saskatoon) and less so in Region 4 (Regina) (where Bridging is somewhat more prevalent).

TABLE 2.2
Region of Last Intervention: EP Participants,
Percentage Distribution by Region

Region	Bridging (n=4,519) (%)	Community Works (n=1,677) (%)	Work Placement (n=1,929) (%)	Self- Employment (n=669) (%)
1 (North)	6	28	10	11
2 (Central)	13	18	14	16
3 (Saskatoon)	38	24	46	37
4 (Regina)	32	25	19	28
5 (Southeast)	10	5	9	9

Source: Administrative data from One Client Service Model and Career and Employment Information System

¹⁰ For the purposes of this evaluation, the sample selection criterion was all individuals who participated in Employment Programs between April 1, 2000 and March 31, 2002.

There is some evidence of over-subscription and lapsing of funds. Anecdotally, key informants within DSS indicated that Bridging programs have been over-subscribed in the past and this is an area where funds were found to be lacking. Conversely, representatives from several Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services (CSCES) offices reported lapsing funds for WP when it was operating. The underutilization of this program was attributed to challenges in securing employer participation. An examination of 2001/2002 financial data obtained from Saskatchewan Learning corroborates this evidence: Bridging expenditures exceeded budgets in two regions. On the other hand, expenditure in WP, CW and SE were 20 per cent or more below budget in three regions. Overall, 81 per cent of the 2001/2002 budget was spent. However, it should be recognized that budget allocations at the beginning of the year are best estimates only, based on several factors including regional needs, client need, population, and unemployment, that may change during the year.

2.3 Program Targeting

Key informant views about the EP program eligibility criteria were mixed. Some key informants from within DSS/Saskatchewan Learning indicated that funding and participation levels dictate that the current eligibility criteria that target EI-eligible clients (claimants and reachback) and SAP recipients be maintained. Several key informants feared broadening the criteria would spur demand that could not be adequately met by available resources. Further, they said that broadening the criteria to include, for example, non-SAP/non-EI-eligible individuals, could result in a participation bias toward job-ready clients and the exclusion of those with multiple barriers. These key informants pointed out that the current exemption process allows for flexibility in the eligibility criteria to accommodate special situations where clients do not meet eligibility criteria, but where a case can be made for their inclusion in an EP.

An examination of administrative data on exemptions obtained from Saskatchewan Learning provides detail on reasons for and expected benefits of the exemptions. The data indicate that, over the period April 1, 1999 to March 31, 2002, there were 183 applications for exemptions under the programs, of which 92 per cent were approved. Of the 169 that were approved, 15 per cent were associated with one of three EPs, Bridging, CW or WP, specifically with respect to “criteria” “eligible costs” or “participant support costs” under

those programs. The predominant type of exemption, however, which was indicated for about 72 per cent of approved exemptions, was labelled “participant eligibility; section 3”. An examination of the descriptive text on file for approved exemptions revealed that these were associated with non-EI/-SAP recipients who, in descending order of frequency, comprised: (1) youth, (2) First Nations persons, (3) new Canadians with post-secondary education, (4) persons with disabilities, (5) those from rural areas particularly women entering or re-entering the labour market, and (6) single parents.

The file also indicated what the expected benefits of allowing non-targeted clients into the programs. These benefits were, in descending order of frequency, the following:

1. increased general “employability” (increased education, self-esteem, work experience; first time work experience; re-qualification; establishing an overall career path);
2. increased chances of full-time employment (among those who already had work experience but of a part-time or seasonal nature);
3. benefits for individuals translating into community/society benefits (keeping clients in, and increasing attachment to, the labour market and putting them in a position to qualify for EI rather than turning to SA); and
4. benefits in the form of involving someone with much enthusiasm who would potentially be able to act as a role model for a family dependent on SA or for a First Nations community.

Representatives of CBOs (as well as a substantial portion of DSS staff) uniformly favoured broadening the EP eligibility criteria or providing greater flexibility in the criteria to include currently non-eligible clients based on need. Key informants cited examples of client groups that could benefit from EPs, but would not fall within the eligibility criteria as including unemployed individuals who are non-EI/non-SAP eligible, re-entrants to the workforce, those who are underemployed (working poor, in poor jobs, low income earners), and other special groups (e.g., persons with disabilities/special needs who have pension earnings).

The majority of surveyed staff support the existing target client groups for EPs: three-quarters of staff or more indicated that EI claimants, reachback and social assistance clients should (continue to) be eligible for EPs (Table 2.3). The only exception is a somewhat smaller number (59 per cent) who indicated that SAP recipients should be eligible for SE.

TABLE 2.3
Targeting of EPs: Staff,
Per Cent Saying Particular Client Groups Should be Eligible for EPs

“Which of the following client groups do you think should be eligible for a program such as <EP>?”				
Client Group	Bridging (n=69) (%)	Community Works (n=65) (%)	Work Placement (n=64) (%)	Self- Employment (n=51) (%)
Responses offered by respondents				
El claimants	73	74	77	98
Reachback clients	86	91	91	84
Social assistance recipients	96	97	97	59
Unprompted/open-ended responses				
Unemployed, non-EI/non-SAP	9	8	17	8
Re-entrants	9	9	8	4
General public/any resident	9	9	3	8

Source: DSS Staff Survey, 2002

In addition to the current client target groups, however, four in ten staff named in an open-ended question at least one other group that should be eligible for Bridging, CW or WP (only 22 per cent recommended that the eligibility criteria for SE be expanded to include other groups). Surveyed staff identified the following other groups that should be eligible for EPs: unemployed individuals who are neither eligible for SAP nor EI (8 to 17 per cent); re-entrants to the labour market (four to nine per cent); and any resident/general public (three to nine per cent).

2.4 Representativeness of Client Profile

One of the evaluation questions identified for the study was the extent to which EP clients are representative of the overall SAP caseload and whether programs favour job-ready clients as opposed to those with multiple barriers to employment.

Key informants believed that EP participants would tend to represent the more “job-ready” portion of the SAP caseload, particularly for the WP, CW and SE Programs. According to informants, successful work placements and ensuring the continued good will of employers and organizations in programs such as CW and WP require that participants are job-

ready and possess job maintenance skills. Similarly in the case of SE, the unique and demanding requirements of starting a business (access to capital, viable skills and experience, a business idea) generally favour those with prior work experience, formal education and marketable skills. Clients with multiple barriers and those who are less job-ready more often participate in Bridging to gain life skills and entry-level skills before proceeding to employment or to other programs such as WP or CW.

Three in ten surveyed staff (28 per cent) and a similar proportion of service delivery partners (32 per cent) agreed that “only social assistance recipients who are the most job-ready are selected for participation in EPs”. About half of staff and service delivery partners disagreed with the statement. Among those who agreed that job-ready clients tend to be selected for participation in EPs, staff were more often thinking of work placement programs such as CW and WP and less often of Bridging projects.

To assess representativeness with respect to SA receipt, EP participants (excluding those in SE) who collected SAP benefits at the time of their intervention were compared to the SAP caseload overall. This analysis suggested that EP participants tend to *under*-represent SAP clients with disabilities, women, single parents, and those with less than high school education. Note that some of these traits are associated with not being job-ready. As well, the proportion who are Aboriginal clients is slightly higher among EP participants compared to the SAP caseload overall.

2.5 Overlap and Complementarity

Key informants described EPs as complementary, both within the array of EPs themselves, as well as with other program offerings. Bridging, CW, WP and SE were viewed as providing a range of services that are appropriate for a variety of client needs and can work effectively together to provide a spectrum of services. EPs further link to preparatory interventions offered through programs such as Basic Education by providing options for additional follow-up interventions.

Within the provincial government, some key informants and staff noted that there was the potential for overlap between EPs (specifically the Work Placement Program) and Work-Based Training under Job Start/Future Skills. Since the funding of WP ceased in 2002, this is no longer an issue.

In terms of overlap with programs offered by other orders of government, key informants pointed out that Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) has minimized its involvement in labour market programming to selected client groups, namely, youth, Aboriginal people (through Aboriginal Human Resource Development Agreements), and persons with disabilities. While there is the potential for duplication in offerings for these particular client groups, more often there is a pooling of resources to meet needs. Mitigating against duplication and overlap of services is: (1) the eligibility criteria (often those who are eligible for HRDC programs are not eligible for EPs); (2) partnerships and communication between HRDC and Saskatchewan Learning/DSS staff at the field level; and (3) level of need of the client groups (i.e., there is a great need for assistance and one program or another on its own would be insufficient to meet need).

Surveyed staff and service delivery partners generally confirmed the views of key informants. The majority of staff (58 per cent) and partners (55 per cent) disagreed that “there is significant overlap between EPs and other employment and training programs available”. A small proportion, 13 per cent of staff and 17 per cent of service delivery partners, agreed with the statement. When asked to specify the areas of overlap, the handful of staff who had indicated duplication among programs cited two areas of potential overlap: youth programs and Job Start/Future Skills.



3 DESIGN/DELIVERY

The purpose of this chapter is to assess the design and delivery of the program. Data collected in all surveys but the survey of employers and organizations were used to address these issues in this chapter. Design and delivery issues with respect to employers and organizations are addressed in Chapter Five, which is devoted to the employers'/organizations' perspective on all issues.

3.1 Program Marketing

According to key informants, marketing of EPs is carried out through a mixture of methods. Centrally developed materials (fact sheets, posters, brochures, web-site) are supplemented by locally driven efforts (advertisement on TV/radio, newspaper, direct mail and informal/formal networking with government, industry and members of the community). According to key informants, CBOs themselves do little marketing of programs. Rather, clients are referred to them and CBOs inform their clients of options through group or one-on-one information or counselling sessions.

This perception was confirmed in the service delivery partner survey where the most frequently identified means of reaching clients was word of mouth or referral (62 per cent). Fewer organizations indicated undertaking active marketing efforts such as advertising.

For participants, marketing of programs is usually done through CSCES resource rooms, orientation sessions, Career and Employment Consultants (CECs) or referrals from other organizations (e.g., HRDC). Marketing for SE is particularly low-key given that this program is appropriate for only a select group of clients. Given that some components of EPs

are over-subscribed, marketing to individual clients is generally not perceived to be problematic.

For CBOs (e.g., CW organizations or service delivery partners), marketing is also viewed as having been quite successful. CBOs themselves generally praised the efforts of the CSCES to market programs and most key informant representatives felt well-informed.

Marketing has proven more difficult for the employer client group. When the WP program was funded, there were challenges in building relationships with the employer community to generate sufficient participation. Personal contacts and highly targeted local efforts have been effective in the past. However, lack of human resources and ample promotion-designated funding limit the extent of marketing. Several key informants noted the importance of continuing efforts to engage the employer community to connect them (employers) to the unemployed population and to break down negative stereotypes often associated with the DSS/Saskatchewan Learning client group.

3.2 Sources of Awareness

Referrals and informal avenues such as word of mouth are the most common ways that participants became aware of the Employment Program in which they participated (Table 3.1). Bridging participants were most likely to have heard of the program through Social Services (mentioned by 18 per cent), a CSCES office (14 per cent), or SIAST or regional college (11 per cent). One in ten mentioned publications, pamphlets or posters as their source of awareness of the program. Primary sources of referrals for CW and WP included CSCES offices (18 and 20 per cent, respectively) and HRDC/EI offices (14 and 17 per cent, respectively). With the exception of SE participants, between 20 and 29 per cent of EP participants first heard of their program through word of mouth. SE participants are most likely to have learned of the program from an HRDC/EI office (33 per cent learned of the program from this source), followed by a CSCES office (23 per cent); publications, posters or pamphlets (17 per cent); and word of mouth (16 per cent).

TABLE 3.1
Sources of Awareness: EP Participants,
Per Cent Indicating Source

"How did you first find out about your <EP>?"				
Source of Awareness	Bridging (n=293) (%)	Community Works (n= 216) (%)	Work Placement (n=140) (%)	Self- Employment (n=101) (%)
Word of mouth	26	20	29	16
Can-Sask Centre	14	18	20	23
HRDC/EI office	6	14	17	33
Department of Social Services	18	11	6	0
Community-based organization	6	9	5	6
Publication, pamphlet, poster	10	7	6	17
Employer	1	4	8	2
SIAST/regional college	11	3	1	1
Other	6	6	2	3
DK/NR	5	9	8	5

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002

- ❑ Community Works participants from urban centres are more likely to have learned of the program through word of mouth than are rural participants. Not surprisingly, participants with previous employment experience are more likely to have learned of the CW program from an HRDC/EI office.
- ❑ Bridging participants with post-secondary education or prior employment experience are more likely to cite a CSCES or HRDC/EI office as their primary source of awareness of the program, and less likely to have learned of the program through the Department of Social Services, a community college, or a community-based organization. SAP recipients participating in Bridging are more likely to have learned of the program from Social Services and less likely to have learned of the program from a CSCES or HRDC office.

Surveyed DSS staff and service delivery partners were asked whether awareness or participation is lacking among any particular client group. Many staff (43 per cent) identified no particular client group where awareness is lacking. The remainder identified groups such as EI clients (16 per cent); special groups (e.g., persons with disabilities, rural dwellers, recent immigrants) (14 per cent); and working poor/underemployed (12 per cent).

Many service delivery partners were uncertain about levels of awareness (27 per cent) or felt that awareness/participation is not lacking among any groups (18 per cent). Only a small number feel awareness and participation is a concern for rural/remote

communities (nine per cent), individuals with low levels of education or skills (nine per cent), SAP recipients (seven per cent), at-risk youth (six per cent), First Nation/Métis (six per cent) or persons with disabilities (six per cent).

3.3 Program Participation

a) *Participation in Complementary Services*

A significant number of participants in each EP program have used other services offered by Saskatchewan Learning and Saskatchewan Social Services (Table 3.2). Between 56 and 63 per cent of participants in the various EPs used the resource area at the CSCES office. About seven in ten SE participants reported speaking with a Career and Employment Consultant. Contact with a CEC was somewhat less likely among WP and Bridging participants (56 to 58 per cent) and even less frequent among CW participants (47 per cent) who may have dealt directly with the CBO offering their placement.

Between 49 and 59 per cent of participants visited the SaskNetWork or SaskJobs Internet site. Only Bridging participants are likely to have developed a written career action plan (62 per cent compared to one-third or less of participants in other programs). This low figure may be due, in part, to a lack of recognition or recall of an action plan given their informal nature in some cases. SE (50 per cent) and Bridging participants (45 per cent) were most likely to have received a follow-up call or contact after completion of their program. One-third of WP and CW participants received a follow-up contact.

- Community Works participants from urban areas and those with post-secondary education and prior employment experience are more likely to have used the resource area at the CSCES offices.
- Bridging participants who are reachback or EI claimants are more likely to have used the resource area and report developing a career action plan.

TABLE 3.2
Participation in Complementary Services: EP Participants,
Per Cent Indicating Yes

“Saskatchewan Learning and Saskatchewan Social Services offer a number of other services to assist people who are looking for work. Did you use any of the following services around the time you were involved in your <EP>?”

Service	Bridging (n=293) (%)	Community Works (n=216) (%)	Work Placement (n=140) (%)	Self- Employment (n=101) (%)
Use the resource area at the CSCES office	63	56	57	60
Speak with a Career and Employment Consultant	58	47	56	69
Visit the SaskNetWork or SaskJobs Internet site	57	56	59	49
Develop a written career action plan	62	34	33	31
Receive a follow-up call or contact after your program was finished	45	32	34	50

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002

b) Program Completion

The majority of participants completed the program in which they participated (Table 3.3). Eight in ten CW participants completed the period of work funded. Three-quarters of Bridging and 70 per cent of WP participants completed the full program scheduled for them. Among SE participants, two indicators of program “completion” are presented: 78 per cent of participants completed a business plan and 76 per cent started a business.

TABLE 3.3
Program Completion: EP Participants

Employment Program	Per Cent Completed
Bridging (n=293)	76
Community Works (n=216)	80
Work Placement (n=140)	70
Self-Employment (n=101):	
<input type="checkbox"/> Completed business plan	78
<input type="checkbox"/> Started business	76

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002

Participants who left the CW, WP or Bridging programs before completion were asked to indicate why. The most common reason for leaving cited by participants in all three programs is health or personal reasons (by between 31 and 44 per cent of participants). A significant number of Bridging participants who did not complete the program stated they left to take a job (38 per cent of those who did not complete). Other reasons for leaving cited by CW and WP participants included: being asked to leave (10 and 15 per cent, respectively); transportation problems (10 per cent of CW participants who did not complete); to take a job (11 and eight per cent); no longer being interested in the program (seven and 12 per cent); and low/no wages (four and 12 per cent).

Service delivery partners were also asked to indicate the main reasons their participants do not complete their project or achieve desired outcomes. Their responses are consistent with those of participants: personal problems were cited as the main reason (by 41 per cent of delivery partners). Other reasons included: lack of access to financing or poor business idea (for SE participants); lack of adequate skills; poor attitude; or lack of transportation or childcare.

c) *Incrementality*

Based on the self-reports of participants, program incrementality of Bridging and CW is strong, whereas for WP and SE it is less so (Table 3.4). Almost two-thirds (64 per cent) of CW participants believe they would *not* have obtained their placement in the absence of the program, and the same proportion of Bridging participants stated they would *not* have been able to participate in their Bridging project activities without the support of the program. Forty-three per cent of WP participants feel they would *not* have been able to obtain their job without the program and only one-third (34 per cent) of SE participants believe they would *not* have been able to start their own business in the absence of the program. The proportion responding “don’t know” to these questions ranged between three and 11 per cent.

TABLE 3.4
Program Incrementality: EP Participants,
Per Cent Indicating No

“Do you believe that you would have been able to ... if the <EP> was not available?”		
Employment Program	Activity	Per cent Indicating “No” (i.e., program is incremental)
Bridging (n=293)	“...participate in these activities on your own ...”	64
Community Works (n=216)	“...obtain this job ...”	64
Work Placement (n=140)	“...obtain this job...”	43
Self-Employment (n=77)	“...start your own business ...”	34

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002

3.4 Satisfaction with Program Design/Delivery

a) *Participants*

Participants’ satisfaction with EPs varies for different aspects of the programs and also varies by program (Table 3.5). The aspect rated most highly by program participants is the application process (with between 71 to 82 per cent of participants in each program satisfied). The program aspect rated most poorly across all programs is the extent to which participants believed they were well-informed before starting their intervention (between 58 and 64 per cent of participants in each program satisfied). Bridging participants generally report the highest levels of satisfaction with each aspect of their program. WP participants tend to provide somewhat lower ratings of the various aspects of their program compared to other participants.

- Community Works participants with post-secondary education indicated less satisfaction with the support of program staff during their program.
- Bridging participants who are Reachback or EI claimants are less likely to be satisfied with the extent to which they felt well-informed about the program before starting. SAP recipients participating in Bridging and participants who were not employed prior to the program indicated greater satisfaction with the support of program staff.

Participants who are SAP recipients are also more satisfied with the suitability of the Bridging program to their needs.

TABLE 3.5
Program Satisfaction: EP Participants,
Per Cent Satisfied*

“Please rate how satisfied you were with the following, using a 7-point scale where 1 is extremely dissatisfied, 7 is extremely satisfied and 4 is neither.”

Aspect of EPs	Bridging (n=293) (%)	Community Works (n=216) (%)	Work Placement (n=140) (%)	Self- Employment (n=101) (%)
The application process	82	82	71	73
The support of program staff during your program**	82	69	64	68
The suitability of the Program to meet your individual needs	77	76	66	70
How quickly you were able to receive services	71	78	68	69
The wages you received through your work experience job	n/a	63	59	n/a
The extent to which you felt well-informed about your Program before you started	64	58	58	59

* Responded 5, 6, 7 on a 7-point scale.

** Participants could have interpreted this question to refer to provincial staff delivering EPs or employers/organizations/trainers involved in delivery.

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002

b) Staff Perspective

Surveyed staff were asked to rate the effectiveness of various components of the delivery of the four components of Employment Program (Table 3.6). Among the findings:

- turnaround times for contract approvals are viewed as being effective by the majority of staff and is among the highest rated elements of all the programs. Conversely, client assessment and referral is consistently rated a weaker aspect of the programs (with the exception of SE which receives high ratings on this aspect likely due to the more rigorous screening of this program);
- for SE, lower ratings are provided for the amount of funds available for business supports and the coverage of activities and costs;

- ❑ comparing the CW and WP work experience programs, the ratings for the WP program tend to be marginally better than those of CW, and WP is viewed as being much more effective in terms of flexibility to meet client needs and effectiveness in providing transferable skills, while 63 per cent found CW effective in providing benefits to the community; and
- ❑ ratings of effectiveness of the Bridging program are modest across the board (e.g., there is only a 15 percentage point difference between the highest and lowest ratings of effectiveness).

TABLE 3.6
Rated Effectiveness of EP Design and Delivery Components: Staff,
Per Cent Indicating Very Effective*

“To what extent do you feel the following aspects of the <EP> are/were effective?”				
Aspect of Design/Delivery	Bridging (n=69) (%)	Community Works (n=65) (%)	Work Placement (n=64) (%)	Self- Employment (n=50) (%)
Range of activities and costs covered	59	n/a	n/a	44
Turnaround times for contract approvals	57	71	77	70
Flexibility to meet client needs	55	42	58	46
Contracting processes	55	60	61	64
Flexibility to meet partner/employer needs	55	49	55	46
Monitoring and tracking processes	52	48	52	56
Amount for employment supports	46	60	53	44
Wage subsidy/per participant funding amount	46	51	56	48
Client assessment and referral	45	39	44	64
Effectiveness of placement in providing transferable skills	n/a	51	67	n/a
Support that staff are able to provide during placement	n/a	45	41	n/a
Training deliverer qualifications/solicitation	n/a	n/a	n/a	56
Payment disbursements to partners	n/a	n/a	n/a	56
Providing community benefits	n/a	63	n/a	n/a

* Per cent responding 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale.

n/a Not applicable to particular program.

Source: DSS Staff Survey, 2002

c) **Service Delivery Partners**

Six in ten partners delivering Bridging and SE programs indicated they were satisfied with the overall design of the program in which they were involved. The ratings of the various aspects of program design are mixed, however (Table 3.7). The clarity of information describing the program's objectives and criteria garnered the highest level of satisfaction (with 83 per cent of partners satisfied), followed by the flexibility of the program to meet the needs of organizations (with 71 per cent of partners satisfied). Two-thirds of partners indicated being satisfied with the application/proposal process and with the range of costs and activities covered by the program. The funds available for business or employment support costs and the requirements around the minimum and maximum duration of training are features where partners reported the least satisfaction (44 and 45 per cent very satisfied, respectively).

Of the service delivery partners dissatisfied with the per participant funding amount or the funding available for business/employment support costs, the vast majority indicated that they would like to see the amount of funding or duration of funding increased.

TABLE 3.7
Satisfaction with Program Design: Service Delivery Partners,
Percentage Distribution by Satisfaction Level

"How satisfied are you with the following design aspects of the Program?"				
Design Aspect	DK/NR	Dissatisfied (1-3)	Neutral (4)	Satisfied (5-7)
Overall design	1	16	20	61
Clarity of information about objectives and criteria	1	5	9	83
Flexibility of program to meet needs of organizations	0	17	11	71
Application/proposal process requirements	1	15	17	66
Range of costs and activities covered	2	17	6	66
Flexibility of program to meet needs of individual clients	2	23	12	61
Client assessment and referral process	6	18	9	61
Per participant funding amount	5	21	7	59
Eligibility criteria	1	21	16	57
Requirements around minimum and maximum duration of training	1	30	15	45
Funds for business/employment supports	1	30	12	44

Source: Survey of Service Delivery Partners, 2002, n=82

Satisfaction of partners is much higher with the delivery of the Bridging and SE programs than it is with program design. A strong majority (84 per cent) indicated being satisfied with the delivery of the program overall. The majority of delivery partners surveyed are very satisfied with each aspect of program delivery examined (Table 3.8). The overall transparency of the assessment and recommendation process is the aspect of program delivery that received the weakest satisfaction rating (68 per cent are satisfied).

TABLE 3.8
Satisfaction with Program Delivery: Service Delivery Partners,
Percentage Distribution by Satisfaction Level

“How satisfied are you with the following delivery aspects of the Program?”				
Delivery Aspect	DK/NR	Very Dissatisfied (1-3)	Neutral (4)	Very Satisfied (5-7)
Overall delivery	1	9	4	84
Contract development process	1	9	4	87
Promptness of payment following invoicing	5	2	6	85
Monitoring and tracking processes	2	7	2	83
Knowledge and support of CSCES staff	1	6	7	80
Turnaround times	6	5	7	79
Transparency of assessment and recommendation process	7	10	7	68

Source: Survey of Service Delivery Partners, 2002, n=82

3.5 Barriers to Participation

EP participants were asked to indicate whether they experienced any difficulties participating in their program. Most participants in CW, Bridging and WP indicated they did not experience any difficulties (71 per cent, 67 per cent and 68 per cent respectively), while just over half of SE participants (54 per cent) experienced no difficulties. The most common difficulties experienced by participants included: lack of financial support (mentioned by between nine and 13 per cent of participants in each program); lack of follow-up (cited by between seven and 11 per cent); difficulties finding information about the program (cited by four to 13 per cent); red tape (by four to 10 per cent); transportation problems (two to seven per cent); and lack of child care (one to seven per cent).

Like participants, key informants did not view barriers to participation in EPs as being significant. Examples of barriers, both internal and external to the programs, cited by key informants included:

- ❑ lack of awareness of EPs on the part of some potential clients;
- ❑ limits on funding. For example, the Bridging program tends to be over-subscribed, presenting a barrier to participation. Further, level of participation is dependent on the availability of income support through the Provincial Training Allowance (PTA);
- ❑ limited participation of employers – particularly relevant to the WP program, which was generally under-subscribed as a result;
- ❑ in rural areas, there can be limited access to services, transportation barriers and scarcity of employers/job opportunities, though these are not difficulties with the design and delivery of EPs *per se*.
- ❑ lack of prerequisite skills and experience on the part of clients to successfully participate in programs (i.e., the need for preparatory pre-employment skills and basic education, which is not a barrier in the design or delivery of EPs *per se*); and
- ❑ individual personal issues (e.g., disabilities, lack of suitable childcare arrangements, racial issues, particularly for Aboriginal clients, and other issues such as lack of motivation or work ethic).

3.6 Employment Needs

EP participants were asked to identify what they feel they need at this time to achieve their employment goals. The responses among Bridging, CW and WP participants were quite similar. The most frequent response was more training or education (mentioned by between 43 and 51 per cent of respondents across these program groups). A substantial minority of CW participants (12 per cent) also mentioned more work experience. Between 19 and 29 per cent feel they need nothing more at this time to achieve their employment goals.

In order to achieve their employment goals, SE participants most commonly identified: financial assistance (22 per cent); career planning (20 per cent); and training (15 per cent). SE participants were more likely than other EP participants to indicate they need nothing more at this time to achieve their employment goals (32 per cent).

Key informants involved in delivering EPs were also asked to identify the key needs of the EP client group. Issues identified by key informants included:

- lack of supports for employment (e.g., transportation, child care, appropriate housing);
- low levels of work experience/work ethic;
- addressing employers' stereotypes associated with Aboriginal clients/SAP recipients;
- addressing personal issues or distractions (e.g., poor health, substance abuse, lack of family/social support);
- lack of training/credentials; and
- unrealistic expectations on the part of employers.

3.7 Administrative Information Systems

Key informants provided generally favourable comments on the Program Agreement System (OCSM). The system was described as being “easy to use”, “well-structured”, “user-friendly” and “time-saving”. The system has enabled staff to perform their responsibilities in the area of contracting and provides good information to managers in terms of planning and analysis for budgeting and expenditures purposes. This perception was confirmed by surveyed DSS staff: 72 per cent indicated that the introduction of the Program Agreement System had a positive impact on their work delivering EPs (responded 5, 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale). One in ten indicated that the system had no impact and a similar proportion rate the system as having a negative impact.

Key informants believed that sufficient supports are in place for staff using the Program Agreement System. Examples of supports include: (1) the Help Desk; (2) the Programs Branch; and (3) experienced staff. There has also been training on implementation/enhancements and training of new staff.

Key informants recommended few changes to the Program Agreement System. Suggestions included: enhanced word processing capabilities; better linkage between

the Program Agreement System and Career and Employment Information System (CEIS); and ongoing training offered to new staff.

3.8 Appropriateness of Per-Participant Funding Levels

Amounts available for program/wage subsidy costs and for employment supports were viewed by Departmental and stakeholder key informants as being adequate. There was approval of the flexibility in the program design to negotiate funding amounts and the option of approving additional funds for employment/business support costs. Several informants, however, suggested that subsidies should be standardized (to the \$5,000 maximum) to ensure comparability among EP programs and between EPs and other offerings (e.g., Job Start/Future Skills and the summer student programs). According to some stakeholder informants, where funding has proven deficient is in meeting the special needs of, for example, people with disabilities (e.g., for workplace modifications) or clients with children. Generally, though, funding amounts are comparable to other employment programs in Canada and, unlike many other programs, offer additional flexibility in that no wage rate is stipulated.

3.9 Overall Flexibility in Program Design and Delivery

According to both Departmental and stakeholder key informants, flexibility in the design of EPs was viewed as being adequate and a key strength of EPs. Flexibility is reportedly built into program design in a number of ways: (1) the exemption process (CECs may recommend an exemption for the eligibility criteria, funding amounts, the age criteria, etc. (as observed in the previous chapter); (2) additional funds for employment supports (\$1,000) for clients who have special needs; (3) an array of program options that emphasize different ways/ means to enhance employability; (4) individual Bridging contracts; and (5) the fact that the CW/WP wage subsidy is offered as a lump sum, so there is flexibility in determining wage rates.

There was some suggestion by Departmental respondents that staff may not use the flexibility available in the program design to the fullest extent. Some staff are reportedly reluctant to submit program exemptions (exemptions must now be forwarded to the Executive Director, though this process is currently in the process of being streamlined, with greater authority delegated to the Regional Director level). Reluctance is demonstrated by the fact that, between April 1, 1999 and March 31, 2002, there were 183 requests for exemptions, which represents a very small proportion of the number of program participants over that period (recall that there were over 7,500 participants between April 1, 2000 and March 31, 2002.). As well, the programs are relatively new and staff are still learning the full capabilities of the programs and how to use them in the best interest of the client. Indeed, as noted, staff ratings of flexibility of EPs were modest at best, with staff rating Bridging and WP more effective in this regard and CW and SE less so.

As well, recall that seven in ten service delivery partners were satisfied with the flexibility of the program (i.e., Bridging/SE) to meet their needs and six in ten were satisfied with program flexibility to meet the needs of individual clients.

Key informants recommended few changes in the program design to enhance flexibility. Those who provided suggestions suggested, for example, increasing the range and amount of costs covered, streamlining the application process (e.g., on-line submission), speeding up the approval of work placements, and, as mentioned above, providing greater flexibility in the eligibility criteria.

3.10 Development and Role of Partnerships

The extent to which partnerships have been established or enhanced through EPs is often difficult to disentangle from activities undertaken by Career and Employment Services (CES) or under the Canada-Saskatchewan Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA). As well, some respondents may consider funding relationships (e.g., between the province and service delivery agents) as partnerships, though they lack elements of true partnerships.

According to key informants, few efforts under EPs are or can be undertaken without participation of other organizations. Examples of “partnerships” (really funding arrangements or cooperative arrangements): (1) organizations participating in CW and WP; (2) CBOs and training institutions (e.g., regional colleges) delivering EPs such as Bridging and SE; and (3) partnerships with other orders of government, such as HRDC, other provincial departments (e.g., Environment) and local school boards. Interview participants noted fewer examples of cooperation with First Nations communities, other federal government departments/agencies, and municipalities.

Surveyed DSS staff indicated that EPs have had positive impacts on partnerships. A strong majority (86 per cent) agreed with the statement, “Employment Programs have led to the development and strengthening of partnerships with other organizations”. Four per cent of staff were neutral and seven per cent disagreed with the statement. The remaining three percent were unsure.

Among partners delivering Bridging and SE projects, 57 per cent indicated that the program had helped their organization to develop new partnerships or strengthen existing ones to a great extent (responded 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale). Another 35 per cent indicated that partnerships had been developed or strengthened to some extent (responded 3, 4 or 5 on the scale). Aside from Saskatchewan Learning/DSS, key project partners were cited as being: CBOs (56 per cent); employers/businesses (30 per cent); federal government (21 per cent); other Saskatchewan government departments (e.g., Justice, Health, Apprenticeship Commission) (17 per cent); and Band/Tribal councils (17 per cent).

Specific examples of accomplishments of partnerships under EPs that were discussed by key informants included:

- overall improvement in the quality of services to clients;
- pooling and efficient use of resources to fund projects such as Bridging;
- expansion of services in areas such as rural and remote locations where there is difficulty getting the minimum number of participants without partnering with other programs/organizations;
- greater expertise/synergy brought to bear (e.g., the inclusion of CBOs with particular expertise in special client groups, such as persons with disabilities);

- ❑ greater understanding/consensus on priority areas/community needs; and
- ❑ greater awareness of services/programs available through different local agencies (leading to cross-marketing and referrals, and avoidance of duplication).



4 IMPACTS ON PARTICIPANTS

The purpose of this chapter is to assess the effectiveness of Employment Programs (EPs) in meeting objectives, particularly with respect to the employment outcomes for individual participants. The survey of EP participants is primarily used to address these issues. Program impacts for employers/organizations are examined in the next chapter, along with other issues addressed from the perspective of employers and organizations.

4.1 Perceived Usefulness of Programs

EP participants were asked to rate the usefulness of their EP in terms of providing them with a variety of different skills and experiences (Table 4.1). Overall, the ratings for each of the program groups tend to be more positive with respect to softer outcomes such as increased motivation and self-confidence (between 44 and 62 per cent rated their EP as very useful). Less positive ratings were provided for items such as finding employment or self-employment, helping to pursue further training or education and clarifying for participants the kind of career for which they would be best suited.

In terms of differences by program:

- *Bridging* participants tend to offer the most positive ratings of program usefulness compared to other participants, particularly in the softer areas such as increasing motivation and self-confidence and increasing their sense of security about future work prospects. Within the Bridging client group, there are few consistent differences among sub-groups in the ratings of usefulness. Rural dwellers rate the usefulness of their program somewhat more positively in terms of gaining job-related skills and work

experience. Those without recent prior employment experience are more positive in terms of self-confidence and gaining work experience. Participants who are SAP recipients provide higher ratings of usefulness in gaining work experience and increasing work motivation. Non-visible minority/Aboriginal clients provide more negative ratings with respect to gaining skills, work experience and finding employment;

- Community Works* participants rate their program as more useful in gaining work experience on-the-job and specific job-related skills compared to participants in other programs;
- Work Placement* participants tend to provide ratings falling in the middle or average among the programs; and
- Self-Employment* participants provide consistently lower ratings of program usefulness (at least some of which is a reflection of the nature of their program which would not, for example, typically provide work experience on-the-job).

TABLE 4.1
Perceived Usefulness of Employment Programs: EP Participants,
Per Cent Saying Very Useful*

“How useful do you feel your <EP> Program has been in giving you certain skills and experiences?”				
Benefit	Bridging (n=293) (%)	Community Works (n=216) (%)	Work Placement (n=140) (%)	Self- Employment (n=101) (%)
Increasing your self-confidence	62	57	48	44
Increasing your motivation to achieve your career and personal goals	61	50	45	45
Increasing your sense of security about your future work prospects	50	40	38	37
Gaining work experience on-the-job	49	62	49	22
Clarifying for you what kind of career you would be best suited for	49	42	35	19
Helping you to pursue further training or education	49	40	36	19
Gaining specific job-related skills	47	54	41	38
Finding employment or self-employment	42	39	40	35

*Percentage indicating very useful (6 or 7 on a 7-point scale)

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002.

4.2 Employment, Joblessness, Education, and Self-Sufficiency Outcomes

a) *Employment and Further Education and Training*

Another measure of the effectiveness of an intervention is the rate at which participants are able to find employment following completion. In the case of WP, there are special considerations related to whether or not the participant was hired by their employer after funding expired. Since CW organizations are typically community-based, there are fewer expectations that sponsoring organizations will hire the participant, but rather organizations are expected to provide the skills and support for the participant to find a job elsewhere. Table 4.2 presents these results.

Two-thirds of WP participants say they were hired by their employer/organization after the wage subsidy ended. As expected, the likelihood of being hired among CW participants was lower than for WP. Nevertheless, a substantial proportion of CW participants (43 per cent) indicated that their placement organization hired them beyond the period of the wage subsidy. One in five CW participants and almost one-half of WP participants were hired on a full-time basis.

According to participants, the most often cited reason they were not hired by their sponsoring organization was the short-term nature of the project or a lack of work (59 and 53 per cent of CW and WP participants, respectively). Affordability of wages was mentioned by one in five CW participants and one in ten WP participants. In some cases, hiring following the end of the program did not occur due to participants' health/personal reasons, participant finding another job or lack of interest on the part of the participant.

A minority of CW participants (15 per cent) say they received help finding another job from the organization that employed them under the program.

TABLE 4.2
Employment Outcomes for WP and CW Participants,
Per Cent Indicating Response

Outcome	Community Works (n=171) (%)	Work Placement (n=114) (%)
Employer hired client after the wage subsidy ended		
Yes	43	66
<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time	22	46
<input type="checkbox"/> Part-time	10	11
<input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal	11	9
Not hired	55	27
DK/NR	2	7
Why not hired (n=88 and 32)		
Work was seasonal/project-based/short-term	31	28
Lack of work/no need	28	25
Employer couldn't afford wages	22	9
Personal/health reasons	4	13
Participant found other job	3	3
Participant not interested	1	13
Participant not qualified	0	6
Other	1	0
DK/NR	17	9
Organization helped to find participant another job at end of project		
Yes	15	n/a
No	85	n/a

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002.

Looking at employment outcomes for EP participants at the time of the interview, the results are mixed and vary quite significantly by program (Table 4.3). Between 70 and 79 per cent of participants had actively looked for work since the end of their last EP intervention. The exception is SE participants who are less likely to have looked for work (50 per cent) (a reflection of the self-employment status of a portion of these participants). Among those who actively searched for a job, the duration of job search was similar across all participant groups (between 14 and 18 weeks).

- Within the Bridging client group, job search was longer for women. Within the CW client group, job search was longer for SAP recipients and those without prior recent employment experience.

TABLE 4.3
Employment and Education Outcomes of EP Participants,
Per Cent Indicating Response

Outcome	Bridging (n=293) (%)	Community Works (n=216) (%)	Work Placement (n=140) (%)	Self- Employment (n=101) (%)
Actively looked for work since last intervention				
Yes	74	79	70	50
No	25	21	30	49
Average weeks looked for work since last intervention	15 weeks	18 weeks	14 weeks	16 weeks
Worked since last intervention (full-time, part-time or self-employed)				
Yes	69	70	82	93
No	31	29	18	7
Mean number of employers	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.6
Current employment status				
Employed:	48	46	65	88
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-employed	2	1	3	52
<input type="checkbox"/> Employed full-time	28	31	44	24
<input type="checkbox"/> Employed part- time/contract/casual/ seasonal	18	14	18	12
Unemployed and looking for work	24	36	21	6
Unemployed and not looking for work	6	5	4	2
Student	11	7	4	2
Homemaker	5	2	2	0
On leave (maternity, disability)	5	4	3	2
DK/NR	2	0	0	0
Still working with placement employer/organization				
Yes	n/a	17	27	n/a
No	n/a	83	73	n/a
In same field/occupation as placement				
Yes	n/a	39	33	n/a
No	n/a	61	67	n/a
Taken further education or training since last intervention				
Yes	40	26	31	32
No	59	74	69	68

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002.

Employment outcomes for Bridging and CW participants are very similar and generally weaker than those for WP or SE participants. About seven in ten participants in Bridging and CW found work in the post-program period, working, on average, for two different employers during this period. At the time of the survey, 48 per cent of Bridging participants and 46 per cent of CW participants were employed. CW participants more often characterize themselves as unemployed and looking for work (36 per cent compared to 24 per cent of Bridging participants). On the other hand, Bridging participants are more likely to be in school and to be out of the labour force (e.g., on leave, homemaker). Of those CW participants who had found employment in the post-program period, 17 per cent were working for the organization with which they had their placement. Four in ten CW participants no longer with their CW placement organization found employment in a field or occupation similar to that of their placement.

- ❑ Within the Bridging client group, those who are most likely to have found work during the post-program period are men, EI-eligible clients, and those with recent prior employment experience. Women are more apt to be working in non-standard employment than men (part-time, casual/contract) and more likely to be out of the labour force. There are higher rates of unemployment among rural dwellers, SAP clients, those with less than a high school education, and those without recent prior employment experience.
- ❑ Within the CW client group, those who were more likely to have found employment in the post-program period are clients with a post-secondary education, recent prior employment experience, women, and non-Aboriginal clients. SAP recipients are less likely to have found employment. In terms of current employment status, the unemployment rate tends to be higher among men, rural dwellers, First Nations/Métis clients, SAP recipients, those with lower levels of education (less than high school) and clients without recent prior work experience.

The strong majority of WP participants (82 per cent) found employment during the post-program period and two-thirds (65 per cent) were employed at the time of the survey. One in five classified themselves as unemployed and looking for work. While two-thirds of WP participants indicated that their employer had hired them following the end of their wage subsidy, only 27 per cent were still working with this employer at the time of the survey interview. Of those not working with their WP employer, one-third found employment in a field or occupation similar to their original placement.

SE participants have the most positive employment outcomes of all the program groups. Almost all SE participants indicated that they had worked during the post-program period (93 per cent) and fully 88 per cent were employed at the time of the survey (including 52 per cent who indicated they were self-employed, 24 per cent employed full-time and 12 per cent in part-time or non-standard employment arrangements).

It should be noted, however, that a quarter (24 per cent) of SE participants never started a business and 10 per cent started a business that was no longer in operation at the time of the survey interview. Among SE participants who did not start a business or whose business failed following their intervention (n=34), the most commonly cited reasons were: financing difficulties (35 per cent); business not profitable (26 per cent); found another job (15 per cent); and personal reasons (15 per cent).

A substantial portion of program participants have taken additional education or training since finishing their EP. In particular, four in ten participants in Bridging went on to take further education and training (also reflected in the higher proportion who indicated student status at the time of the interview). About 25-33 per cent of participants in CW, WP and SE indicated they had taken further education or training in the post-program period.

- In both the Bridging and CW client groups, women were more likely to take additional education/training. CW participants living in urban areas and those with recent work experience were also more likely to have taken further education after their intervention.

Those who indicated that they had not found work (full-time, part-time or self-employment) since the end of their EP intervention were asked about the main problems they had encountered in finding employment.¹¹ The most frequently mentioned barriers by Bridging participants were: lack of education/skills (31 per cent); no jobs available in field (23 per cent); and personal/health, child care or transportation barriers (mentioned by 11 per cent of participants each). Among CW participants, the most often cited problems in finding

¹¹ Only Bridging and Community Works have sufficient cases to address this question.

work were: no jobs available in field (35 per cent); lack of education/skills (32 per cent); personal/health reasons (19 per cent); and lack of work experience (17 per cent).

b) *Job Characteristics and Earnings*

Table 4.4 summarizes the job characteristics of those who found employment in the post-intervention period. About half of Bridging, CW and WP participants (45 to 55 per cent) had more than one employer following completion of their program. Their first job following the end of their EP intervention lasted six months on average (virtually the same across the three programs).

In terms of their current job (or most recent job for those who had subsequently become unemployed), a minority of participants across the programs (between 14 and 16 per cent) had returned to a job that they had had prior to starting their Employment Program.

Many participants across all programs found year-round employment following the completion of their program (at least half). The incidence of non-standard forms of employment (seasonal and casual/contract), however, tends to be higher among Bridging and CW participants (46 and 47 per cent, respectively compared to 24 per cent of WP participants and 35 per cent of SE participants). Most participants were working on a full-time basis (70 per cent or more). The exception is SE participants, almost four in ten of whom reported working fewer than 30 hours each week (however, among those SE participants whose business is currently operational and their primary source of earnings, the average weekly hours is 50).

Weekly earnings were reported to be about \$400 on average, though there were some variations across programs. Average earnings were highest among SE participants. In terms of hourly wage, earnings are roughly the same across the program groups at just over \$10 an hour (substantially higher than Saskatchewan's minimum wage at \$6.65).

Participants were asked to rate the extent (on a 7-point scale) to which they believed their Employment Program was important (6 or 7 on a 7-point scale) in helping them

to get their current job. The ratings for CW, Bridging and WP participants were roughly similar (45, 44 and 41 per cent, respectively rated their program very important in helping them to get their job). SE participants provided mixed ratings, depending on the status of their business. Among those currently operating a business, 63 per cent rated the program important in starting their business. For SE participants working at other jobs at the time of the survey, only 19 per cent rated the program important in getting their current job.

TABLE 4.4
Current/Most Recent Job Characteristics of EP Participants: Post-Intervention,
Per Cent Indicating Response

Job Characteristic	Bridging (n=197) (%)	Community Works (n=149) (%)	Work Placement (n=112) (%)	Self- Employment (n=59) (%)
Same job as before intervention				
Yes	16	16	14	n/a
No	84	84	86	n/a
Type of employment				
Year round	53	52	73	61
Seasonal	25	18	10	15
Casual/contract	21	29	14	20
DK/NR	1	2	3	
Weekly hours				
<30	24	20	19	38
30 or more	70	76	76	55
DK/NR	5	4	5	7
Weekly earnings				
<\$250	19	21	14	27
\$250-499	57	55	54	32
\$500+	24	24	32	41
Mean weekly wage	\$388	\$382	\$412	\$431
Mean hourly wage	\$10.10	\$10.70	\$10.70	\$10.50
Rated importance of EP in getting job				
Not at all important (1-2)	31	30	39	39
Somewhat (3-5)	24	23	19	25
Very important (6-7)	44	45	41	32
DK/NR	0	1	1	3

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002

- In terms of sub-group differences within the Bridging group, women are more likely than men to be in casual/contract positions (as are those with at least some post-secondary education and First Nations clients) and working part-time. Men are more apt to be in seasonal employment. Wages are higher among those with a post-

secondary education. Youth, non-visible minority/Aboriginal participants and non-SAP clients rate the program less important in helping them to get their current job.

- For CW, rural dwellers are more apt to be in seasonal positions. Those with a post-secondary education are more likely to be in year round positions, while SAP recipients tend to be in casual/contract jobs. Higher earners are urban dwellers, non-SAP clients, men, non-visible minority/Aboriginal clients and those with a post-secondary education. Men rate the program somewhat more important in helping them to get their current job than women.

A special sub-set of questions were asked of SE participants regarding hiring of employees for their business and their participation in paid employment to supplement their self-employment earnings. Of those who started a business and whose business was in operation at the time of the survey interview, 33 per cent hired paid employees for their business. Of these (n=22), participants reported hiring, on average, 2.3 employees for their business.

Of those who started a business and whose business was still in operation at the time of the survey interview, 29 per cent worked at other paid jobs in addition to their business. For these participants (n=19), their business income represented only 25 per cent of total personal earnings.

c) *Extent of Joblessness*

Table 4.5 presents the extent of joblessness and job search of EP participants during the post-intervention period. On average, the time period between the end of the last recorded EP intervention and the time of the survey interview was about 18 months (or 79 weeks). The table shows the number of weeks not working and weeks looking for work during this period, as well as the proportion of weeks during the post-intervention period that individuals spent not working and looking for work.

The results for WP and SE participants are strongest. SE and WP participants spent 14 and 23 per cent of post-intervention weeks not working. Bridging and CW participants each spent 34 per cent of post-intervention weeks not working.

TABLE 4.5
Joblessness and Job Search Since Last Intervention: EP Participants,
Percentage Distribution According to Response

Unemployment and Job Search Experience	Bridging (n=293) (%)	Community Works (n=216) (%)	Work Placement (n=140) (%)	Self-Employment (n=101) (%)
Number of weeks not working since last intervention				
Zero	10	14	33	52
1-24	40	37	28	23
25-52	16	13	14	7
53+	16	11	10	6
DK/NR	18	25	16	12
Mean	27.7 weeks	23.6 weeks	17.6 weeks	10.7 weeks
Number of weeks looking for work since last intervention				
Zero	40	46	61	74
1-24	45	40	27	20
25-52	8	8	7	4
53+	7	6	6	2
DK/NR	0	0	0	0
Mean	11.8 weeks	11.3 weeks	9.0 weeks	5.1 weeks
Percentage of weeks not working since last intervention				
Zero	13	19	39	60
1-24%	43	35	28	24
25-49%	15	19	10	6
50-74%	10	7	14	6
75+%	20	20	9	6
Mean	33.6%	33.7%	23.0%	13.6%
Percentage of weeks looking for work since last intervention				
Zero	16	11	22	28
1-24%	58	52	48	44
25-49%	12	19	13	17
50-74%	6	5	7	0
75+%	8	14	10	11
Mean	19.6%	27.2%	22.5%	20.4%

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002

During the same post-intervention period, participants were looking for work for up to about one-quarter of the time. The differences across programs are considerably narrowed for this measure.

- ❑ For Bridging participants, longer periods of joblessness were experienced by women, SAP clients and those lacking recent employment experience. Youth, urban dwellers and those with recent prior work experience had shorter periods of job search.

d) **Use of Public Income Supports**

Decreased use of public income supports such as social assistance and EI is often used as a proxy for increased self-sufficiency of participants. Table 4.6(a) presents these results. The proportion of clients accessing social assistance at any time since the end of their last EP intervention varied greatly across programs. Bridging and CW participants were equally likely to have collected SA in the post-program period – about four in ten participants reported collecting. The incidence is much lower among WP participants (24 per cent) and lower still for SE participants (seven per cent).

- ❑ For Bridging participants, women, those on SAP before program participation, those with lower levels of education and without recent prior employment experience were more likely to have collected SAP in the post-program period. Similarly, among CW participants, SAP recipients, those with lower levels of education and no recent employment experience, as well as Aboriginal clients were more likely to be collecting SAP since the end of their intervention.

TABLE 4.6 (a)
Use of Public Income Support Since Last Intervention: EP Participants,
Per Cent Indicating Response

Use of Public Income Support	Bridging (n=293) (%)	Community Works (n=216) (%)	Work Placement (n=140) (%)	Self- Employment (n=101) (%)
Collected social assistance since last intervention				
Yes	42	43	24	7
No	58	57	76	93
Collected EI since last intervention				
Yes	15	37	25	14
No	84	62	75	86

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002.

CW participants were most likely to have collected EI in the post-program period (37 per cent). This is a reflection of their weaker employment outcomes (compared, for example, to WP participants), but an increased likelihood of having worked sufficient hours

during their placement to qualify for benefits (compared to Bridging participants). The incidence of collecting benefits in the post-program period for other participants was: Work Placement (25 per cent); Bridging (15 per cent); and Self-Employment participants (14 per cent).

- For Bridging participants, those who were EI-eligible prior to participation, single/separated parents, clients with three or more dependents, and those with a post-secondary education were more likely to collect EI in the post-program period. Among CW participants, rural dwellers, those who are single/separated parents and those with prior employment experience were more likely to collect EI in post-program period.

For all program groups the proportion in receipt of social assistance or Employment Insurance is much smaller than at program start. Table 4.6(b) compares participants' sources of income in the week prior to program participation and at the time of the survey interview. The decline in use of the SAP is most dramatic for programs that have a high proportion of SAP clients, namely Bridging, CW and WP. Results indicate a decline in the proportion in receipt of social assistance by between 11 and 19 percentage points. In contrast, SE participants, who are largely drawn from EI recipients, show a significant decline in the proportion collecting EI (by 60 percentage points). Participants across all program groups were substantially more likely to report employment earnings at the time of the interview compared to immediately prior to program participation. The percentage point increase is highest among SE participants and lowest among CW participants.

TABLE 4.6 (b)
Prior and Current Sources of Income: EP Participants,
Percentage Point Difference
Between Week Prior to EP Intervention and at Time of Survey Interview

Source of Income	Bridging (n=293) (%)	Community Works (n=216) (%)	Work Placement (n=140) (%)	Self- Employment (n=101) (%)
Employment earnings	+31	+26	+50	+66
Social Assistance (SA)	-19	-11	-15	-4
Spouse/family	-5	+1	+3	-1
EI	-11	-5	-19	-60
Student loan/grant/PTA	-1	0	-5	-1
Savings	+2	0	-2	-10
Spousal/child support	+1	-2	+4	+2

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002

Table 4.6(c) compares the extent of draw on SA and EI during the 12 months prior to program participation and the 12 month period after the end of the intervention. The average number of months on SAP and EI during the post-program declined substantially for all program groups (by about 50 per cent for EI and about 33 per cent for SA – the latter even greater for WP participants).

TABLE 4.6 (c)
Length of Time on Public Income Support, Pre-/Post Program: EP Participants*

Length of Time on Income Support	Bridging (n=268) (%)	Community Works (n=195) (%)	Work Placement (n=136) (%)
Mean months on Social Assistance			
<i>Pre-Program (during 12 months prior)</i>	4.8	5.1	3.0
<i>Post-Program (during 12 months after)</i>	2.5	2.8	1.6
Mean months on Employment Insurance			
<i>Pre-Program (during 12 months prior)</i>	2.7	1.4	2.4
<i>Post-Program (during 12 months after)</i>	1.8	0.5	1.0

* Results for Self-Employment Program participants are not reported owing to the small number of cases available for analysis.

Source: Survey of EP participants, 2002

4.3 Multivariate Analysis: Participant/Program Factors Contributing to Success

The preceding discussion has provided employment and other results for participants in each of the EP interventions. The multivariate analysis further examines the relative importance of participant characteristics and program factors in influencing positive employment and other outcomes. Multivariate analyses permit a determination of the importance of each individual variable by holding all other (measured) conditions constant. Only findings statistically significant at the 10 per cent level (or better) are reported.

In these analyses, variations in the outcome variable of interest (e.g., employment, earnings, use of public income support) are measured in terms of the influence of service delivery or intervention variables (participation in WP, Bridging, SE, and CW), plus variables capturing the characteristics of participants (described below). Nine dependent

variables representing employment outcomes and satisfaction with EP services were tested. Logit regression was carried out with dichotomous dependent variables, while Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) was used for the continuous dependant variables.

Logistic regressions were run for five dependent variables:

- had a job during the post-program period *vs.* not;
- employed at time of interview *vs.* not;
- employed full-time at time of interview *vs.* not;
- received social assistance since end of EP intervention *vs.* not; and
- received employment insurance since end of EP intervention *vs.* not.

OLS regressions were run for five dependent variables:

- percentage of weeks not working since the end of intervention;
- percentage of weeks looking for work since the end of intervention;
- percentage change in earnings;
- satisfaction with EP services (summary index of scaled battery); and
- perceived usefulness of EPs (summary index of scaled battery).

A common set of explanatory (control) variables was introduced into the analysis for each dependent variable to assess their relative influence. These variables included:

- length of time between end of intervention and time of interview;
- socio-demographic variables (age, gender, education, marital status, First Nations, Métis, disability status, and urban/rural indicator);
- prior labour force experience (employed or not in two years before intervention, employed or not one week before intervention);
- prior use of EI and SA;
- service delivery variables (use of resource room, developed an action plan, received counselling, received follow-up); and
- program participation (participation in WP, participation in Bridging, participation in SE, relative to participation in CW).

In terms of satisfaction with EPs, receiving follow-up increased the level of satisfaction with the intervention. Women, those with some post-secondary education (compared to those with less than high-school education), and clients whose intervention took place earlier in the period under study were less satisfied with services. Involvement in the different EP interventions played no role in clients' satisfaction.

Considering participants' own subjective rating of the usefulness of their EP intervention, First Nations clients had a more positive rating of benefits, as did clients who developed a career action plan and who received a follow-up contact. A longer post-intervention period and participation in the SE program appear to negatively affect the rating of perceived usefulness.

Factors that influence clients' subjective rating of the usefulness of their EP intervention also were significant predictors of clients' actual employment outcomes. For example, the number of weeks not working and weeks searching for a job in post-intervention period were influenced by the following factors:

- ❑ *socio-demographic characteristics* – Being female and having a post-secondary education decreased the proportion of weeks not working in the post-program period but had little effect on proportion of weeks searching for job. On the other hand, joblessness was greater for older, married, and disabled clients and for those who were SAP recipients before participating in EP. The time spent searching for a job was also longer for those who used social assistance prior to EP and those residing in a rural area;
- ❑ *prior work experience* – those who were employed in the two years prior to participating in EP were more likely to have shorter periods of joblessness and spend proportionately fewer weeks searching for work. Being employed in the week before starting an EP also decreased the length of weeks not working and weeks searching for work;
- ❑ *service delivery characteristics* – speaking to a counsellor and receiving follow-up contact contributed to a shorter time period spent not working. Follow-up was also associated with fewer weeks searching for a job. Use of the resource area was associated with a longer job search; and
- ❑ *program participation variables* – compared to CW, participation in WP and SE programs decreased the proportion of jobless weeks, while participation in Bridging decreased the length of time searching for work.

Employment outcomes (e.g., found a job in post-program, employed at time of interview) were influenced by a wide set of factors. The multivariate results revealed the influence of the following:

- ❑ *socio-demographic characteristics* – having a post-secondary education increased the chances of finding employment in the post-program period. Having a high school diploma (compared to less than HS education) increased the likelihood of employment at the time of the survey. More than a high school education was also associated with a positive increase in earnings between the pre- and post-program job. Living in an urban area increased the likelihood of current and full-time employment. Older clients, on the other hand, had a lower likelihood of having found a job in the post-program period and participants with a disability had significantly lower incidences of current and full-time employment since the end of their intervention and at the time of the survey. Youth and having a disability were also associated with a decrease in earnings between the pre- and post-program job.
- ❑ *length of the post-program period* – a longer time period between the end of the last intervention and the time of the interview led to a greater likelihood of having found a job, being currently employed, and being employed full-time at the time of the survey.
- ❑ *prior work experience* – those who were employed in the two years prior to participating in an EP were more likely to have found a job and to be currently employed. Being in receipt of EI prior to starting an EP also increased chances of finding a job but played little role in predicting current or full-time employment at the time of the survey.
- ❑ *service delivery characteristics* – receiving a follow-up contact increased the likelihood of finding a job in the post-program period and being currently employed. Clients who met with a counsellor had a higher incidence of full-time employment, while the reverse was true for those who used a resource area. EP participants with an action plan were less likely to be currently employed;
- ❑ *program participation variables* – compared to CW, participation in the SE program led to a greater likelihood of having found a job in the post-program period and being currently employed (though it was also associated with a decrease in earnings between the pre-and post-program job). Bridging participants were less likely to be employed full-time.

In terms of use of public income support, the variables that affect the likelihood of relying on social assistance in the post-program period are mostly socio-demographic. While females and married clients were less likely to be SAP recipients, minority groups (Métis, First Nations, and persons with a disability) were more likely to rely on social assistance in the post-program period. Also more likely to be receiving SAP were those who were in receipt of social assistance prior to participating in an EP. Having recent prior work experience significantly decreased the likelihood of social assistance usage in the

post-program period. Finally, clients who used a resource area were also less likely to collect SA.

EP clients most likely to have collected EI in the post-program period were rural residents and those with a prior EI history. Relative to participation in CW, those who participated in WP, Bridging, and SE programs were less likely to have collected EI since the end of their last intervention.

4.4 Factors Contributing to Successful Employment Transitions and Contracts

In the preceding section, multivariate analysis results were presented identifying participant and program characteristics contributing to positive outcomes. In this section, further evidence on the issue is provided. First presented are the views of key informants and surveyed DSS staff, who were asked to identify the key ingredients for a smooth and successful transition to employment for participants. Second, factors associated with successful contracts with employers and service delivery partners are examined.

As a general condition of a successful transition to employment for participants, key informants emphasized the importance of the project or intervention itself, namely that interventions be client-centred/-focused as opposed to meeting the needs of the program or the needs of employers/organizations. In this vein, respondents supported flexibility in program design, holistic approaches and sensitivity to and involvement of the client target groups. According to key informants, other factors contributing to a smooth transition to employment for participants include:

- proper client assessment and planning to determine clients' strengths and weaknesses and their general state of readiness for participation and ongoing employment (e.g., other barriers/issues addressed) and, related to this, appropriate referral to a suitable program/placement;
- ongoing support and monitoring during program participation to resolve issues as they arise in the workplace or in the classroom (confirming the multivariate analysis results);

-
- ❑ access to adequate income support, whether this be in the form of wages or public income support, to meet financial commitments/expenses while in the program;
 - ❑ employment supports (e.g., transportation, child care, clothes, family support);
 - ❑ commitment of client (being motivated and willing, having clear expectations, being actively involved, being job ready);
 - ❑ positive employer environment (respectful, providing meaningful work and opportunities for skill development, committed to hiring); and
 - ❑ community involvement, specifically involvement of the target community in identification of need and design of solutions.

Surveyed DSS staff generally confirmed many of the perceptions of key informants. Factors identified by staff in ensuring participants' successful transition to employment included: favourable qualities of the clients themselves (e.g., job ready, motivated) (18 per cent); appropriate screening/match between participant and the employer (16 per cent); strong action plan/client assessment (15 per cent); other supports in place (e.g., income support, daycare, transportation) (12 per cent); appropriate intervention (flexible and suited to clients' needs) (11 per cent); and follow-up (coaching, support during intervention) (11 per cent).

In terms of relationships with employers/organizations, according to key informants, the most important ingredients for a successful placement often have to do with the quality of the employer/organization. Characteristics such as a positive and stable prior record in the community, a training culture, commitment to long-term jobs, and a supportive and tolerant work environment were mentioned. Additionally, if the employer/organization is well-connected within in the community, it effectively becomes an ambassador for the Program. Other success factors identified by key informants included clearly articulated expectations and a focus on results, and staff support and monitoring of employment once the client is in the workplace.

According to surveyed DSS staff, the most important ingredient in ensuring the successful implementation of projects with employers and service delivery partners is clarity in the contract (including objectives, expectations, and outcomes) (mentioned by 39 per cent). Other factors of success included good communications (19 per cent) and appropriate screening/match of participants to the intervention (17 per cent).

4.5 Non-Employment Outcomes

Effort was made in this evaluation to address the potential non-employment outcomes of participation in EPs, specifically impacts on participants' quality of life. The results are similarly positive across the four program groups. The majority of participants indicated that, considering their personal quality of life, they are better off now than before they started their program (CW – 61 per cent, WP – 64 per cent, SE – 67 per cent, Bridging – 69 per cent). A minority (10 – 14 per cent) reported that they were worse off now and, for the remainder, their quality of life had not changed.

4.6 Unintended Impacts

Several key informants indicated that the creative and innovative partnerships brought about by funding under EPs and perceived positive impacts on the region's economy have been surprising and positive outcomes of the programs.

Potential unintended negative effects of EPs mentioned by key informants included:

- when placements fail to lead to sustained employment, participants can become discouraged;
- wage subsidies can have the unintended impact of reinforcing the stereotype that social assistance recipients are not productive, valuable employees;
- the persistent use of wage subsidies by CBOs to fill a “permanent” position, which leads to dependence on funding for core operations;
- flexibility of Bridging funding that has led to some questionable projects and the use of funds for purposes for which it was not intended;
- short-term project-based funding, while supporting strategic labour market responses, can present difficulties for CBOs in planning and hiring;
- the possibility of providing a competitive advantage to one employer or client group over another by providing labour market/training assistance; and
- frustration amongst potential employers due to on-again, off-again programming (e.g., ceasing funding to WP).

5 EMPLOYER/ORGANIZATION PERSPECTIVE

This chapter provides information on the perspective of employers and organizations using Employment Programs (EPs), in particular, those who hire or have had participants placed with their organization through the Work Placement and Community Works Programs. These results are based on data collected in the survey of employers/organizations.

5.1 Awareness and Motivation

The two most frequently mentioned sources of awareness of the CW and WP programs were Career and Employment Services (30 and 24 per cent, respectively) and word of mouth (25 and 26 per cent, respectively) (Table 5.1).

TABLE 5.1
Source of Awareness of Program: Employers/Organizations,
Per Cent Indicating Source

Source of Awareness	Community Works (n=60) (%)	Work Placement (n=58) (%)
Career and Employment Services	30	24
Word of mouth	25	26
Professional association	8	7
HRDC	3	5
Newspaper/radio advertisement	3	5
Internet	0	5
Poster/brochure/mail	2	3
Social Services	2	2
Other	0	2

Source: Survey of Employers/Organizations, 2002.

The main reasons employers/organizations decided to participate in EPs are presented in Table 5.2. The top reasons were the same for CW and WP respondents, though the order was somewhat different. The top reasons cited by CW organizations comprise access to funding (57 per cent), to provide an employment opportunity to the client group (35 per cent) and need for workers due to new projects/new work (30 per cent). Similarly, WP employers were most likely to report an upturn in business (47 per cent), belief in providing an employment opportunity to program participants (36 per cent) and access to funding (33 per cent) as the main reasons for participating.

TABLE 5.2
Main Reasons for Participating in the Program: Employers/Organizations,
Per Cent Indicating Reason

Reason for Participation	Community Works (n=60) (%)	Work Placement (n=58) (%)
Funding	57	33
Expansion/Upturn in business	30	47
Believe in providing opportunity	35	36
Local community project	5	0
Screen workers	0	5
Previous Experience	0	3
Help in starting out	0	3
DK/NR	3	0

Source: Survey of Employers/Organizations, 2002.

5.2 Characteristics of Placements

On average, organizations took on 1.9 participants under CW and 2.4 participants under WP (Table 5.3). In terms of the type of placements offered, participants in CW were most likely to be placed into seasonal/short-term jobs (mean of 0.8 jobs), while those in the WP were more apt to be placed into full-time, year-round jobs (mean of 1.5 jobs). This is a reflection of program design, as CW organizations are not expected to provide long-term employment because of the limited resources of these CBOs.

The types of occupations for which participants in CW tended to be hired were sales/service or clerical (both 27 per cent). Those under the WP were most likely hired into sales/service occupations (53 per cent).

TABLE 5.3
Characteristics of Placements per Employer/Organization

Characteristic of Placements	Community Works (n=59)	Work Placement (n=57)
Mean number of placements		
Total	1.9	2.4
In full-time, year-round jobs	0.6	1.5
In part-time, year-round jobs	0.3	0.4
In seasonal, short-term jobs	0.8	0.5
Occupations (top four) (% in occupation)		
Sales and service	27	53
Clerical	27	11
Arts, culture, recreation	17	2
Natural/applied science	0	16

Source: Survey of Employers/Organizations, 2002.

5.3 Assistance Provided During Placements

Table 5.4 presents the kinds of training or assistance that employers/organizations provided participants during their CW and WP placement. On-the-job training was provided by virtually all organizations (95 and 100 per cent for CW and WP, respectively), closely followed by feedback to workers on their performance (92 and 95 per cent, respectively). Job coaching/mentoring ranked third (87 and 86 per cent, respectively). Equipment and job search advice were provided less frequently.

TABLE 5.4
Forms of Assistance Provided by Employers/Organizations to EP Participants,
Per Cent Providing Assistance

Form of Assistance	Community Works (n=60) (%)	Work Placement (n=58) (%)
On-the-job training	95	100
Feedback to workers	92	95
Job coaching/mentoring	87	86
Equipment	40	53
Job search advice	47	41

Source: Survey of Employers/Organizations, 2002.

5.4 Satisfaction

All CW organizations reported being satisfied (5, 6, or 7 on a 7-point scale) with the CW program overall (35 per cent extremely satisfied, 7 on the scale). A high proportion of WP employers (88 per cent) were also satisfied (33 per cent extremely satisfied with the program overall) (Table 5.5). CW organizations provided highest satisfaction ratings for administrative aspects such as payment disbursements and paperwork, and also approved of the flexibility of the program and staff support. WP employers tend to provide consistently lower satisfaction ratings than their CW counterparts. Worker quality was lowest ranked, by both CW and WP organizations (73 and 66 per cent satisfied, respectively). Requirements for project monitoring (submitting cost reports and receiving on-site monitors) also received relatively low satisfaction ratings among WP employers (67 per cent).

TABLE 5.5
Employers'/Organizations' Program Satisfaction: Per cent Satisfied*

Aspect of Program	Community Works (n=60) (%)	Work Placement (n=58) (%)
Program overall	100	88
Disbursement of payment	97	81
Amount of paperwork	95	79
Flexibility of Program to meet needs	95	81
Support provided by program staff	93	79
Requirements for project monitoring	90	67
Information available about the Program	88	78
How quickly workers were placed	87	81
Amount of wage subsidy	85	90
Quality of workers	73	66

*Responded 5, 6, or 7 on a 7-point scale.

Source: Survey of Employers/Organizations, 2002.

Among those who were dissatisfied with the quality of workers, respondents most often cited workers' attitude and behaviour (63 per cent overall) as weak. This was followed by workers' willingness to learn (32 per cent), punctuality (26 per cent) and responsibility (26 per cent).

The majority of employers (85 and 88 per cent of CW and WP employers/ organizations, respectively) indicated that they did *not* have any difficulties in using the resources or services offered by the Program. All CW and WP employers (both 100 per cent) reported that they would hire workers through the Programs again in the future.

5.5 Impacts

a) *Hirings*

Among CW organizations, respondents indicated that 0.8 participants, on average, went on to find long-term employment after the project was completed (or about 40 per cent of original participants) (Table 5.6). One-third of CW organizations (33 per cent) reported that none of the participants who were placed with their organization found employment, while 50 per cent indicated that one or more participants had found employment (17 per cent did not know). The majority of CW participants were reportedly hired into full-time year round jobs. One-half of organizations whose participants found employment indicated that their organization had, in fact, hired a participant.

Among WP employers, 1.2 workers were hired after their wage subsidy ended (or about 50 per cent of the original number of participants placed). The types of jobs that were filled were most likely full-time, year-round.

TABLE 5.6
Characteristics of Jobs Placement Hired Into

Characteristic of Hirings	Community Works: Participants Going on to Employment (n=29)	Work Placement: Participants Hired (n=40)
Mean number (total)	0.8*	1.2
Type of jobs filled (mean)		
In full-time, year-round jobs	0.5	0.9
In part-time, year-round jobs	0.2	0.2
In seasonal, short-term jobs	0.1	0.1

* Finding *long-term* employment.

Source: Survey of Employers/Organizations, 2002.

When asked why all participants did not go on to find long-term employment after the funding had ended, CW employers indicated: a lack of work (18 per cent); participants had personal/family issues (16 per cent); organizations could not afford the wages or that participants went on to another program (both 12 per cent). One in four (26 per cent) indicated they did not know why participants were not able to find employment after funding ended.

WP employers indicated that reasons participants were not hired after funding had ended were that participants: were not interested or quit (19 per cent); were not qualified (14 per cent); found another job; or had personal/family issues (both 10 per cent). Lack of work or inability to pay wages was mentioned by only nine per cent. Four in ten did not know why all participants were not hired.

b) *Rated Benefits*

Enabling the organization to complete a project with benefits to their community was the most highly rated benefit of the program by CW organizations (88 per cent indicated this as a positive benefit and 43 per cent rated this an *extremely* positive benefit) (Table 5.7). Two-thirds of organizations or more also cited benefits in the areas of providing high-quality on-the-job training and helping their organization to fill job vacancies.

In general, WP employers provided lower ratings of the benefits of the program to their organization compared to CW organizations. Comparatively fewer benefits were attributed to the program in terms of addressing overall human resources issues and development of partnerships with the government (less than half indicated positive benefits of program participation in either of these areas). Between 59 and 70 per cent of employers/organizations indicated that the program was beneficial in terms of increasing the number of jobs created by the organization.

TABLE 5.7
Impacts of Project Participation on Employer/Organization,
Per Cent Rating Impact as Positive*

Employer Impact	Community Works (n=60) (%)	Work Placement (n=58) (%)
Helped organization to provide quality on-the-job training to workers	90	66
Enabled organization to complete a project with community benefits	88	n/a
Improved partnership between organization and provincial government	85	47
Improved organization's understanding of workforce and training requirements	80	48
Allowed organization to hire into positions more quickly	77	57
Helped organization to fill job vacancies	75	66
Increased number of jobs created by organization	70	59

*Responded 5, 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale.

Source: Survey of Employers/Organizations, 2002.

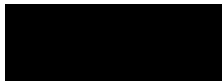
5.6 Incrementality

Seven in ten CW organizations (71 per cent) but only three in ten WP employers (31 per cent) indicated the program to be incremental, i.e., the organizations would *not* have hired anybody if the funds had not been available (Table 5.8). This is the strictest measure of incrementality. However, another five per cent of WP employers would have waited until it was affordable to do so. Among WP employers, 29 per cent would have hired the same participant even if funding had not been available.

TABLE 5.8
Program Incrementality: Employers/Organizations,
Per Cent Indicating Actions if No Funding Had Been Available

Actions That Would Have Been Taken Without Program Funding	Community Works (n=60) (%)	Work Placement (n=58) (%)
Not hired anybody	71	31
Same workers anyway	2	29
Hired other persons	7	21
Used volunteers	8	0
Reduced operation	7	2
Waited until affordable	0	5
Hired part-time	2	3
Other assistance	0	2
DK/NR	3	7

Source: Survey of Employers/Organizations, 2002.



6

RESPONDENTS' VIEWS ON STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES AND ALTERNATIVES

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight suggestions for improvements to EPs offered by those consulted for this evaluation. Key informants and program staff involved in design, implementation, management and delivery of the program components offered observations concerning key lessons learned in the development and delivery of EPs.

6.1 Strengths and Challenges Identified by Respondents

Key informants and surveyed DSS staff identified a number of strengths of EPs that contribute to successful delivery. According to key informants, EPs are an important tool for providing assistance for individuals to make the transition to the labour market. The general spirit and intent of the programs were praised and their financial contribution was broadly recognized. Specific strengths of the design and delivery of EPs identified by key informants included:

- flexibility of the programs to meet client needs;
- broad array of programs to meet needs of low- and high-skill clients to make the transition to employment;
- client assessment process;
- experienced staff;
- partnerships with CBOs, government and industry; and
- a manageable contracting process and administrative systems.

According to surveyed DSS staff, a key strength of the EPs is the intervention itself. Almost four in ten staff indicated strengths in terms of the provision of work experience and skills or a “foot in the door” for participants. Another 15 per cent mentioned the general intent of the programs to provide assistance or opportunities to those who are unemployed. Other strengths identified are the flexibility of the programs (15 per cent) and assistance provided to employers (11 per cent).

According to key informants, current challenges associated with the design and delivery of EPs are:

- eligibility restrictions that cause some potential clients who do not meet the criteria to “fall between the cracks”;
- limitations in funding and elimination of programs (i.e., WP);
- uneven outreach/marketing and inclusion of employer community;
- poor record of long-term hiring amongst some employers (WP) or limited skills development within some programs (CW);
- lack of appropriate income support for some clients;
- projects that lack a strong link to employment (e.g., Bridging projects focused on basic education); and
- lack of sensitivity to the social assistance client group (e.g., vision, outreach, staff competencies, expectations for results).

6.2 Respondents’ Suggestions for Improvement

Suggestions for improvement were canvassed from all respondent groups in the evaluation - key informants, program staff and participants (program participants and employers/organizations). Improvements suggested by key informants included:

- adjust the funding allocation among program components to increase funding for Bridging, which is consistently over-subscribed. (Note that since Bridging participants often rely on PTA funds for income support, there would need to be a parallel increase in income support funding). Some key informants were prepared to see the SE program reduced or encompassed within another program (e.g., STB);

-
- ❑ need for more accountability in contracts (especially Bridging contracts) to report on results (possibly linking payment to outcomes) and greater emphasis on tracking and assessment of outcomes;
 - ❑ greater attention to ongoing support and follow-up with participants and employers/organizations during program participation, e.g., through job coaching;
 - ❑ for clients with multiple barriers, greater availability of basic education or preparatory training, longer intervention packages featuring extended work placements, and occupational skills training;
 - ❑ greater efforts generally to link employers to clients; and
 - ❑ integration of EPs and other intervention programs to a community development framework or perspective that recognizes the need for an array of supports to families and communities.

In addition to the points above, many key informants suggested that the Work Placement program be re-established, or a similar successor program established, to address a gap in work experience programming in the private sector.

Table 6.1 presents the suggestions for program improvements of surveyed DSS staff. With the exception of WP, many staff (44 to 46 per cent) did not offer any suggestions to improve EPs. For Bridging, the most frequently mentioned suggestions pertain to streamlining administrative procedures such as contracts and procedures. One in ten staff also recommended more funds for employment or income supports, and for the program as a whole. For CW, the most common suggestions were for more funds/greater flexibility in funds and improvements to the selection of placement organizations to enhance training/employment potential. With respect to WP, staff most frequently suggested restoring or increasing program funding, followed by improvements to the selection of employers and a greater emphasis on participant training during the placement. Finally, with respect to SE, suggestions included additional funds, adjustments to eligibility criteria to exclude SAP recipients, and simplifying paperwork associated with the program.

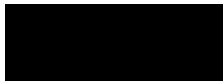
TABLE 6.1
Suggestions for Improvement to EPs: Staff,
Per Cent Indicating Suggestion

Suggestion	Bridging (n=64) (%)	Community Works (n=57) (%)	Work Placement (n=64) (%)	Self- Employment (n=44) (%)
No suggestions	44	46	30	46
Increase/restore program funds/flexibility of funds	10	25	36	-
Increase per participant funding amounts	11	-	-	11 – living/income support 11 – business supports
Streamline/simplify paperwork	13 – individual Bridging 10 – paperwork general	-	-	14
Better selection of employers	-	19	14	-
Greater emphasis on training	6	5	11	-
Limit eligibility to EI	-	-	-	11
Extend eligibility	6	4	6	-

Source: Survey of DSS Staff, 2002

Many surveyed service delivery partners offered suggestions for improvement to the design or delivery of the Bridging/SE programs. One-third suggested the amount or duration of funding or incentives be increased, and just over a quarter (27 per cent) suggested more relevant training for participants. Other suggestions included changes to eligibility criteria (20 per cent), increase in the duration of the program, and better management or organization (both at 18 per cent).

Among surveyed employers/organizations, about half of CW (44 per cent) and WP (53 per cent) respondents had no suggestions for improving the program. Among CW organizations, no single recommendation stands out: 14 to 17 per cent of organizations recommended better screening of participants, more funding/longer term funding, more follow-up/support in the workplace and better promotion of the program. One in five WP employers suggested more promotion of the program and 14 per cent recommended better screening of participants.



7 **SUMMARY OBSERVATIONS**

This evaluation dealt with issues related to rationale, delivery, and impacts and effects for Employment Programs (EPs). The summary observations below are organized thematically by each evaluation issue, followed by overall findings and suggested areas for improvement for individual EPs.

7.1 **Rationale**

a) ***Relevance***

There was general approval for the relevance of the program objectives of EPs. Programs are perceived to be meeting the needs of participants by providing a spectrum of options. While each program may be more or less relevant to specific participant groups (e.g., Employment Insurance (EI)-eligible *versus* Social Assistance Plan (SAP) recipients), together they offer a sensible and flexible response to a range of client needs.

The needs of EI-eligible clients tend to be well-addressed by EPs and these clients also have access to other intervention programs such as the Skills Training Benefit (STB). Their profile characteristics (e.g., established work history), however, tend to predispose this group to successful employment outcomes.

For SAP recipients and for clients with multiple barriers, key informants, particularly representatives of CBOs, perceived there to be gaps at each of the far ends of the services spectrum – basic skills/preparatory training on one end and occupational skills training

on the other. In addition, there were some doubts about the responsiveness of EPs to this group generally (e.g., potential for those who are most job-ready to be selected for participation in some programs, project timeframes that are too short, lack of appropriate outreach into communities).

There were mixed views regarding relevance of EPs for organizations and delivery partners. Key informants and staff perceive EPs to be relevant to the needs of both participating employers/organizations and service delivery partners. Conversely, employers participating in WP provided only a modest rating of the program's relevance to their needs, which is further reflected in their modest ratings of the benefits of the program to their organization.

b) *Program Usage/Demand*

During the period under study, the greatest activity under EPs occurred in the Bridging program. This program also tends to be oversubscribed, with several Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services (CSCES) offices reporting running short of funds for this program toward year-end.

There are significant variations in the client profile across the different components of EPs, reflecting the unique objectives of each component. Clients who experience greatest barriers to employment are generally represented in the Bridging and CW programs. These participants tend to have lower levels of education, little work experience and are more likely to have been collecting SAP benefits. There is a higher proportion of Aboriginal clients in Bridging and CW, and, in the former program, youth and single parents. SE participants, on the other hand, have the highest levels of education and resources. The profile of WP participants falls in the middle.

c) *Targeting*

There was no clear answer to the question of appropriateness of current eligibility criteria. Certainly the current target groups – EI claimants, reachback and SAP recipients - are viewed as valid. Yet, a significant portion of staff and stakeholders/partners

viewed other client groups as potentially benefiting from EPs. The impact of broadening the eligibility criteria on program demand is unclear and would depend on the types of clients to which programs are opened (e.g., the general public vs. recent immigrants). At the very least, there may be a need for examining the flexibility of EPs in this area and the extent to which staff and partners are aware of and using the exemption process to address the needs of ineligible clients in exceptional circumstances.

d) *Overlap and Duplication*

Few significant concerns were expressed about potential overlap between EPs and other programs offered by the province or other orders of government. Eligibility criteria for the various programs often differ. As well, collaboration and co-ordination among program deliverers prevents duplication of services at the field level.

7.2 *Design and Delivery*

a) *Marketing*

Marketing of EPs has not been a strategic or a significant priority for CSCES offices. Participation levels of individual clients are sufficient and, based on participants' sources of awareness of their intervention, cross-referrals among organizations are effective. Most evaluation participants were not of the view that there are significant gaps in awareness/participation of client groups. Exceptions are client groups with special needs (e.g., persons with disabilities, new immigrants, rural dwellers – a challenge for most programs). Service delivery partners appear well-aware of project opportunities under EPs and communications between the Department and CBOs were viewed as effective.

Weaknesses were identified in marketing to the employer client group and the underutilization of WP in some offices reflects challenges in reaching this group.

b) *Administrative Aspects of Program and Program Agreement System*

Program administrative aspects such as the application/approval processes, timeliness, disbursement of payments, and project monitoring were generally viewed as effective by staff and found to be satisfactory by participants, employers/organizations and service delivery partners.

The Program Agreement System (One Client Service Model, OCSM) received high marks from delivery staff. The system supports the contracting and analysis/reporting processes within the Department. Sufficient supports are available to assist staff in their use of this system. Few modifications were recommended.

Two-thirds or more of participants indicated satisfaction with various aspects of the program tested. Exceptions are the extent to which participants felt well-informed prior to participating in their program and, for CW and WP participants, the level of wages. Few participants, however, indicated any barriers to participation in EPs.

The majority of employers/organizations (66-97 per cent) were satisfied with the various administrative aspects of the program. The lowest levels of satisfaction were reported for monitoring requirements (submitting cost reports and receiving on-site monitors) among WP employers (67 per cent) and for the quality of workers among CW and WP employers (73 and 66 per cent, respectively).

For staff and service delivery partners, the level of funding available received lower satisfaction ratings. Staff also rated the client assessment and referral process among the less effective elements of EPs.

c) *Use of Other Services and Supports*

About half or more of EP participants are using other Departmental services to complement their EP intervention (CSCES resource area, CECs, web-site). With the

exception of Bridging participants, only one-third reported developing an action plan (or recall doing so), however. Fewer CW and WP participants report receiving a follow-up contact.

Use of employment supports varies across programs. Bridging participants are most likely to have received additional assistance for supports (40 per cent), while between 20 and 30 per cent of participants in other programs accessed employment supports (e.g., to cover training costs, equipment or tools, business costs).

d) *Non-Completion of Intervention*

Discontinuation of the intervention prior to completion occurs in 20 to 30 per cent of cases. Personal or health reasons most often interfere with completion, though a significant portion of Bridging participants indicated they left to take a job.

e) *Incrementality*

Program incrementality is considered strong by Bridging participants and by CW participants and participating organizations. For WP, however, less than one in three employers (31 per cent) and less than one in two participants (43 per cent) feel that hiring would have occurred without the program. SE is even less incremental – only one in three felt the program was necessary for them to start a business.

f) *Funding Levels*

Views about program funding levels were mixed. Key informants generally viewed current per participant funding levels as sufficient, though some recommended standardizing wage subsidies. On the other hand, CW and WP participants themselves were only moderately satisfied with the wages at their placement (though this is typical of employment program evaluations).

Service delivery partners (and some staff) provided comparatively lower satisfaction ratings of funding levels, particularly for employment/business supports. Adequacy of supports for special needs clients was also raised as an issue.

g) Flexibility

Key informants identified program flexibility as a strength of EPs and this is also an area where the satisfaction ratings of service delivery partners. The Bridging program (particularly individual Bridging contracts), coupled with the exemption process and funds for employment supports, provide significant flexibility to address client needs. There is likely to be greater use of flexibility in the future as administrative processes for exemption approvals are streamlined and staff become more familiar with the programs to best meet the needs of clients.

h) Partnerships

The close connection between Career and Employment Services and EPs makes it difficult to isolate the effects of EPs on partnerships. Still, most evaluation respondents – key informants, staff and service delivery partners – agreed that EPs have resulted in the development or enhancement of partnerships (e.g., with CBOs, participating employers/organizations and HRDC), though it should be noted that the term partnership could have been considered to include mere funding arrangements. Partnerships are said to lead to improved client service and outreach, and understanding and awareness of available resources and community needs.

7.3 Impacts/Success

Participants tend to rate the usefulness of EPs higher in softer areas (e.g., confidence, motivation) and lower for outcomes directly related to employment. Bridging participants tend to provide higher ratings of program usefulness compared to other participants and SE participants provide the lowest ratings.

The majority of participants indicate that their personal quality of life has improved since the time prior to starting their intervention.

In terms of immediate employment outcomes, two-thirds of WP participants were hired by their employer once the subsidy had ended, most on a full-time basis. Hiring was often short-lived, as only 27 per cent were working for their WP employer at the time of the survey interview.

As for the CW program, despite the fact that there are fewer expectations that participants in this program will be hired by the sponsoring organization, in fact, a significant portion of participants reported being hired beyond the subsidy period (four in ten). Again, however, the job tenure was relatively short, with only 17 per cent still employed with the organization at the time of the interview.

The reasons cited for why hiring does not take place following the subsidy tend to differ between participants and employers. While participants most often cite lack of work or inability of the organization to afford wages, employers themselves say this only infrequently (being more likely to indicate they “don’t know” or to indicate that hiring did not take place due to the actions/qualifications of the participant).

Considering impacts 18 months, on average, following the intervention, Bridging and CW participants have similar employment outcomes, with just over half employed at the time of the survey. This is at least a partial reflection of the similar socio-demographic characteristics of these two program groups. Employment results are generally stronger for WP than for CW or Bridging and most positive for SE participants. WP and SE groups have a greater likelihood of being employed and spend less time jobless during the post-program period. The unemployment rate at the time of the survey ranged from just six per cent for SE clients to 36 per cent for CW participants.

It should be noted that while SE clients have the most positive employment outcomes, many participants have not, in fact, been involved in *self*-employment. Just over half classify themselves as self-employed at the time of the interview and SE participants often experience a decline in earnings from their pre-program job.

Among those participants who had not found employment in the post-program period, the most frequent reasons cited were no jobs or lack of skills/education.

A significant portion of participants in all program groups went on to further education and training after completing their intervention (26 to 40 per cent). Bridging participants, in particular, were likely to go on to further training.

Participants from all program groups show increased self-sufficiency following their intervention as measured by a reduction in the proportion collecting EI or SAP benefits and a greater propensity to have employment earnings in the post-program period compared to before the intervention. Being a single parent or separated or the presence of many dependents increased the chances of SA receipt.

The multivariate analysis shows that having a post-secondary education or prior work experience is associated with positive labour market outcomes for participants, as is having a longer post-program period. Program variables such as speaking with a CEC and follow-up contact were also important. Weaker results are recorded for older workers, persons with disabilities, SAP recipients and rural dwellers.

Key informants and staff further identified such program variables as proper client assessment/action plans, client screening and client-employer matches, adequate income/employment supports, and ongoing support/monitoring during the placement as key ingredients in a smooth transition to employment. A positive employer environment and community involvement were also seen as important.

Virtually all CW and WP organizations indicated that they had provided on-the-job training to participants, as well as feedback on performance and job coaching, which is an expectation of the programs. However, this training was likely to have been informal and job-specific. Moreover, the participants themselves were less apt to report receiving this kind of support than employers were to say they provided it, and, in the case of CW, the training rarely occurred on a formal basis. Staff and service delivery partners recommended that training form a more important focus in placements. Few CW participants reported receiving advice on job search from their host organization.

Majorities of organizations and employers reported organizational benefits of participating in CW and WP, with CW organizations more likely to observe benefits than

WP employers did. Representatives of CW organizations also observed community benefits of their projects. For both CW and WP, being able to provide high-quality on-the-job training and fill job vacancies were seen as benefits of participation.

In terms of job creation impacts, 60 to 70 per cent of employers/organizations participating in CW and WP rated the program as having a positive impact on the number of jobs created. Another potential avenue for job creation is through businesses created under the SE program: 33 per cent of participants reported hiring 2.3 employees, representing a mean of 0.75 employees hired per participant considering all SE participants.

Program incrementality (the degree to which hiring would have taken place without the program) was considerably higher among CW organizations than WP employers (71 and 31 per cent, respectively).

7.4 Perceived Strengths

The evaluation of EPs has pointed to a number of program strengths. Relevance of the program objectives is supported. The program design is viewed as sufficiently flexible and features such as the involvement of partners in delivery and the availability of different program options are seen as strengths. The delivery of EPs is also well-supported by administrative systems (e.g., the Program Agreement System).

Some key success factors identified in the evaluation include:

- ❑ *Importance of an ongoing connection with participants during and following the intervention.* Evaluation respondents highlighted follow-up as a key ingredient of a smooth and successful transition to employment for participants. This is confirmed in the evaluation data where having a follow-up contact was associated with higher levels of satisfaction and positive employment outcomes.
- ❑ *Client assessment and referral.* A strong assessment process to determine clients' motivation, strengths and barriers was also cited as a factor of success, but an area that staff rated as being less effective compared to other design/delivery elements. The current screening process for SE participants is quite rigorous (though perhaps does not focus sufficiently on incrementality) and the majority of Bridging participants report developing an action plan. Assessment appears less formal for other participants.

- ❑ *Match between client and employer.* Evaluation respondents – including key informants, staff, and employers/organizations – emphasized the importance of the match between the participants and the organization for a successful placement. On the employer/organization side, these participants indicated a need for better screening (e.g., in terms of attitudinal and skill attributes) of client for placements. At the same time, staff and service delivery partners also noted the responsibility of employers/organizations to ensure success by providing a welcoming work environment with meaningful skill development.
- ❑ *Other supports.* Access to sufficient income and successfully addressing other barriers (personal or otherwise) that may interfere with program completion or smooth transition to the labour market were noted as factors of success. Funding for wage subsidies and employment supports address these issues to some extent during the program. The linkage between EPs and other programs such as PTA and the Saskatchewan Employment Supplement should be assessed and communicated clearly to participants.

7.5 Areas for Improvement of Individual Programs

Suggested areas for improvement of each of the components of EPs are discussed in turn below.

a) Community Works

Findings related to CW on a variety of aspects tend to be weaker than for other programs, pertaining to job tenure, likelihood of employment, and duration of joblessness. The poorer employment outcomes for participants is at least a partial reflection of the greater barriers to employment of this client group.

Some CW design and delivery elements were also found to be fairly weak, for example, client screening and follow-up contact. The relatively weak screening could partly explain organizations' perceptions of low quality participants. On the other hand, CW organizations tended to be more satisfied with administrative elements than WP employers were.

Participants generally were not satisfied with the wages they were during their placement, which however is a complaint often heard in evaluations of other similar programs. As well, staff and service delivery partners assigned relatively low satisfaction ratings to the level of CW funding available for wage subsidies and, particularly, employment/business supports to address clients' barriers to employment.

An expectation of program participation for CW placements is that the work experience be accompanied by training for clients and job search advice. While virtually all CW organizations indicated that they had provided on-the-job training to participants (as well as feedback on performance and job coaching), this training was likely to have been informal and job-specific. Moreover, participants in CW were less likely to report receiving this kind of support than employers reported providing it. In particular, training was reported by only four in ten CW participants and this rarely occurred on a formal basis. Staff and service delivery partners also recommended that training form a more important focus in placements. A minority of CW participants reported that their organization had provided them job search advice.

b) *Bridging*

Bridging comprises a significant portion of EP activity. Yet, the program has been oversubscribed in the past and concerns were expressed about the extent to which Bridging has been able to adequately address the needs of clients with multiple barriers. The latter issue may be leading to Bridging projects designed to address basic skill needs. The effectiveness of the link among Bridging, Basic Education and PTA should be examined, as well as the sufficiency of funding for these programs. Finally, while Bridging was praised as a flexible program, there were also calls to ensure accountability of contracts and ensuring a closer connection between the intervention and employment.

c) *Work Placement*

A significant portion of evaluation respondents believed that ceasing funding of WP has created a gap in the program array. The Work-Based Training (WBT) option under Job Start/Future Skills does not currently cover this gap given its differing

objectives, its location in a different Department from delivery of EPs and a funding allocation that has not been increased since funding ceased for WP. Program renewal (or expansion of WBT) is supported by the fact that most participants were hired by their sponsoring employer on a full-time basis after the subsidy had ended and by high incidence of training that occurs during the placement, though participants were less likely to have said the latter had occurred than employers were to have said they provided it.

If the program were renewed, there is a need to ensure harmonization between it and WBT, as overlap/duplication between WP and WBT had raised concerns. Also, while staff provided high ratings of the effectiveness of its design and delivery elements, the satisfaction ratings of WP employers were modest at best (though all said they would participate again). As well, staff and service delivery partners were relatively dissatisfied with WP funding available for wage subsidies and, particularly, employment/business supports to address clients' barriers. The incrementality of the program is questionable in some cases, from the perspective of both the participant and the employer.

A re-introduction of WP or expansion of other options would require greater effort in the area of program marketing, particularly given that the erstwhile program experienced challenges in recruiting employer participants. Personal contacts and networking, and highly targeted local efforts are strategies that have proven effective in the past.

The match between the participant and the employer was viewed as a key element of success. WP employers were critical of the quality of workers, though weaknesses were more often identified in the areas of attitude/motivation than work skills or experience. Thus, screening is an area for improvement should a program like WP be re-introduced.

As well, attention would have to be paid to the fact that WP participants were not as likely to say they had received training as part of their placement as employers were to say they had provided it to the client. Also, the importance of coaching and mentoring throughout the placement period was stressed as an ingredient of success.

d) *Self-Employment*

The SE Program provides a useful option for a narrow segment of the EI-eligible client group. While the employment outcomes for this group are the strongest of all the programs, much of the employment outcomes are not *self*-employment. Also, participants generally rate the program less useful and less important in helping them to get their current job. Program incrementality was seen as low: the majority of SE participants would have started their business without the program.

While screening processes are effective in selecting those with solid credentials (experience, education, resources and maturity), this may also have the paradoxical effect of selecting those who need assistance the least. Some evaluation respondents wondered about the appropriateness of the program under EPs given its limited applicability and virtually exclusive draw of clients from the EI-eligible pool.

APPENDIX A

List of Acronyms

List of Acronyms

CBO	Community Based Organization
CEC	Career and Employment Consultant
CEIS	Career and Employment Information System
CES	Career and Employment Services
CSCES	Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services
CW	Community Works
DSS	Department of Social Services
EI	Employment Insurance
EP	Employment Program
HRDC	Human Resources Development Canada
OCSM	One Client Service Model
PSEST	Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training
PTA	Provincial Training Allowance
SA	Social Assistance
SAP	Social Assistance Plan
SE	Self-Employment
SIAST	Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology
STB	Skills Training Benefit
SL	Student Loan
WP	Work Placement

APPENDIX B

Program Descriptions

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

The Employment Programs (EPs), targeted at Social Assistance Plan (SAP) recipients and Employment Insurance (EI) clients, offer a broad range of programs and employment assistance services intended to help clients obtain training and work experience leading to sustainable employment. Under the umbrella of EPs, there are five individual programs or components, the first four of which are the subject of this evaluation. First, *Work Placement* provides wage subsidies or subsidies covering other employment related costs for employers who in turn provide on-the-job training and work experience for participants. Second, *Community Works* is a similar program focused on community organizations, Aboriginal governing bodies, and municipalities. Third, *Bridging* provides funding to community groups, businesses, or training facilities to assist participants to move to employment (through counselling, basic skills/ literacy training, or work experience). Fourth, the *Self-Employment Program* delivers entrepreneurial training and support services to individuals seeking to set up businesses. A fifth component, *Job Development Services*, provides support to employers and organizations to help match job opportunities with the skills of individuals on SA or on EI who are looking for work. This component is not included in this evaluation.

a) ***Work Placement Program***

The Work Placement (WP) Program provided funding assistance to employers to hire eligible employees and provide on-the-job skills training to lead to on-going employment. The WP was cancelled in April 2002. The specific program *objectives* were: to provide eligible employees with assistance to find and keep on-going employment; to assist eligible employees to gain work experience, and develop work based skills; to assist employers in providing on-the-job training to eligible employees; to work with employers to identify available jobs and the skills needed to fill those jobs; and to provide support to employers in filling available jobs.

In 2000/2001, 448 employers signed a total of 509 contracts to place a total of 1,025 participants under the WP program.

There were several specific eligibility criteria that had to be met by employers¹². First, funding was provided to employers who hire eligible employees for job positions that led to on-going employment. Second, the work placement position was to have provided valuable on-the-job skills training. Third, written consent from the bargaining agent in unionized work places was required. Fourth, hiring must not take place prior to program approval. Fifth, job positions must not displace or reduce the number of hours worked by other employees. Finally, eligible employers included registered businesses, regional and urban parks, district Health Boards and hospitals, Boards of Education, public and regional libraries, public and private post-secondary training and education institutions, labour organizations and farmers. Federal and provincial government departments and agencies were eligible for employee "support" costs only.

Eligible employers were eligible for funding up to a maximum of \$3,000 per position. In cases where a wage subsidy was not required, or where an employee required assistance for special needs in addition to a wage subsidy, there was funding assistance available for employment related supports such as mentoring, job coaching or equipment. Normally up to a maximum of \$1,000 per work placement was available for eligible employee support costs. Level and type of support was determined based on the needs of the individual employee. With respect to monitoring, CSCES officers may conduct on-site visits, while employers must submit completed project cost reports.

b) *Community Works Program*

The Community Works (CW) Program provides funding assistance to community based organizations, municipalities, Indian Bands, tribal councils and Métis Nations of Saskatchewan to hire eligible employees in job creation projects that provide a direct benefit or service to the local community. The specific program *objectives* are: to assist individuals in acquiring the fundamental skills needed to fully participate in the workforce and to link them to sustained employment, and to assist organizations to complete projects that will enhance community services and facilities.

¹² For the eligibility criteria of individual participants, see the end of the description of the Bridging Program below.

In 2000/2001, 350 organizations signed a total of 431 contracts to place a total of 861 participants under CW.

The eligibility criteria that organizations must meet are quite specific¹³. The work placement position must provide on-the-job skills training that will enhance the participant's ability to obtain further employment opportunities upon project completion. The on-the-job skills training provided can be transferred to other related jobs in the community. The employing organization must demonstrate a commitment to assist the employee with finding other employment at the end of the work placement when there is no potential for ongoing employment. Also, written consent from the bargaining agent in unionized work places is required and hiring must not take place prior to program approval. Job positions must not displace or reduce the number of hours worked by other employees.

Community based organizations (CBOs, registered through the Non-Profit Corporations Act, 1995), northern municipalities, Métis Nations of Saskatchewan, Indian Bands, and tribal councils are eligible for funding assistance up to a maximum of \$5,000 per work placement position. All other municipalities are eligible for funding assistance up to a maximum of \$3,000 per work placement position. The program has the right to negotiate the level of funding based on individual employee and employer need.

Like the WP Program, in cases where a wage subsidy is not required, or where an employee requires assistance for special needs in addition to a wage subsidy, there may be funding assistance available for employment related supports such as mentoring, job coaching or equipment. Normally up to a maximum of \$1,000 per work placement is available for eligible employee support costs. Level and type of support will be determined based on the needs of the individual employee. With respect to monitoring, CSCES officers may conduct on-site visits, while organizations must submit completed project cost reports.

¹³ For the eligibility criteria of individual participants, see the end of the description of the Bridging Program below.

c) *Bridging Program*

The Bridging Program provides funding to eligible applicants (delivery agencies/agents) to develop and deliver programs that will link individuals to employment. Bridging provides a flexible range of programs, services and supports based on the needs of the client. This includes assessment, career counselling, job readiness skills, employability skills, life skills, academic upgrading, literacy, entry level skills, work experience, mentoring, job coaching, job development services, and employment related supports. Projects must be linked to employment opportunities. Projects may include the delivery of employment related supports, employment related training supports, and purchase of employment related equipment. The specific Program *objectives* are: to provide employment related supports to eligible participants that will enhance their ability to find on-going employment and to provide learning environments suited to the needs of individuals or particular groups.

In 2000/2001, 79 organizations signed a total of 100 contracts, and 266 individual-based contracts were signed, to place a total of 2,266 participants under the Bridging Program

Eligible applicants include a broad range of organizations, including: community-based organizations (CBOs); public and private post-secondary training and education institutions; certified private trainers; registered businesses; Indian Bands; Tribal Councils; Métis Nations of Saskatchewan; trade unions; industry associations or councils; and individual community members.

Applicants interested in developing a Bridging Project must attach a proposal to the application form describing the following (corresponding to program criteria): the project's rationale; the project and course content; training (skills development, accredited/certified training and delivery methods); expected outcomes (measurable project outcomes); evaluation (how the project and participants will be evaluated); links to employment (how participants will be linked to employment opportunities); partnerships (other community partners involved in the project); and instructor qualifications. The proposal must also include the following documentation: annual financial statements; summary of successful project history and/or letters of support; letter of support for the project from the Board of Directors

and the name of the individual who has the authority to sign the contract if the project is approved.

Program funding covers costs such as the salaries and benefits of the instructor/facilitator, skills training delivered through a third party; incremental administrative costs; incremental facility rental costs; equipment rental; learning materials and supplies; trainee wages during work placements; job development services; liability insurance in the case of injury in classroom settings or in work placements; program development costs for new programs; and monitoring and evaluation. Funding up to a maximum of \$5,000 per program participant is available for eligible Bridging Projects. The Program reserves the right to negotiate the level of funding based on the needs of individuals or particular groups.

For the above three programs (WP, CW and Bridging), eligible employees must be at least 18 years of age, a resident of Canada, legally eligible to work in Canada, in receipt of EI benefits, financial assistance through the Social Assistance Plan (SAP), or, in the case of WP, CW and Bridging only, a Provincial Training Allowance. The eligible client can also be an unemployed individual within an established EI benefit period - whose EI benefit period ended within the last three years, or who received EI maternity or parental benefits within the past five years and are re-entering the labour force after having left it to take care of a newborn or newly adopted child. Employees cannot be immediate family members of the applicant.

d) *Self-Employment Program*

The Self-Employment (SE) Program provides a flexible range of programs, services and supports to assist eligible individuals to develop, implement and operate a viable business. The Program is a training option for individuals seriously considering self-employment. It may be delivered on an individual basis or in a group setting, depending on the region, client demand and client need. The *objectives* of the Program are to contribute to economic development and job creation through the development of businesses and to meet clients' need for self-employment training.

In 2000/2001, 18 training organizations delivered training to 286 participants under the SE Program.

Eligible applicants (organizations, the deliverers of the services) are public training institutions, Community Futures Development Corporations, Regional Economic Development Authorities, and businesses or community based organizations (registered with Corporations Branch, Saskatchewan Justice). As for participants (recipients of the assistance), they must be residents of Canada; legally entitled to work in Canada; be at least 18 years of age; be in receipt of either Social Assistance Plan benefits or Employment Insurance eligible; be able to attend and participate full-time; be in need of assistance; and have a viable, self-sustaining business idea.

The maximum amount of funding to trainers is \$5,000 per participant. The program reserves the right to negotiate the level of funding based on the needs of individuals or groups and to limit the amount of funding to any one trainer. The following program costs for eligible trainers are covered under this program: instructor/facilitator salaries and benefits; individual coaching/consulting fees; program coordination; assessment and selection costs/instruments; advertising and recruitment costs; speakers and professional services; skills training delivered through a third party; facility and equipment rental costs; learning materials and supplies; liability insurance; special equipment for persons with disabilities; trade show or business launch; and self-employment supports for program participants. Additional funds, up to \$1,000 per participant, are available for eligible business support costs. The level and type of support is based on individual needs.

The selection of trainers is carried out through an expression of interest process. The letter of interest must provide a statement of qualifications and location in Saskatchewan where the training is to be delivered. Submissions are evaluated provincially against assessment criteria and a list of qualified trainers is developed. Following this, qualified trainers on the list are asked to submit proposals for specific projects to local Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services offices. To address program criteria, the proposal must include descriptions of the following elements: objectives of the program being delivered; participant assessment and selection (assessment tools, selection techniques, reporting of assessment results to funding agency, and numbers of participants); the program

and course content; the training methodology; support services provided (infrastructure and supports available and how participants will access supports when the project is completed); links to financing (how participants will be linked to financing); participant evaluation (program exit points and contents of an evaluation); instructor qualifications; applicant information; partnerships; expected program outcomes; and budget.

The SE Program involves delivery of a range of flexible entrepreneurial training supports and services, based on individual needs, to help participants establish successful businesses. The methods of delivery include: classroom instruction, individual consulting, mentoring, business plan instruction or skill workshops. The training, which must assist participants to become self-sufficient through self-employment, focuses on the research and writing of a business plan, as well as business related skills development and operation, supporting individuals from the initial business idea through to setting up and running business operations. The Program includes processes such as: a participant suitability and needs assessment, business plan development, and skills development such as market research, accounting, financial forecasting, small business management and business finance options. Services provided can also include mentor support, technical business advice and follow-up business consulting during the start-up and development of the new business. Participants are required to complete a business plan and begin the operation of their business during the time frame of their assistance.

APPENDIX C

Profile of EP Participants

PROFILE OF EP PARTICIPANTS

a) Socio-Demographic Profile

A summary of the socio-demographic characteristics of EP participants is presented in Table C.1. The gender distribution among Community Works (CW), Work Placement (WP) and Self-Employment (SE) participants is virtually identical, with a slightly greater proportion of clients being men. Bridging has a somewhat lower representation of male clients (48 per cent).

The average age of EP participants varies based on the program type. Bridging attracts a younger client group (average age 33 years) with almost one-quarter of Bridging participants (22 per cent) younger than 25 years of age. Conversely, the oldest clientele is for SE (average age 42 years), where 38 per cent are older than 45 years of age and another 42 per cent in the 35 to 44-age cohort. The average age of CW clients is 36 years of age, while WP participants are, on average, 39 years old.

Considering education levels, Bridging and SE participants further stand out as the two most distinctive segments. While a majority of Bridging participants (43 per cent) have less than a high school diploma, only 11 per cent of SE participants are in this category. Just 22 per cent of Bridging clients have some kind of post-secondary education compared to 48 per cent of SE clients. The CW and WP programs have similar proportions of participants with at least some post-secondary education (33 and 36 per cent, respectively). WP, however, has more clients with a high school diploma (39 vs. 30 per cent in CW), whereas CW has a larger number of clients with less than a high school education (38 per cent vs. 23 per cent in WP).

In terms of family status characteristics, CW participants are more apt to be single (40 per cent) and have no dependents (50 per cent), while participants in SE are more likely to be married/common-law couples (75 per cent) and to have dependents (73 per cent). Bridging participants stand out as having the largest proportion of single parents (40 per cent). WP participants are more likely to be married/common law compared to CW and Bridging (42

vs. 30 per cent) but are less apt to have dependents compared to SE clients (56 per cent vs. 73 per cent).

TABLE C.1
Socio-Demographic Profile of EP Participants
(at time of survey interview)

Characteristic	Bridging (n=293) (%)	Community Works (n=216) (%)	Work Placement (n=140) (%)	Self- Employment (n=101) (%)
Sex				
Male	48	55	56	55
Female	52	45	44	45
Age (years)				
Less than 25	22	16	10	1
25-34	40	32	27	20
35-44	25	30	36	42
45+	13	22	27	38
Mean	33.0 years	36.1 years	38.7 years	42.1 years
Education (highest level attained)				
Less than high school	43	38	23	11
High school	35	30	39	41
Some post-secondary	11	15	15	17
Community college	7	10	11	16
University	4	8	10	15
Family status				
Not married, no children	26	40	26	11
Not married, with children	26	16	14	5
Married/common-law, no children	6	8	13	16
Married/common-law, with children	24	22	29	59
Separated/divorced, no children	4	4	2	2
Separated/divorced, with children	14	10	16	6
Dependents				
Yes	58	50	56	73
No	42	50	44	27
Equity group status				
Person with disability	14	17	19	13
First Nations	42	27	6	4

Characteristic	Bridging (n=293) (%)	Community Works (n=216) (%)	Work Placement (n=140) (%)	Self- Employment (n=101) (%)
Métis	10	21	11	3
Visible minority	5	2	6	3
None	34	39	62	77
Community type				
Urban	70	62	68	55
Rural	30	38	32	45
Personal income (2001)				
<\$10,000	19	19	13	12
\$10,000-\$19,999	22	18	26	23
\$20,000-\$29,999	8	8	12	14
\$30,000 +	3	5	8	26
DK/NR	48	50	41	25
Mean	\$14,500	\$14,300	\$17,500	\$23,600

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002

Regarding equity group status, CW and Bridging have proportionately more clients who are the members of an equity group (61 and 66 per cent, respectively) compared to WP and SE programs (38 and 23 per cent, respectively). While a significant portion of Bridging participants are First Nations people (42 per cent), CW has the largest Métis representation (21 per cent).

Seven in ten Bridging and WP participants reside in an urban area, while this proportion is somewhat lower for CW participants (62 per cent) and lower still for the SE group (55 per cent). The average annual personal income for CW and Bridging participants in 2001 was about \$14,000. WP participants had a somewhat higher personal income of \$17,500, while SE participants report the highest personal annual income of \$23,600. The large proportion of survey respondents who could/did not respond (“DK/NR”)(25-48 per cent), however, should be noted.

b) *Work Experience Profile*

A profile of EP participants' work experience prior to their program participation is presented in Table C.2. The majority of EP participants across all programs had recent prior work experience (within the last two years), though this is proportionately much higher for SE (86 per cent) and WP (66 per cent) compared to CW and Bridging (both at 53 per cent). The SE group also shows the longest average tenure at their previous job (six years), while the rest of participants report about three years tenure at their previous job. About one-half of clients in CW and Bridging (48 and 51 per cent, respectively) were working in year-round jobs and another quarter in casual and contract jobs. The incidence of year round jobs was higher for WP (61 per cent) and SE (71 per cent) clients, with only nine per cent of the latter group having worked on casual or contract basis.

TABLE C.2
Work Experience Profile of EP Participants Prior to Intervention

Characteristic	Bridging (n= 293) (%)	Community Works (n=216) (%)	Work Placement (n=140) (%)	Self- Employment (n=101) (%)
Worked two years prior to intervention				
Yes	53	53	66	86
No	44	46	31	13
Mean experience at previous job	3.2 years	2.7 years	3.3 years	6.4 years
Type of employment	(n=149)	(n=123)	(n=93)	(n=87)
Year-round	51	48	61	71
Seasonal	21	27	18	20
Casual/contract	27	25	20	9
Weekly hours				
<30	33	28	23	10
30 or more	62	69	74	86
DK/NR	5	4	3	3
Mean	36.4 hours	34.7 hours	37.0 hours	42.5 hours
Weekly earnings				
<\$250	24	27	16	5
\$250-\$499	53	53	65	28
\$500 or more	23	20	19	67
Mean weekly wage	\$392	\$366	\$386	\$641
Mean hourly wage	\$9.50	\$9.60	\$9.70	\$14.80
Main reason job ended (top five)				

Characteristic	Bridging (n= 293) (%)	Community Works (n=216) (%)	Work Placement (n=140) (%)	Self- Employment (n=101) (%)
Laid off/lack of work/fired	40	25	33	51
Temporary/contract	12	26	14	18
Medical/health/personal	16	7	10	6
Quit	22	21	24	15
Moved	7	14	11	5
Receipt of SA in prior 12 months period				
Yes	53	53	38	14
No	31	32	51	76
DK/NR	16	15	11	10
Receipt of EI in prior 12 months period				
Yes	24	36	45	70
No	67	51	44	24
DK/NR	9	13	11	6
Employment status week prior to participation				
Self-employed	1	2	1	4
Employed full-time	6	5	8	4
Employed part-time	5	7	8	4
Employed casual/contract/seasonal	2	2	4	4
Unemployed and looking for work	58	69	64	67
Not looking for work	15	15	5	15
Student	7	5	6	1
Homemaker	2	0	1	0
On leave (maternity, disability)	2	1	1	1
DK/NR	2	3	3	0
EI status				
Employment Insurance claimant	7	7	20	44
Reachback	29	47	49	51
None	63	44	28	5
Unknown	1	1	3	0
Main sources of income week prior (top six)				
EI	15	17	28	64
Social Assistance Plan	46	41	31	8
Employment earnings	16	21	17	15
Spouse/family/child support	16	13	13	19
Savings	2	6	6	15
Student loan/grant	6	2	4	3
DK/NR	7	8	8	5

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002

Most EP participants who had a job prior to their intervention were working on full-time basis. Mean weekly hours for all programs were around 35 to 37 hours, with the exception of the SE group that indicated 43 hours, on average. Weekly earning in the pre-intervention job varied little among CW, Bridging, and WP participants and were in the \$366-\$392 range, while SE program clients had the largest weekly earnings of \$641. The same pattern is reflected in average hourly wage.

Shortage of work was the most frequently mentioned reason why participants' pre-program job had ended for SE (51 per cent), Bridging (40 per cent), and WP (33 per cent) participants. Clients in CW were more likely to cite the temporary/contract nature of the work (26 per cent). About one-fifth of all but SE participants indicated quitting and another 14 per cent of CW clients said they lost their job because of a move.

At the time of starting their EP intervention, seven in ten CW and SE participants were unemployed and looking for work. Sixteen per cent were employed (either self-employed, employed full-time, or engaged in non-standard employment). WP and Bridging participants had a somewhat lower unemployment rate just prior to starting their EP intervention (64 and 58 per cent, respectively), with WP participants being more apt to have some kind of job (21 per cent).

In terms of income support status, there are great differences based on the program type. The SE program draws the largest proportion of EI claimants (44 per cent) and reachback clients (51 per cent) and relatively few who would be receiving SAP. The majority of WP clients were also EI-eligible (reachback - 49 per cent or claimants - 20 per cent). CW and Bridging had the lowest incidence of EI claimants (seven per cent each), but reachback clients were more likely to be found among CW participants (47 per cent) than Bridging (29 per cent).

EP participants were also asked whether they had collected employment insurance or social assistance in the 12 months prior to program participation. There is a clear split between these characteristics depending on whether a participant is in CW and Bridging or in WP and SE. A slight majority of CW and Bridging clients (53 per cent each) were receiving social assistance during this time. Conversely, most SE participants (70 per cent)

were EI claimants. Forty-five per cent of WP clients were receiving EI benefits and two fifths were receiving SA benefits.

Sources of income in the week prior to starting the EP intervention reflect participants' employment and income support status described above. A majority of SE clients (64 per cent) relied on EI income, 19 per cent received spouse, family, or child support, and another 30 per cent (15 per cent each) relied on savings and employment earnings. Many Bridging (46 per cent) and CW (41 per cent) participants were relying on social assistance. CW participants were more apt to also have employment earnings. Somewhat similar proportions of WP participants relied on EI (28 per cent) and SA (31 per cent), with 17 per cent having employment earnings and 13 per cent spouse/family/child support.

APPENDIX D

Profile of EP Program Activities

PROFILE OF EP PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Surveyed EP participants were asked a series of questions related to program activities that were funded under their EP intervention. A summary of findings for each intervention is presented below in tables D.1 to D.4.

a) *Bridging*

A profile of Bridging program activities is presented in Table D.1. Bridging clients reported participating in multiple activities under this program. About one-third (32 per cent) of participants indicated receiving job search assistance, and 25 per cent upgraded their literacy or undertook academic upgrading/GED. A similar proportion of participants (23 per cent) developed job readiness skills and 20 per cent mentioned computer literacy skills. Less frequently mentioned activities were specialized job skills (18 per cent), career counselling and assessment of needs (16 per cent), life skills (16 per cent), and gaining job experience (10 per cent). Ten per cent of Bridging participants provided a “don’t know” response.

TABLE D.1
Profile of Bridging Program Activities

Characteristic	(n=293) (%)
Kinds of activities included	
Job search	32
Literacy/academic upgrading/GED	25
Job readiness training/mentoring/job coaching	23
Computer literacy	20
Specialized job skills	18
Career counselling/assessment/needs determined	16
Life skills	16
Job experience	10
Other	11
DK/NR	10
Receipt of Employment Supports	
Training expenses (course fees, certification costs)	27
Work-related expenses (e.g., license fees, transportation costs)	16
Equipment or tools	10
None of the above	59

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002

EP clients involved in the Bridging program were also asked whether they received any additional employment supports during their intervention. While more than a half (59 per cent) reported no support, 27 per cent were helped with training expenses, 16 per cent were reimbursed for work-related expenses, and remaining 10 per cent received aid with equipment or tools.

b) *Community Works*

A profile of Community Works (CW) program activities is presented in Table D.2. The majority of participants involved in this program had their placement with a community-based/non-profit organization (61 per cent). Public sector was the second most common type of placement (22 per cent), while placements in the private sector (seven per cent) or with an Aboriginal organization (two per cent) were infrequent.

Four in ten CW clients (43 per cent) received skills training as a part of their placement. Among those who received training (n=95), the majority (63 per cent) were trained on-the-job, 19 per cent were trained in the classroom, and another 19 per cent were provided training in both locations. The types of training most frequently provided to participants were: computer-related skills (41 per cent); general training (32 per cent); job specific training (27 per cent); office/clerical skills (26 per cent), carpentry/construction (15 per cent); and training in health, social services or education (12 per cent).

EP clients involved in the CW program were also asked whether they received any additional employment supports during their placement. A vast majority (78 per cent) reported no supports, while 11 per cent received assistance for training expenses, eight per cent received aid to cover work-related expenses, and the remaining eight per cent were assisted with equipment or tools.

TABLE D.2
Profile of Community Works Program Activities

Characteristic	(n= 216) (%)
Type of organization worked for/placed with	
Community/non-profit organization	61
Public sector	22
Private sector	7
Indian Band/Tribal Counsel/Métis Nations	2
Regional/urban park	1
DK/NR	7
Received skills training as part of placement	
Yes	43
No	56
Training provided (n=95)	
On-the-job	63
In the classroom	19
Both	19
Type of training received (top 6) (n=95)	
Computer-related	41
General training	32
Specific to job	27
Office/clerical/secretarial	26
Carpentry/construction	15
Health/social services/education	12
Receipt of Employment Supports	
Training expenses (course fees, certification costs)	11
Work-related expenses (e.g., license fees, transportation costs)	8
Equipment or tools	8
None of the above	78

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002

c) Work Placement

A profile of Work Placement (WP) program activities is presented in Table D.3. When asked about the type of industry they worked in, one-fifth of participants

indicated service sector, 12 per cent reported manufacturing, and 11 per cent worked in the wholesale/retail industry. Nine per cent of respondents each mentioned construction and accommodation/beverage sectors.

TABLE D.3
Profile of Work Placement Program Activities

Characteristic	(n=140) (%)
Type of industry (top five)	
Service sector	20
Manufacturing	12
Wholesale/retail	11
Construction	9
Accommodation/food & beverage	9
Received skills training as part of placement	
Yes	61
No	39
Training provided (n=85)	
On-the-job	60
In the classroom	9
Both	31
Type of training received (top six) (n=85)	
Specific to job	38
General training	28
Computer-related	24
Office/clerical/secretarial	18
Food/restaurant	12
Carpentry/construction	9
Receipt of Employment Supports	
Training expenses (course fees, certification costs)	10
Work-related expenses (e.g., license fees, transportation costs)	3
Equipment or tools	7
None of the above	82

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002

The majority of WP clients (61 per cent) received skills training as part of their placement. Among those who received training (n=85), 60 per cent were trained on-the-job, nine per cent were trained in the classroom, and another 31 per cent were trained both on-the-job and in the classroom. As for the most common types of training, 38 per cent of clients received job-specific training, 28 per cent mentioned general training, and 24 per cent obtained computer-related skills. Other types of training reported were: office/clerical skills (18 per cent); food/restaurant (12 per cent); and carpentry/construction training (9 per cent).

When asked about access to additional employment supports during their placement, a vast majority (82 per cent) of WP participants reported no support, while 10 per cent received assistance with training expenses, seven per cent with equipment or tools, and a small fraction of clients (three per cent) were assisted with work-related expenses.

d) Self-Employment

A profile of Self-Employment (SE) program activities is presented in Table D.4. Respondents were asked a series of questions related to the training they took under the SE program. Seven in ten SE participants received courses or workshops as part of the intervention. The average length of training was 165 hours (21 per cent of respondents could not recall the amount of training time). Participants indicated a long list of skills learned. The most common types of training were: bookkeeping and accounting (73 per cent); business plan development (65 per cent); marketing, advertising and promotion (59 per cent); and management (45 per cent). About one-third of SE clients also reported training on computer skills and legal issues/insurance (34 and 32 per cent, respectively), while training on obtaining financing was mentioned by 28 per cent of respondents.

SE clients were further asked whether they received any additional assistance to cover their business costs. Three in ten (29 per cent) participants received this kind of support.

The average amount of personal capital investment was \$21,136. A vast majority of SE participants (78 per cent) completed their business plan. Of these (n=77), 57 per cent received mentoring or business advice during start-up or operation. As for the type of

services provided by their business, 17 per cent reported business services, 13 per cent started a retail business, and another 26 per cent indicated other services not covered by the standard list of industries. Less frequently mentioned were: agriculture (9 per cent), construction (6 per cent), accommodation and food (6 per cent), and computer and high tech services (5 per cent).

TABLE D.4
Profile of Self-Employment Program Activities

Characteristic	(n=101) (%)
Received training courses/workshops	
Yes	70
No	30
Length of training (n=71)	
<40 hours	20
40-80 hours	30
More than 80	30
DK/NR	21
Mean	165 hours
Types of skills/information learned (n=71)	
Bookkeeping/accounting/taxes	73
Business plan development	65
Marketing/advertising/promotion	59
Management	45
Computer skills	34
Legal issues and insurance	32
Obtaining financing	28
Receipt of additional help for business support costs	
Yes	29
No	71
Mean amount of capital investment (\$)	\$21,136

Characteristic	(n=101) (%)
Completed business plan	
Yes	78
No	22
Received mentoring/business advice during start-up or operation (n=77)	
Yes	57
No	43
Type of business/industry/service of business (top seven) (n=77)	
Other service industry	26
Business service	17
Retail trade	13
Agriculture-related	9
Construction	6
Accommodation/food and related services	6
Computer and high tech	5

Source: Survey of EP Participants, 2002

APPENDIX E

Profile of EP Projects

PROFILE OF EP PROJECTS

Partners delivering Bridging and Self-Employment projects were asked to provide some descriptive information on the nature of their projects (e.g., activities, clients, etc.). These results are presented below.

Partners delivering Bridging and Self-Employment projects are most likely to characterize their clients as SA recipients (48 per cent) or EI claimants or reachback clients (37 per cent) (Table E.1). Other key client groups include First Nations/Métis (17 per cent), persons with disabilities (13 per cent), and individuals with low levels of education or skills (12 per cent). Client groups mentioned by only a small number of partners include immigrants/new Canadians, at-risk youth, and women.

TABLE E.1
Program Targeting: Service Delivery Partners:
Per Cent Indicating Group is their Primary Client

Client Group	%
Social assistance recipients	48
EI-eligible	37
First Nations/Métis/Aboriginal	17
Persons with disabilities	13
Low education/skill level	12
Immigrants/new Canadians	7
At-risk youth	6
Women	5
No particular group	4
Other	6

*Multiple mentions possible, as individuals may be a member of more than one group.
 Source: Survey of Service Delivery Partners, 2002 (n=82)

Word of mouth or referrals is by far the most important means that service delivery partners reach potential clients. This is followed by newspaper advertisements, posters, brochures/pamphlets, and information sessions (mentioned by between 24 and 35 per cent of partners) (Table E.2).

TABLE E.2
Program Marketing: Service Delivery Partners

Marketing Approaches Used to Reach Potential Clients	(%)
Word of mouth/referrals	62
Newspaper advertisement	35
Posters	29
Brochures/pamphlets	26
Information sessions by the organization	24
Radio/TV advertisements	10
None	5
Information sessions offered by CSCES office	4
Own Website	2
Other	2
Don't know/No response	4

Source: Survey of Service Delivery Partners, 2002 (n=82)

There is significant variation in the number of participants enrolled in the most recent project offered by service delivery partners. While just under half (48 per cent) of delivery partners indicated that they had between 10 to 15 participants in their most recent project, the number of participants varies from less than 10 (in 12 per cent of cases), to 16 to 20 (17 per cent), or to more than 21 (13 per cent).

According to partners, the majority of participants complete their Bridging/Self-Employment project; 83 per cent on average for partners' most recent project. Partners delivering Bridging estimated that 56 per cent of participants on average found employment after completing their project. Among partners delivering SE (n=11), about eight in ten were reported to have started their own business after completing the program.

Service delivery partners were asked to indicate what proportion of participants were *not* job-ready before participating in their most recent program. Overall, 78 per cent of participants in partners' most recent Bridging/SE project were characterized as not being job-ready (among the nine organizations delivering SE who responded to this question, the proportion of non-job ready clients was reported to be somewhat lower at 72 per cent).

Service delivery partners were asked to indicate what kinds of training and employment assistance they most frequently offer under the Bridging Program. Most frequently offered services included: life skills training (50 per cent); career/employment counselling (40 per cent); academic/literacy upgrading (40 per cent); job-readiness/employability skills (34 per cent); work experience (33 per cent); and computer literacy development (27 per cent).

The most frequently offered training and employment assistance offered in the most recent Self-Employment project undertaken by service delivery partners (n=12) included: classroom or individual instruction (in 100 per cent of cases); skills training (50 per cent); and consulting support/follow-up (33 per cent).

APPENDIX F

Profile of Employers/Organizations

PROFILE OF EMPLOYERS/ORGANIZATIONS

Tables F.1(a) and F.1(b) provide an overview of the characteristics of organizations that participated in Community Works (CW) and Work Placement (WP). Organizations involved with these two programs are typically small (less than five employees) or medium (from five to 19 employees) size. The average number of employees for CW organizations is nine, while organizations that participated in WP have, on average, 14 employees.

Different types of employers participate in CW and WP, as dictated by the program criteria. The vast majority of organizations involved in CW are non-profit or community-based (82 per cent), with the remaining 15 per cent in government, education or health. Conversely, nine in ten WP employers are private sector organizations with a few being non-profit or community-based (five per cent) or public training institutions (two per cent).

Both CW and WP organizations plan to enlarge their workforce over the next year. While a higher proportion of CW organizations intend to hire workers over the next year (78 per cent compared to 64 per cent of WP employers), WP employers plan to employ more staff. The average number of employees expected to be hired by WP employers is 12, while CW organizations plan to hire about four individuals.

There is little variation between organizations in terms of their workforce dynamics within the last two years. Slightly more than one-third of both employers (35 per cent for CW and 34 per cent for WP) indicated that the number of staff employed by their organization is greater than two years ago.

Employers were asked whether they had any difficulty finding workers with needed skills. The majority of WP organizations (67 per cent) reported having this problem, whereas this was less true for CW organizations (45 per cent). CW organizations were more apt to having the greatest difficulty finding skilled workers for clerical occupations, as well as art/culture/recreation positions (both 23 per cent). WP organizations were most likely to have the greatest difficulty in finding workers with sales and service skills (31 per

cent). An unattractive salary was the most important reason cited for why it was difficult to find workers with the needed skills (33 and 31 per cent, respectively).

TABLE F.1(a)
Profile of Employers/Organizations

Characteristic of Organization	Community Works (n=60) (%)	Work Placement (n=58) (%)
Size of employer/organization (number of employees)		
Less than 5	45	38
5 to 19	47	38
20-99	8	22
100+	0	0
DK/NR	0	2
Mean	9 employees	14 employees
Type of organization		
Government/education/health	15	0
Public training institutions	3	2
Non-profit/community-based	82	5
Private sector	0	91
DK/NR	0	2
Percentage intending to hire workers over next year	78%	64%
Mean number of employees expected to hire over next year	3.8 employees	11.9 employees
Percentage whose employed staff is greater than two years ago	35%	34%
Difficulty finding workers with needed skills		
Yes	45	67
No	50	28
DK/NR	5	5

Source: Survey of Employers/Organizations, 2002

Table F.1(b) presents key industries of organizations participating in WP. The majority are in retail trade (26 per cent), other services (15 per cent), and accommodation and food services (13 per cent). Other key industries reported were: professional/technical (nine per cent), construction (eight per cent), resource-based, and health care/social services (six per cent each).

TABLE F.1(b)
Percentage Distribution of WP Employers by Industry

Key Industry	(n=53) (%)
Retail trade	26
Other services (except public administration)	15
Accommodation/food services	13
Professional/technical	9
Construction	8
Resource-based	6
Healthcare and social services	6

Source: Survey of Employers/Organizations, 2002