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# THE INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE YUKON COMMUNITY

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A Discussion Paper for Yukon 2000

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THE INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES  
IN THE YUKON COMMUNITY

A  
DISCUSSION PAPER  
FOR  
YUKON 2000

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## PREFACE

For the purpose of this discussion it is important to understand some basic terminology. The World Health Organization (W.H.O.) defines disability as:

" Any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a person of the same age, culture and education." (1981)

It is important to note that;

1. A disability can be temporary or permanent and though it may be caused by a disease process the term disability is usually applied to restrictions of "normal" activity. Thus, disability does not imply an individual is suffering from an illness.
2. The limitation or inability to perform activities independently occurs in one area of function (or more) depending on the nature of the disability. A person may require special aids or the assistance of others to complete activities of self-care, mobility, recreation, leisure, employment, daily living, communication or social fulfillment.
3. There are many kinds of disabilities and a variety of ways to categorize them. During our research, we talked with people who have one of the following disabilities; mental retardation, a learning disability, a physical disability or a mental/emotional disorder.

The term "handicap" refers to a disadvantage, resulting from a disability, experienced by an individual that limits or prevents the fulfillment of age, sex or culturally appropriate roles (W.H.O., 1981). These disadvantages are often in the form of barriers to inclusion. For some these barriers may be inherent in the limitation caused by their disability. For most, however, the barriers are within our society. They include barriers in employment systems and hiring practices, physical accessibility and attitudes generated from myths and prejudice.

Thus, an individual may have a "disability" and not be "handicapped". For example, diabetes is a common physical disability that can be effectively controlled with medication. As a result, people with diabetes follow certain dietary rules and take medication but live independently with the same access as other members of society. They perform roles appropriate for their age, culture and education. They are not handicapped.

Consider another example, people who require wheelchairs can be "handicapped" by buildings and structures that do not have ramps, lifts or elevators, wide doorways and altered washrooms. These same people face similar barriers in all areas of their lives. Until these individuals and society can overcome these physical access barriers, people in wheelchairs will continue to be handicapped by their surroundings.

Finally, we would like to point out that it is the nature of any language that we associate meanings and feelings to words. We draw inferences from the definitions when the words are associated with our own subjective experiences. Some words suggest good things about other people and some do not. Often, the inferences drawn from the words used as labels for disabilities have been those of helplessness and dependence. These labels suggest nothing about ability but highlight limitations. For this reason, people with disabilities prefer to be addressed without the use of labels. They are people first with skills and abilities just like everyone else in our society.

With this in mind, we apologize to our readers for our use of labels in this paper. In order to discuss the subject matter, labels are required to provide a frame of reference. It has been our experience that rather than having more limitations, people with disabilities are often more adaptable since they overcome greater challenges than "normal" people.

THE AUTHORS

## INTRODUCTION

According to national statistics, people with disabilities account for approximately 10 - 12% of the Canadian population including men, women and children. Of these individuals, 70% are currently between the ages of 16 and 65 and are capable of working (Statistics Canada, 1986). One estimate suggests that as many as 90% of those who are capable are not in the competitive workforce (Affirmative Action, 1980).

It is the intent of this discussion paper to examine the status of people with disabilities in the economy of the Yukon and to review the implications of the YUKON 2000 Economic Strategy with regard to this group. In particular, the Human Resources, Infrastructure and Training Strategies will be discussed in conjunction with several key issues for the inclusion of all Yukoners in the economy. The forthcoming recommendations should provide an operational framework through which people with disabilities can achieve the goals of YUKON 2000.

The option to remain in the Yukon, equal opportunity, control of one's own future and an acceptable quality of life are all issues close to the heart of philosophies of advocacy and support groups for and by people with disabilities. Historically, these fundamental "facts of life" have not been recognized as directives by those who plan programs and control funding for disabled persons. Consequently, many have received education in segregated settings, performed menial tasks in "sheltered" workshops and lived in institutions or group homes removed from their families, the community and society at large.

These situations have perpetuated myths resulting in the creation of barriers to exclude these people from most economies including the Yukon. Though there are several mechanisms currently in place to overcome existing barriers, a strategy is required to ensure that disabled people are recognized for their abilities and included in the human resource development process. Stated simply, sound economic development must involve a strategy to include the capabilities of ALL Yukoners. A focal point must stem from the belief that every citizen can contribute to and receive the benefits of community living. It must be recognized, also, that communities, as a whole, have a responsibility to think about the future and to improve the quality of life for all community members.

The implications of such a philosophy for people with disabilities are many. They include;

- 1) equal opportunity for community education and training programs,

- 2) equal opportunity for real and meaningful work in integrated settings with competitive wages in all sectors,
- 3) equal opportunity for adequate, affordable and integrated housing,
- 4) equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from leisure and recreation activities with non-disabled peers.

The principle of normalization (Wolfensberger, 1972) is the philosophical foundation adopted by the Canadian Association for Community Living (formerly the Canadian Association for the Mentally Retarded). It establishes some clear directions in developing strategies to include people with disabilities in the economy. Simply stated, people respond to the manner in which they are treated. If a person is treated as less than an equal contributor to community life, then he will be less likely to function as an equal contributor. Conversely, if a person is given the opportunity to live as a normal, functioning person, he is more likely to learn the skills necessary to function as a normal, contributing member of society - a person who can work, contribute and develop his/her full potential as a human being. It is necessary to focus on a person's abilities rather than the disability.

#### EXAMINATION OF CURRENT STATUS IN SOCIETY

To determine the status of people with disabilities in our society, data was collected from three sources;

- 1) national and territorial statistical reviews,
- 2) literature from local and national advocacy organizations and
- 3) interviews of disabled persons, their families, program administrators and employers.

The Yukon Disability Survey(1986) estimated from their sample that 860 Yukoners live with disabilities. The researchers felt that this number is a conservative estimate and as many as 1500 people may be affected. Sixty percent of the respondents were between the ages of 20 - 65 years. The skills most affected by the disability were functional daily living skills and mobility. As a result of their disability, people described limitations in opportunities to participate in recreational and social activities, ability to function independently and

opportunities for employment.

In support of these findings, national statistics reflect the same conclusion - striking inequalities exist when the lives of disabled persons are compared to the "able-bodied" in our society. For example, there is higher unemployment experienced by persons with disabilities who are capable of working than any other minority group in Canada. Estimates of unemployment within this group range from 68%(Statistics Canada, 1986) upwards to 90%(Affirmative Action, 1983). As a result of this high unemployment, as well as the effects of underemployment, income levels are often lower for members of the group than other Canadians. Fourteen percent of those reporting a disability have annual incomes of \$20,000 or more, compared to 30% of the total population. Eighteen percent of Canadian households report annual incomes of under \$11,000, 30% of households with one or more disabled persons report incomes below the same level (Statistics Canada, 1986).

People with disabilities are more likely to have agricultural or service occupations (eg. janitorial, chambermaid) than other members of society. Members of this group are less likely to be represented in managerial and professional occupations than other Canadians. In this regard, the effect of underemployment has a greater impact on women with disabilities than men. That is, the participation rate of disabled women is less than that of men in similar situations. In fact, Statistics Canada reports; "Women who report a disability are the group least likely to have a job. This reflects the combined effect of sex and disability status"(1986, pg.66).

People with physical disabilities or learning disabilities are more likely to be employed than those with mental retardation or emotional/mental disorders(Statistics Canada, 1986). This fact does not suggest that only those with mental retardation or emotional disorders are the only disabled people who have problems getting jobs rather these individuals are less likely to be in the workforce than people with other types of disabilities. The fact remains that unemployment and underemployment remain the most pressing problems for most adults who are disabled regardless of their job skills or the nature of their disabilities.

Further, the degree that an individuals' functioning is affected by a disability seems to be directly related to their inclusion in the workforce. Those with complex or multiple disabilities are less likely to be working and more likely to have additional expenses resulting from their impairment(Statistics Canada, 1986). Thus, these individuals suffer greater degrees of poverty, experience greater dependence and often lack the opportunity to make choices regarding their own lives.

In the Yukon as in other locations across Canada, many people with disabilities experience the lifestyles suggested by these statistics. Of those individuals surveyed, many spend more than half of their incomes on food and shelter. One man complained, "It's hard to live on \$400.00 a month." Another respondent has worked for seven years and managed to save only \$25.00. He has few belongings and has not taken a vacation outside of Whitehorse since adulthood. For these individuals and many others, limited income prevents a variety of choices in housing, recreation and leisure and access to educational opportunities. How could one even attend a movie if you earn \$600.00 per month and your living expenses total \$550.00 for the same month?

For others who have disabilities, the situation is more difficult. Approximately 70% of the people interviewed do not have permanent jobs of any kind. Many of these people reported that they have been in one or more training programs, sometimes for two years or longer. Individuals in this group reported that many "on-the-job" training placements end without the offer of permanent employment. When this occurs, these people return to the roles of social assistance or receive benefits from programs such as Vocational Rehabilitation Services. As well, these individuals often return to programs designed for prevocational training such as the Yukon Rehabilitation Centre or to programs for job placement like the Yukon Employment Incentive Program.

The point to note is the apparent discrepancy between the number of programs offered to assist disabled persons and the number of these people who are continuously unemployed. In the Yukon, people with disabilities can access any of 10 programs available for the purpose of job placement. These programs (see Appendix 1) are designed primarily for job entry and offered by the federal and/or territorial governments. One program is operated by a community based society. The programs provide a range of services including skill development, work experience, counselling and job placement to disabled persons and others who are employment "disadvantaged". Some are designed to secure employment in particular areas such as the Federal (Access Program) or Territorial Public Service Commission (Positive Employment Program). Other programs access jobs wherever they are available. Some employment programs such as the Job Development Strategy of the Canada Employment Centre and the Department of Education, provide funding to private sector employers for the training of disadvantaged individuals. Several programs provide funding for physical accessibility or technical aids. The Canada Employment Centre, for example, will provide up to \$10000. for "worksites modifications and/or the installation of special facilities" (Employment and Immigration Canada, 1985).

With all these programs and the vast sums of money available, it seems remarkable that there are disabled people who are still unemployed. Program administrators suggest that one of the

greatest gaps is the lack of provision for on-the-job trainers. At the present time, only the Yukon Rehabilitation Centre (Y.R.C.) and Vocational Rehabilitation Services (V.R.S.) provide job trainers for their clients. Y.R.C. has two half-time employment counsellors to serve the training needs of 15 clients while V.R.S. hire trainers as the need arises through application to an intergovernmental committee which meets only once per month. Programs that do not provide job trainers, rely on coworkers and employers to provide training. The unique problems of this approach will be discussed in detail later.

During the interview, program administrators were asked to explain why training placements do not become permanent jobs. Along with the lack of job trainers discussed above, they described several concerns which seem to inhibit the success of many placements. Several respondents felt that "matching" client aptitude, skills, interests and capabilities to the available jobs is a problem. Often there is an urgency to place clients since these programs have large caseloads with a wide variety of needs. When a placement occurs, there is one less need to fill. For this reason, some clients may be inappropriately placed, just because a position is available. As well, for some clients who lack work experiences or those who want to work as soon as possible, any job may be acceptable. It is only after a period of time that some individuals come to the realization that the position may not be what they had hoped for.

Staffing of employment programs for disabled persons is another source for concern. Many program administrators report that high client to staff ratios prevented "extras" that may produce successful placements. Training placements require regular monitoring to ensure that training follows the agreed direction and if necessary, for "trouble shooting". Follow-up is out of the question when many people remain to be placed. Support and training for prospective employers also becomes a low priority with these time constraints. Unless an employer is resourceful, has the time and is aware of the needs of the trainee, the chances for a successful placement are usually slim. One administrator stated that in these cases, problems on the job are often not identified until it is too late.

Training subsidies were discussed with both program administrators and employers. Subsidies are advantageous for employers who are willing to train but have limited financial resources, however, there are some drawbacks. Administrators feel that in some cases training placements do not become permanent positions because employers are not able to pay the wage when the subsidy expires. When this happens, a person may spend up to a year in training only to be unemployed when the training period is completed. In addition to this problem, it is suggested that, in isolated examples, employers agree to offer permanent employment to receive a subsidy with the knowledge that

a position will not be available when training concludes. Through gaining a subsidy, these individuals secure "cheap labour" for the duration of the contract period. Unfortunately, this type of abuse is difficult to identify. Fortunately, it seems to be a rare occurrence.

Employers repeatedly said that a subsidy would not affect their decision to hire someone with a disability. As one stated, "A person's ability to perform on the job is more important." In fact, six of ten employers surveyed have had a disabled person in their employ or would hire such a person if he/she could develop the necessary skills. This positive attitude, though encouraging, does not reflect the true picture. Survey results indicate that 26% of the employers interviewed have had a disabled person in their employ, a figure more closely matching the number of disabled respondents who are unemployed.

For those who have utilized subsidy programs, many described these as difficult to access (not knowing where to go or who to contact), bureaucratic (several contact people working in isolation) and cumbersome to access (multiple plans and proposals that interfere with the employer's daily routine). Some respondents went further to say that persons with disabilities who have been successfully employed have done so on their own initiative, without the help of government programs. One employer stated that he would rather be approached as an individual and not be "imposed on" by human rights legislation or affirmative action programs. For these reasons, employment development programs are not reviewed favourably by Yukon employers.

Individuals who are the clients of job development programs, although pleased with the opportunity to learn new skills on the job, expressed similar concerns. Access to programs for them means choosing one from the many by sorting out which program best suits their own needs. Since the different offices are in a variety of locations around Whitehorse, an individual may find him/herself tracking multiple referrals until the appropriate program is found. This is surely a frustrating experience.

Once a person finds an appropriate program, their troubles may not be over. Some cases were reported of individuals waiting up to six months for a training placement to be secured. During that period, the persons' skills were assessed, a source of funds was established, a training plan was written and an employer was contracted. However, many of these processes do not require this amount of time. It can be argued that the job availability is the most critical factor to determine the time period from program entry to placement. Thus, when more than six weeks is required to process the paperwork, this can be sited as a problem in program delivery.

Employers were asked, "What is required for you to hire a disabled person?". The two most common answers are the need for job trainers and education about disabilities for supervisors and coworkers. The Yukon Development Strategy(1986) stated 90% of Yukons' businesses employ less than 6 people. In small business, the employer is often responsible for contract proposals and negotiations, inventory control, production, bookkeeping, payroll and staffing, as well as the training of new employees. Then one of the greatest drawbacks to hiring persons with intellectual disabilities, is the time required for training. If an individual has special training needs, a job trainer is required to ensure these needs are met without an additional burden to the employer. Eighty percent of employers surveyed said that the development of skilled personnel who require the least support from the supervisor is the most important factor determining who will be employed. Thus, job trainers would be a welcome addition to the present employment development programs.

Further to this point, many employers report that the presence or lack of a disability is not an issue during the hiring of employees. They suggest the following criteria as important;

- 1) skills or the ability to develop them,
- 2) efficiency and productivity,
- 3) the ability to work independently and
- 4) safety.

Most of those employers interviewed stated that a trainee who filled these criteria would have a good chance at a permanent position regardless of the presence of a disability. With regard to items 1 - 3, skilled job trainers working with motivated clientele could fill these criteria. The issue of safety will be discussed in the section entitled Barriers.

Employers also expressed the need for public education to promote the hiring of disabled persons. The information shared could focus on the abilities of these people, as well as offer training techniques to prospective employers. One respondent said, "The public does not know what disabled people can do. We need to be educated." This type of education would serve a further purpose to dispell the myths that shape our attitudes toward people with disabilities.

## BARRIERS

It is not our purpose to reiterate the work of Nancy Marlett in the discussion paper entitled "Disabled Citizens" (1986), however, there are several points we would like to express from our research. The Marlett Paper discusses the costs to the tax payer of people receiving financial assistance verses the contribution that is possible if people with disabilities are employed. She points out, "If we are going to reverse the costs we must look at why more persons with disabilities do not work - the barriers to employment."

### BARRIERS TO ACCESS

#### Transportation:

Presently, the only specialized transportation available in the Yukon is the Handi-Transit operated from 9:00 am to 4:00pm from Monday to Friday in Whitehorse. This has some obvious limitations when consideration is given to the transportation needs of all Yukoners. Certainly, we do not advocate that this service should be available in every community since the costs would be great and there may not be a need in every community. We do feel that the support of individuals in the community could effectively fill this gap where the need exists.

In Whitehorse, operation of the Handi-Transit, though beneficial, does have its limitations. First, the service is used by people of all ages to attend school, training programs or to go to work and to attend to daily needs such as shopping. As a result, the system is overtaxed and requires expansion. Second, the hours of operation excludes access by individuals who work in the evenings or on the weekends. Thus, in order to increase the participation of all Yukoners, the feasibility of expanding the present service requires study.

#### Physical Accessibility:

The awareness of architects and contractors to physical accessibility is growing. More often we see buildings and community development that take access into account. Building codes are changing to meet the needs of persons with mobility concerns. However, mistakes continue to be made that are easily overcome. During the planning of new structures and the renovation of existing buildings, physical access can be addressed through consultation with persons who require wheelchairs for mobility.

## HIRING POLICIES

Our research revealed that one employment development program includes in its mandate the rewriting of job descriptions to reflect the skills necessary for job performance and the restructuring of hiring policies to promote an equitable representation of all Yukoners in the territorial government. By this process, the Positive Employment Program may directly benefit disabled persons to overcome "inflated education and experience requirements"(Marlett, 1986) which prevent employment access for many people.

In addition to instituting equitable hiring policies, all employers should consider job adaptations and job sharing as a means to hire persons with disabilities. One respondent said, "A person should look at his job site to see where a person with a disability would fit in." A publication entitled "Disability, Handicap and Society"(1986) suggests there is a need to develop assessment procedures related to job requirements. Such an assessment could analyze each job systematically to determine requirements in terms of the necessary levels of physical and mental functioning together with the training requirements. Employment counsellors are presently aware of the qualifications of their clientele. Then placement becomes a process of matching the client with an appropriate job.

## ATTITUDES

As previously discussed, 60% of the employers surveyed maintain positive attitudes toward the hiring of people with disabilities but attitudes still exist which prevent equal opportunities for these people. Among the concerns most often reported are job performance, productivity and safety. Research has shown that these concerns are unwarranted.

The DUPONT study(1973) evaluated job performance of 1500 workers to assess the quality of workers who are disabled. On measures of performance, safety, attendance and stability these workers were rated average or above average when compared to able-bodied coworkers. Further, studies by Reagles(1981) and Parent and Everson(1986) concluded that qualified workers with intellectual impairments when properly matched to their jobs perform as safely and efficiently as their nondisabled counterparts. Employers reported that these individuals generally experience a high degree of job satisfaction and consequently, make good employees due to reduced turnover rates and lower absenteeism. The statement is made that hiring employees with intellectual impairments "makes good business sense."(Dennis and Ebert, 1987)

A few respondents have strong feelings that disabled people should remain apart from society in segregated programs. Some

suggested that these individuals should work in "special" workshops or they should be trained for one job and "told" to stay there for their lifetime. Peter Park, the Project Officer for the National People First Project, writes, "most people, no matter who they are, would like a job in the community." (People First is an organization of self-advocates. Its membership is comprised of citizens with disabilities.) He continues, "We self-advocates have been told for so long we cannot do it that we have fallen into the trap of believing we cannot do it. I am sorry, I disagree and say we CAN do things with some support." (Park, 1985)

Perhaps self-advocacy is the key to overcoming the barriers that exist as a result of attitudes. To this end, public education should include discussion with people who live with disabilities. "Prejudice and misunderstanding will continue to exist in society until the labelled people themselves gain public attention and speak out. Public presence of self-advocates in the community will challenge the widespread myth of "helpless" and "childlike" persons." (Worrell, 1985)

## REHABILITATION

The concept of rehabilitation is associated with the medical profession and relates to recovery from a disease or illness. Rehabilitation as it relates to people with disabilities and work usually means segregated work settings where people perform menial tasks for token incentive allowances. "Sheltered" workshops have as their goal the preparation of people for the competitive job market. At the present time, approximately 2% of those people in rehabilitation workshops will achieve this goal (Marlett, 1986). As well, it has been shown that the longer people remain in these workshops, the less chance they have of actually getting a job. Of four respondents who are clients at the Yukon Rehabilitation Centre, the average length of time in the program is 5.5 years which covers a range of 2 months to 10 years.

## DISCUSSION OF YUKON 2000 PUBLICATIONS

### TRAINING STRATEGY

In the area of education and training, Statistics Canada (1986) suggests that a higher proportion of disabled people have lower levels of formal education than the rest of the Canadian population. Forty three percent of disabled Canadians have eight or less years of schooling, compared to 17% of the non-disabled population. Only 15% of people with disabilities have some form

of post secondary education, compared to 31% of the general population.

Upon examination of the current status of people with disabilities in the Yukon, and after hearing these people express their goals, two conclusions can be made which impact on the proposed training strategy:

- 1) employers from all sectors show a willingness to hire people with disabilities who possess the necessary skills, motivation and support and
- 2) disabled people want jobs in all sectors and have shown their capabilities on the job(Appendix 2).

The training strategy in its commitment to providing accessible training for all people and its sensitivity to meet the needs of the job market, has outlined several measures which can greatly benefit disabled Yukoners in attaining the goals of Yukon 2000. It is important to note, however, that access for the disabled must be into regular community education and training with the appropriate supports, to ensure that a "normalized" approach is provided. This may require adapted instructional designs, the use of technical aids or personal counselling to meet the unique needs of individual participants. The following discussion and recommendations are made in light of this position.

A college Board of Governors should include the representation of disabled people. This representative may be an individual with a disability or a member of a support group or both. This will ensure that appropriate educational services are identified and implemented at the planning stages of college programming. This representative could also assist with curriculum design if Yukon College is involved in public awareness, social service training or orientation programs for employers and coworkers.

Community Learning Centres(C.L.C.) can play a valuable role in enabling disabled people to acquire competitive work skills. According to the Yukon Disability Survey, as many as 1500 Yukoners may possess challenging needs due to disabilities. For many of these individuals, it has been necessary to move to Whitehorse or "outside" to acquire the appropriate academic, vocational and life skills training required to access the job market. If C.L.C.'s are to assume a more active role in local program development, the needs of disabled people in the community must be represented. This could occur through the CLC Advisory Committees. C.L.C. instructors could be provided with pre-service and inservice training so they can identify and respond to special needs within the framework of regular community programs.

Strengthening linkages between preschool, public school and vocational training is of utmost importance in providing a continuum of service for people with disabilities. An ongoing and comprehensive Individual Education Program, developed and implemented at the preschool level and followed through public school, can serve to identify individual strengths and needs, learning styles, establish long term vocational goals and identify special resources required to assist these people in attaining their goals. Continuity is the key to the success of such a process, particularly during the transition from preschool to public, secondary to post-secondary or vocational training where valuable information is often absent resulting in further, often laborious, assessments.

Within any industry, there are jobs which can be performed by people with disabilities. Training Institutes could be utilized to assess jobs in each sector to determine the skills required and the roles that disabled persons could perform based on the skills they possess. On the job training could be provided through Training Institutes to enable individuals to utilize their skills, gain experience and identify further training needs within the industry.

A Career Services Program could be a valuable resource in the process of habilitation and rehabilitation for disabled people. Employment and career counselling, pre-employment and job readiness programs and work experience programs are currently offered to many people in segregated settings such as the Yukon Rehabilitation Centre and the F.H. Collins Work Experience Program or are offered within the context of various "Work Yukon" Programs. A comprehensive and coordinated Career Services Program, accessible, flexible and sensitive to the needs of disabled people, could minimize the need for further segregated "special" programs in this area. It could facilitate the often cumbersome process of locating and accessing one of the many existing programs.

Introduction of a new "Training Through Experience" Program raises some concerns. "Work Yukon" presently provides several on the job training programs which can be accessed by disabled people. However, results from our survey suggest that these programs are often difficult or cumbersome for both employers and trainees to access due to heavy paperwork demands and stringent requirements. These programs are often redundant in the services they offer causing uncertainty as to which program is best to utilize. What appears to be needed is a system to coordinate existing job development programs with a simplified access process. Proper on the job supports were also cited as a necessary feature to promote the success of these programs. People with challenging needs often require personal supports on the job such as trainers or counsellors in order to facilitate the integration process. The present system of designating

coworkers as job trainers is, in many cases, inadequate, due to a lack of knowledge and understanding of how to deal with challenging needs.

More flexible work hours has been cited as a difficulty with existing job development programs that provide direct training. Often, part time work is more suitable to the needs of the disabled person who has never experienced "real" work or requires a combination of life skills or academic training. Some disabilities create affects that may cycle or produce a low tolerance to stress and physical activity. Current training programs either do not have provision for part time employment or are difficult to access on a part time basis. Provision for part time employment should be included in any training through experience initiatives which are committed to including disabled people.

Again, it is important to note that many employers who responded to the survey felt that wage subsidy would not have significant effect on their decision to hire a disabled person. What they feel is needed is 1)public awareness of the skills and abilities of disabled people, 2)increased skill training for these people and 3)courses designed to help employers and co-workers understand and deal with unique situations which may arise on the job. A training strategy designed to include people with disabilities needs to address concerns while bearing in mind that people should have a choice in the roles that they perform. Whatever the case, training programs should be responsive to individual training needs. Thus, educators, employment counsellors and job trainers should all be prepared to provide the supports necessary for disabled persons to reach their goals. Some excellent guidelines and recommendations which bear consideration are provided in a report entitled "Adult Special Education at Yukon College"(Beagle, 1986).

## HUMAN RESOURCES

We agree with many of the objectives and directions within the Human Resources Strategy. The fact that people with disabilities are considered as contributing citizens is a step forward. However, we must caution that the Yukon 2000 process is a government initiative; equitable economic development for all citizens must occur on all levels of society. The fact that this process is sanctioned by the territorial government is not to its discredit. Certainly, the government has recognized the need or right to include special groups in planning and the subsequent implementation.

There are still many misconceptions held by Yukoners regarding the abilities and needs of people with disabilities. For example, many employers responding to our survey had no idea what

disabled people can do or how they (employers) could help. Hence, public awareness should be a key objective in a strategy to develop human resources. Unfortunately, the paper does not address this issue. The paper does identify current barriers such as the lack of access and opportunities for training, low income levels and the current inflexibility of training programs and job arrangements. As a result of our research, we support the initiative of a public education program geared to highlight the ABILITIES of the disabled. By highlighting ability, "barriers which prevent people from reaching their full economic potential" will eventually break down.

In our opinion, the Yukon Territorial Government would be well suited to coordinate such a program. Through resources such as Yukon College and Vocational Rehabilitation Services, with the assistance of local organizations such as the Yukon Association for Special Needs People and the Mental Health Association, short courses, and in-service training workshops could be offered to all interested Yukoners. Funding would be required from government, as well, since a program of this magnitude would require extensive finances to reach people in the communities. The education process could also support the link with Whitehorse based services and the communities. An area that is sorely lacking.

Further, the territorial government should offer contracts to local professionals to carry out research dealing with human resource development and disabled people. This research could serve three roles;

- 1) to comprehensively document the employment situation of people with disabilities,
- 2) to assess and develop current programs and resources through the identification of strengths and weaknesses and
- 3) to study the application of successful employment "models" from other jurisdictions and provide direction for implementation locally.

The Yukon Disability Survey and our own research provide a starting point for future studies.

Direction 11 of the strategy states "...imported workers should be encouraged as part of training for Yukon residents." This direction should be qualified to ensure that territorial resources are exhausted to find suitable professionals to carry out training or research programs before "outside" consultants are approached. Certainly, southern professionals may offer specialized skills that are lacking locally but all too often, consultants are brought to the Yukon when the expertise is

available in the Yukon. This process would keep funds in the Yukon, develop the confidence and credibility of local professional non-government resources and is available at less expense.

As previous discussed, we support those directions set which indicate the need for job flexibility, training programs and supports for people with disabilities. To ensure those needs are met the following directions should be included with those already sited;

- 1) job sharing should be included in the development of employment flexibility and
- 2) alternatives to work such as non-wage activities and volunteer service be considered as a method of human resource development.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE

The following section will analyze three elements of the Infrastructure Draft Strategy. These are municipal infrastructure, housing and leisure and recreation. These will be discussed individually paying heed to the fact that issues from one area overlap into the others.

##### Municipal Infrastructure:

The three elements mentioned above are extremely important aspects of everyone's life. Especially when one compares the quality of life of disabled Yukoners to the able-bodied. The communities should not be required to offer the same services as Whitehorse or other locations in Canada. The costs are prohibitive. What is important is that the services provided are accessible, quality services and that municipal coordinators are responsive to the needs of all members of the community.

Objective 4 indicates the initiative to develop community skills and "enhance the quality of management capabilities." This process should include public awareness of disabilities. Further, consideration should be given to promoting management groups or boards within municipal organizations that represent special interest groups in the community. Specifically, disabled persons should be considered as personnel for these groups. In this way, municipal organization, through its creation of management boards, will be flexible and able to adapt to a variety of community and individual needs.

By including people with disabilities at the level of municipal organization, the needs of these people will be met in the community. The practical implications of inclusion are far

reaching. During our research we contacted people in several communities such as recreation directors who are not aware of disabled persons in their community. The opportunity to participate can only occur after awareness and understanding.

#### Leisure and Recreation:

The Leisure and Recreation Draft states in Objective 3 and Direction 1 that all Yukoners need to benefit from community leisure and recreation programs. Mention is made of the need to consider cross-cultural development in this area. We suggest that people with disabilities and other special interest groups be included as well.

The need for disabled persons to access community leisure and recreation programs, not just as observers but as active participants, cannot be overestimated. Our research revealed that some people with disabilities not only lack access but in fact, live in social isolation. Boredom, loneliness and the lack of leisure time opportunities are obstacles in their lives. This situation is not only the result of the lack of available finances but also due to access barriers. Again, the contrast to able-bodied persons is striking especially since nondisabled people use community recreation programs to socialize and make new friends, as well as, the fulfillment of physical needs. It is very easy for the able-bodied to take these things for granted.

The Yukon Special Olympics (Y.S.O.), one of two Yukon sport governing bodies with paid program coordinators, is dedicated to provide sport, recreation and fitness programs for people with mental retardation. There are no other structured leisure time pursuits for people with other types of disability and currently Y.S.O. is centred in Whitehorse. Community and territorial recreational organizations must be willing to accept and plan for the disabled to be included in their programs if the opportunity to participate will reach all Yukoners. Again we must stress that "special" programs are not required for inclusion to occur in the communities.

Thus, with regard to recreation and leisure:

- 1) people with disabilities should be included in community recreation plans to ensure an equal opportunity to participate and
- 3) disabled people need inclusion in recreational infrastructures either through membership or consultation.

Sport, fitness and recreation are all different aspects of how one spends their leisure time. Thus, equality of opportunity incorporates access, participation and planning into its broad definition.

## Housing:

In reviewing statistics of income levels, it has been shown that the disabled people are often in lower income brackets. This fact has far reaching implications in all aspects of an individuals' life but it is particularly striking to observe the types of housing that are financially accessible to these people.

When one considers housing availability and the high rental rates common in the Yukon it is imperative that a wide range of housing alternatives be made available. The objectives and directives in this section support this fundamental need. Our research strongly supports the development of a housing policy. Within this policy, specific recommendations regarding the needs of the disabled should be considered. Some suggestions are;

- 1) consideration be given to a variety of housing models that are not presently available such as cooperative housing,
- 2) consideration be given to promoting the concept that people with disabilities should have a right to access housing in whatever area of the community that they wish and that zoning by-laws do not restrict access,
- 3) ensure physical accessibility through building codes and consultation with affected disabled persons during design and construction and
- 4) promotion of independent living be made through access to equipment and aids and/or attendant care and training. The Supported Independent Living Program of Vocational Rehabilitation Services is a viable example of an appropriate training model to assist disabled persons to reach their goals.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. A college Board of Governors should include a disabled person or an advocate who is knowledgeable in the needs of these people.
2. Planning processes which impact on people with disabilities should include them or their advocates to ensure appropriate action in their best interest. Examples of groups where this type of representation should occur are;
  - a) vocational program planning committees,
  - b) Community Learning Centre Advisory Committees,
  - c) Training Institutes,
  - d) committees initiating public awareness programs,
  - e) municipal management boards,
  - f) recreation development groups and
  - g) by-law and building code review committees.
3. Public education is paramount if full integration is to become a reality. The government, in cooperation with community resources, should plan, develop and implement a program to orient people to the successes, needs and problems of people with disabilities. Such a program should include individuals who are representative of this group and speak of their abilities. This program could be offered through Yukon College or as in-service training to teachers, professionals, employers and the general public. Whatever the method of presentation, public awareness should be developed in all Yukon communities.
4. Individual Education Programs should be instituted at the preschool level and maintained throughout the education process for persons with special needs. These plans should reflect the goals of the student and include the individual, his/her family or advocate. I.E.P.'s should be available to vocational support workers to ensure a continuum of services and to prevent repetitious, costly assessments.
5. Training Institutes should involve job skills analysis to determine the roles that are possible for disabled persons. These institutes should be aware of alternatives to full time employment such job sharing which may benefit members of this group.
6. A comprehensive and coordinated Career Services Program, accessible and sensitive to the needs of disabled persons, is suggested to reduce the need for further "segregated" programs.
7. Coordination of existing job development programs is required with a simplified access process, reduced paperwork demands and a comprehensive program offering. At present, several programs have valuable components but operate in isolation and are difficult to access for employers and disabled persons.

8. Job trainers are required for individuals who require a great deal of support during training. These trainers should be skilled in the field and readily accessible.
9. Job development programs should be flexible to address the variety of needs of disabled people. Job sharing and part-time work should be available options.
10. Access to appropriate training and education should be available to persons with disabilities. This should be reflected in the mandates of all departments and agencies who provide training.
11. Program development is required for persons who have severe handicaps. Presently, these individuals do not fall within the mandate of any government service. As a result, families are forced to leave the Yukon to find services for their children with complex needs.
12. Consideration should be given to housing models that are accessible and affordable for people with disabilities.
13. Zoning by-laws should be written in a manner that does not restrict community access be disabled persons.
14. Physical accessibility should be established through appropriate amendments to building codes. New structures and renovations should occur in consultation with individuals who require modifications to ensure access.
15. Research is required to further document the employment situation of disabled Yukoners, to assess current programs and to find ways to address the present employment inequity.

## CONCLUSION

Everyone has dreams and aspirations. The people we interviewed during this survey have desires common to us all. They want jobs, a home, family and friends. They want to be a part of the community. If Yukon 2000 achieves the goal of providing greater equality of opportunity for citizens who are disabled, it will happen through increased access to employment, education, housing and leisure pursuits.

For the skeptics who claim, "This will cost a fortune", consider long term benefit versus short term costs. When people work, they return something to society as producers and consumers. They are not a burden on the tax payer. They gain confidence, self esteem and independence. When equality becomes a reality rather than a goal, we will all be a little better for it. In the process, perhaps we will learn something about ourselves.

In our society it is not uncommon to come in contact with someone who lives with a disability. Some sources suggest that one in ten Canadians is affected. You may presently use aids or specialized transportation to perform your daily tasks, you may have a child who requires special assistance in school or a friend who needs a wheelchair. The Canadian Labour Congress estimates that 20,000 people are permanently disabled on the job each year. Anyone, at any time, can become disabled.

If there is a lesson to be learned from Rick Hanson's "Man in Motion" World Tour, it should be:

"think of ability, not disability."

## POSITIVE EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Offered By; Territorial Public Service Commission

Focus; training and job placement for natives, women and disabled persons within territorial government

Primary Roles; \*remove systemic barriers from employment procedures and hiring policies  
\*rewrite job descriptions  
\*assess job requirements and develop skills inventory  
\*placement and monitor

Limitations; \*training provided by designated coworkers

Contact(s); Dorothy Thorsen

## PROJECTS FOR THE SEVERELY EMPLOYMENT DISADVANTAGED

Offered By; Canada Employment Centre

Focus; projects providing long term unemployed with training and work experience

Primary Roles; \*funding projects for maximum one year  
\*monitor skill development  
\*provide funding for worksite modifications

Limitations; \*training provided by designated coworker  
\*extensive paper work required  
\*contracts providing 30 hours per week or more encouraged

Contact(s); Lesley Levy

## VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

Offered By; Department of Human Resources - Y.T.G.

Focus; program coordination for disabled people seeking employment

Primary Roles; \*need assessment and general service planning  
\*case management and service coordination  
\*counselling  
\*funding for job trainers, aids and devices  
\*placement follow-up

Limitations; \*one full time counsellors' position to serve many people  
\*process to secure funding is time consuming

Contact(s); Marg Render

APPENDIX 1

SYNOPSIS OF EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS AVAILABLE TO DISABLED YUKONERS

ACCESS PROGRAM:

Offered By; Federal Public Service Commission

Focus; job placement within Federal P.S.C.

Primary Roles; \*provide funding for training and placement of  
individuals with disabilities  
\*provide funding for technical aids and equipment

Limitations; \*program administered from Vancouver  
\*training provided by designated coworker

Contact(s); Adeline Webber  
Bradford Bentley(Vancouver)

DEPARTMENT OF NORTHERN AND INDIAN AFFAIRS - ON THE JOB TRAINING

Offered By; D.N.I.A. Whitehorse

Focus; job placement for unemployed natives including persons  
with disabilities within the Department and private  
business

Primary Roles; \*provide salary for training  
\*monitor progress via performance evaluation  
\*provide some counselling eg.pre-employment skills

Limitations; \*training provided by designated coworker  
\*indirect job contact

Contact(s); Betty Vincent

JOB DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (see Work Yukon Programs)

Offered By; Canada Employment and Immigration with Department of  
Education

Focus; training and job placement for long term unemployed

Primary Roles; \*provide funding for training to one year  
\*monitor progress  
\*provide funding for worksite modifications

Limitations; \*training provided by designated coworker or employer  
\*extensive paper work requirements  
\*contracts for 30 hours per week or more preferred

Contact(s); Olga Anderson, Special Needs counsellor

WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

Offered By; F.H. Collins High School

Focus; provide work experiences to adolescents with disabilities

Primary Roles; \*life skills training  
\*provide work experience placements  
\*education

Limitations; \*placements are unpaid  
\*programs for complex needs unavailable

Contact(s); Bill Davies

"WORK YUKON" PROGRAMS

Offered By; Advanced Education and Manpower - Y.T.G.

Focus; industrial training for residents pursuing employment or education

Primary Roles; \*wage subsidy for training up to one year  
\*monitor progress

Limitations; \*training provided by designated coworkers  
\*30 hours or more encouraged  
\*extensive paper work required

Contact(s); Ross Knox

YUKON EMPLOYMENT INCENTIVE PROGRAM (see Work Yukon Programs)

Offered By; Department of Human Resources - Y.T.G.

Focus; training and job placement for long term unemployed

Primary Roles; \*provide funding for training to five months  
\*counselling  
\*monitor progress

Limitations; \*extensive paper work required  
\*training provided by designated coworker  
\*contracts of 30 hours or more preferred

Contact(s); Ernie Fetchner

YUKON REHABILITATION CENTRE

Offered By; Yukon Rehabilitation Centre Society

Focus; in-house training program with work experience and job placement components

Primary Roles; \*prevocational skill training  
\*education, socialization and behavioral supports  
\*counselling  
\*job placement and job training

Limitations; \*most training occurs in an isolated setting  
\*only one full time position for job training

Contact(s); Tony Ravensdale

APPENDIX 2

JOBS HELD BY PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

* accountant	* health care aide
* animal caretaker	* laundry worker
* auto attendant	* machine operator
* baker's helper	* mail clerk
* bookkeeping assistant	* maintenance person
* bus person	* material packager
* campground maintenance attendant	* mechanic's assistant
* carpenter's assistant	* messenger
* chamberperson	* outfitter's assistant
* chef's assistant	* painter
* collater	* paper stuffer
* custodian	* photocopier
* day care attendant	* receptionist
* delivery person	* radio technician
* dishwasher	* rehabilitation counsellor
* employment counsellor	* reporter
* farm worker	* sales clerk
* file clerk	* stock room attendant
* gas station attendant	* surveyor
* general labourer	* ticket sales person
* hairstyling assistant	* trades assistant

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