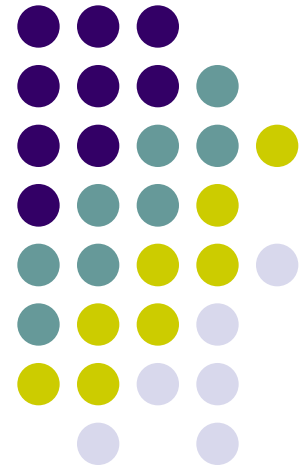


Working Together on Employment

People with Disabilities, Labour Markets,
Public Policies, and Canadian Federalism

Michael J. Prince
Lansdowne Professor of Social Policy
University of Victoria

Disabilities Health Research Network Speaker Series
February 3, 2010



Disabilities, employment and health

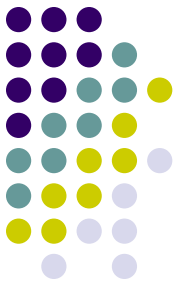


- Employment as:
 - a sign of inclusion or belonging
 - financial support if not security
 - providing structure, self-esteem, identity
 - independence from welfare, charity
 - entrée to other work-related benefits (e.g., LTD)
 - access to professional networks and friendships (informal social and economic support)
 - eligibility for social insurance programs
 - contributing to quality of life and well-being

The federal condition of our body politic



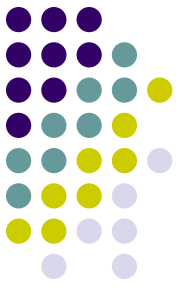
- Disability and employment in relation to our body politic
- Public policies on supporting the active participation of people with disabilities in the labour force
- The role and influence of the institutions of federalism and intergovernmental relations on policies, labour markets and people with disabilities



Outline

- Diagnostique of people with disabilities and the Canadian labour market
- Research lessons and gaps in knowing what is, why, and what works
- Brief history of Canadian employment programs for persons with disabilities
- Vision for reforms and reform ideas
- Concluding thoughts

Diagnostique: current situation



- In 2006, there were 2.4 million Canadians with a physical or mental disability in the working-age population of 15 to 64 years of age
- Employment figure for persons with any disability in Canada was 46.5% compared to 75.5% for people with no disability
- Employment rate varies by types of impairments. In 2006, the employment rate for persons with a developmental or intellectual disability was 25.5%
- Where working, people with any disability have earnings of about 70% of those for people without disabilities

Diagnostic: 2

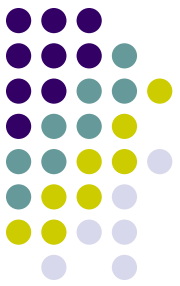


- In 2005, the median earnings for people with disabilities were \$18,521 compared to median earnings of \$27,496 for people without disabilities
- Canadians with disabilities are twice as likely to be living in poverty - that is, below the after-tax low-income cut-off line - than are non-disabled Canadians, 20.5% v. 10.2%
- This represents approximately 500,000 working-age people with disabilities in Canada living in difficult and restricted low income circumstances
- This disproportionately high risk of living in or near poverty is a pattern that has more or less persisted for the past 25 years

Research lessons



- Large proportions of individuals with disabilities who are without paid work would like to work, should “the right conditions” exist
- Sheltered employment for disabled people generally has high administrative costs and low transition rates toward standard and supported employment
- “Right conditions” include personalized employment counselling, work-focused interviews, early vocational rehabilitation measures; policy/procedural flexibility by employers in terms of how and when key job duties are performed; and, financial incentives to assist people with disabilities with living expenses associated with their impairments



What works

- Research is clear on the importance of the availability and affordability of essential aids, devices, personal supports; having in place accessible built environments, including workplaces and community infrastructure; and, readily available and appropriate transportation services
- Employment services and supports relevant to the needs and circumstances of working age adults with disabilities

Research gaps

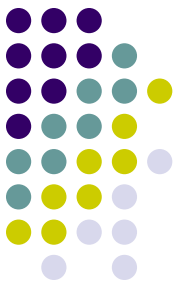


- Financial incentives of earnings supplements and wage subsidies
- Labour regulations, human rights and equity legislation
- Supported employment arrangements, such as personal assistance at the workplace
- Social enterprises as places of employment and skills development
- Employment service providers and job brokers
- Interactions among income benefit programs, public and private, and tax measures
- Labour market outcomes of adults with disabilities in the recent period of economic growth and tight labour markets
- How the need for, and availability of on-the-job supports affects the employment trajectories of people with disabilities and best practices by governments and employers, [solo and together] to support individuals in this connection

Brief history of labour policies and persons with disabilities

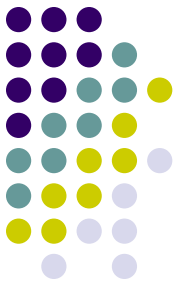


- 1970s – 1980s: anti-discrimination and employment equity initiatives
- 1990s – about 2000: activation measures for economic inclusion
- About 2000 – present: devolution of federal measures and innovation



1970s – 1980s

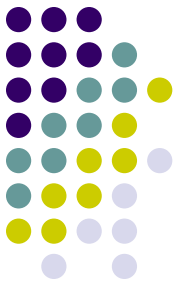
- Canada Pension Plan Disability launched, 1970
- UI sickness benefit introduced, 1971
- *Canadian Human Rights Act*, 1977
- Charter of Rights and Freedoms, 1982
- Canadian Jobs Strategy, 1985
- Disabled Persons Participation program, 1985
- Federal Contractors Program, 1985
- *Employment Equity Act*, 1986
- CPP Disability reforms, 1987
- Reforms to Canada Assistance Plan and to Vocational Rehabilitation for Disabled Persons, 1988-90



1990 – about 2000

- *Mainstream '92* report (published 1994)
- National Strategy for the Integration of Persons with Disabilities, 1992-96
- *Employment Equity Act*, 1996
- From UI to new Employment Insurance system, 1996
- CAP ended, 1996-97
- Reforms to CPP Disability, 1997
- Opportunities Fund launched, 1997
- Employability Assistance for People with Disabilities replaces VRDP, 1997
- Aboriginal Human Resources Development Strategy, 1999

Around 2000 – present



- Devolution of EI Part II programming and design to all provinces and territories, from late 1990s
- Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPD) replace EAPDs, 2004
- Canada Access Grants for college and university students
- Disability Supports Deduction (replaces Attendant Care Deduction)
- EI Compassionate Benefit
- Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit
- Canada Employment Credit
- Enabling Accessibility Fund, 2007
- Working Income Tax Benefit, 2007

Current federal presence in labour market policy for persons with disabilities



- Canada Studies Grants to Persons with Disabilities
- Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program
- Opportunities Fund
- Social Development Partnership Program – Disability Component
- Working Income Tax Benefit – Disability Supplement and other tax measures
- Labour Market Agreements
- Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPDs)

Existing LMAPDs: an overview



- *Principle:* persons with disabilities should be fully included in Canada's social and economic mainstream
- *Goal:* to improve the employment situation of persons with disabilities
- *Objectives:*
 - Enhancing the employability of persons with disabilities
 - Increasing the employment opportunities available
 - Building on existing knowledge base of research, best practices, data collection practices

Key priority areas of the LMAPDs



- *Education and training:* technical aids and equipment, interpreter services, transportation, income support
- *Employment participation:* work and volunteer placements, school to work transition programs
- *Employment opportunities:* workplace-related disability supports, self-employment, job coaching and mentoring
- *Connecting employers and persons with disabilities:* awareness strategies, labour market information
- *Building knowledge:* data collection, program evaluations

Existing LMAPDs: an assessment



- Built upon intergovernmental agreements and programming from the early 1960s
- Focus tends toward individual and supply-side
- Varied spending patterns and priorities:
 - Mental health and addiction services (Manitoba, NB, NS, Saskatchewan)
 - Community services, education and employment (NL, PEI)
 - Adults with developmental disabilities (Alberta, BC, Ontario)

Existing LMAPDs: assessment (2)



- Complex organizational contexts and mixed delivery systems
- Recent governance reforms in some provinces (e.g., Ontario, BC)
- Few summative evaluations of LMAPDs completed
- Annual reports by provinces vary in their accessibility, range and consistency of information, and the depth of analysis

Vision for reforms



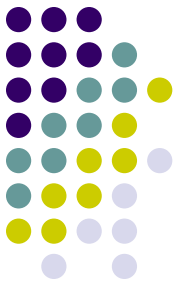
- Retain a federal role to serve Canadians with disabilities, to foster innovation and to share what works; given huge unemployment and non-participation rates of persons with disabilities
- Maintain a cost-sharing agreement with the provinces like the LMAPD; eliminating a designated program risks losing a policy space for the voices and needs of people with disabilities

Reform options for new LMAPDs



1. Significant *additional monies* over the next five years for select areas of federal investment
2. Sign *multi-year agreements* again to support longer term planning by provinces, disability groups and service providers
3. Shift the continuum of employment services, promoting *supported employment options*
4. Stretch the *duration of support services* from the often short term focus
5. Stimulate *supply of supports for on the job* more readily and accessible in workplaces to people with disabilities and to employers to further the employment of people with disabilities
6. Strengthen *reporting and sharing of results*

Concluding thoughts



Benefits of these sorts of reforms:

- expand education and employability options and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities
- enhance economic and geographic mobility
- reduce number of people in segregated and sheltered workshops and wholly dependent on social assistance
- ease the rate and depth of poverty and expand economic inclusion and earned income
- help businesses and social enterprises
- boost personal well-being
- maintain a collaborative approach to federalism

Thank you



Michael J. Prince

Lansdowne Professor of Social Policy

Faculty of Human and Social Development

University of Victoria

mprince@uvic.ca



University
of Victoria

British Columbia
Canada