People Over Programs

**Some Characteristics of More Integrated Planning and
Delivery of Employment and Training Programs and
Some Possible Directions and Supports for Communities**

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Norman S. Rowen
December 1999

Acknowledgments

This project did not unfold as expected; the main reasons are outlined in Part I. However, it has been a most rewarding experience and, for their interest, cooperation and understanding, many thanks are deserved.

Related to the francophone initiative in Eastern Ontario, my sincere appreciation goes to Gilbert Hereaux, Chair of the CAFA, and Dianne Dugas and Donald Lurette, staff at the CAP and instrumental in the development of the CAFA. Their energy and commitment are unquestionable and their openness to their community and willingness to address difficult challenges is admirable. In addition, they showed a special kindness to me and my less than fluent French which helped me immeasurably during my visits. Donald in particular spent countless hours ensuring that I understood some of the more important aspects of franco-ontarienne culture that has contributed the development of the work in Prescott-Russell. Lucie Brunet deserves my sincere thanks for her work in carrying out the documentation of the CAFA. It is not easy to do a part of someone else's project; but her sensitivity to the community and to the work was truly commendable.

Special thanks must go to Sandi Hennessey who has been chair of the London-Middlesex Labour Market Planning Council for most of the project and, more important, was persistent a year ago in her claims that I and others in the province had much to learn from initiatives in London-Middlesex. Corinna Purchase, LMPC project leader (on maternity leave since July), demonstrated why LMPC gets so much done. Her infectious laugh and patience will, no doubt, serve her as well in parenting as it has the LMPC. Brenda Chapman, in Corinna's absence, fielded a number of frustrated requests for additional information with equal humour and efficiency.

My sincere appreciation must also go to the members of the Funders Forum (formally known as the Employment and Training Service Funders of London-Middlesex) and their chair, Glen Howlett, Commissioner of Social Services for the City of London. Not only did the group extend to me the privilege of allowing me to attend their meetings for nearly a year, they demonstrated their openness and interest in the project from the outset. Elizabeth White of the City also answered my additional requests for information and provided important encouragement, as did several others. I know that my account of their work will be insufficient to convey my respect, both personal and professional, as well as what I've learned and hope to communicate to others. I trust that my attempts to support their many efforts will not seem presumptuous: they are merely suggestions for how they might build upon their important efforts to date.

The National Literacy Secretariat and Literacy Section of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities have been generous in their support for the project and their belief in the importance of the work. Robert Dupuis (formerly a manager in the Section, currently with the LMDA secretariat) and Harold Alden of the Section were supportive at the outset of the project and I trust remain committed to developing a more coherent approach to community planning and to integrated program delivery. My thanks also go to the Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy and, in particular, Colleen D'Souza, for overseeing the project and for the independence and support she provided. I hope their support for the project will prove justified.

Public thanks must also go to John MacLaughlin for continuing to be a good colleague and for his time and support throughout the work. While the Toronto portion of the study did not develop as expected, there may yet be concrete benefits from the project which, I hope, are worth the effort he has given. My respect for him continues to increase the more I've come to appreciate the challenges he takes seriously in his commitment to his program and its learners.

Readers will appreciate Cheryl Hamilton's summary and highlights; and those who read the more detailed sections may regret, as I do, that she wasn't able to use her considerable skills on the rest of the report.

Most important, my sincere thanks go to the dozens of practitioners, administrators, and program managers who gave generously of their time and ideas. With openness, commitment, and energy they participated in yet another project aimed at helping to provide more effective service to so many in our communities. One regret is that time and scheduling limitations prevented me from even greater involvement. I hope those who participated found their involvement as enjoyable as I did and that they will find their understandings reflected and their contributions appreciated in my examination some of the difficult questions which the project tried to address.

Finally, while the project benefited from the contributions of so many people, the responsibility for the work cannot be shared. Any errors, of commission or omission, of fact, analysis or conclusions, are mine alone.

Norman S. Rowen
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Part I: Introduction

I.1 Background and Context

When this project was initially proposed and the work begun, there seemed to be little public discussion about whether, let alone how, to move to a clearly integrated employment and training system. The 'silos' of distinct funded programs outlined in *More Walls Than Doors* (1998) seemed likely to remain a feature of public policy, though in at least some communities there had been attempts to develop more explicit partnerships in an attempt to meet the needs of harder-to-serve clients. It was fair to say that in the great majority of communities, attempts at integration had been limited.

During the course of the project, however, two important initiatives were moving forward and came to greater public attention. First, there have been the discussions between the federal and provincial governments concerning a labour market development agreement (LMDA). These ongoing discussions are specifically directed toward the development of a more integrated service delivery system which would include a range of employment and training supports and which have, to this point, remained largely distinct. There has been a long-standing consensus among practitioners and policy makers alike that explicit integration is necessary in an effort to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. The discussions would also result in responsibility for the range of services being explicitly devolved to the province.

The province's understanding of a more integrated system can be seen in two documents which emerged in the course of this project. The first, *Better Skills, More Jobs* (MET, 1998), offered a broad statement of the province's vision for a single system of employment and training services; while the second document, *Ontario's Plan for an Integrated System of Employment Services, Targeted Programs and Delivery Under a Labour Market Development Agreement* (MET, October 1998) offered more specific policy and program directions, including additional details on how the different services might be organized and administered.

As well, a second initiative emerged during the project; namely, the public discussions and (1999) report of the Ontario Jobs and Investment Board, which offered it's blueprint for economic growth and located labour force development as a key element in the government's strategic planning. While less specific than the LMDA group's work, the report - *A Road Map to Prosperity* - has been understood as an expression of the government directions over a new mandate. Given the re-election of the government in the course of this project, some practitioners have become more interested in what directions might emerge which would guide program development.

And these documents clearly identify the need for a more integrated employment and training service system. For example, in order to achieve the goal of "ensur(ing) Ontario's education and training system is high quality and market driven", the OJIB report notes that "governments need to work together to put in place a single comprehensive training and labour market adjustment system to meet the needs of Ontario workers and employers. In particular, governments should address duplication and overlap in adult and youth training and employment services" (*A Road Map to Prosperity* ; Section 2: 4).

The employment and training community might reasonably wonder how such a system would develop. Here, there are two, perhaps, contradictory, observations. First, the OJIB notes that the design of a "made-in-Ontario" system is clearly a responsibility of governments; specifically assigning the design of a single system and its implementation to the two levels of government, in contrast to other features identified with other institutions or with individuals.[1] On the other hand,

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[1]Indeed, the report states "3.(GP/GF) Implement a single, simple to understand, made-in-Ontario employment services and training system for Ontarians by integrating provincial and federal training and employment programs. This would eliminate duplication and fragmentation; create one simple-to-understand, made-in-Ontario, system that

the trend in program implementation in several sectors has been for greater local (or at least regional) responsibility; for example, for income support (e.g. Ontario Works), for health (e.g. Community Care Access Centres), for children's and family services (identified by the Ministry of Community and Social Services in *Making Services Work for People*). Indeed, the OJIB report recognized this trend and the principle behind it by noting that "economic development cannot be "commanded" by government, although governments have important roles to play through leadership and facilitation" (*A Road Map to Prosperity* ; Section 1: 9). As well, the LMDA group confirms this orientation by proposing an approach where responsibility for program delivery, funding and performance accountability would rest with a regional management structure - a significant departure from the historical separation of funded programs. In addition, the program guidelines for Literacy and Basic Skills suggests the importance of local efforts to involve practitioners from other funded programs in LBS community planning activities. Taken together, the framework offered by these government documents suggests that the devolution of program responsibilities is likely to continue together with an acknowledgment of the role of central governments in designing and shaping service delivery. The roles of both governments and communities are clearly changing.[2]

While these developments occurred during the course of this project, the work reported here can be seen as a contribution to the challenge of how communities might adapt to these likely changes. In particular, the intent has been to identify some ways in which local communities might develop practical processes and useful projects which will further the local integration of employment and training services. The balance between central demands and local implementation is a constant feature of service delivery. This project, however, was focused on how communities respond to this challenge and on some specific approaches or directions local leadership might usefully pursue.

When we began the project, the role of literacy and basic skills programming in a broader attempt to reorganize the delivery of employment and training services was unclear. While there may be several reasons for this ambiguity, two seem particularly relevant. First, as noted in *More Walls Than Doors*, literacy programming has been perceived as a small component of employment and training efforts. As noted in the discussion of other jurisdictions (Part II, below), a principal pressure of all governments has been the need to reduce the number of social assistance recipients which, in turn, resulted in a shift from a "human capital development" to a "labour force attachment" orientation which favoured work-first or quick-employment supports, rather than longer term training programs. This, in turn, points to a second reason for the ambiguous relationship identified in that report; namely, the relative isolation of LBS programs from other employment related supports. Since employment has been only one of several possible goals of LBS programming, how literacy can be better integrated with other employment and training services has been only one focus of the government's objectives for LBS program reform, though it may be an important focus.

This project, therefore, has tried to identify some of the possible ways in which the integration of this aspect of LBS programming might be better connected to other efforts at employment and training

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gives all Ontarians easy access to the employment services and training programs and is responsive to community and business needs; provide more Ontarians with job and self-employment preparation and training; and, help employers meet their need for skilled workers." (*A Road Map to Prosperity* ; *Section 2: Implementation Strategies and Actions:* 6.)

[2]See LBS Program Guidelines June 1998: Part 1, Section 4. The Guidelines note that literacy agencies should "define working relationships with Ontario Works, the Local Board, Job Connect, and other appropriate service providers". Many literacy practitioners note that the involvement of providers from other funded programs (as well as establishing of working relationships with OW and local boards) requires the support of these other practitioners; and, while these may be requirements for LBS programs, achieving this goal requires that these other funded program have a similar commitment to collaboration to that shown by LBS. The challenge of defining and implementing these relationships locally, while a direction of only one of several funded programs, is understood by some practitioners as an example of the "fact" that the roles and relationships will change, though it is unclear how such changes will come about.

service reform. Drawing particularly on experiences and lessons from other jurisdictions, Part V of this report attempts to offer some concrete directions for employment oriented literacy programming. There are, of course, other "systems" with which literacy programming might be more productively integrated, including health and social services. However, these were not the subject of this project which tried to retain a focus on employment-oriented activities.

Given this background, it is important to note that any effort to develop a more integrated approach to community planning for the delivery of employment and training services is not an end in and of itself. Rather, as noted at the start of the project by a manager in the LBS section, community planning is but a means to the more important end of integrated programming; that is, to developing a mechanism to deliver more effective programs in general and the more specific goal of developing a more integrated "system" of employment and training services.

Of course, Ontario is not the only jurisdiction desiring a more integrated approach. For example, the other provinces have already signed their own agreements with the federal government. As well, in the US, several major initiatives have been launched over the past few years which have similar goals; and other countries, such as Australia and the UK have embarked on their own strategies to address similar challenges.

In each case, these strategies have had to be designed with sensitivity to the political cultures of both the national and the more local governments (whether at the regional, provincial, state, or municipal level), and with a recognition of the historical relationships among funders, training providers and clients. The rationale for such efforts in each jurisdiction have much in common. Though some particular factors may differ, the initiatives share a common desire to realize improvements in the effectiveness and efficiencies of employment and training services, better results and clearer accountability, a clear focus on customer service and program improvement, and increasing local responsibility coupled with a significantly reduced role for government,

Given the context and challenges each government has entertained, the scope of changes has been great. Obviously, a limited project could not address all of the dimensions which can be identified. Rather, the project sought to address some specific issues.

I.2. Major Questions and Methodology

The project was designed to address three broad questions.

First, the project would identify some approaches which might result in more effective, integrated planning among literacy programs and between literacy and other initiatives and programs. In particular, the project was asked to identify some of the characteristics of more effective relationships and processes that communities might benefit from in developing appropriate planning processes.

Second, the project was asked to identify some of the supports necessary for the development of effective community service planning, and how these supports might best be provided.

Third, the project was expected to offer some practical steps which might lead to effective involvement of both literacy and other programs in planning integrated service delivery appropriate to clients needs.

Through the cooperation of the many individuals and groups we interviewed and observed, and the many documents examined, some answers to these questions are possible which seem particularly relevant to the developing situation in Ontario. As discussed below, it has been extremely difficult to define discrete models; rather, the project evolved to consider the broad approach which seems common to the initiatives we examined, to identify specific characteristics, and to offer some specific directions and projects to communities, and some supports which might help achieve a more integrated system of employment and training services.

Methodology

The basic methodology followed from the work done on the earlier project and reported in *More Walls Than Doors*. Specifically, three kinds of data were collected: (i) observation of the collective processes and discussions of groups involved in integrated planning activities; (ii) individual (and a few small group) interviews; and (iii) documents provided by the groups or individual members, as well as documents from (and some discussion with practitioners in) other jurisdictions.

As might be expected, the communities whose initiatives comprised the major focus of the project were not as originally conceived. In particular, the project's involvement in three communities was limited, though several meetings of groups in each community were attended and a number of individuals interviewed. While there are several reasons why there isn't a more thorough description of activities in these communities, the major reason is simply that the groups originally identified do not see themselves or their activities as directly related to more integrated programming (or, for that matter, as directly related to "community planning"). In two communities, the groups appear to be explicitly organized to help with information sharing. While there are many important partnerships between particular programs in each community, the programs and agencies meet together very infrequently (quarterly), have limited time (usually just a few hours at most) and attendance is often a problem. It was a deliberate decision to observe these meetings and speak with some of the participants, rather than try to influence the direction of either group or advocate a particular process or the content of their activities.

Two of these communities were selected to correspond to what we originally thought were useful categories; namely, where a more integrated process was based on the literacy service planning process and local board approaches, respectively. In neither of these communities, however, did their activities reflect the original typology. Similarly, in a third community, the expectation was of integrated planning which arose from program-to-program collaboration. Here, too, our original expectations did not meet the reality, though it is important to note that there has been more recent effort to develop this approach.

From each of these communities, however, some important understandings have emerged as a result of attendance at the meetings of these groups and discussions with individual participants. These understandings are included in the synthesis discussion in Part V.

The more detailed work of the project, however, is largely based on intensive work in two Ontario communities: the francophone community in Prescott-Russell and the several initiatives in London-Middlesex. As well, there was considerable attention paid to developments in other jurisdictions; notably, Australia, the UK and US.

More than twenty formal meetings were attended in four communities and interviews were conducted with more than fifty individuals, including funders and service providers; several individuals were interviewed on more than one occasion. As well, the initiative in Eastern Ontario was researched and written by Lucie Brunet who describes her own processes in that part of the report.

Some Immediate Benefits

It may be important to note that the project has already provided some measured benefits in three communities. In Prescott-Russell, further focus and planning among the members of the CAFA development committee has been based, in large measure, on the study prepared by Lucie Brunet which formed the basis of at least two later meetings of a broad cross section of providers and funders. Second, the project has been able to offer some more specific findings and suggestions to the London-Middlesex providers (and funders) through their Labour Market Planning Council, and these suggested directions have been the subject of at least three meetings of LMPC Steering Committee (which included an overview of findings from London-Middlesex, from the CAFA and

from the other jurisdictions). Third, in Toronto, the project has led to preliminary discussions among some providers across funded programs to develop a consortium to plan and deliver integrated services. A proposal to establish such a consortium is, in fact, in the development stage. While having proceeded somewhat slower than originally hoped, this approach has benefited from the research reported here (for example, the PIE consortium in London-Middlesex) and does, in fact, represent an important alternative approach. While other communities can benefit from their work, the identification of possible directions to those involved in the CAFA and the London-Middlesex community are small attempts to support the further development of those we were privileged to learn from. Hopefully, they too will be able to finds some benefit from their generous involvement this project.

I.3. How this document is organized

The four additional parts of this document organize the basic findings from the different initiatives. Part II offers a description of the initiatives in other jurisdictions. It is offered next, in part, because of the interest of many in these experiences and, in part, because it affords the opportunity to identify the principal challenges and context in which efforts to reform employment and training services have taken place. The work tries to synthesize many of the features of these initiatives in each jurisdiction and which, in turn, comprise some characteristics of effective service planning. Outlining the breadth and scope of these experiences and dimensions might be useful in locating the specific initiatives from Ontario.

Part III describes the initiative in the Francophone community in Prescott-Russell. While part of the project as a whole, it was subcontracted and is the result of Lucie Brunet's efforts. It has been included in full and is unedited - both for completeness and out of respect for the work accomplished.

Part IV describes activities which have developed in London-Middlesex. Hopefully, the detail offered will allow others to appreciate some of the five specific initiatives outlined, as well as some of the lessons learned which may be applicable to other communities. As part of the discussion, the characteristics of more integrated activity are extended to include an initial discussion of the main community planning and service delivery functions which communities might want to consider. As well, given the extensive time and effort of those involved, some suggestions specific to London-Middlesex are offered and which, in turn, informed the directions offered in final section of this report.

Part V of the report seeks to synthesize the three longer descriptions by focusing on the broad questions which informed the project: characteristics of and supports for more integrated service planning and delivery. In particular, from the evidence and experiences outlined in this report, six important characteristics appear clear, as do five community planning functions, and three broad delivery functions. We identify eight suggestions for communities related to some initial challenges in developing more integrated planning processes; as well as ten specific "projects" which might focus the efforts of community partners. Two kinds of supports are suggested, policy and participation, each of which includes some specific suggestions. Finally, seven directions are offered which relate specifically to literacy and basic skills programming, following some discussion about its importance based largely on the experience of other jurisdictions.

A note of caution: The initiatives discussed in this report are ongoing. They are in no way complete; rather, each is evolving -- that is, each community and jurisdiction is truly in the process of changing the ways programs are planned, organized and delivered. As the provincial government may be in the process of developing more specific plans and policies for the development of a more integrated employment and training system, it is our hope that the initiatives outlined in this report will be of some help to both provincial and local decision-makers and practitioners.

A final -- and personal -- note

On a personal level, for two reasons this project has been among the most challenging I have undertaken in more than two decades of educational research. First, the complexity of the issues and challenges should not be underestimated -- but perhaps were not fully appreciated. The initiatives in other jurisdictions are extremely complex involving not only the reform of educational programs, but of a number of other employment-related systems as well. There was, in the end, no easy way to limit the scope of the project and, therefore, no alternative to trying to understand - and communicate - what is being tried elsewhere and how it might help us in our own efforts. This is not merely a processes of picking and choosing what seems like it might apply; rather, it seemed important to understand not only what happened, but how, in order to arrive at any meaningful conclusions.

The second personal reason why the project presented the challenge it did has been my own health. Having suffered a serious back injury in April, I was unable to attend to the work as I wished. An initial period for recovery was ultimately coupled with a second period following back surgery in October. While this resulted in the delay in completing the report, it also had an effect on the structure of what resulted. In particular, the different sections were drafted at different times. The CAFA work was completed in June; the London-Middlesex description was drafted in August; the experiences of other jurisdictions in October; and the final section in December. The result may be some overlap and, while it would have been possible to present the work in the order in which it was drafted, it seemed preferable to present it in an order which might be more useful to readers.

You have my sincere apologies for the fact that this report is not more "user-friendly". It seemed important to make it available as soon as practical. Each section is long and may offer more detail than readers might want. However, even in an era where it is suggested that "less is more", it seemed important to provide sufficient detail to allow practitioners and policy makers alike the opportunity to evaluate for themselves the important experiences which informed my own understandings.

Two kinds of "people" are important to the title of this report. As will be evident, the development of a more coherent, integrated and effective employment and training system must be oriented to achieving results for customers, both individual clients and employers. These are the first people who must be the focus of our efforts and for whom change must produce clear benefits.

But there are a second group of people who also merit attention; namely, those who are delivering services, managing programs, providing support, helping to build communities. No effort at substantive and substantial change will be successful without the very real and committed efforts of those people in agencies and government departments who must share the practical and everyday work of any change which can be envisioned.

Without either of these groups of people, there are no programs.

Finally, in one of the first texts written on "qualitative" research, Schwartz and Jacobs (1979) describe a phenomenon they call the "what's new?" problem; namely, that if the analysis offered conforms to people's everyday understandings "it may come off as something (1) that everybody already knows, (2) that anyone could have found out, given a moment's reflection or a look around the corner, or (3) that is dull, obvious, or trite" (1979:297).

I have been privileged to have had that opportunity - to look around that corner and reflect on what I've seen. I hope that this report represents, in fact, what at some level we already know; and that, even if obvious, the understanding of the issues and directions will prove neither dull nor trite.

I.4 Acronyms

The different parts of this report include a number of frequently used acronyms, the most common of which are listed below.

CAFA - Centre d'anguillage et de formation des adultes (Referal Centre for Adult Training) serving
          the united counties of Prescott-Russell
CCAC - Community Care Access Centre (funded by Ministry of Health)
EI - Employment Insurance (income support funded by HRDC)
GED - General Education Diploma (the most common form of grade 12 equivalency)
HRDC - Human Resources Development Canada
LBS - Literacy and Basic Skills (programs funded by MTCU, either acronym or upper case)
LMDA - Labour Market Development Agreement (negotiated between the two senior governments)
MET- Ministry of Education and Training
MTCU- Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (formerly a part of MET)
OECD- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OJIB - Ontario Jobs and Investment Board
OW - Ontario Works (social assistance administered by municipalities and jointly funded by the
          provincial Ministry of Community and Social Services)
SARS - Social Assistance Recipients (refers to persons receiving any form of income support)

Selected London-Middlesex Acronyms

CLEAR - Canada-London Employment Assessment and Referral
ETN - Employment and Training Network
LMPC - Labour Market Planning Council
PIE - Partners in Employment
TEA - The Employment Alliance (an offshoot of PIE)

In addition, the United States is cited as US and the United Kingdom as UK.

I.5 A Note About References

In three parts of this report, references are included in the text or footnotes. However, in Part II, the large number of sources cited in the text are numbered to reduce space and possible disruption to the reader. A list of these numbered references is appended to Part II.

Part II: Some Lessons from Other Jurisdictions About Integrated Planning and Delivery of Employment and Training Services

While the intent of the project was not to examine, let alone design, a comprehensive welfare-to-work or workforce development system, it proved impossible to look at the challenges, experiences and characteristics of integrated planning and delivery of employment and training services in other jurisdictions without looking at the overall intent and organization of their respective initiatives. In particular, any look at integrated planning and delivery requires some view of the context and goals of the approaches which have developed over the last few years.

And the last few years have seen major changes in each of several other jurisdictions. As will be described briefly, each of the US, UK and Australia have undergone significant and far-reaching changes in the nature of their social assistance and employment services at the national, regional and local levels. Since 1996, each has radically changed the assumptions, policies, design, and delivery of services to millions of residents. Each of these jurisdictions are just now in the process of implementing some of these changes and it will take several more years before comprehensive data on their approaches is available (though some lessons from pilot sites have become available). However, some major principles and characteristics can be understood and need to be considered if we are to benefit from these experiences in designing our own approaches and processes.

Of course, it is likely that federal and provincial officials have been aware of some of these initiatives and have chosen not to travel down these roads; as someone in a focus group said, "we know the models". Therefore, the point of providing this discussion is to identify some of the characteristics that could help communities and governments to identify some ideas which could be implemented and to provide some suggestions for how our governments could support communities to delivery more integrated employment and training services. In Ontario, it's likely that federal, provincial and local governments will each have a presence and, therefore, some processes for coordination will be required if a more effective and efficient delivery system is to emerge. The experiences of other jurisdictions can offer some important insights into the characteristics and supports which are important to developing a more integrated system of employment and training services. (Some possible directions for communities and governments, as well as ideas specifically related to literacy and basic skills are presented in Part V of this report.)

This discussion in this part of the report is divided into three sections. The first section outlines three challenges which informed the context for reform in the three jurisdictions, and includes important findings from a number of studies related to employment and training services. The second section outlines how the jurisdictions refocused their efforts in order to create significantly different systems for providing services. The third section discusses six characteristics of more integrated planning and delivery and offers additional detail from the experiences of these other jurisdictions.[1]

II.1 Challenges and Context

Based on the experiences of selected other jurisdictions, it is possible to identify some particular challenges which provide important context and rationale for the development of more integrated approaches to the planning and delivery of employment and training services.

(1) The need for a significant reduction in the numbers of people on social assistance.

In all three other jurisdictions, a common theme in the significant changes of the past few years was the need to significantly reduce social assistance expenditures and move significant numbers of

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[1]The numbers in the text in square brackets refer to sources appended to this discussion. Hopefully, readers will find this format less distracting than other conventions. The numbered references are appended to this Part of the report.

recipients from welfare to work. In reforming policies and programs, federal legislation explicitly signaled a shift from "human capital development" (skill building programs) to a "labour force attachment" (quick employment) approach. The first considered that poverty could be reduced if people spent time developing the skills required to be employed in stable jobs; the second suggested that the poor would be more likely to become self-sufficient if moved quickly to employment where earnings could be sustained, and then they could get further training, either on their own or through their employers, if they were sufficiently motivated to improve their skills and earnings.[2]

This "work-first" orientation has been adopted by most jurisdictions (including in Canada). As offered below, there was also evidence that existing programs aimed at skills development had not produced significant results and were considerably more expensive than work-first approaches; one comparative study suggested that HCD programs were twice the cost of LFA programs, though without better results.[59] In addition, the quick employment approach also spoke to those who viewed recipients as lacking motivation, life skills or the disposition to work and, therefore, included penalties for those not moving quickly to work. Those who needed assistance would be provided with short-term supports geared specifically to job search skills (including workshops on resume production, "cold calling", interview techniques, how to use job search resources).

With the economic expansion of the mid-1990s, this approach seemed eminently reasonable. The number of social assistance recipients declined markedly over the past several years owing, at least in part, to the increase in available jobs and, in part, to the shift in public policy to a labour force attachment orientation. This combination of factors resulted in significant reductions in social assistance payments; a 1999 study reports a case load reduction of nearly 40% in the US between 1995 and 1998, with some states reporting reductions as high as 70%.[129] It also resulted in a significant reduction in expenditures on training. According to data from a 1998 government study of seven states welfare-to-work programs, the proportion of participants in education and training activities declined from an average of 70% in 1994 to an average of 31% in 1997 following the changes in policy and programs.[57][3] Estimates of US federal spending on education and training services, while less than 0.2 of Gross Domestic Product, totaled over $10B in 1995, including nearly $4B specifically for the disadvantaged.[54] Taken together, reductions in social assistance payments, coupled with reduced spending on education and training for social assistance recipients, resulted in significant savings.

However, the work-first approach didn't work for everyone; not all boats were lifted - neither by the rising tide of economic growth, nor by supports for quick employment. Since the adoption of welfare-to-work measures, there is an increasing body of evidence that "quick employment" initiatives have had only limited effects on reducing poverty.[123,57,8,54] Specifically, despite serious sanctions (such as eligibility criteria and time limits on collecting welfare), there remained a large group of the "hard-to-employ", not all of whom are on welfare. One recent study reported that between 50% and 70% are currently employed or have earnings and, in some states as many as one-third of leavers had not been employed at all.[130] In addition, while large numbers of social assistance recipients have become employed, most of these people have realized very limited gains

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[2]In the US., this shift happened in three stages, beginning with the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (1996) and continuing with the Balanced Budget Act (1997) which established welfare to work formula grants to states, and culminated with the Workforce Investment Act (1998). In the UK., the government enacted the "New Deal" programs (for "18-24", for "over 25s", for the "disabled", for "partners" of other recipients, for "over 50s"). The Australian government similarly enacted their "Work for the Dole" program. Each has similar provisions requiring more active job search and providing explicit sanctions for those not available or willing to work. Each government provided for particular exclusions, but focused their efforts on moving large numbers of people from assistance to employment. Coupled with economic expansion, the changes (which included some benefit reductions and the provision of specific supports aimed at "quick employment") resulted in a significant decline in the number of recipients.

[3]This reduction came, at least in part, from regulations given the states for specific limits on the proportion of recipients who could be in education programs and, in part, from the choices of individual participants not to "use up" part of their time-limited entitlement on lengthy training which might not help them get a better job.

in income and are still in poverty.[7,130] For this group, the marginal increases in income have come from working more hours, rather than having "better jobs" (defined as jobs which not only pay higher wages, but also provide some opportunity for stability and the further training or experience that would lead to advancement).[121] In the absence of a better job, experience has indicated that recipients -- and the working poor -- will continue to require some form of assistance and will be neither be independent nor able to support their families. As one study noted:

> Job search has consistently helped recipients to work more over the short-term but not over the long-term. The initial success fades because job search does not help recipients find better jobs than they could have found on their own, it does not help them keep jobs longer, and it does not help the most disadvantaged.[57]

As will be discussed below, recognition of this challenge has led to some important lessons in the services offered and affected the way in which employment and training services have been integrated, among the most important of which are (i) the requirement for integrated systems to distinguish among client needs in order to target services to those most in need, (ii) the development of more integrated programming to address the needs of the hardest-to-serve, and (iii) an increasing focus on what the state of Pennsylvania called "family-sustaining jobs"[61].

(2) The need to address pressures for productivity increases.

If those individuals remaining in poverty are one group for whom the results of the changes have been disappointing, a second group which appeared less than satisfied with the results of the work-first orientation has been employers. While employers may have benefited from the availability of workers resulting from a quick-employment focus, in each of the jurisdictions concerns have been expressed about increasing productivity to meet the challenge of global competition. The relationship between productivity concerns and the employment and training services may not be a simple one, but it has certainly informed how governments have developed more integrated approaches to the planning and delivery of employment and training programs.

For example, in their "white paper" announcing a major overhaul of the "post-16" training system tabled this past June, the British government identified their productivity concerns including that "the UK lags behind the US by almost 40% and behind France and Germany by around 20%" and that , in a knowledge-based economy, new and better skills are required to compete.[20] The US National Governors Association cited a Council on Competitiveness report which indicated that "worker skills will be the most serious competitiveness hurdle for the United States in the next decade."[94] And Pennsylvania's unified state plan under the Workforce Investment Act states "recent studies indicate that Pennsylvania's workforce competitiveness has emerged as the most predominant factor influencing business location and expansion".[64]

Finally, in discussing the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (1998), one of three goals offered for the initiative was to "enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the nation" in the face of "rapid technological progress, fierce competition... An integrated, highly accountable, workforce investment system is critical if American workers and businesses are to keep pace in this rapidly changing economic environment."[43]

The relationship between these two challenges -- reducing social assistance and increasing productivity -- appears to have provided the opportunity to join welfare-to-work initiatives with the more recent workforce development focus. This reorientation is captured in a 1999 discussion of business participation in welfare-to-work programs which noted two motivations: the "push" of requirements for welfare recipients to seek jobs and the "pull" of "a shortage qualified entry-level employees forcing employers to seek new sources of labour."[79]

The need to integrate "welfare-to-work" and "workforce development" approaches

One challenge that unites these two themes, that poses a significant challenge to both reducing social assistance (and poverty) and increasing productivity - and which informs many of the characteristics of integrated planning and delivery - is "low basic skills". Why is this an important problem?

There is no shortage of studies to remind us of the relationship between educational levels and both individual income and economic growth. A paper presented to a recent OECD ministers meeting noted that "there is consistent evidence from multiple sources of a strong positive relationship between educational attainment levels and output and productivity growth, at a macro level, and labour market outcomes, at a micro level."[49] For employers, individuals and nations the effects of higher skill levels are significant.

From a business perspective, while some employers may have always found fault with the educational system, several recent US reports have directly noted their concerns with the increasing demands for skills at the entry-level and the limited basic skills of job seekers.[112,47]. A 1999 summary by the US National Governors Association noted that "virtually every state reports that employers view the basic skill deficiencies among their workers as a significant problem"[90]. A specific study of employer perceptions following their participation in welfare-to-work programs indicated that "as many of the more employable welfare recipients have moved into work, the remaining participants are increasingly seen as unemployable, as they do not possess the basic skills, attitudes or motivations to effectively contribute to a private-sector workplace."[112]. Finally, the National Governors Association identified an important relationship between recipients' low basic skill levels and the broader economy by noting that employers consider that the greatest productivity gains are most likely to come from increasing the skills of front-line workers.[94][4]

Given the challenges for employers, a major question has become how to develop the capacities of those with low basic skills under the current work-first orientation and, in particular, how to involve employers in this effort given their direct interest in the skill levels of entry level workers. Indeed, this concern has informed the approaches to integrated planning and delivery of a range of employment and training services.

From the perspective of job seekers, all three countries have faced the particular challenge of those with lower basic skills. In what is among the most comprehensive analyses of evidence from different US welfare-to-work programs, the review concludes that "low basic skills stand out as both the most common barrier to steady work and, by far, the strongest single predictor of whether a recipient works at all."[121] Other studies, particularly since the significant changes to government policy and programs, have echoed the difficulties of developing basic skills given rules developed for social assistance under the quick employment approach.[87,122,57,102]

Among the more interesting findings contained in recent reviews is that few learners are in fact participating in programs aimed at increasing literacy skills and which have an employment focus; possibly 17% according to one study[121] and this may overstate the number. Another recent review noted that basic education was the most common skills building activity under the older orientation and that "most skill-building programs had no direct links to employment, but rather promoted education as an end in itself."[123]

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[4]While some employers have suggested that they feel little obligation to help develop workers basic skills[127], there are increasing expressions of employers willingness to participate in the development of increased skill levels. However, the importance of employer concerns in this area should not be underestimated as it is likely to affect their participation in a more integrated system which is a key element in these other jurisdiction. The link is shown in a 1999 review of business participation in welfare-to-work programs which noted that "from an employer perspective, 'work first' can be impractical and problematic. A large segment of the welfare population is not qualified for most entry level jobs. Forcing ill-prepared recruits upon employers may alienate companies."[112].

Among the many challenges for clients and providers, therefore, is how to deliver literacy and basic skills in a "work-first" environment and, as will be discussed below, how to ensure programs are effective and contribute to employment gains for both learners and employers. Among the lessons from efforts in other jurisdictions, there is evidence that greater integration in the planning and delivery employment and training services can indeed address some of these challenges. Stated differently, there are good reasons to develop and implement a more coherent system.[5]

From a government perspective, the introduction of major reforms in all three countries clearly identified the relationship between their reforms and the need to address the challenges of the harder-to-serve. For example, in tabling their major reforms in 1996, the Australian minister noted that "disadvantaged job seekers, especially the long-term unemployed, are ill-equipped to compete for jobs even in periods of strong economic growth."[132] Similarly, the British government signaled its understanding: "There are too many people with few, if any, qualifications and too many with low skills... Those without qualifications earn 30% less than average earnings... and the unemployment rate of those with no qualifications is more than three times that of graduates."[20][6]

Prior to the "white paper", a government commissioned review of adult literacy policy and programs in the UK offered data suggesting the scope of the problem; specifically, that a significantly higher proportion of the population (23%) is at the lowest literacy and numeracy levels than in either Canada (17%) or Germany (12%) and that significant reforms were required.[86][7] Several other government advisory bodies and studies offered support[55,12] with one noting: "All the evidence suggests that work opportunities and business expansion for those without skills are fast diminishing, and something has to be done to enable them to break out of the vicious circle of low-pay, poor working conditions and lack of prospects."[75]

American jurisdictions have been no less concerned. For example, in the development of their integrated plan (under the Workforce Investment Act), New Jersey presented data showing that "between 43 and 51 percent of New Jersey adults function at the lowest two of five levels of literacy (and) nearly three-quarters ... (of) adults who are poor or near poor perform at the lowest literacy levels... Approximately 80% of (social assistance) recipients demonstrate skills at the lowest literacy levels"[11][8] Perhaps signaling the importance of integrating delivery and incorporating literacy concerns in their integrated planning, the State determined that

> The literacy needs of unemployed and underemployed populations, such as welfare clients, be assessed and strategies to meet their literacy needs be developed. For those whose employment options are hampered by low literacy skills, especially those individuals on welfare, solid education strategies must be designed to empower them to move into unsubsidized employment.

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[5]One 1998 study asked: "To what extent should education and training be part of ... efforts to help welfare recipients attain self-sufficiency? Caught up in this debate are two different groups of recipients: those whose low basic skills put many jobs out of reach, and those with somewhat better skills who are stuck in low wage jobs".[122] While the study suggests that much can be done for the first group, there is less offered about the second. However, as will be outlined below, there are at least a few examples of integrated service delivery which have facilitated a transition to "better jobs".

[6]A recent OECD paper provided an interesting perspective on the size of the problem: "Regardless of the criteria used for identifying adults who are 'at risk', the numbers involved are large. Their magnitude can be appreciated by comparing them to current enrollment levels in formal education systems and labour market training programmes... If those adults (who have not completed upper secondary education or an equivalent vocational qualification) were simply reinserted in the formal education system, in most countries the systems would have to at least double their present capacity. When using low literacy levels as the criterion, the number of adults at risk is at least as large... Even when one focuses only on those in the labour force, the number of poorly qualified adults is equal to half the school population or more."[49]

[7]The comparisons were based on data from the International Adult Literacy Survey.

[8]The New Jersey IALS data suggests between 20% and 23% at level 1 and 23% to 28% at level 2. Given the figures in the UK study, it would appear that their levels are similar to New Jersey.

Therefore, it is essential to integrate literacy skills training with the skills needed to compete in the current and future labor markets.[11]

Pennsylvania's 1999 Unified Plan echoed these concerns noting that the State "will not be able to successfully transition to a knowledge based economy with a high rate of adult illiteracy" and that one of the "primary goals is to support the integration of literacy instruction and occupational skill training and promoting linkages to employers."[65]

While merely examples of the context, it is clear that other jurisdictions have considered the need to integrate a welfare-to-work orientation with a somewhat broader workforce development orientation in an effort to address the challenge posed by those remaining unemployed, low-skill and low-wage workers (including many former recipients) and employers requiring better trained workers to realize potential productivity gains. Not only has government policy and service design adapted to meet this challenge, providers have had to similarly adapt, over a comparatively short period, to the responsibilities of delivering services in significantly different ways. Before outlining some of the characteristics of these more integrated delivery systems, an additional challenge requires some mention as part of the emerging context.

(3) The need to make employment and training services more effective and efficient.

Another important motivation for the significant changes in the planning and delivery of employment and training services has come from the recognition that existing services have been both ineffective and inefficient, and an acknowledgment that previous approaches were not meeting their goals for individuals, the economy or governments. Two main dimensions of this challenge are particularly important: (i) complex and fragmented organization, and (ii) the difficulties of achieving demonstrable results.   It would be hard to overstate the extent of these challenges.

Efficiencies

For example, in stating why major changes were necessary, the UK government announced

We cannot ignore the fundamental weaknesses in the current systems. Mechanisms for planning and funding are complex, inconsistent and confusing. Too many administrative layers means too little money reaches learners and employers. There is insufficient focus on skill needs and a lack of innovation... There are also too many providers where quality is not up to scratch and where success rates are therefore very poor... (And there is) too much learning provision which is unsuited to the needs of learners[20]

Similarly, the Australia government explicitly intended to streamline their services by eliminating eleven national programs, consolidating four others, pooling resources across programs, instituting a competitive tendering process for providers of all services, and devolving operational responsibilities.[132]**9**

In outlining the 1998 Workforce Investment Act, the Department of Labour noted that, over six decades, numerous programs were established to respond to particular concerns, but never "brought into alignment with other components of the 'system'" resulting in limited choice, lack of quality information, weak strategies and the absence of strong accountability.[43] The National Governors Association noted that many employment and training programs were "duplicative, disconnected and slow to adjust to rapid changes in the economy"[91] and reported on examples of state consolidation of programs such as Texas where an initial restructuring integrated 23 different workforce development programs.[96]. Indeed, in commenting on the goals of the OneStop initiative and it's role under the new Act, one study noted that "the underlying notion of One-Stop is the integration of programs, services and governance structures"[38] supported by the requirement

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9It may be noted, however, that the national reforms did not necessarily result in equivalent changes at the "state" level.

for service delivery which includes nineteen mandatory and five optional program partners, resulting in a "single, customer focused, user-friendly, service system at the local level."[44]

In essence, the directional changes of each of the reform efforts clearly assumed that the number and separation of programs had led to important inefficiencies. Each jurisdiction sought to:

(i) change the role of government from providing services to purchasing services (directly or through intermediary structures) and overseeing the accountability of the system as a whole;

(ii) reduce the costs of the system by integrating benefit and labour force development functions, rationalizing categorical programs and encouraging the pooling of resources across programs, more effectively targeting services to particular client groups, instituting common outcome-based reporting requirements, requiring contracted service delivery with accountability through intermediary organizations (i.e. transferring operational authority to regional or local bodies);

(iii) simplify eligibility by mandating access to all programs through a single entry point, including integrated case management and tracking functions; and

(iv) support integrated planning and delivery through both policy and funding for "system building" through required partnerships for planning and delivery (through specific structures), performance-based accountability (including public disclosure), and integrated management information systems to support these efforts.

While the initial change to a work-first approach seemed to lead to a reduction in funding for training activities, there is some indication that both the UK and Australia sought to increase funding for services to those most at risk. Specifically, funding for the most intense services in Australia was increased in their 1996 reforms[132] and the 1999 "white paper" committed the British government to an additional $40B (over three years) for widening participation through new employment and training programs[20]. The ability of both national and state governments to expend more on training is directly tied to the reductions in unemployment and the fiscal windfall from social assistance savings. The ability to use (at least much of) the savings for the delivery of employment and training services may be the result of the integration of programs at a national level; that is, the integration of benefit and service functions seem more likely to allow funds to be retained.

The second dimension facing governments relates to finding better ways to spend limited funds; in particular, the challenge of ensuring that programs are effective.

Effectiveness

In perhaps the largest review of studies related to programs for social assistance recipients (which examined more than 250 studies), the author concluded that

> the broadest generalization about the current knowledge of government training programs for the disadvantaged is that they have produced modest positive effects on employment and earnings for adult men and women that are commensurate with the modest amounts of resources expended on them... (but) the programs have not made substantial inroads in reducing poverty... or welfare use.[54]

This is, of course, a rather sobering assessment, but one confirmed in several other studies. The analyses which have been done, however, point to some important directions which have, in turn, informed several policy and planning decisions. The OECD, for example, has reported similar conclusions on several occasions. In assessing the impact of different forms of active labour market programs, they concluded that

- "most evaluations show that subsidized employment schemes ... are ineffective ... lead(ing) to small employment gains;"[69][10]
- "various forms of job-search assistance appear to be effective in reducing the length of UI receipt and leading to quicker employment... [but] the evidence is mixed as to whether job-search assistance can help those who are long-term unemployed for considerable periods of time";[51]
- training programs tend to be less effective than job-search, though a few show positive effects most often as a result of specific targeting, content and delivery[77];
- "youth tend to need more help than simple job-search assistance"[51];
- "earnings increases tend to come from increases in annual hours and not gains in hourly wages, suggesting that active labour market programs do not lead to higher quality jobs"[51].

More specific findings can help identify some important lessons. In particular, several recent reports have examined supported job search (and other quick employment supports) compared to more extensive pre-employment education and training. As noted above, the data suggests that the work-first approach does indeed help recipients get jobs, but that those results did not produce significant or lasting income gains.[11] In commenting on the benefits and limits of quick employment strategies, a recent evaluation noted that "program impacts typically diminish ... after one or two years and, in job search-only programs, disappear after three or four years."[121]

Unfortunately, results from basic education programs, by far the most common pre-employment training program, also show poor results. The most striking conclusions include that fewer than half the programs reviewed increased employment and earnings and, among those that did, the increases were small (3 to 14 percentage points) which is "a disappointing result for a skill building strategy since it is essentially the same outcome as for the quick employment approach, only at a much higher cost and with a slower payoff."[121] Indeed, a comparative study of quick employment and basic skills development programs found similar limited gains from each, but the skills development programs had approximately twice the cost.[59]

The review cited earlier also noted two problems with educational attainment. First, that a majority of participants in basic education programs did not receive a GED (considered to have been important for participants to gain better jobs) and, second, that "most programs did not raise recipients' scores on a test of basic skills".[121] In another review, improvement on post-program literacy tests was found in only one of five research sites.[54] To further complicate the findings, there was no relationship between educational attainment and earnings gains; that is, programs that produced educational gains were not the same programs which produced earnings gains.[121][12] Finally, additional findings suggest that job-related vocational training seems to have the greatest impact on earnings and employment, with one review noting a 43% increase in income over more than three years.[123]

Among reasons for the lack of results in basic skills programs in particular, reports in both the US and UK note that learners typically attend less than four hours per week, which may account for why (in Britain) less than one-third of learners achieve their learning goals.[86] For the US, "overall welfare-to-work basic education students average 100-200 hours of instruction over a 2-3 year period, twice as much as other basic education students."[121] This small amount of time needs to be considered with the finding that fewer than twenty percent of basic skills learners are in employment oriented programs. Taken together, the lack of effectiveness may not be surprising.

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[10]Another study noted that "in the past such programs [unpaid, work experience] have had a poor record of preparing participants for unsubsidized jobs ... [and] present serious risks for the displacement of incumbent workers" and that such programs "have shown virtually no success in increasing employment or earnings."[114]

[11]For example, one study of those no longer receiving social assistance, found median wages over five years increased an average of $0.09 per hour per year. Another study which looked at twelve years of earnings for women who had received welfare dating back to 1979 found hourly wages increased from $6.07 to $6.72.[123]

[12]Another conclusion offered is that some adult basic education programs appeared to result in a net income loss, perhaps because participants did not use the time to gain work experience which might have led to earnings gains.

Other results, however, do indicate some important directions which relate directly to more integrated service delivery. Specifically, evidence of significant increases in both employment and earnings can be seen from programs which combine job search with basic skills training, and from combining basic skills development with specific job skills training. Five possible directions are suggested which would assist in helping achieve employment and income goals, including increasing the likelihood of attaining "better jobs".[121][13]

(1) "The most effective welfare-to-work programs share a flexible, balanced approach that combines job search, education, job training, and work. Successful employment programs more generally offer a wide range of individualized services; have a central focus on employment; have close ties to local employers; and are intensive, setting high expectations for participation."

(2) "Job training in the classroom or workplace and access to postsecondary education are key components of a strategy aimed at better jobs. Training must be made more consistently effective, however, and more accessible to those with low basic skills."

(3) "Activities to improve basic education skills are also important, but should be provided as part of a broader range of employment and training activities."[14]

(4) "A quick employment focus means that policy makers should consider new ways to build skills quickly and to help low income workers, including former welfare recipients, improve their skills and move up to better jobs over time."

(5) Job development and job retention services help to involve employers directly, can serve important employer needs, and can be effective in helping individuals secure better jobs.

Not only did the review offer these directions for more effective programs, a limited number of specific programs are identified which have been explicitly designed to achieve the possible benefits, indicating that integrated service planning and delivery is both possible and practical, including several sites which specifically targeted and achieved "better jobs" involving higher skills as well as considerably higher earnings.[15]

These challenges, taken together, led each of the jurisdictions to a substantial change in the orientation and organization of a range of employment and training services. Just as there was a common context for the changes, the responses of each share some important similarities.

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[13]The first four points are principles identified in Strawn 1998 [121] and are supported by significant evidence. The fifth point includes that work (itself a synthesis) with government perspectives in all three jurisdictions [46,64,132, 86,12], as well as innovations in providing effective job-development and post-employment supports - including training.[e.g. 129,102,112,125]

[14]"Skill building efforts must relate more closely to specific employment goals. Strategies targeted to specific occupational goals, through development of certifiable job skills or training for particular jobs may ... offer promise where basic education alone has proved ineffective."[123] As will be noted below, this integration of literacy and basic skills with other training has become a requirement under the training provisions of the Workforce Investment Act (1998) perhaps simply confirming "the trend toward integration of needed basic skills in substantive job training programs."[114]

[15]The evaluation of the Portland, Oregon project as part of the National Evaluation of Welfare to Work Strategies noted their success in achieving $11 per hour jobs for participants, sufficient to raise incumbents above the poverty line and which compares most favourably with minimum wage jobs found by participants in most other programs.[117] Several other programs are identified in Part II.3 below.

II.2. Vision and Goals: The Shape of a More Integrated Employment & Training Service Delivery System

> *Strategic thinking ... is about synthesis. It involves intuition and creativity. The outcome of strategic thinking is an integrated perspective of the enterprise, a not-too-precisely articulated vision or direction ... Such strategies cannot be developed on schedule and immaculately conceived. They must be free to appear at any time and at any place in the organization, typically through the messy processes of informal learning and must necessarily be carried out by people at various levels who are deeply involved with the specific issues at hand.*
> Henry Minzberg, The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning, 1994, cited in [68]

Based on the context and challenges outlined above, it may be useful to outline some of the main directions that other jurisdictions used to organize their efforts to develop more integrated planning and delivery of employment and training services. Five main directions appear to be shared among the three jurisdictions, though with some different emphases in each. Taken together, these goals and initiatives informed the characteristics of more integrated planning and delivery which have emerged (and which are discussed in the next section).

To varying degrees, each of these jurisdictions offered a vision of an integrated employment and training system which would be effective in meeting the needs of individuals and contributing to community (and national) economic development by also addressing some needs of employers. As well, each of the governments has identified some additional and more specific goals.

(a) The direction of employment and training services

From the challenges and context outlined above, one of the key shared elements was the goal of reducing expenditures on social assistance; both the number of people and the length of time people would receive benefits. This shift from a pre-employment training (or human capital development) to a work-first (or labour force attachment) orientation appears to have required two aspects; one policy, the other practical: (a) the integration of benefits administration with the services designed to assist recipients get jobs as quickly as possible, and (b) a common entry point for accessing benefits and finding services. The integration is made more possible by technology, but still requires conscious integration of 'passive' labour market assistance (benefits) with more 'active' labour market programs. The OECD notes that the policy decision to integrate these two components is part of the directions adopted in many countries over the past several years.[48,77,69] The second aspect, a single entry point, was made more concrete through the development of a unified delivery structure known as OneStop centres in the US, Centrelink in Australia and the "new deal" programs in the UK, which are to be delivered through a "single focused Gateway".[16]

The vision for this reorientation included the idea that recipients would only receive the services they need and the ones that would help them move most quickly to employment. Many, if not most, would get jobs either through job-matching (the typical "employment service" function) or, at most, through supported job search programs. More extensive - and expensive - training and other intensive services (e.g. job development, post-employment supports, wage subsidies) would be reserved for those individuals who could not get jobs through the other services. Therefore, under this orientation, savings would result from both reductions in payments based on faster re-employment and from limiting access to the more costly programs. For all but the long-term

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[16]Centrelink is in fact the common entry to all national customer services in Australia (particularly income support). As a statutory body, it is separate, but responsible for, the administration of 35 named programs from five different departments (Family and Community Services; Education, Training and Youth Affairs; Health and Family Services, Primary Industries and Energy; and Transport and Regional Services). Only four of the 35 are directly for job seekers, although several others provide specific supports and allowances.[106]   Alternatively, the "new deal" programs are the British government's welfare-to-work initiative (each program targeted to particular groups) which is administered directly by the national employment service, an arm of the Department for Education and Employment.

unemployed, and those with particular characteristics that made them harder-to-serve, the evidence suggested that job matching and assisted job search could be successful and at much lower cost than more intensive services.[51,77] To achieve the desired results, services would need to be differentiated and more carefully targeted; a goal consistent with governments' desire to both create a more simple system and to offer services through contracted providers (that is, government would no longer be a direct provider of services).

(b) Broader, if not universal, access

A common entry point would allow for universal access and a definition of services that would achieve a second goal; namely, providing services to meet the emerging workforce development orientation. By explicitly adopting a broader "customer" orientation, governments might better focus at least some services on the needs of employers for better trained, entry level workers. This might encourage the involvement, and garner the support, of businesses which had traditionally been critical of both welfare-to-work schemes and the skill levels of workers. By reorienting their employment and training services, governments saw the opportunity to serve the needs of both individuals and employers at the same time: employers were needed to hire those moving from welfare-to-work, and individuals (both new and incumbent workers) in many cases needed higher skill levels to meet the needs of employers. Redefining services to include support to new or incumbent workers provided an important opportunity to meet these needs by providing employers with specific supports which might help with the retention of new employees, thereby reducing both employer and public costs. Hiring costs could be reduced, fewer people might return to unemployment, and productivity might increase from higher skill levels, perhaps resulting in the better jobs that were needed to lift families from poverty. As well, the goal of simplification meant that customers are entitled to expect that services will be integrated; that is, they will be "seamless", providing each with the appropriate services, and leaving service managers to worry about administrative accounting. This was understood to be a major change in each of the jurisdictions; and one that would require considerable effort by service providers and governments to be successful..

(c) Government roles

A third element of the common vision in these jurisdictions reflected the desire of governments to alter their own roles. Not only would the government not deliver services directly, senior governments would devolve the responsibilities, delegating decision-making - under definite constraints - either to other levels of government or directly to service providers. In the US, this took the form of the regulations which first established the OneStop centres and, subsequently, the Workforce Investment Boards; in the UK, the recently announced Learning and Skills Council, as well as the local Councils and local Lifelong Learning Partnerships; and in Australia, the Centrelink and Job Network systems and the regulations for competitive tendering for all employment and training services, contracting directly with providers.[17]

In each jurisdiction, governments purposefully placed responsibility for the planning, design and delivery of services at the local level, with (more or less) explicit directions about who must be involved in various aspects of planning and delivery and about the outcomes they expected, but with few directives about how local communities would arrive at these outcomes.

(d) Accountability

A fourth element of the vision to be achieved by each government was the need for more effective services. While targeting provisions and contracting requirements might yield some important savings, the devolution of responsibilities also allowed for the development of a significantly different view of accountability through the adoption of performance management. While it may be

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[17]The Job Network is the organization of providers which are approved to deliver services to job seekers. Individuals are referred to the appropriate Job Network provider following assessment through Centrelink.

suggested that there was nothing to prevent governments from using performance standards under their existing systems, the change in roles and orientation allowed governments to define several different types of accountability which would refocus services. In particular, a simplified and unified service delivery system could develop common measures. With the clear emphasis on employment (rather than training) each government clearly stated that the main indicators for all services could relate to "sustainable employment".[132,20,43] A second set of indicators would relate to the satisfaction of consumers with the services they used; hence, the need to include "customer satisfaction" measures.[18] As serving customer needs has become part of a broader business (and government) culture, including such measures seemed a useful part of establishing accountability in a way that had not previously been required.

Taken together, customer satisfaction and common performance measures would provide the basis for a requirement for continuous improvement, also part of the emerging culture of accountability. Perhaps more important, these three related aspects could apply to all funded programs, regardless of provider, funder, or historically defined "program". They could be related to all services whether provided to employers or individuals, job seekers or employed workers.

Two related aspects were also part of the emerging notions of accountability. The information on performance and satisfaction would, if made public, allow for greater consumer choice in selecting the services most appropriate. Not only did the shift in government policies suggest greater individual responsibility, it also acknowledged (if only indirectly) that government decisions on service design and delivery had not necessarily produced the most effective results. Therefore, each government tried to increase the role of individual choice (wherever possible and through the use of vouchers for those requiring more extensive training services) which, in turn, requires that information be available about the performance of, and satisfaction with, individual providers. As well, each government required the development (or redesign) of certification requirements for providers as part of the effort to provide information to customers and raise the quality of service providers by having delivery related to identified standards.[19]

(e) Local planning to achieve integrated service delivery

A fifth element of the common vision was the need to develop new structures and processes for integrated service planning and delivery. Given (i) the shifts in policy (first to quick-employment and, later, to workforce development), (ii) the broadening of access and targeting of defined services, (iii) the changes in the roles of governments, and (iv) the focus on performance and accountability, the goal of a more coherent and effective system was understood to need some conscious coordination. Several aspects need to be considered.

The US and UK clearly identified the need for a local structure to do the work of practically and effectively integrating services. In the US, this started with the OneStop boards and later became the workforce improvement boards (though they may be nominally separate in some states). In the UK, the integration goal is to be carried out by the Learning and Skills Councils (regionally) and the more local Learning Partnerships; though there is a national Council to oversee the processes,

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[18]It is interesting to note that, at the national level, Australia does not require such measures, though some states do; perhaps reflecting the extent of their interest in outcomes over all else, coupled with the fact that the range of services available to employers are defined through two different ministries, one tied to the employment service function and the other related to economic development. At the state and regional level, these functions are combined through the Job Network of services.

[19]In the UK and Australia, such standards have traditionally been identified with processes for granting credentials of different types to individuals which are nationally recognized and have common standards. As well, there are national accreditation bodies for institutional providers of different credentialled programs. However, the UK in particular has made a commitment to revamp their adult training and education standards and curricula, as well as their inspectorate system; and the US reforms include a requirement for state or local certification of providers.

just as a state Workforce Investment Board oversees the local efforts in the US.[20] As a matter of policy and based on at least some (largely US) experience, these groups are mandated to ensure that an integrated system of delivery does develop. To help achieve this result, there are required partners, including what have been separate funded programs from different government departments, as well as a focus on involving business, both as purchasers of services and as employers of individual clients. Another element is the requirement for communities to develop integrated service plans, often with targets for performance, and priorities among the types of services or groups needing to be served. As well, in each jurisdiction, there is a general direction to integrate employment and training service planning with community and regional economic development planning. However, there are few specifics offered about how to achieve this goal, other than by including particular interests, requiring an integrated plan, and ensuring some degree of openness in how services are decided.

It should be noted that the local structures and processes are clearly designed to achieve the goal of local decision-making, particular about service delivery. Since there is clear direction (in the US and Australia, perhaps less so in the UK) that services be integrated to meet customer needs, it is assumed that this cannot and will not happen without a considerable amount of local discretion. This takes the form of required "pooling" of resources in both Australia (by providers) and the US (through the OneStop, but also by local boards); and a significant amount of "discretion" is promised in the UK. Each government has identified some balances to local autonomy; in general through the definition of the services to be offered and the outcomes to be achieved. However, with respect to funding, the UK maintains some greater central control (the local bodies will have constraints on their discretion). Australia defines the amounts payable to providers for achieved outcomes. And each of the three governments have included provisions to guard against "creaming" by providers, including incentives to provide services to individuals who are most "at risk". The assumption is that the services required to achieve identifiable outcomes, and how those services could be organized and delivered - including how they are funded - must be a local decision. This is a significant change from past practices of governments and providers alike.[21]

The main documents cited outline the specific version which each of the governments has publicly offered as the expression of their vision. While some specific elements differ, these five elements are common to the goals they each want to achieve. Some additional detail can be seen from six characteristics of more integrated planning and delivery, which are the subject of the next section.

II.3 Characteristics of Integrated Service Planning and Delivery

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[20]The planning functions in Australia are not mandated at a national level. States do their own planning, partly because of the division of responsibilities and partly because of the separation of employment from training functions. While this may be relevant to Canada, it was extremely difficult to get other than very general information, particularly since the government reforms. However, it should be noted that there are state training boards responsible for the provision of training and further education, and for the integration of adult and community education. The responsibilities are somewhat confusing and seem to follow some historical separations; for example, community-based language and literacy programs are essentially separate from institutional programs (offered in schools and colleges) and both are separate from the national workplace-based program. One state maintains eleven different funded programs for language and literacy. However, greater regional/local integration may be occurring based on some recent state planning initiatives, as well as changes in the roles of the Area Consultative Committees and the mandate of a new Regional and Community Employment Councils.
[21]All three governments have tried to distance their new initiatives from past practice which granted a fixed amount of funding in each separate funded program, often based on the length of the program rather than the expected or achieved outcomes, or the specific services provided which may differ considerably for different clients. While there is some literature on the effectiveness of a variety of service delivery approaches in the US, there is little, as yet in the UK. Australia is undertaking a comprehensive review of their overall employment service changes including implementation, monitoring of outcomes, measuring service quality and effectiveness, though the final evaluation (including effectiveness report) is not due until 2001.[33]

If you want them to act like it's their business, make it their business.
James Belasco and Ralph Stayer, The Flight of the Buffalo, 1993 cited in [68]

(A) Employment and Training Services Focus on Customers, Not Programs

Every provider of goods or services, public or private, expresses their interest in serving their customers; taxpayer funded services, perhaps, all the more so. The difficulty expressed by many current governments has been in transforming a history of largely distinct and separate employment and training programs, which arose in response to particular needs, including competing programs funded by different levels of government, into a coherent system. The US. Secretary of Labor gave voice to this challenge[43], as did the British Minister of Education and Employment [20] and the Australian Secretary of State, whose statement of the intent of their reforms included to ensure that "labour market assistance will be client-driven, not program driven" and that previous arrangements "focused much of the attention inappropriately on placements in programmes rather than achievement of sustainable employment outcomes."[132]. The Minister went on to identify the principle in major reforms, noting:

> *Experience suggests that the existence of discrete programmes, each with its individual set of objectives and eligibility guidelines, prevents providers from having the flexibility and autonomy they need to reintegrate job seekers into the workforce most effectively. A pool of funds with which providers could purchase the required services on behalf of the eligible job seeker (up to a set financial level) should encourage them to carefully consider the individual barriers of each client and the most cost–effective method of overcoming them.[132]*

While commenting on a somewhat different approach, the extensive evaluation of the initial US OneStop implementation emphasized the problems resulting from trying to develop an integrated service delivery approach while still retaining "categorical" programs, and called for the elimination of separate funding streams in favour of a more integrated approach to meeting client needs. The evaluation also noted that "the transformation of workforce development systems from separate and discrete categorical programs into coherent seamless systems is occurring through an evolutionary process."[72]

This is neither a new challenge nor is it difficult to understand some of the challenges in realizing a truly customer-driven system. A principal problem is that adopting a stronger customer focus is said to require fundamental changes for both service providers and governments; namely, by defining "success" as the extent to which customers achieve their goals. As another study noted:

> *The One-Stop Career Center initiative redefines who the customer is; it holds firmly to the notion that those receiving the product or service are the customers of the system. In the workforce development and labor exchange system, job seekers and employers are the customers. ... Quality is determined by the extent to which their needs and expectations are met – not the requirements of funding sources nor the internal organizational needs of the government services and agencies, education and job training programs which serve them. ... In the absence of an alternative definition of quality (e.g., fulfilling customer needs and expectations), conformance to the needs and specifications of the funding source has defined success... The shift from defining quality as "conformance to organizational specifications" to "conformance to customer expectations" constitutes the paradigmatic shift that is the sine qua non of total quality management or continuous quality improvement.[52]*

The ability to effect a shift of this magnitude cannot be taken for granted since there continues to be an assumption on the part of many providers and government officials that separate "funded programs" continue to serve important purposes. This assumption may be at least part of the reason why, in each of the three other jurisdictions, the reforms which are under way have been the result of deliberate national initiatives; that is, they have clearly been "top-down"; perhaps because

service providers seek to please funders who, in turn, are protecting their individual funded programs.[22] The evaluations of the OneStop initiative also confirm the challenges experienced by individual providers - across a range of funded programs - which had difficulty collaborating in several areas (from co-locating services, to cross-training of staff, to sharing "credit" for client outcomes) when developing their partnerships. The final evaluation of initial efforts cited "organizational strains within and between OneStop partner agencies because they required substantial changes to the organizational cultures" which, in turn, limited the scope of attempts to integrate services.[72]

Defining the Customers of a More Integrated Service Delivery System

One of the initial needs of each of the reform efforts was to define who a more coherent system might serve. As noted, each of the jurisdictions began from the need to address the challenge of moving significant numbers of recipients from welfare to work. As will be noted in the next section, this resulted in defining different levels of service for individuals based on what they required in order to get a job.

However, the context for service definition, planning and delivery has shifted to address the fact that many clients have continued to have difficulty getting jobs (i.e. the harder-to-serve or those at risk of long term unemployment), as well as those who need "better jobs" in order to be self-supporting. These two groups have increasingly defined the nature and scope of the more complex and expensive services needed to meet their goals.

One result of the transition from a welfare-to-work to a broader workforce development orientation in other jurisdictions has been the inclusion of not only social assistance recipients (with emphasis on the harder to serve), but an interest in other low-wage workers as well. Since many incumbent workers are former recipients, customer service has sometimes taken the form of ensuring that they have long-term employment, if not "better jobs", and with increased emphasis on providing services to help individuals retain employment and support self-sufficiency.[116] For other low-wage workers, a customer focus has increasingly been concerned with supporting "lifelong learning", particularly workplace-based skills development, and often in the context of services to employers.[23]

For several reasons, the development of a strong customer orientation has included a concerted effort to meet the needs of local employers. First, the most basic service provided, job matching, has become increasingly important to many employers as the economy has grown and labour markets have tightened. The modernizing of these services to be more efficient has been an initial focus in each jurisdiction.[40,132]

Second, as private sector employers are the source of jobs for social assistance recipients, they are less likely to employ them if unsatisfied with the quality of services or, alternatively, unless they are provided with specific supports (such as wage subsidies or continued "post-placement" support). Employers, therefore, want the "job development" function of employment and training services to be efficient for them, in particular, by having a single point of contact.[98,132] As well, this has led to the extension of supports well into a client's employment, an important result of which has been more stable jobs for many participants; and the stability of employment has become part of the outcome measures used for employment and training services.[112,72,129,95,101] According to a September 1999 review of "early grantees" under the revised welfare-to-work program which allows for increased training, "over 85 percent plan to provide job retention services".[102; also 97, 132] In turn, employers have stated the benefits to them from post-program supports in the form of reduced

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[22]This may be especially true in times of economic growth when enrollment in specific programs may, in fact, decline.
[23]It may be interesting to note that the name of the most local (of several) planning bodies in the UK is formally the "Lifelong Learning Partnership", perhaps in part to signal the need to serve both recipients and incumbent workers through the coordination of training services.[26]

costs for entry level hiring and replacement, as well as increased worker satisfaction from job retention efforts.[112,86][24]

Third, the pressures for productivity increases, particularly from entry level workers, finds employers increasingly interested in working with providers to define the specific curriculum and delivery of some training programs; both basic skills and particular vocational skills.[103,112][25] A fourth and related interest of employers is in meeting their specific training needs (also in an interest to increase productivity and/or competitiveness) through contracting with particular training service providers in their communities - another reason why employers have been interested in participating in design and development of employment and training services and in reforming service delivery.[40,129,94][26]

Finally, the involvement of employers in the definition of services to meet their needs also serves to increase the legitimacy of service provision. To the extent that employers' needs can be satisfied, at the same time as those of individual clients, there would appear to be great benefit to their involvement, and their support is productive for everyone. However, employers may have less interest in the most intense (and expensive) services required by the hardest-to-serve clients since these clients are least likely to become employed quickly and limited funds cannot support their needs and also those of employers. There appears to have been some accommodation to this challenge in each of the jurisdictions through the development of clear criteria for some services; that is, to limit the numbers receiving the most expensive services, coupled with increasing the services available to provide more intense training directly in the workplace.

In sum, the design of customer services in each jurisdiction has explicitly considered the potential benefits to employers, and their involvement appears to have benefited the planning and delivery of integrated employment and training services.[77,112,90,101,12,112][27]

(B) Employment & Training Services Have Different Levels of "Intensity"

In order to meet the needs of individual clients, incumbent workers and employers, and to develop a more accessible and seamless system, each of the other jurisdictions has defined specific levels and kinds of services which are to be accessed on the basis of need. Australia may have the most sophisticated system for individual clients based on extensive client "profiling", a process which has been recognized by the OECD as the basis of "a coherent 'what and when' strategy."[48,49]

Specifically, each of these countries has defined three levels of services (the names for which vary and can be quite confusing). An initial level of service (the least intense) - often referred to as

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[24]A 1998 review of five employer focus groups reported their desire for "informal post-employment support", but also that their new employees had not received any such support from their programs. They were otherwise pleased with their involvement in welfare-to-work services.[112]

[25]In their 1999 Survey of Employer Views on Vocational Education and Training, the Australian National Training Authority reported that three quarters of employers who had hired recent trainees believe that "training pays for itself through increased worker productivity", but also that half of the employers who had not hired recent trainees felt that the training received "was not relevant to their industry."[89]

[26]For example, a 1998 National Governors Association Survey reported that all but two states have publicly-funded, customized training programs for specific firms or industries.[91] Another NGA document notes that the largest share of training expenditures goes to "generic skills and vocational and technical skills that are probably transferable to other employers. This suggests that these programs not only benefit the specific employer who is upgrading the skills of their workers, but potentially adds to the skill levels in a region."[90]

[27]Included in a summary of what New Jersey businesses want from an integrated system is the "primary goal: to find qualified employees quickly and cost-efficiently", and the related goals "to filter out unqualified candidates, certifying candidates as job-ready or job-skilled, a single point of contact with agencies, good service and timely follow-up, and personal contact with workforce staff."[109]

'core' services - largely involve "job matching" and other self-serve activities which can be effective for individuals who are "job ready" and unlikely to be at risk of long term unemployment. This is also one element of the first level of service available to employers. Since clients must access the services sequentially (i.e. you have to have the first level, before going to the second) the core services have become more comprehensive and, in the US., following the passage of the 1998 Workforce Investment Act, the core services *must* include:[28]

   • initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities and supportive service needs;
   • job search and placement assistance [limited]
   • labour market information
   • information on income support, as well as child care, transportation, or other "supportive services";
   • information about training providers including their cost and performance;
   • assistance establishing eligibility for specific programs, if needed
   • follow-up services, including counseling for not less than 12 months after someone becomes employed.

Included in Pennsylvania's core services are "access to computerized training to upgrade foundation skills", which is a self-serve activity and is not required at this level of service, and "resume preparation and dissemination to employers".

A second, more intense level of service is designed for people who may be job ready, but lack some of the skills to find and get jobs. These services *may* include:

   • comprehensive and specialized assessments
   • development of an individualized employment plan
   • group or individual counseling and career planning
   • case management for those seeking training services
   • short term job readiness activities (including some personal life skills and job search skills)
   • directed job search

Some states (e.g. Pennsylvania) also include at this level "short-term prevocational and stand- alone services, such as adult basic education, ESL, GED, basic computer literacy, interviewing skills , and soft skills"[66], though they are clearly intended to be distinct from how similar needs might be delivered when part of the most intense level.

A second tier of employer services include:

• job profiling
• group and individual counseling
• linkages to other employers with similar needs
• account management (including brokering with particular providers)
• individualized recruitment plans

Finally the third and most intense level of support (called "training" in the US) *may* include:

   • job readiness training (some states)

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[28]The description of services at each level is taken from several sources, but relies most on the March 1999 unified state plan for Pennsylvania[61] and an August 1999 synthesis prepared by Centre for Law and Social Policy[116]. The US services are used for example because they are more detailed at each level than those identified for the UK (New Deal programs) and Australia, where (as noted earlier) no specific services are defined, only the requirement that case managers (i) use whatever programs they need to help a person prepare to become employed and (ii) maintain contact to ensure stability for at least one year following employment. These themes seem to be comparable across jurisdictions. The initial US Dept. of Labor specifications indicated only "some follow-up to help customers keep their jobs"[45], though this seems to have been specified more recently in the requirement that employment outcomes are considered to be fully met after a year.

- entrepreneurial training
- on-the-job training
- programs that combine workplace training with related instruction (including co-op education)
- occupational/vocational training (including for non-traditional employment)
- adult education and literacy activities (provided they are delivered in combination with some other "training" service)

For employers, training services are simply identified as "incumbent worker training", "basic skills training" and "advanced skills training".

In each jurisdiction,

- the services at each level are to be universally available (through OneStop, Australia's Centrelink or Britain's Gateway); though in the US services at the two upper levels may vary by state;
- local discretion over delivery, however, means that different providers may be contracted as the initial point of contact (and there may be several in larger cities). Therefore, the principle of making active referrals is embodied in a requirement "that customers need to encounter 'no wrong door' when applying for services"[38];
- continuous case management, coupled with increased technology, allows continuous tracking of each client and the services they are receiving;
- neutral brokering (that is, those delivering core services are not referring to themselves);[29]
- a focus on successful employment outcomes, but with 'subsidiary' or 'secondary' training outcomes;
- information on the performance of training providers is publicly available to support
- customer choice (which exists if there are multiple providers of the same service)
- training (or other intense assistance in Australia) is available for selected individididuals for, initially, up to one year, but can be extended for another six months;
- job development, which is especially important for clients receiving the most intense services, is coordinated to meet the needs of employers, and is extremely useful in identifying opportunities for "better jobs" and for developing training targeted to those jobs.

In each jurisdiction, the criteria used to qualify for more intense services are a combination of employment experience (i.e. has not gotten a job from the previous level of service) and the client's profile (s/he is at risk of longer term unemployment).[30] There is a clear focus, particularly in Australia, on the third level "intense assistance", with priority given and clear financial incentives for providers to succeed in helping the hardest-to-serve to attain stable employment.[31] The Australian Job Seekers Classification Index (JSCI) includes both "objective" and "subjective" criteria to be used by front line workers, in addition to the length of unemployment.[67][32] In keeping with their commitment to achieve defined literacy targets, the UK. has recently decided to include a basic skills screening process for all those accessing their employment service programs.[85][33]

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[29]This "neutrality" is an important feature of the CAFA initiative in Eastern Ontario, and has inspired the confidence of referring agencies (Ontario Works and Employment Insurance) and providers, as well as individual clients and, most recently, particular employers. A full description of the initiative prepared for this project by Lucie Brunet is included as Part 3.

[30]However, the explicit objective of providing for "self-sufficiency" has been used in the US and Australia to qualify incumbent workers for supported training.[100] In addition, in determining allocations of the most intense/training services, the statute and guidelines in the US require that priority is given to "low income" individuals, defined as either on social assistance or working poor.[45,116]

[31]This commitment was part of the government's initial design and it includes payments of up to $10,000 for the "primary outcome" of stable employment (for those most at risk), compared to approximately $1,000 for those needing only "supported job search activities" to achieve the same outcomes.[132]

[32]A "case management referral interview" is used as a final check on both the JSCI and the initial worker's judgment.[48]

[33]In the UK., many of the services for long-term unemployed are still being worked out and the Minister has recently identified April 2001 as the date for more comprehensive services to be in place.[16]

All three jurisdictions make special provisions for services to youth. Though all of the services identified at each level are available, there are a number of special provisions aimed at increasing the educational attainment of unemployed youth and providing them with special training opportunities to help establish greater labour force attachment without invoking the penalties that exist for those over age 25. To help accomplish this, the US and UK have structured their local bodies to ensure a focused committee with responsibility for the design and delivery of services targeted to youth, particularly since it has been so very difficult to develop effective youth programs. As well, services to the disabled are not very well defined in all jurisdictions, though it is noted that many have significant barriers (including psychiatric, substance abuse, and learning disabilities) that make it unlikely that they will achieve independence, and they are not subject to the same sanctions if on assistance.

There is little question that each jurisdiction has designed their services in an attempt to provide a comprehensive answer to the "what and when" question; that is, each has tried to ensure that however the specific services are defined, those who need and are most likely to benefit are able to access the service. Combined with the penalties of the work-first orientation, common tracking, and clear incentives to provide services which support client attainment of specific outcomes (including the reporting of the performance of every provider), it would appear that this has reassured governments, job seekers, and providers that participants are not likely to be involved in on-going or open-ended training which may or may not be appropriate to their needs. The intent is to ensure that the most appropriate interventions will happen at the earliest possible point and that continuous case management, coupled with incentives to serve those with significant barriers, will ensure that individuals receive the level of support they require for the time they require, but will also emerge with clear results.

The kinds of initiatives which are emerging to integrate programming is the subject of the next characteristic.

(C) The Delivery of Employment & Training Services is Truly Integrated

Some Particular Kinds of Integrated Services

As noted in the discussion of challenges and context, there are some clear directions for more integrated programs based on demonstrably effective initiatives in several (US) communities. The two main directions cited earlier are (i) integrating supported job search, with literacy and basic skills development, and (ii) integrating literacy and basic skills development with specific vocational training. Two additional directions are offered, followed by some additional considerations.

The first direction is supported by a host of studies which demonstrate, for either job search-only or basic skills-only programs, that employment and earnings increases are neither significant nor sustainable, and particularly for harder-to-serve clients.[121,122,97,111,57,114,117]. The rationale for this form of integration is also found in the persistent comments of employers who have hired participants from "quick employment" services and who repeatedly reference the inadequacy of literacy and basic skills among these new hires.[132,112,79,127,94,60] To the extent that employer satisfaction is important in maintaining the effectiveness, if not the vitality, of welfare-to-work programs, it would seem useful to address this need.[34]

The second direction, integrating basic with vocational skills development, is an important direction in workplace development reforms.[129,97,115,90,95] Indeed, in its "unified" plan, Pennsylvania stated that "one of its (a new Interagency Coordinating Council) primary goals is to support the

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[34]It may also be noted that, in November 1999, the UK government announced that integration of job-search services with specific vocational training would be improved, as of 2001, particularly for the long-term unemployed.[69]

integration of literacy instruction and occupational skill training."[65]; and New Jersey stated that "it is essential to integrate literacy skills training with the skills needed to compete in the current and future labour markets."[11] Of particular note, a 1998 review of US work-first (and time-limited) policies (supported by the NIFL) concluded, somewhat matter-of-factly:

> *with the stakes as high as they are now for welfare recipients, providing them with only basic skills -- without integrating them with job skills and work experience -- would be considered by some as malpractice.[87]*

Finally, both these directions found support in requirements under recent (US) workforce development policies which require that, at the most intense level of service, literacy and basic skills development be offered only in conjunction with other training services.[45]

Among examples offered of new initiatives to address these findings are four emerging approaches to service delivery which have explicitly integrated programming: (i) for work-related basic education (in Cleveland, Texas, Oregon and Illinois); (ii) combining work-related basic skills with job training (Seattle, El Paso, Portland, Chicago); (iii) combining work-related basic skills with work experience (Washington, New York, Oklahoma and a national demonstration project); and (iv) integrating basic skills, vocational skills, and paid work (California, Ohio, and two national demonstration projects).[35]

If pre-employment training is one important form for this kind of integration, post-employment services are another and is the form increasingly suggested from experience and recent developments in the US. As outlined in the challenges and context, the movement of social assistance recipients to employment, coupled with concerns about productivity and competitiveness, have led to increased employer interest in workplace-based training, for both new and incumbent workers. As well, the effectiveness studies cited earlier suggest that reducing poverty for individuals and families is dependent on people getting better jobs. These interests have more recently come together in the form of the increasing use of welfare-to-work funding to support a variety of post-employment training.[102,129,57,86][36]

The specific type of training must obviously be planned and delivered through collaboration between a particular employer (or consortium of employers in the same community or industry), the community coordinating body (such as a OneStop service in the US or a Local Learning Partnership in the UK) and individual training providers. This set of relationships may appear complex, but seems to meet the needs of all parties; in particular, of employers whose needs can be assessed and the training brokered through a single access point, which is also required to provide information about the actual performance of all providers).[62,91,73] It is important to note that the intent of recent initiatives has explicitly been to help local areas "develop new models that creatively combine work with the development of basic and job-related skills", recognizing "both the needs of individual workers.. and the expectations of employers" and acknowledging that "education and training must be complemented with supportive social services." This 1999 review notes that the changes that allow post-employment training are consistent with the earlier work-first approach, as

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[35]Brief descriptions of these programs are found in Strawn 1998 [121]. As well, the Center for Employment Training (CET) has been evaluated as one of the more effective programs. It combines vocational with language and literacy skills development[129], and is frequently cited in the literature, including by the OECD, which identified it as "the only one of 13 JOBSTART programs which delivered statistically significant earnings gains for youth".[77]

[36]The specific provision to allow these efforts in the US states that training services can be used to assist with "self-sufficiency" or for others "in need of training".[45] Unfortunately, a 1999 survey of sixteen states by the National Governors Association reported that none had yet defined these terms.[100] However, one review noted that "the regulations establish the 'lower living standard income level' as the national minimum standard for self sufficiency", or approximately US$26,000 for a family of four.[116] States apparently have the right to adopt a higher cut off, though the statute makes clear that priority must be given to low-income individuals when training funds are limited.

well as with broader workforce development trends to upgrade skills and encourage lifelong learning and career development among incumbent workers.[129][37]

A final area for greater integration concerns several of the "support functions" which assist both employers and individual clients; in particular, the related services of job development and post-placement support. Both of these services relate specifically to the goal of having social assistance recipients secure stable, long-term employment. As noted earlier, this goal is clearly enunciated in each jurisdiction (rather than simply "any" job) and is supported by the use of job retention among required performance measures for both individual providers and the system as a whole. As well, how both services are delivered is also increasingly seen as important in maintaining the support of employers, which is a practical as well as political necessity.[112,101,95,127,86]

One of the important additions in both the US and Australia has been the use of "account representatives" to provide a single point of contact for employers, whether their particular needs are in job matching, needs analysis, post-placement support for individuals, etc.[72,63] By representing the range of service providers, these individuals are expected to refer or arrange the particular services through specific providers. Providing such services through the OneStop (Centrelink and Job Network in Australia) embodies the commitment to provide employers with integrated and easy access to a range of services, just as individuals are to have universal access.

As noted earlier, a 1999 review of some initiatives reported on funding under the revised welfare-to-work grants; and "according to a survey of early grantees , 85 percent plan to provide job retention services."; that funding had supported "intensive and ongoing case management to welfare-to-work participants at the workplace"; that "post-employment job retention services are also a routine part of most (of the new) grant programs"; and that the funding had assisted in coordination between job training and welfare systems at the state and local levels, "especially where there had been little historic coordination" through "local collaboration efforts".[129]

The main post-employment services now authorized are supports such as case management, individual counseling, problem solving between employers and new workers, providing additional supports (such as child care or transportation), as well as identifying skill needs or providing specific short-term skills training. These services are considered important to achieving successful employment outcomes by both employers and individuals. A related 1999 review summarizes the intent of this direction, noting that

> *within the constraints of Work First approaches that are at the heart of welfare-to-work programs, post-employment education and training services represent one potential avenue for individuals placed in low-paying jobs to transition gradually over time to higher-paying, career type jobs.[102]*

A "Cultural" Dimension of Integrated Delivery

If delivering some services in a more integrated fashion defines one characteristic of the new approaches being implemented in other jurisdictions, the development of a new "culture" is surely another, related characteristic. While difficult to define, the shift from a "program" to a "customer" orientation is a key feature, as noted above. There are several barriers to moving toward this different approach. Historical divisions among funded programs and among agencies, as well as between providers and funders, and between agencies and employers, all make it difficult to ensure that a coherent system will, in fact, develop. While there are examples in many communities of productive and supportive partnerships, the changes of the past few years have been

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[37]The authors also note that one benefit of post-employment training may be the ability to ladder to post-secondary training which has a proven relationship to better jobs; and they note that "simply obtaining a GED without subsequent training or education has little effect on lifetime earnings or employment" and that "the GED should not be promoted as an end in itself."[129]

intended to make these relationships the rule, rather than the exception. Achieving this goal is acknowledged to be neither easy nor simple.

For example, as noted above, in their evaluation of the initial OneStop implementation, the authors noted "organizational strains" among providers from the need for "substantial changes to the organizational cultures of participating agencies".[72] They also concluded that the continuation of "categorical funding streams, each with its own mandated targeted population, eligibility criteria, reporting requirements and performance standards" was a "significant barrier" to achieving substantial integrated delivery.[72] (This particular challenge was addressed through the subsequent Workforce Investment Act which identified required partners, as well as consolidating most, but not all, funded programs under a new structure.)

One of the results of the challenge of different cultures identified in early implementation was to adopt a focus on those services which might be more easily integrated. In particular, it was apparently felt by many agencies that their 'core' services would be left more intact if collaboration focused on such elements as information, assessment and referral, as well as tracking and follow-up. These services also were important elements in the implementation of the early promise of universal access through a "single door". Focusing on the front-end services also provided some opportunity for co-location and cross-training of staff, both of which led to initial success in several locations.[71][38] The evaluation report on early implementation also noted the limited ability to move beyond some of these initial collaborations in the absence of greater policy coordination at both the federal and state levels.

The experiences in other jurisdictions also offer support for the practical need to adopt a unique culture, not wedded to the histories of individual agencies or funders. In particular, each jurisdiction tried to embody the intent of a new approach by creating new structures or encouraging their creation. For example, the statutory agencies in each jurisdiction are not only a response to government desires to divest itself of delivery responsibilities, they are also an attempt to ensure that a new service would, by design, ensure that new partnerships emerged. Similarly, as will be outlined below, the governing and funding structures were purposefully designed to encourage broad and inclusive partnerships. The mandates of each initiative clearly reflect this intent. For the US it takes the forms of local Workforce Investment Boards and OneStop collaborations; for the UK, Local Learning and Skills Councils and Local Learning Partnerships provide the focus; in Australia, the Job Networks reflect a similar, but not identical, mandate.[45,20,132]

Both the UK and US experiences have identified the challenge of developing effective local partnerships as a major "system-building" goal of their initiatives. The Local Learning Partnerships and the "Learning Towns and Cities" initiatives have tried to provide some guidance on possible approaches in the UK. In the US, the Department of Labour commissioned a "Guide for Practitioners" with examples of different strategies to achieve their system-building goals.[71] Among the possible approaches identified with respect to inclusion, the guide suggests the possibility of (i) building on historical partnerships; (ii) identifying a limited number of core partners, (iii) including all Dept. of Labor funded programs, and (iv) including all workforce development programs. Similarly, with respect to related "management", they offer several examples of different ways to get started including creating (i) a new advisory or governing board for the full range of services, (ii) centres or networks with a single, integrated management, and/or (iii) interagency operations teams for coordinating each shared function.[71] Each of the examples provided suggests that the very structure which needed to be created (OneStop service centres in the US; local "councils" and "partnerships" - with explicit mandates - in the UK) ensured at least a

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[38]It may be important to note the relationship between these initiatives and those in, for example, London-Middlesex (reported in Part IV) and Eastern Ontario (reported in Part III). This characteristic also informs some particular suggestions to other communities reported in both the London-Middlesex discussion and the "synthesis" provided in Part V of this report.

minimum level of collaboration; and, in each case, the respective governments provided the opportunity and support for communities to find their own forms and processes, including funding and a reasonable time frame: three years in the case of OneStop implementation which, in turn, formed the basis for more extensive workforce development initiatives.

In several instances, the form adopted included the development of a "new" agency or provider at least in part to create what might be termed "a culture which no one owns"; that is, one in which the responsibilities and focus would clearly be on the new, integrated service delivery, rather than past allegiances to either former agencies or former funded programs. Examples include not only the new "access points", though these are central to the governments' visions and the day-to-day functioning of first integrating accessibility to the different types of services. Other examples include the development of a "consortium" of agencies, or a new provider, to consolidate job development services across similar agencies and the development of work teams to negotiate common performance measures with state and national funders.[39]

The consortium approach seems to be favoured in some jurisdictions as a way of organizing the needs of more than one employer in a region.[91,62] As well, California was reported to be funding a three-year pilot of five "regional collaboratives" to demonstrate an alternative approach to integrating service delivery with economic development.[91] Among other examples of consortia cited are the SouthBay Employability Center and San Diego Workforce Partnership and the services delivered through the Chicago Commons (a private, non-profit organization which coordinates the pooling of resources and services across several different public and private agencies); the Tulsa IndEx program (an arm of the Chamber of Commerce), the Columbus HOST program (a partnership between Ohio's education, welfare, and development agencies, local public schools and county welfare agency, and a consortium of employers in the hotel and motel industry), and the New York EDGE program (which is a state-administered "consortium" integrating programs from four state departments).[87,121]

It is impossible to conclude whether these or other initiatives have, in fact, created "a culture which no one owns". However, a strong client focus, coupled with an interagency work group with a vision and mandate to create a "new" service (even if "reconfigured" from past agency efforts) may help achieve this result. What separates all of these attempts from much historical practice is that a new culture is, in fact, an explicitly desired outcome. In the other jurisdictions, it is an important lesson; that is, in the community there must be a recognition, acceptance, embracing of a need and requirement to create something new. If, as suggested, historical practice has not been either effective or efficient in meeting the variety of goals, the profound shift which has begun in these jurisdiction is likely to make at least some difference.

How communities can demonstrate the extent of the differences is the subject of the next characteristic of more integrated planning and delivery.

(D) The Community is Accountable for Delivering Quality E&T Services

The major challenge is to convert existing fragmented programs into mission-driven systems for delivering services that meet customer needs and demands. A common performance management framework promotes this system orientation among diverse programs and creates a common policy environment for them. As the programs connect and blend their resources and activities, they become more concerned about how they contribute to achieving system goals. Performance

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[39]In Australia, these reforms and guidance were initiated at the state, rather than national, level[2] and reflect the Governments principles that providers would determine the mix of services appropriate for the client and that contracts would be awarded based on competitive bids.[132] This is in contrast to both the US and UK approaches which stressed the development of integrated community plans.

management becomes the wheelhouse for steering the delivery system toward accomplishing goals set for the system. US. National Governors Assn.[92]

Most of our programs are lousy! They were dreamed up quickly to give the Minister some good news to announce at a time when unemployment is rising. We do not want evaluations revealing to the general public how bad our programs are; we know this already!
An explanation offered for the lack of evaluations of employment and training programs in Europe; cited in Martin[77].

In the visions expressed for their integrated employment and training systems, each of the other jurisdictions made clear that their respective efforts needed to increase the quality and effectiveness of services and, therefore, that demonstrable results would be required for the considerable expenditure of public funding. Increased accountability is an explicit goal of reforms in each jurisdiction, a shift in orientation to be achieved by

placing a special emphasis on the area of program performance. This includes a focus on outcomes rather than inputs; results rather than process; and continuous improvement rather than management control. The performance provisions contained in the (Workforce Investment) Act reflect this emphasis and provide increased flexibility in service delivery in exchange for increased accountability for results.[43]

While the specific approaches vary, several common features are evident in the requirements.

(i) common performance measures across all funded programs;
(ii) customer satisfaction measures from both individual clients and employers;
(iii) an emphasis on service improvement (including performance targets, financial incentives and penalties);
(iv) reporting of results for individual providers and the system as a whole;
(v) certification of providers

Common performance measures, regardless of provider, focus on the attainment of "sustainable employment outcomes"; in particular, retention in unsubsidized employment for at least six months, if not a year. In addition, recognized outcomes may also include either placement in a full-time training program (Australia[132]) or attainment of academic or vocational credentials or other measures of skills attained (US[43]). It is assumed that all providers and individual clients are working toward these goals and demonstrating these results is a crucial measure of performance of an integrated system.[40]

 The specific measures to be used in the US and UK are negotiated between each community, the state or region, and the federal government. In Australia, these measures are defined centrally. The desired result in each jurisdiction is a comparable set of measures the data for which, for the most part, are to be collected through an integrated information system, rather than by individual providers. Thus, a single reporting system is encouraged, if not assumed, and is one of the benefits of combining benefits and employment service functions (that is, integrating the databases that would be able to give tracking information including information on employment and wages).

The training and skills attainment measures are somewhat more difficult to specify. In Australia and the UK, there are standard levels defined as part of current reporting systems for adults, particular for literacy and numeracy and secondary school levels. In addition, as part of its reforms, the UK undertook to develop a new "qualifications" scheme (through the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority).[20] Alternatively, in New Jersey, achievement is measured against GED or

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[40]The 'core' indicators identified in the US are identified as "placement (in unsubsidized employment), retention, earnings, and skill attainment" and, for youth, "basic skills attainment and, as appropriate, occupational skills, high school diplomas, and placement and retention in postsecondary education, advanced training or employment."[45]

other credentials, completion of vocational and technical programs, as well as attainment on particular assessment instruments related to literacy and vocational proficiency.[120]

As noted earlier, customer satisfaction data is identified in each jurisdiction as an important indicator of the extent to which both individuals and employers have had their needs met. While employment and income outcomes can be tracked administratively, customer satisfaction measures involve more options for individual providers, and OneStop and Job Network providers might collect such information for their respective partners.[41]

The initiatives also assume that customer satisfaction is part of every provider's commitment to service improvement and an indicator of "high performance organizations". Indeed, the US requires that this information be used as part of a continuous improvement process which would ensure that the system as a whole (including all individual providers) "aligns resources to meet and then exceed shared goals."[44,42] As of April 1998, approximately half the states surveyed had customer improvement processes in place, even prior to the new Act[91]. By August 1999, fifteen of seventeen states which had submitted unified plans had statewide quality improvement processes in place, eleven of which were described as "comprehensive... capacity building strategies."[100] The Connecticut Employment and Training Commission[96] identified a five-step process for service improvement:

• measurement and reporting of performance;
• analysis of data and identification of improvement goals;
• determination of causes of weak performance;
• design of corrective strategies; and
• implementation of corrective strategies.

While continuous improvement requirements may operate at the level of individual agencies, the data used (i.e. performance and customer satisfaction measures) are common to all providers.

The public reporting of performance results is considered an important part of accountability for several reasons. First, achieving one of the goals of the new approach - greater customer choice - requires information, the most important of which is assumed to be the performance of individual providers. Together with other information available to consumers (e.g. on services and supports provided, costs, satisfaction), the effectiveness of different providers in achieving outcomes relevant to the client is clearly important information for decision-making.

Second, specific performance data is also important information for the decisions of government funders. For example, Australia's funding process perhaps goes furthest by directly tying funding of providers to the attainment of particular outcomes; for "primary" outcomes (which include retention in full time employment), providers are paid at a very different rate than for "secondary" outcomes (which include part-time employment or enrollment in most education or training programs, though some secondary outcomes are paid at the primary rate under certain circumstances); and the payments also vary depending on the difficulties of the individual client[132][42]

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[41]One of the findings from the evaluation of the initial OneStop implementation was the need to ensure that customer satisfaction measures were implemented across funded programs and addressed all OneStop goals.[71] More recent policy directives support this direction; for example, Pennsylvania's Unified Plan suggests that customer satisfaction data will be the responsibility of the local CentreLink (their OneStop) and is being designed through a state-wide task force which was to be established in April 1999.[66] As well, the state intends to integrate the main performance measures, both employment (or training) and customer satisfaction, into a unified data base.[62] The North Carolina Commission on Workforce Preparedness, through their OneStop implementation, is specifically cited for work on the development of a customer satisfaction methodology.[73]

[42]The Australian government recently announced the second round of grants under the current system and, in particular, noted the ineffectiveness of some intensive service providers which resulted in their contracts not being renewed, but rather offered to others in the hope of more effective service provision. One such provider, however, was granted additional contracts to deliver other, less intense, services based on quite good performance.[80]

Third, public reporting meets an important planning need, in that providers (and funders) involved in determining the nature and levels of demand for different services, and the need to develop new forms of delivery, must rely on actual data to make such decisions. Both the US and UK planning systems are predicated on having accurate information at the local and regional levels.[20,41] The information may also assist in evaluating the "coverage" of services; that is, the extent to which access was universal or appropriately targeted. A guide for work-first programs notes that "by measuring coverage, rather than participation, you focus attention on those individuals who are left unserved by the program... This protects against creaming."[8][43] As well, the priority-setting and decision-making processes outlined in the new approaches assume, if not require, an open process which, in turn, requires this information.

The final reason why performance information needs to be made public is its use as part of a certification process for individual providers. Partly to support customer choice and partly to ensure quality provision, the certification of providers is seen as an important vehicle to improve the effectiveness of service delivery. In the US, the requirement for certification of individual providers is just beginning to be developed, and is a responsibility is explicitly part of state requirements. In the UK, there is a longer history which includes an extensive "inspectorate" system, the inadequacies in which resulted in the government's decision to establish a new system (including a new inspectorate and an unspecified "audit" system) as part of their comprehensive attempts to raise quality and performance.[20] In Australia, certification is a State responsibility.[44]

An additional element of accountability common to these jurisdictions is the setting of performance targets. Some of these targets are broad and national, for example the literacy and basic skills goals in the UK[20], and to which each local community is expected to contribute; while others targets are to be set locally based on demand. New Jersey's unified plan makes reference to specific targets for attainments in literacy and basic skills (including ESL), as do the plans of several other states.[120]

Several observations concerning accountability may be useful in understanding the approaches adopted by these other jurisdictions. First, the Australian government has clearly avoided possible intrusion into state matters by not commenting on the design or delivery of specific services, nor have they specified planning parameters or detailed measures as has been done in the US and UK. They simply hold the individual contractor responsible for the attainment of outcomes. The effect of performance measures in the UK is not yet clear, given that some of their reforms are only in the piloting stage.

Second, the focus on outcomes and satisfaction measures is indeed a radical departure from previous service delivery; however, it implies that both satisfaction and results are (a) able to be controlled by the provider and (b) good measures of the quality of human services. It is, of course, possible that external factors play a significant role in employment outcomes (e.g. the state of the economy, firm-specific policies), and/or in educational attainments (e.g. individual or institutional limitations, enrollment ceilings, costs, delivery constraints). Similarly, it may be possible that particular elements of a quality program are not "satisfying" to particular clients, either individuals or employers. The measures adopted to date may be too limited to capture many important dimensions.

A third and related observation is that, to the extent that services are delivered by integrating providers, unless a "new" organization is responsible (e.g. consortium or other clearly identifiable alliance) it may be difficult to sort out the effects of one provider from another. This may not be important for

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[43]The problem of creaming is important and a result which all jurisdictions seek to avoid. As noted, Australia has provided specific financial incentives which provide considerably larger payments for achieving the same outcomes (either employment or training) for those requiring more intense assistance (three times the rate for 'easier' clients) and particularly those most at risk (fully ten times greater)[132].

[44]It is hard to reconcile the notion of certifying providers - clearly an "input" - with the outcome focus of other measures. However, to the extent that certification is a "consumer protection" provision it may be said to support the overall goals of service reform with a customer focus.

the purposes of service improvement, but would be for public reporting of the performance of individual providers. As well, in each jurisdiction, services to some groups remained deliberately separate (though only for some services). In particular, services for youth involved both some different outcomes, some different measures, and focused planning and delivery processes.

Fourth, it is clear that a significant level of support is required to efficiently realize the kind of accountability required; in particular, a single reporting and tracking system. This is no small task. An August 1999 inventory of features contained in the plans of sixteen states indicates that only eight has as yet developed a common data system.[100] Yet such as system is crucial. A recent review of methodologies noted, "using administrative data is often more cost effective than conducting surveys or home visits, and these data provide a more accurate source for the information included in follow-up databases."[99] Evidence from a recent study of attempts to create such a system in several states suggested that comparability and compatibility on different measures was proving difficult to establish.[93] The review of methodologies noted that mail surveys have a response rate of less than 30%; telephone surveys, between 60% and 70%, and visitation typically yields over 70%, though at about four times the cost of telephone surveys; and also noted that administrative data may need to be gathered from several databases.[99][45] So while a common, shared or fully administrative tracking and reporting system may be desirable, it may be difficult to implement.

Finally, and given the above, additional processes may be needed to gain the depth and breadth of information needed for program improvement. In particular, the core measures required to date do not provide the detail needed to understand, for example, the relative effectiveness of different curriculum components, particular approaches to delivery, or their relevance to either clients or the employers they may encounter. While satisfaction measures may help, they are likely to be insufficient to address specific service improvement questions.

A final element of approaches to accountability for more integrated delivery is the openness of an integrated planning and decision-making process itself, which is outlined as part of the next characteristic. It is one of the vehicles through which the trade-off cited at the beginning of this characteristic is realized; that is, increased flexibility at the local level to integrate the design and delivery of services in exchange for greater accountability for service performance.

(E) Employment & Training Services are Designed and Delivered Locally

The whole system must be driven from the bottom-up.
"Learning to Succeed"; British Government White Paper on Post-16 Education and Training,
 [20: para 3.27]

A centralized approach will not work. Communities need to be empowered to decide for themselves on how their training needs... can best be met.
David Kemp, Minister of Employment, Education and Youth Affairs; Commonwealth of Australia[83]

As noted above, if greater accountability was one side of the trade-off that each government sought, the other was to reduce (if not eliminate) government's role as a provider of employment and training services. To carry out this shift while maintaining overall responsibility, it has been necessary for government to establish the policy framework and clear guidelines under which

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[45]Response rates for telephone surveys of less than 50% may be more common than suggested. According to a May 1999 review, only 11 studies could be included with response rates over 50% and only one of nine which used such surveys had sample sizes over 1,000; compared to two of four which used administrative data and included more than 18,000 individuals.[7]

service planning and delivery would take place. Both the US and UK have done so, to varying degrees and their approaches are informative.

Part of the context which led to the specific provisions of the Workforce Investment Act (1998) was the experience of early implementation of the OneStop centres. As noted, the continuation of distinct categorical programs was understood to be a major obstacle to more integrated planning and delivery, the adoption of common performance measures, and the realization of a coherent, responsive, customer-focused system of services.[72] Central to the emerging approach was the need for more local decision-making and the definition of roles for the principal partners.

First, in attempting to meet the main objective of sustainable employment outcomes, local employers would need to be included far more directly; for placement itself, as well as to ensure that participants were equipped to meet the skill demands of particular jobs and to address the particular development needs of their specific workforce. Therefore, the involvement of specific employers was incorporated into the needs analysis, priority-setting, and (in some cases) actual re-design of services.

Second, providers would clearly need to play a central role in any re-design to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of service organization and delivery. An additional pressure for agency involvement came from the fact that many of the separate programs under which they had received funding were either drastically curtailed or eliminated altogether. As with employers, providers shared a sense of urgency about their involvement in planning the developing integrated system.

Third, while their roles would be considerably different, governments - specifically program managers - also needed to be involved. Since one of the goals of changing approaches was to simplify the system at all levels, managers at the state and local levels were important to specific tasks required for coherence such as (i) providing planning guidance (e.g. defining service areas; mechanisms to ensure appropriate membership, responsibilities and accountability; types of service integration; and administrative relationships); (ii) negotiating and designing specific measures to meet statutory requirements; (iii) developing the detailed information systems and requirements to gather the information; (iv) designing and implementing a system for the certification of service providers and dissemination of performance results; (v) establishing targets (where necessary) and a service improvement process; and (vi) supporting the local implementation of each of the elements. Devolution, coupled with a significant change in the orientation of services, clearly requires considerable effort.

While these may be important reasons for involvement of key groups in each jurisdiction, the specific forms and mechanisms for a new orientation had a distinct trajectory. In the US, several factors were identified as contributing to the development of the effective OneStop centres including a strong history of collaboration among local programs and partners prior to implementation; clear state guidelines which provide local partners with "substantial discretion" to tailor systems to meet local needs; "continued active involvement of state and local planning partners in ongoing planning and oversight" of the evolving system; "the involvement of direct service staff from participating agencies in the planning ... consolidated services over an extended period"; and "careful attention to the capacity building needs of ... managers and local staff to help them prepare to deliver integrated customer services."[46]

In addition, the evaluation offered a number of challenges which appear to have been considered in the subsequent legislation, regulations and guidelines; in particular, the potential benefits of reducing the number of categorical programs "each with its own mandated target populations, eligibility criteria, reporting requirements, and performance standards"; the challenge of declining resources relative to new responsibilities; how to include special populations (e.g. youth, individual with disabilities) in services redesigned to provide universal access; the challenge of expanding

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[46]These are five of eight factors cited in the evaluation of early implementation.[72]

services to employers; and what structures and processes to develop to ensure participation and partnerships.

The orientation which resulted in the US attempts to balance policy with operational concerns through several specific features:

(a) Responsibility for the design and delivery of integrated services is devolved to the states, including accountability for results (e.g. performance measures, customer satisfaction and continuous improvement). However, in practice, the specific functions, including funding allocations to providers for particular services, are explicitly local. (The chief local elected official is formally designated as responsible for the receipt and distribution of both federal and state funding.)

(b) The functions are coordinated in two ways. First, states have responsibility to "negotiate" the specific elements with the federal government (e.g. performance and satisfaction measures, improvement systems, criteria for certifying providers and processes for reporting performance results). Second, the functions in each local area (the geographic areas are defined by the states) are the responsibility of a local "workforce improvement board". While the members are appointed by the "chief local elected official", a majority of members must be local employers. The Board, in turn, oversees the OneStop services, and has a contractual relationship with each of twelve required partners (which are program areas, such as welfare-to work, adult education, vocational rehabilitation, unemployment insurance, etc.) and with each provider.[47]

(c) Each state has a similar Board which includes the elected officials who oversee each local board, and is responsible for the overall parameters of the system including performance targets, measures, and improvement processes. The state can submit a "unified plan" or each area can submit their own. However, the Act explicitly states that local boards "must develop processes for local planning and assessment to improve ... performance in a way that is consistent with the state vision and goals... (and) both boards take responsibility for ... how to best organize the service system, ... deploy resources, ... achieve desired results and build capacity for continuous improvement." The state board is expected to increase each local board's capacity, and local boards are expected to support providers abilities to achieve results "at the front line with job seeker and employer customers. To do so, local Boards will need significant flexibility to determine what services to make available, how to deliver them, and how to effectively engage local employers."[41]

There is considerable evidence that the new Act was seen to be a natural evolution from the earlier developments of OneStop centres, and these centres were still to be the central and defining feature of integrated service planning and delivery[43,41,44]. In addition, some of the main functions were being developed in a large number of states prior to the new legislation. For example, an April 1998 National Governors Association report noted that more than three-quarters of states had already formed state-wide councils, fully a quarter had local or regional boards, more than half were developing system-wide performance measures, nearly half had initiated "quality management or continuous improvement practices", and several were developing "report cards for organizations that provide training"; all of which are initiatives that, perhaps, anticipated the Act's likely requirements.[91] Similarly, a 1997 document reports on several challenges and approaches to involving employers which became a major element in the subsequent Act.[94] With respect to planning, it is clear that several states had developed mechanisms which they viewed as essentially appropriate for the new requirements including local industry councils established under the former Job Training Partnership Act. However, several states also had broad-based planning bodies at a local level; for example,

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[47]Another document[44] specifies nineteen required and five optional partners. The Act also requires that, for some programs, "funding remains distinct" though services must be "seamless to customers". The document also suggests that an integrated "client/management/financial information system" is the responsibility of the OneStop centre, rather than the local board. However, in practice, this is an element developed by the state in conjunction with local areas.

the Local Collaborative Planning Team (LCPT) has been an integral part of the development of the job center system in Wisconsin (and) under WIA ... we encourage an "LCPT type" system to be maintained although aspects of what the existing LCPTs do may be taken on by the (Workforce Development Boards). The LCPT structure ensures ongoing functions such as coordination, information sharing, and decisions about many of the details of how partner agencies operate within the One-Stop delivery system.[37]

In short, (i) the federal requirements on states cannot be achieved with out the participation of local areas, (ii) the local areas benefit from state support for common tasks, (iii) local areas must do the actual planning -- and most of the funding -- of integrated service delivery, and they can do it almost any way they choose (subject to the common tasks such as performance measures, reporting, certification of providers, etc. which are mostly being done at the state level), and (iv) development of these elements is taking place over nearly two years (and this after initial OneStop implementation) and with the support of considerable resources at the state and federal levels; both funding and guidance.[48]

The UK is in their initial stages of policy development and early implementation following the Minister's announcement in the June 1999 budget; however, several features are noteworthy which are largely consistent with the approach adopted in the US.

First, the government clearly sought to devolve planning, funding and performance responsibilities while ensuring the integration of programs. To achieve this, a national Learning and Skills Council is to be established with broad planning and funding powers. However, the initiative attempts a balance by having the national council responsible for broad targets and a new funding formula, and several coordinating responsibilities; while Local Learning and Skills Councils appear to have considerable autonomy in exercising their responsibilities for planning, funding, and integrating actual service delivery. For example, the "white paper" states that "funding should follow individuals and employers and the wider community should decide the mix of opportunities which are made available."[20] As well, the statement offers that "local learning and skills councils will need sufficient discretion to secure the right balance and mix" of education and training services for their communities. To ensure integration across funded programs, the local plans "will take into account all the public funding available for post-16 education and training within their areas." In addition, discretionary funding is specifically identified as important in attracting "high quality candidates to serve on (local councils), particularly from the business community."[20][49]

Second, since the "local" councils are regional (47 are being established), over 100 Local Lifelong Learning Partnerships are likely to do the actual work of assessing needs, defining priorities, developing and delivering integrated programming to meet the priorities, and evaluating - and improving - the results. "The whole system must be driven from the bottom-up", the government wrote, articulating a similar understanding of the Local Learning Partnerships that federal and state guidelines offered for local planning in the US; namely, "their strength is their detailed knowledge

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[48]The unified plans cited earlier are merely the first to be submitted. The final regulations are to be published in December 1999, final plans in April and implementation beginning in July 2000, nearly two years after the Act was passed. Release of the considerable funds is contingent on approval of the five-year plan. The Pennsylvania documents cited are examples of state planning activities.[61 - 66] Also, Pennsylvania is an example of how the implementation of several state responsibilities (e.g. decisions on specific measures, defining services) has been achieved through task forces which include local program administrators.

[49]In addition, there are funds to be included at the local or regional level from the European Social Fund and from the Single Regeneration Budget - which are economic development budgets with some intentional relationship to education and employment, and which identified improved learning performance among the priorities, particularly basic skills for adults.[55] As noted earlier, the government committed itself to approximately $40B of new spending. As well, they specifically indicated that funding would "take into account the extra costs of meeting the needs of the most vulnerable", similar in intent to the Australian provisions for funding services to those most at risk. A specific mention is also made of those who lack basic skills.[20]

of their area, of the local labour market and of the causes and social conditions which underlie the extent of participation in education and training."[20]

Third, the local skills councils and local learning partnerships require many specific partners, identified by the government, including the same types of services mandated for inclusion in the US (e.g. career services, further education sector, local education authorities, trades and education councils), and many others are suggested (e.g. youth services, employment services and other statutory agencies).[26] Australia has some similar structures at the local level, though with more limited expectations. In particular, through their welfare-to-work initiative, the government was to establish new Regional and Community Employment Councils which would build on the national network of Area Consultative Committees, "while addressing a number of (unspecified) weaknesses in the current ACC arrangements."[132] The ACCs in Australia had a mandate quite similar to the local learning partnerships in the UK.[50]

Fourth, as with the local Workforce Investment Boards, the local Lifelong Learning Partnerships (in conjunction with the Single Regeneration Budgets) have a mandate to contribute to community economic develop "through regeneration, capacity building and community development. Learning Partnerships will add real value by developing more coherent learning provision to meet the needs of young people and adults, and the skill requirements of employers."[26]

Fifth, among practical responsibilities, the partnerships will develop an integrated plan including targets and how they will be achieved, resources required, an integrated "information, advice and guidance" system, and recommendations (to the local Learning and Skills Council) for funding specific services.

Sixth, as in the US, the system envisioned in the UK provides for public certification of providers and public information on the performance of providers, though certification will likely be done at the national level through the revised "inspectorate" system which will also provide advice to the Learning and Skills Council "which enable it to make accurate judgments about the performance of individual providers and elements of their programs."[20][51]

There are, as well, several important differences between the two approaches, most of which reflect their different histories and cultures. First, the initiative in the UK is based on their intent to reform the whole of "post-16" education and training; that is, many of the specific components are not directly a result of reforms to social assistance (i.e. their "new deal" programs), but are understood to be important to achieving the welfare reforms in that eligibility for education and training is explicitly defined as part of the reforms.

Second, the initiatives are very much oriented to specific national numeric targets for skills attainment, particularly literacy and basic skills. While some US states have defined such targets (e.g. New Jersey), others have not. The national targets in the UK, however, reflect their

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[50]It is unclear in what areas the two bodies will differ. ACC "core functions" involved "provid(ing) advice and feedback to Ministers and Departments on employment and training needs in the region (and) the impact of Commonwealth policies and programs on the regional labour market"; and, specifically, "to develop and implement a three year strategic plan to address regional priorities for growth" (and specifically employment) and to "provide support for the effective operation of the Job Network" (the regional service providers) and to "promote and facilitate" other initiatives including work-to-welfare, new apprenticeships, etc.[5] As with the UK local learning partnerships and the local workforce improvement boards in the US, "the specific priorities and actual operations of ACCs may vary widely, reflecting the differing nature and needs of specific regions", though ACCs are recognized (through a "charter"), as well as funded directly, through a memorandum of understanding among three ministries.[4]

[51]There is a clear view that "over time, the Council will move to a position where it only funds learning where providers effectively meet expectations and fulfill the responsibilities" identified with good practice, including requirements for service improvement identified by the inspectorate.[20] It is not yet clear, however, if there will be reporting of specific performance results for individual providers, thought it would seem difficult to avoid this given the stated aims and other elements of the UK reforms.

understanding of the ineffectiveness of the current system in meeting the needs of individuals or employers. As cited above, their understanding of the productivity "gap" between the UK and other advanced economies includes the contribution to that gap of comparatively poor literacy and basic skills, a lack of sufficient and appropriate vocational skills, and a general lack of relationship between employment needs and education and training programs.[52]

Third, the UK has a long history of various kinds of national "intermediary" bodies; for standards setting, for program accreditation, and for learner certification. Initiatives such as a revised adult education "inspectorate", mandatory training and certification for literacy and basic skills instructors, and development of new national standards under the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority are extensions of historical processes. Australia shares this orientation to "centralized" curriculum and standards as evidenced in recent initiatives including the development of national "training packages", a National Reporting System; Awards (wage) Restructuring, and the Modern Apprenticeship and Traineeship System. By contrast, curriculum in the US is largely a local matter.

Finally, where the US provisions ensure that funds flow to states and, more importantly, local communities (once plans are approved and performance measures negotiated), funding for the delivery of services under the British reforms will remain the responsibility of the Department for Employment and Education on recommendation of the Councils and Partnerships, though there are some services where actual funding is likely to be determined by the Learning and Skills Council (which is also responsible for the design of a new funding formula). In other words, local bodies may have somewhat less control of funding.

To summarize, from the initiatives undertaken in the US, UK and, in a somewhat different manner, Australia, there appears to be a clear consensus among central governments that

(a) the only way to integrate employment and training services is to do so locally;
(b) local responsibility is consistent with government no longer being a direct service provider, though it has important implications; in particular, that more senior levels of government must, in fact, relinquish important control in exchange for greater accountability;[53]
(c) devolving responsibility requires a statement of expected outcomes (e.g. local and state or regional plans) developed by local bodies, with specific provisions to integrate services by local providers;
(d) funding has to follow local needs, by either explicitly requiring decisions on funding to be local (Australia US, though in very different forms) or through significant local discretionary authority (UK);
(e) an effective local system requires considerable support including funding, guidance and resources, and the time to use them in a locally-responsive and appropriate design; there are

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[52]Given what is outlined in the "challenges and context" section above, the emphasis on literacy and basic skills development in the UK may be simply a difference in emphasis with the US, given the many US studies cited which note the extent of need and importance of literacy services. As with the UK, there are examples of states such as New Jersey and Pennsylvania which have explicitly identified literacy as a priority of their workforce development efforts.
[53]Some would suggest that, given the inefficiencies and questionable effectiveness of prior policies, the results from greater local control - with safeguards - could only improve. The numerous studies cited above would appear to support this view. However, the experiences from other jurisdictions suggest that defining the safeguards is a difficult task; and it is in this area that the three jurisdictions seem to differ most. Australia has adopted an approach based on sanctioning providers if they fail to produce results and has recently (December 1999) made specific funding allocations which reflect this approach.[80] The UK, while granting significant discretionary spending authority to local groups, has left some provisions vague enough to maintain some national control (through the yet to be determined funding formula). In contrast, the US (based on considerably more experience and with recognition of past political pressures) has ensured local communities can provide some balance to overall state authority. It is probably not coincidental that the US, therefore, has the most detailed accountability requirements such as ensuring common performance measures, public reporting, and continuous improvement.

historical partnerships in every community upon which to build, but the changes required are far more extensive and require considerable effort.[54]

(f) extensive policy coordination is needed; among levels of government, across ministries and departments, and between and among local bodies and providers; and - more important - it is not clear if the desired changes and the greater effectiveness that is the goal, can happen in the absence of such coordination.

This last point is the subject of a final characteristic of more integrated planning and delivery.

(F) Integrated Service Planning and Delivery Benefits from Policy Coordination

The late Sar Levitan... once defined coordination in employment and training programs as "an unnatural act between two or more nonconsenting bureaucracies" Amy Brown in [8]

Integration essentially comes through action and interaction by people around agreed directions, not from formal arrangements described on pieces of paper.
Office of Training and Further Education, State Training Board, Victoria, in [3]

The characteristics outlined above are merely summaries of features common to the reforms under way in each of the three jurisdictions. More importantly, each characteristic reflects a large variety of activities involving many different organizations and individuals. While the directions and some specifications are set in political initiatives adopted by the respective governments, the ability to implement these directions falls to those most intimately aware of the details of program design and administration. While good civil servants follow the directions of their political masters, the knowledge of how things actually work can make implementation extremely difficult. So it is with the development of specific policy which might result in a major shift in the orientation of employment and training services: actual people have to work out countless details.

Five broad areas seem to need some form of policy coordination. First, there is the need to bring together what have been the separate functions of income support (social assistance) with employment and training services (workforce development); that is merging passive and active labour market programs. As noted earlier, bringing these two "systems" together is a major part of the vision and goals of not only these other jurisdictions, but most OECD members.[48,77,69]

Second, there are services involving different ministries within the same level of government. For example, in Australia, the movement from an employment service orientation to a broader workforce development approach requires a relationship between the Department of Employment, Education and Youth Affairs and the Department of Employment Workplace Relations and Small Business; the former is responsible for many funded programs, the latter for the Job Networks; and Centrelink reports through the Minister for Social Security, given its overall responsibility for administering all national income support programs. Similarly, in the UK, there is the anticipated relationship between the "new deal" programs (under the former employment service) and the "post-16" education reforms (under education); as well as the need to relate the local learning and skills councils and local learning partnerships with the regional economic development initiatives (under the Single Regeneration Budgets). The US encountered this challenge when integrating programs and services from four different federal departments, as well as ensuring that states integrated their own welfare-to-work and training services.

Third, within the principal ministry or department, there have been distinct programs. While each jurisdiction retained some of these - for accounting purposes only - there is an assumption that they

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[54]While it is difficult to calculate the exact sums, both the US and UK have allocated tens of millions of dollars for their national efforts to establish new bodies, new procedures, common measures, etc.

will be fully integrated at the local level. This, of course, requires some form of harmonization across programs of eligibility criteria, performance measures, reporting systems, certification (or at least criteria) for providers, and particular delivery features such as entry services (e.g. information, assessment and referral), support services (such as counseling, specialized assessment), and placement services (e.g. job development, post-placement support). And then integration would need to consider integrating services in major areas such as supported job search; language, literacy and basic skills, vocational training, on-the-job training, etc.; each of which are the subject of integrated delivery (or should be, according to the evidence cited in the challenges section, above). As noted, there are distinct bureaucracies which have supported the delivery of each of the nearly twenty required or optional partners in local communities, not all of which will be integrated by governments, but each of which has had distinct and at times not totally compatible requirements. At a policy level, therefore, it is likely that a coherent education and training system will require considerable coordination within government.

Fourth, service provision at a local level involves a host of different providers. Even if the rules for what have been distinct funded programs are integrated, there are related support services, the provision of which is often in different departments, but without some of which (e.g. child care, transportation, health services), the ability to realize the benefits of more integrated delivery may be limited. Some group in each community must organize these service and decide how to ensure that the new integrated rules can be made to work with the rules of important existing services (and vice versa; that is, how to make sure the rules of these services are made to fit the new integrated delivery system).

Finally, as a practical matter, someone has to ensure that the practical systems are coordinated such as information management, common indicators (both performance measures and customer satisfaction measures) and funding policies for both individuals and providers. For example, whenever funding is shared or pooled, the providers of the services covered by the funding need to have clear expectations from a single set of rules governing the funding and the services in question.

A potentially useful way of looking at the possible approaches considered for policy coordination in the US can be seen from a discussion on performance-based systems which used the experiences of seven states who were (in 1997) beginning to develop more integrated workforce development systems. The study noted that "the states are continuing to design and implement a new, more encompassing and more robust concept of performance management. That concept

• is anchored in broad policy goals established by the state for its overall system;
• employs a results-oriented framework for accountability and continuous improvement in process and outcomes;
• relies on shared accountability across programs and agencies for achieving commonly agreed upon policy goals;
• entails monitoring and reporting on the results achieved; and
• involves a process of continuous quality improvement to identify performance problems, diagnose their causes, implement changes to correct them, and evaluate the effects of the changes on service delivery and results."[92]

The study notes that performance management identifies goals around customer needs and, for workforce development systems, the goals are relatively clear; namely, "employment and earnings success of clients and the increased competitiveness of companies" which, in turn, requires services that develop job ready and skilled individuals." The document continues by posing three options which follow a common strategy, followed by 3 questions which states needed to ask to develop a "common policy framework": (a) what programs will be included? (b) how will system-building be authorized? and (c) how will program coordination be achieved?

The first question may self-evident, but it is important to note that some services may be integrated in delivery, while still maintaining discrete funding and accountability. This is the case, for example,

with programs for several particular groups (e.g. youth, the disabled). What is important here is that services to groups which have been distinct in the past still need to be integrated; for example, the finding that literacy and basic skills training should be integrated with specific vocational skills development applies to youth as it does to adults. Developing separate youth services, however, allows for better targeting, more homogeneous groups and better focus for the program. Nevertheless, there would still be an integration of basic with vocational skills.

The second question is answered in part by the nature of the authority granted by the government (at whatever level) to itself or to an arms length "coordinating agency" to ensure integration and accountability. For example, can or should the changes be made by administrative "directive"? regulations? new legislation? or some combination? Regardless, any authorization to plan and implement more integrated services will have some constraints under any system; constraints which, it is suggested, must be clear. System-building, however authorized, will also require supports (including policy, funding, facilitation, infrastructure). The NGA study suggests that "authorization that remains stable over time is more likely to be taken seriously and to produce enduring change."[92]

The third question asks how to operationalize the changes, and the study suggests three options. The first option uses "a common policy framework for designated programs. An interprogram or interagency team develops the details of the common policy framework which addresses system-wide issues... (and) coordination is facilitated by staff of an oversight authority". The second option combines a common policy framework with "co-locating various service delivery components of programs. This approach stops short of reorganizing agencies and instead combines staff from each affected program to form a coordinating entity that implements common policies." The third option "relies on the common policy framework, but also reorganizes programs into a single administrative entity."[92]

These are clearly different options, though they have as their shared element a "common policy framework." What is not addressed is whether it is possible to develop more integrated service delivery, or to plan for services to be more integrated, in the absence of such a framework.

There may be no answer to this question. However, at least in Ontario, that is a distinct possibility. Several of the initiatives developed in London-Middlesex, in the francophone community in Eastern Ontario, and emerging in other areas of the Province might be seen as a test of the proposition that serious integration requires such a framework. Stated differently, these communities and their initiatives may give us an indication of how and how far the planning and delivery of employment and training services may be able to be integrated without greater policy coordination between governments, across ministries, and among separate funded programs. A common policy framework may be beneficial, but is it really necessary? The remaining parts of this report may offer some ideas.

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Part III: The CAFA in Prescott-Russell[1]

Executive Summary

Introduction

The **CAFA (Centre d'aiguillage et de formation des adultes)/Referral Centre for Adult Training (RCAT)** is an assessment and referral service offered to adult residents from Prescott-Russell Counties who wish to further their education. The free service provides clients with an objective assessment of their basic competencies in their first language (French or English) and arithmetic. Based on the identification of an individual's training needs, it refers clients to the most appropriate training program where a training plan is drawn up. The CAFA follows up with its clients to monitor their progress.

The CAFA is neutral, since it is not a training service provider. The service has been designed as a "single entry point" to all local education and training opportunities. There are several access locations for better client service. The CAFA only deals with the assessment of skills relating to education and training. Other agencies assess employability skills.

The CAFA is a multisectoral coalition made up of regional stakeholders, including all education and training service providers, Ontario Works, Human Resources Development Canada, employment support agencies, industries, unions, municipalities and clients.

Prescott-Russell Counties are located in the most Easterly part of Ontario. The area is largely rural and agricultural, with many manufacturing industries established in the Hawkesbury area. The Western part of the counties benefits economically and demographically from its proximity to Ottawa. Literacy levels are much lower than the Ontario average, particularly in the Franco-Ontarian population which historically has been denied equal access to education in French.

History

The seed for the CAFA was planted in the Fall of 1994 by the Centre d'alphabétisation de Prescott, a literacy centre which has since acted as the CAFA sponsor and administrator. Several factors led to its creation. Competition among education and training service providers made recruitment of adult learners difficult and threatened the viability of some adult education programs. A formal entry assessment was not the norm in all learning institutions; too often, the assessment was done on the basis of years of schooling or a judgment about lower social status, as opposed to measuring a person's basic competencies. There were also some referral problems: institutions tended to keep the learners who registered with them, even if the program was not meeting the learners' needs or not matching their basic competency level. This contributed to a high drop-out rate for learners.

A series of meetings of key representatives from five education and training institutions in the region led to the development of a common assessment and referral protocol in 1996. Partners agreed to use the same assessment tool whenever a learner would want to register for a program

and, based on the results, to refer learners to the appropriate program, as necessary. As partners monitored the application of the protocol, they realized that it was not being applied uniformly, as some of them were skeptical about the process and feared losing clients through referrals.

In the meantime, as a result of a request from IVACO Rolling Mills which wanted to have a single point of contact for employee training, the "Upgrading in the Workplace Project" started in the Hawkesbury area. A liaison worker was hired to meet workers on the shop floor in two manufacturing industries to promote the full range of available training courses. Workers were referred to the most appropriate training program and courses were designed to accommodate the schedules of shift workers.

The results of the pilot project were so positive that it became clear that this service should be expanded. Human Resources Development Canada saw the value of the outreach and recruitment work done in industry and offered additional resources. A decision was made to target other industries, as well as unemployed individuals receiving Employment Insurance or Social Assistance.

Ontario Works and Human Resources Development Canada agreed to refer to the CAFA all of their clients wishing to get further education. They saw that the assessment tool and referral procedures put in place as a result of the protocol were a reliable and valid mechanism to ensure that learners would end up in a program at the right level and that training dollars were being spent wisely. OW and HRDC referrals provide the bulk of the CAFA clients. HRDC is providing a grant for salaries for the second year in a row and Ontario Works will make a financial contribution this year.

The CAFA officially opened its doors in November 1997. It has become a forum where service planning and coordination among agencies and service providers takes place in a collegial atmosphere. One of the outcomes is joint programming by a literacy centre and a school board who have set up a learner transition program.

Results

Because of its proactive recruitment efforts in industry and through referring agencies, the CAFA has encouraged many learners who might not have registered for courses otherwise. Between November 1997 and March 31, 1999, 542 individuals were referred to the CAFA and three-quarters of the individuals who were assessed by the CAFA started on a training path. Most learners who have been assessed by the CAFA were referred adult credit and literacy programs.

As part of the Upgrading in the Workplace Project, 250 industry workers registered for courses after having been contacted individually in the workplace by a CAFA liaison worker. Of these, 20% have pursued literacy and adult credit programs, the rest chose computer skills and language courses.

Strengths and Challenges

The CAFA was created as a grassroots organization in response to community needs; its creation was not mandated by a government program or funder. It has succeeded in bringing to the same table all of the key regional actors who are committed to offering quality education and training

programs and creating the best possible conditions for learners to succeed. Its neutrality is a major asset. CAFA staff and partners have a client-centered approach and make special efforts to more effectively reach out to a "hard-to-serve" clientele in need of training.

Part of the CAFA's success is due to its location in a small region where there are a small number of key players and little duplication or overlap in education and training services. The CAFA is part of a broader movement in the Eastern Ontario counties in which key stakeholders have begun the understand the link between the region's prosperity and economic and social development, and higher literacy levels.

Like most young organizations, its major challenges are in the areas of organizational mandate, long-term financial sustainability and organizational development. Because it is the most successful multisectoral forum in the region, partners have great hopes that it can expand its mandate to meet other community needs (e.g. closer links between training programs and labour market needs and between education and training service providers and employment support agencies).

The CAFA is a good model of integrated planning and programming. It is a viable model that works for Prescott-Russell Counties. Some of its components can be applied elsewhere, provided they are adapted to the local conditions.

The CAFA's Future

As outlined in the epilogue, members of the CAFA Development Committee had the opportunity in June 1999 to read and respond to this report. They have undertaken a strategic planning exercise and selected priorities for the future direction of the organization. These broad orientations emphasize the consolidation of existing training services in order to better serve clients and to enhance service planning in the region. Another orientation is to create closer links between career orientation and needs assessment and referral to a training program. A business plan will be prepared in the Fall of 1999.

Introduction

This is the story û in a case study format - of the **CAFA**, the **Centre d'aiguillage et de formation des adultes (CAFA)/Referral Centre for Adult Training (RCAT)**.   It is an innovative model of a single entry point (known as "guichet unique") for the objective assessment and referral of adult learners in Prescott-Russell Counties in Eastern Ontario.

The CAFA is one of five case studies which are being written up about "Models of Integrated Community Service Planning" in Ontario. It is the second phase of the research conducted by Norm Rowen on transitions and program articulation for learners in Literacy and Basic Skills programs. The project is funded by a grant from the National Literacy Secretariat to the Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy.

In order to write the story of the CAFA, twenty-two (22) individuals were interviewed face-to-face or by telephone between January and April 1999 (see Appendix A). Documentation relating to the organization was also analyzed. **This case study is not meant to be an evaluation of the CAFA or of its partners.**

This story is divided into six parts:

1) Creating Awareness
2) The History of the CAFA
3) Building the Connections
4) CAFA Partners' Understandings, Reflections and Learnings
5) Looking at Alternative Futures
6) A Bird's Eye View: Looking at the CAFA Model From the Outside.

The first five sections are a synthesis of comments gathered during interviews with CAFA partners and staff. It reflects the views of the individuals interviewed about the development of the organization and their visions of the future of the CAFA. The last section is the perspective of the writer of the case study on the CAFA model.

List of acronyms

To help the reader better understand the story, here is a list of acronyms and what they mean:

CAFA	Centre d'aiguillage et de formation des adultes (also known as Referral Centre for Adult Training (RCAT))
CAP	Centre d'alphab•tisation de Prescott (known since March 1999 as the Centre d'apprentissage et de perfectionnement)
HRDC	Human Resources Development Canada
LBS	Literacy and Basic Skills
MET	Ministry of Education and Training

OW   Ontario Works

Note: In the text, the term "**education and training service providers**" refers to recognized learning institutions which offer literacy and basic skills training, educational upgrading and vocational training (e.g. literacy centres, adult education centres, community college). It does not include agencies such as Job Connect and others which offer employment support programs such as those funded by Human Resources Development Canada ord the Ministry of Education and Training.

Part 1: Creating Awareness

Before we describe the experience of the CAFA in detail, it is appropriate to understand the environment in which it has developed. What follows is a brief background on the United Counties of Prescott-Russell, where the CAFA is located, and a snapshot of literacy levels in the region. As part of the backdrop of the story, we outline the problems which motivated the development of a common assessment and referral system.

1.1 A Profile of the Prescott-Russell Region

The United Counties of Prescott and Russell (pop. 74,013) are located in the most Easterly part of the province. With a total of eight municipalities, the area is largely rural and agricultural. The largest municipality is Hawkesbury (pop. 10,000), located in Prescott County, about an hour from Montr•al. Hawkesbury and the surrounding area are the administrative and industrial heart of the Counties.

Like many other industrial centres, Hawkesbury has many well-paying jobs which currently require little formal education. However, it is now entering an economic transition period where it is slowly moving toward a more diversified economy with jobs that require more qualifications. There are approximately 3,000 workers working in Hawkesbury area industries. The manufacturing sector is sensitive to the fluctuating impact of free trade and economic recessions. Plant closures and downsizings are therefore common.

In Russell County, rapidly rising prosperity and demographics can be attributed primarily to the arrival in recent years of commuters who work in the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton. Because the majority work in white collar jobs, the population tends to be better educated than in Prescott County.

Prescott-Russell is the area in Ontario where the percentage of French-speaking residents is the highest. Over two-thirds of the total population have French as their mother tongue. Until recently, Francophones were a large majority in most municipalities, but this is changing, especially in Russell County. Most county-wide service agencies and many businesses operate entirely or mostly in French.

Economically and socially, Prescott-Russell Counties have long lagged behind most other regions in the province. According to some estimates, the number of individuals and their dependents who receive Social Assistance, Family Benefits, Unemployment Insurance or Workers' Compensation represent over one-third of the population. However, in recent years, there have been several examples of communities, groups and individuals mobilizing to improve the economic and social situation of the region. Intersectoral collaboration is a recent but growing trend.

1.2 A Snapshot of Literacy Levels in the Region

The A + B = $ Project (a regional initiative designed to improve the economic and social well-being of Prescott-Russell and Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry Counties by increasing literacy levels through grassroots involvement) has carried out a detailed analysis of the 1996 Census data. The level of education has been analyzed by municipality, language, gender and age.

The picture that emerges confirms that literacy levels in Prescott-Russell Counties are significantly lower than the provincial average. Figures listed below are for population of 15 years of age and over.

Table 1: Years of schooling, population 15 years and over, Prescott-Russell and Ontario

	Prescott-Russell English + French	Prescott-Russell English	Prescott-Russell French	Ontario
Population 15+	53,065 100%	14,720 100%	38,345 100%	8,429,215 100%
<Grade 9	7,370 14%	1,015 7%	6,355 17%	845,385 10%
Gr. 9-13 û no diploma	12,350 23%	3,480 24%	8,870 23%	1,941,565 23%
Total no diploma	**19,720 37%**	**4,495 31%**	**15,225 40%**	**2,786,930 33%**

Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census

These numbers are supported by extrapolations made by the A + B = $ Project of the results of the International Adult Literacy Survey of 1994 for federal ridings. These show that 27% of the French-speaking residents of Prescott-Russell and Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry Counties are at Level 1 (individuals at that level have great difficulty reading) and 29% are at Level 2 (individuals at that level can read, but not well). In other words, 56% of the Francophone population is at Levels 1 and 2, compared with 49% for Anglophones in these five counties and with 44% for all adults in Ontario.

1.2.1 The French-English Literacy Gap

Like Franco-Ontarians in the rest of the province, Francophones in Prescott-Russell have a significantly higher rate of illiteracy than Anglophones. Several reasons explain why Francophones lag behind.

a) From 1912 to 1998, Francophones in Ontario did not have access to education in their language on a parity basis with Anglophones, especially secondary school education (generations of Franco-Ontarians had no choice but to go to English-language high schools). Regulation 17 which prohibited the use of French in Ontario schools from 1912 to 1927 had a disastrous impact. So did inequities in the Ontario government's taxation and funding structures. Franco-Ontarians did not fully control their school boards until 1998.

b) Only a small minority of Francophones in the region pursue postsecondary education. There is no tradition of going on to university or college, let alone to embrace lifelong learning. Since many of the local jobs are in the industrial or agricultural sector, there is little incentive for higher learning. Those who do obtain degrees or diplomas seldom come back to live and work in the region. Other than the Coll•ge d'Alfred de l'Universit• de Guelph (a community college with a mainly agricultural vocation), there are no postsecondary institutions in Prescott-Russell (La Cit• coll•giale û the first French-language community college in Ontario

û and Algonquin College both had campuses in Hawkesbury but they stopped offering postsecondary diploma programs).

This brief picture of educational levels in the region show how limited access to education has adversely affected the Francophone population's literacy levels. This in turn makes it challenging to change attitudes towards upgrading one's skills to face the demands of the changing economy.

1.3 Why the CAFA came about

The idea of developing a common assessment and referral system germinated in 1994. At that time, there were many internal and external forces which contributed to the emergence of the CAFA. The three key factors can be summarized as follows:

1.3.1 Recruitment problems: too many institutions wanting to attract the same clientele

As many adult education institutions know, recruiting a learner is hard work. Many adult learners have experienced failure in the schooling system and have doubts about their own learning abilities. Not only is it difficult to get adult learners motivated enough to register for courses, there are other problems as well related to service delivery. In Prescott-Russell, one of the main difficulties in the mid-90's was that service providers were competing against each other to reach the same adult learner clientele by offering similar courses.

As a consequence of this duplication, many courses ended up being cancelled because registrations were divided up among two or more service providers. This problem was compounded by the rural nature of the territory: satellite offices further fragmented registration numbers. In other words, the full range of learning opportunities responding to a variety of literacy levels and different learners' pace of learning was not effectively being offered in the region.

From the point of view of potential learners, the existence of a complex institutional network of learning institutions offering a wide variety of courses in different locations created confusion. Confronted by this maze, some simply gave up and did not pursue their dream of getting further education. Others ended up registering in a program that was not well suited to their needs.

1.3.2 Assessment problems: playing it by ear too often

In 1994, only the Centre d'alphab•tisation de Prescott (CAP), a literacy centre, and La Cit• coll•giale, a community college, had learners go through a formal entry assessment. Staff would test potential learners using their institutions' instruments. The two school boards did not assess a learner's actual level at the time of registration (this was done later when the learner was in the classroom). School administrators looked at the report card and assumed that a person who had, for example, completed Grade 10 was in fact writing and reading at that level.

The International Adult Literacy Survey of 1994 has demonstrated that a person's current reading and writing abilities do not necesarily correspond to their level of schooling. In other words, individuals who have a high level of schooling may have poor reading and writing abilities, if they do not use those skills regularly in the workplace. Conversely, a person who has little

formal schooling may be able to read and write well, if he/she uses and develops these abilities. In the absence of a formal assessment process used by all learning institutions, it was almost impossible to determine a person's actual literacy skills. This obviously had a lot of impact on referrals, especially since the International Adult Literacy Survey has shown that more people have practical skills below their education level than vice-versa.

1.3.3 Referral problems: learners not being directed to the right place

Because of the competitive climate which existed and funding structures which encouraged this trend, service providers tended to "hang on" to the learners who registered with them. As a result, learners did not always end up in a program that could fully meet their training needs, given their literacy level. This was especially true of learners who registered with one of the two school boards to take adult credit courses. Many of them dropped out because whatever learning material was presented to them was too advanced. They should have been referred to a literacy service in the first place, but this was seldom happening.   It was found also that when a service provider referred a learner to a literacy centre, the decision was sometimes based on a judgment of this person's appearance or social status rather than on his/her actual literacy skills.

Another facet of the referral problems should also be mentioned and it encouraged the creation of a single entry point in 1997. Ontario Works and Human Resources Development Canada were unsure which learning institution they should send their clients to. They were being sollicited by various service providers who all hoped to register their clients. Before the existence of the CAFA and in the absence of a uniform assessment process, the agencies did not have full confidence that their clients were being referred to the institution that would best meet their training needs and match their literacy skills.

In conclusion, the above problems were symptomatic of the fact that service providers did not put clients' own needs front and centre; too often, the needs of the institution came before customer service.

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Part 2: The History of the CAFA

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The CAFA has officially been in existence since November 1997. It quickly got off the ground and was soon able to provide a centralized assessment and referral service efficiently. This was greatly due to the fact that the project had a solid foundation to build upon, resulting from several years of preparation work.

The history of the CAFA can be divided into three key periods:

2.1   Fall 1994: The Development of an Assessment and Referral Protocol.
2.2   January 1997: The Launching of the "Upgrading in the Workplace" Project in Key
        Industries.
2.3   November 1997: Ontario Works and Human Resources Development Canada come on
        board and the CAFA opens a permanent centre.

2.1 Fall 1994: The Development of an Assessment and Referral Protocol

The creation of the CAFA was largely instigated by the Centre d'alphab•tisation de Prescott (CAP) located in Hawkesbury. Founded in 1988, it is one of the oldest French-language literacy centres in Ontario.

The CAP was frustrated to see the high failure rate of many learners who had registered to take credit courses at the adult high school. They were doomed to fail because of their low literacy level and should have started with remedial courses first.

The two school boards also started to realize that competing against each other to attract the same clientele was counterproductive: because of the fragmentation of the market, each service provider (this also included La Cit• coll•giale which sometimes offered similar courses) only had a few registrations, and courses often had to be cancelled because they were not financially viable.

In the fall of 1994, the CAP invited a representative of the Literacy and Basic Skills Section, Workplace Preparation Branch at the Ministry of Education and Training, to a meeting of all education and training service providers (i.e. recognized learning institutions which offer literacy and basic skills training, educational upgrading, or vocational training) of the region. The MET representative facilitated the meeting at which key decision-makers had been invited. He indicated the Ministry's interest in exploring assessment and referral mechanisms and invited the Prescott-Russell region to become a Franco-Ontarian pilot project.

The stakeholders started to realize the benefits of greater collaboration ("concertation") in the planning and coordination of adult education programs. In May 1995, the CAP prepared a funding application which all service providers endorsed and signed. The funding received was used to support the work to develop an assessment and referral protocol and to design the accompanying tools. Starting in October 1995, a series of meetings were held with decision-

makers representing all the education and training service providers, using focus group methodology. Four **themes** were explored at those meetings:

a) a common definition and understanding of literacy and illiteracy;
b) a review of each organization's methods to recruit, register and assess learners;
c) possible scenarios for a referral mechanism;
d) a review of the various forms of prior learning recognition at registration time and at the end of the training.

When the idea of a common assessment and referral protocol was first envisaged, the **objectives** of the project were to:

1) gather service providers from Prescott-Russell to review their recruitment and assessment strategies and see how the assessment process could be made more uniform, while respecting the specificity of each program.

2) develop a common assessment protocol to be used to identify individuals with low literacy skills and refer them to the appropriate program.

3) elaborate a referral mechanism, building on the collaboration and the instruments developed.

As stated in CAFA documentatation, some of the **anticipated results** of the project were to:

1) improve service offered to clients by letting client needs drive the service;

2) explore collaborative ventures based on emerging partnerships (e.g. sharing human resources, facilities, training material, expertise);

3) create a continuum of services which would form the building blocks on which a learner's progression would rest;

4) make the best use of all available resources.

A **Steering Committee** was set up and included two representatives from the following organizations:

_   **Conseil d'•ducation de Prescott-Russell** (school board which, at the time, was responsible for both public English and French-Language education)
_   **Conseil des •coles s•par•es catholiques de langue fran•aise de Prescott-Russell** (French-Language Catholic School Board)
_   **Centre d'alphab•tisation de Prescott** (literacy centre)
_   **La Cit• coll•giale** (community college offering at the time postsecondary diploma programs).

A decision was quickly made to invite **Moi, j'apprends**, the French-language literacy centre in Russell County, to be part of the focus group. It was clear to the group that every key education

and training organization in the two counties needed to be at the same table, so that the outcome of the exercise could be applied across the two counties.

An external facilitator was hired to facilitate the meetings. At the outset, he advised the group against inviting outside experts who would tell local people what to do and how to do it. His view was that it would be more effective and more lasting to have local stakeholders be fully involved in and take responsibility for whatever they would develop.

The focus group meetings forced the Steering Committee to look at the real issues and to come up with a common terminology. For example, what do we mean by low literacy skills? What kind of reading and writing abilities or how many years of schooling are we talking about? When does literacy training end and when do secondary school credits start?

In order to compare the various assessment approaches used, organizations were asked to submit the forms and instruments they used. Each institution was also asked to say how it would respond to the hypothetical situation of Arthur, a 39-year old unemployed man with health problems who has a Grade 9 education and wants upgrading. The result was a chart outlining the steps of the registration and assessment process, and the similarities and differences in the practices of all service providers.

At the second focus group meeting, the Steering Committee came up with several possible scenarios for a common evaluation and referral system. A first scenario (viewed as the most "conservative") was to have each partner organization evaluate potential learners at its own facilities. At the other end of the spectrum was a scenario to establish a single entry point (or "guichet unique") that would assess all learners before they were referred to the appropriate service.

The Steering Committee chose the first scenario by consensus. This agreement meant that:

a) all five service providers would use the same, common assessment tool ;

b) there would be five entry points for learners to be registered and assessed;

c) training would be offered to staff responsible for intake and assessment on how to administer
   the tool, compile and interpret results, and present them to learners;

d) a committee made up of representatives of the five partner organizations would be set up to
   monitor the referral process with new learners and deal with problem cases and see how
   programs could be adjusted accordingly.

Implicit in the agreement was the notion that service providers using the assessment tool would refer learners to the appropriate institution, based on the score obtained by the learners, rather than register learners in their own program, no matter what the results were.

At that time, a few partners felt that the a single entry point ("guichet unique) should become a goal for the medium term, but they acknowledged that its immediate implementation would be premature.

In November 1995, a sub-committee was set up with working-level representatives (primarily instructional staff) of the five partner organizations to develop the common assessment and referral protocol. The Steering Committee first endorsed the basic components. It was clear at the outset that the skills assessment needed to be done in two parts: the first was to identify individuals experiencing literacy problems with reading, writing and arithmetic. The literacy diagnostic tool would be used only when staff had doubts about a person's ability to function in a program requiring French-language skills equivalent to Grade 9 (this assessment was made on the basis of the intake form described below).

The second step of the skills assessment focussed on a person's skills in French and in arithmetic in order to determine what level the individual was at in these two subjects (the ranking would be either expressed in terms of schooling levels for the purposes of school boards or in terms of levels 2, 3 or 4 for the Ontario Basic Skills program which was then offered at La Cit• coll•giale). Section 1.3 summarizes the practices which were used in the past for assessment and referral, prior to the development of the protocol.

A lot of discussion took place on the content of the protocol and focussed on both the assessment and the referral procedures. A common intake form was designed, to be used by every partner organization: the first part was to spell out the learner's training objectives and needs (including the learner's goals after training completion). The second part was a summary of prior learning and experience (e.g. level of educational attainment, other courses, work and volunteer experience). The underlying philosophy of the protocol's application was to emphasize human contact with learners, especially with people having low literacy skills who need to be supported right from the start.

A referral structure was proposed: a permanent committee would meet three times a year. In addition, ad hoc committees were to be set up in various locations and would deal specifically with complex cases requiring the involvement of more than one service provider. The development of a common, individualized broad training plan for learners was another element of the protocol. A first draft of the protocol emerged in February 1996, a second draft three months later.

The protocol was developed within the French-language education network to better serve French-speaking adults in Prescott-Russell Counties. (It was later extended to also serve the English-speaking population). As one of its cornerstones is a pedagogical principle which states that adult learners have better chances of succeeding in their training program if they access the training in their mother tongue (first language spoken). Consequently, service providers agreed that bilingual Francophone learners should first be referred to French-language programs.

In parallel to the work of the Steering Committee, another process was taking place. While decision-makers were hashing out the parameters of the new partnerships, front-line instructional staff from every institution met to elaborate the assessment tool which was later to be used. Three sub-groups were formed: the first, made up of CAP tutors (called "alphab•tiseures"), developed a literacy diagnostic tool, the other two developed the French language and arithmetic skills tests. (The English tests were designed later). Again, what was different in this approach from what existed in the past is that common instruments were being developed and this was being done collaboratively.

Because of a commitment by the Steering Committee to have test content and result interpretation reflect the local reality, the tests were validated in Prescott-Russell learning institutions. Learners from the two literacy centres and Grade 7 and 8 students from local elementary schools validated the diagnostic tool. With the help of school boards, the French language and arithmetic tests were administered to adult education learners, as well as to Grades 9, 10 and 11 students in regular high schools. Following the validation process, the sub-groups who had worked on components of the assessment tool gathered to develop guidelines on how to interpret the results in light of the validation results.

On August 27, 1996, the first training session was held for working-level staff in the learning institutions who were responsible for the use and administration of the protocol.   At the end of that day, the official launch of the protocol took place. At the press conference, the coordinators of the two literacy centres and senior administrators of the community college and the two school boards signed the protocol. Every person who had contributed to the development of the protocol was invited to take part in the launch.

The Steering Committee continued to meet in the Fall of 1996 to refine the application of the protocol. Meanwhile, the two school boards merged their adult education programs (see the details in Section 2.4).

2.2 January 1997: The Launching of the "Upgrading in the Workplace" Project in Key Industries

This initiative was a key turning point in the development of the CAFA. The "Upgrading in the Workplace" Project was in effect the forerunner of the single entry point. It came about as a result of a request from IVACO Rolling Mills in L'Orignal, a major employer in the region, who had worked in previous years with the Centre d'alphab•tisation de Prescott to set up a workplace-based literacy program.

IVACO was in the process of upgrading its technology and took employee training seriously. It was aware that many of its employees did not have all of the basic educational skills to fully take advantage of technical training. The IVACO Director of Training approached the CAP and the school board's adult education centre. He expressed the need to have a single point of contact, i.e. one person who would promote to workers the full range of training courses available in the region, instead of having workers contact every institution individually. The goal pursued by this service was to increase access to the various upgrading programs through active recruitment of learners in the workplace and to offer programs adapted to the workers' individual needs and circumstances.

With funding that the CAP had just received from Human Resources Development Canada for salaries to implement special projects, the CAP chose to hire one liaison worker for 26 weeks whose mandate was to meet workers from each shift on the shop floor. Workers were asked if they wanted to finish their Grade 12 or take general interest courses (e.g. computer or language courses). The liaison worker offered to assess their competencies and needs and then referred them to the appropriate training resource. Other than a pair of work boots, his main tool was the assessment and referral protocol which had previously been adopted by all adult education

centres in the region. Workers at PPG Canada Inc., an automotive glass manufacturer in Hawkesbury, were also approached. Workers participated on a voluntary basis.

In the context of this pilot project, it was made clear to the employers that literacy, adult credit and general interest courses offered would be within existing funding parameters, but that service providers would strive to adapt and create new activities, if necessary, to respond to workers' training needs and schedules.

There are several structural and situational barriers to consider when promoting further education and recruiting new learners in the workplace. In the larger manufacturing industries, workers do shift work, which means those who want to upgrade their skills cannot access training courses which are designed for the public who works regular hours. In addition, these workers lack adequate information on what courses are available and relevant to their needs. The courses may not be offered in a convenient location. Sometimes they lack the financial means to further their education or they doubt their own abilities to face new challenges. Because most of the industries targetted were medium-sized (as is common in rural or semi-urban areas), the CAFA planned to group workers from various industries in order to produce a sufficient number of registrations.

A word here on the approach used to recruit workers with weak literacy levels in industry. There are two schools of thought as found in research on literacy in the workplace. One is to talk overtly about literacy programs in order to avoid recruiting literate learners. In working in the past few years to develop literacy in the workplace, the CAP used this recruitment approach and got mixed results. It was difficult to get workers who needed literacy to sign up.

The other approach in promoting literacy and lifelong learning in the workplace is to use a broader vocabulary and talk to workers about basic education, upgrading, continuing education, vocational training, in order to remove the stigma attached to literacy which is common in more traditional workplaces. In fact, all CAFA assessment results were kept confidential, i.e. the employer did not gain access to the results of the individual assessments.

The results of the six-month pilot project within the two industries were beyond everyone's expectations. Over 100 workers in the two industries went through the assessment process and registered in training programs. They felt reassured, based on the assessment results, that they would not waste their time in a program that was too easy or too difficult for them. They felt more confident about their chances of success and this increased their self-esteem.

Wanting to expand the program, the CAFA got the commitment of seven industries and three labour unions: the United Steelworkers of America, the Canadian Automobile Workers and the Canadian Union of Public Employees. The Upgrading in the Workplace Project aimed to reach at least 1,600 workers. The unions agreed to provide one of their labour representatives to be present on the shop floor to facilitate the liaison worker's contacts with workers and relieve their anxiety, especially with workers who had left school many years before or who experienced failure in the school system.

The involvement of labour unions is critical to "sell" continuing education in the workplace. Many of the larger employers now require new employees to have Grade 12 education (or in some cases, a trade). However, many of the current staff were hired 15, 20 or more years ago,

when all that was valued by the employer was a strong backs. With the introduction of costly technological processes, industries realize that they have no choice but to encourage their workers to upgrade their education to maintain productivity and competitiveness. Workers with low literacy levels who are unable to read labels or signs run the risk of injuries or of creating extensive damage when handling hazardous substances or working in restricted areas.

The Town of Hawkesbury realized the impact this experiment could have on economic development. It offered to play a facilitator role to strengthen the links between employers and training service providers. It supported a grant application made to HRDC to expand the project. Its Chief Administrative Officer at the time later agreed to chair CAFA Development Committee meetings.

2.3 November 1997: Ontario Works and Human Resources Development Canada come on board and the CAFA opens a permanent centre.

Human Resources Development Canada saw the positive impact of the Upgrading in the Workplace Project and agreed to provide additional resources. It also valued the objective assessment that Employment Insurance recipients were getting at the CAFA. In the Fall of 1997, HRDC gave the CAFA funding to pay for two salaries to reach out to three target groups:

1) employees in medium and large-sized area businesses;
2) unemployed individuals receiving Employment Insurance;
3) Social Assistance recipients.

In addition to detecting individuals with low literacy skills, the project planned to study the obstacles which learners with weak literacy levels face when undertaking a training process and to develop a strategic plan to reduce these obstacles. The project was also to compile and analyze the training needs expressed by participating workers. (La Cit• coll•giale can conduct, as part of its services, an analysis of the training needs of area employers).

Ontario Works was at that point in the process of introducing "workfare" and was interested in referring OW participants who wanted to further their education. Agreements were signed with referring agencies (HDRC and OW); these partnerships brought increased credibility to the CAFA.

Staff were hired, and premises secured. It was also at that time that other partners were invited to join the newly-formed Development Committee. A third employee was later hired to serve Russell County. In the Fall of 1998, new storefront offices were obtained on Main Street in Hawkesbury (close to the CAP and l'•cole des adultes) and agreements were made with partners to eventually develop five satellite offices across the two counties.

The agreements with industries, HRDC and OW specified that the services provided by the CAFA should be offered in both French and English. The CAFA rose to this challenge and assessment tools were produced in English. Because translation costs can be very high, partners agreed to help out as much as possible. The Development Committee developed a policy that translation of documents would only be done on demand or when deemed essential in dealings

with external organizations, and that internal documentation would continue to be produced and circulated in French. As a rule, Committee meetings are conducted in the French language.

The CAFA and l'•cole des adultes at one of its two Hawkesbury campuses made an agreement that "walk-ins", i.e. individuals who contact the adult high school directly, should first be assessed by CAFA staff who go on-site one afternoon a week. The assessment is seen as part of the registration process. It is hoped that other campuses will follow suit.

2.4 Summary of Factors Which Led to the Creation of the CAFA as a Single Entry Point

In restrospect, there were several factors and circumstances which supported the development of a single entry point for assessment and referral and the opening of a permanent centre in November 1997.

a) A core group of committed individuals facilitated the establishment of a community service.

Behind the creation of the CAFA was a small group of committed individuals who believed in this project and invested their energies to make it happen. If the CAFA became a community organization which exists outside the bureaucratic framework, it is because it was consciously designed this way. Partners agreed to adhere to a common vision of the CAFA mainly because they had the opportunity to develop together the assessment tool and to agree on the referral mechanisms. In this regard, the CAFA is a collective creation.

b) The protocol was not being applied uniformally.

While the signatories of the protocol had originally agreed that each service provider would assess potential learners at its own facilities and then refer learners, as appropriate, to other institutions, this did not unfold as planned. In the first part of 1997, Steering Committee members realized, by talking to learners and to each other, that the assessment tools were not being used uniformly (some institutions or their individual campuses were skeptical and never or seldom used them) and that referrals among institutions were far and few between. Therefore, something had to be done to improve the application and increase the relevance of the protocol.

c) The three school boards entered into a partnership for the delivery of their adult education programs.

When the two French-language school boards acknowledged that the competition for a finite number of learners was getting them nowhere, they decided to merge their adult education programs into l'•cole des adultes de Prescott-Russell. The senior administrator of the public school board promoted the value of collaboration to his counterparts at the Catholic school board. He was among the first community players to recognize literacy services as critical and equal partners in adult education. Later, the English-language school board entered into a partnership with l'•cole des adultes; this means that adult credit programs in English and French are offered on the same premises. The result of this "rapprochement" have been to facilitate planning and coordination efforts at the regional level. It also allowed the school boards to create efficiencies and realize cost savings. Whatever duplication or overlaps in services existed

in the adult education field in Prescott-Russell Counties were reduced substantially within a few months.

d) IVACO requested to have a single point of contact.

This request brought service providers to work cooperatively in order to offer the best possible service to IVACO and PPG industries. For the school boards, this became a new opportunity to recruit workers who would not normally register for courses primarily because of course schedules that were incompatible with shift work. Service providers adapted their course offerings accordingly. The pilot project was so successful that service providers became enthusiastic about expanding it.

e) HRDC agreed to support the CAFA.

When Human Resources Development Canada found out that the assessment tool existed and that Employment Insurance recipients could be assessed in order to be referred to the right learning institution, it was dismayed to find out that the assessment was not carried out by all education and training service providers. For HRDC administrators, the assessment tool was a reliable and valid mechanism that helped them ensure that training dollars were being spent in the best possible way. Having seen the value of the outreach and recruitment work done in industry during the pilot project, the Regional Director agreed to support this community initiative and offered additional resources.

f) Ontario Works agreed to refer its participants to the CAFA

With the introduction of "workfare", Ontario Works administrators became interested in the assessment and referral process. As with HRDC, OW case managers responded favourably to the idea of having a neutral third party assess potential learners and refer them to the most appropriate training program. OW instantly became the largest source of referrals to the CAFA, thus ensuring that it would have a steady stream of clients.

All of the above factors were instrumental in bringing CAFA partners to realize and then agree that a single entry point for assessment and referral - a permanent centre with several access points - would be desirable and feasible. In essence, the evolution from the signature of the original protocol to the establishment of a permanent structure had a lot to do with the circumstances and the success which prevailed throughout 1997. The birth of the CAFA was not û as is the case with other organizations - directly related to program funding mechanisms or to official government policy. Rather, it became a rallying point for a community in the process of empowering itself.

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Part 3: Building the Connections

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We have seen that the CAFA understands its mandate as providing a single entry point, with several access locations, for the assessment and referral of potential adult learners to the learning institution that can best meet their training needs. To achieve this mandate, the organization has put in place an organizational structure which is described below.

Because the CAFA is multisectoral in nature, it is a complex web of relationships, all of which are essential to the success of the organization. The first set of relationships is among education and training service providers who were the original signatories of the protocol in 1996 and who respond directly to the training needs of CAFA clients who go through the assessment and referral process.   Funders are another key group of players who interact with the CAFA. Referring agencies, such as Ontario Works, Human Resources Development Canada and employment support agencies, provide the bulk of CAFA clients. There are also other key players with whom the CAFA has established relationships: the Training Board, municipalities and economic development bodies.

3.1 The CAFA Structure

First a few words on how the CAFA is structured. It has set up four committees:

a) The **Management Committee** is an informal committee made up of CAFA employees and two CAP staff (the CAP acts as project sponsor and administrator). The Committee meets weekly to deal with on-going issues, oversee the implementation of the Action Plan approved by the Development Committee and review the various reports. It acts as an Executive Committee and deals with funders. It refers financial decisions to the CAP Board of Directors.

b) The **Development Committee** meets every six weeks or so. Its members are education and training service providers, referring agencies and community partners. Members are a combination of senior administrators and frontline workers. Its role is similar to that of an interim Board of Directors. It roughly follows a parliamentary procedure and decisions taken by the group are made by consensus. It refers procedures and policy development issues to the Procedures Committee.

c) The **Procedures Committee** is a sub-committee of the Development Committee. This is where the "nuts and bolts" of the application of the assessment and referral system are discussed and where "technical" or policy issues are resolved. When CAFA staff notice something in the process that needs fine-tuning, they will raise the issue and the parties involved (e.g. school board and Ontario Works) will work out the details.   Committee members have as a goal to smooth the way in order to ensure that potential learners are directed to the right place right from the beginning and reach their academic goals quickly and

efficiently. Because of this, the Committee emphasizes "continuous improvement" as a
philosophy underlying the development of policies and procedures.

d) The **Fundraising Committee** is another sub-committee of the Development Committee which
   meets regularly to review the CAFA's medium and long-term financing possibilities and to
   develop strategies to approach potential funders in order to diversify funding sources.

A **policy manual** ("document de r•f•rence") is currently being produced with the input of the
Procedures Committee. The CAFA tries to be as flexible as possible in order to respond and
adapt to the constraints and needs of its partners.
A comprehensive **data base** contains all related data on individuals referred to the CAFA. Once
a critical mass of learners is attained, detailed statistical analysis could be carried out and
statistical profiles could be helpful to service providers, employers, the Local Training Board,
etc.

A **communications strategy** was developed early on.   Press releases have been issued, a
brochure, poster and information kit have been produced.

Many of the connections relating to the CAFA happen outside its formal structure. In other words,
many of the key actors on the committees also have contacts with each other outside the committee
work.

3.2 Links, Roles and Relationships among Education and Training Service Providers

Many of the connections relating to the CAFA happen outside its formal structure. In other words,
many of the key actors on the committees also have contacts with each other outside the committee
work.

Program	Service Provider	Funder
Literacy	Centre d'alphab•tisation de Prescott	LBS Section
	Centre d'alphab•tisation Moi, j'apprends	MET
	Prescott-Russell Reading Program	
Adult Credit	•cole des adultes	MET
	Adult Education Centre	
Vocational Training	La Cit• coll•giale	MET
	Algonquin College	
Diploma Programs	Le Coll•ge d'Alfred	MET
Non-Credit & General Interest Courses	•cole des adultes	MET
	Adult Education Centre	
	La Cit• coll•giale	
	Le Coll•ge d'Alfred	

A few details to better understand **literacy services** offered in the region. Le **Centre d'alphab•tisation de Prescott** delivers its services in Prescott County, **Moi, j'apprends** in Russell County. The **Prescott-Russell Reading Program** covers Prescott and Russell Counties). The two French-language literacy services have a " learner empowerment" or "popular education" philosophy and use a small group approach with paid staff. The Prescott-Russell Reading Program is administered by the Upper Canada District School Board. Half of the English-language literacy program is delivered in a small group format, the rest is provided through tutorials by Laubach literacy volunteers.

L'•cole des adultes de Prescott-Russell welcomes learners who are pursuing secondary education credits. It is administered jointly by the French-language public and separate school boards and has an agreement with the Upper Canada District School Board to offer English-language courses on its premises.

La **Cit• coll•giale** is a French-language community college based in Ottawa which has a campus in Hawkesbury. It offers technical training programs, continuing education courses and custom-designed training for workplaces. It also has a partnership agreement with **Algonquin College**, an Ottawa-based English-language community college, which will deliver English-language programs in Prescott-Russell Counties, as required.

Le **Coll•ge d'Alfred de l'Universit• de Guelph** is a community college offering agricultural programs, as well as general interest courses. It is the only institution in the region to deliver postsecondary diploma programs.

As far as funding is concerned, the only figure available relates to literacy services. Approximately $400,000 were invested in the region last year by the MET Literacy Section on direct service delivery by the three service providers. As far as adult credit programs and vocational training are concerned, the budgets for these are administered by the institution's headquarters which are not in Prescott-Russell Counties and reliable figures are not available.

Collaboration among the training and education service providers has, on the whole, been positive. Within the school board where there are six campuses, acceptance of the CAFA protocol and procedures is still not uniform. There is little overlap or duplication in the services offered by adult education centres; the most obvious exception is computer courses which are offered by the school board and La Cit• coll•giale. The only major gap in the region is the absence of choice in postsecondary diploma programs.

Transition from one program to another is generally smooth. There is no protocol in place to formalize learner transition, it is done rather informally. For instance, a literacy learner who finishes his/her literacy program will be referred by the CAP to the CAFA, who will in turn arrange for the learner to meet with L'•cole des adultes . Learners contemplating vocational training are referred to the CAFA or go directly to La Cit• coll•giale.

Most learners who are assessed by the CAFA have so far been referred to the school boards. La Cit• coll•giale has had few referrals up to now, but it is expected that in the coming years, as learners complete their secondary education, some will want to register in programs which require Grade 12 education. The referral procedures with La Cit• will be streamlined in the coming months.

3.3 Links, Roles and Relationships with Funders

The CAFA currently relies on four funding sources:

a) **Human Resources Development Canada** has agreed to fund the CAFA on three occasions: initially as a pilot project (1 employee for 26 weeks for the Upgrading in the Workplace Project); during its first year of operation (3 full-time employees); during the second year (the equivalent of 2.5 employees). HRDC has decreased this year's funding by $18,000 over last year's and has made it conditional to the CAFA getting other funding sources. HRDC funding is for the establishment of the service only and therefore the CAFA needs to aim for self-sufficiency quickly. Because it is also a referring agency, HRDC could also be open to the idea of a fee for service if the base funding ends.

b) **Ontario Works** is by far the largest referring agency. It has agreed in principle to make a financial contribution but the exact amount is still being negotiated. OW was able to try out the CAFA service and see its benefits before it was asked to make a contribution.

c) The **National Literacy Secretariat,** jointly with the **Ontario Ministry of Education and Training,** has provided funding to carry out Phase I of an action research project to experiment and validate the CAFA model. (A report summarizing the results will be available in the Fall of 1999). Funding for Phase II was not granted this year. MET also gave seed funding in 1995 for the initial pilot project to develop a common protocol.

d) The **Centre d'alphab•tisation de Prescott** pays for many of the administrative and operational costs which are not covered by the HRDC grant. It has signed for the CAFA's three-year lease.

e) **Some partners** such as school boards, Ontario Works and JobConnect have made office space for learner assessment available at different times. L'•cole des adultes has lent computer equipment. All training organizations have provided staff time to meet learners who were referred to their program.

The issue of funding is discussed in greater detail in Part 4 under "Issues and Challenges".

3.4 Links, Roles and Relationships with Referring Agencies

Ontario Works has indicated that the CAFA has made their work easier and more effective. Now, there is only one place where individuals who wish to pursue their education are referred to. The results of an assessment made by a neutral and impartial body are uniformly recognized by participating training institutions. OW administrators know that OW participants are being referred to the training institutions which can best respond to their needs. In the past, case managers did not have the tools to know if someone who had a Grade 10 education could really function at that level. They had no idea how long an individual's training program would need to last.

It should be noted that the case management of OW participants is done by Ontario Works staff. Only those participants who choose to further their education are referred to the CAFA.

The CAFA is viewed as a relaxed environment for those who have fears about going back to school. The on-going communication between OW case managers and CAFA staff helps work out issues as they come up. The assessment tool is seen as a reliable, valid tool to verify participants' level of education. Because of the CAFA, individuals on social assistance have gone back to school û in the opinion of OW staff, in many cases, this was completely unexpected, given the client profile.

There generally exists a good dialogue among Ontario Works case managers and training and education service providers. Some instructors say they would benefit from having direct contact with case managers for specific cases. There have been many success stories of individuals receiving social assistance who complete their education. These learners have a personal goal and are committed and involved in their learning.

Others are less motivated and find the discipline of attending school too demanding. Many of these are part of a hard-to-serve clientele who has multiple needs. Education and training service providers are required to keep attendance records. Some have observed that the policy relating to OW participants' absenteism is not applied uniformly and that there often are no financial consequences for a participant who does not honour his/her commitment to be in school.

The willingness of OW to refer its participants to learning institutions turned out to be a great motivator for the learning institutions. For years, they had talked about how to reach out to this clientele who was in need of upgrading. At first, they had visions of an "army coming", but in the end, they had no problem dealing with the influx from a new source of learners.

Over the past three years, the number of social assistance cases in Prescott-Russell Counties has dropped by almost a third to just over 1,300 employable individuals (December 1998 figures). The 21% reduction in benefits by the province in 1995 and improvements in the regional economic situation explain this drop. Close to two-thirds of all social assistance recipients in Prescott-Russell do not have Grade 12 education. In the past year or so, about 340 Ontario Works participants (approximately 25% of the "employable case load") chose to go back to school. While several of these have dropped out or have found a job before achieving their academic goals, the vast majority are still registered in their training program.

Ontario Works supervisors expressed the view that this type of centralized assessment and referral structure should be established by OW programs in other regions because it is a vehicle to increase the level of literacy among OW participants.

Human Resources Development Canada is both a funder and a referring agency. In the past, the unemployed looking to register in a training program could come back to the Employment Centre with very different results, depending on which training institution had assessed them. There was no common assessment. Maturity credits were being given and there was no way to determine the actual literacy skills of the individual. It was also found that individuals who wanted their EI benefits extended to complete their Grade 11 or 12 could not follow the pace of the instruction they received because they did not have the basic skills.

HRDC's policy is to have unemployed individuals who want to go back to school go first for a CAFA assessment in order to make sure that they have the required literacy skills to succeed in their training program. In the past, a learner had to be registered for 25 hours a week. HRDC is

now allowing the unemployed to register for less than ten hours of schooling a week. In such a case, an Employment Insurance recipient will not be penalized, but it is understood that he/she is to continue looking for work while studying. If the individual does not honour his/her commitment to be in school, HRDC will reduce the allowance accordingly. Literacy is an approved training program, as it can serve as the foundation for subsequent upgrading or vocational training. From HRDC's point of view, an effective assessment and referral system is critical: because of the high cost of training, a person should be trained only once, i.e. in the right program from the start.

Many of HRDC's services are contracted out to local employment or economic development agencies. The bulk of them are delivered by the Centre de services • l'emploi de Prescott-Russell. The region was the first in Canada to experiment with a contracting-out arrangement which is on the whole satisfactory for the parties involved. HRDC no longer buys "block training", but it will authorize the purchase of individual courses.

HRDC and MET have been encouraging the CAFA to establish links with **employment support agencies**. Two of these are represented on the Development Committee: the Centre pour services • l'emploi de Prescott-Russell administers, on a contract basis with HRDC and MET, several employment support programs, including Job Connect for Prescott County (its total budget is $2.5 million). La Cit• coll•giale (Ottawa campus) delivers the Job Connect program in Russell County.

Employment support agencies wonder what their role or contribution to the CAFA can be. Very few of their clients are referred to the CAFA. Employment support agencies are concerned that the CAFA activities might duplicate theirs in the future, given the pressure by funders to increasingly mesh employment and training. HRDC has requested that the CAFA keep statistics to determine in the three-month and six-month follow-up interviews how many CAFA clients leave their training program because they have found a job. From the point of view of employment support agencies, this represents an overlap with their mandate of helping people find work. They feel that the CAFA's mandate should be restricted to the assessment and referral process and to the development of a broad training plan for its clients.

Most of the **industries** and **labour unions** approached so far have been cooperative with the CAFA in opening doors to provide direct access to workers. However, they have not been active on the Development Committee.

3.5 Links, Roles and Relationships with Other Bodies

There have been some contacts with **Eastern Ontario Training Board**, but no formal linkages have yet been established. However, in its environmental scan and strategic plan, the Local Board has made it clear that it wants to tackle the problem of illiteracy in the five Eastern counties.

Among municipalities, only the **Town of Hawkesbury** is present at the Development Committee. Early on, it could see the benefits of developing a well-trained workforce to attract industries requiring a higher level of knowledge and skills. It was also sensitive to the plight of laid-off workers with little schooling trying to find work in the new economy and needing

upgrading. Other municipalities, such as the **Town of Clarence-Rockland** and **Russell Township have indicated their interest and offered moral support to the CAFA.**

The CAFA is a voting member of the newly-formed **Economic Development Corporation for the Town of Hawkesbury** whose mandate is to support existing businesses and attract new ones to the region.

To conclude this section on connections, it is clear that in a small, rural environment such as Prescott-Russell Counties, most people know each other, agency representatives meet each other in more than one context, and relationships are therefore more personal. An organization can have a clearly spelled out mandate, it can establish sound policies and agree on priority tasks, but in the end, it is personalities which largely influence the outcomes of any multisectoral work (for better or worse!).

Part 4: CAFA Partners' Understandings, Reflections and Learnings

This fourth section presents the results achieved by the CAFA. Through the interviews, CAFA partners had the opportunity to share their insights into the CAFA's philosophy, mandate and operations and to reflect on the elements which have contributed to make it a success. Partners have identified many issues and challenges which the organization and the community face. In the last part, we present the key learnings from this integrated community service planning experience.

4.1 Results and Spin-offs

If we look at statistical results, between November 1997 and March 31, 1999:

- a total of 542 learners were referred to the CAFA.
- 380 contacted the CAFA.
- 349 went through the assessment
- 270 had an individualized training plan drawn up.
- 257 registered in a training program.

In other words, three-quarters of the individuals who were assessed by the CAFA started on a training path. At each step, there are individuals who do not show up for their appointment or who drop out. They do so for various reasons: lack of motivation, personal reasons (financial, emotional, family factors), new job, lack of follow through on the part of referring agencies, etc.

The source of the 542 referrals can be broken down as follows:

Ontario Works	374
HRDC	106
"Walk-ins"	20
Centre de services • l'emploi	15
Centre d'•ducation aux adultes	16
Centre d'alphab•tisation de Prescott	7
Vocational Rehabilitation Services	4

A total of 257 registered in the following training programs:

Centre d'•ducation aux adultes	172
Centre d'alphab•tisation de Prescott	50
Prescott-Russell Reading Program	19
Moi, j'apprends Literacy Centre	18

As part of the Upgrading in the Workplace Project, of the 250 workers who have registered for courses, 50 have pursued literacy and high school credits, while the rest mostly chose general interest courses such as computer skills. A report on this project will soon be published by the CAFA.

The numbers of individuals reached by the CAFA may seem modest at first glance, but what is remarkable is that many of the individuals assessed by the CAFA, especially those coming from industry and Ontario Works, would have been considered unlikely candidates for further education. Of course, there is no way of knowing how many of those would have registered anyway without being referred to the CAFA, unless an independent evaluation was carried out with learners. However, education and training service providers admit that if they had relied on their traditional means of recruitment, they would not have been able to reach out to most of the clientele that the CAFA has brought to them. All have benefitted to varying degrees (except for La Cit• coll•giale, which may benefit later as the new learners "graduate" to postsecondary training courses).

While the numbers of learners registered in education and training programs has increased, the challenge is one of retention of a "hard-to-serve" clientele. "Walk-in" learners who decide of their own volition to register in a program are generally motivated about succeeding and staying in the program until it is completed. In contrast, many Ontario Works participants who choose to upgrade their skills are being prompted by case managers and program administrators who want to see results. This clientele tends to have less stability and the personal motivation and discipline is often waning.

This means that the number of learners registered in programs has increased, but the number of contact hours has not followed in the same direction. This is especially true for literacy service providers whose funding depends largely on the number of contact hours. For CAFA partners, the challenge of dealing with program drop-outs is the next priority (the first priority was to have access to the OW and HRDC clientele through the referral procedure). Starting this Fall, the CAFA plans to offer a two-week workshop ("groupes d'accueil) which will focus on preparation for returning to school.

One of the positive spin-offs of the CAFA is the partnership between the CAP and L'•cole des adultes of the French-Language school board which has led to the development of a transition program for literacy learners who simultaneously take non-credit (literacy) and credit courses (equivalent to Grade 9 level). This was in response to learners refusing to register for literacy courses unless they could get some credits and recognition from the school board of their learning outcomes. Although some may question that it may violate MET Literacy Section policies, it is nevertheless a good example of integrated programming.   The Coll•ge d'Alfred is investigating setting up a similar transition program with L'•cole des adultes .

4.2 Partners' Assessment of the CAFA û On the Positive Side of the Ledgerà

Four main themes have emerged in the assessment which partners have made of the CAFA up to now.

4.2.1 A paradigm shift: from competition to collaboration and coordination

Several partners have pointed to the important shift in attitude which has taken place with the advent of the CAFA.

> "In Prescott-Russell, we have a tradition of in-fighting and confrontation. Lack of collaboration has in the past delayed our development as a region. The CAFA represents almost a revolution in the way we work together. It is a good example of cooperation and service delivery to a clientele with multiple needs. Everyone benefits: learners, referring agencies, training institutions, industries".

The competition which existed among service providers a few years ago is almost non-existent now.

> "The CAFA has helped organizations coordinate their efforts better, make a better use of available resources and improve service to the client".

The coming together of so many sectors û literacy and non-literacy - is one of the strengths of the CAFA.

> "Part of the success of the CAFA is the coming together of many partners. Neither clients nor funders are interested in seeing competition and duplication among service providers. Each service provider must have its own "slot" on a continuum of services. The CAFA is helping service providers and referring agencies support each other and put the client at the centre in making resources available. It is encouraging partners to want to continuously improve their services."

4.2.2 Putting client needs first

The client-centered approach is another paradigm shift which is happening thanks to the CAFA. Institutional needs are now less central than before.

> "For me, developing the CAFA was an opportunity to learn and to focus on why we exist as institutions: to serve the client".

> "As adult education institutions, unless we can develop an attitude of service towards our learners, we have no chance of succeeding, especially if everyone is pursuing his/her own interests".

The philosophy guiding the service is to û right from the start - help the potential learner clarify his/her motivation, i.e. what he/she wants to achieve. The role of CAFA staff is therefore to make the person feel at ease and secure about his/her own abilities to pursue personal goals. Nothing is imposed on an individual, in fact, being referred to a training institution may not, in isolated cases, the best option for that person. Qualities required to deal with clients include tactfulness, frankness, patience and good negotiation skills. It is also essential to keep current with course offerings and not to make a judgment on the quality of the courses offered.

"Individuals who are referred to the CAFA get a personalized service directed at their needs and are not treated as a statistic - the way they might be in larger institutions."

4.2.3 A high degree of satisfaction with the CAFA service

CAFA clients value the service because it is delivered on a human scale and they are made to feel comfortable by CAFA staff.

Training and education service providers say the preliminary assessment done by a neutral third party is very helpful to them. They view the CAFA as an excellent entry point, especially for individuals with literacy problems or who have little confidence in their own abilities. The assessment is a big time saver for the school board who no longer has to do an initial assessment to determine a person's level.

"The CAFA can be compared to a hallway, with many doors that a learner can open over time".

Referring agencies (primarily OW and HRDC) have one less headache since the creation of the CAFA: they now know who to refer potential learners to and they have confidence that the learner is directed to the right program. They see the centralized assessment system providing reliable and valid results. Sending a social assistance or Employment Insurance recipient on training has therefore become a more plausible option than before.

"The CAFA is like a broker between agencies who serve people in need and training and education service providers."

Funders and other bodies see the value of a structure which supports the achievement of higher literacy levels because its impact contributes in the long term to a better-trained workforce and greater economic and social well-being in the region.

New partners have joined the Development Committee. Even though the CAFA is made up of stakeholders who have very different agendas, partners have maintained their interest over time, as shown by the steady attendance at CAFA meetings. A core group of them are actively involved in Committee work, they work like a team (mainly in the Procedures Committee) and want the CAFA to work and to succeed.

4.2.4 A more effective and creative use of community resources

By meeting regularly, partners are able to develop common objectives and strategies.

"The CAFA brings partners to focus on a common goal, structure and process which, at the same time,are external to them. In doing so, partners start questioning their own practices and procedures. In the spirit of continuous improvement, they try to adjust their policies and programming so that learner accompaniment and transition is as seamless as possible."

Education and training service providers are encouraged, through the CAFA, to look at the strengths and weaknesses in the continuum of training programs. This in turn helps reduce and eliminate duplication and overlap in services. Together, they are forced to invent new ways to reduce the drop-out rate to better serve a clientele with multiple needs.

The single entry point approach, with a common assessment tool, is seen by some partners as being in line with the Ministry of Education and Training's guidelines to streamline services and make them more accessible to those wishing to upgrade their skills. Because the CAFA is viewed as a neutral organization, there is no conflict in terms of which organization should be receiving the learners the CAFA deals with.

> "To have a single entry point eliminates duplication and helps put the needs of the client at the centre of the service. It makes services known to potential users who otherwise may not have known about them".

To conclude on the benefits which the community sees as a result of the CAFA's existence, a few partners have pointed out that the fact that it exists and that it is still going, five years after the initial attempt in 1994 to promote greater collaboration, is a major accomplishment. Many similar structures elsewhere would not have survived that long, in part because there is no MET financial support available for this purpose.

> "Given the history of competition among regional actors and the difficulty in securing funding to keep the CAFA going, it is remarkable that the CAFA is thriving."

4.3 Issues and Challenges

While the CAFA is viewed by many partners as a success in many respects, there are some key issues and challenges facing the organization which were identified by individuals interviewed.

4.3.1 Funding

In the eyes of many, funding is a key issue for the CAFA's survival. Two formulas have been explored: user pay and base funding. The "user pay" concept has been discussed with partners. How much to charge (and still be fair to all parties) is difficult to determine. The reaction of many is that if the fee for service is too high, this will discourage partners from using the service. The danger then is for organizations to revert to "old habits" and work in isolation. Also, fee for service results in a very unstable funding source which can fluctuate wildly, thereby increasing the complexity of planning and managing the CAFA budget. "Base funding" (an annual grant or lump sum to be determined) is seen as a more desirable option for achieving stability.

From the point of view of education and training service providers, there is no logic in paying for participants who are referred to them by the CAFA but who do not register or stay in the program (this is especially true of the "hard-to-serve" clientele, including Ontario Works participants). Literacy centres have small budgets to start with and feel they cannot be expected to pay for this service. They find that the functions of information, intake and evaluation still need to be done by them once a potential learner is referred to them after the CAFA assessment, in order to place the

learners at the right level. The CAFA assessment tool only provides a rough estimate of a learner's abilities in reading, writing and arithmetic. Service providers - such as literacy services or the community college - have their own levels and standards which are measured using more precise instruments.

Several partners have mentioned the need for the private sector to contribute financially to the CAFA. Its benefits to industry are obvious to many, but there has been no contribution so far.

Many partners hope that the Literacy and Basic Skills Section of theWorkplace Preparation Branch at MET will give more than moral support to the CAFA and other integrated assessment and referral models.

> "One of the main problems with the Ministry of Education is related to its structure. Most public servants who manage and make decisions about MET programs are in Toronto. There is no cohesion or coordination at the local level in how these programs (e.g. secondary level education, Job Connect, Labour Adjustment, Literacy and Basic Skills) are administered. Only LBS requires that centralized assessment and referral functions be offered at the community level."

There is consensus that a strategy is needed to demonstrate the benefits and spin-offs of the CAFA to potential and current funders. For example, an exercise that would highlight the contribution of each participating organization, as well as the time and financial savings that the CAFA services generate for each, would be helpful. Of course, the more clients the CAFA can serve, the more successful it is, but costs rise accordingly and revenues must keep pace with the expansion.

Several partners believe the CAFA can have an impact on the region's economic development by facilitating further education. The more people go through the CAFA, the better chances are they will be referred to the right program, thus increasing their chances of success in achieving a higher level of literacy or other skills, thus making a better workforce. However, the contribution to economic well-being will only happen in the long term. Because funding is allocated on an annual basis, there is pressure to show immediate results.

Potential funders which have been identified by the individuals interviewed include:

1) HRDC (as a referring agency in coming years)
2) the education and training service providers which benefit from having new learners referred to them (in particular the French-language school board which gets the bulk of referrals)
3) industries
4) municipalities (as part of their economic development strategy)
5) United Counties administration (through the Ontario Works program mainly)
6) Eastern Ontario Training Board
7) Labour Adjustment Program of the Ministry of Education and Training
8) Various Branches of the Ministry of Education and Training, including the Literacy Section, Workplace Preparation Branch
9) United Way

Some CAFA partners believe that **funders have an expectation that intersectoral collaboration should happen *de facto* among the organizations they fund and that this should happen without providing some financial support for it. The reality is that most government agencies are unable to do among themselves what they expect of organizations.**

> "Many funders [at senior levels in Toronto] don't talk to each other. Why can't the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Ministry of Education and Training, HDRC, etc. develop agreements that would mirror the protocols and partnerships that are happening in the field? Even within the Ministry of Education and Training, different programs (e.g. secondary level education, Literacy and Basic Skills, JobConnect, vocational training) don't coordinate their policies. Because the CAFA is the only coordinating body in the region in the area of training, it's seen as a funnel through which all things should go through. The CAFA doesn't want to become a "dumping ground" for governments who can't do themselves what it's asking the CAFA to do with very few resources".

A meeting with existing and potential funders is scheduled in June to present and discuss the challenges facing the CAFA, as outlined in this report. A follow-up meeting is also planned in the Fall of 1999 to discuss the strategic orientations and long-term financing of the organization.

4.3.2 Governance

There are two visions within the Development Committee as to what its role and powers should be. On the one hand, this Committee was initially set up as an advisory group to the project and as an information-sharing and networking forum that encourages reflection. As a result, Development Committee meetings tend to be information meetings, not decision-making meetings.

The other vision is that the Committee should play the role of a Board of Directors. Because the meetings are primarily information meetings, a few partners feel there is little incentive to get more actively involved. Some Committee members believe that the CAFA should eventually have a broader decision-making body, with partner and community representation, which would tackle many of the decisions that are currently being handled by the Management Committee. These decisions relate to the strategic orientations of the organization, the delivery and expansion of the service, the financial parameters of the organization, the creation of complementary services to respond to community needs, etc.

As far as problem-solving is concerned, here is how this is currently done. Both the partners and the CAFA Management Committee do raise issues or problems at Development Committee meetings. The group discusses the issue and tries to arrive at a consensus. The matter is sometimes referred to the Procedures Committee or to the Fundraising Committee for further exploration and resolution. Partners generally say that CAFA staff show great flexibility in adjusting to their needs and understanding their program criteria and constraints.

4.3.3 Independence/autonomy

Some partners see as a blessing the fact that the Centre d'alphab•tisation de Prescott acts as the sponsoring organization of the CAFA. It was the CAP who spearheaded the process and sought the funding for each phase. Its contacts with industries and labour unions helped with the creation of the initial single entry point. It is therefore easy for most partners to delegate to the CAP the responsibilities and duties associated with the management of the CAFA. The attitude that many seem to have is: "If you have a good babysitter, you don't call home every five minutes". Conversely, others wonder why it should still be only the CAP's responsibility to sustain the CAFA after initiating and getting it running, when so many clearly benefit from it. A few partners are completely indifferent to the notion that the CAP is acting as manager of the CAFA and are satisfied with the status quo.

The CAP is in effect managing two organizations concurrently: the CAFA and the CAP. The additional effort required is having a definite impact on the literacy centre. This situation is starting to improve as more learners are referred to the CAP.

The CAFA's incorporation has been suggested by many partners û including the CAP - as a way to make the CAFA become an independent, community and partner-driven organization in the medium term. Draft by-laws have been prepared, but energies have been invested in areas other than incorporation. There is a recognition by some that the CAFA's uncertain financial situation must be resolved first and more partners must become more involved û either financially or otherwise - before a new organizational structure, with a Board of Directors, can be put in place and an executive director hired.   A training program for the new Board could be helpful in easing the transition.

4.3.4 Neutrality

A few partners question the CAP's neutrality. The fact that the CAP is so closely involved in the management of the CAFA raises the question of accountability. For instance, how separate are the budgets, benefits, salaries of the CAFA and the CAP? No financial statement has yet been presented to the Development Committee.

On the other side of the coin, CAFA funds to be managed are rather limited at the moment. HRDC funding is used for salaries only and the CAP pays the administrative costs. Administratively speaking, the CAFA is one of the many projects which the CAP is managing. As project manager of the CAFA, the CAP is accountable to HRDC and to its own Board of Directors. The CAP's audited financial statements are public documents which can be consulted by anyone.

While the financial and administrative accountability may be rather straightforward, the issue of moral accountability to a broader constituency needs to be addressed. Because the CAFA is providing a service which involves many partner organizations in the two counties, there is an expectation that it should be accountable to these partners and to the broader community. Are these expectations too high? How accountable are structures such as school boards, Ontario Works, HRDC, etc. which also serve the same clientele as the CAFA?

In addition, some partners question the high costs of the CAFA, the output of three full-time staff as measured against results, or the starting salaries paid to staff. A small minority feel that the CAFA is being managed by a "clique" and that the only reason that the CAP instigated the

CAFA was to increase the number of its learners. (Statistics show that the CAP receives approximately 20% of CAFA referrals). In their eyes, the CAP will become a partner like any other at the table when the CAFA is incorporated. For these critics, greater transparency is seen as desirable.

It should be noted that to the clientele or to someone who does not know the organization's history, the connections between the CAFA and the CAP are not obvious because the CAFA is located in premises which are separate from the CAP's.

4.3.5 An independent structure: at what cost?

Most partners want the CAFA to become a separate, incorporated entity, but some are asking: at what cost?   Is it realistic or desirable to invest so much money into an autonomous structure? With the CAFA's annual budget being in the vicinity of $150,000, is it possible to rethink the structure in order to reduce its costs? What are some cheaper alternatives?   These questions are part of the funding and transition issues which were discussed previously.

The fact remains that salaries represent the majority of CAFA expenditures. Even if other organizations could help, either with rent or administrative costs, the bulk of the budget would still be spent on providing direct services to clients, and funding for this important item must come from somewhere. A few have expressed the view that the CAFA's neutrality can be best ensured in the long term if it is not physically located in other partners' facilities and that the money spent on rent for "stand-alone" offices is a small price to pay in exchange for the organization's independence.

4.3.6 The need for a business plan and a more business-like approach

If the CAFA is to be of interest to a broader range of potential funders, it will need to prepare a formal business plan that will look at a three-year horizon. This could include consultations with partners (the upcoming strategic planning exercise could be part of this), the preparation of a site study, etc.

Along with adopting a more business-like approach is the need to develop quality standards and performance measurements to know if objectives are being met. Tied to this is greater accountability to partners and funders. In their current presentation format, statistics kept by the CAFA are not well understood by a minority of partners.

4.3.7 Bringing more active partners on board

Economic development agencies should be invited to become partners, given the emphasis on linking higher literacy levels to greater prosperity and well-being. Municipalities, industries and labour unions are not involved enough and should be asked to make a financial contribution, however small it may be. Even though there are only one or two private training institutions in the region, it is expected that their numbers will increase in the next few years. They will need to be at the table. With their for-profit philosophy, they will likely challenge CAFA partners.

4.3.8 Improving visibility

Several partners feel that the CAFA needs to become better known by the general public. Part of the answer is to increase its visibility (in particular to improve the storefront signage of the service), so that more potential learners and the community at large know that it exists. The official opening in March 1999 generated a lot of media coverage.

Increased visibility can however be seen as a double-edged sword. Is it the goal of the CAFA to reach the general public at large when its entire structure is built upon a system of referrals, where the CAFA provides the link between referring agencies and learning institutions? If the CAFA chose to invest some of its limited resources into advertising, would that not create confusion in the mind of potential learners? Why not instead concentrate on improving and consolidating the existing service?

4.3.9 An uneven presence throughout the territory

Because the CAFA headquarters are located in Prescott County, some partners feel that the CAFA presence is not visible and proactive enough in Russell communities. While most partners represent the two Counties, very few are there to voice the specific concerns of Russell County (most service agencies have their headquarters in Prescott County). While the six service centres of the CAFA are divided equally between the two counties, there is a perception that Russell County is lagging behind. There is a concern that the funding allocated to serve Russell residents is not being fully allocated to that purpose.

However, it must be remembered that the CAFA's core mandate is to refer individuals it assesses to the appropriate service provider and that this is generally done by appointment. It does not

have as its mandate to promote to the general population its own service or available education and training services.

Statistics show there are far fewer individuals from Russell who were assessed by the CAFA. Outreach efforts started there later because the original funding did not include the two counties. Referring agencies also tend to refer less in Russell. In addition, education levels are higher in Russell County, there are fewer unemployed individuals, and there are no large industrial employers. Thus potential clients are not concentrated, making it harder for learning institutions and referring agencies to identify them.

One possible solution to this challenge is to actively encourage Ontario Works, HDRC and adult education staff who are responsible for Russell County to refer more of their clients to the CAFA. Another is to broaden Russell County representation, e.g. invite HDRC local offices and community representatives to join the Development Committee. Increased media coverage would help too.

4.3.10 Testing and recognition of outcomes

Three tests were initially developed by the CAFA: one was designed as a literacy diagnostic tool, a second to assess language abilities, and a third to gauge a person's skills in arithmetic. The third test is currently optional: it should be administered to all potential learners, according to a few CAFA partners. It is not uncommon to see learners with Grade 12 education fail the second test because they have not been able to master or maintain their literacy skills. La Cit• coll•giale does not always recognize the outcomes of the CAFA tests and will at times accept such candidates with a Grade 12 diploma when they are able to pass its own tests to register in a trade program. Because La Cit• is not requiring learners to first attend remedial courses, its instructors need adapt the course according to participants' lower skills level. This issue needs further discussion.

4.3.11 Program transition and prior learning recognition

The CAFA and its partners have had some experience with helping learners make the transition from one training program to another. This is usually done informally and learners are sometimes sent to the CAFA where staff will assess their skills, if necessary, and refer them to the appropriate person. More work needs to be done to make the transition as seamless as possible. The greatest success story in the area of transition is Alpha-Transition where literacy learners concurrently take adult credit programs delivered by CAP staff on behalf of the school board.

In Prescott-Russell Counties, community recognition of prior learning needs to be improved among adult education providers across the education and training continuum. Because it is the only forum where the latter meet regularly, the CAFA could potentially play an incubator or facilitator role in getting the process off the ground. The learning outcomes published by the Ministry of Education and Training are not commonly used to facilitate transition among educational providers, who rely mostly on personal relationships instead.

4.3.12 Follow-up and support

Follow-up and support were originally to be a key component of the CAFA intervention. Based on the observation that learners who start a training program have little support and that many services have no resources to provide that support, the CAFA had planned to do follow-up call three and six months after an individual was referred to the service. There was also an intent to see what impact participation in a training program had had on their working conditions, mobility within the workplace and the labour market, family life, etc.

At the moment, it is a challenge to the CAFA to figure out what the objective of the follow-up should be: is it to verify that the learner is still registered in a training program? if not, to find out the reasons for dropping out? to evaluate the learner's degree of satisfaction with the service received? to provide encouragement ? to get feedback on how well the training program is responding to the learner's needs? The three-month period may be too long also before contacting a learner. CAFA partners have different perceptions of what purpose the follow-up should serve.

The Procedures Committee is looking at making follow-up more effective and relevant. Key principles which are being proposed are that it should focus on CAFA service only and should not exist to judge the quality of training programs or of programs put in place by referring agencies.

As is found by other programs that deal with a clientele which tends to be fairly mobile, tracking is difficult to do well. Ideally, tracking would follow the progress of learners beyond the six month period in order to monitor where they go, in particular the transition from literacy to non-literacy programs and from education and training programs to employment. No one organization is doing this in the region. A collaborative effort in this area would help in further defining workforce needs and adjusting the curriculum and service delivery accordingly.

As far as support is concerned, many CAFA clients are in need of moral support. Many doubt their own abilities to succeed in their educational endeavour. Instructional staff provide encouragement, but more needs to be done. One proposed option û which will start as a pilot project in Hawkesbury this Fall - is to offer a two-week workshop for all learners who register in a program, regardless of their level. The workshop would focus on the learners' personal and training objectives, self-esteem and "learning to learn" methods in order to create a positive attitude, especially with those who are not self-motivated. The workshop would be linked to individualized training plans. Presently, the CAFA sends letters of congratulations to learners who obtain their high school diploma or who complete their literacy program.

4.3.13 Evaluation

At present, there is no systematic way to evaluate clients' or partners' degree of satisfaction with the service received at the CAFA. Anecdotal evidence suggests that both clients and partners are happy with the service which is seen as "well organized", "proactive", a "supportive environment". Ideally, measuring client satisfaction would be done by an external, independent organization to ensure objectivity. Similarly, no program evaluation has been funded yet. This expenditure should be part of the future CAFA grant applications.

4.4 Key Learnings: Free Advice for the Asking

Partners were asked what advice they would give to other communities who wanted to undertake a collaborative community planning and coordination initiative.

1) Start small. A lot can be accomplished with little in the early stages.
2) Set up a core group of committed individuals who are passionate about adult education and believe in working with others in a cooperative spirit.
3) Identify and build on existing partnerships, if possible.
4) Work at developing an element of trust within the group.
5) Show potential partners what the benefits of collaboration will be in order to enlist their support.
6) Explain to reluctant partners that the system takes nothing away from them and will actually benefit their clients and themselves.
7) Agree on a common terminology first before developing a common protocol.
8) See the relationships with partners as important and precious. Develop a win-win attitude.
9) Set aside your competitive tendencies and focus on the client's needs, not on your organization's needs.
10) Spend time defining and understanding every agency's and service provider's mandate. Make sure this is accepted and respected by the group of partners.
11) Have a clear mission and stick to it.
12) Don't attempt to do what others are mandated to do. Support them instead.
13) Be ready to "put water in your wine". The key word is "compromise".
14) Be open to what others may say or bring to the table.
15) Be transparent in your dealings with your partners.
16) Aim to have a diversity of experiences and viewpoints at the table and within your staff.
17) Get actively involved in the network if you want to be connected to the whole and have access to partners.
18) Involve all sectors, including community representation.
19) Be leery of funders who try to impose partners on you before you're ready to integrate them fully.
20) Analyze the feasibility of using an existing organization to provide the centralized assessment and referral service vs. creating a new organization.
21) Keep in mind that this a community development process. It's unthinkable to do in three months what other regions might have taken five years to build.
22) Get a chairperson who is as neutral and credible as possible (e.g. who has nothing to gain directly from referrals).
23) Validate whatever instrument or assessment tool you are developing with local students. Insert local examples in the text.
24) Don't give up when times get tough, keep the vision alive. Only you can make it happen.
25) Think small. A centralized assessment and referral system works best if it covers a smaller, rather than a larger territory.
26) When intervening in workplaces, both the employer and labour must believe in the importance of workers' continuing education and get involved jointly.

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Part 5: Looking at Alternative Futures

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We have seen why and how the CAFA developed and what it has done to date. The partners we interviewed suggested a number of possible future directions for the organization. Some of these possible avenues are an expression of **community needs** (these are synthesized in Section 6). In most cases, the future scenarios propose an expansion of the current CAFA service.

We have chosen, at this stage, to simply list the various options and to refrain from recommending what role the CAFA should play. CAFA partners will be making this choice as a result of the strategic planning exercise. We hope that the following section may be of some assistance in clarifying their options.

5.1 Reaching out to new clienteles

Several possibilities were raised by partners about new potential clienteles:

1) the general public (by promoting the centralized assessment as part of a lifelong learning culture)
2) employed individuals (including under-employed, part-time, in danger of losing their job as a result of technological change) who want to know what their real educational/literacy level is in order to reorient their career
3) workers in industries which are moving to new technological processes, to assess their skills before receiving technical or vocational training
4) individuals with a visual handicap (inasamuch as the tools can be adapted for them, training could be offered to this group)
5) young people who fall between the cracks because they do not qualify for Job Connect or Employment Insurance
6) immigrants who speak neither French nor English (a dozen have come to the CAFA so far, but there are locally no services to help new Canadians).

Needless to say that the assessment instruments which are currently used would need to be modified if the intent is to serve different types of clienteles for different purposes.

5.2 Creating a single point of access for all adult education services

This is a medium-term scenario which hinges on the creation, in the next few years, of a single adult education centre which would group all education and training service providers under the same roof, if possible, and have a common intake and assessment. Each service provider would remain autonomous. (We are not talking here about "one big agency"). Under this scenario, the CAFA would become the "Assessment and Referral Centre for Workforce (or Adult) Training" and be the entry point for all training services.

One can also imagine a scenario where the CAFA would be given the authority by service providers to complete the full academic profile of an individual, i.e. going beyond the literacy diagnostic and the summary assessment, and administering the full range of tests necessary to enter a program. This may be difficult to achieve, since each program requires different tests and program administrators like to meet with the clients at the outset to assess where they will fit into the curriculum. For technical or trade courses, tests could be administered by the CAFA who would, if necessary, refer learners for a period of upgrading (otherwise the chances of success of learners could be jeopardized).

The CAFA could also be mandated to coordinate marketing and recruitment efforts on behalf of all education and training service providers. This broadened mandate would make the CAFA accountable to a committee of education and training service providers.

5.3 Merging training and employment into a one-stop service centre

While a few partners can see the merging of training and employment agencies to create a common entry point as a desirable or feasible move, most sense this would be a formidable goal to achieve in the short term. Just getting education and training service providers to agree on a common assessment and referral protocol back in 1995 was quite a feat (one which is not widely replicated elsewhere in the province). To broaden the circle by involving other sectors and getting referring agencies such as HRDC and OW was another major accomplishment in the life of the CAFA. It is difficult to gather partners who have very different mandates and get them to agree on a common vision. The training domain and the employment field are each like a little universe or sub-culture on their own. From a management point of view, having staff report to several masters sometimes makes for an awkward and potentially conflictual situation.

From the point of view of the client, there is no doubt that a common intake, assessment and follow-up process for all training and employment needs would be ideal. The client would have easier access to a full range of services at a "one-stop centre".

The Centre de services • l'emploi had some surplus office space, which it offered to make available to the CAFA. This arrangement was not satisfactory to the CAFA because it wanted to be seen as a separate entity with a focus on referrals to adult education services. There was a concern that associating the CAFA with employability programs would create confusion in the minds of clients (the CAFA was initially designed as an educational project, a "projet p•dagogique").   Another concern was that CAFA should be seen to belong to all the partners and not to be overly identified with any one partner.

For the satellite offices outside Hawkesbury, the CAFA chose for practical reasons to be located on the premises of l'•cole des adultes since most learners are referred to the French-language school board and usually get to see •cole des adultes staff the same day. This was to speed up the process, so that learners would not have to come back for another appointment.

Most partners who expressed an opinion on the merging of training and employment support feel that the CAFA must have as its first priority to consolidate its structure, operations and partnerships and restrict its field of action to the training area.

> "The CAFA's mandate should not be broadened: it should focus its efforts
> exclusively on the training domain. It is better to consolidate the network of
> adult education institutions rather than to develop new programs which require
> different kinds of expertise. An employability mandate should not be part of
> the CAFA's raison d'•tre."

While the following issue is not related to the CAFA mandate, it is part of the employment and training context. Ontario Works is considering setting up its own employability program. It appears that OW participants are currently offered little in the way of employability skills and supports to prepare themselves for employment. The question that this raises is whether this move would duplicate the work already done by the Centre de services • l'emploi which is already serving HRDC clients in this regard. OW no longer shares the facilities that it previously shared with the Centre de services • l'emploi.

Very few clients of the Centre de services • l'emploi and the Job Connect programs are referred to the CAFA. It seems that most employability program participants are looking for immediate employment and do not have as a goal to further their education at this time. Few admit that their chances of finding employment might be increased if they had a better education.

There is no question in partners' minds that the devolution of Federal Government powers to the provincial level in the area of human resources training could have a major impact on the CAFA and some of its partners. The federal-provincial Labour Market Development Agreement has yet to be signed. It could be at least a year or two before new policies are implemented. The Ministry of Education and Training has made clear its intention to increasingly link employment and training, streamline services and eliminate duplication. The reform undertaken by the Workplace Preparation Branch is definitely going in that direction and literacy is viewed as a preparatory step to getting people back into the labour force.

> "Even if the government or the community itself decided to create a common
> entry point for training and employment, it remains to be seen if the CAFA is
> the best organization to take on this mandate. There could be other resources
> in the community who could take on this role successfully."

Having said this, there is no question that closer links need to develop between employment preparation programs and education and training service providers. Most learners do end up looking for a job at some point. The Ministry of Education and Training's reform has, as a stated objective to facilitate learners' integration into the job market. Service providers and the CAFA have a responsibility to prepare learners for what is coming next. The content of literacy curriculum and individual training plans should reflect this orientation more. Employment support agencies offer job search workshops, and could act as a resource to service providers who could adapt the content to the learners' abilities or alternatively, the employment agencies could deliver the employment preparation portions themselves. This would become another example of how integrated programming can be developed with the CAFA's coordination.

5.4 Becoming part of other organizations' one-stop service centres

Employment agencies are not the only organizations wishing that the CAFA would be housed in its premises. Ontario Works is in the process of setting up two one-stop service centres (one in

Prescott County, one in Russell) to better serve its clientele. The goal over time is to have one entry point to better serve its clientele: social assistance eligibility and support, training assessment and referral, childcare information, job search workshops, etc. The approach is similar to that of the CLSC (Centre local de services communautaires) in Qu•bec which centralize many services under the same roof.

OW may be in a position to offer free office space to the CAFA as a way to ease pressure to secure permanent funding for the CAFA and ensure its survival. As the other main referring agency, HDRC could potentially be interested in a similar arrangement. However, rent and administrative costs are a small portion of the overall CAFA budget. The reservation about sharing offices with another organization which is not a learning institution is that the CAFA would no longer be perceived as neutral, and that it would create confusion with clients and partners if its services are delivered on the premises of other organizations.

Another issue related to partnerships is the difficulty of organizations working towards the same goal and sharing resources in doing so.

> "We know that the trend is for increasing integration of services, however, cohabitation can be difficult. Joining forces and sharing resources do not necessarily have positive outcomes when partners don't see eye to eye."

This points to the challenge facing the CAFA, an organization which was conceived by the education and training milieu, to work with very different sectors such as social services and employment support agencies. Beyond the challenge of developing successful working relationships are the issues of policy and mandate which are complex to resolve in a quickly changing political climate and in a world of decreasing resources.

5.5 Using the CAFA as a forum for educational services planning in Prescott-Russell

Eastern Ontario is an unusual creature when it comes to literacy planning networks. Because of the linguistic situation here, two parallel planning networks exist:

The Upper Canada District School Board is a member of the **Literacy Services Planning Group** which is the structure that coordinates English-language Literacy and Basic Skills services in Prescott-Russell and Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry.

The French-language service providers in Prescott-Russell do coordinate their services with the assistance of the MET LBS consultant. In addition, they are active within the **R•seau des services d'alphab•tisation et de formation de base de langue fran•aise de l'Est ontarien,** a broader regional network which comprises French-language service providers from Kingston, Ottawa-Carleton, Prescott-Russell and Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry.

The CAFA is a unique structure, in that it groups not only literacy service providers but also the full range of education and training providers in the region. It is also the only forum where English and French-language service providers meet on a regular basis. Because the focus of the CAFA is to provide a centralized assessment and referral service, it does not have a planning

mandate across educational "systems" per se. Nevertheless, it helps services re-examine and better coordinate their activities, and provides an overview of what is offered in the community.

In a way, because the CAFA is connected with the full range of available educational services, it might benefit the community to use this forum for the planning of services. The CAFA's neutrality could be an asset in this regard. It could go beyond the traditional literacy services planning and become a tool for the planning and coordination of all education and training programs in Prescott-Russell which could also partly be linked with labour market needs. However, to succeed would require the "buy-in" of the various branches of the Ministry of Education and Training and other related funders. We do not know what their views are on this issue.

There obviously is a need to bring local cohesion in terms of how MET and HRDC resources are spent in the region to respond to the needs of adult learners and of employers. Because it is in a position to see the overall labour market and training needs and to set priorities, the Local Training Board could play a role in supporting this initiative.

5.6 Expanding the service to neighbouring counties

At the suggestion of HRDC, there had been some talk in the earlier stages of the CAFA of expanding its activities into Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry. From HDRC's administrative point of view, this option would make sense. The Local Training Board also covers the five counties. While it may be manageable operationally, there are within the five counties significant cultural and linguistic differences to deal with. The other difficulty with expansion has to do with the territory covered by CAFA partners: the vast majority deliver services only in Prescott and/or Russell counties. Covering a smaller territory is seen as a better way of keeping pulse on who the clients are and getting the commitment of local partners. Adding partner organizations from Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry would triple or quadruple the number of partners, which is no longer workable.

At any rate, the Tri-County Literacy Council in Cornwall already offers English-language learners in SDG an assessment and referral service. The literacy centre J'aime apprendre is working to offer similar services in French.

> "It is best to stay small and concentrate on doing well what we do in Prescott-Russell."

5.7 Expanding outreach efforts in industry

As the CAFA makes more inroads into industry, the benefits become increasingly visible to partners, specifically in the area of prevention.

> "If we had been able to go into the Amoco Fabrics plant a year before the plant closure was announced, this could have made a huge difference. Some of the workers might have already have started on a training path. We would have had a profile of the literacy level of some of them which would serve as a baseline. Right now, most workers are in shock over the news that they're losing their jobs. The last thing on their minds is to go back to school. What we also want to avoid

> is having the same workers get laid-off again and have problems finding a job a
> second or third time around because of low literacy levels."

The Upgrading in the Workplace Project has been fairly successful in its outreach efforts. It has organized with the support of learning institutions, specific courses for groups of workers. However, most workers register for general interest courses (e.g. computer skills) and do not go through the formal assessment process which is used primarily for literacy and adult credit programs.

Forward-looking companies see the benefits of attracting and maintaining a qualified and well trained workforce. However, there are limitations to how many workers can be contacted this way.

> "Some of the non-unionized multinational corporations are not as interested in
> the CAFA service. They don't want to lose their "cheap labour" which allows
> them to be competitive; if workers become more educated, they will start
> looking for better-paying jobs. This is why it is so critical to diversify our
> economy."

What is at stake is the willingness of industry to pay for a least a portion of the cost of the CAFA service. The "resurrection" by MET of the Literacy in the workplace program may help a little with the diffusion of CAFA services in giving greater visibility and credibility to workplace literacy initiatives. However, it seems that no new funding will be made available for the program.

Vocational and upgrading training is another area that is an identified need in workplaces. At the moment, industries requiring training either use internal resources or contract with La Cit• coll•giale.

5.8 Targetting small and medium-sized businesses

The emphasis so far has been on reaching large industries. In the medium term, efforts could be shifted to serve small and medium-sized entreprises which create more jobs than the larger employers. Most do not have a training budget, but workers in the smaller businesses are prime candidates for upgrading. It is estimated that 50% of the workforce in the region do not have the literacy level necessary to compete with global markets.

5.9 Offering specialized services to workplaces

In addition to providing assessment services and arranging for service providers to offer custom-designed courses in workplaces, the CAFA could be considering offering support services for industries whose labour force has low literacy skills. For example, a readability analysis of manuals used by workers could lead to a rewrite using plain language. This kind of service might best be offered by literacy services, even though it is not one of the five essential services targetted by the MET Literacy Section.

5.10 Human resources planning and training

The CAFA could eventually play the role of a "broker" between individuals who seek its services and labour market needs.   It could also coordinate the purchase of specialized courses requiring external expertise for groups of individuals requesting it.

> "If we want people in the region to stay in Prescott-Russell, we must get a better handle on the employment structure. People must be oriented to go where the openings are. For example, in the next 10 to 15 years, agri-business is a field that will grow greatly in our region. In addition to being proactive in enticing industries to come here, this means working with guidance counsellors in the schools to inform them what the most promising avenues are. We must work with employment services at the federal and provincial levels. We are talking not only about creating new jobs but also about preserving existing jobs. Efforts to improve literacy levels will allow more people to keep their jobs. Economic development organizations need to have this as a strategy."

The CAFA could help define local training needs in relation to available jobs locally.   Data compiled by the CAFA could eventually be helpful to HRDC, the Local Training Board and training institutions to determine what new training courses should be offered. Industries thinking of establishing their operations in the region could contact the CAFA as an information source on the profile of the workforce.

> "How many more newly-trained hairdressers can the local market absorb? Can they make a living doing this work, given the competition? What are some alternatives to hairdressing if the market is saturated?"

The fact that there is no direct link presently between the CAFA's goal-directed assessment and the labour market is a significant weakness. Pursuing this direction obviously requires of the CAFA a thorough understanding and analysis of local labour market needs. It may also have a bearing on other actors such as employment support agencies, economic development agencies, the Local Training Board, etc. which have an interest in better matching current and anticipated needs with current and future training programs. When this work is done, the CAFA's role is then to refer learners to the right programs.

> "The CAFA and the Local Board can be quite complementary in their actions: the CAFA assesses the needs and skills of clients, the Local Board assesses the training needs of employers. There has to be closer collaboration between the two."

It so happens that there are several recent initiatives which will result in a greater understanding of the regional labour market. A survey of employer needs in the region and a profile of workforce skills is being undertaken in the five Eastern counties by the Local Training Board. Another survey is being done on maintaining and expanding Prescott-Russell manufacturing businesses. These studies will help pinpoint the strengths and gaps in the labour market and highlight training needs. A multisectoral advisory committee has been set up by the MPP for Prescott-Russell to develop a training development strategy to have a better trained workforce. The A + B = S Project which links higher literacy levels and economic development through

grassroots mobilization and involvement is another example of a new awareness that is developing in the region. Its goal is to double the number of learners who are registered in literacy courses within the next five years. All these initiatives aim at exploring how to work together and share resources to bring about change.

It remains to be seen what concrete action will flow out of these initiatives. It is hoped that they will lead to the registration of more learners in literacy and basic skills programs and the creation locally of more postsecondary and/or specialized training programs.

5.11 Linking assessment and referral process to career orientation

This option was mentioned by several partners. There seems to be a need in the community for a career orientation service, which the CAFA assessment and referral process would be part of. As CAFA clients complete their initial training path, some will want to go on to further (including postsecondary) education and will require guidance on available programs and occupations which are in demand.

Employment support agencies provide some of the career counselling function to selected target groups, but within the CAFA, there is no direct link at this moment between assessment results, learner needs and labour market demand. To be effective, career counselling would need to be done by qualified and accredited guidance counsellors who keep abreast of labour market developments. La Cit• coll•giale is in the process of making career transition counselling services available in the region. However, the cost of this service will not make it very accessible.

5.12 Becoming more involved in the Labour Adjustment Program

The recent announcement by AMOCO Fabrics that it was closing its Hawkesbury plant demonstrated the need for a concerted approach by the CAFA and its partners. There was some confusion as to how this should happen, as each service provider had been invited to contact the plant manager individually. The CAFA could have played a coordinating role instead. The CAFA has since developed a policy with its partners on how to deal with plant closures or massive lay-offs in the future. Being a multinational corporation, AMOCO chose in the end to use its own internal resources to assess workers's needs and turned down offers of assistance made by the community.

The MET consultant for the Labour Adjustment Program has indicated at a Development Committee meeting that he would like to see the CAFA do the training needs assessment (including low literacy skills identification) of workers who are laid-off as a result of downsizing or plant closure. This would complement the contract work done in the past by the Centre de services • l'emploi de Prescott-Russell and La Cit• coll•giale (Hawkesbury campus) to carry out a comprehensive assessment of workers' needs.

Within the parameters of plant closures and massive lay-offs, the CAFA should at least be recognized in the community and by employers as an important resource for laid-off workers who want their literacy/educational skills assessed.

5.13 Role as central assessor for the five LBS levels

This is an idea which is adapted from the ESL (English as a Second Language) field. The Literacy and Basic Skills Program of the MET has developed a five-level matrix used in the assessment and progression of learners. The five levels represent a continuum of LBS levels. It is conceivable that the MET will go in the same direction as ESL and fund a province-wide centralized assessment system. Using a benchmark approach, the CAFA would act as a central assessor and provide an objective rating to individuals who want or need to have their level reassessed in the course of their training path. The assessment would be based on a portfolio which would demonstrate the learner's academic results and strengths in self-direction and self-management. The rating done by service providers would continue to be for internal purposes. This approach is also a way of strengthening the process of community recognition of learners' prior learning.

5.14 Spreading the word to other regions

The CAFA is presently completing Phase I of an action research project funded jointly by the National Literacy Secretariat and the Ministry of Education and Training. In Phase II which was to take place in 1999-2000, the CAFA had planned to share the CAFA's experience with interested French-language service providers in other regions. The plan was to make available information, training and support on setting up a centralized assessment and referral system. New knowledge and learnings from the other regions were to serve to "enrich" the basic model. Because funding for Phase II waw not granted, it will be more difficult for the CAFA to act as a resource to other organizations interested in setting up a referral mechanism.

Conclusion

As can be seen from the wide range of possible future scenarios which partners have identified, the CAFA has generated a lot of enthusiasm and new opportunities. Because it has been successful in the first stages of its existence, people are "waking up" to its potential and can see expanded mandates. As the saying goes, "you have to walk before you can run". The CAFA is still small, relatively new and somewhat fragile. It has no permanent funding and is not incorporated. It has not even finished developing its own potential, for instance in Russell County. It is obvious that it does not have the resources to realize all of these "possible futures". It must therefore proceed with caution and strategically select the avenues which support and strengthen its current mandate and do not duplicate what already exists.

Part 6: A Bird's Eye View: Looking at the CAFA Model From the Outside

As the writer of the CAFA story/case study, here are a few reflections from an outsider, based on the reading of an extensive collection of documents and over 20 interviews with CAFA partners, staff and clients.

6.1 General Observations

To start with, the understanding of the history and origins of the CAFA varies widely according to the time period at which individual partners became involved. Partners who joined the process later are not familiar with the intense groundwork that was necessary to assemble education and training partners back in 1994 and get them to agree on a common assessment and referral protocol. The Centre d'alphab•tisation de Prescott is not always recognized or credited for its role as the instigator and sustainer of the process. Many partners do not fully understand or appreciate how much effort and nurturing is required in creating any new grassroots organization from scratch.

The story of the CAFA goes beyond putting an assessment and referral system in place. It is a story of coalition building, community development, and consensus building. The impetus did not originate from outside the community or because of a government program or policy. The CAFA was built with the community's assets, capacities and abilities. The history of the CAFA shows that the evolution of a new organization depends largely on the right mix of committed people and the right circumstances on which to build a new structure.

If we go back to why the CAFA came about (Section 1.3), we can see that many of the problems associated with recruitment, assessment and referrals have been resolved. In this regard, it is a success.

6.2 The Difference Between the CAFA and Other Assessment and Referral Systems

While the CAFA is an innovative model, alternative models do exist in other regions. There are examples of training and education service providers agreeing on a common intake and assessment system, or mandating one service provider to carry out the assessment, or every partner contributing financially. However, these models are not comparable to the CAFA model which has several features that differentiate it from most other assessment and referral structures:

a) The CAFA and its partners have developed a **single entry point and common tools and procedures** for the assessment and referral of adult learners. The model is therefore more than just working with comparable assessments administered by a variety of service providers.

b) The CAFA is not centralized physically and it has several access points. It is not a "one-stop centre" where multiple services are offered. The CAFA **concentrates only on the assessment of skills to enter training programs**. Other agencies assess employability skills.

c) The CAFA is based on a **broad, multisectoral coalition**, which goes beyond the traditional literacy and basic skills service providers' networks. Through Ontario Works, it has the support and involvement of the Prescott-Russell United Counties and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The Federal Government is involved: Human Resources Development Canada acts as a funder and a referring agency. There is a clear understanding that OW and HRDC will systematically refer clients to the CAFA. Other bodies such as municipalities and employment support agencies complete the circle. Within the CAFA forum, literacy services are treated as equal partners by other stakeholders, which was not always the case until recently.

d) A **healthy interdependency and win-win situation** has resulted from the partnerships between the referring agencies and the education and training institutions, with the CAFA acting as a broker who puts clients in touch with the right training resource. The organization and its partners have adopted a **client-centered approach** and energies are directed at better reaching the "hard-to-serve" clientele which is in need of literacy and upgrading programs.

e) **The CAFA is not a service provider.** If it were, there would be the perception of conflict of interest and it would be hard to avoid being seen as judge and party. Its neutrality is a definite asset and its independence will be further reinforced when it becomes incorporated.

f) The CAFA does **"proactive recruitment"** which in turn produces more learners for adult education programs. The CAFA is attempting to reach out to potential learners where they are. For instance, contacts made with industry workers are made on the shop floor. With this approach, it is attracting learners who most likely would not have registered in a program in the first place. It is steering them to the most appropriate learning institution for their needs. By doing so, it increases the chances of learners succeeding in their program and creates in them the desire to continue learning.

6.3 The CAFA's Challenges

The CAFA faces several organizational challenges, many of which will need to be addressed in the coming year and as part of the organization's upcoming strategic planning exercise:

_   attaining long-term financial viability
_   demonstrating to funders the benefits of the approach
_   building better bridges between training and employment
_   sustaining the initial momentum
_   reaching new clienteles
_   being more present and visible in Russell County
_   becoming more business-like
_   having more partners become involved in the management of the CAFA
_   incorporating and structuring the CAFA into an autonomous structure
_   putting together a Board of Directors with equitable representation from the community, service providers, funders, and agencies
_   developing a unified vision

_   selecting future directions most compatible with its mandate and available resources.

The CAFA will need to continue to be innovative, i.e. it will need to rethink its operations, and invent new ways of delivering its services. It will need to decide on some tough questions, such as increasing accessibility vs. safeguarding the organization's neutrality. For instance, one could argue that the CAFA does not need to have its own headquarters premises and that it could do without having a storefront presence. Instead, the service would be provided on site, where the clientele is: in the workplace, at HRDC, OW and employment support agencies' offices, in adult high schools, etc. However, if the service is decentralized to such an extent, can the CAFA still be perceived as neutral by clients and partners?

The CAFA is fragile û both organizationally and financially - and will continue to be for some time. To use an analogy from nature, the fledgeling must become strong enough before it can leave the nest. Its parents, the CAFA Management Committee, fear the immature bird may crash; they therefore may appear to be very protective at times. They understandably want to create the best possible conditions for its solo flight in order to ensure its success as an independent being. The CAFA now needs to be adopted by an extended family who will take care of it and support it.

6.4 Community Needs and the Role of the CAFA

Several CAFA partners talked about some of the community needs they saw in the region and how the CAFA may or may not be involved. Many of these needs are outside the current mandate of the CAFA, but they relate to the mandate of many of its partners:

1) a population that is more literate and values lifelong learning
2) a social and cultural evolution, mainly for Franco-Ontarians who have been prevented from accessing further education in the past
3) expanded access to postsecondary education locally
4) jobs which can use the skills of better trained and qualified workers
5) a closer link between training programs and labour market needs
6) greater links between education and training programs and employment support programs
7) career orientation services for adults

As was demonstrated in the section on alternative futures, there is no shortage of ideas as to what the CAFA might be doing. Because it is the only multisectoral body that cuts across so many service providers and agencies in the two languages and the two counties, it is very tempting for stakeholders to want the CAFA to have an expanded mandate in order to respond to some of the community's needs. CAFA decision-makers must proceed with caution and focus on activities which avoid duplication and complement existing services.

Although we have made broad recommendations, because of the upcoming strategic planning exercise, we have refrained from making specific ones on the future directions of the CAFA. We trust that this report will be useful to the CAFA and its partners in making their decisions.

6.5 Conclusion

The CAFA is part of a broader movement or **"projet de soci•t•"** which is starting to emerge in Prescott-Russell and in Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry. More and more stakeholders realize that the region's prosperity and economic and social development opportunities hinge greatly on raising education levels. Better educated people have a greater potential of getting better paying jobs which in turn contribute to more economic activity and greater quality of life in the community.

The extent to which the CAFA is able to demonstrate the link between higher literacy levels and economic development will largely determine its success in securing long-term financing. Making local politicians at all levels more aware of the CAFA's impact would help in enlisting their support.

There is no question that the CAFA is a viable model that works for Prescott-Russell Counties. (Whether it is sustainable in the long term is the central question.) All the key players are at the table. The level of collaboration and "concertation" is uncommon. The success of the CAFA rests foremost on its partners being involved and supportive. There are, to our knowledge, no similar structures in French-speaking communities, and specifically in rural communities in Ontario.

What has helped make this experiment successful is the fact that it is happening in a small region where there are a limited number of partners and basically no duplication or overlap in education and training services. Part of its success is also related to its grassroots nature, i.e. it is not a mandated program, it was not created by a funder, it exists outside of the bureaucratic framework.

While this model cannot and should not be replicated exactly as is (there can be no "cookie cutter" approach in this area), the CAFA instruments and protocols could be adapted by other regions. As the CAFA experience becomes better known, it could snowball and convince HRDC, OW and MET administrators that a single point of access for assessment and referral is a cost-effective first step in better serving the client and in moving towards integrated planning and programming.

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Epilogue
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The draft report on the CAFA was circulated to the Development Committee for comments. Three meetings then took place in June 1999.

Meeting #1 with the Development Committee

The Development Committee met on the morning of June 8th to discuss the draft case study. Report highlights were presented. Partners who joined the CAFA later were pleased to learn about its history. Members felt that, on the whole, the story reflected faithfully the reality of the CAFA's development and challenges. Only a few minor changes were suggested.

The Committee reacted to the report and looked at the CAFA in a somewhat broader context. Putting client needs first has always been a priority for the CAFA. While learners have different needs (academic upgrading, employment support, etc), no one organization in Prescott-Russell is looking at the client as a whole person and trying to identify how to best meet the broad range of learner needs. Currently, the CAFA deals primarily with the front-end assessment of training needs and academic skills; it directs learners to the appropriate training program; it does part of the transition between programs and does some client tracking. It has limited impact on the programming offered to clients. Given where the CAFA fits into this overall framework, the question that arises is: does the CAFA want to be more comprehensive to serve the different needs of clients?

Related questions which the CAFA should address are: what are the community's needs? Who should decide what the needs are? Who should respond to those needs? Because no one in the region has the mandate to define the needs, each organization and each funder end up deciding in isolation what these needs are. At the same time, it is clear that the CAFA cannot be expected to meet all community needs.

There was consensus among Development Committee members that the CAFA must document client success in order to demonstrate to funders and to the community the savings which training organizations and referring agencies realize. A clear business case needs to be made to the Ministry of Education and Training, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, municipalities and the Federal Government. Another priority is to consolidate the CAFA's existing work.

If the CAFA decides to broaden its mandate, the group should focus on new projects which generates excitement in people in order to create sustained commitment and support in the community.

Putting it in a provincial perspective, the CAFA is ahead of other communities because it has achieved consensus among key players on a common assessment tool which was developed

collectively. It is past the point of simply eliminating overlaps in programs and is ready to build a common future.

Meeting #2 with Key Stakeholders

In the afternoon of June 8ᵗʰ, a second meeting took place with key stakeholders in the community, including senior program administrators and potential funders. The goal of the meeting was to sensitize decision-makers to the CAFA's accomplishments and challenges and to explore long-term funding. After an overview presentation of the CAFA, the issues of costs and return on investment were raised. Some partners talked about the benefits of the CAFA (for example, for Ontario Works, it provides a neutral assessment of learners' basic competencies û a big time-saving for OW staff; for the school boards, the CAFA has generated an increase in registrations for adult credit courses).

However, concern was expressed that partners' financial contributions must be made on an equitable basis. It was pointed out that the CAFA does more than simply assess and "dispatch" learners to a training program: it encourages collaboration and networking among partners who work jointly in a spirit of continuous improvement to best serve clients' needs. To have OW ask one of its employees to do from its premises the academic assessment of its clients would defeat the whole purpose of the CAFA.

The CAFA is supported by the Federal Government (through HRDC) and by the municipal government (through OW). The provincial government is the only level of government who has made no commitment to fund the CAFA (other than some developmental funding from the Ministry of Education and Training, given jointly with the National Literacy Secretariat). There was strong support for the idea that MET should contribute financially and that the onus should not be only on the Literacy and Basic Skills Section; other programs such as adult credit courses and vocational training also benefit from a centralized assessment, which is combined with the proactive recruitment of learners.

The Eastern Ontario Training Board representative offered to obtain funding for the preparation of a business plan for the CAFA, based on the strategic plan developed by the Development Committee. The business plan would analyze the costs of the service and document the benefits of the CAFA to partners and taxpayers. It would also identify funding sources.

Another meeting with the stakeholders group is planned for the Fall.

Meeting #3 with the Development Committee

The purpose of the June 22ⁿᵈ meeting was to review possible future directions for the CAFA and to further develop a common vision by exploring some of the possibilities described in Section 5 of the report. Committee members were led through a "free association exercise" and were asked to select an object which represented the CAFA and to share their insights with the group. Their perception of the CAFA as a gathering element, a web of complementary services, an innovative experiment, a neutral service, etc. were indicative of the respect they have for the organization, its mandate and its effectiveness.

The CAFA's current mandate was summarized for the group. After reviewing and providing feedback on the 14 scenarios outlined in Section 5 of this report, Development Committee members were asked to select the five which they felt the CAFA should be pursuing in the next three to five years. This exercise was done individually, using a numerical rating system.

To help the discussion, it was suggested that the **14 scenarios could be grouped under three headings**:

a) **Current mandate dealing with training** (scenarios 1, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14).
b) **A broadening of the CAFA mandate** to respond to other learner needs (scenarios 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 11, 12).
c) **Planning and coordination mechanisms** (scenarios 5, 10).

The scenarios which received the most support are, in order of preference:

1 û Creating a single point of access for all adult education services (scenario 2).
2 û Linking assessment and referral process to career orientation (scenario 11).
3 û Targetting small and medium-sized businesses (scenario 8).
4 û Becoming more involved in the Labour Adjustment Program (scenario 12).
5 û Merging training and employment into a one-stop service centre (scenario 3).
6 û Using the CAFA as a forum for educational services planning in Prescott-Russell (scenario 5).

If we refer to the above groupings, two of the selected scenarios deal with the current mandate, three advocate an extension of the mandate and one is a planning and coordination mechanism.

The CAFA's **current and potential challenges** (Section 4.3) were reviewed. On the funding front, it is clear that the uncertainty generated by the recent creation of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the devolution of federal powers to the province in the area of labour force training will impede the CAFA's efforts to sensitize senior public servants to the need to invest in community-based assessment and referral mechanisms.

Even though the absence of an autonomous structure for the CAFA is not viewed as an obstacle, the Committee agreed that the organization should start moving gradually towards a distinct and permanent structure, even if the issue of long-term funding has not yet been resolved. Administrative autonomy may be desirable, but pedagogical independence is what really matters at the moment. In this respect, the neutrality of the assessment process and the validity of the tools meet everyone's expectations. While partners are satisfied with the current administrative arrangements, they see that an autonomous organization would increase partners' commitment and involvement in the management of the CAFA.

Regarding the visibility of the CAFA, it is not within its current mandate to publicize its services to serve the general public. It was agreed that current agreements with service providers and referring agencies must first be strengthened before a marketing campaign is designed to invite adults to go back to school and use CAFA services.

The Committee then brainstormed on the **strengths and assets** of the CAFA. Many of these can be found in Sections 4.2 and 6.2 of this report.

Each person was then asked to assess each of the six scenarios selected earlier by the group, using the following **criteria** as a guide:

1 û Responds to important community needs.
2 û Generates community support.
3 û Can be implemented without too much resistance or difficulty.
4 û Makes me personally enthusiastic.
5 û Does not duplicate existing services.
6 û Preserves the neutrality and independence of the CAFA.

The results of this priorization exercise were as follows:

1 û Creating a single point of access for all adult education services (scenario 2).
2 û Linking assessment and referral process to career orientation (scenario 11).
3 û Using the CAFA as a forum for educational services planning in Prescott-Russell (scenario 5).
4 û Becoming more involved in the Labour Adjustment Program (scenario 12).
5 û Targetting small and medium-sized businesses (scenario 8).
6 û Merging training and employment into a one-stop service centre (scenario 3).

Because of time constraints, it was not possible to discuss each individual scenario in depth. Nonetheless, a few observations emerged from the results:

-   the Committee saw the need to consolidate existing training services, whether through the creation of a single point of access for clients or of a regional planning forum.
-   all 6 scenarios were seen as an expression of important community needs which are not met at the moment.
-   most options were viewed as preserving the neutrality of the CAFA.
-   the single point of access and the career orientation scenarios generated the most excitement.
-   there is a desire to ensure that learners receive more information and support in finding the training program which corresponds to labour market needs (hence the emphasis on career orientation and the merging of training and employment programs).
-   the merging of training and employment programs was considered one of the most difficult scenarios to achieve.
-   the outreach to small businesses and the involvement with the Labour Adjustment Program complement and expand on the existing work within manufacturing industries.

It was suggested that CAFA partners must work to develop the services necessary to meet identifiable community needs, rather than wait for the Government to prescribe what needs to be done, especially during the transition period which is expected under the devolution of federal programs. It was also pointed out that the development of the CAFA, and the very real cooperation to date, has been an act of courage by trying to bring elements of the education and training community together to provide a necessary and common service to many clients.

Now that the CAFA has selected broad strategic directions, its next challenge is to examine which priority or priorities should be pursued.   A sub-committee has been formed to review the results of the discussion and to look at the implications of each scenario (with objectives, means and outcomes for each scenario). This information will then become part of the business plan which will be developed this Fall.

Conclusion

The preparation of a strategic plan and a business plan marks the beginning of an important step in the CAFA's evolution. The 14 scenarios for the future which are described in this report were identified by Development Committee members themselves who also had input into which ones should be considered a priority in the coming years. This involvement in the CAFA's future will help create a sense of ownership and empowerment and strengthen the foundation on which rests the organization.

Appendix A

List of Individuals Interviewed

Bertrand Rochon	CAFA staff
Carole Dupuy	

Training and Education Service Providers

Donald Lurette	Centre d'alphab•tisation de Prescott
Diane Dugas	Management Committee
Louise Lalonde	Centre d'alphab•tisation Moi, j'apprends
Diane Coombs	Prescott-Russell Reading Program
Chantal Bertrand	•cole des adultes de Prescott-Russell
Marie-Christine Gill	La Cit• coll•giale
Gilbert H•roux	Coll•ge d'Alfred de l'Universit• de Guelph
	Chair, CAFA Development Committee

Referring Agencies

Anne Comtois-Lalonde	Ontario Works
Johanne Portelance	
Carole L•onard	Human Resources Development Canada
Pierre Leblanc	IVACO Rolling Mills
Andr• Roy	Centre de services • l'emploi de Prescott-Russell
Caroline Arcand	
Andr• Rouleau	Job Connect/Connexion emploi
Michel Guilbeault	
Martin Bonhomme	Town of Hawkesbury

Others

Marc Brabant	Learner, Centre d'alphab•tisation de Prescott
Debbie Fawcett	Learner, •cole des adultes de Prescott-Russell
Nycol Vinette	Ministry of Education and Training
Robert Dupuis	Ministry of Education and Training

Denis Thibault   Eastern Ontario Training Board

Part IV: London-Middlesex

Clients do not care which government provides a particular service. They are looking for assistance and only want to tell their story once. They do not want to be shuffled from one person to another because of arcane jurisdictional niceties. [1]

"One size does not fit all". Ontario must take a 'bottom up' regional approach to economic development, not impose solutions from Queen's Park. [2]

It is impossible not to be impressed with the efforts -- and the results -- of the London-Middlesex employment and training community. In what follows, the broad outlines of the some of their work will be presented. However, it is just a summary. Having attended meetings of two of the major planning bodies over nearly a year, having read countless documents and having interviewed nearly three dozen individuals who administer and deliver a broad range of employment and training (hereafter, E&T) programs, it is clear that there is so much more that cannot be simply captured on paper. [3]

The importance of the work summarized in this section is, hopefully, obvious: communities can find creative ways to both identify and address their needs; obstacles can be overcome, but it takes many efforts and includes several elements. It cannot be stressed too strongly that what follows is but a description at a particular point in time. Work is ongoing and the structures and processes continue to develop. The atmosphere among the many members of the E&T community in London-Middlesex is one of actively engaging the many challenges which they have identified. And there are, of course, many challenges identified by those we heard from. However, it is extremely encouraging to have seen the energy which so many individuals have brought to bear for the benefit of the community.

IV. 1 Background

As a major urban centre in southwest Ontario, the City of London and surrounding area of Middlesex County have a population of approximately 400,000 (nearly 85% of which is in the City of London). London-Middlesex comprises nearly seventy percent of the population of Local Board 15, which also includes Elgin and Oxford counties. [4]   A majority of the working age population have at least a high school education, with more than twenty percent holding post-secondary credentials. Of course, there are also many individuals with considerably less education: ten percent have no secondary school, and older workers, who represent more than a third of the working age population, report lower levels of formal schooling, which is true across the province. Women comprise over half of the working age population; visible minorities are approximately five percent, persons with disabilities six percent; and nearly twenty percent of the working age population are youth.

The Local Board identified a diverse industrial base with the major industries reported as Trade (18% of the labour force), Health and Social Services (11%), and seven other groups with between 5.5% and 7.5% of the workforce (including Education; Finance, Insurance and Real Estate; Agriculture; Transportation, Communications and Utilities; Personal Services; Accommodations, Food and Beverage; Transportation Equipment Manufacturing; and Construction).

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[1] Deloite and Touche Consulting Group, cited in Partners in Employment *Business Plan and Alternative Proposal for the Development and Implementation of a Coordinated System of Access and Intake* (April 1999; p. 1)

[2] Ontario Jobs and Investment Board, *A Road Map To Prosperity; Section III: Priorities for the 21st Century* p.11 (1999).

[3] I owe sincere thanks to all those who spoke so very candidly with me and welcomed me at so many of their meetings. I apologize in advance for not being able to do justice to the complexity of their understandings and the tasks they have taken on. Though there was much additional information provided which has not been included here, I trust that my description of major activities and my understandings of the approaches offered will reflect my deep respect for their commitments.

[4] The statistics are taken from the Local Board's "Environmental Scan" (January 1998), but are generally 1991 Census data.

More specific to London-Middlesex (rather than the larger local board area), in 1995 the community estimated that nearly one-quarter of the labour force was either unemployed or on social assistance including 32,000 employable adults as well as more than six thousand sole support parents and nearly the same number of disabled adults.[5]

Also, similar to other communities, services to the large number of social assistance recipients are considerable and, historically, have been provided by each of the three levels of government which have funded a number of different programs to meet client needs, in addition to the several forms of income support to individuals and families. There are more than fifty service providers, small and large agencies, funded by the different levels of government (and different departments and ministries within each level of government) to meet identified needs and provide specific services to particular groups in the community.

As in other communities in the province, London-Middlesex has also had to respond to the broader economic changes which have taken hold (e.g. globalization, moves to a more knowledge-based economy, part-time and contract employment, etc.), as well as the specific changes in the development of programs in Ontario as each successive government has designed what it felt would be the best approach to providing assistance to those in need. These changes, whether legislative and regulatory, cultural or organizational (including "devolution" of responsibilities to other levels of government) have been important factors in developing some of the approaches considered by the E&T community, in London-Middlesex as elsewhere in the province.

A May 1996 report identified several specific factors which suggested the need for a new approach to service delivery planning and management including (i) the withdrawal of governments from direct service delivery; (ii) the devolution of responsibility to other levels of government, and to local communities; (iii) the movement from an "entitlement-based" approach to a "needs based" approach (and, therefore, the need for a community needs assessment); (iv) concerns with program gaps, duplication and competition among providers resulting, in part, from the fragmentation and proliferation of programs and services (and which leads to considerable frustration on the part of consumers); (v) lack of program and service integration; (vi) the need for greater accountability; and (vii) the need for leadership and an overall strategy.[6]

It is against the backdrop of changes over more than a decade that elements of the employment and training community have come together in an effort to try to ensure that the services provided by the variety of government and non-government providers would be as effective and efficient as possible in addressing client needs. Of course, other communities have faced many of the same environmental factors. What makes London-Middlesex unique among communities has been the extent to which there have been some collective, rather than individual, responses.

IV.2 Two Key Partnerships Involved in Planning E&T Service Delivery

As we would expect, some of the most important developments within the E&T community in London-Middlesex have come from long-standing relationships. In many, if not most, communities in the province, some senior officials have been involved for many years and have a considerable history with each other. In London-Middlesex, key officials from the federal and provincial governments (HRDC and provincial Ministry of Community and Social Services) provided the impetus for creation of a "labour market planning council", which was formally founded in July 1992 as the London-Middlesex Labour Market Planning Council (hereafter LMPC), with the expressed purpose:

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[5]London-Middlesex LMPC "jobLink Ontario Funding Proposal" (LMPC, February 27, 1995)
[6]*Creating Partnerships That Work: Employment and Training Restructuring Plan for London-Middlesex* (Draft, May 1996; IER Planning, Research and Management Services); pp. 1-14.

> *To contribute to the prosperity and well-being of the people of London and Middlesex through innovative labour market planning; to develop an organized and integrated planning process, to identify needs, share information, plan for services and resources, and promote community growth and development.*

Of course, this is a most ambitious statement, but it has been operationalized in a variety of ways over the years. The many people we spoke with share a view that the history of planning and coordination activities in London-Middlesex is, first and foremost, a function of particular individuals who had a "vision" without which the prospects for productively coming together would have been considerably less. There had been, to that time, many individual partnerships and joint activities and a long history of inter-agency groups established to share information and collaborate on particular projects. The nurturing and broadening of these relationships, however, required both form and function of which the creation of the London-Middlesex Labour Market Planning Council (LMPC) was an important step.[7]

A second important step was the creation, in 1994, of a working group of funding organizations. Initially entitled the "Funders Forum", the group is now known as the "Employment & Training Service Funders for London and Middlesex" (though we will continue to refer to it as the Funders Forum, as does the community; hereafter FF).[8] It has taken on a number of responsibilities and sponsored a number of important initiatives which are discussed below. Membership on the FF has included representatives of the City of London, Middlesex County, HRD/C, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Ministry of Education and Training, and the United Way of London-Middlesex.[9]

The importance of each of these bodies - and their relationship - cannot be overstated. The LMPC, comprised largely of service providers[10], is a key forum for those delivering programs and has taken on important projects which have provided a focus for the development of the partnerships necessary to effectively plan for -- and deliver -- more effective programming. The FF has ensured that there is an effective mechanism to begin to develop some approaches to shared decision-making among the various levels and departments of government, as well as to connect the E&T community to its broader goal of contributing to both individual development and the health and vitality of the community as a whole. Each group has developed strategic plans which reflect their shared goals and the tasks they have agreed will help realize the goals. While we cannot discuss each and every initiative of either group, several are central to the approaches to integrated planning and more effective service delivery developed in London-Middlesex.

IV.3 Vision and Roles

The idea of an integrated system is neither new nor unique to the London-Middlesex E&T community; few people would want otherwise and governments at all levels and of all political persuasions have promoted this vision. What is unique, perhaps, is the leadership and the particular activities that have been developed in an effort to try to have a true system emerge from the variety of employment and training activities.

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[7]There may have been some feeling that the LMPC has been "a creature of the Feds". However, the LMPC is now generally perceived to be operating independently and it enjoys the confidence of the community and its members.
[8]The history of the Funders' Forum indicates that it was, initially, "sponsored" by the LMPC. The interaction between the FF and LMPC is indeed complex. However, it is important to note that the evolution of the FF has, at this point, allowed both bodies to collaborate while functioning largely independently of each other, which may be one of the principal strengths of their relationship.
[9]Over the course of this project, the Ministry of Education and Training did not have a presence at the FF. While staff from particular MET-funded programs have attended on different occasions in the past, the absence of someone who regularly represents the range of provincially-funded education and training programs is an important concern.
[10]While the more than one hundred members of the LMPC are mostly agencies providing specific services from the public, private, and community-based sectors, there are also a number of individual members, as well as deliberately overlapping participation of members of the FF, particularly on the Steering Committee.

In *Planning for the Future* , the Funders Forum May 1997 outline of strategic directions, the funders collectively defined the service system as

> *a comprehensive range of services and supports which are organized into a coordinated, integrated, and interactive network to meet the multiple and changing employment and training needs of youth and adults in the community.*[11]

Recently, the FF reiterated their vision and clarified their objectives as part of their current review of "roles, responsibilities and planning priorities". The June 1999 "Update Bulletin" notes that

> *The individual and collective decisions of the E&T Service Funders to realize this vision will be based on principles that result in a service system that:*
> * *ensures access to services by consumers and employers*
> * *promotes consumer self-sufficiency and independence*
> * *responds to the diverse needs of employers*
> * *utilizes human, financial and other resources effectively and efficiently*
> * *demonstrates collaboration between service providers*
> * *reflects a fair and equitable distribution of services*
> * *measures results based on outcomes.*

In *Planning for the Future* , the funders also articulated their understanding of their roles and responsibilities as "a voluntary consortium of management representatives who are responsible for the allocation of public and voluntary funds to support E&T Services in London and Middlesex." The Terms of Reference includes the following primary roles for the Funders Forum:

> * *sharing information among funders;*
> * *strengthening linkages between funders;*
> * *exploring strategies to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of resources;*
> * *collaborating to develop a plan that responds to identified service system priorities;*
> * *monitoring the implementation of strategies in the E&T Service System Plan.*

The funders also committed themselves as a group to share responsibility for five more specific tasks, included in the Terms of Reference:

> * *Develop a communication strategy to ensure that all key stakeholders of the E&T Service System in London and Middlesex are informed of the purpose, composition and activities of the E&T Service Funders for London and Middlesex.*
> * *Explore collaborative initiatives between funders to address identified system needs.*
> * *Implement strategies to improve access to available employment and training services in London and Middlesex.*
> * *Develop an E&T Service System Plan for London and Middlesex.*
> * *Monitor the ability and capacity of the service system to respond to the training and employment needs of the community.*

The Funders Forum generally meets monthly and while this may seem frequent, their meetings are well attended, substantive, and perceived to be productive and well organized. The chair has passed from the representative of the Ministry of Community and Social Services to the Commissioner of Community Services for the City of London, which also provides some staff support. Following their recent review, the group agreed to continue to meet regularly, to make decisions through consensus, and to proceed a bit more formally.[12]

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[11]*Planning for the Future*; p. A-1.

[12]My personal appreciation to Glen Howlett, Commissioner of Social Services, and other city staff, and to the current members of the Funders Forum, cannot be overstated.

In responding to *Planning for the Future* , the LMPC developed their own "Business Plan" which includes a mission statement and three strategic directions, each with several specific objectives, as well as four themes which complement the Funders' principles:

Focus: consumer-focused; community-focused; partnerships
Quality of Service: responsive; accessible; equitable; effective
Value: cost-effective, viable, sustainable
Well-Managed: cooperative; coordinated; collaborative; accountable.[13]

The LMPC Mission Statement included several "roles" that the LMPC membership agreed to explore.

• *Create an organized and integrated planning process to identify needs, trends, share information, plan for services and resources, and promoted community growth and development...*
• *Encourage commitment of our members to a full range of community initiatives developed to meet identified needs.*
• *Develop a network of community-based organizations, consumers, labour, employers, funders, service providers, educators, representing both rural and urban contexts.*
• *Ensure access is available to employment and training opportunities for people in London and Middlesex County.*
• *Facilitate linkages with existing and new employers, as well as agencies providing labour market services.*
• *Market the L/M labour force in collaboration with community and economic development partners.*

While each of these principles and themes is important, the funders and service providers are clearly committed to ensuring that the employment and training community works together to create a "system", rather than merely a menu or collection of services, through some particular directions and activities.

IV.4 Directions, Goals and Objectives

In their May 1997 document, *Planning for the Future*, the FF offered three strategic directions and particular objectives to reflect these directions.

Service System Access and Coordination. "Coordinated access to the E&T service system is a collective responsibility." Specific objectives included the invitation for providers to develop collaborative proposals for more coordinated access for clients of the service system; and identification of sources within existing resources to support more coordinated access.

Collaboration. "Funding Allocations will reflect a commitment to collaboration as a means of responding to the employment needs of consumers and the labour market requirements of employers in London and Middlesex." Specific objectives included (i) reviewing government policies and directions to determine opportunities for collaboration among funders (ii) gathering information to determine priorities together with the community, (iii) jointly determining some priorities, (iv) ensuring collaboration between service providers, and (v) collectively developing processes to reduce duplication of funding.

Accountability. "Funding Allocations for E&T services will be directly linked to identified priorities and service system outcomes." Specific objectives included (i) the development of "an accountability framework that reflects their individual and collective tracking, evaluation and monitoring responsibilities", (ii) together with key community partners, the design and implementation of "a common information system to produce reliable data that is required to monitor the ability of service providers to effectively and efficiently utilize resources", and (iii) "employment and training service outcomes will be adopted by funders".

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[13]These four themes had been identified in the May 1996 IER Report cited above.

Also included in the May 1997 document are several particular tasks the funders identified as the focus for their work toward achieving each objective. Not all of these tasks were achieved in the two years since their strategic plan was developed. However, based on the recent review of their work, it is clear a great deal was achieved in some important areas.[14]

In addition to supporting a vision and principles for a more integrated service delivery system, the LMPC identified three broad areas related to the Funders Forum goals, each with several specific objectives, which were to form the basis for LMPC activities.[15]

Community Planning, including working to develop a community planning process that is inclusive, coordinating community initiatives, providing advice to partners and funders regarding priorities, participating in developing funding proposals, expanding the funding base to support community initiatives;

Service Coordination, including communicating information regarding the changing employment and training environment to members, developing standards for E&T service delivery in partnership with funders, collaborating in the development of pilot projects, ensuring the consumer remains at the centre through access and choice, appropriate information and encouraging "a seamless approach to customer service"; developing common assessment and client information systems; cooperating on implementation of the funders *Planning for the Future;*

Labour Market Information, including participation in data collection and development of community needs assessments; and developing a communications strategy for disseminating labour market information, and becoming a vehicle for linking information with community development.

In an effort to carry out these directions and participate in the specific projects, the LMPC has been able to secure funding from the FF (shared among the several funders) for a "project leader" and part of a clerical staff; and space (one office and use of meeting space) is provided by one of the member agencies in the SkillCentre building where several agencies are located. The FF also supports particular projects.

The LMPC has a Steering Committee of interested members, as well as *ex officio* members representing the funders, holds regular meetings and has recorded minutes. The chair (or co-chairs) are selected annually. In addition to several general membership meetings held throughout the year, members beyond the steering committee participate in specific projects, and the views of the membership as a whole is solicited for each of the initiatives the LMPC is leading or when the provider community is asked to respond to other initiatives.

The goals and directions cited above show how each group understands its purposes and their intended activities. As well, as noted above, the development of these two groups has been impressive. Both groups have functioned essentially in a collegial manner; both encourage participation and the involvement of groups or agencies which have an interest in each project; both have continued to develop their roles and pursue their projects with limited, but well used, resources.[16]

There are several lessons and challenges we can note from discussions with participants in both the LMPC and FF. However, before outlining some of what we might learn from their efforts, it is important to briefly describe some of the major initiatives which they have nurtured.

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[14]The FF engaged the services of a facilitator to assist with the development of their 1997 plan and invited her back to help them evaluate their progress and support their continued development. It is to their credit and hers that they have used the time and process so well.

[15]The LMPC identified five broad goals in "London and Middlesex Employment and Training Service System Overview"; LMPC, December 8, 1998.

[16]The FF has a limited amount of staff time provided by the City of London for its ongoing work (including minutes, agendas, reporting). City staff also provide much of the liaison with, and coordination of, particular projects carried out by the LMPC or others. On several of the projects, additional costs (e.g. for dedicated, contract staff, as well as equipment or other expenses) are generally shared between the other members of the FF.

IV.5. Some specific projects

At least some indication of the vitality of the statements and intentions articulated by the LMPC and the FF can be seen from the ways they have chosen to pursue their vision and directions. There are several projects which illustrate their commitments to coordination, collaboration and accountability and from which we can learn about some important characteristics of effective and integrated community planning.

IV.5.1 CLEAR

The Canada-London Employment Assessment and Referral (CLEAR) project was begun as a partnership between the Federal and Municipal governments. The objective is

> *to identify, develop and implement, or support the implementation by others, of innovative approaches in the provision of employment support services for individuals eligible for assistance under HRIF* [Human Resource Investment Fund] *criteria.*[17]

This original project (now referred to as CLEAR I) was "to enhance the labour market support services delivered in the community and to identify and implement efficiencies". Additional activities were introduced in 1997 involving the delivery of HRDC "employment information" and "employment support network" sessions (referred to as CLEAR II); and integration of Resource Centre staff and activities (CLEAR III). Among other factors, these additions came as a result of the City of London becoming an Ontario Works site and HRDC implementing new directions such as Flexible Income Support and Alternate Service Delivery.

The opportunity, however, was seen as directly related to realizing some important goals in collaboration and integrated service delivery. In particular, CLEAR I had the two levels of government cooperating in the provision of "a seamless approach and enhanced services for HRDC/OW clients" including service co-location, the development and use of common assessment and referral instruments and processes, collaborative training of staff, and more efficient and effective relationships with community partners. Most important, the project is seen as providing an appropriate "single door" for clients and the community, beginning with social assistance recipients.

It is interesting to note that, in designing the service model, the two levels of government were able to draw upon several previous initiatives from the E&T community; in particular, the community's jobLink proposal (February 1995) which had outlined the type of cooperation in delivery that might be most effective in meeting client needs.[18] A key element in that proposal and the initial CLEAR delivery was that

> *The model makes a distinction between individuals who are self-directed, those who need minimal assistance and those who require more intense follow-up. The model was adopted because it ensures that services are provided according to need, which in turn increases cost-effectiveness.*[19]

It should be noted that the distinction in levels of service which need to be provided to clients and the organization of initial service delivery to account for these differences has become a commonly accepted approach in other jurisdictions.

In addition, the early CLEAR project led to the development of an approach to common assessment which has formed the basis for continued work by the LMPC to be implemented more widely among employment and training service providers and across the range of funded programs.

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[17]CLEAR Activity Report for April 1, 1997 to March 27, 1998.

[18]It may be important to note that the jobLink proposal was prepared by the LMPC as a special project supported by the FF, and was submitted by area managers for COMSOC and HRDC as well as the co-chairs of the LMPC.

[19]CLEAR Project Update to City of London Community and Protective Services Committee; June 18, 1996.

From the outset, the CLEAR project collected some systematic information from both intake and follow-up in an effort to learn from the program and ensure accountability to each partner. As well, the initial success was seen to be evidence that the different levels of government could indeed collaborate with each other and with community partners in the provision of "an integrated income and employment support system."

CLEAR II and III (workshop and resource centre activities, respectively) can also be seen as supporting the basic thrust to integrated service delivery. Workshop sessions were designed and delivered by CLEAR staff and figures show that attendance at these sessions grew from over three hundred clients (at each of two types of sessions) in 1996 to more than seven thousand clients at over 120 sessions in the 1997-98 fiscal year. The joint Resource Centre reported serving between three hundred and six hundred clients daily.[20] Currently, resource centre activities are delivered through a combination of partnerships between HRDC and the City, and HRDC and several library locations.[21] In addition, the projects funded under CLEAR II and III included the cross-training of staff (including City and HRDC staff, as well as staff from community-based service providers) to deliver individual and group assessments using the tools developed, group labour market information sessions (directly to clients) and group employment planning techniques (using a train-the-trainer model). A report to London City Council notes that

> *CLEAR project staff trained 172 staff from 31 agencies in the delivery of Common Assessment Training, Group Employment Planning, Counseling Assessment Training and Train the Trainer. As a result of the training it is expected that uniform employment assessment will be available and shared among agencies. These efforts are supporting the evolution of service delivery in this community towards a more streamlined and accessible employment and training system.*[22]

Finally with respect to the CLEAR initiatives, a survey of client satisfaction with the Resource Centres indicated that more than ninety percent of respondents were satisfied (a clear majority were "quite satisfied" and reported that they were helped "a great deal"); and a similar proportion said that they would return if needed and would recommend the service to a friend.

IV.5.2 Common Assessment Process (CAP)

As mentioned above, an important component of the CLEAR initiatives was the development and implementation of a common assessment process. Both the FF and the LMPC played important roles in this project which owes its origin, at least in part, to the collaborative development of the 1995 jobLink proposal with its emphasis on the need to develop a common approach to determining the level of services necessary to meet the needs of each client.[23] This objective was incorporated into the design of the CLEAR project and has since been extended to numerous other agencies providing E&T services to particular client groups and in the context of specific "funded programs".[24]

The instructions and forms currently being used (April 1999 version) provide for a process which focuses more on gathering important intake information for the "employment action plan", rather

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[20]Data taken from March 5, 1997 and April 22, 1998 reports to the Community and Protective Services Committee. The large number of clients served through the sessions and resource centre is not indicative of the caseload of those requiring more intensive services, be they EI or OW recipients.

[21]Delivery in Middlesex County include co-locations in five centres, the largest of which - the GAINS Centre in Strathroy - also delivers several other E&T services through a partnership among providers.

[22]Commissioner of Community Services Report to the Community and Protective Services Committee of London City Council; April 22, 1998; p.2.

[23]"It was suggested that the greatest frustrations of consumers are the need for constant assessment and reassessment for different programs. Creation of a single assessment was seen as a vital activity in the 'new' system." (*Creating Partnerships That Work*; IER Planning, Research and Management Services, May 1996; p. 19).

[24]"Funded programs" refers to each of the distinct funding streams through which services have been supported by one of the levels of government. Examples include Literacy and Basic Skills, Job Connect, Appreticeship, Adult Credit (each supported through the former MET); Ontario Disabilities Support Program (Ministry of Community and Social Services); Employment Supports workshops, Resource Centres, and Skill Development Education Grants (HRDC); as well as specific programs funded through other ministries (e.g. Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs).

than the more intensive academic or vocational assessment instruments and processes that many practitioners (particularly in Literacy and Basic Skills programs) associate with "assessment".[25]

The categories of information include: (1) Employment Goal(s); (2a) Education and Training, (2b) Skills and Experience, (2c) Employment History, and (2d) Interests and Hobbies; (3) Job Search Readiness and Maintenance; and (4) Personal or Environmental Situation (which includes language background, family status and responsibilities, and income support). The forms continue with both an "overall" and a "step-by-step" action plan including the agency and specific services to which the client is being referred, as well as agency contact information (including name, initial appointment and start dates) and expected outcomes and results for the client. It is expected that both the client and the referring assessor will work together to develop the action plan and both are expected to provide any additional comments and to sign the plan.

The agreement between client and referring assessor (regardless of how they came to the assessor or agency) is central to several components of the "service delivery standards" (outlined below) including standards for how the plan is to be developed, as well as important responsibilities of individual agencies in providing the services agreed to in the action plan.

The objective of the forms is to collect the information directly relevant to the development of an appropriate action plan. As such, it does not include additional information (either background or assessment) that might be relevant to those clients of particular programs who have other than employment goals.

While the use of the common assessment forms has been, to this point, optional for agencies, it is assumed that all providers will now use at least some version of it. This is particularly important since the development of the ET Link project (which is part of the ETN project discussed below) assumes that all agencies will enter or forward this basic information on all clients to the community-wide database.

In 1998, the LMPC and FF agreed on the need for an evaluation of the common assessment process in place from January 1996; in particular "to examine the utilization, impact (outcomes), general benefits, limitations/concerns, and training issues from the point of view of the various community agencies which have participated in the CAP project".[26] Interviews and surveys were conducted with the four government agencies involved, executive directors and managers of sixteen providers, and staff at these agencies. Among the conclusions of the study:

• A majority of agencies were using a "modified CAP"; that is, "the process but not the forms"; only a quarter used the full CAP and one in five did not use the process. However, 9 of 12 agencies also indicated that they used the CAP with 80-100% of their clients. Those agencies not using the CAP as intended indicated that funders required other specific information.

• Four (of sixteen) directors reported that action plans were completed with all clients; four others were not sure; and two others said that action plans were completed for some, but not all, clients.

• A significant number of referrals (665) were reported by the agencies surveyed, with a majority of staff reporting that they personally made referrals based on the assessments. However, more than two-thirds of agency directors reported no incoming referrals; and the "sum of all incoming clients... represents about 5% of the 665 estimated referrals made". Neither agency directors nor staff could provide an explanation for the limited number of referrals received.

• Most staff and directors reported that the process had contributed "somewhat" (42%) or "very much" (26% and 33%, respectively) "to the development of common client information, standards and procedures across community agencies"; less than one in five suggested it had contributed "very little" or "not at all". As well, both staff and directors felt that the process

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[25]Indeed, several practitioners referred to the tool as "small 'a' assessment", compared to the "large 'A' assessment" that is the focus of some program-specific processes. It is certainly a very different process than the common assessment developed for Eastern Ontario through the CAFA initiative, discussed in detail in Part III.
[26]*Common Assessment Process Study: Final Report* (Acumen Research; July 24, 1998); p. 1.

"had contributed to improved staff training and development, more consistent data collection and, to a lesser extent, increased trust in the assessment work completed by other agencies." However, neither the accuracy of referrals, nor reducing time and redundancy in intake and assessment were perceived to have been achieved by the use of the common assessment process.

• Overwhelmingly, staff and directors were extremely satisfied with the training provided on the use of the common assessment process. However, there was less satisfaction with the support provided in using the process, with a significant minority (about two in five) staff suggesting that they needed additional support, particularly from program funders. At the same time, three-quarters of directors and seventy percent of staff stated that they felt the process "was an appropriate tool to accomplish the goal of establishing consistent information, standards and procedures across community agencies".

• Among reported limitations, respondents were most concerned with the limited number of referrals where clients had CAP documentation, lack of coordination among funders' information requirements, different standards in the "quality" of information and documentation, lack of network and database support, and "the lack of a process to monitor the quality and consistency of assessment". Several of these concerns were the subject of the report's recommendations.

In addition to the development of the revised forms, two ongoing initiatives of the LMPC and FF directly address these concerns: the ETN project and the development of "service delivery standards", each of which is outlined below.

IV.5.3 The Employment and Training Network Project (ETN)

Begun as the Employment Technology Project, the origins of the ETN can be seen (at least) as far back as the 1995 jobLink proposal.[27] At that time, the E&T community put forward the notion that the development of a more integrated service delivery system required better information.

Growing out of the initial conception to develop a common database for both funders and program providers, the ETN has now become an important element in the infrastructure necessary to support a more coherent service delivery system. From the outset, the idea was to develop the common assessment information that would allow for the setting of expected outcomes, as well as for monitoring progress towards those outcomes, by both delivery organizations and program funders. The ET Link database was to be the major component in meeting this need.

The technical infrastructure would also provide access for clients to the range of information necessary for them to make informed decisions about the E&T services available. Similarly, program funders and planners wanted a system which would provide information for their decision-making including information on program delivery, demands for various kinds of programming, tracking, and the outcomes of employment and training services.

A working group was established representing both the program funders and delivery agencies (through the FF and LMPC, respectively). As another example of an important joint initiative, the group has progressed with planning, appointed a project manager, begun the technical work to build the network and has been increasingly involving the delivery agencies in the design and implementation plans for the system to be in place as soon as possible. A consultation process is being initiated to ensure that agencies have the opportunity to provide input on how the developing infrastructure can best meet their needs, while at the same time ensuring that it supports the funders' objectives for an information system that will support their decision-making.

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[27]As well, there was a 1993 report on the need for a "planning support system" of labour market information. While that report focused on getting comprehensive supply and demand data, the intended use was as a support for more effective employment service planning.

As with other projects, support has been garnered from the major funders, including the involvement of technical and program management staff from City of London, HRDC, the Ministry of Community and Social Services and the United Way. Each of the funders is represented on the Steering Committee, as is the LMPC; while most of the staff support seems to come from the City. Updates on the ETN project is one of several reported on regularly at FF meetings; and staff involved in the project were regularly present at the FF during the past year. Resources for the initiative now include a full-time project manager supported through the FF.

It is important to note that both the funders and delivery agencies consider the ETN as a key component for enhancing their individual and collective responsibilities for serving their clients, for planning and funding appropriate programs, and for ensuring accountability to their respective boards and departments. As such, the ETN can be seen to support each of the three strategic goals enunciated by the Funders Forum.

IV.5.4 Service Delivery Standards

The evolution of the relationships between and among funders and providers led to consideration of additional vehicles through which the E&T community as a whole might address the collaboration and accountability directions enunciated by the FF in *Planning for the Future*. One approach has been the development of "service delivery standards". As with other projects, this initiative has been overseen by a working group of providers and funders who, in turn, contracted with a consultant to develop a set of "Standards of E&T Service Delivery Components".

Following several consultation stages, the community is currently finalizing a document which sets out "values and practices" for all agencies, as well as standards for the delivery of services in the areas of: (1) Information, (2) Intake, (3) Employment Counseling, (4) Assessment, (5) Referral, (6) Employment Plan Preparation, (7) Employment Preparation, (8) Skills Training, (9) Work Experience, (10) Supported Employment, (11) Case Management, (12) Participant Follow-up, and (13) Evaluation. Each area includes a limited number of statements (between three and seven) which include some specific elements and responsibilities of that type of service.

While all agencies obviously will not be involved in delivering each and every one of the component services, those who do will be expected to provide services according to the agreed standards for that service. In addition, the standards may become an important component for providers in communicating with clients, establishing clear expectations for both clients and agencies, and as one aspect in their accountability to program funders.

It may be interesting to note that the language of the twelve "values and practices" statements in the standards is largely couched in terms of clients; that is, what program participants can expect from service providers and the E&T service system as a whole. For example, #1 states that "All participants have a collaboratively developed employment plan" and (#5) "Participants know which staff member at which agency is assigned to coordinate services from all of their service providers for the duration of their employment plan implementation." These statements clearly reflect not only statements of abstract values, but also some practical responsibilities to clients on the part of the service system as a whole and of individual delivery agencies.

The statements in the thirteen standards are important commitments on the part of providers to deliver a level and type of service which is employment focused and shares responsibility with clients for the successful development of an employment plan based on clear information, systematic intake and assessment, and appropriate counseling. Specific tools and techniques are not identified; but, rather, the approach of the standards is one of ensuring that the full range of components are considered. For example, the list of attributes for assessment identified in #4.1 include not only those traditionally associated with formal assessments, but also the broad range of skills associated with employability, both formal and life skill components.

The successful realization of the client's employment plan is equally a shared responsibility including the client's involvement in collaborative development of the plan, the agency to which s/he is referred, and a clear understanding of the expected outcomes of the training or work-based support s/he is participating in. Similarly, the statements indicate a range of specific responsibilities for agencies which are designed to both concretely demonstrate the agency's respect for the client as well as its responsibility to provide particular components to meet client needs. (For example, the statements indicate the specific services which agencies should provide to ensure the quality and appropriateness of work experience opportunities such as communicating expected outcomes, contacting employers, providing on-site job analysis, preparing contracts, ensuring that the experience is consistent with the participants' needs, that employers meet health, safety and employment standards, and providing ongoing facilitation, monitoring and/or interventions, if necessary. Similarly, for training programs, agencies and participants are expected to be clear about fourteen elements ranging from what knowledge and skills are to be included, to supports available, expectations, specific costs and practices regarding placement and follow-up.) The specific detail of the standards is assumed to provide both clients and agencies with clear and consistent expectations.

The FF is considering the Service Delivery Standards, as are the member agencies through the LMPC. The intention seems to be that, following approval of a final set of standards by both groups, each agency will begin implementation on a voluntary basis; and, over a period of time (as yet unspecified), the standards will be implemented across the E&T system in London-Middlesex.

The FF has identified the implementation of service standards as "the initial step in an Accountability Framework" (Update Bulletin; June 1999), along with the development of more common outcome measures for E&T services across the various funded programs. Several, but not all, funded programs have begun to incorporate specific outcome measures, and further effort is seen as necessary to develop a common approach. As well, it is assumed that the implementation of the ETN will be necessary to ensure that appropriate and timely information on client and program outcomes is available for monitoring and evaluation.

IV.5.5 Partners In Employment (PIE)/The Employment Alliance (TEA)

The development of the jobLink proposal, the design and implementation of the CLEAR projects, including the commitment to implement common assessment, were not the only community-wide efforts which have been productive. The accumulated trust and experience in achieving specific objectives through carefully designed projects informed the development of Partners in Employment (PIE) and the community's approach to serving the employment and training needs of the disabled in London-Middlesex.

An important initiative in the provision of services to those with disabilities, PIE developed from a 1995 overture from the regional manager of the Ministry of Community and Social Service to bring together many of their funded agencies to begin

> *to discuss the possibility of working together in a more collaborative manner. The environment suggested that funding resources were not expanding at a time when service pressures were increasing and the network of social services was about to undergo fundamental change...It was recognized that no planning authority for employment and training services for people with disabilities existed, and that a common vision or mission was not shared between service providers.*[28]

Following a series of "dialogue" meetings within the community, it was agreed that providers would indeed work together. (This process was undertaken in other communities as well.) In February 1997, representatives of PIE and the FF agreed that the goal would be "to move towards and integrated approach to creating employment opportunities for people with disabilities". With the support of the funders, PIE established a series of working groups to develop particular aspects of

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[28]*Employment and Training Service System for People with Disabilities*; Partners in Employment; October 1997; p.3

this mandate. Membership on the working groups was drawn from agencies which provide services to persons with disabilities, the three levels of government (i.e. Ministry of Community and Social Services, the City of London, HRDC), and consumers of E&T services for people with disabilities. Over a period of six months, the working groups involved more than 125 people.[29]

In October 1997, the Steering Committee of PIE presented a framework which outlined the objectives, tasks, timelines and responsibilities in order to realize specific implementation and outcome objectives for each of eight related components: (i) Access/Intake, (ii) Assessment, (iii) Training, (iv) Employment with Supports, (v) Job Development, (vi) Entrepreneurial, (vii) Supported Volunteerism, and (viii) Public/Employer Education.[30]

Following a prioritizing exercise, in April 1998 it was agreed that further work would proceed on two components: access/intake and job development. (In addition, PIE has continued to explore community and business education in order to promote the achievements of persons with disabilities who are employed successfully.) The focus on these two areas stemmed from a consensus that these areas represented important common functions of most, if not all, agencies; that is, all clients were involved in access and intake and, while all agencies did not necessarily have a large job development function, many do. In addition, there seems to have been consensus that employers were feeling frustrated by having to relate to job developers from numerous individual agencies and providing better service to employers was understood to be an important means to increase the employment prospects of persons with disabilities.[31]

In the Fall 1998, the FF agreed to support further work on these two components and, in particular, a pilot project to develop a consortium which would carry out the job development function of the various agencies which, to this point, had been operating independently. The Employment Alliance (TEA) was formally established in January 1999 with the participation of ten job developers from various agencies and with an independent coordinator to oversee the development of an integrated approach to job development for all persons with disabilities in London-Middlesex.[32] Funding for the coordinator was provided through the FF which will also ensure that an independent evaluation is conducted on the effectiveness of the consortium in more effectively meeting the needs of both employers and individual clients as customers of job development services.

An alternative to this consortium approach might have been to mandate a unified job development function with a single agency taking responsibility (possibly decided through a tendering process). It was the deliberate decision of the FF not to pursue this approach but, rather, to establish the consortium. This decision was not only consistent with the principle of seeking collaboration wherever possible; perhaps more important, the consortium is an attempt avoid some of the competitiveness between service providers, as well as to draw upon the expertise of job developers from all the member agencies. It is not possible as yet to say whether TEA will succeed in providing more - and more effective - service to both consumers and employers.

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[29]Not all agencies were delivering E&T services, nor were E&T services necessarily the largest component of the providers' services. However, agencies were invited to participate in the working groups given their experience with and commitment to those with disabilities. Over the course of the work, representatives of other agencies and institutions (e.g. hospitals, school boards, college, university, private trainers) as well as additional consumers were added to working group membership or became more involved through consultations.

[30]"E&T Service System for People with Disabilities - Outcomes" (August 14, 1997. It is part of the larger document *Employment and Training Service System for People with Disabilities*; Partners in Employment, London-Middlesex, October 1997.)

[31]It should be noted that some employers might be courted by different job developers from, for example, an agency for the blind, another representing an agency for the deaf, another representing an agency serving physically-challenged, etc. As one would expect, the range of disabilities is large as is the number of agencies.

[32]At this time, it was agreed that PIE would continue to work with its members on the other components, including the access/intake initiative.

PIE was asked to continue to work with its members on the other components, including the access/intake initiative. In July 1998, PIE presented an initial business plan for coordinated access and intake for persons with disabilities. The FF asked the working group to reconsider some of the elements and to prepare a revised plan for implementation of a "central access point". During the period of revisions, other changes in government policy and programs occurred, most notably, the development of the Ontario Disability Support Plan (ODSP). In April 1999, the PIE working group incorporated their understanding of these changes into a revised plan with a limited number of elements which they felt are crucial to any attempt to develop a more integrated intake function; specifically, development of a single location to serve as a focus for intake; the development of two "intake specialist" positions; cross-training of existing HRDC, OW and ODSP staff; and the development of a nine person steering committee (to include representatives of each level of government, PIE, consumers/families, and community representatives). The FF continues to support the concept in principle, and asked the PIE working group to develop a more extensive three-year business plan including phase-in plans, time frames, and possible savings.

IV.5.6 A Few More Collective Activities

In addition to the major initiatives described briefly above, there have been number of other tasks that both the LMPC and the FF have undertaken, either separately or together. For example, both groups have been involved in two large-scale projects to examine the coordination of a broader range of community services. The "Call to Action" (sponsored by the City of London) involved ten task groups with a mandate to identify the issues, challenges, roles and responsibilities, and ultimately offer recommendations; all in an effort to develop a coherent plan to address the needs of residents across London-Middlesex in areas ranging from "basic needs" to "prevention and recreation" to "services for families and individuals in crisis", "multiculturalism" and "children and youth". As one of the task groups, the E&T community was involved, over a two year period, through the FF, LMPC and as individual agencies, volunteers and consumers. Part of this process has continued through a consultant hired to coordinate responses and further develop approaches to service delivery planning. Both the FF and LMPC have been involved in providing input and responses to the consultant's work.[33]

The LMPC has also been a focal point for discussion and coordinating responses of the E&T providers to other initiatives. For example, over the past fall and winter (1998-99), the LMPC prepared a response to developments concerning a Federal-Provincial Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA). LMPC's project director ensured that the views of their membership were communicated to the relevant provincial officials through a paper prepared with the assistance of the steering committee.

Both the LMPC and FF maintain regular relationships with the Local Board which has requested input on a number of projects including several surveys of agencies and consumers in an effort to gain a better understanding of training needs.

The LMPC was also asked to coordinate an application process for a major employer who was in the process of hiring a considerable number of new workers. The liaison allowed for potential workers from the many training programs to be offered applications and, in many cases, interviews for these new positions. Many of the more than two thousand applicants may not have had the opportunity in the past to apply and to be seriously considered for such positions. The involvement of LMPC was designed to ensure that an "objective" organization (not any one of the many delivery agencies) could provide the logistical support for a rather complex application and selection

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[33]The *Integrated Report* (Call to Action, February 1998) was followed by a further discussion paper, released in the Fall 1998 (Ginsler and Associates, *Coordinating Community Service Planning and Delivery in London and Middlesex*, December 1998). Forums and individual responses were to be received over the Winter 1999, with a subsequent report based on the feedback.

process. Several providers we spoke with at the time suggested that the process was a signal from a large corporation that many E&T programs in London-Middlesex have been successful in supporting the development of their clients' employability necessary to meet the requirements of this major employer.

This task, while concentrated in a limited time period, exemplifies a rather different role for the LMPC than its more typical role in coordinating and representing the views of delivery agencies. The role was not inconsistent with other practical tasks it has participated in and, in fact, the LMPC has demonstrated the ability to move between involvement in policy and planning issues and involvement in many practical projects such as the ETN, common assessment, and the development of service delivery standards.

The Funders Forum, together with the LMPC and several other groups involved in delivering other services to youth (i.e. not E&T services), developed a "Downtown Youth" initiative. Obviously, this initiative operates "across systems"; that is, some E&T providers are involved, but also some providers of health, housing, counseling, and other social services.[34]

IV.6. Some Findings from London-Middlesex

While no two communities are alike, there may be some useful lessons which can assist others who are embarking on integrated planning or delivery initiatives. These observations and perceptions are followed by some suggestions specific to initiatives in London-Middlesex.[35]

IV.6.1 Having a Vision Helps

There is an unmistakable presence in London-Middlesex. In addition to the wide variety of practical planning and partnership activities, and the scope of service delivery by individual providers, there is a sense of a "big picture". It is not that everyone shares the same understanding or talks explicitly about it; only some do. However, the vision is there, everyone knows it, and it has an effect on so much of what people are involved in and their commitments to working together.

There is, however, no single statement of the vision; there are several. As outlined above, there are various statements of goals and directions, principles and values. In their 1997 document, the FF members merely stated that they "envision a service system that is designed to efficiently and effectively response to current and future employment and training needs of individuals, employers and the community as a whole." Like most such statements, it is pretty general and would be hard to object to.

However, one characteristic that perhaps makes London-Middlesex unique is that the members of the E&T community feel that the vision means something. There are probably many reasons for this, most important of which is that the delivery community sees that the funders - individually and collectively - have done much to try to embody the vision in what they do and what they ask service providers to do. This is not to suggest that everyone understands how the funders work, or believes that every decision made has been made collectively, or that there are no inconsistencies in decisions about particular needs or how they might be addressed. No one is that naive. But the community has, in fact, understood that the funders are serious because they've supported (in some cases required) projects and partnerships that have (a) been explicitly designed to provide better service to

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[34]While some might question the involvement of the FF in this initiative, the view was expressed several times that there was no other coordinating body available and, since the City is also delivering many of the other services (e.g. housing support, public health, transportation), their coordination would seem to be important.

[35]This discussion will include perceptions from the individuals who spoke freely, conclusions from documents and group discussions. The responsibility for the conclusions and suggestions, however supported, rests with me and should not be attributed to any of the many participants. The suggestions are offered in this document, but have also been discussed with members of the E&T community in London-Middlesex in the hope that they will find some specific benefit from their participation in the project.

clients and (b) helped providers and funders together to become more of a community. Whatever the frustrations felt by providers in London-Middlesex, the overwhelming (if not unanimous) perception is that the commitment to develop a coherent "system" of employment and training services is real. In addition, there is a important understanding that many of the particular projects and partnerships which have developed are directly related to realizing the shared goals.

This is no small achievement. It cannot be taken for granted that just having a vision will mean anything, that people share the vision (especially the people who actually have to deliver on it), or that the activities that people do are understood to be expressions of the vision. Indeed, while the broad London-Middlesex vision is not unique (many other jurisdictions have similar statements), there is an obvious credibility which comes through when funders and providers talk about what they're doing -- rather than about the vision itself. People seem clear that the context for the services being planned and provided in particular ways is an attempt (not always successful) to address the needs of clients and the difficulties clients have encountered in what has been a largely uncoordinated array of programs and services. In short, people generally know why they're doing many of the planning, development, and delivery activities and appreciate that these are part of a process designed to bring about a more coherent system.

Of course, this did not happen overnight. As outlined above, the shared commitments have taken years - many years - to develop and, while there may be no short cuts, there are some further lessons available.

One of the characteristics of the vision as it has developed in London-Middlesex is that there is a focus on the "practical", based on a limited number of elements. Specifically, the Funders Forum articulated three goals (or "strategic directions") which provide a clear focus. There are not five or ten or twenty; just three. And what they talk about is important: access, collaboration on funding, and accountability (i.e. that funding will be related to identified priorities and to service system outcomes). These are not simple dimensions of the vision, but they are limited. While a lot of activity can fall under each goal, not everything can (and the recent FF "Update" shows that much activity has, in fact contributed to these goals). What has been achieved seems to demonstrate that these are, to some extent, enduring goals, as a vision should be.

While neither the vision, nor the goals may be unique to London-Middlesex, an important lesson may be to ensure that both are clearly related to the activities undertaken in the community. Ensuring the relationship between vision, goals and activities is an important characteristic of planning processes and an important challenge for all communities. It will not be sufficient to receive a vision from senior governments or studies. The commitments which are necessary seem to come from how people embody the vision in goals, and the goals in activities.

And it is not easy. So many people are attached to the survival (or expansion) of their program, their agency, their institution, and have been for so long, that the bigger picture is not at all obvious. Many providers in London-Middlesex feel strongly that they have had to work hard to "offset" the policies of governments which (perhaps unintentionally) have encouraged competition rather than cooperation, insecurity rather than confidence, rhetoric over reality, new values rather than enduring ones, programs rather than people. Providers know that the needs of clients, as much as the demands of governments, require more effective and efficient service delivery. But they also know that all the challenges have not been of their own making, and nor will the solutions.

Governments have often been the object of providers' frustration. However, it may be useful to point out that several recent statements of both vision and policy seem to support the direction that London-Middlesex has chosen, including the "community capacity building" goal of HRDC, the report of the Ontario Jobs and Investment Board and the plan outlined by the Province for changes which would follow a Federal-Provincial Labour Market Development Agreement. At the most basic level, both senior governments support a "single, integrated E&T system" as a response to the historic - and current - fragmentation of programs. However, the perception of most practitioners is

that, to this point in time, many services funded by the different levels of government remain "program-based", ensuring that people are treated as customers of a particular program, rather than clients of a system. This is a contradiction that providers have generally tried to work with; that is, they have accepted the requirements of each funded program while still trying to work with other providers and, in London-Middlesex, with local funders, to develop a more integrated system.[36]

In this respect, one characteristic of the London-Middlesex approach has been to try to embody the vision through incremental initiatives to bring the various funded programs under a common framework of activities which further the development of a more coherent system while still respecting the requirements of individually and separately funded programs. The members of the FF have respected these constraints, as have the providers we spoke with; but it is a delicate and difficult balance. The goals and activities have, perhaps, been deliberately chosen to acknowledge this balance, while still moving toward the broader vision. (As discussed in the synthesis provided in Part V of this report, the transformation from individually funded programs to a system is a change that is occurring in many jurisdictions and the challenges faced are indeed similar. However, an important difference with other jurisdictions is the need for "corporate" support for this change from the provincial government; a need felt by practitioners in London-Middlesex.)

There are good examples of local corporate support in London-Middlesex, such as the CLEAR project and the PIE/TEA initiatives which are new forms of partnerships and cooperation, and which are creating more integrated delivery while maintaining accountability to individual funders and for individually funded programs.

The relationship between the LMPC and the FF is an important demonstration of how governments and delivery agencies can collaborate. Their interests, at the most basic level, are entirely consistent: ensuring the most effective and efficient service delivery system. However, it is often the case that funders are perceived to operate with a "divide and conquer" philosophy, encouraging (if not deliberately designing systems that foster) competition, rather than cooperation among providers who, in turn, view each other as threats in the fight for scarce resources. The relationships which have developed in London-Middlesex clearly challenge this approach and, more important, provide some insight into the characteristics of a practical -- and successful -- alternative. It is to these characteristics that we now turn.

IV.6.2 Characteristics of a More Integrated System.[37]

If one of the characteristics from London-Middlesex is that it helps to have a vision, a second characteristic is the shared commitment to more specific goals, objectives and activities which might help bring it about. In addition, there are some important attributes of a more integrated system which appear to be part and parcel of the variety of activities which contribute to a more integrated approach. Some materials refer to these as values or principles which guide the development of specific activities. However, they are not merely abstractions; rather, each can be seen as a characteristic of more integrated planning and delivery and, taken together, may provide some guidance for other communities and activities.

(1) focus on customers, not programs

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[36]It should be noted that several funded programs of the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities (e.g. Literacy and Basic Skills, JobConnect) have policy directives for agencies delivering their programs to relate to each other and/or establish more direct relationships with other programs. However, most practitioners observe that these directives are not related to each other, but demand additional activities that seem not to be related to efforts to create a more coherent E&T system, which is clearly an objective of both the OJIB and the LMDA.

[37]Readers should note that the characteristics outlined below were identified and written prior to the more extensive descriptions of these characteristics in relation to other jurisdictions reported in Part II.3 of this report.

As with the broad vision of an integrated employment and training system, this attribute is far from simple, nor is it easy to bring about. However, it is a value that is clearly felt by both providers and funders in London-Middlesex, an obvious characteristic to nearly everyone who spoke with us. People believe it and a variety of collaborative projects embody it.

How is this orientation expressed? Sometimes it is offered as the belief, other times as a demand of funders, that better service will result from collaboration and partnerships, from integration. Practitioners (together with the funders of their programs) need to share a belief that their future, and the future of their programs and agencies, are a function of the extent to which their customers, clients, or learners are well served; that providers will not continue to be funded, indefinitely, based simply on historical allocations.

In a "program-based" approach, individual providers and practitioners can be forgiven for assuming that their future is a function of how well they meet the needs of funders, since this has traditionally been the case. Even with the imposition of specific performance criteria, satisfying the needs of funders will not necessarily bring about greater integration, or more effective or efficient delivery. It is not that the staff of agencies delivering a single funded program do not have the interests of their clients at heart; rather, they are understandably pulled by the "turf" and "survival" interests of their organizations over the needs of their clients for a more coherent system. As has been noted by commentators in other jurisdictions, the shift from a program-based to a customer-based approach is the single most important change required for more integrated delivery, as well as for a different conception of quality; and that the demands of individual funders and funded programs are major obstacles to this shift; that is, it is hard to serve too many masters.

This is an important characteristic with implications for planning, for program design and delivery, for how quality is defined and measured, and for how programs might be funded.

(2) integrated service delivery

The several examples of integrated activities outlined above may be nice, but are they really necessary? Is integrated planning or delivery, in and of itself, really that important in meeting client needs? Of course, it is possible to say (as a matter of logic) that you cannot have a "system" without some form of integration, but do practitioners and agencies really need to be involved? What kind of integration is most useful? What attributes are most important?

The examples of collaboration and partnerships in London-Middlesex seem to fall into two categories. First are ongoing activities such as LMPC, FF, CLEAR and PIE/TEA. These are examples of new or different functions which have organized responsibilities in a particular group whose members come from several agencies or organizations. As well, there are also ongoing activities which are specific partnerships where two or more providers share responsibility for delivering different components of a single program. The elements, while part of the same program, are related but delivered separately; for example, the relationship between three organizations (YOU, WIL, and Fanshawe) in delivering the JobConnect program elements; and the program developed between YOU and Thames Valley Board, where each provider is delivering separate elements of a more integrated program for the client. Unlike the work TEA has undertaken, there is little integration of staff or functions across several agencies.[38]

A second form of collaboration can be seen in the several ad hoc groups which have been formed from time to time to accomplish a particular project. Examples include the work done on common assessment, service delivery standards, and the ETN group developing a common information system.

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[38]Some might suggest that CLEAR is an example of shared delivery of an existing program by two agencies. However, it seems far closer to a new "alliance" or "consortium", in that staff are "cross trained" and identify the service independently of who is funding the particular position. The defining characteristic may be that the client doesn't know (or care) which agency is providing the service; it is known by it's own, "integrated" name.

Two challenges can be seen from these examples which define why integration is an important characteristic for service planning and delivery. First, integration provides an opportunity to realize greater efficiency and effectiveness. For example, the TEA initiative may not reduce the unit cost of providing job development services; however, it may provide more effective delivery and better service to both employers and clients than the previous services which were delivered by each of several agencies separately. Indeed, the perception is shared among several providers involved in TEA that consolidating services was necessary in order to respond to employers concerns about the number of job developers they were relating to before services were consolidated under the alliance. The CLEAR initiative, on the other hand, was specifically designed to improve both efficiency and effectiveness and, according to their own evaluation, has succeeded in reducing duplication and enhancing the level of service. In 1996 it was noted that CLEAR had succeeded along several dimensions:

> • *Blending individual planning with an appropriate mix of group interventions keeps unit costs down.*
> • *Group information sessions are the most effective use of limited resources in setting expectations, answering common questions and reinforcing critical information which effects client eligibility, thus reducing the need for one-on-one interventions.*
> • *The three-tiered model advocated through the jobLink process is achievable.*
> • *A directive, yet supportive, service approach provides the appropriate balance of sensitive, individualized service and public accountability.*
> • *There is a need for a community incubator using an partnership model to envision, test and train community-wide tools.*
> • *The CLEAR project has the potential to link federal, provincial, municipal, non-profit and private sectors partners in an integrated income and employment support system in the greater London community.*[39]

As well, the several ad hoc initiatives benefit from integration in several ways. They can draw expertise from many providers and perspectives, particularly since few agencies have the critical mass of resources by themselves; they can avoid or reduce duplication of effort; they can engender broader ownership in their results; and, most important, they can achieve specific ends which require integration, such as agreeing on a common assessment process. These benefits are particular versions of more effective and efficient delivery.

A second challenge, however, is more difficult; namely, integration as a characteristic necessary for the development of a delivery "culture" which supports a coherent system. One of the important lessons from London-Middlesex (and supported by experiences in other jurisdictions and the CAFA) is that integration can help in the creation of a "new" culture where the resulting service becomes something new or is clearly different than any individual provider could have delivered by themselves. Creating "a culture which no one owns" includes how staff relate to their own agencies, boards and clients. What "true" integration seems to allow especially in new working groups (e.g. consortia, alliances; whether formal or informal) is an expectation that a different culture will help - or is needed - to move further toward the client focus. The reason it may be necessary to create an entity with its own culture is that the current program focus orients practitioners more to the stability of their own agency and meeting the requirements of funded programs, rather than a more intense commitment to clients. The creation of "a culture which no one owns" may also help develop a greater sense of collective ownership and collective, rather than individual, accountability.

(3) accountability and quality

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[39]A question may be raised about the importance of possible differences in approaches to planning and delivering integrated income support as opposed to integrated E&T services. It is evident from the CLEAR example that they are part of a single fabric of E&T services. However, the approach in other areas (e.g. Eastern Ontario, reported in Part III) clearly separates the two services and, as noted, refers to "education and training" rather than "employment and training". The experience in other jurisdictions (outlined in Part II) is of fully integrating income support with E&T services.

Both funders and service providers in London-Middlesex have more than simply acknowledged the need for accountability, they have done some important concrete work, and they have done it together. The development of service delivery standards, the work on common assessment and the ETN are each examples of how the community has come together in different ways to meet the needs of both funders and providers for evidence; that is, for information about how effective providers are at delivering on their commitments to clients.

All jurisdictions share with Ontario the need for service delivery to be evaluated by ensuring that outcomes for clients are realized. Several other jurisdictions, including most OECD countries, and in particular, Australia, the UK, US (at both the state and federal levels) and other provinces (e.g. Alberta) have already developed, or are in the process of developing, measures to follow-up and track client outcomes. In Ontario, the LMDA group has emphasized the need for tracking and reporting of results, possibly through a central data management system. The ETN is certainly the local representation of this need.

However, as a characteristic of a more integrated delivery system, many in London-Middlesex perceive the need for some additional dimensions of accountability to be considered. Two seem particularly important: an orientation to the quality of services and the challenge of how funders need to be accountable.

The importance of the orientation to "people over programs" suggests that accountability must focus on the extent to which customers needs are met, rather than agencies' current focus on the specifications of funders. Specifically, people in London-Middlesex talked about the need to think about - and plan for - how to increase the quality and effectiveness of services, a view not unique to London-Middlesex, as evidenced by the following statement of the challenge.

> In the absence of an alternative definition of quality (e.g., fulfilling *customer* needs and expectations), conformance to the needs and specifications of the *funding source* has defined success. This is not to say that job training and education and skill training vendors were not focused on meeting the needs of participants or that the Employment Service was not concerned with placing job seekers in good jobs – it is just that the focus was on meeting numerical performance standards and not necessarily on quality. In other words, to the extent that "customers" were considered at all, ... job seekers and employers were the *means* to satisfying funding sources...

> The shift from defining quality as "conformance to *organizational* specifications" to "conformance to *customer* expectations" constitutes the paradigmatic shift that is the *sine qua non* of total quality management or continuous quality improvement... Data gathering, analysis, interpretation and utilization, program improvement and all the infrastructures that support these activities in the public sector will have to change in a quality-driven system... This change in customer definition means that the relatively static performance standards of *funding sources* are replaced by the ever-evolving needs and requirements of *job seekers and employer*s.[40]

A great deal of frustration was expressed about the many different reporting requirements of separate funders and funded programs; every agency has several, perhaps too many, reporting requirements. The point from the above quote is more challenging than the frustration many in London-Middlesex feel. Some simple tracking and outcome measures are understood to be necessary - but not sufficient - to capture the quality and effectiveness we need in the service delivery system. Talk about "continuous improvement" processes being built into reforms in other jurisdictions was largely absent in London-Middlesex, though there is certainly interest in these developments. For funders and providers in London-Middlesex, work on their "service

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[40]Discussion of the Service Quality Information System in Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, Boston Private Industry Council, North Carolina Governor's Commission on Workforce Preparedness and Private Industry Council of Louisville/Jefferson County (project partners) *Ensuring High Quality Career Centres Through Chartering*; (Final Report on Grant Activities; January 23, 1998) pp. 21-22; emphasis in original.

delivery standards" is a contribution to the discussion of quality and accountability and one that other communities and senior governments might consider.

Another form of accountability can be seen in the commitment to evaluating the initiatives under way. In particular, the evaluation of common assessment, the explicit provision to evaluate TEA, the review of progress and directions by the Funders Forum two years after their "strategic directions" document, and the examination and development of a revised business plan for LMPC, each represent another form of accountability. These are not small matters. They show that the community in London-Middlesex takes what it is doing seriously, and is prepared to be self-critical, rather than merely defensive, about its own initiatives.

These evaluations partly address the second challenge; that is, how funders might be accountable to the community. There are several other particular challenges that agencies feel funders can address to support the accountability of the service delivery system as a whole. Specifically, funders can ensure that there is a single reporting system. The extensive reporting not only causes continual frustration, it takes time and energy from the delivery of programs to support the various reporting requirements. The ETN may address this perceived need, and it would be useful to ensure that it does so successfully.[41]

As well, funders can support the development of additional indicators. While it is unclear what specific indicators would be most useful, there is a need to consider measures which are less dependent on immediate job attainment and are more sensitive to the longer-term employment needs of both individuals and employers. In other jurisdictions, customer satisfaction measures are common. However, providers and funders alike suggest the need for more substantive measures of quality, though no specific indicators or process was offered.

Finally, funders can support the development of clear relationship between funding and delivery. One aspect in articulating this relationship is the communication that agencies seek from the FF. As one member of the FF noted, "People are looking around to see the funders' behaviour". The FF seems to have responded to providers' need for information by distributing "updates" on progress toward their objectives. In addition, providers would welcome a clear understanding of where and how current funds are allocated and how these allocations relate to identified needs and priorities for employment and training services in London-Middlesex.[42]

Another dimension of the relationship between funding and programming is providers' concern that the required funding is not available to deliver the quality and quantity of services required. There is a perception that past efforts to both reduce expenditure and assure specific employment results may have left those requiring lengthier preparation for the labour market with fewer programs and shorter training times. Many providers are concerned that some assurance is needed that service delivery is not simply "creaming", that is focusing on those most likely to be successful through short-term interventions, leaving those who need more extensive interventions without the required supports and services.

(4) local coordination

A fourth characteristic or principle for increased integration is that it needs to be a process that is locally controlled and able to be responsive to local needs. While all governments have stated commitments in this direction, the history of funding for E&T services suggests that this is not an easy condition to meet. Perceptions, particularly among providers, are strong and consistent on this

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[41]As noted earlier, the need for a "support system" for E&T planning was outlined six years ago in McLaughlin, Kathleen *Information for Labour Market Planning* (prepared for LMPC; August 5, 1993).

[42]As noted above, such information has not been available to date. The FF is attempting to address this need, and it should be noted that the absence of the information itself appears to be the obstacle, rather than an unwillingness on the part of funders to share it with the community. As noted in Part II, public reporting of both expenditures and provider performance is a feature of reforms in other jurisdictions.

matter: "Tell the government to get out of our face, tell us the outcomes we're working toward and then just let us do what we need to deliver better services to our community. Leave us alone and we'll build a coherent E&T service system which is responsive, accountable, and (relatively) efficient." While merely a paraphrasing of many statements, the sentiment is clear: local communities need to craft local solutions, rather than have particular funded programs dictate the nature and specifications of service delivery to meet clients' needs. This view could not have been put more strongly.[43]

To address this perceptions, most people seem to want some clear support from the Provincial government, in particular, from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities; given that people feel that they have had consistent support for both integrated planning and integrated service delivery from the federal and municipal levels, and the provincial Ministry of Community and Social Services. Two possible forms for this important support - consistent with the direction of the LMDA group - are suggested below.

However, at this point it may be useful to note that the ability to carry out many of the projects that have developed is, at least in part, a function of the FF having at least a minimal amount of discretionary funds; that is, funds they could jointly allocate for collective priorities. While providers and funders share a desire for greater local control of a more significant pool of funds from each level of government, this may be a more long term condition for more thorough integration. As a lesson from London-Middlesex, the strategic use of limited funds is an important characteristic of beginning efforts at greater integration.

The LMPC expressed the importance of the FF in addressing local needs in a recent letter to the Province. "It has been our experience that a clear physical presence of those funding the services has facilitated the provision of timely and appropriate programs; and reduced the challenges unique to each local environment."[44]

What authority to vest in local bodies has been an ongoing tension in Ontario for some time. Most of those we spoke with expressed consistent views on this subject. In particular, both funders and providers argued for greater autonomy for several functions which they believe should properly be decided at a community level. (These functions are discussed below.) The LMPC and FF have formally stated their willingness to accept more responsibility locally and their belief that this is appropriate; however, it is not without some important challenges. Most important among these challenges is how to ensure that the community has the appropriate discretion while, at the same time, being part of a provincial system, designed under an LMDA.[45] The consensus of practitioners and funders in London-Middlesex is that they must not be subjected to a "one size fits all" approach. Rather, they would welcome the identification (by the Province under an LMDA) of a set of broad goals and directions (perhaps even some indicators), while allowing the community to determine priorities, allocate funds (or recommend allocations) and design services to meet the priorities at the local level. Anything less is perceived to jeopardize the progress they have already made in integrating service delivery across what have been separately funded programs. The overwhelming feeling is that the design and delivery of programs are tasks that can only be achieved

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[43]This view contrasts with what some in other communities have said; namely: "we're burned out from past attempts at 'community'; we worked together, or tried to, developed proposals that went nowhere; just tell us what you want and we'll do our best to do it." The two perspectives are equally sincere, but are clearly very different.

[44]LMPC letter to the LMDA group at MET; February 1999; p.4

[45]The LMDA outline includes the principle of "flexibility to allow for local input and decision making on program and service design and implementation". (p.2) Whether "implementation" includes some local authority for funding is unclear. However, Section 6.2 of their document provides a framework for "local planning and decision-making" which appears to include several elements consistent with the FF and LMPC initiatives.

at a local level and they are prepared to accept the responsibility to do so, and be accountable for the results.[46]

People in London-Middlesex are, however, aware that there may not be the same kind of developed relationships in all communities and are concerned that the Government may seek to impose not only the outcomes for service delivery, but the processes as well. This perception supports their belief that a single process, prescribed structures and roles, and accountability based largely on provincial reporting will not serve the interests of London-Middlesex. Three kinds of statements were offered: "leave us alone", "give us permission" (to continue to develop as we have been) and "give us some support" (both policy and resources). These suggestions need not be seen as contradictory; rather, they may be an acknowledgment of the complexities of developing a coherent system among so many different funders and providers. (We address the specific suggestions below.)[47]

(5) different levels of service intensity

A final characteristic concerns the need for differentiating services for each of several levels of "intensity". This is directly related to what was put forward in the jobLink proposal nearly five years ago. As noted, the CLEAR project reported that its results indicate that the three levels of intensity are able to be distinguished and appropriate services delivered according to level of client need. Nor is this a characteristic unique to London-Middlesex. Many other jurisdictions have services distinguished using three levels of intensity, and the OECD has noted the benefits of organizing services in this way. As well, the LMDA group seems to have reached the same conclusion. However, as will be discussed below, a major challenge is to ensure that clients are appropriately assessed both among and within the three levels.

The first level broadly includes those core services which are universally available; that is, with no eligibility requirements. The US includes some job search and placement assistance in this category, as well as several requirements for information which must be provided, including information on the performance of providers. The Australians have defined it more in terms of self-serve services which those who are job ready can access (as well as job matching services for employers). A second level includes specialized assessments, career counseling and career planning, and (for the Australians and other OECD countries) supported job search activities, and mandatory case management. Finally, the most intensive services are generally reserved (in Australia and the US) for those requiring basic skills, vocational skills, on-the-job training, combined workplace and classroom training, and more intense job-readiness training (though some might put this latter type in the second level).[48] The LMDA group defined it a bit differently, separating "Employment Services" from "Targeted Programs" (which are by definition more intense). The LMPC's 1995 jobLink proposal also distinguished among three levels of service.

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[46]It may be of interest to note that the report of the Ontario Jobs and Investment Board cited as its first "specific suggestion" from its extensive consultations: "One size does not fit all. Ontario must take a 'bottom up' regional approach to economic development, not impose solutions from Queen's Park". (OJIB, p.11.) We can only assume that there might be similar view of the provision of E&T services. The need for a distinctly local approach to E&T service delivery was also evident in the May 1996 report on restructuring services entitled *Creating Partnerships That Work* (IER Planning, Research and Management Services; prepared for the FF and LMPC), which built upon the work of the London-Middlesex jobLink proposal developed in 1994-95.

[47]It is worth noting, however, that the community has indeed been able to develop several important initiatives in the absence of more direct support from the MET. This isn't to say that MTCU support will not now be important; rather, it is simply to note the obvious: while MET support would have been important and its absence has been something of an obstacle to some further development, the community has still come together around a variety of projects. This willingness to proceed in the absence of clear support may be yet another lesson from London-Middlesex .

[48]This list borrows most heavily from the US. Department of Labour 1999 "Technical Assistance Guide". However, the Australian category of "intensive employment services" includes similar elements.

Whatever categorization is used, one of the determinants of the effectiveness of the system as a whole is the degree to which people are provided the right level of service. Several OECD reviews have stated that **this is the most difficult and most important delivery function**. Australia has developed a "profiling" system to identify those most at risk of long-term unemployment. The JSCI (Job Seekers Classification Index) is supplemented by "judgmental" factors (from personal interviews) to make the decision about the level of services. Australia's estimates for 1999 indicate that roughly half of CentreLink clients will be involved with intensive services. This compares to LMDA estimates for Ontario of roughly 3/4 to receive "employment services" and (at the high end) 1/4 receiving intensive services. (Of course, the breakdown within employment services is difficult to estimate.) The London-Middlesex jobLink proposal suggested a 16%/55%/28% division, but this was based on 1991 data of general "welfare" clients. A few providers offered their observations that more than half of those they serve require more intensive services and many more observed the need for longer training times for many clients. Given that different understandings of these needs are certainly possible, it may be useful to ask how we might determine the <u>actual</u> needs among the three levels of service. (Two suggestions are offered below.)

IV.6.3 Initial Challenges

In addition to these five characteristics, several other findings or lessons can be offered which may be useful to other communities in their efforts to develop more integrated activity.

(1) Have a vision. Whether more or less comprehensive, it is useful to articulate where you want to be at some defined point in the future. It should describe some forms of better service and some particular types of results (but not actual numbers) that will come from working toward increased cooperation.

(2) Get a Task! The commitment to building an E&T community in London-Middlesex, which includes both funders and providers, has developed over a long period of time. In reflecting on both what has been accomplished and what lies ahead, the focus has clearly been on developing shared projects. Relationships of trust are necessary. However, a finding from London-Middlesex may be that these relationships are a result of, rather than a condition for, common projects. Each task should explicitly be defined to involve practitioners from across what are now distinct funded programs. In some cases, funders may need to require collaboration on projects as a condition for funding existing agencies, as has been done in some cases in London-Middlesex.

(3) Start Informally. This is not to say that organizations and mandates are unimportant; but they seem secondary to the need for people to work together on their chosen common task without the pressure of meeting some externally imposed or formal mandate. As the FF and LMPC have developed, the participants have begun to consider formalizing the relationships and roles which have developed. However, they have years of working productively with each other.

(4) Pool some resources. It seems to be an important lesson for the community of both funders and providers to know that there is a commitment to working together. Pooling some resources, both funds and staff, seems to be a useful way to demonstrate more than just an interest in collaboration. The amounts need not be large; however, they must be sufficient to the task at hand and they must be clearly shared to demonstrate the commitment.

(5) These characteristics may allow the community to "get some results". Success breeds more effort and demonstrating that collaboration produces positive results may allow people to feel that the energy necessary to move further is worth it. Several communities have attempted to develop more thorough plans, only to feel that the rejection of the plan showed them the futility of other attempts. Starting informally, on concrete tasks, with some shared resources may allow for the incremental results which characterize success and provide a basis from which to build.

(6) To apply these lessons in other communities, the London-Middlesex approach suggests that two groups are important: one group of funders and a second of service providers. The separation of the two may be important. The perception on the part of both funders and providers is that there

are very different needs and functions to be played by each. Funders need, among other things, a forum to exchange information about funding, priorities, their understanding of the strengths and challenges faced by different agencies, and a place to simply talk amongst themselves about how best they might proceed to balance the needs of their respective political masters with the community they serve. A regional manager at the London-Middlesex FF indicated that it was quite important to him that the FF allowed him to talk openly to his peers, that is, neither his superiors nor his staff, when considering issues on the table. These relationships - among peers - cannot be found in any other forum and, whether formal or informal, are crucial to the continued development of an employment and training community, including specific strategies and plans.

With respect to the LMPC, it has been clearly important to have a forum for providers across funded programs. While there are some mechanisms for sharing information (even some planning) within funded programs (e.g. literacy service planning process for agencies funded through the Literacy and Basic Skills Section of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities), there is no necessary process for providers of different services to meet and plan collective projects. The LMPC has become a mechanism for these initiatives in London-Middlesex, and other communities may wish to develop similar vehicles. To the extent that the FF supports the continued development of the LMPC, the funders - individually and collectively - may be conveying an important message about the value of providers in London-Middlesex. It may be tempting, once some tasks have begun or accomplished, to move quickly to more formal relationships. The experience in London-Middlesex, however, suggests that more collaborative activity will benefit the community by developing the relationships and not rushing to greater formality.

(7) Wait to do "mandates" and "roles". Formalizing structures and issuing statements of who is responsible for what seem to be less important than the work that people do together and the relationships that develop. After all, it is relatively recently, after many years and many projects, that the groups in London-Middlesex developed their first statements and are only now considering more formal definitions and processes in some areas.

(8) There are some specific directions for projects which can be seen from the initiatives in London-Middlesex. Specifically, efforts around common assessment (and its related "no wrong door" approach), coordinated delivery of specific "up front" components (evidenced through CLEAR and PIE), developing a common information database (e.g. the ETN project), and the development of a consensus around service delivery standards for all agencies, regardless of funded program; all point to some directions which other communities may wish to consider. In addition, other possible lines of work might be the development of specific "hybrid" programs which deliberately integrate services currently provided under different funded programs, and the creation of an alliance or consortium to deliver services currently offered by several agencies (e.g. CLEAR, and PIE/TEA; as well as CAFA in Eastern Ontario and several examples in other jurisdictions).

(9) The development of a coherent, effective and efficient employment and training service system requires consideration of a number of components which we can refer to as (a) "community functions" (i.e. those functions that are about the nature and shape of the services which comprise the "system") and (b) "delivery functions", (i.e. those functions which are elements of the delivery of the services themselves).[49]   The distinctions outlined below developed from a contribution of one FF member who noted: "Form follows function. The trouble is we're not clear what the functions are". Part of the challenge of sorting out the mandates and responsibilities of different groups is, of course, figuring out what are the important things to do and who is in a good position to do each function. Defining the relevant functions is a problem that all emerging groups have had, and - along with a vision that articulates where you want to be down the road - defining the important functions is difficult but necessary before deciding how, or who, will address each. Therefore, in

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[49]I make no claim to anything original in what follows. The particular distinction owes much to some discussion at a Funders Forum meeting earlier this year. While not specifically what they were considering at the time, it seemed that it might be useful for others to consider some version of these distinctions.

keeping with the idea of local autonomy, it may be useful for communities to consider the importance of each function before the question of who should be responsible for each.

There seem to be five main "community functions". The E&T community, as a whole, needs to

(a) establish priorities among the E&T service needs identified in the community;
(b) design/re-design/develop/configure services to meet the priorities;
(c) allocate funding to service providers to deliver the particular services;
(d) deliver the services [which is the subject of the other set of functions]; and
(e) evaluate the results of service delivery and support service improvement.

The "delivery functions" can be seen from the service delivery standards which outline thirteen components.[50] It may be useful to group them into four categories of activity (which also seem to correspond roughly to some levels of "intensity of service"); namely,

(a) "Initial" functions: including initial information, intake, referral, and (small "a") assessment services (Service Delivery Standards #1, 2, & 5);
(b) "Supported" functions: including more intensive counseling, (large 'A') assessment, employment plan preparation services (Standards #3, 4, & 6), as well as supported job search and other short term employment supports;
(c) "Intensive" delivery: including delivery of training and related "employability" services [i.e. the infamous "black box"] including "employment preparation", "skills training", "work experience", "supported employment" (standards #7 through #11);
(d) "Follow-up" functions: including tracking and providers' follow-up to determine client outcomes and success and to obtain information for program improvement (including standards #12 & #13).[51]

The main functions are discussed in more detail in Part V, below, which attempts to integrate the lessons from each of the other sections. At this juncture, it may be useful to offer some particular suggestions for directions which might further the important work of developing an integrated service delivery system in London-Middlesex.

IV.7. Some Particular Suggestions

Based on the findings from London-Middlesex, it is possible to offer some particular suggestions for the LMPC and Funders Forum to consider. These are not offered as recommendations for their action, but rather directions the community might consider. They arise from our understanding of what both groups have already been doing, coupled with the perceptions of members of the E&T community. As well, the suggestions consider several lessons from other communities and jurisdictions which are struggling with similar challenges. Additional directions, not specific to London-Middlesex but directed more broadly, are suggested in Part V.

It should also be noted that none of these suggestions are meant to imply that people in London-Middlesex have failed to do something they should have done. Rather, these suggestions are only possible because the LMPC and FF have undertaken the projects they have and achieved some important results. If the suggestions are worth considering, it reflects each group's willingness to

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[50]It should be noted, however, that the delivery functions (and service standards) being discussed are primarily services to clients, rather than employers. The elements of these functions are organized and defined somewhat differently in Part V, below.

[51]Both of the first two functions are designed to ensure that the individual clients are in appropriate programs. Standard #5 - Referral - could be either of the first two categories, depending on the client. Standard #11 - case management - would probably be a component of both (b) and (c).

learn from their own history of working together. These suggestions are offered with the utmost respect for the work to date.

IV.7.1 Community Planning Functions

In general, while there may be some debate about who, specifically, should assume responsibility for these functions (with the exception of actual service delivery), in London-Middlesex it is likely that the Funders Forum is in the best position to develop the overall accountability for the shape of the service delivery system, as well as several specific functions. (A more extensive discussion of alternatives is found in Part V, section V.3.3, of this report.)

More specifically, there is a broad consensus among those we spoke with that the FF is the right group to oversee these functions, particularly if its membership included all relevant funders. While those we spoke with assume that the LMPC and other groups have important roles to play at particular points and with respect to particular tasks, the FF enjoys widespread support. Part of this support may be based on the assumption that individual funders will not relinquish control over their funds to any local group; and to the extent that collective priorities and collaborative funding are possible, the FF is seen as best positioned to balance the needs of the community with those of the individual funders and delivery agencies. Providers are not naive: they recognize that there will be constraints on the degree of collaboration which is possible. However, they also wish to see a demonstrable increase in collaboration and the FF is understood to be the group capable of meeting this need.[52]

(a) Determining Community Priorities for Employment and Training Services

Employment and training service providers, as well as individual funders, feel strongly that there has been considerable effort already expended in collecting data about needs, particularly by the Local Board. However, it is unclear if the data collected is sufficiently detailed or inclusive of key elements needed for developing specific priorities or for planning specific service delivery. As well, funders have noted the need for additional data and for a "framework to consult" which would enable them to integrate the perspectives of different stakeholders. In order to further the development of collective priorities which might inform the funding of particular services,

#1: The Funders Forum could consider developing a "framework to consult" which provides explicit processes for regular input on employment and training priorities from a variety of stakeholders.

Among the specific input the FF might wish to consider:

#1a: The responsibility for identifying priorities of employers and incumbent workers might be vested in the Local Board, together with other existing representative groups (e.g. Board of Trade, Chamber of Commerce, LEIC, Labour Council and individual business and labour organizations).

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[52]It is difficult not comment briefly on the processes of the FF. In particular, since the members of the group have worked together for some time, it is fair to say that considerable trust has indeed developed; a characteristic that so many commentators have stated is the basis for developing the ability to move beyond parochial interests. Over years, the group has proceeded somewhat informally and, from their own self-criticism, there is the feeling that more formal procedures may be useful for attaining more of their objectives. However, while many decisions have been made by members working together outside of formal meetings, this process seems to have served the community well. The particular balance of formal and informal processes will be, of necessity, unique to each community; however, it may be important for others to note that it is a balance and that no prescriptions can - or should - be suggested. The FF in London-Middlesex has been successful, at least in part, because of the wisdom and patience of members to allow these processes to develop to meet the particular challenges the group has addressed. Those considering how other communities might develop the capacity to work together might benefit from the FF's experience. The supports necessary to encourage this development, in London-Middlesex and elsewhere, include not only policy and resource supports, but an understanding that the actual work processes cannot be imposed.

There is ample evidence from other jurisdictions that the needs of incumbent workers and employers require attention. The experiences of other jurisdictions indicate the importance of the shift from a welfare-to-work to a workforce development orientation, including the need to include employers and existing workers as important clients of an employment and training system. In these other jurisdictions, the pressures to fill vacancies, coupled with demands from growth into new product or service lines, have required firms to consider upgrading the skills of existing workers including both basic and specific vocational skills. While this may not be the prime focus of many current E&T services, productivity and competitiveness is of sufficient concern that these needs must be taken seriously.

#1b: The LMPC could design and implement an appropriate process by which employment and training service providers can identify priorities for services based on their experiences and those of their clients.

In so many discussions with providers, a frequent refrain was "we know what our clients need". While there is no vehicle at present to confirm or refute this assertion, it is an important one. Given that front line practitioners have the greatest contact with clients, it would seem incumbent on agencies to provide their understandings as part of a systematic process. The LMPC, as the body most directly identified with service providers across the E&T spectrum, might design a process which could effectively and efficiently represent the understandings of agencies and practitioners.

In considering the information to be gathered from providers, the LMPC might also work with the ETN which, when implemented, may be both a useful vehicle for data collection, as well as a mechanism to offer additional data (or confirmation) based on an analysis of how well the current services met clients' identified needs.

#1c: A specific process is needed to gather information about the need for different employment and training services from the broader community, particularly residents not currently accessing existing services.

There is a general understanding, shared by both funders and providers, that many potential needs are not now factored into service planning. Acquiring the right information, however, will not be an easy task. While we did not explicitly ask how these needs might be identified, several suggestions for how this might be done were offered; in particular, through community meetings, targeted outreach and liaison with other service deliverers (for example, those dealing with health, housing, recreation and other services). An initial approach to gaining such information might be for a member of the FF, such as the United Way, to be asked to design an appropriate process which might involve combining several approaches.

Each of these elements might only be required as part of a regular planning cycle (possible two or three years). However, the framework to consult might need to include a process for new information to be provided as situations develop; for example, in the event of significant layoffs and/or hirings (both of which occurred during the course of this project).[53] Resources to support the work required to develop these three elements might come from the Local Board, and Funders Forum (with the addition discussed below).

It should be noted that, in several other jurisdictions, a Local Board approach is used where a body of some kind, independent of both funders and service providers, determines priorities, allocates funds and contracts for services. The new Workforce Improvement Boards in the US require partnerships, including with OneStop centres, and is the body in each community to whom providers are responsible. As of the new year, there are to be pilots of Local Learning and Skills

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[53]These events suggest the importance of continuing involvement of the Government's labour adjustment services as part of more thorough E&T service planning.

Councils and Local Learning Partnerships in the UK.[54] In Australia, there are the Area Consultative Committees which have no formal authority, but important coordination responsibilities, as well as various state-mandated formal planning processes. Alternatively, in Alberta, consulting with the community seems to be the responsibility of staff of the new ministry (of Human Resources and Employment) and may vary considerably in both who is consulted and the process for gaining their input.

The use of a local board approach in other jurisdictions, however, is not reason to adopt a similar approach in Ontario. Our political culture seems to suggest that senior governments do not wish to devolve the important functions to Local Boards. Three different Ontario governments have each had concerns about devolving responsibility for coordinating services to Local Boards and there is not a ground swell for Local Boards to have these functions. However, there is a perception (shared in London-Middlesex) that Local Boards can play an important role if - and only if - they are given a clear mandate to provide specific research from the participating constituencies. In the absence of such a mandate, it would appear that the necessary support will have to come from another group.

As well, there is concern that the data collected by Local Boards (not only in London-Middlesex) has little - if any - effect on program allocations. In other jurisdictions, a comprehensive planning process, coupled with customer service measures, is designed to ensure that the data clearly informs service delivery. Similarly, the experience of the literacy service planning process in some Ontario communities has been that it, too, has little effect on allocations and, perhaps more important, that it is too often an opportunity for existing providers to confirm what they are doing.

The intent of these suggestions is to address the expressed desire to have a local process for setting priorities which includes the perceptions of the important stakeholders. And funders will obviously have to reconcile the stated priorities with their own mandates.

Participation and communications

Decisions about priorities, regardless who makes them, depend upon complete information. In evaluating the gaps between identified needs and existing services, the FF has been hampered, at least in part, by the absence of complete information on the services currently funded in London-Middlesex. As noted, the FF has not had regular and equal participation from some major funders, in particular, the Ministry of Education and Training whose funded programs included adult credit programs and courses (delivered through the school boards and the Independent Learning Centre), LBS and JobConnect programs of the Workplace Preparation Branch (delivered through contracted third party agencies), apprenticeship programs (delivered through employers and colleges), labour adjustment services, and skills training and post-secondary programs (offered through colleges, universities, and private vocational schools), as well as continuing education courses delivered by a wide array of agencies and institutions (including schools, colleges, universities, libraries, community agencies, etc.)

There is little doubt that MTCU-funded programs are crucial components in developing a coherent employment and training system. Therefore,

#2: It would be useful for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to provide a representative who can speak on behalf of all the funded programs of the ministry and who would participate in the Funders Forum as a full partner.

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[54]These local councils will be in addition to a national Leaning and Skills Council. The UK is noted for having layers of intermediary bodies, particularly in education where local education authorities exist along side adult education bodies, national and regional accreditation bodies, and funding authorities for different program streams.

In addition, those we spoke with suggested including several other funders in the community such as the Ministries of Health and Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, WSIB, local foundations, and business or industry groups.

The absence of the former MET may have been extremely important at one level and not at all important at another. Obviously, the FF has been able to get on with several important projects without MET being at the table. However, the development of a coherent E&T system clearly requires their full involvement. While there have been, from time to time, representatives of particular MET-funded programs at particular FF meetings, it should be noted that the absence of someone able to speak for the range of MET programs has been a challenge in other communities as well as London-Middlesex. Current program organization has meant that there is no identifiable person with managerial responsibility for the range of provincially funded programs who can participate as an equal with her/his peers on the FF and contribute to discussions and projects.

The prospect of an equal partner from MET (now MTCU) was raised in the outline offered by the LMDA group, which notes that under an integrated system, "managers will be accountable for responding to community needs and (will) have the autonomy to choose the most suitable methods, services and programs required to achieve results."[55] While there are likely to be constraints on the local (or regional) manager, such a role would be a significant and welcome departure from past MET practice. Several practitioners we spoke with thought that the most important support which MET could offer would be to provide a member for the Funders Forum with what one participant referred to as a similar "span of control" as other members.[56]

In addition, a suggestion was offered by several participants (both funders and agency managers) that the provincial government might designate London-Middlesex as one of several pilot sites with a mandate to develop and implement an appropriate community planning process. In particular, the MTCU could provide funding (see suggestion #9, below) for the community (possibly represented by the FF) to oversee - and be accountable for - the community planning functions necessary to support the continued development of an integrated service delivery system. The outcomes of that process, the funding and other supports necessary, would have to be agreed upon; as would the service delivery outcomes. The movement to greater community responsibility might take place over several stages. There are examples of guidelines from other ministries (e.g. Community and Social Services, Health) and other jurisdictions which might be of useful. However, the point of the suggestion was clear: if an integrated employment and training system is to be locally planned and delivered (as all levels of government have indicated), the support of the MTCU is crucial.

With systematic input, and with the support and participation of MTCU, the Funders Forum might be able to do what it set out to in May 1997: collectively decide priorities. It would mean that they would be able to collectively say (i) what services are being funded, (ii) how these services relate to identified priorities, (iii) other priorities which require attention; and (iv) what outcomes are expected as a result of the allocations. Therefore,

#3:	*The employment and training community might benefit from the dissemination of the Funders Forum analysis of service priorities and allocations, including all special projects which support the development and delivery of more effective and integrated services.*

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[55]*Ontario's Plan for an Integrated System of Employment Services, Targeted Programs and Delivery Under a Labour Market Development Agreement* (October 21, 1998): 38. The document states that these responsibilities will be "within the parameters of provincial and local plans", both of which will require clarification.

[56]This is not to suggest that staff from individual MET funded programs are not appreciated. Most people spoke highly of those who they've dealt with from a variety of programs including LBS, JobConnect, Apprenticeship, and Labour Adjustment. The point that people wanted to make, however, is (i) the need for a MET manager with the ability to speak for the range of programs and (ii) the need for such staff to have some authority equivalent to that of managers from the Ministry of Community and Social Services, HRDC and municipalities.

The priorities, whether decided by individual funders or the FF as a group, can help identify where particular needs fit into a "big picture". And delivery agencies are clear that they want to understand the big picture; they want to know the outline of funding and service delivery, changes over time, anticipated changes and where the particular services each agency delivers fits into the overall system. They want to contribute to the development of priorities and they want to share the responsibility for meeting those priorities. Funders share with providers the interest in offering as transparent a view as possible. Those we spoke with (both funders and providers) were uniformly skeptical about how the considerable research generated over the years on needs, gaps, etc. has been used. For providers to have confidence in the decisions being made does not require detailed public disclosure of financial arrangements between each funder and each and every provider. Rather, the community wants an understanding of broad service areas or types of activity, possibly with projected activity levels.[57] Much of the information may, initially, involve communicating the allocations of existing funded programs, with the additions of those special initiatives supported through the FF. To date, this information has not been available to the community and the difficulty of providing this data cannot be underestimated. Documenting the relationship between needs, priorities and allocations is considerably more difficult and will require both patience and perseverance on the part of both funders and providers. However, it may be an important component in the evolution of the relationships in London-Middlesex.

One of the lessons from other jurisdictions seems to be the need for more public reporting. While this is tied to the idea of greater customer choice, information on priorities, allocations and performance is assumed to benefit the public, delivery agencies and customers (both employers and individual clients), and is part of an emerging framework for accountability in these jurisdictions. As well, public reporting is understood to demonstrate that those responsible for the system are responsive, and this responsiveness in turn is a part of efforts to secure the involvement of needed partners, including employers, in the planning and delivery of services.

(b) Designing (or Reconfiguring Existing) Services to Meet New Priorities

Presumably, to the extent that existing programs are meeting identifiable needs, these services will continue to be delivered. However, there may be other priorities which are identified; gaps or new areas of need which are brought to light precisely because existing services are either inappropriate or insufficient. This is not to imply that existing funded programs have failed to meet some community needs. Rather, any community-based planning process should be able to identify new needs and new situations; and to the extent that it does, new forms of delivery will be necessary. In addition, greater attention to results may lead to new understandings of how services might be improved; customer feedback may suggest new configurations of existing services. Finally, changes in service delivery may be required to respond creatively to funding changes, such as the use of "skills development education grants", for example. Together with some lessons from other jurisdictions, local consultations may suggest new approaches.

For these reasons, there is an important design or re-design function which requires attention. It will be impossible to consider whether or how to fund new delivery initiatives in the absence of specific planning of the particular service. This is a function that has, in the past, been handled on an ad hoc basis, usually with a particular funder asking one or more providers to develop a proposal. In a future where planning is a more conscious and open process, an alternative might be useful.

#4: The LMPC could convene a working group of relevant providers to develop specific new or reconfigured services to meet identified priorities.

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[57]A list of agencies providing services under the funding might be appreciated, though the specific allocations probably aren't useful for the purpose of this suggested task.

Note: This working group might be related to the group looking at "intense" services (suggested below), but could also look at other services, for example shared job development, shared follow-up, integrated and continuous case management; that is, services which might be delivered to those requiring the most intense services, but also to other clients.

It seems that the working group approach has worked well in London-Middlesex, rather than a more formal and permanent structure with fixed representation and mandates. But there needs to be a process to ensure that, when the Funders Forum (or other group, or an individual funder) identifies any new need or service gap, an appropriate group can be convened and the task quickly taken up. There are many possible and specific needs which may arise where new approaches to service delivery may be needed, including some which cross current boundaries between funded programs (including those specific needs identified below and discussed in both Parts II and V of this report). In addition, as envisioned by the LMDA group, the development of "the most suitable methods, services and programs required to achieve results" will be a local responsibility (within some parameters, including "results targets"). The suggested approach might be one way of furthering this goal.[58]

For example, one of the lessons from other jurisdictions is that delivery of more intense services to those most in need of training for employment is most effective when specific vocational training is integrated with literacy and basic skills and other "employability" skills (where necessary). There are, however, precious few examples of where this kind of integration has been done. However, the experience available seems to suggest the importance of deliberate integration of the most intensive training efforts The obvious people to develop such programming are those most intimately connected with their delivery; and the LMPC can be an important vehicle to coordinate these efforts. (Given the general lack of data on effectiveness of more intense training, the FF and LMPC might wish to develop and pilot some new configurations to test specific hypotheses about what kinds of delivery are most effective and efficient in realizing specific employment goals.[59])

As well, in order to realize some efficiencies, the experiences of other jurisdictions suggest that some services can be effectively coordinated across providers (and regardless of funded program). In particular, an integrated service system might benefit from coordinated delivery of services that are important for client success and employer satisfaction (e.g. job development, case management and important post-program supports). These elements might be part of the services delivered to clients receiving supported job search, employment supports and more intense training services; and coordination among providers and across funded programs might better serve both individual clients and employers, as well as being more efficient. The coordination of job development through TEA is an example of such an initiative.

In order to test even some of the possibilities for more effective and efficient service delivery, additional resources are likely to be needed for planning, designing and developing the particular and most appropriate forms. While some directions for new work are offered below, they are fairly broad and the specifics will take some time to develop. Coupled with the identification of specific priorities for London-Middlesex (e.g industry-related or occupation-related skills which could be

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[58]The program reform undertaken by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, outlined in *Making Services Work for People* (1997), identified the services and programs which must be available in all communities, but seems to provide considerable discretion for the design (or re-configuring) of specific delivery appropriate to each community. If such an approach were adopted under the LMDA (as outlined in the October 1998 paper), there would be an important opportunity for communities to design - and implement - more integrated delivery.

[59]In London-Middlesex , examples might include the YOU/Thames Valley School Board program combining automotive, academic and employability skills; and the London Training Centre program which, for some learners, combines cook training with upgrading, including literacy, numeracy and computer training. Data from the US. suggests that the integrated training approach used by the Center for Employment Training in San Jose, California has produced demonstrable results. (See Martin, John P. "What Works Among Active Labour Market Policies: Evidence from OECD Countries' Experiences"; Labour Market and Social Policy Occasional Papers No. 35; OECD 1998)

developed in conjunction with, for example, literacy and basic skills), there needs to be a commitment of funds.

(c) Funding Allocations

Both funders and providers accept the idea that allocations, even under an LMDA, might still rest with each level of government. This is assumed to be likely since, while much E&T funding would be covered under an agreement, other funding for important initiatives might continue to come from other ministries and branches of the three governments (e.g. ODSP and federal funding for services for the disabled; youth services; training programs purchased through WSIB; adult credit programming which is not included in the new MTCU; as well as funding for services which might come from OMAFRA and Ministry of Health; to name just a few). Many individuals we spoke with strongly advocated more "pooling" of resources, with the FF responsible for re-allocating to identified needs and considered priorities. However, most people agree this more extensive pooling is unlikely to happen soon.

In the absence of full control, the members of Funders Forum have been able, none-the-less, to use some of their discretion to provide resources to several projects. Given their track record, the community, both funders and providers, wants the FF to have more discretion. In particular, whether by explicit allocation authority or by "recommending" to their superiors, they should be able to fund those new initiatives that have a direct relation to identified priorities and which may - or may not - fit into currently defined programs. Indeed the LMDA group envisioned the likelihood and importance of such priorities by including the "Local Skills Initiative" as part of their more integrated system. The FF and others have been clear about wanting increasing local control over more funding; that is, a larger discretionary pool from which to draw. Therefore,

#5: The Funders Forum should have access to, and accountability for, increasing amounts of discretionary resources from each level of government for new joint initiatives, determined by a local priority setting process.

The resources available to the different FF/LMPC initiatives to date have included some staff support (mainly provided by the City of London), as well as funding for individual project staff, mainly provided by HRDC, MCSS, and the United Way. Even with the inclusion of MTCU, there will still be a need to access a specific pool of funds to support any new initiatives and programming. Whether by formal allocations from each funder or by continued informal pooling, there is a need to ensure that the resources are available from each level of government (regardless of current funded programs) to address emerging needs and to design service delivery to meet identifiable priorities and which build on the experiences of others in configuring services to be more effective.

While the FF approach has been positive, several members spoke of their hope that there would be clear support from more senior officials for their efforts; and, if not explicit support, at least permission to continue to develop the capacity of the local community to plan, deliver and be accountable for a more integrated service delivery appropriate to London-Middlesex. Stated differently, what may not be possible as a matter of explicit policy should at least be given permission to develop. Since it appears that the main directions being pursued in London-Middlesex are consistent with both those identified in the LMDA planning and those which are found in other jurisdictions, explicit support of this kind from senior officials could, presumably, be forthcoming.

The role of the FF in allocations is likely to be constrained, at least to some extent, by the policies of the respective governments. While some alternative approaches to the FF are outlined in Part V.3.3, mention has been made of several alternative ways the current FF might work. The FF might (i) share strategic directions of each funder, (ii) share information on actual funding decisions, (iii) share funding of some, but only some, projects which meet collective community priorities; that is jointly fund these projects with each (or at least several) funders contributing some resources; (iv)

establish a special projects pool of resources from all funders; (v) pool larger sums from currently funded programs for allocation by the FF as local managers.[60]

As is evident, all but the last possibility assume that each funder will retain the responsibility for recommending (or allocating) their own program funds; but each would do so by considering the needs and priorities of the community as a whole. As well, approaches (iii) and (iv) suggest that it is possible to have a process which "applies resources strategically, to have value added, while respecting the roles (of each funder and government)."[61] Both these approaches seem largely consistent with the LMDA group's outline which included a provision that "MET [now MTCU] will establish and delegate the appropriate contracting and budgeting authority".[62] Alternatively, in the final approach, it is unclear if current government policies might include delegation through a group such as the FF. It is certainly conceivable that each government might provide some guidelines under which a more general pooling could be used to meet the needs of a more integrated service delivery plan which included other funded programs as well as those under an LMDA.

As noted, there are other alternatives to the FF, outlined in Part V.3.3, for allocating funding in an effort to develop a more integrated service delivery system.

(e) Service Quality and Program Improvement

As noted earlier, there are several important dimensions to accountability. Of particular interest for this function are those dimensions that are important to ensuring that customers are being well served (defined as outcomes achieved) and that mechanisms are in place that ensure that programs can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their services. There has been much discussion of "continuous improvement" in the Canada and other jurisdictions. Much of the discussion, however, centres on the need to be attentive to those who are served. As quoted earlier, the differences between a client-focused and program-focused approach include the important challenge of meeting the needs of funders while still focused on serving clients. It is not easy. Putting clients first is often exemplified by ensuring that customer feedback is systematic and incorporated into program delivery decisions.

While outcome and satisfaction measures are needed, they are clearly not sufficient to ensure quality programs. Both types of measures are subject to important external effects; for example, labour market conditions may have a far greater role in employment outcomes than the quality of any particular service. Similarly, reported satisfaction levels may tell us little about what skills were used on the job, how well a worker was able to acquire subsequent training, or what factors might allow skills to be acquired more effectively.

There is a growing body of literature about "what works" related to labour force attachment, the differences between short and long term attachment, and between active and passive labour force development programs. The OECD papers over the past few years, coupled with some HRDC studies, offer some guidance, as do the evaluations of different initiatives in the US. More important, there is much new work that has begun in other jurisdictions, including specific new

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[60]An important difference between "integrated" and "pooled" approaches may be that integrated funding would suggest that each funder retained control over the allocations, but that these allocations were part of a larger plan which located each funder's decisions in the full range of services provided. The pooling of funds obviously requires a willingness on the part of funders to contribute to an overall fund for (some) service delivery through more collaboration and, consequently, some reduction in control. In either case, the decisions would require considerable discussion on the range of services to be provided and how each funded program contributed to the whole.

[61]It was noted that "handing over a pot of money to the community is not where the (Provincial) government is going" since FF participants appear to agree that political accountability requires retaining their own authority over their funding decisions.

[62]*Ontario's Plan for an Integrated System of Employment Services, Targeted Programs and Delivery Under a Labour Market Development Agreement* (October 21, 1998); p. 39.

approaches to integrating specific services in order to increase effectiveness (as reported in Part II above). Additional research to identify links between delivery and quality and effectiveness may be forthcoming; but the specific task of developing a practical evaluation and service improvement process based on more than customer satisfaction will be difficult and will be another one of those challenges where the best of both funders and providers needs to come together. Therefore,

#6: The Funders Forum and Labour Market Planning Council might establish a working group to consider how best to learn from others and to design an appropriate service improvement process for employment and training services in London-Middlesex, including - but not limited to - common tracking of client outcomes and common customer satisfaction measures.

A commitment to further practical work on quality and effectiveness would be an important signal to the community and to the three levels of government that the quality of services, not only their cost, is a major concern of the employment and training community, both providers and funders.

This work might complement two existing initiatives. First, the ETN is expected to provide a unified database for tracking clients and their attainments across programs; information that is an essential starting point for evaluation. Second, the implementation of the recently developed "service delivery standards" may provide important information about the ability of providers to embrace some common criteria for a variety of components. Since it is unclear how the community will monitor the implementation of the standards, this is a task which might be looked at by the working group; in particular,

#6a: The working group (or a separate ad hoc group under LMPC) might (i) design a process to monitor and (ii) identify particular supports required for the implementation of the service delivery standards.

An important consideration with respect to the service delivery standards is whether some implementation priorities among the standards might be useful in providing some focus for agencies in their implementation. Experience with the introduction of Core Quality Standards for agencies delivering Literacy and Basic Skills programs might be considered.

Alternatively, the group might begin by reviewing what we already know; specifically, evidence from several jurisdictions is that those requiring less intense services can be effectively and successfully served since they are largely "job ready"; including clients who require only "self-serve", resource centre and/or "job matching" services, as well as those requiring moderate, but short-term, job search assistance such as counseling, job-finding clubs, and assistance with particular job search skills.

Equally clear, however, is that we know much less about what works for those who are not "job ready", are in the greatest danger of becoming or remaining unattached to the labour force and, therefore, require the most intensive supports. Some of the newer delivery approaches from other jurisdictions may be of interest. There is also some interest in developing a more direct connection between program evaluation and program improvement. That is, since it is difficult to determine what interventions are most effective using some of the more direct measures of employment, it may be important to develop some additional indicators which can be used to support program improvement initiatives. Developing an appropriate evaluation process for these more intense services might be another task of the working group.

#6b: The working group might establish a liaison between the ETN project and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (LMDA group) and/or Ministry of Community and Social Services to ensure the development of a common reporting/tracking system for employment and training outcomes, and for customer satisfaction measures for an integrated service delivery system.

There's a simple and important reason for this: most people are frustrated by the amount and kind of reporting that they have to do to meet the needs of several funders and different funded programs. Providers clearly expressed their desire to report once. If there is any possibility that the time spent on information collection and reporting could be reduced, it would (obviously) free up time and energy for service delivery concerns. Since the LMDA group identified the development of an integrated information system as an important objective for the initial phase of LMDA implementation, it may be an opportunity to ensure that (a) the systems are compatible and (b) they result in a demonstrable reduction in reporting requirements. As well, the Ministry of Community and Social Services may be developing a useful database. The ETN seems like the obvious group to pursue the details of possible arrangements and ensure they meet the needs of both funders and providers in London-Middlesex.

Beyond the frustrations of providers with the current system where each provider and each distinct funded program is responsible for their own client tracking and follow-up, is the likelihood that such a process is ineffective. The evidence from other jurisdictions suggests that standard telephone follow-up is not only expensive (particularly when done by each individual provider), but is unlikely to produce valid or reliable results; both the coverage and accuracy of the data has been questioned. Some use of "administrative records" (i.e. through a database) appears to be necessary for employment and training outcomes; and a common approach to customer satisfaction data - across funded programs - seems equally important. While access and reporting of these data may require some restrictions and safeguards, it is important to have better data from which to evaluate the results of different programs and of the system as a whole. While this assumes that at least some measures are common across funded programs, the alternative to making this a collective responsibility is to continue to have each provider consume scare time and resources getting data which may be neither useful nor comparable.

A related task for this group might complement a single reporting system; namely, the development of a single funding application process for providers. Several agencies (not only in London-Middlesex) expressed their frustration with the many and different requirements of the different funded programs. Some of the variety may stem from the different administrative and reporting requirements which, in turn, may reflect the lack of common definitions for the expected outcomes of related services. As with other features of service provision to date, the fragmentation of funded programs results in considerable work for individual agencies, work which might be reduced were there to be a fully integrated system. In the short term, through the FF, the managers of individual funded programs might be able to accommodate providers by piloting a common proposal format. While addressing this concern is not as urgent as the need for a single reporting system, it may be possible for funders to address it expeditiously, thereby removing an irritant as well as increasing the energy available for providers to spend on service delivery.

Among other findings we can have some confidence in is the absolute need to consider access to more intense services, a subject to consider in outlining some suggestions related to program delivery.

IV.7.2 Delivery Functions

The delivery functions pose other challenges and developing more integrated delivery may very well move to another level over the next few years (with or without the LMDA group's work). There are several areas where a few suggestions might help build on the specific work already undertaken in London-Middlesex. There are three broad areas where the LMPC might provide leadership and assume responsibility: (a) assessment, especially defining who needs more intense services; (b) developing the right intense services (including hybrids, intense, contextual, vocationally-oriented training); and (c) investing in ways to ensure program improvement and effectiveness. These are each project areas that are likely to exist regardless of how governments choose to organize programs or allocate resources.

(a) Assessment

There are two important needs here. First, there are the challenges that flow from the work already done on "common assessment" (including the evaluation) and the perceptions of many, if not most, providers that it is not being used as it was intended; is not being used consistently; there are not referrals coming (the report says referrals are being made, just not received); and there are questions about whether the common assessment process as it now stands includes enough of the necessary information to help clients be assured that they're getting the right service from the right provider. If the process and tool are not doing the job for all clients, additional work may be required. However, the question can fairly be asked: why is this important?

One of the findings from other jurisdictions, and supported by some previous work in London-Middlesex, is the need to distinguish among the different levels and types of services needed for different consumers of E&T services. The idea of "levels of service" was raised in the jobLink proposal and is supported in virtually every other jurisdiction, as well as by the LMDA group. The OECD concluded that distinguishing among three levels of service, based on the intensity of what clients need, is a useful and productive strategy.[63] One of the reports on the CLEAR project also concluded that the project had demonstrated that this was, indeed, feasible.[64] However, it is not obvious that distinguishing among the three levels of service is being done for all those who might benefit whether or not they are EI or OW recipients.

While the CLEAR project is a good example of movement toward a OneStop-type of approach, it may be important to note the principle used in the US is for "no wrong door"; that is, that everyone can get the level of service they need, regardless of their income support or where they initially go to contact the E&T service system. Right now, it seems that for some clients there may in fact be "no wrong door"; but not for all. As well, it is not clear whether every door is able to lead to clearly defined services distinguished by their level of intensity. The evaluation of the common assessment process and the perceptions of providers cited there - as well as our discussions with practitioners during this project - suggest that the instrument and process is not used consistently, nor has it been sufficiently effective in ensuring that clients are referred correctly and efficiently (that is, its use to date has not resulted in the intended "one stop" for all individuals).[65]

As mentioned above, there is near unanimous agreement that people need to be initially offered one of three levels of service; and there are various ways of defining these. (We're only talking here about services to individuals, not to employers.) Each jurisdiction seems have adopted slightly different ways of defining each level, though they share an understanding of the different kinds of supports and who might be served at each level. As well, there is some agreement from other jurisdictions that the identification of the appropriate level of service for each client is the most difficult and most important delivery function. Coupled with the fact that several of those we heard from believe that a considerable proportion of their clients require more intense services, experience in other jurisdictions suggests that the ability to plan for the necessary range of services is dependent upon agreement on the intensity of services and on the actual needs of clients. While a

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[63]For example, see " Enhancing Effectiveness of Active Labour Market Policies" (OECD, 1996); "Labour Market Policies: New Challenges; Enhancing Effectiveness of Active Labour Market Policies: A Streamlined Public Employment Service" (Meeting of the Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Committee at Ministerial Level held at the Château de la Muette, Paris; 14 and 15 October 1997; "Key Employment Policy Challenges Faced by OECD Countries" (OECD submission to the G8 Growth, Employability and Inclusion Conference London, 21-22 February 1998; Labour Market and Social Policy - Occasional Papers No. 31; OECD 1998); and Martin, John P. "What Works Among Active Labour Market Policies: Evidence from OECD Countries' Experiences" (Labour Market and Social Policy - Occasional Papers No. 35; OECD 1998).

[64]Report on the CLEAR project; June 1996.

[65]"Common Assessment Process" Study: Final Report (Acumen Research; July 24, 1998); in particular, pp. 21-22, and pp. 6-9. It should be noted, however, that the sample was relatively small. Our own discussions confirmed the study's results.

difficult task, projecting the required services has important consequences for both funding and for service planning. The fact that it is so hard to estimate is why it is so important to begin to establish more and better data about client needs.

Small 'a' Assessment

#7: Following agreement on an appropriate description of the services at each of three levels, the LMPC, with support from the Funders Forum, might convene a working group to develop recommendations on how to ensure that a common assessment process is used which provides (a) universal access through a "no wrong door" approach and (b) provides the appropriate distinctions among three levels of service.

As noted earlier, there are different definitions of the services (and eligibility) for each level. After considering these, as well as any identified through the LMDA discussions, a particular set of service definitions for clients could be defined at each level to be followed by possible revisions to the current initial assessment process. It may be that there are some adjustments to the "small a" assessment that will enable the right distinctions to be made. Alternatively, something more extensive may be needed, but perhaps not as comprehensive as the "profiling" done in other jurisdictions. In either case, the need is for a tool that is easy enough for all to use, but also comprehensive enough to help make certain that those needing more intensive services can be clearly identified. Some providers also suggested that the right tool must also be accompanied by a requirement from funders that it be used for all clients.[66]

More Intense Services: Large 'A' Assessment and Integrated Programming

This, in turn, leads to the second challenge: namely, providing a more in-depth (large "A") assessment for those people who require more intense services; that is, assessments that have sufficient depth and breadth to be useful in the development of clients' action plans.[67]

The CAFA initiatve in Eastern Ontario (reported in Part III) has developed one such instrument and process, though its intended use is for academic assessment and directly related to the programs available. They are also considering whether to develop a related vocational assessment tool. An important characteristic of their process is that it is "independent" of any provider, though many were involved in its development. It has garnered significant support: people trust the results (programs, delivery agencies, funders, clients). A second characteristic of the CAFA is that the process includes important follow-up and liaison with the client and the program to which s/he is referred. A related characteristic is the need for all involved in providing intensive training services to use the assessment. This has been a problem in many attempts to "encourage" the use of common assessment processes in many communities.

Rather than concern ourselves here with who might administer the assessment for those with more intensive needs, or how referrals and employment plans based on the assessment would develop, it would seem useful to consider the development of an appropriate process; therefore

#8: The LMPC, supported by the Funders Forum, could establish a working group to consider the need for a common ("large A") assessment for those clients who require the most intensive (training) services (including literacy and basic skills, vocational skills training, and

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[66]The need for funders to require the use of the process stems from the perception that there needs to be an expression of the commitment of the funders to implement a common process.

[67]Of course, they must be valid and reliable assessment as well, but short of the more extensive profiling done in Australia. There is also concern expressed in some OECD reviews about the use of individual action plans. In particular: "There is little evaluation research comparing those who have such plans with others who do not, or when the plans should be introduced during the unemployment spell." (See *Enhancing Effectiveness of Active Labour Market Policies*; OECD, 1996)

on-the-job training of significant length). The working group might also consider various techniques for "profiling" harder-to-serve and "at risk" clients.

It might be suggested that the same working group could accomplish both assessment tasks. However, the tasks seem sufficiently distinct. The first, the small 'a' assessment, is essentially concerned with ensuring that the process can distinguish between those needing each level or type of service. The second, the large 'A' assessment, requires gaining more specific "diagnostic" information that will allow for development of appropriate action plans and a detailed understanding of the kinds of training (or other intensive services) required for the client to become "employable". The assessment, therefore, needs to consider basic skills, vocational skills and other employability skills; as well as the mode of delivery most likely to be effective. This is clearly a different kind of task from initial assessment and one which would seem to be shared only among providers of the most intense services across the range of funded programs.[68]

The community does not now know what intensive services, delivered in what way, have been most effective in assisting people to reach their goals. Nor do we know what components might be efficiently delivered through particular forms of integrated programming. Nor is there data to suggest whether there are particular needs or approaches which are not as yet available. As someone suggested, it may be that all the pieces to the puzzle exist (in terms of the range of services that are delivered), but that, for many clients, the pieces do not easily fit together, or with the person's needs.

It should be noted that there is growing evidence from other jurisdictions that, to be effective, training services need to be intensive, goal based, vocationally oriented (as opposed to "academic") and integrated (that is, include basic skills, vocational skills, and other "employability skills" as part of an integrated whole). As well, such programming should be delivered to small, homogeneous groups.[69]

#8a: As a second task, the working group might specifically design more consciously integrated training, including expansion of some existing programs in London-Middlesex, and new services required to meet community priorities and individual needs for intensive training. Pilots designed by a working group should explicitly seek to integrate service currently delivered under different funded programs and serious consideration should be given to delivery through an alliance or consortium in an effort to further develop "its own culture" (or a "culture-that-no-one-owns").

Whether the same group or another, this suggested task responds to the reality of what has been relatively fragmented delivery as a result of maintaining distinct funded programs. However, as mentioned above, there are some examples in London-Middlesex of delivery which appears to meet

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[68]The term "profiling" as used in Australia appears to be far more extensive than, for example, its use in the context of Job Connect programs in Ontario. Regardless of what distinctions are made, however, the key characteristic from other jurisdictions is that the distinctions apply across the integrated service system and they are consistently applied across what are now distinct funded programs.

[69]The initial positive findings related to integrated programming are from the work of the Centre for Employment Training in San Jose, California which has been judged to be an important model by the US. Dept. of Labour. In addition, specific studies of comparative delivery have been reported by the San Diego Consortium for Workforce Education and Lifelong Learning (Sticht, Thomas G. et al "Functional Context Education and Welfare Reform"; September 16, 1997). In addition, the OECD reviews have suggested that the largest benefits are for women who have been out of the labour force for a considerable period of time, rather than for disadvantaged youth. One review notes: "The effectiveness of training programmes tends to decline with the growing size of these programmes and the heterogeneity of the participants. In order to work, these programmes need to be well-targeted both to the characteristics of the participants and the requirements of the local labour market. The quality of the training and its closeness to a work environment are also important determinants of the outcome." From *Key Employment Policy Challenges Faced by OECD Countries* (OECD submission to the G8 Growth, Employability and Inclusion Conference; London, 21-22 February 1998; Labour Market and Social Policy - Occasional Papers No. 31; OECD 1998). Finally, more recent findings identify some specific types of integrated programming which have been effective. These are reported in Part II and references therein.

at least some of the criteria for effective delivery gleaned from experience in other jurisdictions. It is important to both build on these existing services and consider the need to redeploy resources to meet the demands. Indeed, a report on the CLEAR project noted the importance of developing a "community incubator using a partnership model to envision, test and train (staff)".[70] Since it will be a considerable time before the effectiveness of any more integrated delivery is determined, it would seem useful to begin to develop such approaches as soon as possible. The LMPC can be pro-active in helping London-Middlesex providers prepare to deliver innovative programming to meet these challenges and in the preparation of specific pilots of integrated delivery that meet identifiable needs.[71]

Based on experience in other jurisdictions, the two priority areas for initiatives should be integrating (i) supported job search with literacy and basic skills; (ii) literacy and basic skills with specific vocational skills training. The reason for these is the overwhelming and compelling empirical evidence (mostly from longitudinal studies of outcomes related to employment and income gains, and their persistence over time).

As noted in Part II, the data strongly suggests that neither supported job search nor basic skills development by themselves yields significant gains; rather, only by combining the two are the results for participants significant and longer lasting. Similarly, only by combining vocational (and sometimes job specific) training with literacy and basic skills development do participants realize sustainable income and employment gains. There are results from innovative programs where training was both classroom-based and workplace-based, involving long-term unemployed and/or incumbent workers. In addition, training programs need to be intensive, small group, targeted (homogeneous) and tied to specific employers and/or jobs. Neither of these two forms of integrated delivery are common in Ontario (though some examples have existed, and a few still do), and the current separation of funded programs may have made it more difficult. At least several specific, demonstrably successful examples exist and should be considered.

And these two forms appear to be most effective in addressing the needs of those most at risk of long term unemployment, as well as addressing what employers want in entry level workers. A final reason for beginning with these two areas is the importance of basic skills development (but not by itself) to both reducing poverty (for job stability and advancement which result in long-term earning gains) and to meeting employers' need for better skilled entry-level workers (which they see as the key to increased productivity and competitiveness, and therefore, economic development). Some additional discussion and suggestions specific to literacy and basic skills programming are offered in Part V.6, below.

As well as work on assessment and program design for those needing more intense services, this group might consider how to implement service delivery standard #11 on case management. One of the lessons from other jurisdictions is that continuous case management is an important support for those requiring more intense services. Some suggest that this be combined with the assessment and program planning function and remain the responsibility of that provider. Others merely suggest that it be continuous, as does the London-Middlesex proposed standard. In either case, a focus on those with more intense service needs would suggest that implementation of this standard be a priority to ensure a common approach and effective case management services.[72]

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[70]While this suggestion was made in the context of "community-wide tools", it would seem to be equally relevant to community-wide delivery of other services as well.

[71]The integration of specific vocational skills training in such programming may be a particular challenge under the newly designed "Skills Development Education Grant". As well, an interesting feature of the Australian approach is to discourage "creaming" by providing financial incentives for agencies to deliver programs to "harder-to-serve", with the incentives tied to demonstrable results. Of course, the incentives have to be sufficient to support the considerable work involved in helping these clients achieve meaningful outcomes.

[72]In addition, there is evidence to suggest that case management should explicitly include a period following re-employment, based on the need to provide support to those with greatest difficulty making the transition to regular employment. In those jurisdictions with a "jobs first" approach (e.g. US.), it is common for training and other support services to be provided to recently employed clients and their firms, rather than being reserved for job seekers

IV.7.3 Some Final Comments

Several points need to be offered by way of summary.

As noted earlier, these suggestions would not be plausible were it not for the work of so many people in London-Middlesex; funders and providers alike. The successes of the FF and LMPC are important examples of the kind of work that can be achieved through serious collaboration. While far from complete, the outline of a more coherent employment and training service system is apparent.

The above suggestions hopefully can provide some additional support in the form of ideas for activity in four main areas.

The initial suggestions (#1, 1a, b & c) are aimed at establishing the FF as the responsible and accountable body to ensure that the several elements of the community can assume responsibility for providing the information necessary to establish the community's employment and training priorities and to do so at an appropriately local level to ensure it is used in planning service delivery. Two subsequent suggestions (#2 & 5) would ensure that the explicit determination and funding of priorities proceeds with the full involvement and support of the Ministry of TCU and encourages the inclusion of other important funders for their support as well.

In addition to suggestion #1b, several other suggestions speak to the three priority areas for attention by the LMPC. First, assessment, both initial and more intensive, requires some conscious attention to build on the developments both in London-Middlesex and other jurisdictions (#7 & 8). Second, the suggestions around program design (#4 & 8a) are intended to speak directly to the role of providers and the LMPC in the important task of translating identified priorities into the actual services that are delivered. Third, program evaluation and improvement is the subject of three related suggestions (#6, 6a & 6b). While it is assumed that the initiatives be shared between LMPC and the FF, the role of providers is crucial if the efforts are to be productive.

There are undoubtedly other suggestions which might support the work in addressing these important community and delivery functions. Some may feel that the suggestions are too obvious or lack specificity; both of which may be legitimate criticisms. However, the suggestions offered here would be important additions to the already considerable activities of both the FF and LMPC as groups, and their members as individuals. There is, therefore, a final suggestion.

Resources/Support

#9: The Labour Market Planning Council and the Funders Forum might jointly approach the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for an appropriate contribution, to complement the support of other funders, for agreed upon projects which further the capacity of the employment and training community of London-Middlesex to develop, pilot and/or implement new and innovative approaches which address the needs of clients and employers; as well as to provide support for the ongoing work of the both the LMPC and Funders Forum.

There is good reason to build on the success of much important work to date. Obviously, extending this work, whether through the projects suggested or others, will require some support. The commitment of the funders to developing a more coherent system has been clear; but additional

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and ending as soon as a person becomes employed. This approach, however, may reflect some different structural condition in the US.; in particular, that their labour market has resulted in greater opportunities for those on social assistance to be hired, only to find they need additional skills to be effectively employed, even in entry level jobs.

support is needed, both for the funders work and the several projects involving the LMPC. It is difficult to imagine important progress continuing in the absence of the necessary support.

In addition to the any or all of the specific projects that the LMPC and FF are involved in, there is also a need to support the LMPC and FF as "entities" that are key to the community's development. For example, the FF benefited greatly from having a skilled outside facilitator help with the development of their "strategic directions" two years ago, and the same person has again helped with their recent review. The LMPC as well has benefited from having external consultants facilitate their work on particular projects, such as the service delivery standards and common assessment evaluation. While the FF provides funding for the LMPC project manager (and part of a support staff), there is no similar "secretariat" for the FF itself. Any attempt to actually address the functions outlined above, in London-Middlesex or any community, will require support in the form of staff and facilitation. The FF may have matured in their willingness to accept these functions. It is, however, unlikely to assume additional responsibilities and tasks without some dedicated support.

As with other groups, the FF could develop a business plan and ensure that they were accountable for the allocations that need to come from all three levels of government and, in particular, from the Ministry of TCU, which is the responsible party for so much of the important E&T activity which will ultimately become a system in London-Middlesex and across the province. Their support, both policy and resources, would be an important contribution to the community's development.

Indeed, the LMDA group may have anticipated this need when it outlined a "Local Skills Initiative" component, the elements of which seem fully compatible with support for the initiatives identified here. For example, the description of eligible activities offered by the outline includes: "labour market research, projects to develop and implement human resource strategies, and test innovative methods"; "projects that build alliances and partnerships between local stakeholders and require a shared contribution of resources"; and "actively involv(ing) community partners and citizens in local labour market initiatives." As well, among the performance results for this program are "continued development of effective community networks" and "community leaders, partners and stakeholders will have input to local priorities."[73]

Also, among the most important challenges identified by both FF and LMPC members we spoke with is the extent to which the MTCU (formerly MET) will ensure a local process and provide the necessary supports for the continued development of local responsiveness and responsibility. Even if there is a delay in the integration of programs at a provincial level, for whatever reasons, the prevailing sentiment is that it is important to further the London-Middlesex initiatives and vision by supporting their continued development.

Related to both the funding and local responsibility challenges, there is a feeling - deep and sincere and broadly shared among London-Middlesex funders and providers - that might be paraphrased as "we've got it right. Not that we already know how to do everything; such as how to collaborate on priorities, on allocations, etc. But we've got a vision and principles - including accountability - and we've got a local process that can work to ensure that the community is involved." People do not believe it is perfect. The voices of consumers and employers need to be heard more often and more clearly; deliverers and funders want to focus more on quality and effectiveness in delivery. But these will always be important challenges. What comes through loudly (and near unanimously) is that, left to their own devices, there are structures and processes - with checks and balances - that build on a deeply felt commitment to clients and their needs and which can be - and should be - supported by all levels of government.

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[73]*Ontario's Plan for an Integrated System of Employment Services, Targeted Programs and Delivery Under a Labour Market Development Agreement* (October 21, 1998) p. 20. It should be noted that any funds provided under this initiative would necessary be only one contribution to the work of the FF and LMPC, given that their activities are aimed toward the develop of an integrated system which includes, but is not limited to, those programs and services which may come to be included under an LMDA. Each funder would need to continue to make appropriate contributions.

There is also a feeling that long and difficult experience has indeed been the best teacher and the lessons have been learned well. Not to support the continued development of the employment and training community in London-Middlesex would not only represent a considerable waste of effort; more important, it would seriously preclude the Province realizing its own stated goal of creating an integrated service delivery system, since the same commitments - and many of the same tasks - will be necessary. The perception is that the activities of the Funders Forum and the LMPC represent at least "the prudent application of resources", if not actual savings from more effective and efficient service delivery. However, to this point in time, a variety of funded programs have not been able to be included in the planning that the FF might like to do. Explicit recognition and support (including participation, as well as policy and resource supports) by the MTCU would allow the evolution of these important local efforts to continue.

The above suggestions and commentary may seem particular to London-Middlesex. However, these suggestions and the functions they support are relevant to other communities as well. The findings from London-Middlesex, coupled with those from other jurisdictions, have formed the basis for some important understandings of the characteristics of effective relationships and integrated planning activities, as well as the supports required for those activities to be successful. While there is always much work to do, the success of several initiatives in London-Middlesex point to directions which can inform approaches in other communities and in the province as a whole. Some of these directions are the subject of Part V of this report.

Suggestions

Developing Priorities

#1: The Funders Forum could consider developing a "framework to consult" which provides explicit processes for regular input on employment and training priorities from a variety of stakeholders.

#1a: The responsibility for identifying priorities of employers and incumbent workers might be vested in the Local Board, together with other existing representative groups (e.g. Board of Trade, Chamber of Commerce, LEIC, Labour Council and individual business and labour organizations).

#1b: The LMPC could design and implement an appropriate process by which employment and training service providers can identify priorities for services based on their experiences and those of their clients.

#1c: A specific process is needed to gather information about the need for different employment and training services from the broader community, particularly residents not currently accessing existing services.

Participation and Communication

#2: It would be useful for the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities to provide a representative who can speak on behalf of all the funded programs of the ministry and who would participate in the Funders Forum as a full partner.

#3: The employment and training community might benefit from the dissemination of the Funders Forum analysis of service priorities and allocations, including all special projects which support the development and delivery of more effective and integrated services.

Designing (or Reconfiguring Existing) Services

#4: The LMPC could convene a working group of relevant providers to develop specific new or reconfigured services to meet identified priorities.

#5: The Funders Forum should have access to, and accountability for, increasing amounts of discretionary resources from each level of government for new joint initiatives, determined by a local priority setting process.

Service Quality and Improvement

#6: The Funders Forum and Labour Market Planning Council might establish a working group to consider how best to learn from others and to design an appropriate service improvement process for employment and training services in London-Middlesex, including - but not limited to - common tracking of client outcomes and common customer satisfaction measures.

#6a: The working group (or a separate ad hoc group under LMPC) might (i) design a process to monitor and (ii) identify particular supports required for the implementation of the service delivery standards.

#6b: The working group might establish a liaison between the ETN project and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (LMDA group) and/or Ministry of Community and Social Services to ensure the development of a common reporting/tracking system for employment and training outcomes, and for customer satisfaction measures for an integrated service delivery system.

Levels of Service (small 'a' assessment)

#7: Following agreement on an appropriate description of the services at each of three levels, the LMPC, with support from the Funders Forum, might convene a working group to develop recommendations on how to ensure that a common assessment process is used which provides (a) universal access through a "no wrong door" approach and (b) provides the appropriate distinctions among three levels of service.

Intense Services (large 'A' assessment; truly integrated programming)

#8: The LMPC, supported by the Funders Forum, could establish a working group to consider the need for a common ("large A") assessment for those clients who require the most intensive (training) services (including literacy and basic skills, vocational skills training, and on-the-job training of significant length). The working group might also consider various techniques for "profiling" harder-to-serve and "at risk" clients.

#8a: As a second task, the working group might specifically design more consciously integrated training, including expansion of some existing programs in London-Middlesex, and new services required to meet community priorities and individual needs for intensive training. Pilots designed by a working group should explicitly seek to integrate service currently delivered under different funded programs and serious consideration should be given to delivery through an alliance or consortium in an effort to further develop "its own culture" (or a "culture-that-no-one-owns").

Resources/Support

#9: The Labour Market Planning Council and the Funders Forum might jointly approach the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities for an appropriate contribution, to complement the support of other funders, for agreed upon projects which further the capacity of the

employment and training community of London-Middlesex to develop, pilot and/or implement new and innovative approaches which address the needs of clients and employers; as well as to provide support for the ongoing work of the both the LMPC and Funders Forum.

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Part V. Possible Directions and Supports Related to Increased Integration

> *"No instruction is certain, no knowledge complete."*
> Poet Robert Bringhurst from "Nagarjuna"

As noted in the introduction, the purposes of this project focused on identifying (i) characteristics of more integrated community service planning and delivery and (ii) supports which might help communities to move toward a more coherent system of employment and training services. This section outlines some possible directions which might help communities, including service funders and service providers, to move toward more integrated service planning and delivery in an effort to better meet the clients' needs. As well, there are some suggestions as to the kinds of supports that would help communities take up some of the possible directions.

It may also be useful to reiterate one of the assumptions which informed this project; namely, that the purpose of integrated planning is to support the delivery of more effective and efficient services. Planning is not an end in itself; but, rather, a means to an end.

This section tries to integrate some lessons from studies in London-Middlesex, the francophone community in Prescott-Russell, and the findings from the other jurisdictions (i.e. US, UK and Australia); each of which is outlined in some depth in the respective parts of the report. Some of the specific suggestions are supported by particular findings from these studies and will be noted wherever possible.

This part of the report focuses on some possible directions which might be useful in moving to greater integration of planning and delivery efforts. It would be difficult to summarize each of the other discussions here. However, it may be useful for readers to review the context and challenges (the first part of the discussion of other jurisdictions) and the characteristics of more integrated planning and delivery (in each of the other jurisdictions and the London-Middlesex discussions) as background for what is offered below. Following a review of those discussions, this section offers a brief overview of the "community planning" and "service delivery" functions which might inform the development of further initiatives.

The main focus for this part of the report is on possible directions for communities, governments and, finally, for literacy and basic skills programming. Section V.4 summarizes eight ideas which might help communities orient to some of the changes in orientation required for more integrated planning and delivery. This is followed by ten specific "projects" which might become priorities for communities and - more important - are grounded in the specific studies reported in detail in the other sections. Section V.5 considers some of the supports required if the projects are to go forward, as well as some supports for other initiatives aimed at more integrated service planning or delivery. Section V.6 discusses some particular directions for literacy and basic skills programming.

V.1 Overview of Context and Challenges

Section I of the discussion of other jurisdictions identified three particular challenges which formed the context for major changes in each of three other jurisdictions.

(1) The need for a significant reduction in the numbers of people on social assistance.

This challenge includes two important shifts in policy and programs. First, the movement from a "human capital development" to a "labour force attachment" orientation with its particular emphasis on a work-first approach to social assistance recipients. Second, a consensus that a quick-employment approach was not able to address the needs of many recipients nor was it able to provide access to the "family sustaining" jobs which would lift many out of poverty. Developing and

delivering programs which would provide sustainable employment and better jobs has become an important challenge for each jurisdiction.

While the data indicates that there have been significant reductions in social assistance recipients, there is also evidence that a significant number of recipients have not experienced hoped for increases in either employment or earnings. Since the adoption of welfare-to-work measures, there has been an increasing body of evidence that "quick employment" initiatives have had only limited effects on reducing poverty, and a large group of "hard-to-employ" individuals remain, not all of whom are on welfare. In addition, while large numbers of social assistance recipients have become employed, most of these people have realized very limited gains in income and are still in poverty, since their marginal increases in income have come from working more hours, rather than having "better jobs". These individuals seem to require additional supports to build on their labour market attachment, as well as to fully integrate them into more stable and long-term employment.

(2) The need to address pressures for productivity increases.

Coupled with troubling results for many harder-to-serve social assistance recipients, the needs of employers and the broader economy have become an additional impetus for change. Specifically, recent reforms in both the US and UK have tried to address the need to increase productivity and competitiveness. In particular, there have been considerable pressures to increase the basic and vocational skill levels of entry level workers (including social assistance recipients) based, at least in part, on increasing skills levels required in many positions, and on the perception that the largest productivity gains are likely to come from entry-level and "line" workers, rather than through organizational changes or from professional or managerial employees.

These two challenges can be seen to inform the approach adopted in both the US and UK; namely, to attempt to integrate "welfare-to-work" and "workforce development" approaches. The recent initiatives are being developed with a view of promoting greater workforce development through the development of higher skill levels among both social assistance recipients and incumbent workers. These approaches also seek to garner support from employers who want to raise productivity while, at the same time, providing concrete reforms aimed at raising the quality of the necessary services, including greater emphasis on workplace-based programs and post-employment support to meet the needs of employers and recipients.

(3) The need to make employment and training services more effective and efficient.

The third challenge for government initiatives in each jurisdiction has been the need to realize greater efficiencies from expenditures on employment and training services, combined with the need to find more effective approaches. Each of the reform efforts clearly assumed that the number and separation of programs had led to important inefficiencies and, as part of their respective changes, each jurisdiction sought to

(i) change the role of government from directly providing services to purchasing services and overseeing the accountability of the system as a whole;
(ii) reduce the costs of the system by integrating benefit and labour force development functions, rationalizing categorical programs and encouraging the pooling of resources across programs, more effectively targeting services to particular client groups, instituting common outcome-based reporting requirements, requiring contracted service delivery with accountability through intermediary organizations (i.e. transferring operational authority to regional or local bodies);
(iii) simplify eligibility by mandating access to all programs through a single entry point, including integrated case management and tracking functions; and
(iv) support integrated planning and delivery through both policy and funding for "system building" through required partnerships for planning and delivery (through specific structures), performance-based accountability (including public disclosure), and integrated management information systems to support these efforts.

The problem of the ineffectiveness of much current delivery is perhaps a more difficult challenge owing to the recent evidence that, to be effective, providers must effectively integrate pre-employment services (such as supported job search with literacy and basic skills; and vocational with basic skills development) and need to combine these with workplace-based services. The evidence strongly supports more deliberate efforts at system reforms which can support the necessary integrated programming while, at the same time, meeting employer and community concern for workforce and community development.

V.2 Overview of Characteristics of Integrated Planning and Delivery

Collaboration is a means to an end, not an end in itself.[1]

Both the discussion of other jurisdictions and of initiatives in London-Middlesex offer several characteristics of integrated planning and delivery, six of which can be mentioned here.

(A) Employment and Training Services Focus on Customers, Not Programs

The respective discussions outline how a customer-driven focus differs from a program-based approach and the important role this plays in reorienting all partners in service planning and delivery processes to identify and meet the needs of clients, rather than orienting to the specifications of distinct funded programs. For the other jurisdictions, as well as for London-Middlesex, this characteristic has moved beyond mere rhetoric to include a number of important initiatives designed to place clients at the centre of service delivery. Of course, this has required conscious efforts at *defining the customers of a more integrated service delivery system,* which have explicitly included employers in each of the other jurisdictions. The role of OneStop centres in each jurisdiction has been crucial to a customer orientation and provides the focus around which the integration of services has taken place. This role is complemented by the other characteristics.

(B) Employment & Training Services Have Different Levels of "Intensity"

Each of the other jurisdictions has specifically identified three levels of services which distinguish the level of support job seekers (and employers) will need if they are to achieve demonstrable outcomes. While the names vary, the specifics allow more effective targeting of programs, particularly to those requiring the most intense supports, while ensuring universal access to a broad range of defined services. Following from the work-first orientation, incentives have been developed to ensure that those most in need are served, as well as to ensure that the outcomes are achieved. Among the features common to each jurisdiction:

- services at each level are to be universally available (through OneStop, Australia's Centrelink or Britain's Gateway); though in the US services at the two upper levels may vary by state;
- local discretion over delivery, combined with active referrals and a requirement that customers encounter 'no wrong door' when applying for services;
- continuous case management, coupled with increased technology, allows continuous tracking of each client and the services they are receiving;
- neutral brokering (that is, those delivering core services are not referring to themselves);[2]
- a focus on successful employment outcomes, but with 'secondary' training outcomes;
- information on the performance of training providers is publicly available to support
- customer choice (which exists if there are multiple providers of the same service)
- training (or other intense assistance in Australia) is initially provided for up to a year, but can be extended for another six months;

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[1]"Recruitment Through Interagency Collaboration" in *Ideas that Work* (Issue #3; US Dept. of Labor; November 1998)

[2]This "neutrality" is an important feature of the CAFA initiative in Eastern Ontario, and has inspired the confidence of referring agencies (Ontario Works and Employment Insurance) and providers, as well as individual clients and, most recently, particular employers. A full description of the initiative prepared for this project by Lucie Brunet, is included as Part III.

• job development, which is especially important for clients receiving the most intense services, is coordinated to meet the needs of employers, and is extremely useful in identifying opportunities for "better jobs" and for developing training targeted to those jobs.

The more detailed discussion in Part II provides an overview of how each jurisdiction approaches the levels, eligibility and specific services which are provided. The common focus, however, is on ensuring that clients receive the appropriate services. Discretion over the services needed is an important vehicle for integrating delivery and shifting from a program-based to a customer-based approach. It is unclear, however, whether agreement exists in Ontario on what services can be provided at each level or, indeed, whether governments and providers share a commitment to the elements of a work-first orientation.

(C) The Delivery of Employment & Training Services is Truly Integrated

This characteristic refers to two important dimensions of integration. First, s*ome particular kinds of integrated services* are offered in directions for communities (V.4.2, below) which provide some elaboration on the two areas mentioned above, including why they are priorities and references some particular examples of new approaches to integration which may be significantly more effective than services delivered through distinct funded programs.

A second important element is the need to address the *"cultural" dimension of integrated delivery*; that is, the importance of creating a new culture of integrated, customer-focused services in forms which resolve the differences among providers (which where identified in the early implementation of OneStop services as a major challenge). As an important characteristic of more effective integrated service planning and delivery, the development of "a culture which no one owns" can take many forms. The lessons learned from other jurisdictions and examples of a consortium approach suggest that addressing this characteristic is important if integration is to be effective. Each jurisdiction, as well as several initiatives in London-Middlesex, demonstrate that a new culture is important to develop both more integrated planning as well as delivery.

(D) The Employment & Training Community is Accountable for Delivering Quality Services

A clear and consistent focus for the reforms in other jurisdictions, as well as for some recent developments in some funded programs in Ontario, has been to enhance accountability. In the other jurisdictions, this has taken the form of common measures of both performance and customer satisfaction regardless of funded program. While measures may be negotiated, the intent has been to limit the number and types of attainments which apply to all providers delivering each service and to ensure that performance is a part of decision-making for individuals (through publication of performance) and for funders (by being included in service planning and allocation decisions).

The approaches to accountability also begin from an understanding that the quality and effectiveness of discrete funded programs has, historically, been questionable. Each jurisdiction, however, is adopting somewhat different approaches to improving quality beyond the shared focus on performance. For example, the UK has focused on the development of new program standards and staff development, while the US has required a continuous improvement process, and both have made certification of providers a requirement for funding. In each case, the principal responsibilities rest with local communities, particularly since the development of measures, tracking and follow-up, and resource allocations are intended to be local responsibilities.

While the government focus for accountability has been on particular measures, it is clear that local communities and providers can develop their own processes for service improvement, which is becoming increasingly important. A final element of accountability in other jurisdictions has been the openness of the planning process itself, which is directly related to the next characteristic.

(E) Employment & Training Services are Designed and Delivered Locally

The experiences of other jurisdictions indicates that more integrated service planning and delivery requires considerable local autonomy. This has been understood as part of a trade-off whereby communities would have considerable flexibility to design and deliver integrated services in exchange for providing greater accountability.

In Australia, this has taken the form of government policy which explicitly encourages providers to pool resources across previously discrete programs in order to deliver the services they deem appropriate. State governments, in Australia as in the US, are mandated to provide comprehensive integrated plans which, in the US and the UK are the responsibility of local communities. Both the US and UK have developed specific mechanisms, including required partnerships, to ensure the involvement of stakeholders and the integration of funding from across what had been distinct funding streams. While the specific bodies differ, the approach - and responsibility - is definitively local.[3]

While there are several important differences in the details of how local coordination proceeds in the US and the UK, there are also important similarities. The clear consensus from the initiatives undertaken in all three jurisdictions is that central governments have concluded that

(a) the only way to integrate employment and training services is to do so locally;
(b) local responsibility is consistent with government no longer being a direct service provider, and, in particular, that more senior levels of government must, in fact, relinquish important control in exchange for greater accountability;
(c) devolving responsibility requires a statement of expected outcomes (e.g. local and state or regional plans) developed by local bodies and specific provisions to integrate services by local providers;
(d) funding has to follow local needs, by either explicitly requiring decisions on funding to be local (Australia, US, though in very different forms) or through significant local discretionary authority(UK);
(e) an effective local system requires considerable support including funding, guidance and resources, and the time to use them in locally-responsive and appropriate design; there are historical partnerships in every community upon which to build, but the changes required are far more extensive and require considerable effort.
(f) extensive policy coordination is needed; among levels of government, across ministries and departments, and between and among local bodies and providers; and - more important - it is not clear if the desired changes and the greater effectiveness that is the goal, can happen in the absence of such coordination.

(F) Integrated Service Planning and Delivery Benefits from Policy Coordination

The experiences of other jurisdictions, as well as in Ontario, suggest five areas where policy coordination is important in order to develop a more integrated approach to service planning and delivery.

First, there is the need to bring together what have been the separate functions of income support (social assistance) with employment and training services (workforce development); that is merging passive and active labour market programs.

Second, there are services involving different ministries within the same level of government. There are several examples from other jurisdictions, most of which involve the integration of social service and employment with workforce and broader economic development policies and programs.

Third, within the principal ministry or department, there have been distinct programs. While each jurisdiction retained some of these - for accounting purposes only - there is an assumption that they

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[3]While it may be difficult to precisely define "local" in Ontario, we heard uniform views that the current areas of Local Boards are too large and diverse, and a preference for smaller units, perhaps similar to CCAC areas.

will be fully integrated at the local level. This, of course, requires some form of harmonization across programs of eligibility criteria, performance measures, reporting systems, certification (or at least criteria) for providers, and particular delivery features such as entry services (e.g. information, assessment and referral), support services (such as counseling, specialized assessment), and placement services (e.g. job development, post-placement support). In other jurisdictions, there have been distinct bureaucracies which have supported the delivery of each of the many required or optional partners in local communities. Each of these funded programs has had distinct and at times not totally compatible requirements.

Fourth, service provision at a local level involves a host of different providers. Even if the rules for what have been separate funded programs are integrated, there are related support services, the provision of which is often in different departments, but without some of which (e.g. childcare, transportation, health services), the ability to realize the benefits of more integrated delivery may be limited. Some group in each community must organize these service and decide how to ensure that the new integrated rules can be made to work.

Fifth, as a practical matter, someone has to ensure that the systems are coordinated such as information management, common indicators (both performance measures and customer satisfaction measures), as well as funding policies for both individuals and providers.

Each jurisdiction has provided for the coordination of policy for the major functions either explicitly as part of the extensive reforms or by delegating certain areas to regional or local bodies. Regardless of the different approaches, they each have a "common policy framework" to guide the activities of governments, communities, and providers. What is not addressed in the initiatives of other jurisdictions is whether it is possible to develop more integrated service delivery, or to plan for services to be more integrated, in the absence of such a framework.

There may be no answer to this question. However, at least in Ontario, that is a distinct possibility. Several of the initiatives developed in London-Middlesex, in the francophone community in Eastern Ontario, and emerging in other areas of the Province might be seen as a test of the proposition that serious integration requires such a framework. Stated differently, these communities and their initiatives may give us an indication of how and how far the planning and delivery of employment and training services may be able to be integrated without greater policy coordination between governments, across ministries, and among separate funded programs. A common policy framework may be beneficial, but is it really necessary? And, in the absence of coordination, how might communities move toward greater integration?

V.3 Community Planning Functions

As noted in the discussion of some of the initiatives in London-Middlesex, there are a number of functions which, it would appear, all communities have to engage in order to develop a coherent approach to integrated system planning and delivery. Regardless of who actually takes responsibility for each of these activities (that is, what body or group develops and carries out the specific tasks to achieve each function), one of the lessons from the more detailed descriptions (especially from other jurisdictions), is that a local process will be necessary to achieve a more effective, integrated service delivery system.

There are five broad functions for which the community, in some form, might take responsibility.

V.3.1 Determining the Needs and Priorities for Employment and Training Services

The development of community profiles and an analysis of needs is a basic part of any service planning approach. In Ontario, the task has been frequently associated with local boards; and, indeed, each local board has developed its own process for environmental scanning and the

development of priorities. Unfortunately, there is a perception that local boards have, to this point, had little effect on the development of particular services and the allocation of funding. While there may be several reasons for this, the perceptions of funders and providers involved in this project is that local boards have not been given a sufficiently clear mandate or authority. There is little to suggest how individual funders or particular funded programs make use of local board information in the development of their own priorities; and still less evidence that the information informs collective priorities across the largely distinct service areas.

Having said this, it is also clear that the information and particular data collected by local boards is potentially useful to service planning and delivery decisions, provided there is a process which ensures that their contribution is in fact used as part of decision making. But what specific information from local boards would be most useful?

Given their mandate and the important challenges and context outlined earlier, information on the priorities of local employers and workers would seem the most obvious. As outlined in the discussion of London-Middlesex, there is ample evidence from other jurisdictions that the needs of existing workers and industries require attention. In a growing economy, other jurisdictions have noted that the pressures to fill vacancies, coupled with demands from growth into new product or service lines, have required firms to consider upgrading the skills of existing workers including both basic and specific vocational skills. While this may not be the prime focus of many current employment and training services, productivity and competitiveness is of sufficient concern that these needs must be taken seriously. Services to employers and workers cannot be enhanced without specific information. The local board can play an important role in prioritizing these needs for whoever assumes the functions of service planning and delivery.

A similar dilemma affects the understanding of needs and priorities by service providers. Over many sessions, in several communities, individual and groups of providers repeated their view that "we know what our clients need". While there is no vehicle at present to confirm or refute this assertion, it is an important one. Given that front line practitioners have the greatest contact with clients, it would seem incumbent on agencies to provide their understandings as part of a systematic process. The Labour Market Planning Council is a clear vehicle in London-Middlesex for providers to develop recommendations on collective service priorities. As will be noted below, other communities need their own vehicles if providers' input is to be coherent and offer the shared understanding of the agencies which actually deliver programming.

As well, as noted in the discussion of initiatives in London-Middlesex, there is a general understanding, shared by both funders and providers, that many potential needs are not now factored into employment and training service planning. Acquiring the right information from those not currently accessing services, however, will not be an easy task. While this project did not explicitly ask how these needs might be identified, several suggestions for how this might be done were offered; in particular, through community meetings, targeted outreach (including community meetings) and liaison with other service deliverers (for example, those dealing with health, housing, community services such as recreation, etc.). An initial approach to gaining such information has been suggested for London-Middlesex; however, it is only one suggestion. Regardless of who undertakes the task in different communities, a combination of approaches will be needed to ensure that the development of priorities includes those of people not currently involved in employment and training services.

The discussion of some of the London-Middlesex initiatives also indicates the importance of an appropriate form for distilling information on needs and priorities from individual sources (employers, local board, individual providers) into a coherent plan. Indeed, one of the key features of the initiatives in both the US and UK is the requirement for local plans which have a steering effect on both the development of specific services and the allocations of individual funders. (Of course, in both jurisdictions, the effect of recent changes has been to develop a community-based allocation process into which the resources of individual funders can be "pooled" to have the greatest effect, as well as to ensure that services are designed and delivered to address the needs of people, rather than the distinctions between separately funded programs.)

At present, no such integration is apparent, though the LMDA group anticipated there would eventually be a unified system. They noted that, under an integrated system, "managers will be accountable for responding to community needs and (will) have the autonomy to choose the most suitable methods, services and programs required to achieve results."[4] While there are likely to be constraints on the local (or regional) manager, such a role would be a significant and welcome (to both other funders and to providers) departure from past ministry practice, which finds individual staff from individual programs occasionally involved in meetings of funders and providers at the community level. If implemented, the LMDA approach could lead to greater integration among ministry programs which, in turn, could contribute to the development of more coherence at the community level.

Just as information from the local boards and providers is needed to help determine priorities, there is important information from funders which can similarly inform the direction of services. As noted in the discussion of the initiatives in London-Middlesex, decisions about priorities, regardless who makes them, depend upon complete information. In evaluating the gaps between identified needs and existing services, the Funders Forum has been hampered, at least in part, by the absence of complete information on the services currently funded in London-Middlesex. The group has not had regular and equal participation from some major funders, in particular, the Ministry of Education and Training whose funded programs included adult credit programs and courses (delivered through the school boards and the Independent Learning Centre), Literacy and Basic Skills, and Job Connect programs of the Workplace Preparation Branch (delivered through contracted third party agencies), apprenticeship programs (delivered through employers and colleges), labour adjustment services, and skills training and post-secondary programs (offered through colleges, universities, and private vocational schools), as well as continuing education courses delivered by a wide array of agencies and institutions (including schools, colleges, universities, libraries, community agencies, etc.) The importance of including such programs in local planning activities cannot be overstated, particularly given (i) the potential for realizing greater efficiencies (from reducing overlap among similar programs funded by different governments, as well as from coordination of agency efforts), as well as (ii) the potential for improving the quality of services (from developing the kinds of integrated delivery which have been identified as leading to better outcomes for clients).[5]

In summary, the development of priorities for service delivery requires input from at least three distinct groups: employers and incumbent workers, service providers, and those in the community not currently involved in services as currently delivered. For each of these broad groups, a process needs to be developed to ensure their views are communicated and have impact on the design of actual services. In addition, to support the detailed planning of specific services to reduce duplication, to fill important gaps, and to improve the effectiveness of services the community would benefit from complete information on the distribution of current activity regardless of which government or branch is the specific funder. (As noted in the discussion of other jurisdictions, the mandate of the responsible local planning group is designed to ensure a relatively transparent

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[4]*Ontario's Plan for an Integrated System of Employment Services, Targeted Programs and Delivery Under a Labour Market Development Agreement* (October 21, 1998): 38. The document states that these responsibilities will be "within the parameters of provincial and local plans", both of which will require clarification. There may also be a legitimate question as to whether a formal plan is necessary if funders retain individual programs and responsibilities; that is, a plan seems to assume that funding from distinct programs has been pooled.

[5]In a draft proposal to pilot a consortium to plan and deliver a range of employment and training services, the authors note that three levels of government (Ontario Works, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, and Human Resources Development Canada) each fund distinct programs in five of seven program areas including (i) the development of individual action plans, (ii) supported job search, (iii) employment supports such as childcare and transportation, (iv) vocational training including apprenticeship, and (v) tracking and follow-up. In addition, among the reported sources of greatest overlap is in client assessments where the duplication is not only among the distinct funded programs, but among the providers delivering each funded program as well.

planning process where decisions about priorities and allocations are public; a feature which may enhance confidence in the system on the part of individuals, employers, and service providers.)

V.3.2. Designing Services to Meet the New Priorities.

Some current services are clearly meeting identifiable needs. However, there is also evidence (largely, but not exclusively, from other jurisdictions) that several important kinds of services are not being delivered or are being provided in ways that are considerably less likely to produce important outcomes for individuals, communities or governments. The most important of these involve needed integration across what are currently distinct funded programs (such as Literacy and Basic Skills, Job Connect and federal supported job search services) or separated by governments (e.g. income support, employment supports). In addition, there are some services such as job development or continuous case management where coordination has been absent and where experience (e.g. PIE/TEA initiative in London-Middlesex) indicates that there are important potential benefits. To paraphrase one provider, " it may be that all the pieces of the puzzle are there, we just haven't put them together right."

An important task, therefore, may be to re-configure some services and purposefully design others to account for increased knowledge about what is effective and to develop the capacity to ensure new priorities can be addressed. This is not a one-time process. While there may be continuing demand for some kinds of basic services, others will likely require fairly frequent adjustment in order to address the needs of specific employers or sectors, specific client groups, and specific delivery options. While some individual providers may be able to respond to specific needs, the system as a whole has not (though this may be a function of how the needs are defined, rather than the divisions among individually funded programs).

The LMDA group at the Ministry recognized the need for such a function to be driven by those priorities defined in the community. As mentioned in the London-Middlesex description, the LMDA outline noted that the development of "the most suitable methods, services and programs required to achieve results" will be a local responsibility (within some parameters, including "results targets").[6]

Regardless of the outcome of discussions about a possible labour market development agreement, it would appear that there is a need to work out the particular configurations of services that will address community-specific priorities based on the experience of the community (as well as experiences in other communities) and on specific information (such as the relative success of different approaches in achieving specific outcomes and the satisfaction of both individuals and employers). An LMDA might help, but local communities would still have to design the particular service delivery alternatives needed to address particular needs.

A "working group" approach has been generally successful in the London-Middlesex as a way of avoiding permanent structures and focusing on a particular task. Based on the collaboration of funders with providers, this approach has made it possible for interested providers to work together, with a representative of funders available for advice and clarification when needed; and the several examples of this approach outlined in the description could be added to with several others. In the section on possible "directions" which follows, there are several suggestions for such specific tasks, some of which are specifically related to what seem to be priority areas for the development of new or reconfigured services. At this juncture, it may be sufficient to suggest that there needs to be a clear community responsibility for the design (or redesign) of several kinds of services; that this responsibility can be taken up by providers with the participation and support of the funders; and,

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[6]It may also be noted that the program reform undertaken by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, outlined in *Making Services Work for People* (1997), identified the services and programs that must be available in all communities, but seems to have provided considerable discretion for the design (or re-configuring) of the specific delivery appropriate to each community. If such an approach were adopted under the LMDA (as outlined in the October 1998 paper), there would be an important opportunity for communities to design - and implement - more integrated delivery.

finally, that this approach is consistent not only with the experiences in other jurisdictions, but also the directions suggested specifically by the LMDA group and the government in general (e.g. Community and Social Services).

V.3.3. Allocating Funding to Service Providers

It must be stated at the outset that the function of allocating resources among providers is not a major concern of the customers of any employment and training system. While perhaps trite, it is a conclusion that helps to refocus interest on the nature and quality of the services provided, rather than who funds any particular agency. Indeed, this distinction is so basic that the US for example explicitly states that the services must appear seamless to the client, regardless of the administrative complexities of whatever separate reporting is necessary for different funded programs. Having said this, the allocation of funding has important potential impacts on the development of services in several ways.

First, there are the apparent overlaps and duplications of services noted earlier in five important program areas. With the addition of the important service of assessment, the likelihood of inefficiencies is great; and the effectiveness of the different approaches for both clients and providers (or funders) is questionable. There are, however, several examples of more integrated assessments including the CAFA and London-Middlesex initiatives (including the CLEAR project), as well as approaches in other communities which are not included in this project. None of these projects has been without difficulties; some of those related to the experience in London-Middlesex are included in the discussion of their approach. What is common to each of these initiatives is that each requires the agreement of several funders and individually funded programs to be successful. For example, despite the general support from clients, providers and referring agencies, the CAFA's struggle for existence hinges on the question of how the community as a whole (i.e. the funders together) might financially support what they themselves acknowledge to be an important service to a variety of employment and training programs.[7]

Second, current allocations based on distinctly funded programs have, according to local funders and providers, made it difficult to consider how to best integrate services. There are several examples available which demonstrate this difficulty including the separate assessments conducted by individual providers and/or funded programs, the separation of literacy and basic skills delivery from supported job search, and the separation of both from vocational skills development; all of which are examples of activities which likely need to be integrated to be more effective. Since each funded program makes decisions about providers largely in isolation, some different approaches will be required to alter these patterns.

Third, there is a general sense, among providers, but also some funders, that current approaches to planning and funding many services ensure that future programming (including patterns of expenditures, client groups, geographical areas, types of training, relationships to employers, etc.) largely reflects historical programming. While there have been some modest changes to particular programs at the request of individual funders, current approaches seem unlikely to make more substantial changes to either the nature of services or the delivery of those services. In the context of individually funded programs, this is understandable; however, it does not address the need to consider the possibility that current program definitions are themselves a barrier to more effective integration in either planning or delivery. (Some possible approaches to this challenge are offered below).

Fourth (and related to the above), the development of several important initiatives for more effective services require greater integration in both planning and delivery. To date, in most communities, there are few, if any, examples of formally shared funding to deliver a specific service or to develop a

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[7]It should be noted that there may be ways in which the CAFA service might be improved and/or expanded to be even more effective. This has just begun to be an important subject of discussion. The principal issue, rather, has been whether the current service can be maintained in the absence of greater cooperation among funders.

consortium which can offer a range of services through joint (rather than sequential) delivery. These are important options which need to be considered in the future.

Finally, funders expressed the view that, under current program requirements, there continues to be a need to maintain distinct accountability to each level of government. Whether municipal, provincial or federal, representatives of each level of government made clear their perception that funding allocations have a "political" dimension and that accountability to their respective masters might require that decisions on funding would continue to rest with each level of government.[8]

Four alternatives to the current arrangement can be identified, each of which would provide considerably more direction - and discretion - to local communities to plan and deliver the most appropriate and most effective services to address identifiable needs and priorities.

A first possible approach is a "local board" model where the local board would be given an explicit mandate and authority for several of the community functions (e.g. priorities, planning new initiatives) including allocating funding to providers of the different services. Indeed, both the US and UK have empowered local communities with just such a form and mandate through local workforce improvement boards and local learning and skills councils, respectively. As noted in the discussion of other jurisdictions, the UK and particularly the US have established detailed regulations governing membership and responsibilities, processes and accountability. Deciding how best to plan and deliver services, as well as how to fund them, are explicitly local responsibilities. This approach results in effectively "pooling" funds from each level of government and from most, but not all, funded programs. As part of the trade-off noted earlier (increased flexibility in exchange for greater accountability), this approach marks a clear departure from past practice in other jurisdictions, as it would for Ontario communities. The US, for example, made both the authority of local boards and their accountability requirements for funding.

While this is certainly a plausible approach, two specific constraints can be mentioned: (i) local boards currently do not have such wide (and statutory) authority and there is a perception in several communities that they are not the appropriate body, having too large a geographic area and lacking the confidence of many); and (ii) local boards do not currently examine several related parts of the employment and training system as they have developed over the years, in particular, the roles and responsibilities of municipalities, as well as funding (and programs) designed by other ministries. However, the main objection to local board authority has come from the funders who expressed concerns (not only now, but historically) that governments would not relinquish such control. As one representative noted: "handing over a pot of money to the community is not where the (Provincial) government is going."[9]

A second approach is for a single ministry to assume functional responsibility for most aspects of planning, design and delivery. This appears to be the case in, for example, Alberta, where the new Ministry of Human Resources and Employment has assumed these responsibilities (and following their own labour market development agreement with the Federal government). Under the agreement

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[8]Some readers may suggest a certain irony in this position since another version of accountability is found in the idea that there is only one taxpayer. It is generally accepted that there is only one client who is assumed to be indifferent to the source of funding for the service s/he needs, provided it is an effective service. Reconciling these views (accountability as a community responsibility with the current view of accountability as a responsibility for each level of government - or each distinct funded program) is an important challenge.

[9]The use of a local board approach in other jurisdictions is not reason to adopt a similar approach in Ontario. Our political culture seems to suggest that senior governments do not wish to devolve the "needs and priorities" and "allocations" functions to Local Boards. Three different Ontario governments have each had concerns about devolving responsibility for design and funding of employment and training services to Local Boards and there is not a ground swell for Local Boards to have these functions. However, there is a perception (shared in London-Middlesex) that Local Boards can play an important role if - and only if - they are given a clear mandate to provide specific research from the participating constituencies, in particular, business and labour.

(implementation of which has been extended to 2002) the new Ministry will not only integrate federal and provincially funded employment and training programs, it will also integrate these services with social services which had been under a separate ministry. The implementation exercise was described as being "revenue neutral"; that is, there is no stated intention to reduce expenditure on employment and training services, but to ensure that more effective services are delivered.[10]

The Alberta approach includes many similar features to those in other jurisdictions such as integrated OneStop-type centres, three levels of defined services, and common assessment across funded programs; i.e. services are to be matched to a client's needs, rather than distinguished by funded program eligibilities. However, a single ministry within just one level of government is now responsible for the range of clients and services available. Following a regional manager approach similar to what the Ontario LMDA group suggested, each regional manager has the responsibility for community consultations, service planning, and allocations to service providers. While it was suggested that "all programs were now provincially funded and, therefore, all clients were treated the same", there appear to be some differences based on the source of income support (federal vs. provincial), though it may be that these differences are largely in reporting and administrative requirements rather than services which are available to meet client needs.[11]

Among other features of this approach, there remains some important central planning through "global allocations" by program type and targeted client group. However, each region and each "centre" does some kind of local exercise (which can vary considerably according to the process designed by the local manager) to determine priorities and each region used the guidelines and expectations determined centrally; "we take it and overlay our own community's needs". The envelopes of broad service types (there are only four or five compared to the previous array of funded programs) effectively pool funding; and the Ministry, through the regional manager, is able to develop particular configurations of services they view as necessary to meet particular needs, including some shifting of funds across envelopes since "the client doesn't care if the envelope is blue, green or yellow."[12]   Even in its early stages, the was a suggestion that there had already been considerable integration of services, that some efficiencies had been realized and that measures related to increasing effectiveness were being implemented.

A third approach may be seen in the reforms under the Ministry of Health "community care access centres". Created in January 1996, the 43 centres (and their satellite locations) are essentially independent brokers of services to meet the needs of individual clients. Their mandate includes providing a single, community-based access point, and to coordinate the provision of in-home nursing, homemaking and personal support or therapy services. Some of the key functions of the CCACs include case management, service planning, monitoring of care, eligibility determination, and placement services for long-term and chronic care facilities.[13] While the budget for each centre is determined centrally, the Ministry of Health provides each centre with the basic autonomy and funding to contract with a range of service providers. Some services are provided directly by staff at each centre (such as co-ordination of in-home services); and the greatest proportion (approximately two-thirds or more) of funding is allocated to contracted providers. A board of local community members oversees each of the 43 centres across the province. There is a list of services which every centre must ensure access to, though each may provide the service directly or under contract. There

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[10]Personal communication with regional manager; September 1999.
[11]It was explained that this distinction pertains mainly to skills development programs which are funded under a different ministry, but remain eligible activities for clients of the new integrated services; and a newer Skills for Work service can be used, if needed, for clients for whom the skills development program cannot provide the appropriate service.
[12]Under their labour market development agreement, the four broad service areas were identified as career/employment assistance service, job placement, self- employment, and on-the-job training (and Skills for Work); though there are also explicit (and separate) provisions for youth and the disabled. The agreement also eliminated local boards since both governments were not convinced that local boards were effective. It was mentioned that the initiatives benefit from the fact that "funding goes with the individual, not with the program", which may be the Alberta version of a clear customer focus.
[13]Summarized from information provided by the Hamilton-Wentworth and other CCAC web sites.

may be some particular collaborations across centres, for example, there were five sites for the piloting of a common assessment system; however, in general, each CCAC is responsible for meeting the particular needs of its community and the specific needs of each individual client. The contract/tendering system, intended to reduce costs while monitoring, if not enhancing, service quality, is similar to that used in Australia and several of the US states, although there does not appear to be an obligation for CCACs to report the performance of individual providers.

There are other similarities to the provision of employment and training services, as well as some differences. Not only are contracting provisions similar, there is also a clear mandate to coordinate access for individuals to a range of services. This, of course, requires assessment and information; elements which each of the OneStop-type initiatives share. In addition, as with the experiences in other jurisdictions, the CCACs are required to ensure continuous case management, regardless of referral to an outside or contracted service. Finally, as with the provision of employment and training services, the assessments and referrals are intended to be independent of funding; that is, based on client need.

Important differences between CCACs and employment and training services include the fact that all funding is from a single government source (the Ministry of Health), as are the eligibility requirements for contracted services (though once established they are independently administered) and the certification of providers (where necessary, such as long-term care facilities). As well, the board members are locally elected (following the initial boards which were appointed) and are responsible for deciding what services may be provided by the centre itself. (This is also the case for the US OneStop centres, though the assessment and referral services are independent of providers in the UK and Australia.)

There are clear advantages to such a model; namely, the autonomy provided to each region to develop the appropriate relationships and services. Funding is received directly by the centre which can contract for services as needed and with whomever is most appropriate (on both cost and quality criteria). However, the number of funders and range of services which are included in an employment and training system may make this approach difficult. While few would dispute the ability of a CCAC to assess the needs of every individual client, the needs - and the right approach - to addressing employment and training needs has historically been the subject of considerable debate. Finally, it is doubtful that all governments could agree to provide a community board with the funds and autonomy to contract services according to their own priorities and criteria.

A fourth approach is based on the Funders Forum in London-Middlesex (formally named the Employment and Training Service Funders). As described in some detail in Part IV, the group is currently comprised of representatives of three levels of government and the United Way and the programs they currently fund and has included in their goals and objectives their desire to engage in more collaborative decision-making with respect to allocations to support initiatives involving greater integration of services to meet identified priorities. As outlined, they have collectively supported a number of significant initiatives and innovative approaches including the PIE/TEA initiatives, support for the LMPC and, in turn, for the ETN, common assessment, and service delivery standards projects. While they have had only limited impact to date on the basic shape of allocations or on the separation of the many funded programs, their work clearly demonstrates that, at a local level, funders representing the different levels of government can - and do - work together, within the constraints they are given.

One important constraint has been the absence of a representative of provincially funded programs under the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, particularly during the period of this project when the group was reviewing several important initiatives and their progress since their May 1997 statement of directions.[14] Since each funded program of this ministry has a separate field and

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[14]Representatives of the Ministry of Community and Social Services have historically been an important part of the group and are consistent and willing participants in the group's work. However, in some communities, the Ontario

managerial organization, it would be difficult for a single individual to represent the range of important programs and services provided through ministry funding.

A second constraint has been the uncertainty surrounding a variety of programs, changes which include the downloading of responsibilities within Ontario Works, program reform in specific provincial programs (e.g. Job Connect, Literacy and Basic Skills, Apprenticeship) and the indeterminate character of federal-provincial discussion regarding a labour market development agreement. Despite these (and other) uncertainties, the Funders Forum has managed to demonstrate the collaboration among funders in the variety of projects.

As noted in the London-Middlesex description, one of the potential benefits of the Funders Forum approach is that it can be adapted to the policy and procedural limitations of each level of government. Specifically, mention has been made of several alternative roles: the group might (i) share strategic directions of each funder, (ii) share information on actual funding decisions, (iii) share funding of some, but only some, projects which meet collective community priorities; that is jointly fund these projects with each (or at least several) funders contributing some resources; (iv) establish a special projects pool of resources from all funders; (v) pool larger sums from currently funded programs for allocation by Funders Forum as local managers.

There are possibly important differences between "integrated" and "pooled" approaches; namely, in the way in which each funder retains control over the allocations. Integrated funding would suggest separate control, with some allocations shared among several funders to the extent that the initiative being funded was part of a larger plan which maintained the autonomy of each funder's decisions; that is, the funding of a particular project can be shared, but other allocations need to reflect the priorities of each funder. The pooling of funds obviously requires a willingness on the part of funders to contribute to an overall fund for (some) service delivery through more collaboration and, consequently, some reduction in control. Integrated funding for particular projects can contribute to the development of a more coherent system, as the projects demonstrate, while maintaining each funder's separate accountability. Pooled funding, however, begins from the assumption that a service needs to be supported from more than one funder. In either case, the decisions would require considerable discussion on the range of services to be provided and how each funded program contributed to the whole.

As is evident, all but the last possibility assume that each funder will retain the responsibility for recommending (or allocating) their own program funds; but each would do so by considering the needs and priorities of the community as a whole. As well, approaches (iii) and (iv) suggest that it is possible to have a process which "applies resources strategically, to have value added, while respecting the roles (of each funder and government)."[15] Alternatively, the final approach seems somewhat more consonant with the LMDA group's outline which included a provision that "MET [now MTCU] will establish and delegate the appropriate contracting and budgeting authority".[16] Though it is unclear if this might include delegation through a group such as the Funders Forum, it is certainly conceivable that the Province might provide some guidelines under which a more general pooling could be used to meet the needs of a more integrated service delivery plan which included other funded programs as well as those under an LMDA.

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs is seen as an important player; and the London-Middlesex Funders Forum has indicated its desire to broaden membership to include other foundations (in addition to the United Way) as well as employers, though the process for doing so is unclear at the present time. This desire is, however, consistent with the organization and membership of the local learning partnerships and learning and skills councils in the UK and the workforce improvement boards in the US.

[15]This view was expressed in some form by several participants at more than one meeting.

[16]*Ontario's Plan for an Integrated System of Employment Services, Targeted Programs and Delivery Under a Labour Market Development Agreement* (October 21, 1998); p. 39.

Given the above alternatives, the Funders Forum approach has much to commend it. Not only is it consistent with the direction suggested by the LMDA group, it is an approach which is adaptable to the different circumstances of different communities. For example, those communities which have a history and experience in collaborative activities might be given additional discretion to plan and deliver more integrated services through "delegation" of additional authority (and resources). Alternatively, those communities just beginning to develop more collaborative relationships among funders may need to stay "closer" to each funder's priorities by beginning to share only a limited number of projects. Along the continuum of possible integrated activities, communities could decide their own priorities and use their discretion accordingly while, at the same time, the basic authority for allocations could be gradually devolved on a community-by-community basis. In this flexibility, it is perhaps the only approach which allows each level of government to retain the degree of control each currently enjoys and feels is necessary. Neither the Australian approach (where funding is pooled at the level of providers) nor the US or UK approaches (where funding is pooled by local boards) afford government departments this level of ongoing control over allocations.

For this approach to be effective, however, it would be necessary not only to share funding of some new initiatives and projects; most important, the approach shares with the alternatives a need to ensure that the priorities and processes which develop locally have some impact on the allocations of each funded program. For example, a project to develop a more integrated literacy, skills training and supported job search service would require at least some sharing of funding among Literacy and Basic Skills, Job Connect and/or HRDC funded services, and federal (or provincial) skills training programs. There are examples where such arrangements have been made, though informally. There are even fewer where it is clear how the program fits clearly enunciated priorities which have been agreed upon by all partners and, no less important, can be evaluated in an equally collaborative manner.

Finally, it is important to note that, while these approaches have been offered in relation to the allocation of resources, each of these alternatives really involves the other community functions as well and can be seen as an acknowledgment that the integration of each of the functions across what are now distinct funded programs is an important feature of more integrated planning and delivery of employment and training services.

V.3.4. Delivering Employment and Training Services

Some directions for communities to increase integration in the delivery of employment and training services are offered below. However, it may be useful to briefly review some of the main understandings from the more detailed discussions in the other parts of this report.

Information, Assessment and Guidance

First, as noted in the discussion of other jurisdictions, integrating the delivery of income support with employment and training services is an important step in creating a more effective and more efficient system. Not only has this been a focus of organizational changes in many jurisdictions, as the OECD noted, it is part of a "what and when" process by which interventions can be best targeted to ensure the services clients receive are most likely to be appropriate and effective. If governments wish to continue to delivery income support directly, it would seem that the CLEAR initiative in London is an example of how the integration between government benefit programs might be delivered at a local level, in the absence of a central agreement, as well as how the integration of benefits administration with employment and training service definition might initially take shape.

Second, there is an emerging consensus that a "no wrong door" approach is beneficial by ensuring that access points are available, inviting, and - most important - provide consistent services. Each of the other jurisdictions reviewed incorporate such a feature (as does Alberta) and the initiatives in

London-Middlesex such as CLEAR suggest that cooperation among benefit programs (including co-location) can provide more efficient and effective access through integration.

Third, there is a similar consensus that initial screening assessments can effectively be used to define three levels of service which help to identify the services most likely to be appropriate for different client groups. While the OECD suggests a more extensive profiling of clients, there may be several kinds of assessment processes which can be effective. (In London-Middlesex, the initial (small 'a') assessment process may be effective when used, but has been applied inconsistently and, as noted in that discussion, may need to be revised.) However, an important challenge is to develop agreement among governments and funded programs on a useful definition of each level and the services to be provided; developing and implementing an appropriate assessment process are clearly subsequent steps. A specific challenge in Ontario is how to secure agreement; first among governments and, second, among service providers. While the work of the LMDA group suggests this may be part of an agreement, it is important to consider how communities might develop their own processes. (This is an area included in the possible directions for communities, below.) It should be noted that in each of the other jurisdictions, the national governments provided very specific requirements about both the definition of levels and common services which local communities had to make available, and the US and UK did so without specifying the tools or processes to be used with clients for initial assessment and referral. It seems clear, however, that there must be consensus and support in each community on a common assessment process which will ensure appropriate access and referral; support which may need to come from each level of government directly to providers in the form of a clear requirement.[17]

Fourth, once the different levels of services are defined and clients referred based on a common (small 'a') assessment, there is a subsequent step necessary for those who require more intense services in order to prepare for employment. While it appears that Australia incorporates what we might term "large 'A' assessment" into their profiling system, there is a need to ensure that the most intensive services are designed and delivered so that they can be most effective. An assessment common to providers of more intensive services, therefore, can reduce the discrepancy between individual provider judgments and the interests of both clients and the community. The CAFA initiative in Prescott-Russell is an example of such an assessment. While limited to literacy and related academic programs, it embodies the principle of "paedogogic neutrality" which is the basis of support from clients, referring agencies, and providers alike. The further development of their approach to include vocational assessment (and providers of vocational training) would be an important addition. Since the task of developing consensus on an appropriate large 'A' assessment is also likely to be a community responsibility, it is also a possible direction for communities outlined below.

Integrated Delivery of Employment and Training Services

As noted from the discussion of other jurisdictions, there is compelling evidence for developing two specific forms of integrated programming. Both forms are outlined as part of directions for communities, below.

First, for those individuals requiring less intense services, the integration of literacy and basic skills with supported job search (and related activities such as resume preparation, interviewing skills, etc.) is clearly beneficial. While there are some examples of informally integrating these distinct funded programs in London-Middlesex, a more concerted and systematic effort may be beneficial.

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[17]The example of "profiling" from recent Job Connect materials suggest the perspective on one funded program. Though it differs considerably from the approach used elsewhere, it may be useful in developing an approach which is applicable across funded programs. We are not aware of similar attempts by other discrete programs, nor the relationship between the Job Connect "barriers" and those used by municipalities or the federal government in their respective benefit programs.

Second, for clients who require more intense services, the integration of literacy and basic skills with vocational skills development seems similarly necessary based on the evidence of actual program delivery and its relationship to employment and earning outcomes. Having adopted a quick-employment approach to social assistance recipients, an important form to consider for such integrated delivery may be workplace-based training which, in turn, may meet the needs of employers and incumbent workers, as well as social assistance recipients. Again, there were examples of incorporating some literacy and basic skills training with vocational skills development in London-Middlesex; however, these were informal, with the literacy components neither funded through the LBS program nor provided with other supports (e.g. clear learning outcomes, curriculum, staff development) which might benefit clients.

Third, to address the needs of both employers and job seekers, a greater emphasis on and coordination of job development is required. The PIE/TEA initiative in London-Middlesex represents a clear example of how coordination might develop and the benefits which might result, for both employers and individuals, from integrating delivery. For clients requiring more intense services, the job development service provides an important support for labour market attachment and, at the same time, a focus for employer contact. As part of an ongoing effort to support increased employer involvement, job development can be a useful starting point. However, it may require more cooperation among different funded programs than other service integration since accountability relationships may change; that is, it might be difficult to establish which of participating funded programs (or providers) should get "credit" for successful clients. The sharing of "credit" - and accountability - was identified as an important challenge. The PIE/TEA example illustrates, however, that governments can support definitions of success which focus on the attainments of people, rather than individual providers or funded programs.

Fourth, the experience of other jurisdictions also notes the importance of an integrated and continuous case management service. Clients, particularly those requiring intensive services, need the assurance and, at times, practical guidance which can be provided regardless of funded program or provider. As with the assessment function, this element needs to be demonstrably independent and effective in ensuring that individuals receive appropriate services and are not "lost" in their transitions among services or to employment. Coordination of case management is specifically identified among the "service delivery standards" developed by providers in London-Middlesex and is a key component in providing effective services in other jurisdictions, as well as in the health system through CCACs.

Tracking and Follow-up

The development of a more performance oriented service delivery system assumes that client outcomes are known and have an effect on the system by ensuring that feedback assists in improving services. In addition to the job development services which provide one link among providers, clients, and employers, there are two additional needs that support more integrated service delivery and management.

First, there is a clear need for common tracking and follow-up. Current efforts by individual providers offer neither comprehensive nor sufficiently reliable data from which to document attainments. As noted in the discussion of other jurisdictions, there are several ways of obtaining the information; however, the evidence suggests that some form of administrative tracking is most likely to produce appropriate employment and earnings data, as well as enrolment, retention, and attainment information for those in longer training programs. The ETN in London-Middlesex is one approach in its initial stages; and, as noted in that discussion, the initiative would benefit from being connected with provincial and federal approaches to database integration. In the absence of an integrated data base, it would seem useful for providers to develop a common approach to tracking across funded programs and, if possible, to cooperatively design and share the services of a single service to develop the information.

Second, the above, in turn, would respond to the expressed desire of providers for a single reporting system. Current efforts vary considerably and several providers, particularly those with funding from more than one funded program, feel the burden of different reporting schemes to be significant. It is an irritant which can be addressed by governments and is the subject of some discussion in the directions section below. However, a single reporting system is also related to the identification of common measures which apply across funded programs, part of developing a more integrated approach to accountability and service improvement which is the subject of the final community function.

The delivery functions outlined above and which might benefit from particular initiatives aimed at greater integration are the subject of some possible directions for communities (in Section V.4.2 below).

V.3.5. Evaluating and Improving Service Delivery

As noted above, improving the accountability of employment and training services is one side of the trade-off which, in other jurisdictions, provides local communities with significant flexibility in the design and delivery of services. Other jurisdictions have established requirements in five areas which are worth considering; namely

(i) common performance measures across all funded programs;
(ii) customer satisfaction measures from both individual clients and employers;
(iii) an emphasis on service improvement (including performance targets, financial incentives and penalties);
(iv) reporting of results for individual providers and the system as a whole;
(v) certification of providers

Ontario is some distance from agreement on these areas; some may be deemed to be neither feasible nor necessary, for example, certification of providers. However, each of the first three areas are being discussed or initially implemented by different funded programs. There is, as yet, no agreement on, for example, measures of client outcomes such as employment or earnings; or how (or if) to measure customer satisfaction across distinct funded programs. Perhaps most important, it is not clear how greater coordination will come about. Obviously, the development of an integrated, single reporting and tracking system requires common measures; and while there may be agreement on some basic measures of success which are common to many programs (and an employment and training system as a whole), it would be useful to specify what these are and how the data necessary for these measures will be collected and reported. An important example of the challenge of measures is how employment outcomes will be defined. Specifically, other jurisdictions have used the idea of "sustainable" employment to focus outcomes on longer-term employment (at least 6, if not 12 or more months), while others focus on wage rates in order to support efforts at attaining "family supporting" jobs; both of which are potentially important measures of the extent to which the employment and training system has met its broader goals.

Also as noted in the discussion of the accountability characteristic in other jurisdictions, the movement to greater client responsibility and choice requires information that is timely, accurate, and accessible. These dimensions have also been incorporated into the design of planning and delivery functions since those responsible for the shape of services require the same information.

However, if accountability requires integrated and comparable information on attainments and satisfaction, it also requires a means to use the information to improve services. One focus for service improvement in other jurisdictions (and among some funded programs in Ontario) has been through the use of targets; that is, setting goals for the numbers of individuals who will participate in a particular service (e.g. literacy in the UK and New Jersey), and/or the numbers who will achieve particular results (e.g. high school diplomas, employment, further training). This approach has been taken one step further by identifying, for example, "better jobs" that will be the targets for the services of providers. The evidence indicates that specific targeting of intensive and training services

is more effective and, therefore, what targets to establish and how to plan delivery to meet those targets are important questions related to service improvement.

A second approach is more general and identifies a "continuous improvement" process for providers. As noted in the discussion of other jurisdictions, the US requires some process as a condition of funding, while the UK and Australia rely on other approaches (including targeting and funding incentives and sanctions based on performance). The five-part process identified by Connecticut may be typical example of such an approach. It cannot be stressed too often that adopting this (or other approaches) seems to assume that integration among programs is already taking place. If not, if different funded programs had their own distinct requirements and processes for service improvement, there would be a definite possibility for considerable confusion and frustration; not only because providers would have different - or several - requirements, but because the absence of a common approach would belie the intent of integration - to better serve people, not programs. The broader community would properly wonder why a single improvement process could not be used to support and improve a seamless system.

A third element related to service improvement is how providers relate the attainments of participants to the effectiveness of their services; that is, the relationship between accountability and quality. Given the many factors which affect satisfaction and outcomes, it is important for there to be an expectation and processes which support providers (as well as those planning and managing service delivery) to understand what aspects of delivery contributed to the outcomes. This is particularly important for those new initiatives which might integrate delivery across funded programs, as well as for services developed to meet particular delivery needs, such as workplace-based delivery.

A fourth element may be the relationship between the outcomes of current service delivery and the priorities identified for (if not by) the community. The attainments and satisfaction of individuals are necessary, but not sufficient, measures of how well the community as a whole has been served. In other jurisdictions, an important aspect of accountability is embodied in the development and evaluation of local plans, including how well the existing array of service providers met identified needs. Since the planning and delivery of services is a local responsibility (in these jurisdictions), and local autonomy is a characteristic of more integrated planning and delivery, the ability to improve the effectiveness of services is, at least in part, a function of how well community priorities have been defined and addressed. Therefore, a community-wide process would seem to form an important part of service improvement initiatives. Designing such a process would likely need to be done jointly between funders and providers. While other jurisdictions have somewhat formal requirements for both who is involved and what information is used, a less formal process might be equally effective if it resulted from a shared commitment.[18]

Finally, the relationship between two characteristics of more integrated service planning and delivery - accountability and local autonomy - is a complex part of developing this function. The approach of other jurisdictions seems to be to set clear requirements for the types of outcomes to be achieved and for the structures and participation which will bring funders, providers and others in the community (namely employers) to the table. The responsibilities for planning, designing, delivering and evaluating reside with local groups. While the descriptions and rationales for this approach are outlined in more detail elsewhere, it is clear that these other jurisdictions have determined that, beyond the important parameters specified, local communities can and should have the responsibility for defining and meeting their own needs. As noted in the discussion of these characteristics in relation to London-Middlesex, some in Ontario suggest that it is useful to "tell the government to get out of our face; tell us the outcomes we're working toward and then just let us do what we need to deliver better services to our community. Leave us alone and we'll build a coherent employment and training system which is responsive, accountable and (relatively) efficient". There are many who participated in this project, mostly providers and in several communities, who echoed this view. While it is clearly supported, in part, by the experiences in other jurisdictions, it is worth noting that in each,

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[18]The question has been asked: who is the community? Certainly it includes funders and providers of current services, and employers and individuals who are not currently "customers", but who have identified needs.

a strong central direction was established by the respective governments. It may appear that this is an important contradiction -- a strong central direction to require consistent local activity. Alternatively, it may simply be a recognition of a reality; that, on their own and in the current environment, communities cannot achieve the integration either in planning or in delivery that is required to be more effective; but, at the same time, no government can actually realize the benefits from integration without the responsibilities being shifted to local communities.

With this in mind, it may be useful to offer some possible directions which may help communities move from our current environment to a more integrated approach to planning and delivery.

V.4 Some Possible Directions for Communities

If we plod across this new territory, heads down, our attention focused on specific features of the land, we may fail to look up to take in the whole of things here. We may fail to sense how ...things work together, and we may fail to see the unifying process ...'
Margaret Wheatley, Leadership and New Science, 1994, cited in [68]

Perhaps the most important lesson from this project is the need for communities to assume the responsibility for developing a more coherent employment and training service system. This statement may seem ironic given the discussion of policy coordination as an important characteristic of integrated planning and delivery. However, for communities in Ontario, the context - for the moment - includes the absence of a clear direction, mandate, and support for a coherent employment and training system. The directions which follow are an attempt to offer some suggestions for how to proceed given this reality.

This vacuum has had different effects in different communities. In the initial discussions with people in three communities, it was clear that the people who get together, albeit infrequently, do so because they firmly believe that, eventually, a more coherent system will happen. They are keeping lines of communication open, keeping each other informed of what they are doing (both funders and providers) and of issues which are emerging for their programs and agencies. They are not, however, planning. Rather, they are waiting; anticipating that at some point in the not too distant future, there will be an announcement that will allow - or require - the community to work more deliberately together. These people, representatives of funders and providers alike, are not lazy people; they are not avoiding doing things; they have much to do and great commitment to their clients. But they have tried, at different points in their individual and their community's history, to develop a "plan" for how more integration could take place. In one sense, that work went nowhere; but in another way, it laid the groundwork for what they know will inevitably happen in the future. They stay together knowing that they will be asked to do it again; to figure out ways (or implement someone else's ways) to collaborate. This has already happened. Particular funded programs have required agencies to consult with others and develop partnerships; for example, the guidelines for "community planning" from Literacy and Basic Skills requires consultation with providers from other funded programs on matters such as assessment and referral, and a recent memo to Job Connect providers required transitions of an increased number of young participants to apprenticeship programs. All this by way of noting that more integration is coming, despite the absence of the kind of policy coordination which is one of the principal characteristics of more integrated systems.

Another factor, also noted earlier, which keeps people meeting together in at least some communities is that Ontario currently lacks a Labour Market Development Agreement with the Federal government. Several people we spoke with in these communities noted that, even were an agreement signed tomorrow, it would likely not address many of their concerns and needs, at least not initially. It would not necessarily include the full range of services that are integrated in other communities; that is, some important services would lie outside the agreement. It would not, in and of itself, establish which services would be available to which clients, how they would be planned, priorities

among services (or groups), or how they would be delivered. These challenges would still need to be addressed and, most likely, addressed locally.

Given this context, it may be useful to ask how might communities proceed? What kinds of activities might help develop greater coherence in the current environment? The experiences in London-Middlesex, the CAFA initiative in Prescott-Russell, and the approaches in other jurisdictions offer some possible insights and directions. In thinking about these, it may be important to recall that more integrated service delivery - let alone a coherent system of employment and training services - will likely require that communities break down the barriers between what have been distinct funded programs in order to better serve their customers. While the six main characteristics of integration are outlined above (and discussed in more depth in Parts II and IV), what follows are some practical things people can use to focus some incremental efforts. There is no right order, and several of these lessons from the studies go together.

V.4.1 Initial Challenges

(1) Develop a shared vision

Each of the three previous parts of this report offers some additional detail which demonstrates that a vision is not one particular thing. It might be extremely general and abstract or more specific. What a shared vision does, however, is to express where people think they want to be in the future. Everyone may not agree on how to get there or what the implications would be for their particular program if they did; but a vision, in some form, seems to have been necessary for the different initiatives to proceed. From the assessment work developed by the CAFA, which has had a limited, but very clear, sense of what the service was trying to do for the community, to the workforce development visions which have changed some directions for their respective nations, each effort has required some agreement about where services are going.

Finding a shared vision is not easy, as evidenced by the few examples of a vision that crosses the boundaries of funded programs. Yes, there are mission statements for agencies and programs. But there are few example where either funders or providers of a range of employment and training services have been able to identify the goals and objectives they share. What many participants in this project noted was the very real pressures to conform to institutional and governmental expectations and requirements. People are attached to the survival of their programs and agencies, to their clients, to the services that they planned, that they manage, that they deliver. Many people suggest that any change will harm their service and, indirectly, their clients. As well, those who oversee the particular program or agency on behalf of a particular branch of government feel the same way.

At more senior levels of government, corporate policy suggests that greater integration of employment and training services, if not the creation of a coherent system, is a worthwhile goal. The Ontario Jobs and Investment Board has clearly suggested this; and the work of the LMDA secretariat within the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities has supported this direction as well. The point is, however, that the experiences documented through this project suggest that, at this juncture in Ontario, communities would be well off to find a vision of integrated service delivery which can be supported within each community. The work in both London-Middlesex and the CAFA demonstrate it is both possible and productive to have a sense of where the community can be which, in turn, gives a focus to some practical activities. As well, it provides a focus for periodically evaluating progress toward the goals identified in the vision; and the process of developing it offers important clues about the challenges to be addressed along the way.

For example, the London-Middlesex vision is consistent with the broad statements of the Province, as well as those of the Federal and municipal governments; and it is also consistent with the vision of other jurisdictions of the transformation from individual "funded programs" to a system, a change that is occurring in Alberta, the US, Australia, and the UK. (The works cited in Part II give ample evidence of the consistencies.)

One of the characteristics of the vision as it has developed in London-Middlesex is that it is focused on the "practical", based on a limited number of elements. Specifically, there are three broad goals, or "strategic directions", which provide a clear focus; and what they talk about is important: access, collaboration on funding, and accountability (that is, that funding will be related to identified priorities and service system outcomes). These are not simple dimensions of the vision, but they are limited. While a number of different initiatives and projects can fall under each one, not everything can. (Part IV cites a recent "Update" which shows how much of what has been developing does, in fact, contribute to these goals/directions.) What has been achieved does seem demonstrate that the directions identified in London-Middlesex are to some extent "enduring" goals, as a vision should be.

It is important to note that two of the three London-Middlesex goals, access and accountability, are related to the first characteristic of more integrated programs; namely, a customer focus. Whether as a part of a vision, or as a principle or characteristic, there is no single change that is more important for changing how services are planned and delivered. As a value and as a practical matter, developing an orientation which views client needs as the driving force is no small matter. In the other jurisdictions, particularly the US which has developed this orientation over some time, in London-Middlesex, and through the CAFA, those who have developed and deliver the service believe in this change and their collaborative projects embody this commitment. What is common to the examples is the conviction that the future of their agencies, their programs, their own jobs is a function of the extent to which their customers (clients, learners) are well served. Of course, staff at every agency delivering a single, funded program believe that they have their clients' interests at heart. But they are pulled by the "turf" and "survival" interests of their organizations over the needs of their clients to have access to a coherent system. As noted earlier, this shift in orientation is integral to a definition of quality. It may be worth restating the comments of one evaluation of early implementation in the US.

> The One-Stop Career Center initiative redefines who the customer is; it holds firmly to the notion that those receiving the product or service are the customers of the system. ... Funding agencies may be stakeholders, interested parties, sometimes partners, ... - but they are not the primary customers in a quality-driven system. Jobseekers and employers are the *primary* customers ... Quality is determined by the extent to which *their* needs and expectations are met – not the requirements of funding sources nor the internal organizational needs of the government services and agencies, education and job training programs which serve them.[41c]

The Partners in Employment (PIE) group is one example of how such a focus changes when agencies come together to re-configure services to meet customer needs. The reorganization of, for example, job development services under The Employers Alliance (TEA) demonstrates that traditional agency and, to some extent, program concerns can take a back seat to the customers, both employers and clients, who need an integrated, efficient and effective service. The support for PIE/TEA took the form of policy and funding, and involved three levels of government. Alternatively, the CAFA project demonstrates some of the same benefits, though support for their integrated service has been less forthcoming.

(2) Start a Funders Forum

The experience in London-Middlesex has been thus far unique, but it doesn't have to be. There is nothing to keep representatives of the different funded programs from meeting together; and there is much to commend it. What the funders have clearly done is provided important leadership not only in defining a vision (though this is important), but also in developing a support structure for each other and for the community. The support for each other comes in the form of a vehicle to share

with your peers. To paraphrase one member, "the people around the table are neither my superiors nor my subordinates." In what other venue is this possible?

And the support provided through the Funders Forum has been instrumental in the development of each of the several initiatives described in the more detailed study (Part IV). These supports include being able to cooperate when planning an initiative; being able to share the costs of particular projects; being able to communicate a clear message (be it policy or funding) to the provider community; having a forum to explore co-location, to plan cross-training of staff, to share in the development of new instruments and processes in an effort to help get the right people in the right programs; being able to consider how to collectively support providers and government needs (for example, the ETN project); being able to ask questions about each other's priorities and sharing the responsibility of dealing with the effects on the community when they change. The list is long and could be longer.

In an environment where senior departmental and ministry officials (not to mention politicians) don't always see things the same way, their representatives responsible for managing services in each community have a more important role and responsibility; that is, "we have to find a way to make things work," as one member put it. The point is, a forum for funders is useful in moving from a vision of greater integration to the reality of even some integration. There is so much they can do together. But there are also challenges.

If a first challenge is time, the second is energy; both are limited. At a time of increasing devolution and shifting responsibilities, the pressures to meet deadlines and reorganize your own service delivery are immense. However, these pressures to re-orient services are also viewed as an important opportunity for cooperation. Many of the subjects discussed at their meetings reflected their practical commitments to find solutions when opportunities presented themselves. In short, the benefits to the community in the Funders Forum were not at all abstract; despite their more visionary understandings, the members, individually and collectively provided practical support to each other and to those delivering specific services and, most important, those who need - and benefit - from those services.

A third challenge is participation. The London-Middlesex group, as groups in other communities who participated in this project, would benefit from the active participation of representatives from all relevant funders; in particular, from representatives from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities who could represent the full range of programs and participate as equals with their peers from other ministries, the federal and municipal departments. Unfortunately, the separation of funded programs at MTCU makes this very difficult; during the course of this project, no representative of the ministry was able to participate as a full member of this important group. While the LMDA planning suggests that, at some point in the future, there will be a "regional manager" with responsibility for all funded programs, this may be some time off. The benefits for integrating TCU-funded services are great, particularly given the potential importance of programs in literacy and basic skills, supported job search, on-the-job training and skills development in meeting the needs of clients; in having individuals achieve sustainable employment goals, in meeting employers' needs for better skilled workers, and in linking economic with workforce development for the benefit of the community as a whole. The funders forum, in any community, needs the participation of the ministry; just as the effectiveness of ministry funded services requires their integration with the services provided through other funders.

The benefits of the funders forum, however, are not simply as a result of their own initiatives. Rather, there is an important relationship with the providers of the services they fund. Among the benefits of a funders forum is that it leads by example; that is, it demonstrates that collaboration is neither just rhetoric nor the command of bureaucrats to practitioners. When funders collaborate to reduce the barriers between funded programs, it sends a strong (and likely convincing) signal that they, too, can practice what they preach; that it is possible to find more effective ways of working, that the changes people want from integrated service planning and delivery are supported by managers who are

prepared to work together, differently from in the past. At the local level, in communities, this seems eminently reasonable and experience seems to suggest it is entirely possible.

(3) Start a Providers Forum

As the CAFA study (Part III) illustrates, the integration of services from what have historically been discrete agencies and funded programs is a difficult and challenging task. However, to be successful, their service (assessment) required the cooperation of referring agencies (OW, EI) and of providers, particularly in the development of the instrument and referral "protocol". It has been a difficult process of development and implementation. However, it is a good example of the need for a regular commitment from providers to work together. While some have suggested that funders need to compel participation, there is good reason to believe that mutual interests can, and are, shared by such efforts.

Some communities have had some informal (or at least less formal) groups to talk about shared interests, particularly among agencies serving clients needing (or already participating in) more intense services. As program definitions and requirements change, these have become useful vehicles to share information. As personnel change, they become an occasional means to meet colleagues in other agencies and understand some of the services they (hope to) provide. As with the funders forum, there are important purposes to having providers meet regularly and work on shared projects; if they don't, little actual integration can occur. This is one of the lessons of the other jurisdictions; in particular, the US, where OneStop partners needed to come together to figure out how they could actually design and implement the components of the services they were required to deliver.

Sometimes the group might be smaller, as in the case of PIE/TEA. Other times larger, as with the LMPC (London-Middlesex Labour Market Planning Council), which has taken the initiative on several projects over the years including work on common assessment, service delivery standards and the ETN (each of which are outlined in Part IV). An important point about the LMPC is that they have funding for a coordinator (support provided by the Funders Forum), who has been able to organize the actual work that must get done to bring providers from across funded programs together. Since the funders are represented on the steering committee, there is good sharing of information. But the LMPC is essentially a vehicle for the provider community to work together on shared projects.

(4) Get a Project

The success of the LMPC, and its effectiveness as a group, comes in no small measure from the fact that it focuses on projects. The CAFA as well had worked with a clear goal. Other groups initially involved in the project reported here did not have a clear and collective project and, in part, this may have accounted for why they meet infrequently and with more modest purpose.

As noted in the discussion of other jurisdictions, working groups were (and are) one of the vehicles used for integrated planning, even where there is considerable policy coordination. Having a specific task allows practitioners to take a common goal a bit for granted (rather than having to define one) and to tackle the challenges of planning for integration by focusing on a specific service, rather than something too abstract. In the context of a specific task, experience suggests that exposure to the perspectives of others helps build the sensitivity, understanding and trust that is required to deliver (as opposed to plan) an integrated service. As experience with the early OneStop implementation suggests, agency cultures can differ greatly and integrating into a new culture is helped when the people involved are the ones actually planning the new service.

And this is true for several projects undertaken in London-Middlesex and for the work of the CAFA as well. It has been extremely important for there to be a sense of "neutrality" in the outcome; that

no one agency has dominated the more integrated service; that a successful outcome needs to create "a culture that no one owns". In varying degrees, this has been the result of these projects no less than it has been in the experiences in other jurisdictions.

At a time when funding reductions still threaten agencies and programs, the shared experience needs to focus, not on agency survival, but on the development or improvement of a needed service. Therefore, the project chosen should be important, not simply something each provider would be happy to "give up". Several projects (including at LMPC and the CAFA itself) focus on assessment. There may be a good reason for this given that it may be easier - and extremely important - to integrate assessment and referral (i.e. how people come to access a given service) than to immediately try to integrate programming (i.e. what services are delivered and how they are delivered once the person get there). It may be more difficult, at least at the outset, to open the "black box" of each agency, than to focus on how people get there. And the TEA initiative (collaborative job development for disabled) is on the other end; that is, when clients are ready to leave their agency. It may also be possible to share other tracking and follow-up services for much the same reason.[19]

Many partnerships related to delivery are "sequential": your agency does part 1, my agency does part 2. This does bring providers together, but is clearly different than having a new service which integrates the parts. These efforts are also beginnings of integration, but limited since they neither redefine the service nor break down the distinctions among programs and eligibility criteria. Nor do such sequential partnering arrangements affect accountability, since each provider is responsible for their own part of the service and is separately accountable for results. However, it represents another form for beginning to consider what a fully integrated service might look like in the future. It is possible.

There are some specific suggestions for projects (offered below) based on the findings about directions which might be the most useful and the most productive as the focus of more integrated planning and delivery.

(5) Start Informally

Since most providers (and funders) have enough to do serving current clients, there is a temptation to wait to pursue emerging opportunities. Often this is tied to funding cycles, where agencies might secure the extra resources to do a particular project. Unfortunately, waiting doesn't seem to pay off. If the experience in other jurisdictions, as well as in London-Middlesex and with the CAFA is any indication, early implementers have some definite advantages. Of course, it is possible that policy will change and make some of the efforts seem like a bit of a waste of considerable time and energy. (Some communities felt their efforts to develop a community-wide jobLink proposal was such an effort.) However, some of the benefit of early implementation is that it affords the opportunity to find common ground and common challenges; to try to work through some possible approaches to what had felt like insurmountable obstacles.

A second reason to start informally is that it allows the development of some of the new relationships which are necessary to plan and implement an integrated service to begin without the pressure of funding or results. If the project has to end in, for example, twelve weeks (or twelve months), there may be more pressure to find an acceptable result than to find the right approach. Starting informally allows for some needed flexibility.

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[19]It should be specifically noted that employers appear to favour integrated job development across the entire range of employment and training services (both in London-Middlesex and each of the other jurisdictions) because it is more effective and efficient for them. The use of the LMPC to assist a large firm hiring is another example. However, there is reason to suggest that some additional efforts are needed around employers; particularly to establish what services they need as part of an integrated system and how they might better become involved.

A third reason to start informally may be to show commitment. In particular, rather than responding to the needs or interests of another provider or funder, starting informally allows people to explore those areas which may not be fashionable or immediately fundable, but which may be quite important in the long run. And beginning with projects where a clear commitment is present may also be impressive to funders who may understand that the energy and commitment brought to a project speaks well of the partners, should not be wasted and, to the extent it is a service which addresses real needs in an effective manner, it may be more likely to attract the shared funding that integrated services require.[20]

(6) Pool Some Resources

Whatever projects are identified will need support and, as noted earlier, a funders forum can help by pooling limited resources to see that the work gets done. Sometimes the resources are funding for a person to work specifically on the developing integration or services. Alternatively (or in addition), there may be space or staff or other resources which can be offered by one or another funder (in lieu of cash). Finally, there is support that is required which might take the form of someone to help guide (or oversee) the project. All three of these elements have been present - and effective - in several projects in London-Middlesex. The Funders Forum, however, was the group that worked out the arrangements.

Pooling resources also has the benefit of committing the employment and training community to the project; that is, the funders (as a group or individually) and providers (as a group or at least several individuals from across funded programs) would be making a statement that the work was worth pursuing. Obviously, having a funders forum and a providers forum makes it more possible.

Pooling some resources does not necessarily mean that all the funders have to agree and meet; rather, that the project can draw support from more than one funder in order to ensure that the work will further efforts at integrating service planning or delivery.

(7) Evaluate at Specific Intervals

One of the main characteristics of the several initiatives has been the need to periodically evaluate the contribution of each project, or the initiative as a whole, to specific goals. The work on common assessment, service delivery standards, and PIE/TEA are good examples of how an explicit evaluation was designed into the project. In the US, many of the important lessons from the initial OneStop evaluation were derived from an extensive evaluation of the experiences of early implementation; and the evaluation seems to have been particularly useful in how the subsequent workforce improvement approach was formulated (that is, specific challenges identified in the evaluation appear to have been directly addressed in the legislation and policies which followed).

Periodic evaluation has also helped the broader initiatives in London-Middlesex; in particular, the Funders Forum not only brought in a facilitator to help formulate their initial vision and plan, they employed her again two years later to engage them in an evaluation of their work to date and how they might work in the future toward their goal of a more integrated system. While a less straight forward evaluation than, for example, reviewing the use of the common assessment process, the funders review of their own efforts seems a thoughtful and worthy response to the question of how effectively they themselves had been working.

(8) Wait to develop formal mandates, roles, procedures

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[20]Unfortunately, the CAFA embodies these attributes and, as of the Fall, had yet to secure the shared funding it requires for its ongoing service.

Each of the suggestions sketched above can be undertaken in communities before, or in the absence of, any formal requirements. As noted, one of the characteristics of the London-Middlesex projects is how they have begun informally and without necessarily having a clear sense about where they might lead or how they would organize themselves. This may have been a luxury of the time and support afforded by the providers and the funders, as well as a commitment by the participants which reflected their understanding of the need to move forward and try things.

However, waiting to work out specific mandates also reflects the frustration that many people expressed about how much time and energy goes to formalizing arrangements, rather than working on actual service planning and delivery. As well, given that practitioners in several communities seemed to be anticipating "directives" from each funder concerning roles and responsibilities, the reluctance to engage in discussions about formal structures and procedures is both understandable and - more important - a good opportunity.

V.4.2 Particular Project Directions

One of the important outcomes of this project has been to identify some areas where a significant shift in focus is necessary if more effective and integrated services are to be planned and delivered. And the emphasis is clearly on the addressing the need for services to be more effective. As indicated above, initiatives in these areas are important, regardless of developments toward an LMDA; that is, they are important challenges and, while an LMDA might make it easier or more difficult, they still need to be addressed in each community. Nine specific project are identified under the three functions related to delivery: three related to up-front services, three related to integrated programming, and three related to service improvement. A tenth project is related to the development of more employer involvement.

(1) Information, Assessment and Referral

The characteristics of more integrated service planning and delivery identified from the studies (and discussed in more detail in the respective parts of this report) suggest three related projects.

First, there is a need to distinguish services as different levels of intensity; that is, to ensure that those who can access jobs with less support do so, and those who need more support are given the appropriate services. The experiences in London-Middlesex, the US and Australia, and supported by several OECD reviews, suggest that the initial screening function is crucial to ensuring that services are allocated efficiently and provided effectively as part of (what the OECD described as "a coherent 'what and when' strategy". This is clearly a function that cuts across funded programs, that involves integrating what have been separate approaches to information, assessment and referral, and what have been services available to some, but not all, clients.

Following, but related to, the definition of levels or kinds of services, is a second project: to develop and implement an integrated "small 'a' assessment". While there have been initiatives in the recent past to integrate approaches across funded programs, the results of these projects - including their effectiveness - have not necessarily been shared. The results of the evaluation of the London-Middlesex project, coupled with numerous comments from providers as part of this project, suggest that the specific process is not being used how it should be; it's not being used consistently, there aren't referrals coming (the report says referrals are being made, just not received); and there are questions about whether the common assessment process as it now stands gets at enough of the right things to help clients be assured that they're getting the right service from the right provider. If it's not doing the job for all clients, i.e. as an assessment capable of supporting decisions about the level or intensity of services to be provided, it needs some more work. There is near unanimous agreement that clients need to be initially offered one of three levels of service; and there are various ways of defining these. However, the assessment - and definitions of levels of service intensity - need to be

common across all funded programs; that is, available to all clients, regardless of what services they may ultimately access.

These concerns are not unique to London-Middlesex; they are present in other communities. In the other jurisdictions, common tools and processes exist at the national level to ensure appropriate access to levels of services which are described in some detail as part of the broader "no wrong door" initiatives. However, in Ontario communities, it is common for each program to have their own processes, sometimes varying across providers, including different versions of "profiling" which may or may not be consistent with any other program (or provider). Therefore, in the absence of more central coordination, it is likely that the efforts of the local employment and training community, both providers and funders, will be needed to work this out.

The suggestion offered to the London-Middlesex community was for a working group to develop recommendations on how to ensure that a common assessment process is used which provides (a) universal access through "no wrong door" (i.e. everyone actually uses it!) and (b) allows for appropriate distinctions among three levels of service. It may be that there are some adjustments to existing "small a" assessments that will enable the right distinctions to be made. Alternatively, something more extensive may be needed (but short of the comprehensive "profiling" done in Australia). Either way, the need is for a process that is easy enough for all to use, but also comprehensive enough to help make certain that those needing more intensive services can access them. [Some have suggested that the "misallocation" of clients may require more intense and continuous case management.]

The third project is related to the needs of the harder-to-serve who need more intense services. It is clear from the experiences reported in this project, in particular, the actual data on effectiveness of different approaches in other jurisdictions, that the needs of those requiring more intensive supports are varied and demand a variety of solutions; specifically, more integrated programming. To determine the mix of services and supports that will be most effective in helping clients attain the goal of sustainable employment, more extensive assessment is likely required.

The need here might be termed "large 'A' assessment". While it is related to the issue of how to define different levels and types of services, it is primarily a responsibility of those designing and providing new integrated services for those in need of more intense supports. Since the programming which would address the needs of clients must follow from action plans developed in response to identifiable needs, the nature of those needs must be commonly understood by providers responsible for developing the programming. Also as suggested for London-Middlesex, rather than worry, for the moment, about who administers and refers and develops employment plans based on the process, a working group could be established to develop a common "large A" assessment for those clients who require the most intensive (training) services (including literacy and basic skills, vocational skills training, and on-the-job training of significant length). The working group might also consider various techniques for "profiling" harder-to-serve and "at risk" clients. The CAFA experiences, while largely a more intense "academic" assessment, may be valuable, as is the instrument currently being developed through the Preparatory Training Program in Toronto. Neither project, however, has sufficient breadth to consider the needs related to vocational skills, nor has the process of developing either of these approaches included the range of funded programs that clients need to access.[21]

For those individuals requiring more intensive services it is particularly important to ensure a continuous case management service which provides continuity and support across funded programs. As with the assessment tasks, the organization of this function would require either an independent

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[21]It may be important to note that the CAFA has also developed into an "independent" service; that is, it has firmly established the principle of "paedogogic neutrality" (as discussed in the case study included as Part III); a feature which accounts for considerable support among referring agencies and service providers, as well as clients. And the CAFA has considered the further development of the service to include both industry and vocational assessments. Decisions on these matters are pending.

service or extensive cooperation and collaboration across providers. Those supporting the development of the large 'A' assessment might also wish to specifically consider how to develop the complementary case management services.

These three specific directions related to assessment are likely to be required regardless of the organization and shape of programs, and the employment and training providers and funders in any community can work to develop the necessary - and effective - approaches at a local level.[22]

(2) Integrated Service Delivery

For those requiring more intensive services and who are understood in the community as "harder-to-serve", nothing could be clearer than the need for an integrated approach to employment and training service delivery to meet the needs of social assistance recipients (and the public) to move people from social assistance to productive employment. Experience in other jurisdictions suggests that a welfare-to-work orientation needs to be brought up to date with employers needs through a broader orientation to workforce development (and meeting longer term goals). Specifically, there is an already large and growing body of evidence (i.e. actual longitudinal data from a significant number of initiatives) that the separation of job search from skills development (particularly literacy and basic skills) is a serious obstacle to success for participants. The evidence is becoming incontrovertible that job search only and basic skills only programs are not effective. What works better (though not completely) is the integration of basic with vocational skills training, and the further integration of these with job search supports and job retention supports (including intensive and continuous case management, childcare and transportation, and, increasingly, further post-employment skills development). While sounding complex, the "silo" approach of separate funded programs is, according to the research, almost certain to fail in meeting the objectives of governments, clients, employers and communities as a whole.[23]

As noted in the description of other jurisdictions, the most recent initiatives in the US have already incorporated this characteristic. Specifically, states (and the local communities that plan and fund specific programs and providers) are required to ensure that, for the most intense level of services, basic education must be delivered together with other of the listed services to be eligible activities: in

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[22]Some might suggest that it would be more efficient for these projects to be undertaken under a province-wide initiative. This may be true. However, there may also be a trade-off between efficiency and effectiveness; that is, the intensive services available and how they are delivered might vary from community to community and even change over time to meet local needs. This is clearly the experience in other jurisdictions and it suggests that "one size" will not fit all (perhaps not fit anyone); therefore, a community-wide approach is likely needed. As well, deciding to address these challenges locally, but collectively, acknowledges that a significant problem has not been the commonality of assessment across communities, but within communities and, by implication, across funded programs within communities. The Literacy and Basic Skills program Guidelines suggest as much by encouraging LBS providers to consult with providers of other funded programs (and referring agencies) in developing their common assessment processes. However, this need is far more extensive, since clients who require more intense services may need vocational, life skills, and job search skills development, as well as vocational and personal counseling, job development, and post-employment services if they are to attain sustainable jobs. In the absence of a vehicle to find out about these needs, it is unlikely that the appropriate integrated services could be identified, let alone planned or delivered. Finally, there is a general understanding in the community that assessment, information and referral are among the delivery functions that could (and perhaps should) be delivered across funded programs, given the perception that there are extensive and costly duplication and inefficiencies from having separate funded programs. There is little way to examine these claims short of trying an alternative approach.
[23]Only if we define success as employment in the most immediate and shortest term can the job search only approach be viewed as appropriate. The data is clear that those most at risk of long term unemployment and who have the most tenuous labour force attachment will return to social assistance (or remain impoverished though working) if they are not provided with more intensive employment and training services that will lead to "better jobs". This conclusion assumes that longer term tracking of our SARS would yield the same results as those studies done elsewhere. However, in the absence of actual data, it is impossible to know with certainty.

other words, literacy activities in and of themselves will neither be funded nor available in isolation from other training activities. The implications for others (Ontario included) is that there needs to be a fundamental restructuring of programs and delivery, with the focus of employment oriented literacy programs being designed and delivered in conjunction with other skills training and work experience activities.

Two suggested directions can, perhaps, help to focus the efforts of communities to design and deliver more integrated services which are more likely to be effective: (i) integrating job search assistance with literacy and basic skills development and (ii) integrating literacy and basic skills with vocational skills development. There are other possible "hybrids" as well; however, these two kinds of integrated service delivery respond directly to the evidence (about effectiveness) and to the needs expressed by employers and clients alike. There are, of course, a variety of forms delivery might take and a significant integrated planning effort will be needed to design and deliver such services. Several of these are outlined and referenced in the discussion of other jurisdictions. While there might not be many examples (at least twelve are offered), there are some; and we need to learn from these if we intend to have clients succeed by delivering demonstrably effective programs.[24] It might be useful, therefore, for communities to establish a working group that would plan for these specific types of integrated service delivery and which would (perhaps obviously) have to include both funders and providers across what are now distinct funded programs.

When it comes to actual delivery, one of the characteristics of successful program integration outlined earlier is the benefit in creating "a culture that no one owns"; that is, having new, integrated services delivered through a different organization, one that is not associated with an existing program. This has taken the form of a new "consortium" (such as PIE/TEA in London, the CAFA in Prescott-Russell, and an emerging one in Toronto) which allows existing agencies to be part of a broader transition to new forms of service delivery. There is much to commend this approach which communities might want to consider when (re)designing services.

Among several other areas where more integrated service delivery might be beneficial to clients and employers, one in particular, job development, stands out as a third potential focus. The PIE/TEA experience suggests that collaborating in providing job development services is potentially more efficient and more effective in meeting both client and employer concerns. Related, the provision of post-employment supports (to both individuals and employers) perhaps designed with the involvement of "account representatives" for employers, has proven effective in different contexts. Integrating the job development function across funded programs may therefore be a vehicle for greater employer involvement and support and, in particular, for considering how best to deliver employment and training services within the workplace. Experience from other jurisdictions emphasizes the importance of these relationships, especially in the movement from a quick employment to a workforce development orientation.

However, the areas of job development and single case management may make more onerous planning and policy demands than the two integrations of the services and programming identified above as priorities, and would likely involve even greater coordination among funders and governments. Therefore, communities may wish to start with the first two projects (involving literacy and basic skills) since they may offer the best chance for making a difference.

(3) Service Evaluation and Improvement

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[24]The appendix on London-Middlesex notes that there are examples of (unfunded) literacy activities occurring within a supported job search program and within two programs developing specific vocational skills. These are important examples that it can be done, and they are worth considering as part of this direction.

The European minister quoted in the discussion of other jurisdictions was, perhaps, too blunt in suggesting that governments have known their employment and training programs have been largely ineffective. Certainly, there is evidence that current initiatives are being planned and delivered at least somewhat differently. But the perception has a role in reminding the employment and training community that evaluation and improvement are increasingly important to ensure that there is value for the resources spent and achievements that are worthy of support.

As noted earlier, there are several important dimensions to accountability. Of particular interest for this function are those aspects that are important to ensuring that customers are being well served (defined as employment and training outcomes achieved) and that mechanisms are in place which ensure that programs can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their services. There has been much discussion of "continuous improvement", in the Canada and other jurisdictions. Much of the discussion, however, centres on the need to be attentive to those who are served. As quoted earlier, the differences between a client-focused and a program-focused approach include the important challenge of meeting the needs of funders while still focused on serving clients. It is not easy. Putting clients first is often exemplified by ensuring that customer feedback is systematic and is incorporated into program delivery decisions.

Therefore, it is important that there be common measures of performance and customer satisfaction which apply to outcomes across the range of employment and training services and providers. As suggested below, this includes a single reporting system, where currently there are separate measures used by different funded programs. If the desired outcomes for services are the same (which, in the case of employment or further training, they appear to be), it would be useful for communities to develop these data and the processes to collect them in common.

A single reporting system

The need for a single, integrated reporting and tracking function cannot be underestimated, nor can the potential benefits. As noted in the discussion of other jurisdictions, there are clearly challenges; first, in defining the appropriate measures, and, second, in developing and implementing an information system which captures the measures. However, these are not insurmountable. Given the recent mention of an Ontario government initiative to integrate several databases to assist with benefits administration, it would appear likely that a single reporting system, at least for some measures, is possible.

Two principal benefits would result from such a system. First, there could be standard, reliable, timely data on attainments for clients. Specifically, assuming there exists the same capabilities as in other jurisdictions to tie together service and employment data, it would be (relatively) easy to determine employment and earnings outcomes, as well as retention in jobs or other training programs.

Second, having an integrated system would have to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of tracking and reporting; it couldn't be worse. Currently, individual providers are largely responsible for this work and, without administrative data, there is little valid and reliable information; certainly no information that ensures comparability across funded programs and no data of sufficient quality and duration (at least a year according to the research) to allow for an analysis of the relative effectiveness of programs and approaches. There should simply not be a reliance on individual providers for such data. There were few suggestions from individuals we spoke with made as frequently or as intently as the desire for a single reporting system.[25]

That such a system needs to be integrated across funded programs is taken for granted. Less obvious is how to develop such a system. People in London-Middlesex have begun the process of developing an electronic network which might, eventually, have such capabilities; and, as part of the suggestions

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[25]A third potential benefit is that a single reporting system might help develop more trust between providers who would be able to see their performance relative to their own objectives and those of the community. A single reporting system might also be a precursor to making performance data public, which is necessary for informed consumer choice.

offered, it would be useful to see if they can liaise with provincial initiatives to develop a truly integrated information system which would include - but not be limited to - the outcomes data a single reporting system could ensure.

However, there are also the customer satisfaction measures which everyone seems to agree are necessary for service improvement (and as a complement to other performance measures). As with some other functions, there is reason to believe that more can be achieved collectively than individually and, therefore, a specific task for the employment and training community, both funders and providers, would be to develop some locally relevant and effective means to collect such data, and at several points in time.[26] The experience of other jurisdictions suggests that there are a variety of possible approaches to measuring customer satisfaction and that these measures might be common to many communities. However, for the moment, it would appear useful for a working group of providers and funders to consider how best to learn from the experiences in other jurisdictions and how they might collaborate to develop and administer these measures across funded programs.

To summarize, specific projects for communities to consider include common outcome and common customer satisfaction measures (and data collection) leading to a single reporting system across funded programs. While there may be important supports which governments can provide, communities might benefit from beginning work in these areas and establish a working group to pursue these tasks. If governments are able to define the specific measures to be used, it might be more useful for communities to focus on how the information, particularly satisfaction measures, could be locally collected; as well as how the information on both outcomes and satisfaction might be best used.

Service Improvement

As well the group identified above might consider how to include both kinds of measures, outcomes and satisfaction, in the broader project of developing a service improvement process appropriate to the range of employment and training services.

There were several comments from individuals, and certainly an emphasis in other jurisdictions, on actually improving the quality of services. Since it is unlikely that Ontario would adopt a policy of certifying providers, or perhaps even reporting specific performance results for providers, the approaches adopted in both the US and UK appear doubtful, whatever their possible virtues. Yet people are interested in quality and in improving the effectiveness of their programs. Therefore, some form of service improvement process is needed and, more important, supportable.

Again, this element of planning an effective service improvement process would benefit from collaboration across funded programs, particularly if some of the services that are delivered are the integrated programs outlined above. Specifically, a working group (of local providers and funders) could identify how particular performance and satisfaction measures can be used to improve services, as well as what other data and what developmental processes might be helpful. While outcome and satisfaction measures are needed, they are clearly not sufficient to ensure quality programs. Both of these measures are subject to important external effects; for example, labour market conditions may have a far greater role in employment outcomes than the quality of the particular employment or training service. Similarly, reported satisfaction levels may tell us little about what skills were used on the job, how well a worker was able to acquire subsequent training, or what factors might allow skills to be acquired more effectively. These are all factors to be considered in the design of a process with the potential to improve service planning and delivery on an ongoing basis.

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[26]There is little point in limiting satisfaction data, from either individual clients or their employers, to when clients leave the program or are first hired. Perceptions of what has been valuable and effective service delivery may change over the initial period of work, and subsequent "testing" and measures of satisfaction once a person has been on the job need to be included.

(4) Outreach to employers

It would be difficult to examine the experiences of other jurisdictions and not notice the difference with current practice in Ontario; in particular, the shift from a welfare-to-work approach to a workplace development orientation, with its interest in greater employer involvement, in addressing the needs of the working poor, and in the relationship between the skills of the workforce (i.e. human capital development), increased productivity and community economic development. These are not empty phrases; rather, they represent important changes in the orientation of the many services and an understanding of some of the long-standing challenges for both the economy and the unemployed.

As noted in outlining some of the context for several important initiatives, a focal point for some of the developments has been in explicitly linking employment and training services to individuals (particular those on social assistance) with the challenges faced by employers. Three elements have important planning and delivery implications for a more integrated system: defining services for employers and developing specific relationships (both of which have come together in several exemplary programs cited in Part II).

As the social assistance system has become more work-focused, there is a clear need to involve employers more directly in service planning. Not only are employers the ones who ultimately hire recipients, they also must be assured that the skills needed in the workplace are available and can be developed to improve the firm's productivity. These are realities. It is also true, however, that there continues to be concern about the skills (particularly literacy and basic skills) of new workers, at least in the view of employers from other jurisdictions. A more effective employment and training system will have to address these concerns.

As noted above, one form for addressing these concerns is the redesign of programs, both assisted job search (such as those funded by EI and Job Connect) and vocational skills development, to include significant literacy and basic skills components. However, an additional approach builds on the work-first orientation by offering services in the workplace. The numerous studies cited in the detailed discussion of other jurisdictions provide ample evidence of the need for, and benefits of, programs for incumbent workers, as well as some examples of how such services can be delivered.

A second additional need is for employers, individually and collectively, to relate more directly with service providers. The evidence suggests that job development is particularly important in helping the harder-to-serve gain access to sustainable employment; but these clients, and their (prospective) employers, need some ongoing support from service providers. Similarly, the experience designating "account representatives" for employers has been mostly positive and is a complementary delivery function to job development.

A third element is for employers to have a more direct relationship to the employment and training community in identifying specific priorities (including sectors and firms) which can be the focal point for service design; that is, identifying jobs that may be attainable if providers are able to help clients gain identifiable skills. While some may suggest that "customizing" delivery to meet the needs of specific employers or jobs does a disservice to clients, the evidence outlined in the discussion of other jurisdictions suggests that exemplary programs still provide "generic" skills (which employers want) while at the same time ensuring the specific skills employers require if they are to provide the family supporting jobs clients want. The programs cited employ a variety of approaches from which we might learn.

Each of these possibilities requires a more active approach to engaging employers, both individually and collectively. In London-Middlesex, both the funders and providers have expressed their own interest in thinking through how best to involve employers. The lessons from the US and the UK (in particular) suggest that the strategy has two parts: (i) bringing employers more directly into the planning and oversight process (through their participation in local Workforce Investment Boards

and the Local Learning Partnerships, respectively); and (ii) establishing direct relationships between providers and particular employers.

However, since the services that are most likely to be effective - and of interest to employers - are more integrated than at present (including workplace-based training), outreach to employers might need to follow the integrated planning work to design some of the reconfigured services. As well, there is some evidence that employers want to participate in the development of those very programs. An important task in deciding on a specific project might be for a working group of providers to work more directly with those employers who have hired some of their program participants, to identify supports that might be needed, possible changes in their delivery which could increase the acceptance and productivity of new hires, and to develop ideas for possible service additions such as workplace-based training.

The eight initial challenges for communities (outlined in Section V.4.1), coupled with the specific project areas outlined above, can become the basis for communities to focus their efforts to better integrate employment and training services to meet the needs, and attain the outcomes, that our clients and communities deserve. There is little standing in the way of pursuing some of these suggestions. While changes in government policy may help or hinder particular efforts, each of the directions and projects is possible and, based on the evidence, each is necessary and achievable. They do, however, require some support.

V.5. Supporting Integrated Planning and Delivery

> *I found that the new level of organizational performance is not a fast-food item to be delivered*
> *from room service in twenty minutes... Ordering the organization to perform differently is like*
> *standing in front of the buffalo herd and commanding them to fly.*
> James Belasco and Ralph Stayer, The Flight of the Buffalo, 1993, cited in [68]

As mentioned earlier, this project was specifically asked to identify some supports which might encourage or facilitate more integrated planning and delivery of employment and training programs. With little hesitation, there are some supports which can be suggested. A few are offered here; others in the next section, specifically related to Literacy and Basic Skills programming. There are two main areas of support which merit the attention of governments: policy and participation.

The policy supports require some explanation, given that some important questions have remained outstanding for some time.

V.5.1 Policy Coordination

The sixth characteristic of more integrated planning and delivery outlined the nature and some benefits of policy coordination; and, from the experience in other jurisdictions, it is clear that there are a number of elements which might be included.

The discussion of other jurisdictions (Part II) relates five areas which might benefit from coordination ranging from very broad (integrating benefits and workforce development services) to integrating what have been distinct funded programs within the same branch or ministry, to harmonizing specific features (such as eligibility and reporting requirements, performance measures, supports to program participants). Any (or all) of these areas would benefit from coordination and, in turn, providers would be able to pass the benefits from such coordination on to their customers, both employers and individuals clients.

That discussion also notes three questions which governments, at all levels, might want to address: (i) what programs will be included? (ii) how will system-building be authorized, and under whose authority will it develop? and (iii) how will service integration actually be achieved?

The first question may be self-evident, but it is important to note that some services may be integrated in delivery, while still maintaining discrete funding and accountability. This is the case, for example, with programs for several particular groups (e.g. youth, the disabled). What is important here is that services to these groups which have been distinct in the past still need to be integrated; for example, the finding that literacy and basic skills training should be integrated with specific vocational skills development applies to youth as it does to adults. Developing separate youth services, however, allows for better targeting, more homogeneous groups and better focus for the program. Nevertheless, there would still be an integration of basic with vocational skills.

The second question is answered in part by the nature of the authority granted by the government (at whatever level) to itself or to an arms length "coordinating agency" to ensure integration and accountability; can or should the changes be made by administrative directive, regulations, new legislation, or some combination? Regardless, authorization to plan and implement more integrated services will have some constraints under any system; constraints which must be clear. System-building, however authorized, will also require support (including policy, financial, and some infrastructure). The US National Governors Association study suggests that "authorization that remains stable over time is more likely to be taken seriously and to produce enduring change."[92]

The third question asks how to operationalize the changes, and the study suggests three options. The first option uses "a common policy framework for designated programs. An interprogram or interagency team develops the details of the common policy framework which addresses system-wide issues... (and) coordination is facilitated by staff of an oversight authority". The second option combines a common policy framework with "co-locating various service delivery components of programs. This approach stops short of reorganizing agencies and instead combines staff from each affected program to form a coordinating entity that implements common policies." The third option "relies on the common policy framework, but also reorganizes programs into a single administrative entity."[92]

These are clearly different options, though they have as their shared element "the common policy framework." What is not addressed is whether it is possible to develop more integrated service delivery, or to plan for services to be more integrated, in the absence of such a framework.

Tackling these questions is no easy task, particularly in Ontario where the devolution of responsibilities in several service areas has been extremely challenging. One aspect of the challenge concerns the apparent contradiction between "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches; both seem to be present, rhetorically and practically, in the experiences of other jurisdictions. In each of the three countries, the major reforms which included significant changes to the direction, expectations and funding of the systems were driven from the top as part of major national initiatives. At the same time, each of the jurisdictions provided specific policy parameters (guidance and supports) which made certain that the planning and delivery functions required to integrate services would be conducted locally. In the discussion of accountability as a characteristic in other jurisdictions, there is a reference to the US government's resolution of this apparent contradiction; namely, that the shift in orientation

> *includes a focus on outcomes rather than inputs; results rather than process; and continuous improvement rather than management control. The performance provisions contained in the (Workforce Investment) Act reflect this emphasis and provide increased flexibility in service delivery in exchange for increased accountability for results.*[43]

The trade-off which forms the basis for all three governments' actions is similarly available in Canada; that is, given the similar vision and goals which might inform changes in the system, it is possible to provide the "increased flexibility" in service planning and delivery that probably is necessary to achieve a markedly different outcome. Local providers and officials, together with employers, were given direct responsibility, authority and funding to develop their own plans and delivery systems to meet local needs. While some functions may be mediated by state or regional

bodies, several come under distinctly local processes. In exchange for the ability to develop services from the bottom-up, communities (not merely individual providers) are expected to be accountable for performance (e.g. realizing sustainable employment and/or higher skill levels for social assistance recipients, contribute to workforce development for employers and the community), including continuous improvement of their performance. To achieve even the performance goals, some targets are set locally; others negotiated. Some measures are set locally; others negotiated. Delivery is purely a local matter. Funding authority is transferred and, assuming reasonable administrative controls, it will remain largely local. Priorities, planning, organization, development, delivery all are local matters. Safeguards exist to ensure public information on performance, provider certification, and service provision to the hardest-to-serve (through policy and incentives), to name a few. It is inescapable from the evidence that the fundamental nature of many "systems" has been changed as part of the trade-off defined by the reforms in all three countries.

While our governments, at all levels, may or may not wish employment and training services to develop in a similar manner, there may be some particular supports which could be considered and which might assist communities to develop the capacity to plan and deliver more integrated services.

First, since communities develop differently, there needs to be a fair bit of flexibility given for each to decide how best to proceed. Certainly, it would be a fair criticism to suggest that, in some communities, providers (or funders) are happy with the status quo. The evidence suggests, however, that dictating the "local" side of the trade-off will not produce the desired results. The characteristic that describes the local character of more integrated planning and delivery describes its importance. Therefore, the particular policy support that might help different communities would be for each level of government (both senior governments and the municipalities) to agree on the vision and goals of reform, as well as a time frame, and allow communities to come together to define how best they can work toward those objectives. For example, it is clear that the experiences in London-Middlesex will enable that community to develop in different ways than others. They should not be penalized for their success, but neither should anyone assume that it can be easily replicated in other communities.

Second, there should be a reasonable time frame. No jurisdiction has provided less than two years to effect some of the more major changes (though Australia consolidated some programs after eighteen months). The evaluation of the early implementers of both the OneStop initiative suggests that years, rather than months, are required for the capacity to develop. This is neither a shock nor a mystery.

Third, in addition to policies that provide a direction and sufficient time, all three levels of government can actively encourage communities to test some of the directions outlined above; that is, give permission to experiment along with the flexibility required to find the appropriate forms and processes with which to plan and develop more integrated services. It is not a minor matter. Providers and funders in each community who spoke with us felt a clear pressure to conform to increasingly narrow rules, while trying to develop increasing broad roles. If it is possible to change course, communities need the permission to search for the alternatives that only government policy can provide.

For example, if funders - working collaboratively in each community - are to determine the priorities for employment and training services, there needs to be a clear process from which such priorities can be identified. While the suggestions offered for London-Middlesex represents one broad approach, it is not the only one. As a matter of policy, it might be useful for communities to be invited to develop the processes most appropriate to their own histories, provided that the process is transparent, inclusive and leads to a set of priorities which can inform the shape of services to be provided.

V.5.2 Participation

Two specific forms of participation from governments could help the process.

First, the Funders Forum approach seems eminently reasonable and, more important, actually practical as a way to address the main community planning responsibilities. As outlined earlier, it is not the only way. However, given the dispositions of current governments, it may be the most likely vehicle for gradually providing increased local autonomy within constraints, and which allows communities to develop at different rates and in regard to their own abilities and priorities.[27]

Each level of government, department or ministry should be willing and able to participate fully. Even the London-Middlesex group did not have participation from a key ministry over a considerable period of time. Without everyone participating, there is little hope that the group can address the functions for which it, ultimately, needs to accept responsibility. It requires active involvement, interest, and support of one's peers. It requires the authority to make commitments and decisions, and the ability to represent the range of distinct programs funded by the ministry or department. This was a particular problem for the former Ministry of Education and Training, as the separation of programs meant few people (and no one locally) could speak for the range of services. However, the LMDA secretariat proposed a model of regional managers who would be able to participate with the same kind of authority and responsibility as others (similar to the current organization of the Ministry of Community and Social Services). This would be an important step.

The second form of participation concerns the resources necessary to support greater integration. While considerable additional sums have been expended in other jurisdictions, there is little doubt that funding in the current environment is limited. However, a few elements are definitely required if any of the directions for communities are to be developed. The experience in London-Middlesex offers some guidance.

Some funding is required for specific projects, to purchase staff or outside expertise, and to provide external evaluations of the specific initiatives. Some resources are needed for facilitation, to provide the support necessary to integrate the different cultures; a challenge which was so clearly identified in the early implementation of the OneStop initiative. As well, facilitation has clearly been important, albeit periodically and only at key junctures, in the development of the Funders Forum. As well, some resources are required to support the ongoing work of both the funders and providers groups. The fact that both the London-Middlesex initiatives and the CAFA had resource support is not merely incidental to their development. The small amount of resources needed to support the basic work of the LMPC (with additional resources for particular projects) appears to have made a tremendous difference to their development as a group and to the projects which they have undertaken.[28]

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[27]It may be useful to summarize the relationship between the funders forum and the other options. While the UK and US have proceeded with a "local board" approach, it seems unlikely that any level of government will, at this point, devolve funding decisions to local boards in Ontario. As one senior manager noted: "handing over a pot of money to the community is not where the government is going." Similarly, no single ministry or department (as in Alberta) is likely to gain control of all relevant programs; therefore, some mechanism to integrate the other programs will still be necessary. Finally, while the CCACs are an existing model from health which provides integrated services based on need, the variety of funding sources would require agreement by each to similarly relinquish control. As with the local board approach, this seems doubtful. Therefore, the Funders Forum model is at least a plausible - and workable - means to begin to develop the community's capacity to make effective and efficient use of resources to meet identified priorities, while still having the responsibility and control rest with each respective government. The form of shared funding (integrated or pooled) can also vary in the Funders Forum approach, and therefore might be different in different communities or related to different projects.

[28]While other communities may have had access to such funding, the absence of funded support (as well as a specific project to work on) characterized each of the other communities which might have been more involved in the project. Their interest was not in doing specific work aimed at more integrated planning or delivery; nor had they identified other specific projects which might have moved them forward. Resource support may not be the only factor, but neither can it be ignored.

One of the nice things about working together is that resources can be shared. While each participating funder needs to provide a share of the resources to support projects and initiatives (and, hopefully, minimal infrastructure), no one source needs to be burdened; and support might take the form of direct contributions of funding, necessary space, or project liaison and supervision. The sharing of resources is a model which has worked well in London-Middlesex (despite the absence of MET); and it is an approach which would help other communities. For example, in the case of the CAFA, there seems to be agreement that the service is important to the community; however, no one funder will provide ongoing operational support. A funders forum (i.e. the funders as a collective, rather than individuals) could provide such funding together with the monitoring and accountability necessary to ensure that it develops and develops effectively. The alternative is to see a needed service disappear (the need will remain) along with the energy and commitments of those involved (including the providers of the service and the other agencies, and learners, which benefit from it).

Finally, if the different governments wish to take a more active role in supporting greater integration, two additional tasks would help. First, governments could collaborate on the performance measures required of currently funded providers and services. Currently, each distinct, funded program is in the process of developing (or already has developed) measures which they consider important when identifying attainments. Providers, and funders at the community level, would benefit from agreement on these indicators. As well, indicators of customer satisfaction, and (for some, but not all) a commitment to continuous improvement are potentially a source of some confusion, if not frustration. While each community could come together to develop their own processes (as suggested in the directions above), some shared guidance and principles that applied across programs would be helpful.

Second, if there are to be common performance measures, the development of a single database which would include all providers and which would be linked to the relevant reporting measures (as indicated above) would go a long way to supporting the field.

While these ideas are hardly original, there is reason to believe that they may prove beneficial in many different and varied communities across the province. While the more extensive "policy coordination" approach in other jurisdiction has the benefit of experience, there are in fact other possibilities here. Indeed, the experiences in London-Middlesex may be an important test of whether more integrated planning and delivery of employment and training services can succeed in the absence or more extensive policy coordination.

Perhaps a citation from the discussion of other jurisdictions bears repeating. It recalls the famous economist who defined coordination in employment and training programs as "an unnatural act between two or more nonconsenting bureaucracies"[8]. In the time since Professor Levitan offered that observation, there have been several significant achievements. Current governments, at all levels, are able to contribute to several more.

V.6. The Importance of Literacy and Basic Skills

> *With the stakes as high as they are now for welfare recipients, providing them with only basic skills -- without integrating them with job skills and work experience -- would be considered by some as malpractice.*
> Murphy, Garrett and Alice Johnson *What Works: Integrating Basic Skills Training into Welfare-to-Work* (National Institute for Literacy; September 1998:1).

V.6.1 Some Context and Challenges

The experiences in Ontario, as well as those of other jurisdictions, offer convincing evidence that the development of literacy and basic skills is crucial to the life chances of many individuals, businesses

and communities. The environmental scans and strategic plans of local training boards throughout the province testify to the consensus on the need to address literacy and basic skill needs. Sir Claus Moser's report, which provides an overview of adult literacy issues in the UK, provided insight which seems to have informed several important directions in the government's major changes in post-16 education. The development of "unified" state plans in, for example, New Jersey and Pennsylvania (cited in the discussion of other jurisdictions) clearly identifies adult literacy as a challenge which must be addressed for workforce development to be effective. In the current economic expansion, the business community appears to have gone beyond its perhaps typical criticisms of public education and focused on the crucial role it plays in the providing jobs in a work-first approach to welfare reform, and the importance of entry-level workers - and their skills - to increasing productivity and competitiveness.[29]

As the discussion of the context and challenges from other jurisdictions indicates, these are not isolated sentiments; rather, there is a clear understanding of the importance of literacy and basic skills in reducing social assistance, in workforce development and in economic growth. None of this is new to the adult literacy community in every country. None of it is new in Canada or in Ontario.[30]

Given the dramatic, if not bold, initiatives undertaken in other jurisdictions, what may be new, however, is how profoundly we need to change our understanding of literacy and basic skills delivery.

Without recounting in detail what is reported in Part II, there are several conclusions which are both deeply troubling and genuinely hopeful. (Interested readers are encouraged to review the discussion in greater depth.)

First, while we may not know much about the effectiveness of literacy and basic skills programming in moving from welfare-to-work in Ontario, there is now important evidence that, when delivered on its own, literacy and basic skills training is neither effective nor efficient in helping to move people into employment. While supported job search-only programs were also of very limited value to increasing employment and earnings, the even smaller impact of basic skills-only programs is more troubling, particularly given the relative cost.

Second, the effectiveness of literacy and basic skills programs aimed at employment is directly related to how closely these services are targeted to specific groups and to specific jobs. This is not to say that curriculum or delivery must be organized around the needs of specific employers, but it appears to help. In addition, contrary to what some might suggest, this does not mean that employers want narrowly defined literacy skills; rather, employers appear to support more "generic" skills, but want to ensure they include skills relevant to their workplace (including the need for these skills to enhance the productivity of entry level workers). The evidence strongly suggests that literacy attainments are increased significantly when programming is integrated with vocational skills developed either in classrooms or on-the-job. And the employment and earnings gains are significant from such integrated programming. Taken together, whether measured as gains in literacy or gains in employment and earnings, stand alone programs are less effective than integrated delivery.

Third, so convincing was this evidence that the US government now requires that, for the most intense (training) services, literacy and basic skills services are not to be delivered by themselves but must be integrated with another type of training.[31] As a general position, however, one reviewer noted

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[29]The director of a five-county adult education consortium in Kentucky noted that, in a state which is second only to Mississippi in adult illiteracy, the two largest markets for the expansion of literacy programming are with employers and in prisons. [Personal communication, August 1999]

[30]Indeed, the current government's campaign platform for last spring's election also indicated their general understanding that limited literacy and basic skills among social assistance recipients is a major challenge in meeting Ontario's welfare-to-work goals.

[31]This approach applies to individuals who are assessed as having significant literacy and basic skills needs - estimated at two-thirds (or more) of those receiving social assistance in the US - rather than individuals who require minimal basic skills services, but who are likely to move to employment with less intense, job search supports.

*The most effective welfare-to-work programs share a flexible, balanced approach that offers job
search, education, job training, and work. Successful employment programs more generally offer a
wide range of individualized services; have a central focus on employment; have close ties to local
employers; and are intensive, setting high expectations for participation. [And] Activities to
improve basic education skills ... should be provided as part of a broader range of employment and
training activity.*[32]

Fourth, the pressures of competitiveness and a tight labour market have increased the need and desire
of employers, as well as federal, state and local governments, to expand workplace-based training of
all types, including literacy and basic skills. This expansion of post-employment services is a
significant element in the development of more coherent employment and training system,
particularly given the explicit identification of employers (not only individuals) as clients of the
emerging system.   However, the inclusion of post-employment supports is also a necessary element
of service delivery if the objective of sustainable employment for social assistance recipients is to be
realized. This is true in all three other jurisdictions.

Fifth, in the current environment, the evidence available on employment and earning also suggests
that attaining "family sustaining jobs" for those on social assistance and the working poor alike is
not easy. As one study noted

> *Job training in the classroom or workplace and access to postsecondary education are key
> components of a strategy aimed at better jobs. Training must be made more consistently effective,
> however, and more accessible to those with low basic skills.*[33]

Finally, with respect to accountability, it is clear that the need for demonstrable results applies to
literacy and basic skills, as well as to other services. The evidence on attainments is extremely
problematic. Not only do basic skills-only programs have weak employment and earnings
outcomes; of greater concern is that there is evidence to suggest that those programs which result in
better educational outcomes (measured in skill increases on standard tests, as well as GED
attainment) are not the same programs as those which produce better employment outcomes.
Combined with other findings, this suggests that important work needs to be undertaken to ensure
that literacy and basic skills services contribute to both literacy and employment gains.

Taken together, these five conclusions would seem to have some implications for the directions which
might be most useful for literacy and basic skills programming in Canada.

V.6.2 Some possible directions

The first implication is the need for additional literacy and basic skills programming with an explicit
employment focus. From what has been reported for the US, less than twenty percent of learners are
in such programs. While the definition of programs might vary, it is unlikely that many social
assistance recipients, as well as countless other learners with employment goals (however vague) are in
appropriately focused programs. This may require a shift in resources, over time, to support these
needs of learners and objectives of government. For accountability purposes, other jurisdictions have
developed distinct funding streams.

Second, the knowledge that, to be effective, literacy and basic skills services need to be integrated with
other employment and training services suggests that efforts to do so become a major priority.
Specifically, this would mean explicit support for local efforts to integrate LBS programming with (i)

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[32]Strawn 1998:23,25. The term "education" here refers to literacy and basic skills education, as well as skills
development at less than secondary school graduation.
[33]ibid.:24. As noted in the discussion of other jurisdictions, the analysis cited includes references to numerous studies,
as well as descriptions of specific programs which exemplify the author's criteria.

employment supports and job search assistance (services delivered through Job Connect and HRDC funded agencies) and (ii) vocational training (provided through apprenticeship, the current "skills development education grants" funded through HRDC, but also in particular programs such as those cited in the description of activities in London-Middlesex).[34]

Third, the importance of access to postsecondary education in order to secure better jobs presents a challenge. Funding for basic skills development beyond grade nine has been provisionally continued through the former Ontario Basic Skills program. However, it is an important issue given that evidence suggests that the GED may not be an effective route and the relationship between educational attainments and earnings at this level is weak, at best. How to provide access to further vocational skills development for those developing their literacy and basic skills is clearly an issue to address, regardless of whether it falls under the current LBS mandate.

Fourth, the conclusions also suggest that planning and delivery of LBS programming needs to explicitly include both job development and post-employment supports and services in order to (i) help those needing more intensive services gain jobs and (ii) help with job retention and development. Workplace-based training, like employment-oriented LBS programming, is understood to benefit both individuals and employers. Equally, if not more, important, training in the workplace is compatible with a quick-employment approach, as well as the "state of the art" about how to provide effective services, including literacy and basic skills. This, too, would represent a shift in priorities.

Fifth, support for local literacy providers to engage other local employment and training service providers in designing effective assessments (as outlined above) is clearly important if a more integrated system is to develop. The LBS Section has consistently expressed support for such work and the evidence provided in each of the studies (London-Middlesex, Prescott-Russell, and other jurisdictions) merely underlines the role of appropriate assessment in determining (i) what level of services each client requires (small 'a') and (ii) what particular services are needed for those requiring the most intense level of assistance (large 'A').

Sixth, the absence of common measures (let alone a single reporting system) for the many funded programs which support clients in moving to employment is not merely a cause for irritation on the part of providers. The absence of such measures makes it impossible to compare the effectiveness or efficiency of different efforts. As one element of accountability, information on actual outcomes is crucial. (Other elements of accountability are offered in discussing other jurisdictions and the initiatives in London-Middlesex.) There are, of course, difficulties in developing a fully integrated database that would "automatically" provide the kind of administrative data which would be of great assistance in establishing client outcomes and how different services contributed to them. However, at the very least, there is a basic need to find some measures which can be used in common.

Finally, the evidence strongly suggests that, to achieve actual results, very different configurations of services (and programs) need to be planned and delivered, at least for literacy activities for those clients with either employment or further training goals.[35] Together with the particular directions for

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[34]It should be noted that in the specific integrated delivery cited in the London-Middlesex study, literacy and basic skills development is not funded through the LBS Section of the Ministry. While it may be effective programming, it is neither subject to the same requirements, nor does it benefit from the same supports, as LBS funded activity. As well, the availability of entry-level, non-postsecondary skills training has been source of some concern; with several criticisms of the SDEG program, notably the difficulty for agencies of planning skills training in a "voucher" context. Given this, the challenge of creating the necessary programs which integrate vocational with literacy and basic skills is a serious one, as is simply the availability of funding for vocational training, according to several participants.

[35]These goals would surely apply to a large proportion of social assistance recipients, particularly those on Employment Insurance or in Ontario Works. As well, the "further training" may be precisely the vocational training that the evidence suggests needs to be integrated with literacy activities and which shows the greatest promise from being available to those with weaker basic skills, as well as being targeted, small group, contextual, and directly related to local employers. Evidence and examples offered in several studies are compelling.

integrated programming offered above, it would seem reasonable to revisit the current literacy services planning process in favour of a process which is more likely to result in the development and delivery of programming which will be demonstrably effective.

This last direction requires some clarification.

The overriding - and overwhelming - characteristic is not for planning among LBS programs, but rather for relationships between LBS and the other services which must be integrated for literacy and basic skills delivery to be effective.[36]   The experience of LBS providers in the several communities involved in this project is frankly skeptical of how this can be accomplished in the present circumstances. The time and energy that need to go into the current process is already considered onerous and the results of the process for service delivery and funding seem dubious.[37]   Despite many attempts to develop better relationships with non-literacy services, it would be hard to expect that a process designed specifically for literacy planning would produce outcomes (integrated programming) that require far more purposeful involvement with these others. Even if literacy services planning did seek out the participation of others, the requirements of the other funded programs might be less than supportive of this project.

While the directions outlined for communities require efforts beyond the scope the LBS program, they include literacy and basic skills because of how very important it is in developing an effective, integrated employment and training system. The reason to revisit the current literacy services planning process is precisely because of this central role, particularly for those on social assistance.

Given the limited resources available for planning (and pending any overall change in policy coordination, as discussed elsewhere in this report), an important support would be to ensure that energy is directed toward the kinds of integrated programming required. As well, those communities which are both interested and capable of moving more quickly in the directions outlined should be supported. As noted earlier, some support might take the form of "permission" to provide funded literacy services to, for example, those in a skills training program or secondary school vocational courses (even though these might be credit courses); other support might take the form of specific incentives to provide literacy services in workplaces; or to those receiving job search assistance through Job Connect, HRDC or OW (which are generally not integrated with each other). It might be useful for LBS funding, together with resources from other funded programs, to help support an explicit job development function which would be able to identify the particular skill needs of those employing our learners (and which would hopefully result in adjustments to delivery to address those needs, even in the workplace).

It should be noted that the directions identified, for communities, governments at all levels, and literacy and basic skills are also consistent with elements of the current LBS Guidelines. In particular,

• The directions suggested, both for literacy services and for integration across the employment and training system, seem to support each of the five objectives listed for the LBS program;[38]

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[36]The effectiveness of LBS programming for those with other goals - or in need of other supports - may have different characteristics.

[37]The same might be said of many local board strategic planning processes which identify priorities but, likewise, are viewed as having little impact on either funding or program development. For example, it is unclear if local boards have reviewed service delivery and made "recommendations on policy and design changes that would increase effectiveness for clients in that area".

[38]They are: (i) To help Ontario move toward a seamless adult education system which supports lifelong learning; (ii) To support literacy agencies in providing quality services which meet learners' needs; (iii) To focus literacy services on those adults most in need of them; (iv) To ensure accountability to government, to the public, and to learners in the provision of literacy services that are effective, efficient, and produce measurable results; (v) To foster closer links between literacy training and employment

• The directions suggested seem to embody the nine principles offered in the Guidelines;[39]

• The directions offered appear to support several, but not all, of the twelve assumptions listed in the Guidelines;

• The Guidelines identify for literacy providers (and the literacy planning process) expectations related to the Local Board and Ontario Works, as well as the general requirement to "define working relationships with Ontario Works, the Local Board, Job Connect, and other appropriate service providers". The directions offered suggest some alternative means and some specific content which might help those relationships to become more productive.

For example, the Guidelines indicate that OW and LBS providers should "consult with each other to plan flexible delivery models for shared clients"; "provide services that enable clients to work toward a realistic training or employment goal"; and "develop assessment, referral, and feedback protocols for shared clients". The directions outlined above, coupled with the some specific findings from this project, might help both OW and LBS providers meet these responsibilities; though it is being suggested that other funded programs also need to be included.

To summarize, there are seven directions which literacy and basic skills programming might take which would support the development of the kinds of delivery which are likely to be more effective and which address some of the principal characteristics of more integrated planning and delivery of employment and training services. The Literacy and Basic Skills Section may wish to consider some or all of these as worthy supports in the development of a more coherent, integrated employment and training service system.

(1) Greater emphasis on employment outcomes and programs explicitly oriented to meeting employment goals.

(2) Explicit support for programming which integrates literacy and basic skills with (i) employment supports and job search assistance services; and (ii) specific vocational skills development.

(3) Assist learners' development toward postsecondary education (in order to secure better jobs) by supporting basic skills development beyond current LBS Level 5 (grade nine).

(4) Explicit support for both job development and post-employment supports and services, including greater emphasis on workplace-based training.

(5) Increase support for local literacy providers to engage other local employment and training service providers in designing effective integrated assessments.

(6) Development of common performance and customer satisfaction measures across funded programs.

(7) Revisit the current literacy services planning process in favour of a process which includes LBS programs oriented to workforce development with other employment and training services so as to develop and deliver programming which will be demonstrably effective .

Each of these directions, grounded in the evidence from each of the studies, represents a shift in literacy and basic skills practices as they have evolved. However, taken together, they support the development of the main characteristics of more integrated planning and delivery.

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[39]The principles are: (i) results-based ; (ii) community-based ; (iii) cost-effective ; (iv) accessible; (v) accountable; (vi) flexible ; (vii) learner-centred (viii) based on adult education principles; and (ix) links to broader education and training system.

There is a view that the current planning and funding processes - for all funded programs, but also for LBS - merely confirm (at least in large measure) what providers have already been doing. In planning reforms, sometimes we like to say that a new system will mean that providers will need to "adjust" what they currently do. For some this might be true. But to plan the necessary changes - and make the changes - will require substantial and substantive shifts. Stated differently, we can't have a new system by just doing what we've been doing till now. If it was so good, why change it? And if it really needs to change, it won't be the same. There is really no way around it.[40]

This project has enabled the community, both funders and providers alike, to examine some important experiences and evidence from Ontario and other jurisdictions from which we can identify some important characteristics of more integrated planning and delivery of employment and training services. Literacy and basic skills are an important component of that integration. Hopefully, the directions outlined for communities, governments, and literacy services will provide a focus for developing the kinds of relationships we need to create a system that serves the needs of " people over programs" .

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[40]As noted in Part I, there are some LBS programs which serve clients with other than employment or training goals. The planning of such programs might benefit from a similar integration with appropriate health or social services. The research reported here, however, is specific to LBS providers whose learners are oriented to employment or further training goals.