



CHALLENGES IN A CHANGING WORKFORCE

Suggestions for Change

Working Together Towards a
Saskatchewan Training Strategy
April 1997

March 26, 1997

Dear Reference Group Members:

As the co-chairs of the Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board (SLFDB), we are pleased to share the SLFDB report as submitted to the Honourable Robert Mitchell, Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Skills Training.

The Minister requested input on six areas for the provincial training strategy:

- the role and priority for workplace-based training,
- the role and priority for community based organizations,
- the role of private trainers and their relationship with the department and public institutions,
- the priority for retraining and updating the current workforce,
- approaches and methods for ensuring services for the designated equity groups, youth and social assistance recipients, and
- approaches and methods of strengthening and expanding industry and community involvement.

The report represents a consensus achieved as a result of consultations as a Board and with the input of our Reference Groups at two sessions in September, 1996 and March, 1997. The Board recognizes this document as part of an on-going process of working together towards a Saskatchewan Training Strategy with Labour market partners and the federal and provincial governments

The challenges faced by the present Labour force and the demands of the emerging Labour market are enormous. It will be together that the Labour market partners and Saskatchewan will achieve a training system which will be responsive to current and future Labour force development needs.

In the days, months and years ahead, the SLFDB will require the on-going input and support of our Reference Groups, to work together with both the Provincial and Federal governments.

Thank you for your participation in the consultation process.

Sincerely,

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**Canadian Labour Force Development Board
(CLFDB) Training Standards**

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board is pleased to provide the Minister with advice on various aspects of the Saskatchewan Training Strategy. While the Minister requested the Board's input in six areas, there are additional factors which influence the Board's response.

The Board supports public training institutions as an essential element in the provincial training strategy. However the Board maintains that public training institutions must develop ways to work in real partnerships to developing relevant training programs with community based organizations, designated equity groups, youth and low-income recipients, industry and/or communities. Using a partnership approach based on reciprocity, the Board is convinced that public training institutions will make significant contributions to developing the workforce Saskatchewan needs.

The Board is also concerned that the provincial training system not be an isolated entity focusing on post-secondary education and training. The role of the K-12 system in preparing students for both further learning and/or work is critical. Issues around workplace literacy, effective career counselling, and preparing students who will not continue their learning through post-secondary education institutions must be addressed and coordinated with the K-12 system to lifelong learning and the workforce. Many of the Board's recommendations have implications for the K-12 system, particularly workplace-based training, and will require the involvement of the K-12 system. Similarly, the provincial training system must be linked and integrated with programs and services emerging from other government systems, such as initiatives through economic development and job creation efforts.

In addition to consistency and coordination within the provincial training system there must be coordination between systems. Underlying effective labour force development in Saskatchewan is a commitment to full-employment; in particular, developing opportunities which provide full-time jobs beyond minimum wage. Any changes to the provincial training system will be pointless without deliberate and coordinated efforts to make Saskatchewan a first choice for employers and employees.

The provincial training system (based on a solid foundation of basic skill development) must focus on two areas to increase the effectiveness of labour force development in Saskatchewan:

- workplace-based training, and
- a responsive system to retrain and update the current workforce.

To achieve these ends, in addition to the presence of public training institutions, there must also be active and significant roles for community-based organizations and private trainers. Underlying the work of these institutions and organizations are processes which guide and direct decisions regarding current and future training. The Board maintains that it is imperative that these processes include the active participation of communities, designated equity groups, youth and low-income recipients, and industry sectors.

Throughout Board discussions and Reference Group consultations, common themes emerged on the future of the provincial training system. These include:

- **transferability** and **portability** of learning and training,
- **equity** and **accessibility** for current and future labour force participants,
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition,
- partnerships,
- **diverse models** of development and delivery (including distance education and appropriate learning technologies),
- **integrating** human resource planning with sector councils and national standards,
- innovations which build on **established best practices**, and
- **accountability** to Saskatchewan people and employers.

To accomplish workplace-based training, **the Board recommends that:**

1. *1) the provincial training system incorporate workplace-based training into ALL training programs delivered through post-secondary education institutions, and*
2. **workplace-based training** be developed through sector councils based on Saskatchewan's human resource needs for existing and emerging industry sectors.

In order to make workplace-based training effective and to facilitate the retraining and updating of the current workforce, **the Board recommends that:**

the provincial training system, using a partnership approach between industry sectors and training providers, commit to developing appropriate models which integrate Prior Learning Assessments and Recognition into the provincial training system.

An on-going barrier affecting the potential to achieve continual retraining and updating of the current workforce is the literacy levels required for a high skilled, learning workforce. To support economic development efforts and the resulting employment opportunities, **the Board recommends that.**

there be deliberate and ongoing support to increase literacy levels of the current and future labour force.

Another barrier is the cost for many individuals and employers to invest in training. **The Board recommends that:**

the province commit to developing a framework and options which will support individuals and employers to invest in continuing training, and that the SLFDB undertake such a project.

The important and large role that community-based organizations currently have in provincial training must be recognized, and **the Board recommends that:**

the provincial training system develop ways to recognize community-based organizations as:

- **a source of expertise which meets the training and learning needs of their member constituencies,**
- **the most efficient system of delivery for some types of training, and**
- **providers of quality training which is directly accountable to their member constituencies.**

As these organizations are a critical part in the delivery of training to certain target audiences, **the Board recommends that.**

the provincial government provide funding for community-based organizations. This will enable them to continue to deliver relevant training and provide lifelong learning opportunities for members of designated equity groups, youth, and low-income recipients.

The Board also recognizes the important and large role that private trainers have in the provincial training system, but the Board also has concerns regarding access by designated equity group members, youth, and low-income recipients to the expertise that

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY continued

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the provincial government provide funding for community-based organizations. This will enable them to continue to deliver relevant training and provide lifelong learning opportunities for members of designated equity groups, youth, and low-income recipients.

The Board also recognizes the important and large role that private trainers have in the provincial training system, but the Board also has concerns regarding access by designated equity group members, youth, and low-income recipients to the expertise that private trainers provide. Therefore, **the Board recommends that.**

any private trainer receiving DIRECT public funds to offer training programs be required to include youth, low-income recipients, and designated equity group members in the training in the same proportion as in the community, and be required to monitor the employment / education outcomes for these individuals to ensure that their program is providing results-based training.

While the issue of assuring quality and protecting consumers has been traditionally linked to programs offered through private trainers, the Board maintains that the issue needs to be extended to all training providers. As a first step in ensuring quality, the Board maintains that a registry should be compiled on all training offered in the province. **The Board recommends that:**

further exploration of the feasibility and requirements for developing a training registry be determined, including a plan outlining implementation of a training registry, roles / responsibilities for creating and maintaining a registry, methods to validate information contained in the registry, and projected costs to establish and maintain a registry.

The Board maintains that processes of accountability must be built into the system if the system is to be responsive to the needs of communities and industry. *The Board recommends that:*

processes needed to strengthen and expand community and industry involvement include:

- Supporting and enhancing national and provincial industry sector councils so that on-going training needs assessments and development of sector skills standards can be maintained and integrated throughout the provincial training system,
- long-term commitment to planning processes, such as human resource planning, which lay the groundwork for a coherent provincial training system,
- putting community (including designated equity groups, youth, and low-income recipients) and industry sectors into decision-making processes in post-secondary education institutions,
- increasing public training institutions' accountability to communities and industry sectors they serve currently and those which need to be served, and
- creating accessible and current information systems (by utilizing current technologies) that are available to the labour market partners.

Accountability is not only achieved through needs assessments and program development, but also through program evaluation processes. To do so, **the Board recommends that:**

program evaluation:

- be mandated for all training receiving direct public funds,
- be conducted by qualified external evaluators, and
- [the results be made public and accessible through evaluation repositories.](#)

Ensuring participation by members of designated equity groups, youth, and low-income recipients requires that members of such target groups build ownership into programs through active participation in the processes (needs assessments, program development/delivery, and program evaluation) that ultimately determine the direction of the provincial training system.

The Board recommends that.

[opportunities be provided for members of designated equity groups.. youth, and low-income recipients to have meaningful input into and control of the existing provincial training system](#)

The Board supports and endorses the training standards as published by the [Canadian Labour Force Development Board](#) in 1995.

B. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The SLFDB is a representative body unique in its composition and the processes it uses to arrive at positions and directions. To guide SLFDB discussions and to develop positions regarding labour force development, including responding to the Minister's request, the following principles are used.

UNIQUENESS OF SASKATCHEWAN:

A number of factors combine to present a distinct challenge to effective labour force development in Saskatchewan. The proportion of the Labour force involved in primary industries and the changes those primary industries are undergoing, the relatively small population dispersed over a wide geographic area, the high proportion (87%) of Saskatchewan employers which employ Less than 20 employees, the Large proportion of the population either over the age of 60 or under 15, as well as the diverse population with a Large percentage Indian and Metis population are all factors which demand unique options to labour force development But, while options need to reflect Saskatchewan, they must also be integrated with standards and directions occurring at national and international Levels.

The dynamics of employment in Saskatchewan also serve to emphasize the importance of developing solutions which address the Saskatchewan situation. Data from 1993¹ indicates that less than half of the labour force (48%) are employed all year at one job. Other data on labour force activity indicates:

- 14% employed all year in more than one job.
- 15% employed part of the year and are either not in labour force for part of the year or are unemployed.
- persons who experienced job loss were more likely to be under 23 years of age, aboriginal, single parents, and with lower completed education levels
- across Canada, Saskatchewan has highest proportion of part-time workers (29%)².

BUSINESS AND LABOUR AS THE PRIMARY PARTNERS IN THE LABOUR MARKET:

To develop effective labour force development strategies, an approach based on cooperation and mutual respect between employers and employees must be maintained, recognizing that each are active and primary partners in the labour market and the workplace.

PARTNERSHIPS:

Partnership approaches are essential to developing solutions in the complex environment of labour force development. Inclusive partnerships represent current, as well as future labour force participants, and are based on reciprocity; where all partners contribute to the solution and

benefit from the results. Building partnerships requires time and commitment, and to be effective, must be continually nurtured and supported.

CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING:

Inherent to long-term commitment and success are decisions developed through consensus. Consensus built through partnerships naturally respects all contributions. Consensus also acknowledges contradictions, but strives to mediate to produce working solutions which can build commitment to implement.

RESULTS ORIENTED:

SLFDB advocates positions and systems which are known to produce results; where people not only get or create jobs, but also have the ability to maintain a job because of good training, re-training, and skills development processes. The Board's focus is on promoting processes that ensure effective planning, developing, monitoring and evaluation of training to ensure the focus is on results. Essential to achieving results is a focus on learner-oriented delivery and training which meets individual and industry needs. Systems to support results include transferability and portability of learning, accessibility

through diverse models of delivery, assessment of prior learning, ongoing and integrated human resource planning at numerous levels to identify training needs, along with adequate support for individuals and employers to make needed transitions.

EQUITY:

Different groups may need to be treated differently to achieve the same results. Recognizing this not only provides appropriate solutions, but new solutions to continuing problems are created, which serve as models of best practice.

INCLUSIVITY:

An on-going challenge for the Board is to continually review how the Board can reach out and include additional groups in the work of the Board.

In recognizing equity and inclusivity, the Board is also committed to processes that support long-term development of constituencies which provide the voices for equitable and inclusive participation in Labour force development strategies.

REPRESENTATION BASED ON CONSTITUENCY:

Individual members of the Board must be selected by organizations of recognized Labour market constituencies; such Labour market partner constituent groups must be broadly based, inclusive,

and present a provincial focus. Consequently representation reflects broader needs than those of the individual or any one group.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO CONSTITUENT GROUPS AND TO SASKATCHEWAN PEOPLE:

The SLFDB has a two-way responsibility, to not only represent and report back to their constituent groups on the activity and decisions of the Board, but to also effectively present the views of other constituent groups.

BALANCE:

The Board must maintain a broad view of labour force development in order to embrace the diverse labour market constituents, and the unique and rapidly changing needs of individuals and industry in Saskatchewan. The principles and processes described will, at times, require longer and more in-depth discussion in order to achieve consensus. However, effective, balanced, and long-term solutions to labour force development can be developed and sustained by building partnerships, by ensuring equity and inclusivity, and by focusing on results.

In providing the Minister with directions, the Board emphasizes that none of the elements of the provincial training system operate in isolation, and that the "big picture" must be viewed for implementation of substantive and meaningful change. Current and future training systems in Saskatchewan must respond to the needs of individuals and employers. The goal is to train the whole labour market, not selected segments which reflect only specific and limited economic development priorities. Adult literacy is as important as high technology and also contributes to the economic strength of Saskatchewan.

Common themes emerge from discussions on the future of the provincial training system. These include:

- **transferability** and **portability** of learning and training,
- **equity** and **accessibility** for current and future labour force participants,
- **Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition**,
- partnerships,
- **diverse models** of development and delivery,
- **integrating** human resource planning with sector councils and national standards,
- innovations which build on **established best practices**, and
- **accountability** to Saskatchewan people and employers.

Some of these will require extensive changes to current training that is developed and delivered through existing training structures - others provide Saskatchewan with the opportunity to take the lead and demonstrate practices to transform a provincial training system to meet the future needs of Saskatchewan's labour force.

To this end, the Saskatchewan labour Force Development Board proposes seven goals to guide the re-design of Saskatchewan's training system.

1 *Sask Trends Monitor*, November 1996.

2 Canadian Labour Congress, *Women's Work: A Report*, 1997.

C. GOALS

1. A COHERENT SYSTEM

The training and labour adjustment system must provide a coordinated array of employment programs that facilitate effective transitions. The system must be readily accessible to all potential clients and be supported by a comprehensive labour market information system. The aim is to create a learning culture supported by, and coordinated through, a combination of approaches.

2. EQUIPPING PEOPLE TO HELP THEMSELVES

Individuals in Saskatchewan must have access to appropriate career and employment counselling, as well as access to income and personal supports required for effective participation in employment and employment programs.

3. QUALITY PROGRAMMING

Saskatchewan must have access to high quality education and training, and an effective, universally accepted means of documenting knowledge, skills, and experience.

4. EQUITY

Individuals must receive fair treatment and equitable benefits, regardless of race, gender, class, ethnicity, employment status, or ability. Appropriate policies and support services must be established to allow for full and equitable participation in employment and employment programming by all Canadians.

5. FULL AND ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF THE LABOUR MARKET PARTNERS

Decisions for the delivery of training and labour adjustment programming should include the labour market partners in cooperation with governments at the local, provincial/territorial, and national levels.

6. INVESTING IN TRAINING AND LABOUR FORCE ADJUSTMENT

Helping individuals make the transition from unemployment to employment, from school to work, and in maintaining employment must be regarded as an investment in our future and is a shared responsibility.

7. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR RESULTS

Training and labour force adjustment programs have to be designed in an environment where what works and what doesn't have been taken into account. Developing innovative approaches should not take priority over supporting training known to produce results.

The Board has not provided the level or percentage of funds which should be allocated to specific approaches, since it is unclear how current resources are allocated. However, the Board would be willing to provide the department with direction on such funding levels.

D. DEFINITIONS

To clarify the variety of terms used in this brief, the following definitions are used:

Designated Equity Groups refers to women, racialized Canadians, persons with disabilities, and individuals from aboriginal backgrounds.

Training refers to the wide range of programs and services which support a coordinated labour force development strategy including:

- skill development at varying levels,
- career development activities,
- labour market information,
- community development activities that enhance Learning, and
- processes that identify, develop and evaluate Learning.

Training Provider refers to any individual, group, company, organization, institution, agency, or association that develops and/or delivers training and education programs within Saskatchewan.

Private Trainer refers to any individual, group, or company that develops and/or delivers training or education programs without an overseeing body representing their community or constituents and accountable for the operation. Private trainers differ from community-based organizations, not in the type or level of training offered, but by the structure of their operation. Community-based organizations, unlike private trainers, are accountable to a body representing their community or constituents.

Sectoral Approaches are defined by three components:

- groups of companies, managers, and workers sharing common products, services, and/or technologies which results in their having common human resource concerns,
- voluntarily commit to explore those concerns, and to identify and collaborate on possible solutions, and
- apply a strategic management framework to identify current and future human resource development requirements.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition is the process of identifying, assessing and recognizing what a person knows and can do; how or where individuals acquired their knowledge/skills is less important than the knowledge and skill itself. Integral to this process is the recognition and the incorporation of the knowledge and skills into existing training programs to ensure smooth and continuous learning.

E. RESPONSES TO MINISTER'S QUESTIONS

The provincial training system needs to address and incorporate two focus areas to increase the effectiveness of labour force development: workplace-based training and a responsive system to retrain and update the current workforce.

1. WORKPLACE-BASED TRAINING:

The traditional view of workplace-based training has been limited to individuals who are working at the same time as receiving training in their workplace. The Board maintains a more comprehensive view of workplace-based training must be adopted to include a wide range of structures and systems ranging from established forms of workplace-based training such as apprenticeship, cooperative education, and internships, to increasingly common approaches such as mentoring programs, job shadowing, or work experience programs. Common to all workplace-based learning is:

- structured learning in the workplace, and
- relevant off-the-job (e.g. classroom) learning opportunities.

Workplace-based training approaches are increasingly important to ensure timely, responsive, and relevant training required for continuing changes faced by the labour force. The role for workplace-based training in achieving this transformation is critical and should be expanded.

The Board recommends that:

1) the provincial training system incorporate workplace-based training into ALL training programs delivered through post-secondary education institutions, and

2) workplace-based training be developed through sector councils based on Saskatchewan's human resource needs for existing and emerging industry sectors.

Establishing workplace-based training as a primary feature of the provincial training system addresses many of the Board's concerns around issues of retraining and updating the current workforce, meeting the needs of designated equity groups, youth and low-income individuals, and strengthening and expanding industry and community involvement in training strategies. This approach acknowledges that most learning opportunities occur as an individual is working, ranging from the day-to-day experience of work itself to specific learning opportunities provided in the workplace, usually by the employer as part of ongoing staff development programs.

Incorporating workplace-based training into the provincial training system provides designated equity participants, youth, and low-income individuals with entry points into workplaces, allowing them to gain practical experience in the workplace (and in the case of new Canadians, experience which is relevant to the Canadian workplace), and continue their Learning, thus enhancing their current and, future employability. Workplace-based training is the mechanism to

ensure individuals are able to make a smooth transition from [earning environments to the workplace and, when required, back to a [earning environment for training and retraining/updating.

Having industry sectors, in conjunction with postsecondary education institutions, lead initiatives on workplace-based training ensures that training remains responsive and relevant by addressing three continuing issues in the competitive economy:

- technological change,
- quality standards, and
- human resource planning.

The benefit of sector-Led workplace-based training is that industry technology and processes, and sector skills standards are incorporated into the training. As well, balance is achieved between the current and future labour needs of the sector with the number of individuals receiving training. Sectorat approaches lead to cost effectiveness by:

- easing budgetary expense for capital equipment through shared approaches,
- sharing curriculum development and increasing articulation agreements within and between provinces,
- minimizing time workers spend re-learning by using Prior Learning Assessments and Recognition processes,
- ensuring training is linked to human resource planning so that training results in real, long-term employment after training,
- assisting post-secondary institutions in meeting industry requirements, and
- improving career awareness and planning, leading to better preparation for re-training.

The level and type of activity in each sector will vary depending on sector needs related to technological change, demographics, and market demands, and may address:

- developing and updating occupational skill standards,
- skill upgrading,
- improved labour market information,
- Prior Learning Assessments and Recognition processes,
- basic skills development,
- labour market entry,
- employment equity, and/or
- school-to-work initiatives.

While the types of workplace-based training are many, there are fundamental elements that need to be established for effective workplace-based training and which will provide a framework for assuring quality. These elements include training which:

- emerges through a partnership amongst industry sectors and training providers,
- incorporates Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, and
- is transferable, portable, and linked to national sector standards.

1a. Partnerships

Successful workplace-based training reflects a partnership framework between business and Labour, through sector councils and training providers, based on principles of reciprocity; all partners are jointly responsible for:

- identifying specific skill sets required,
- developing curriculum to reflect an appropriate mix of training providers,
- delivering training (including accommodating provisions of existing collective bargaining agreements),
- ensuring opportunities are provided when new collective agreements are negotiated, and
- evaluating results.

The transition from Learning to work is enhanced when industry sectors and training providers collaborate on developing the training. Each partner has much expertise to contribute to the process, and each can also learn from the other. More importantly, each partner becomes accountable for results when collaboration is the norm. By developing workplace-based training through sector councils, training is directly linked to the needs of industry sectors, thus enhancing long-term employability. The Board recognizes that there are barriers to implementing partnership initiatives and that incentives may be needed to encourage partnership development. Partnerships require time to develop; time for each partner to understand the perspectives and concerns brought to the partnership, and to recognize the strengths and competencies all partners bring to the table. However, as the benefits of reciprocal partnerships become evident, the need for incentives will diminish.

INNOVATION AND RESULTS

Prairie Implement Manufacturers Association and Carlton Trail Regional Economic Development Authority

To address a shortage of skilled labour, the growing farm implement manufacturers sector joined forces to train production line welders and operators. The curriculum was designed, tested, and certified by PIMA members to ensure that candidates were trained and certified in welding aspects specific to implement manufacturing. In delivery partnership with Carlton Trail Regional Economic Development Authority through the Youth Internship Canada Program, the program combines employability skills, production line welding training/certification, and 12 weeks' on-site experience with employers. The course has been accepted by the Apprenticeship Division and is awaiting formal ratification. Phase Two of this initiative will see the development of a two to four week curriculum for Production Line Operator.

RESPONSES TO MINISTER'S QUESTIONS - #2

1b. Prior Learning Assessments and Recognition

Prior Learning Assessments and Recognition is the critical factor in assisting individuals in **changing** careers and in **gaining** access to new careers and opportunities. Both individuals and industry require timely access to training opportunities; opportunities that build on and recognize existing knowledge and experience base, rather than duplicate previous learning.

Prior Learning Assessments and Recognition is too often viewed as a post-secondary education institution issue; how to incorporate prior learning into a

predetermined credit system whose end purpose is to grant degrees, diplomas, and/or certificates. Prior Learning Assessments and Recognition needs to be viewed as part of the larger issue of human resource planning, lifelong learning, and career development. In order to maintain a secure workforce, industry sectors need to be able to assess and incorporate **all** prior learning of their current and future workforce, including:

- learning derived from formal education,
- Internet and on-time training,
- informal training, short courses, and just-in-time training,
- previous work experience through paid and unpaid work,
- learning on the job,
- education and experience obtained outside of Canada,
- summer work experiences, and
- work experiences through the K-12 system.

By doing so, of human resource planning processes and sector training can be more cost-effective.

INNOVATION AND RESULTS

Canadian Steel Trade Employment Congress

The Canadian Steel Trade Employment Congress works in partnership with industry and 19 colleges in six provinces to develop a system of national accreditation which increases the leverage of industry training, improves the cost-efficiency, and broadens access for their current workforce. The partnership has resulted in a new approach to Prior Learning Assessments and Recognition that will serve the needs of workers who are not necessarily familiar with the college system. The program provides nationally transferable credits for not only previous formal education and training, but also for work and life experience.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition must also be integrated at various points in the system including:

- workplace-based training approaches to ensure quick entry,
- accommodating individuals whose credentials or education are from outside of Saskatchewan and Canada, and
- as a basis for effective career counselling to help individuals identify gaps in their skills . knowledge.

All training, whether workplace-based or institution-based, needs to be connected to larger training environments. A proven approach to ensuring transferability is workplace-based training organized using a sector approach.

INNOVATION AND RESULTS

Software Human Resource Council (SHRC)

The SHRC, in partnership with industry, government, colleges, universities and private trainers, has developed the Information Technology Program (ITP). The 12-month ITP prepares students as systems analysts, marketing representatives, consultants and entrepreneurs. Students receive a national certificate recognized throughout the industry, as the curriculum was collaboratively developed by IT professionals, academic experts, teachers, and Ministries of Education. The ITP utilizes business simulations, business applications, and workplace and career enhancement skills. Students work for a simulated business company where they conduct consulting assignments for real clients based upon the skills they have acquired in the formal part of their training.

Transferability and portability take many forms; it may be appropriate to evaluate and import required training from sources outside Saskatchewan rather than allocating resources to develop a Saskatchewan version; it may also be appropriate to create a Saskatchewan-based approach which can be transferable to other provinces and countries. The potential cost savings to individuals, educational institutions, and industry, educational institutions, and industry must outweigh any desire to develop and maintain original Saskatchewan training. However, critical element in ensuring transferability and portability is the leadership involvement of sector councils at both the provincial, national and international levels.

RESPONSES TO MINISTER'S QUESTIONS - #3

As an initial step in establishing transferability, processes must be established to identify and recognize existing industry sector standards for training. The expectation is that all training providers (public institutions, community-based trainers, and private trainers) move towards meeting specific, sector standards. Meeting sector standards may require different approaches in each sector; in some sectors it may require formal accreditation processes that focus identifying specific outcomes which can be achieved through various training sources.

INNOVATIONS AND RESULTS

Multi-Party Training Plan - Mineral Sector Steering Committee

The approach used by the Mineral Sector Steering Committee to address the shortage of qualified labour in northern Saskatchewan demonstrates many of the elements required for effective workplace-based training. The training plan emerges from a partnership including mining companies and local development corporations to support equity participation. Prior learning assessments are an integral part of an individual's training plan, with remedies designed specifically for the individual. Training is transferable through, not only existing mechanisms such as apprenticeable trades, but also sector training. Training options incorporate a variety of learning approaches. Career laddering opportunities are evident throughout the approach, beginning with sessions in high school, with involvement of parents and the community, to advanced training opportunities.

While the Board sees workplace-based training as an integral component of the provincial training strategy, there are concerns that workplace-based training, as currently delivered, will not fulfill its potential.

Identifiable concerns include:

- incorporating emerging sectors,
- accommodating training in such areas as administrative / clerical jobs which are not sector specific,
- coordinating sector councils to ensure transferability while avoiding duplication,
- identifying specific actions required to include designated equity groups, youth, and low-income recipients,
- developing models for small business that are affordable, efficient, and effective,
- integrating approaches to address fundamental issues of literacy in workplace-based training,
- coordinating training to ensure cross-sector skills are obtained,
- revisiting operating structures which, over time, become fixed and rigid, rather than remaining responsive and flexible,
- incorporating a lifelong learning perspective to ensure individuals have continuing career options, and
- enhancing and integrating processes, such as human resource planning, labour market information systems, community economic development strategies, career counselling, needs assessments, and evaluation strategies, to support workplace-based training.

The principles articulated in developing partnerships can successfully address many of these concerns. The key element is acknowledging that workplace-based training is a valuable resource with the flexibility to be relevant in a wide range of work/learning situations. To do so, the specific form for workplace-based training needs to be determined in conjunction with sector councils. For example, a responsive apprenticeship system has merit for some labour force needs and some sectors, but the provincial training system also needs to accommodate other types of workplace-based training which 'fits' for the specific industry sector. Furthermore, the proportion between workplace-based training and institution-based training must be determined on a sector-by-sector basis. There is no one approach to workplace-based training which will be appropriate for all sectors, but through sector-led partnerships, the type of workplace-based training required can be determined.

2. RETRAINING AND UPDATING THE CURRENT WORKFORCE

Retraining and updating the current workforce is critical to the long-term sustainability of Saskatchewan's economic growth. Unfortunately, access to retraining and updating opportunities is **conditional** upon:

- current employment status, including the specific employment sector, and
- the provincial training system's focus on institution-based training; a system which is inherently limited in its ability to respond to the continuing training needs of the current workforce.

Re-training and/or updating opportunities for the current workforce are unevenly distributed; specific segments of the workforce have continual access to re-training and updating, while in other segments, training is less accessible. Consequently large segments of the current workplace are left to address their retraining and updating needs on an ad hoc basis. An analysis of the 1994 Statistics Canada survey on participation in employer-supported³ adult education training indicates that:

- people in 'white collar' occupations are almost twice as likely to benefit as people in 'blue collar' occupations,
- full time workers are more than twice as likely to participate in training activities as are part-time workers,
- government workers are more likely than private-sector workers to participate,
- there are wide variations in participation by industry (a low of 5% in construction to a high of 43% in public administration),
- larger firms are more likely than smaller to offer training, and
- union members are almost twice as likely as non-union members to receive employer-supported training.

With the rapid change in knowledge and skills that individuals in the workforce are experiencing, the provincial training system needs to examine the capability of institution-based systems to respond to the retraining and updating needs of the current workforce. The 1994 Statistics Canada survey⁴ indicates that training supported by employers in Saskatchewan constitutes 85% of work-related training, with only 14% of this training happening through educational institutions. The learning paradigm can no longer be based on the usually slow, incremental acquisition of knowledge and mastery of skills, with post-secondary education institutions taking the role of expert and maintaining control over who has input into determining what knowledge and skills are required.

The new learning paradigm, which responds to the dramatic changes occurring in the workplace, demands modular, just-in-time, integrated, continual skill-focused learning. The individual and employer with place each learning segment into a framework that has multiple options (including multi-media), acknowledges prior Learning, and builds upon learning in a seamless manner. It is uncertain whether providing more resources to institutions, which function in the old [earning paradigm, will be sufficient to create relevant retraining and updated learning options. At issue is a fundamental shift in **how** post-secondary education institutions relate to the everyday world of employment, retraining and updating.

3 Morrison, Ian and Jell Rubenson, *Labour Market Training in Saskatchewan: An Analysis of Saskatchewan Data from the 1994 Statistics Canada Adult Education and Training Survey*, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science & Technology, 1996.

4 Ibid.

RESPONSES TO MINISTER'S QUESTIONS - #4

Providing **more** learning opportunities to a **wider** range of the current workforce will not alone address retraining needs. Remedies must be targeted and focused to tie training to employment and include:

- human resource planning and sector-led initiatives,
- coordinating career laddering opportunities, including increasing options for individuals requiring career changes,
- addressing fundamental issues around workplace literacy levels,
- specific initiatives to pilot and test strategies supporting older workers, and
- creating a system where investing in on-going training by both employers and individuals is linked to sustainable, long-term employment opportunities.

A stronger link between human resource planning activities of industry sectors with labour market information, and career counselling to build career ladders is required to enable the comprehensive development of retraining strategies which include:

- core competency training (which can be applied across sectors),
- industry sector general training, and
- industry sector specific training.

Human resource planning activities, originating from and lead by industry sectors, must be supported and coordinated across industry sectors, and integrated into the provincial training system (through such processes as needs assessment). Using a sector-lead approach, retraining/updating initiatives can be extended through both industry-sector and cross industry-sector initiatives. Common core competencies (such as communication, learning how to team, and improving literacy) are required across industry sectors. Other programs such as harassment and diversity training and quality awareness could be coordinated throughout the sector. The foundation for such training activities is human resource planning.

Career laddering opportunities need to be encouraged by increasing coordination throughout the system to provide individuals with information and options about career futures. Such initiatives can build on existing partnerships, and also develop new partnerships. Benefits include:

- integrating Prior Learning Assessments and Recognition across sectors,
- increasing transferability,
- facilitating employment across sectors, and
- sharing costs for joint development/delivery of training.

An increasing level of literacy will be required as the Saskatchewan Labour market moves towards value-added, higher-skilled industries and employment; sectors which require increasing Level of workplace Literacy. Thus Literacy becomes a fundamental issue in updating and retraining of the current workforce. The 1994 International Adult Literacy Survey' indicates that:

- approximately 40% of the adult population Literacy Levels in Canada's Western provinces were below the minimum threshold required to function in the workplace, and
- only one-third were at the minimum threshold required to function in the workplace.

Less than one-third of the current workforce have the fundamental literacy skills required to undertake updating and retraining required for high skilled employment. To support economic development efforts and the resulting employment opportunities, **the Board recommends that there be deliberate and ongoing support to increase Literacy Levels of the current and future Labour force.** Workplace literacy must become a Long-term goal, and provide varied and integrated opportunities throughout the provincial training system to increase literacy Levels, rather than streaming literacy into institution-based Adult Basic Education programs or isolated Literacy programs.

While the training needs of entry-level workers have deservedly received special attention, retraining approaches appropriate for older workers must receive a greater focus. There are few specific strategies which address the learning and retraining of workers who have significant experience in the workforce, but are gradually finding their skills and abilities are undervalued in workplaces which have a high priority on current skills; or who are not able to use their training and experience obtained outside of Saskatchewan/ Canada in a comparable career. Currently, individuals have to be obvious casualties of Labour force adjustments in order to access available training. The approach of dealing with the problem after it happens provides interventions which are too late, and are an ineffective use of limited resources. As Saskatchewan's workforce ages, the lack of attention to retraining older workers will have serious social and economic impact.

While the need for various interventions and approaches has been identified as a viable approach to retraining and updating the current workforce, the reality is that investing in training costs money life-Long Learning has significant financial impact not only for an employer or an industry sector, but also direct impact on the individual employee or future employee. However, approximately 40% of Saskatchewan adults who needed and/or wanted training for a job or career-related purpose indicated cost as a factor which prevented them from taking the training'. While it is recognized that investing in training maintains long-term employability, the immediate barrier to participating in training remains the cost of doing so. The use of tax incentives to support increased retraining and updating must be explored. A number of options and models exist to create a training culture which visibly encourages individuals and employers to commit money to training and life-Long learning. Options include:

- **refundable tax credit for businesses:** since 1991 Quebec has allowed a tax credit applied against the cost of a developing human resource development plans and the costs of formal training. The levels vary for plans and training and also for the size of the business.
- **payroll tax liability/offset:** in which a mandated level of training is established, usually as a percentage of payroll; if an employer reaches or surpasses the prescribed Level of training, they are not required to remit any of the payroll tax Liability. France and Australia have used versions of this option.
- **levy/grant system:** this system imposes a 'push' incentive upon employers to spend on training rather than the 'pull' incentive of a tax credit system; revenues for skills training are raised through levying and collecting a tax on employers and then providing grants back to employers who engage in **approved forms of training**.
- **accommodation for paid Leave for training:** rebating or providing credits to offset the costs of releasing employees to participate in training (day release, block release or extended leave).
- **wage subsidies and direct government assistance:** encourages employers to supply training by reducing the wage bill, or directs training assistance from government toward human resource planning and training costs.
- **individual based mechanisms:** supports training and [earning undertaken by the individual, and provides options beyond a tax credit derived from courses offered through post-secondary education institutions, or deductions from self-employed income. Such mechanisms could include individual training accounts or registered training savings plans.
- **use of the EI system** as a source of retraining funds, either as a reward/rebate system to encourage employers to update/retrain their current employees, or direct access by individuals based on their contribution levels (such as access to funds based on a percentage of their contributions).

5 organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and Statistics Canada, *Literacy, Economy and Society.. Results of the First International Adult Literacy Survey*, 1995.

6 Morrison, Ian and Kjell Rubenson, *Labour Market Training in Saskatchewan: An Analysis of Saskatchewan Data from the 1994 Statistics Canada Adult Education and Training Survey*, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science & Technology, 1996.

RESPONSES TO MINISTER'S QUESTIONS - #5

INNOVATION AND RESULTS

National Coalition for Advanced Manufacturing (NACFAM)

Incorporated in 1989 to enhance the deployment of information-age technologies into the United States' industrial manufacturing base, this sectoral approach provides public-private partnerships to leverage resources in the development of next generation manufacturing processes, and extension network to provide technical assistance services to small and medium sized businesses (portable computer labs, export, marketing and production technical expertise), and technical workforce skill development (school-to-work programs and occupational skill standards). One key aspect of the coalition is the **use of various tax provisions** which encourages training and accelerated depreciation.

Any option chosen must ensure that:

- bias or inequity is avoided which provides advantages to a specific employer (such as training tax credits based on the needs of a single employer). An industry-sector approach would minimize such inherent bias;
- concerns of both business and labour are recognized;
- any system is not a cost-burden to maintain, particularly for small business;
- employers which continually provide their time and expertise for workplace-based training opportunities for individuals;
- training from all sources, not only training received through post-secondary educational institutions, is eligible for tax credits; and
- there is joint responsibility for individuals **and** employers to invest/contribute to training.

Reaching consensus on the framework for investing in training requires additional study. The Board recommends that such a project be explored further; furthermore that the SLFDB undertake such a project. Using the Board's operating structure comprised of business, labour and reference groups, developing the framework may be more readily accomplished the accepted through the Board.

Workplace-based training and an increased focus on retraining/updating the current workforce must be key elements in a provincial training system. To make this so, the provincial training system must incorporate more routes for access into training; routes which may already exist in the current training environment, such as community-based organizations and/or private trainers in Saskatchewan, but are limited in their application.

3. COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Community-based organizations have long been involved in training and re-training in Saskatchewan. Community-based organizations range from advocacy organizations developing and delivering learning for members of designated equity groups, youth and low-income recipients, to professional associations providing continuing education to their member constituencies. Community-based organizations have well-established, cost efficient training programs ranging from entry-level, job-readiness and/or literacy skills, to advanced, discipline-specific continuing education. Some organizations may be mandated to maintain the professional status of their member constituents. The operating and funding structures of community-based organizations vary widely; some rely completely on various public funding sources for support of their training activities, while others support their training activities using a combination of public funds and member generated funds, and still others rely entirely on members providing the funding for the organization to deliver professional continuing education activities. All have governing structures which are directly accountable to their member constituencies.

Public training institutions and agencies cannot always reach the same target audiences as community-based organizations, nor is it feasible for them to do so. Many public training institutions, in attempting to meet the learning needs of individuals who are better served through community-based organizations, have often overextended their expertise and resources, which ultimately results in diverting resources away from where public training institutions can make significant contributions to the provincial training system.

Unfortunately, the role of community-based organizations is largely unrecognized in the provincial training system, whose focus is on institution-based training. **As a first step, the Board recommends that the provincial training system develop ways to recognize community-based organizations as:**

- **a source of expertise which meets the training and learning needs of their members constituencies,**
- **the most efficient system of delivery for some types of training, and**
- **providers of quality training which is directly accountable to their member constituencies.**

The quantity and quality of the program offered through community-based organizations can be recognized and integrated into the provincial training system through such mechanisms as workplace-based training, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, and transferability of learning.

Many community-based organizations (for example, Circle Project, Open Door Society, Saskatchewan Association for Community Living, Rainbow Youth Centre, Regina Food Bank, Jim Brady Development Corporation, or Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan), are the link to members of designated equity groups, youth, and low-income recipients, providing these individuals with relevant entry-Level training, job preparation, and/or work experience in a learning environment **responsive to individual needs**. Because of their direct links to their constituencies, community-based organizations are held accountable for programs and services that meet the needs of those constituencies. Many of these organizations rely on public funds, usually project based, to develop and deliver appropriate training for their target communities. While funding for these types of organizations continues to decline, they have responded by frequently being at the forefront in developing partnerships or using increasingly limited resources effectively in meeting the needs of their target communities. For example, the emphasis of community-based organizations is on the **delivery** of programs and services using facilities available in the community rather than acquiring physical facilities. While there may be some duplication in the training offered by community-based organizations, the key feature of such training - that of addressing learning needs of specific groups throughout the province - usually warrant any duplication.

RESPONSES TO MINISTER'S QUESTIONS - #6

INNOVATIONS AND RESULTS

The Story of N.

N is a disabled woman who was enrolled in a post-secondary education institution to complete her Adult 12 as preparation for taking further technical training. Due to her continuing health problems, she was unable to meet the attendance requirements of the Adult 12 course, and had to withdraw. She was able to take a GED preparation course through the Circle Project, and using an individualized approach she completed the course in one and a half months and passed the GED. While she is proud of receiving her GED, she is also frustrated that her future options are limited because the GED will not be sufficient to help her get into further technical training. She suggests that if the Circle Project could have offered an Adult 12 course, it would deliver the training to accommodate her needs.

These types of organizations face an uncertain future with the projected withdrawal of federal funds. While federal funds, with varying provincial contributions, have supported community-based organizations to deliver training, it is usually on a project-by-project basis. This results in the delivery of programs and services that are unpredictable for the learner, with energy and time spent on project start-up activities, rather than addressing the training need. As these organizations are a critical part in the delivery of training to certain target audiences, **the Board recommends that the provincial government provide funding for community-based organizations. This will enable them to continue to deliver relevant training and provide lifelong yearning opportunities for members of designated equity groups, youth, and Low-income recipients.** This recommendation is based on the existing reality that there is already an efficient system (community-based organizations) which currently delivers quality training to specific target audiences. While post-secondary institutions could be reorganized and re-configured to respond to such target audiences, the costs of doing so are not warranted when such a system already exists. However, the consequence of not providing adequate funding levels for community-based organizations is that large segments of the Saskatchewan labour force will not be adequately prepared for the labour market. Community based organizations are willing and able to address labour market training needs, but downloading programs without the commitment of adequate funding will not enable community-based organizations to continue to address training for designated equity groups, youth, and low-income recipients.

INNOVATIONS AND RESULTS

Saskatchewan Sectoral Council for Culture (SSCC)

As an initiative of provincial cultural organizations, SSCC involves forty community-based organizations from the cultural sector to support development of collaborative training and professional development within the cultural sector, and to promote partnerships with other sectors that will support development of training for cultural workers. Currently organizations are sharing information at the development stage of training to identify potential partnerships for future training programs. This initiative addresses the need to optimize the use of limited training resources.

There is also a segment of community-based organizations which are professional or para-professional organizations which are professional or para-professional organizations (such as Saskatchewan Library Association, Museums Association of Saskatchewan, Legal Education Association of Saskatchewan or Saskatchewan Land Surveyors Association), and provide continual re-training and updating for their member constituents in a cost efficient manner, reflecting the current and future training directions of the discipline. Some of these professional or para-professional organizations have been able to integrate their continuing education/training activities into the provincial training system, but many have been overlooked in their contribution to the provincial training system.

INNOVATIONS AND RESULTS

Flowers Canada Accreditation Program

Flowers Canada represents all segments of the floriculture industry. Through its accreditation program, Flowers Canada provides testing and comprehensive workshops to address an industry need to add value to their product and to provide small businesses (typically of the retail flower stores) with management and skills-specific training. The floral industry has traditionally drawn on a labour pool of single parents, high school leavers, and women re-entering the workforce. These individuals have the opportunity to achieve certification at a relatively low cost, without losing current income, this enabling them to command higher wages and career advancement. Cost efficiency is built into the program as it is operated by members of the industry who volunteer their time to develop, deliver, and coordinate the course offerings. Saskatchewan has the highest percentage participation of members shops in any region of Flowers Canada.

The provincial government must explore ways to facilitate and integrate training which individuals receive through community-based organizations into the provincial training system, while recognizing that integration does not mean absorbing training provided through community-based organizations into post-secondary institutions. The benefits of training through community-based organizations (flexibility, responsiveness to community needs and efficiency) may be list if the objective is to establish one system.

RESPONSES TO MINISTER'S QUESTIONS - #7

The relationship of community-based organizations to public institutions and agencies is that of potential partners and sources of expertise. There are many options to do so. Using a partnership approach based on reciprocity, opportunities exist for public institutions to work with community-based organizations to identify relative areas of expertise, and processes to integrate training provided through community-based organizations and institution-based training. The range of expertise available through community-based organizations includes such areas as discipline specific training, career information, linkages to extended networks which translate into job shadowing/mentoring and work placement opportunities, long-term support for school to work transitions, and career/life counseling.

However, partnerships based on reciprocity must be central to any integration of community-based organizations with the provincial training system. For example, many community-based organizations are sites for field placement/practicum requirements for students enrolled in training at post-secondary institutions. The time and commitment required by community-based organizations to provide successful learning experiences in the workplace for these students is significant, but frequently community-based organizations have limited input into the development of the course content, and find that the student is not current with the developments in the field. Consequently, additional time is required by the community-based organization to bring the student "up to speed" so that they can learn from the field placement.

Partnerships could emerge in the area of career development prior to training; a key to successful results in training. Initial career development currently occurs through community-based organizations by assisting people to negotiate their options, set their direction, and identify goals to meet them. These services need to be:

- accessible to meet the diverse needs of people with literacy needs, those unfamiliar with computers, and persons with employment barriers such as disabilities, displaced older workers, youth without high school completion, aboriginal people, displaced entrepreneurs, and immigrants;
- geared to prevention and adaptability;
- aimed at balanced lives and work that is meaningful to the individual;
- widely available and accessible (range of services); in particular access to career and employment services needs to be improved for youth who have left secondary school, college or university (with or without a diploma or degree) and are not employed;
- coherent and connected (so one step leads to another); and
- accountable to consumers by involving them in the decision making needs assessment and evaluation.

With the federal government's diminishing role in direct service delivery and HRDC's plan to contract out more services, a focus on coordinating the services available and identifying where services are not provided is required. The goal is to ensure career development approaches are linked to industry sector's human resource plans, and serve to forge the relationship between the individual's needs and existing community structures.

A continuing area of concern for **all** training in Saskatchewan is ensuring the quality of training programs and services, and the results are the focus of the training. The Board maintains that **all** training providers in Saskatchewan conduct continual evaluation of the quality and results of the training provided; many community-based organizations already have effective evaluation processes established in order to meet funding requirements and to be accountable to their member constituencies. However, within the context of the training environment, such as that in which community-based organizations operate, relevant evaluation standards must be developed, recognized, and applied to assess the value of training offered through community-based organizations. For example, the impact which a community-based literacy program has on a participant's willingness to continue any type of upgrading must be valued in the context of that literacy program in the provincial training system continuum. Program evaluation approaches are becoming more responsive to issues of comparing quality and effectiveness across a broad spectrum of organizations with different mandates and resources. The provincial training system must incorporate evaluation strategies which are relevant to the learning needs of the constituencies, rather than applying fixed, arbitrary performance standards.

The potential for community-based organizations to be active and recognize contributors to the provincial training system is great. The provincial training system overall can be enhanced by supporting and integrating training offered through community-based organizations with that offered through post-secondary education institutions. At the same time, post-secondary education institutions can benefit through the active involvement of community-based organizations. The ultimate beneficiary is the individual learner.

4. PRIVATE TRAINERS

As with community-based organizations, private trainers are an important component in the training system. Training provided through private trainers includes courses, programs, and development services offered:

- through employers as part of in-house training and re-training initiatives, or
- directly to the public either on contract to government agencies/public training institutions or as a fee-for-service to individuals.

Private trainers offer programs based on expertise which is generally not available through public training institutions and employers, or would be costly for public training institutions or employers to maintain on a full-time basis. Even in situations where private trainers are offering similar training to that offered through public training institutions, having an alternative program provides choice to the consumer, whether that consumer is an individual, a public education institution, or an employer. In this respect, private trainers bring to the training system needed, timely, flexible, and usually, quality training. Private trainers are providing quality training which is comparable to that provided through public institutions, and in some cases, may be providing better training because their expertise can be focused on a narrow range of training.

A priority for integrating training offered through private trainers into the provincial training system is to ensure that the interests of learners (consumers) are safeguarded. A key issue around the role of private trainers in the provincial training system is ensuring designated equity groups, youth, and low income recipients have access to training offered through private trainers. **The Board recommends that any private trainer receiving DIRECT public funds to offer training programs be required to include youth, Low-income recipients, and designated equity group members in the training in the same proportion as in the community; and be required to monitor the employment/education outcomes for these individuals to ensure that their program is providing results-based training.**

Processes to ensure interests are safeguarded are required in two areas:

- quality of training, and
- transferability of training.

This a two-way responsibility. Private trainers, as with **all** training providers, should be able to identify outcomes, how training is delivered, how training relates to the needs of target audiences and Labour markets, and costs associated with the training. At the same time, consumers (Learners) must evaluate their Learning needs and identify training available which will help them meet those Learning needs in a cost efficient manner. For consumers of training, these are essential skills required to function fully in a Life-Long [earning environment, and need to be supported through adjunct processes such as career counseling and usable labour market information.

Ensuring quality of training should be the primary concern of the provincial government; however, this concern should extend not only to private trainers, but also to training provided through community-based organizations and public training institutions. In developing processes which ensure quality, the department must balance protection of the consumer with maintaining flexibility in the training marketplace while using a minimum of processes which add costs to the training.

RESPONSES TO MINISTER'S QUESTIONS - #8

As a **first** step in ensuring quality, and in providing consumers with information on their training options, a registry, on an accessible database, should be compiled on **all** training offered in the province. The registry would provide consumers with information on the range of courses provided, and indicate, at a minimum, such information as:

- learning outcomes (including transferability options and completion rates),
- participation/completion rates, and employment outcomes with specific reference to results for participants from designated equity groups, youth, and low-income recipients (for training providers receiving direct public funds to offer the training),
- how learning is evaluated,
- methods used to deliver training,
- instructor qualifications/experience,
- learner/instructor ratio,
- **processes** to incorporate Prior Learning **Assessments** and Recognition,
- resources available to [earners,
- how training relates to the needs of target audiences and labour markets,
- recognition of training by employers/industry sectors,
- opportunities for consumers to comment on the quality of the training, and
- costs of training in standard terms (such as cost/training hour) and funds available to offset costs.

A registry containing such information alone does not ensure quality, but provides consumers with an indicator that the training provided, whether through public institutions, community-based organizations, or from a private trainer, is organized in a systematic, purposeful manner with an emphasis on results rather than activity. The registry is not an attempt to certify or approve trainers, but to provide consumers with information required to make decisions. Critical to effective use of such a registry is concurrent resources available for individuals in the areas of career counseling (including sector council human resource planning strategies), and labour market information in a format usable to individuals. In addition, such a registry would be an effective and appropriate use of current technology.

The benefits to such a registry extend beyond providing consumers with information on their training options and ensuring a minimum level of quality, but it could also serve:

- to identify gaps and unwarranted duplication within the provincial training system,
- to identify areas for potential partnership and cooperation between training providers,
- as a resource for career counseling processes,
- to begin processes related to transferability and portability by providing baseline data, and
- as an inventory of what is available for individuals and employers seeking training resources. As outsourcing of the staff training and development function increases, many employers are currently compiling such information - a central approach will likely be more efficient and comprehensive.

A model, currently under discussion in New Brunswick and proposed by the New Brunswick Labour Force Development Board⁷, identifies consensus on the following areas of responsibility in the quality assurance process:

Consumer:

- making informed choices on labour training and financing, and
- requires access to information and the ability to utilize such information in making **personal choices**.

Government:

- consumer protection through gathering labour market and training information and making it accessible to the public, by requiring registration of training providers who offer training to the general public and who utilize public funds, and
- by encouraging program accreditation so as to protect the investment of public funds in quality training programs.

Industry:

- setting standards for occupational competency which can be used in an accreditation process to evaluate a program.

Training Provider:

- responsible for offering programs of quality.

Program accreditation and certification were identified and recognized as part of ensuring quality;

however, consensus from New Brunswick could not be reached beyond training providers voluntarily seeking accreditation through existing external bodies and the government encouraging use of external accreditation bodies. Both of these issues need to be placed in the context of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, and how to incorporate training from all providers into Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition.

The Board recommends that further exploration of the feasibility and requirements for developing a training registry be determined, including a plan outlining implementation of a training registry, role, responsibilities for creating and maintaining a registry, methods to validate information contained in the registry, and projected costs to establish and maintain a registry.

The **second** area of focus which needs to concern the department is how to facilitate transferability and integrate training offered outside of non-public institutions into the provincial training system. This is an extraordinarily complex issue which requires good faith and respect on the part of all training providers in the province. There is no single approach to integrating training offered through various training providers in order to achieve a well-trained and educated workforce that can function and respond to global demands. However there are many barriers which prevent any movement in this area. One such barrier is traditional funding structures, such as those of postsecondary education which is based on numbers of students and which, unintentionally, encourages institutions to have students take their course, rather than recognizing courses from other institutions or trainers. **The Board restates that a major initiative be undertaken to develop mechanisms for Prior Learning Assessments and Recognition which integrate Learning from multiple sources including public training institutions, community-based organizations, and private trainers.** Such an initiative must include active involvement in the decision making process by a broad spectrum of organizations affected by the results. This cannot be an initiative directed solely by public training institutions.

RESPONSES TO MINISTER'S QUESTIONS - #9

5. STRENGTHENING AND EXPANDING INDUSTRY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT.

Saskatchewan has an advantage over many other provinces in strengthening and expanding industry and community involvement. With a relatively small population, a tradition of cooperative and community involvement, and distinct, strong industry sectors, Saskatchewan can be a model for how to increase both industry and community involvement in the provincial training system. As a fundamental element, Saskatchewan must weave community economic development principles and practices throughout approaches used in its provincial training system. In doing so, balance must be maintained:

- between economic/business development activities and community development activities, and
- between meeting specific local needs with the need for training that responds to provincial requirements.

While training has direct impact on the ability of industry to grow and compete, it also affects the growth and sustainability of communities, and must do so in ways that communities can support.

In general, the Board favours developing effective **processes** rather than focusing on developing structures which over time tend to become fixed and rigid. If focus on effective processes is maintained, then structures required to support processes will grow as required. ***The Board recommends that processes needed to strengthen and expand community and industry involvement include:***

- ***supporting and enhancing national and provincial industry sector councils so that on-going training needs assessments and development of sector skills standards can be maintained and integrated throughout the provincial training system,***
- ***long-term commitment to planning processes, such as human resource planning, which lay the groundwork for a coherent provincial training system,***
- ***putting community (including designated equity groups, youth, and low-income recipients) and industry sectors into decision-making processes in post-secondary education institutions,***
- ***increasing public training institutions' account. ability to communities and industry sectors they serve currently and those which need to be served, and***
- ***creating accessible and current information systems (by utilizing current technologies) that are available to the labour market partners.***

Such involvement could begin with how labour force development needs are identified by post-secondary education institutions. Industry sectors and communities, in conjunction with educational institutions, must **lead** the process of identifying local, regional, and provincial training needs. The reality is that educational institutions tend to identify the needs they can serve through existing programs/services or easy to acquire/develop training programs; this happens in large part because of funding structures which inherently limit long-range planning and development. Post-secondary institutions can benefit from a community/ industry-driven needs assessment process, since it generates commitment by community and/or industry to cooperate in securing the resources required to fill the identified needs, and to effectively use and integrate existing resources.

An accurate needs assessment process is essential to creating a responsive training system, and while it could be coordinated through educational institutions, the responsibility and control for training needs assessments must be at the level where the results have the greatest impact; which are the communities and industry sectors directly affected by training available (or training which is not available). There are functioning, established groups (such as sector councils and/or communitybased organizations) which can act in these roles.

Training that will be developed through sector councils and community-based organizations, whether it is just-in-time training, on line or computer assisted learning, internship experience or short courses from national or international industry sector councils, must find recognition in our SASKATCHEWAN TRAINING STRATEGY.

Communities and industry sectors must also be directly involved in a meaningful way in other processes related to the development and delivery of training programs. One area, which currently exists, are such structures as program advisory committees in post-secondary education institutions. However, these processes should not be "advisory", but be the decision making bodies regarding the direction and delivery of training programs. There is too much consultation without action, and decisions being made by educational institutions which are not directly affected by the outcomes, or accountable to the communities and industries they serve. Participation on such committees, boards, or Learning authorities must be determined through community and industry consultation, not through education or political systems. Furthermore, individuals selected should bring to the process perspectives that are inclusive and present a provincial focus which reflects broader needs than those of the individual, their region, or any one group.

INNOVATIONS AND RESULTS

Film Sector Partnership Planning

Faced with an expanding industry and a shortage of trained personnel, the film sector in Saskatchewan initiated a cooperative action. The Professional Development Coordinating Committee, composed of film industry organizations, broadcasters, community-based artists' organizations, film unions, educational institutions, arts agencies, and government, collectively developed a five year plan for training and professional development. One component of the plan was a needs study resulting in a dynamic process of cooperation in training, utilizing resources from all aspects of film based on planning, strategic implementation, and on-going needs assessment. New cooperative relationships for training have been developed within the sector, including partnerships with educational institutions. This cooperative approach allows the sector to continue to develop training in pace with the needs of an expanding industry.

Accountability is not only achieved through needs assessments and program development, but also through program evaluation processes. **The Board recommends that program evaluation:**

- **be mandated for all training receiving direct public funds,**
- **be conducted by qualified external evaluators, and**
- **the results be made public and accessible through evaluation repositories.**

Evaluation repositories not only make the process and outcomes transparent, but more importantly, contribute to knowing what worked, what didn't, and why, and how the training contributed to meeting the goals for a diverse workforce - critical information in developing future programs, as well as in deciding the need for innovative programs. Numerous databases already exist for this purpose - what is required is a policy and commitment to make it happen. As mentioned previously, program evaluation processes must also be relevant to the target audiences the program serves. Diverse approaches to evaluation are available, and provide reliable information for future decision making; however, such approaches are often not used because the program focus is on achieving short-term results.

RESPONSES TO MINISTER'S QUESTIONS - #10

Community economic development must be integrated with labour force development; these are not isolated directions. The mechanism to do so is contained in the principle of shifting responsibility for decision making towards the Local Level. This shift is beginning to happen in economic development directions through such agencies as Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs). However, the REDA model may be too Limited; the needs of industry sectors and communities must be adequately voiced. Regardless, the concept of responsibility at a Local level with coordination at a provincial level is essential. The Board's concern is to avoid creating structures and bureaucracies that parallel existing and functioning systems. If structures and systems are to be created, then the focus must be on strengthening sector-led initiatives, and incorporating community organizations into such initiatives.

6. APPROACHES TO ENSURE PARTICIPATION BY DESIGNATED EQUITY GROUPS, YOUTH AND LOW-INCOME RECIPIENTS.

There are a number of approaches previously identified in this brief which would ensure participation by designated equity groups, youth, and low-income recipients in labour force development and the provincial training system. These include:

- providing support to community-based organizations which provide training opportunities to these target groups,
- incorporating workplace-based training approaches into all training programs to provide relevant and current work experience,
- implementing Prior learning Assessments and Recognition,
- ensuring transferability and portability of training to support a seamless process,
- ensuring public funds are directed to programs that maintain equity participation as well as produce results, and
- shifting responsibility for decision making to individuals and groups who are directly affected by those decisions.

Central to ensuring participation by these groups is providing **meaningful input and control** into the processes (needs assessments, program development/ delivery, and program evaluation) that ultimately determine the direction of the provincial training system. Such input requires a fundamental shift in how training is developed and organized to ensure relevant training opportunities are provided by building ownership into the programs by the groups that are directly affected by such programs. **The Board recommends that opportunities be provided for members of designated equity groups, youth, and Low-income recipients to have meaningful input into and control of the existing provincial training system.**

Participation in labour force development for designated equity groups, youth, and low-income recipients is not an isolated issue. It is an issue which needs specific, targeted strategies that provide remedies for members of these groups; remedies based on:

- training for real jobs which are linked to long-term careers and supported through human resource planning initiatives of industry sector councils,
- long-term interventions tailored to varying and specific needs (including funding relatively inexpensive programs such as support groups for individuals who have been isolated from the labour force and need on-going support to make smooth transitions), and
- training approaches which are known to work (rather than spending limited funds on creating unnecessary innovations). For example, research shows that:
 - Bridging Programs work for many designated equity groups,
 - supported employment programs work for individuals with disabilities', and
 - the importance of accurate employment and learning assessments combined with career plans and long term interventions are critical for individuals with multiple employment barriers.

These programs are routine, but tend to be given lower priority than producing new, innovative programs that attempt to solve the same problems.

The Board's perspective is that the various resources (through community-based organizations and industry sector councils) to provide services already exist. Principles of partnership are required to maximize the resources that exist. A fundamental shift in how existing public training institutions perceive and respond to working with community and industry resources is needed. Partnership or coordination does not mean amalgamating existing institutions that are largely unresponsive to the needs of these groups, and then absorbing community resources into those systems. This approach only produces a larger system which may remain unresponsive. The fundamental issues which limit members of designated equity groups, youth, and low-income recipients from participating in the provincial training system must be addressed.

Participation by designated equity groups, youth and low-income recipients in labour force development requires approaches which:

- involve members of these groups in all facets of the programs (including development and evaluation), and
- are linked to effective human resource and labour market planning through sectoral councils.

At the same time, these are approaches that are than spending limited funds on creating unnecessary effective in designing an overall approach to labour innovations). For example, research shows that: force development.

8 Wehman, P. & Kregel J. (1992). Supported Employment: Growth and Impact. In P. Wehman, P. Sate, and W. Parent (Eds.) Boston, MA: Andover Medical Publishers *Supported Employment.. Strategies for integration of workers with disabilities*.

Rivers, D. (1995). An Evaluation of the Saskatchewan Abilities Council's Supported Employment Services. Saskatchewan Abilities Council.

F. CONCLUSIONS

Since its inception the Saskatchewan labour Force Development Board has advocated for the development of a comprehensive adult education infrastructure in the province⁹. Consequently, the Board supports the government's current initiative to redevelop the provincial training system, and efforts to incorporate diverse models for delivery, including parallel systems of training.

As indicated in the Board's response to the Minister's questions, the provincial training system must incorporate workplace-based training lead through industry sector councils and they must incorporate training and work in conjunction with existing training structures - including post-secondary education institutions, community-based organizations, and private trainers. The Board does not have a preferred approach to workplace-based training, but maintains that any workplace-based training must be developed through partnership approaches, incorporate Prior Learning Assessments and Recognition, and ensure transferability and portability of the training.

In order to ensure effective training and re-training of the current workforce, two elements must be focused on: 1) ensuring the current workforce has the literacy levels required for participation in the labour market; and 2) addressing access to training opportunities. While these elements are diverse, they address the fundamental barriers the current workforce have to participating in training opportunities.

Parallel to the public training system, there are individuals, groups, and organizations which contribute to labour force development, but are largely unrecognized. The Saskatchewan Training Strategy must incorporate community-based organizations, sector councils, and private trainers into the provincial training system; not as a replacement to public training institutions, but as partners in addressing the varied and diverse needs of the labour force.

Effective decision making processes are required to ensure participation in the provincial training system by communities, industry, designated equity groups, youth, and low-income recipients. Decision making processes that include substantive participation by these groups must begin at the early stages in developing training (through needs assessments) and continue through to evaluating the results. In many instances the processes exist, but communities, industry, designated equity groups, youth and low-income recipients are involved at arm's-length, rather than being responsible for the directions and outcomes.

Momentum has reached a stage with many of the organizations involved in [labour force development in Saskatchewan to accept the changes required for effective training of Saskatchewan's labour force. Maintaining the momentum and coordinating efforts to bring the diverse elements together is now essential to transforming the provincial training system into a responsive approach to current and future labour force development. The Saskatchewan Labour Force Development Board is committed to working with the government to ensure momentum and coordination is maintained.

⁹ SLFDB, Challenges in a Changing Workforce - Suggestions for Change: Community Forum Analysis and 1995-96 Strategic Plan, 1995.

Canadian Labour Force Development Board (CLFDB) Training Standards

September 1995

Issues at a glance:

- What does the training program say it is going to do?
- What is the benefit of the training to the labour force and the community?
- Does it respond to needs identified by business and labour?

- Is the program focused on student learning?
- How will the individual learner be able to demonstrate achievement?
- Will the individual want to continue to participate in training programs?

- Will members of the equity groups have full access to the program?
- Are support mechanisms in place to accommodate special needs and to promote special abilities?

- Is program information available to help make informed decisions?
- Is it accessible and user-friendly?

- What is the process for entrance to the program?
- Is initial and ongoing counselling a part of the process?
- Is formal assessment of skills and prior knowledge a part of the process?
- Will the individual get credit for prior learning?

- Are the financial and human resources of sufficient quantity and quality to achieve the intended learning outcomes?
- Are the schedules and facilities appropriate?
- Are the teaching materials and practices appropriate?
- What are the links to the workplace and the community?

- What form of recognition will the learner receive upon completion?
- Is it transferable to another learning situation?
- Is it portable between institutions and provinces/territories?

- Does the program have the capacity to be accountable?
- Is there evidence that it does what it says it is going to do?