Moving Low-Income People in Winnipeg's Inner City Into Good Jobs

Evidence on What Works Best

By Garry Loewen, Jim Silver, Martine August, Patrick Bruning, Michael MacKenzie and Shauna Meyerson

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About the Authors

Garry Loewen is a CED Consultant, and the Project Manager for the Manitoba Research Alliance on CED in the New Economy.

Jim Silver is a Professor of Politics at the University of Winnipeg, and a member of the Board of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

Martine August is a graduate student at the University of Toronto. At the time of this research she was a student in the department of politics at the University of Winnipeg.

Patrick Bruning is a researcher with Manitoba Telecom Services. At the time of this research he was a student in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Manitoba.

Michael McKenzie is a graduate student at McGill University. At the time of this research he was a student in the department of politics at the University of Winnipeg.

Shauna Meyerson is a graduate student at the University of Calgary. At the time of this research she was a student in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Manitoba.

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR POLICY ALTERNATIVES – MB

309-323 Portage Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 2C1

PHONE (204) 927-3200 FAX (204) 927-3201

EMAIL ccpamb@policyalternatives.ca

www.policyalternatives.ca/mb

Contents

5 **Executive Summary**

8 **Introduction**

10 Part I **Skill Shortages and Demographics**

14 Part II **Best Practices for Employment Devolopment Interventions**

31 Part III **Evaluation of Winnipeg's Local Employment Development Context Against the Best Practices Model**

38 Part IV **Jobs For Low-Income People: Some Innovative Initiatives in Advanced Manufacturing and IT Beyond Winnipeg**

42 Part V **Jobs For Low-Income People: Winnipeg's Advanced Manufacturing and Information Technology Sectors**

44 Part VI **The Results of a 'Collaboration' to Test Our Findings and Recommendations**

46 Part VII **Conclusions**

50 Part VIII **Recommendations**

55 **Bibliography**

58 Appendix A **List of Collaboration Attendees**

60 Appendix B **List of Employers Interviewed**

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Executive Summary

Two powerful socio-economic and demographic trends are of considerable importance to Manitoba's future. First, like much of the industrialized world, Manitoba is facing an impending labour shortage, and in particular a shortage of skilled labour. We are already beginning to feel the effects of this demographic shift, but the shortage of skilled labour is expected soon to worsen, threatening our ability to manage our economic future. Second, in Manitoba generally and Winnipeg in particular, there are large and growing numbers of working age people who exist outside the formal labour market, or who do not have a permanent attachment to the formal labour market. The result: impending skilled labour shortages existing alongside a large and under-utilized, and even non-utilized, labour supply. This is a recipe for a great many problems; it calls out for innovative solutions.

This paper is the product of a research project aimed at identifying ways of bringing members of disadvantaged communities into the paid labour force, particularly in industries identified by the Province of Manitoba as growth industries. The research project was an extension of research being done by the Manitoba Research Alliance on Community Economic Development in the New Economy, aimed at: exploring the characteristics of the new economy in Manitoba; determining the impact of the New Economy on disadvantaged communities in urban, rural and northern Manitoba; and identifying ways in which community economic development might enable disadvantaged communities to realize the benefits and overcome the barriers created by the new economy.

We conducted an extensive and detailed analysis of the literature on employment development strategies aimed at getting members of disadvantaged communities into 'good' jobs — by good jobs we mean those that pay a living wage, and that include benefits and opportunities for advancement. We reviewed a great many projects that have been undertaken in various jurisdictions beyond Winnipeg in recent years, and that have been well-documented. In the case of many of these projects,

we interviewed project managers, evaluators or sponsors. We also interviewed 34 Human Resource and other Managers in Manitoba-based companies and industry associations in advanced manufacturing and information technology. We believe that what we found in our research can be turned into action, with results beneficial both to Manitoba employers, and to members of disadvantaged communities in Manitoba. All Manitobans would benefit were this to happen.

A review of a large body of employment development literature has revealed that the most successful initiatives have three qualities in common and use a number of strategies that can be considered best practices. Excellent initiatives offer a comprehensive package of supports to help workers overcome their barriers to employment, and a comprehensive training program teaching basic education, soft skills, and technical or 'hard skills'. Comprehensive programs also offer 'post-employment' supports to ease the transition into the workplace and increase worker retention. The best programs connect job seekers to an 'employment development network' consisting of formalized partnerships with relevant actors in the local labour market system — such as community colleges, community-based organizations, governments, unions, and most importantly, employers. Engaging employers at every step is essential, and will provide the high-quality jobs that are the goal of employment development. The best initiatives try to alter how the labour market works to benefit low-income job seekers. The transition to work can be eased if training is designed to simulate the actual workplace, and if cultural competency strategies are used for employers and employees.

How do we move toward a more networked, comprehensive, employer-driven, interventionist and culturally competent employment development system in Winnipeg? The literature that we have examined suggests that this is best achieved by the creation of a workforce intermediary. In this paper we have identified many instances when a workforce intermediary emerged in a particular city and industry, creating significant value-added to the employment development process for members of disadvantaged communities. We have described what we mean by a workforce intermediary, and what such a body does, and we have offered considerable evidence of the success of such bodies. Workforce intermediaries bring together around a single table otherwise diverse and separated elements of the community, in pursuit of a common objective — moving significant numbers of low-income people from disadvantaged communities into good jobs. For a workforce intermediary to be successful, it is most important that employers, including private sector employers, be actively involved. But the involvement of others — governments, unions, community-based organizations, educational institutions — is absolutely essential as well. It is necessary that a workforce intermediary be formalized, as opposed to being a more casual grouping of interested parties; that it be largely employer-driven, since it is employers who hire; and that each party bring to the workforce intermediary a particular commitment.

Winnipeg already has many of the components necessary for successful employment development initiatives employing the best practices we have described. We found that Winnipeg's existing employment development organizations are strong in many important respects, but that when compared to the best practices model, there are some aspects which could be improved. First, the employment development environment in Winnipeg is fragmented. It consists of many parts, which are not well connected, not networked. They

do not constitute a system. Second, most of the components of the Winnipeg employment development environment are not comprehensive. By that we mean that many community-based employment development organizations offer a limited range of services. Third, employment development organizations in Winnipeg tend to be stronger on the supply side than the demand side of the employment development equation. Fourth, most of the initiatives examined attempt to place job seekers into existing workplaces. There is potential to create social enterprises that provide new workplaces for low income workers.

This report recommends that:

1. Steps be taken immediately to create a workforce intermediary for advanced manufacturing industries in Winnipeg.

2. Steps be taken to build upon the considerable strengths of Winnipeg's largely community-based employment development environment, in order to move it toward the best practices model identified in this study. Specifically, we recommend that Winnipeg's employment development environment should be assisted to become more comprehensive, networked, interventionist, and culturally competent.

3. Attention be paid to the following "best practice" considerations in the implementation of any employment development programming.

- Focus on "good jobs"
- Simulate the work place
- Provide post employment supports
- Incorporate a comprehensive program of technical (hard skills) training; basic education programs such as math, reading, writing; job readiness (soft skills) training; support services such as counseling, child care, transportation assistance; job search assistance such as resume writing and interviewing skills; job placement activities that match job seekers with employers
- Include a co-op education or internship component
- Include training allowances or subsidies to employers
- Include, in organized workplaces, the full involvement of the union in all steps of the process
- Include financial assistance to students to help them through the training

4. Consideration be given to a range of program design possibilities, including

- Case Management approach to assist participants to navigate through the range of supports they will use
- Career laddering—providing options for participants to move between classroom and workplace to progressively upgrade their job qualifications and employment status
- Entrepreneurial possibility—establish a commercially viable social enterprise to employ low income workers
- Project based learning that provides training in real life projects
- A specific focus on youth at risk
- Self-paced, competency based training
- Training centres that are deliberately located in inner city locations to increase accessibility to low-income job seekers.

Introduction

Two powerful socio-economic and demographic trends are of considerable importance to Manitoba's future. First, like much of the industrialized world, Manitoba is facing an impending labour shortage, and in particular a shortage of skilled labour. We are already beginning to feel the effects of this demographic shift, but the shortage of skilled labour is expected soon to worsen, threatening our ability to manage our economic future. Second, in Manitoba generally and Winnipeg in particular, there are large and growing numbers of working age people who exist outside the formal labour market, or who do not have a permanent attachment to the formal labour market. The result: impending skilled labour shortages existing alongside a large and under-utilized, and even non-utilized, labour supply. This is a recipe for a great many problems; it calls out for innovative solutions.

In 2004, the Province of Manitoba released the document, *An Innovation Framework for Manitoba*, which outlined a strategy aimed at ensuring that the people of Manitoba benefit from economic development in those industries expected to be future growth industries. Six such clusters of economic activity were identified, and a coherent strategy for ensuring that Manitoba will become a player in these clusters was laid out. In the preamble to the document, there was an acknowledgment of the importance of drawing members of disadvantaged communities into the paid labour force, including the expected job opportunities to be created in those clusters targeted for growth. However, although the *Innovation Framework* named the importance of drawing members of disadvantaged communities into the paid labour force of those industries and clusters, it did not lay out clear strategies for doing so. There remains the need, therefore, to identify innovations aimed at contending with the two powerful socio-economic and demographic trends: the coincidence of an impending shortage of labour, and especially skilled labour; and the growth in the numbers of people who are outside of, or who have no permanent attachment to, the paid labour force.

This paper is the product of a research project aimed at identifying ways of bringing members of disadvantaged communities into the paid labour force, particularly in industries identified by the Province of Manitoba as growth industries. The research project was an extension of research being done by the Manitoba Research Alliance on Community Economic Development in the New Economy, aimed at: exploring the characteristics of the new economy in Manitoba; determining the impact of the New Economy on disadvantaged communities in urban, rural and northern Manitoba; and identifying ways in which community economic development might enable disadvantaged communities to realize the benefits and overcome the barriers created by the new economy. Consistent with this broad theme, we proposed that we examine ways in which members of disadvantaged communities might overcome barriers to employment in the new economy industries identified by the *Innovation Framework*.

The research was funded by the Manitoba Departments of Education and Training, and Energy Science and Technology, and was supported by an Advisory Committee comprised of representatives of the two departments, plus Donna May Morin, Director of the PATH Centre, a community-based employment development agency operating in Winnipeg's North End, Professor Reg Litz of the University of Manitoba's Asper School of Business, and Professor Wanda Wuttunee, Department of Native Studies, University of Manitoba.

We conducted an extensive and detailed analysis of the literature on employment development strategies aimed at getting members of disadvantaged communities into 'good' jobs — by good jobs we mean those that pay a living wage, and that include benefits and opportunities for advancement. We examined the literature describing a great many projects — aimed at getting members of disadvantaged communities into 'good' jobs — that have been undertaken in various jurisdictions beyond Winnipeg in recent years, and that have been well-documented. In the case of many of these projects, we interviewed project managers, evaluators or sponsors.

We also interviewed 34 Human Resource and other Managers in Manitoba-based companies and industry associations in advanced manufacturing and information technology. Our purpose was to determine their hiring practices, including any current efforts to bridge low-income people from disadvantaged communities into good jobs, and in particular to determine from these Managers what they believe would have to happen in order for their companies/industries to hire significant numbers of people from disadvantaged communities.

We believe that what we found in our research can be turned into action, with results beneficial both to Manitoba employers, and to members of disadvantaged communities in Manitoba. All Manitobans would benefit were this to happen.

The paper proceeds as follows. In Part I, we draw upon a considerable body of literature to describe the impending shortage of labour, and especially skilled labour, that is beginning to appear and that is widely anticipated to worsen soon. In Part II, we abstract from the very many practical, on-the-ground projects recently undertaken in the USA, as well as Ireland, Australia, and Europe, to find ways to successfully bridge members of disadvantaged communities into 'good' jobs in the paid labour force. Building inductively from these, we develop a model of 'best practices' for successfully bridging members of disadvantaged communities into 'good' jobs. In Part III we examine various elements of the employment development system in Winnipeg, and attempt to measure that system against the best practices model developed in Part II. In Part IV we provide very brief descriptions of a number of innovative employment development initiatives aimed at bridging low-income members of disadvantaged communities into good jobs in advanced manufacturing and information technology. In Part V we briefly describe the results of our interviews with Human Resource and other Managers in 34 companies and industry associations in advanced manufacturing and IT — interviews aimed at learning more about company and industry hiring practices and hiring needs, and about what, from a company and industry point of view, would have to be done to employ more people from disadvantaged communities in good jobs in those companies and industries. In Part VI we describe the results of a 'collaboration' conducted in May, 2005, at which we tested our research findings and recommendations with employers in advanced manufacturing and information technology, plus representatives of unions, community-based organizations, governments and educational institutions. In Part VII we draw conclusions, and in Part VIII we advance recommendations.

Part I **Skill Shortages and Demographics**

In Canada and across the industrialized world, evidence is growing of an impending labour shortage. Industrialized nations are facing the same demographic realities: longer life expectancies, falling birth rates, and a large 'baby boomer' generation reaching retirement age. With baby boomers soon to retire, and a smaller proportion of young people available to replace them, shortages of labour are expected soon. Most researchers agree that a general shortage of labour will not hit Canada, but that shortages of specific skills will be felt in certain industries and regions (McMullin, Cooke, & Downie, 2004; Schetagne, 2001; Gingras & Roy, 2000; Kuhn, 2003).

Canadians' average age has been increasing in recent years. In 1971 8% of Canada's population was over 60; by 2001 that figure was 17%; it is predicted to reach 30% by 2050 (McMullin, Cook, & Downie, 2004, p. 5). Life expectancies have steadily increased over a long period due to improvements in living conditions, technology, and medicine; and fertility rates have fallen for a number of reasons, including new methods of birth control, increased labour market participation, and higher levels of education for women (Conference Board of Canada, 2004, p. 2). In Canada, women now have an average of 1.5 children, far below the 'replacement' level of 2.1 required for a population to reproduce itself (Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, 2002, p. 5). As a result, the populations of industrialized nations are now aging at "unprecedented rates" (McMullin et al., 2004, p. 4).

Canada and the United States were able to slow their 'aging' because of high birth rates between the mid-1940s and mid-1960s, creating the 'baby boomer' generation. Now between the ages of 40 and 58, the boomers are poised to retire soon; some already have. The retirement of this cohort, who in 2001 made up 47% of the labour force, is predicted to have a serious effect on the labour market (Statistics Canada, 2003a, p. 4). The post-boomer, or 'baby bust', generation is 16% smaller than the boomer cohort, meaning their numbers are insufficient to replace their retiring predecessors (Capelli, 2003, p. 224). In a joint study by the Canadian Council on Social Development and Columbia Foundation (Schetagne, 2001, p.6), possible consequences were advanced, including shortages of either general or skilled labour, and a "decrease in the productivity and competitiveness of Canadian companies as a result of the loss of experienced and competent personnel…". This study also found that the 'active life' of workers has become shorter: workers enter the labour market later in life and leave earlier (Schetagne, 2001, p. 13). So not only are the post-boomer cohorts smaller, but they are waiting longer to enter the workforce. These demographic factors will cause Canada's labour market to stagnate, and by 2016 it is predicted that it will begin to shrink (Schetagne, 2001, p. 16). The Canadian government has chosen to address "potential shortages in the Canadian labour market" in part by promoting higher levels of immigration, recognizing that "by 2011, all growth in the labour market will come from immigration" (Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, p. 4).

The alarm over labour shortages is being sounded most loudly by business. Study after study finds that labour shortages rank ever higher on employers' lists of concerns. Some employers are already reporting skill shortages. A survey of their membership by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business [CFIB] found that in 2000, 46% of respondents had

"difficulties finding qualified labour to meet their staffing needs" (Bruce & Dulipovici, 2001, p. 1). In 2002, that number had risen to 49.6%. The highest levels of concern were in Manitoba, where almost 60% of respondents experience labour shortages (Dulipovici, 2003, p. 4).

A survey by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre [CLBC] in 2002 found that labour shortages were viewed as a 'serious problem' by leaders in business and labour, in both the private and public sectors. Public and private sector managers surveyed by CLBC ranked 'skill shortages' as the second and fifth most important issue facing them, from a list of 39 issues.

Labour leaders also placed skill shortages in their top ten serious concerns. The CLBC found concern over skill shortages to be growing, and most dramatically among labour leaders. Between 1996 and 2002, the proportion of public sector labour leaders seriously concerned about skill shortages rose from 17% to 59% (Canadian Labour and Business Centre, 2003, p. 11).

According to the CLBC, there now exists a "consensus" among managers and labour leaders in both the private and public sector that "a serious human resource challenge lies ahead" (CLBC, 2003, p. 11).

A report released in May 2004 by the Canada West Foundation also predicts skill shortages, with a focus on Western Canada. Their survey of industries found that 80% were already experiencing 'some' or 'severe' shortages, and even more [73 of 76 industries] expected labour shortages in the near future (Hirsch, Brunnen, & Molin, 2004, pp. 4-5). The prairies seem to be hit the hardest, with all 12 industry respondents reporting an insufficient supply of labour. Labour shortages in Manitoba and Saskatchewan are more acute than in other parts of Canada because of high rates of out-migration to other provinces (Hirsch et al., 2004, p. 6). Thus in Manitoba, not only do we face the same demographic forces leading to a labour shortage across Canada, but also we are losing some of the skilled labour that we do have to competition beyond our provincial borders. A recent poll of Manitoba business leaders brings the point home: for the second year in a row, labour shortages ranked as the number one concern among leaders in business, 64% of whom reported difficulty in finding qualified workers to fill skilled positions (Probe Research Inc., 2004).

Not everyone agrees that Canada will soon face a labour shortage. David Foot, author of *Boom, Bust, and Echo*, believes that before labour market shortages occur, we will have labour market surpluses — and that once the boomers do retire, their children will enter the job market to replace them (Beauchesne, 29 July 2002). Peter Capelli (2003, p.225) is convinced that older workers will retire later, preventing the predicted labour shortage. However, retirement ages in Canada have been falling, from an average of 64.9 years in 1976 to 61 years in 1999 (Davidge, 2004).

The most common prediction in the literature is a tempered one: skill shortages, but not a general labour shortage. Based on an extensive literature review, McMullin, Cook, and Downie (2004, p.38) conclude that "there is no evidence of a general shortage of skilled labour in Canada as a direct result of demographic ageing. They agree however with Peter Kuhn (2003) that "future skill shortages are likely to take the form of localized and industry-specific 'hotspots'" (McMullin et al., p. 21). In a CCSD-sponsored study, Schetagne (2001, p.17) agrees that fears of a general labour shortage are unfounded, but that skill shortages may be noticed in certain industries or workplaces with a high proportion of older workers. In a well-

known study prepared for Human Resources Development Canada, Gingras and Roy (2000, p.165) explain that, "the claim that Canada is in the throes of a generalized skill shortage is not borne out by the data". They argue (p.172) that labour shortages reported by employers are part of a "normal cyclical phenomenon… attributable to a tightening of the labour market, not a sudden, aggregate shortage of skilled labour". So while a general shortage of labour will not be felt in Canada, there will be "hot spots of acute skill shortages, localized in terms of geography, industry, or occupation" (Kuhn, 2003 cited in McMullin et al. 2003 p. 21). Areas where skill shortages are expected include the health sector, educators, and construction workers (Statistics Canada, 2003, p. 5).

Manitoba and Winnipeg are particularly likely to be skill shortage 'hot spots'. Canada's lowest rates of unemployment are consistently found in Manitoba, and specifically Winnipeg (Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade, 2004). Winnipeg is a slow-growth city [increasing at an annual rate of 0.04%] in a province that annually loses about 1000 skilled workers to out-migration. Losing young people contributes to the greying of the city: in 2001, 17.2% of residents were over 60 years of age (City of Winnipeg, 2004). The tight labour market and demographic aging in Winnipeg point to looming labour shortages, the beginnings of which are already being felt by employers. The Canada West Foundation found that the most substantial reports of shortages were from Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and predicted that Manitoba would face "severe shortages" in the information-technology, food processing, and health care sectors (Hirsch et al., 2004, p. 6). In 2001 CFIB found that concern for labour shortages was at an "all-time high" in Manitoba at 59.3% (Bruce & Dulipovici, 2001, p. 1), and the Conference Board of Canada projected that the labour shortage already being felt in Winnipeg will intensify in 2009 (CBC, 2004, p. 9).

Within the Winnipeg population, concealed by statistics predicting a labour shortage, there exists a sizeable community with a different demographic story than the population as a whole — the Aboriginal population. Manitoba has one of the highest proportions of Aboriginal residents in Canada [14.3%] and Winnipeg has more Aboriginal residents [55,755] than any Canadian city, making up 8% of the population in 2001 (Mendelson, 2004, p. 9). This component of Winnipeg's population holds the key to turning around Winnipeg's demographic fortunes. The Aboriginal population is much younger than the population as a whole: a median age of 24.7 years in 2001, compared to 37.1 years Winnipeg as a whole (Statistics Canada 2003b, 2003c). So while Winnipeg's population ages, the growing Aboriginal population will slow that aging, and provide large numbers of entrants into the labour market in coming years. The Manitoba Bureau of Statistics projects that by 2016, one in every five labour market participants will be Aboriginal (1997, p. 3). Mendelson (2004, p.38) says that "the increasing importance of the Aboriginal workforce to Manitoba…cannot be exaggerated. There is likely no single more critical economic factor for [the Prairie] provinces".

Although Aboriginal children represent Manitoba's "economic future", the Aboriginal people have in the past been significantly under-represented in the labour market. Although Winnipeg had an unemployment rate of 5.7% in 2001, and was experiencing labour shortages, Winnipeg's Aboriginal population had an unemployment rate of 14.7%, two-and-a-half times that of the general population. (Mendelson, 2004, p. 29). This can be explained by a number of factors. Formal educational levels are lower for the Aboriginal than the non-

Aboriginal population, although Aboriginal educational levels are rising. In 2001, 42.2% of Winnipeg's Aboriginal population had not finished high school, compared to 28.2% of the total Winnipeg population[1] (Statistics Canada, 2003b; City of Winnipeg, 2003). Although Aboriginal levels of post-secondary education lagged behind those of the non-Aboriginal community, the proportion of Aboriginal people in Canada earning trade certificates [12.1%] recently rose above that of the non-Aboriginal proportion [10.8%] (Lamontagen, 2004, p. 3). Low levels of educational attainment and employment, plus persistent systemic racism, have put Aboriginal Canadians at a distinct disadvantage in the job market. As a result they suffer poverty in numbers out of proportion with the general population, live in poorer housing conditions, and rely more on social assistance (Manitoba Bureau of Statistics, 1997, p. 4). Mendelson argues that "Canada cannot have a high quality of life if there is a significant minority forming an impoverished underclass", and that we must look to Aboriginal people to fill impending labour market shortages.

Nearly half of Winnipeg's Aboriginal population [44%] live in the inner city. As in other metropolitan areas, Winnipeg's inner city has been declining for decades, and has become an area with concentrated poverty, unemployment, and social problems. Aboriginal people make up 19.2% of the inner city population, and visible minorities another 20%. There are twice as many low-income households in the inner city as in the city as a whole [40.5% compared to 20.3%]. Labour force participation rates are lower in the inner city than in the rest of Winnipeg, and the inner city unemployment rate [8.1% in 2001] is almost double that of Winnipeg. Almost one in five [19.2%] inner city households rely on government transfer payments as their main source of income (City of Winnipeg, 2004). Often disconnected from the mainstream world of work, and living in an area of concentrated poverty, disadvantaged inner city residents represent a large population who are not benefiting from meaningful employment, and are thus not contributing to Manitoba's economy to the extent that is possible.

Mendelson argues that, "[e]mployment is the cornerstone of participation in modern Canadian society. Employment is not only a source of income, it is also the basis for self-respect and autonomy" (2004, p. 1). To improve the quality of life for disadvantaged members of Winnipeg's Aboriginal population and of Winnipeg's inner city, innovative measures are needed to support their entry into good jobs. Extending the benefits of employment to these groups is not only a matter of equity — it is a matter of economic necessity. The city is already experiencing the beginnings of a labour shortage. It is expected to worsen. Skilled workers are needed to fill these shortages. Previously under-utilized sources of labour in Winnipeg's inner city can be and ought to be tapped.

1 The data for Winnipeg's Aboriginal population include all adults 25 years and older, whereas the Winnipeg data included all adults 20 years and older.

Part II **Best Practices for Employment Development Interventions**

Tightening labour markets, increasing skill shortages, and impending baby boomer retirements signal a looming labour shortage problem. In Winnipeg's inner city, as in inner cities across Canada and the United States, disadvantaged and marginalized residents exist as large, untapped, and generally ignored sources of potential labour. It is going to be necessary to dip into non-traditional populations to fill impending labour shortages. The types of jobs that will need to be filled, however, are not entry-level 'McJobs' that disadvantaged job-seekers are often shuffled into. With the 'New Economy' shift in the last 20 years towards service industry employment, jobs are increasingly either 'good', requiring training and higher education, and offering benefits, family-supporting wages, and opportunities for advancement; or 'bad' — requiring neither training nor education; and offering a low wage, no benefits, and no career ladders (Betcherman et al., 1998, p. 3). The impending shortages are in skilled sectors; the challenge is to equip disadvantaged inner city populations with the skills, education, and training they will need to acquire, retain, and advance in these 'good' jobs.

Bob Giloth of the Annie E. Casey Foundation [AECF] 'Jobs Initiative', understands that getting low-income and disadvantaged workers into good jobs is not easy. He describes the "disconnection between the hardest to employ and the mainstream economy" as two separate 'worlds'. "One world is made up of business culture and expectations that hard work is rewarded. The other world is made up of people who have been marginalized by the mainstream over generations and face the labour market with cynicism, loss of hope, and few positive expectations. Bridging these worlds is an enormous challenge" (Giloth, 2004b, p. 20).

In the USA, a number of initiatives are taking on this challenge, with the goal of securing jobs that pay a "liveable wage and provide opportunities for advancement" for disadvantaged individuals (Jenkins, 1999, p. 8). Programs like the multi-city Annie E. Casey Foundation Jobs Initiative, the Center for Employment Training in San Jose, and Project: QUEST in San Antonio have had remarkable success in connecting disadvantaged job seekers with the training, skills development, and supports they need to overcome barriers to employment. These programs have also connected jobseekers to real-life employers, and have worked to forge and formalize relationships between different actors in the local labour market, and change how the labour market system operates so as to benefit disadvantaged jobseekers.

The goal of 'workforce development' or 'employment development' is to connect disadvantaged, low-income job-seekers with good jobs. Although both terms are common, we prefer 'employment development' because it recognizes that not only the workforce, but the entire employment system needs to be improved. According to Giloth (n.d., p. 1), employment development strategies are "dual customer" oriented, serving both employers and job-seekers, and "the change in terminology signals the recognition that business and workers are both key customers". Based on a review of employment development literature, this section highlights the best practices of employment development initiatives. According to the literature, the most successful initiatives are comprehensive, networked, and interventionist. Successful

initiatives tend to engage in the following best practices:

1. Focus on high-quality jobs
2. Engage employers at every step of a program
3. Build formalized networks and create partnerships
4. Enlist stakeholders with clout
5. Offer comprehensive training with supports
6. Create training environments that simulate the workplace
7. Promote 'cultural competence' for both employers and employees
8. Provide 'post-employment' or 'follow-up' supports
9. Alter the structure of the labour market to benefit disadvantaged job-seekers

Building upon these best practices, we have developed a schematic hierarchy of employment development approaches. Such a hierarchy can be used to compare different approaches, and to identify where gaps may exist in any given community's employment development system. At the top of our hierarchy are approaches that: 1) aim to effect significant change in the labour market system by various interventions; 2) direct resources to the building of extensive network relationships; and 3) offer a comprehensive range of services designed to overcome barriers to employment. At the bottom of the hierarchy are approaches that are the least interventionist, networked, and comprehensive.

2.1 Successful initiatives are comprehensive

Some employment development programs focus only on basic education — connecting low-income job seekers with basic skills in mathematics and literacy. Some focus on job-training — linking job-seekers with training programs that teach technical or 'hard skills'. Some programs focus on job search and job preparation activities — access to job kiosks, resume writing assistance, interview tips. Other approaches deliver supports to help job-seekers overcome their barriers to employment. 'Job Readiness' programs teach the 'soft skills' needed to adjust to the norms of the working world — appropriate language, punctuality and proper dress, for example. Some programs help individuals overcome alcoholism or drug addiction, or offer counselling for victims of domestic abuse. Others offer support services such as financial assistance for housing, transport, child care, or help with financial literacy.

Initiatives offering one or even a combination of the services above take the most traditional approach to employment development. These programs are designed to respond to perceived employment 'deficiencies' in disadvantaged populations; they provide the resources that these populations are missing. The research reveals that 'stand-alone' programs like these have had limited success in helping disadvantaged job-seekers obtain and keep good jobs, amounting to a "disjointed system" without a coordinated approach to training or employment preparation (Torjman, 2000, p. 3). Strawn (1998, p.5) found that although 'quick employment programs' like job search assistance led to increased employment and earnings, "the impacts quickly diminish…after one or two years". Job search or quick educational upgrading may also statistically increase

earnings, but a Prairie Research Associates literature review (1998, p. 13) reports that with such short-term treatments, "the likelihood of coming off welfare has not been reduced". Job-readiness training alone is similarly unsuccessful: "the low-paying jobs people generally find through such programs fail to sustain their commitment to work" (Dickens, 1999, p. 421). Helen Buckley (1992, p.104) found that training courses for Aboriginal Canadians in the 1970s failed because they were not linked to jobs. A similar finding for US government-led training programs was that "they are disconnected from contemporary employer needs" (Clark & Dawson, 1995, p. 5).

If none of the preceding approaches — those traditionally employed by governments and community agencies — have had much success, what can be done to get low-income people into good jobs, and keep them there? And with such a dismal track record, how could employers and job-seekers alike be convinced to even look at 'another training program'?

The literature suggests that although these strategies offered separately as 'stand-alone' programs are not likely to be successful, the story is different when they are offered together in a comprehensive fashion. Fleischer (n.d.) explains that "job placement services were most effective when complemented with an individually tailored package of skill enhancements including: job readiness, soft-skills training, hard skills training, and job retention and support services". Julie Strawn (1998, p.23) agrees, saying that the most effective approaches "…share a flexible, balanced approach that combines job search, education, job training, and work". Giloth (interview, May 25, 2005) adds that basic support services are a solid predictor of getting somebody into a job; job readiness services are a good predictor that the person will still be in a job at least three months later; and hard skills training is a good predictor that they will still be in the job twelve months later. In other words, initiatives are effective if they offer a comprehensive array of interventions including training, education, hard and soft skills, support services, and post-employment supports. According to Giloth (n.d., p.2) "the Jobs Initiative experience has shown that successful workforce programs must combine job readiness with technical skills training and work supports. Failures occur when strategies only adopted a single element of workforce development". Partnerships between organizations are usually required in order for an initiative to be truly comprehensive. As Stephanie Sommers (2000, p.8) observes, "few organizations can provide the full range of training and support services needed to make an [employment] program work. As a result, [employment] programs often form as a partnership of organizations".

Providing post-employment supports was identified repeatedly in the literature as a best practice critical to successful job retention. According to Fleischer (2004, p. 6), "[job] retention is even more important than placement", and to achieve this, follow-up supports are critical. Examples of post-employment supports include mentoring, ongoing case-management, phone calls, and continued financial assistance. A U.S.-based program found that "early and regular contact with participants was critical to job retention" (Torjman, 1998a, p. 26). Making the transition to work is difficult, and new barriers to employment may present themselves after job placement. Providing support services to help clients overcome these barriers, even if it is as simple as giving out bus tickets, is critical to keeping workers in jobs. Stephanie Sommers (2000, p.7) found that "the most effective bridge programs provide follow-up support and encouragement to program

graduates even after they complete training and have been placed in a job". Davis Jenkins (1999, p.10) found that follow-up supports "ensure that [participants] not only stay on the job, but advance up the ladder". Harrison and Weiss (1998, p.150) agree that "follow-up mentoring and counselling are both crucial". Post-employment supports significantly increase retention.

Providing a comprehensive array of services including basic education, hard (technical) skill training, soft skills training, job search and placement assistance, support services, and post-employment supports, is characteristic of successful jobs initiatives. Comprehensive strategies that provide to disadvantaged communities the resources they need to overcome their barriers fall into what we call the 'traditional community development model'. This model is not without its shortcomings, however, and many traditional employment initiatives find that they are still not successful in matching workers with good jobs, despite a comprehensive approach. They are focused on delivering needed resources, but not developing connections to employers. This approach fails to look at both sides of the labour market — workers and employers. A comprehensive approach alone does not build the networks that connect workers to employers, or initiate changes in the labour market to benefit disadvantaged workers (Clark & Dawson, 1995, pp. 9-10).

2.2 Successful initiatives are networked

Networks, in the employment development context, are made up of relationships between actors in the labour market (Tilley, 1996). The theory of networks recognizes that workers are not hired according to 'what they know', but are hired through interconnected social and business networks, so what really matters is 'who they know'. Harrison and Weiss (1998, pp. 35-37) explain that the job market is not a 'queue', where the next qualified worker in line gets the job. Rather, workers finds jobs through networks which provide them with information about job prospects, connections to real employers, and "teach young people about what is needed to find work" (Dickens, 1999, p. 410). Workers with limited network connections may not find a job, even if qualified. The problem with low-income, inner city neighbourhoods is that they tend not to have good network connections. Newman (1995) found that in many low-income neighbourhoods, residents were connected to 'deficient networks' which provided access to jobs, but not 'good' jobs. William Julius Wilson (1996) explained that, unlike traditional working class neighbourhoods, where young people would find work in the local plant because an uncle or an older brother or sister or other family member put in a good word with the foreman or forewoman, in today's inner city neighbourhoods, where unemployment is very high and labour force participation rates low, young people do not have such connections, nor such role models. Bancroft (2004, p.26) explains that "poor people tend to know other poor people, and therefore might not be able to provide the kind of social leverage necessary to move beyond past experience". Disadvantaged workers lacking network connections have little or even no relationship with the world of work; children growing up in these areas do not learn how to connect to the mainstream labour market. To have a chance at good jobs, inner city job seekers need connections to good employers, through high-quality networks, and since such networks do not exist 'naturally', they have to be created.

Successful employment development initiatives feature partnerships between different labour market actors, forming an expanded net-

work that links disadvantaged workers with job opportunities, training opportunities, educational opportunities, and support services. The best networks, according to Harrison and Weiss (1998), are formalized connections between community-based organizations [CBOs] and employers. CBOs, because they are located in inner city neighbourhoods, act as the 'gateway' to employment opportunities for low-income people, and bring them into contact with the network. CBOs recruit, assess, and possibly offer job readiness [soft skills] to disadvantaged job seekers. Fleischer and Dressner (2002, p.12) found that "neighbourhood-oriented, community-based organizations…are more likely to successfully recruit and engage residents of isolated neighbourhoods than…government agencies". Rhonda Simmons of the successful Seattle Jobs Initiative explained that "jobseekers feel most comfortable walking into a CBO that knows them" and that "CBOs should be the doors to employment and training opportunities" (Annie E. Casey Foundation Jobs Initiative website).

Partnerships with many different stakeholders make up a successful employment development network. Community-based organizations recruit participants and offer soft skills training and career counselling. Community colleges can be partnered with to provide training services. Connections to local and provincial governments can provide political and monetary support. Partnerships with adult education centres can provide basic education skills. Partnering with unions can be useful in helping workers navigate unionized sectors.

But the most crucial partnership in a successful network is with employers. According to Sommers (2000, p. 7), employers should be involved in all aspects of employment development, "from design, to implementation, to ongoing evaluation and improvement". Cynthia Gibson (n.d., p. 5) agrees that these partnerships are key: "employers must be engaged in workforce development at the beginning of the process and viewed as collaborators in that process". Harrison and Weiss (1998, p. 150) found that it is important to design networks with "strong ties to real employers". Fleischer (2001, p.9) found that with the Annie E. Casey Foundation Jobs Initiative, "Employers are regarded as essential collaborators in the initiative. They are engaged in governing the Jobs Initiatives sites, designing and developing training curricula, and promoting systems reform". Jenkins (1999, p. 9) also found that with successful bridging programs, "employers are involved in all aspects…design, implementation, defining standards, helping find instructors with industry experience, offering paid internships, and offering full-time jobs…". A best practice of employment development initiatives then, is to build networks and create partnerships — with CBOs, community colleges, adult education centres, government, unions, and especially with employers.

Employers make good partners in an employment development network because they can provide important information: they can identify what skills they want in a worker, help design a training program, provide labour market information, and even provide instructors for training. The success of an employment development initiative relies on partnerships with employers who have really 'bought in' to the program. Laufer and Winship (2004, p. 217) note that "engaging employers in workforce development programs for low-income people and non-traditional labour pools is no easy task". This rings true in Manitoba where only 14% of business leaders think that engaging 'non-traditional' labour sources is a good solution to impending labour shortages (Dulipovici, 2003).

In order to get employers on board with employment development initiatives, the benefits of networking must be well-articulated to them. Employers can benefit in numerous ways from being involved in drawing members of disadvantaged communities into their workforce. Having the opportunity to influence training curricula gives employers the chance to prepare a workforce with the exact skills they require. Involvement may also help them save on training costs — an expensive part of hiring new employees. Firms may also benefit by enhancing their reputation as a socially conscious business. Working to employ disadvantaged job-seekers is not charity, however, and as the previous section detailed, in Manitoba it is very much a necessity. Cynthia Gibson (n.d., p. 6) argues that "employer participation in workforce development is largely fueled by self-interest, due to an unprecedented shortage of entry-level and skilled workers, the high cost of employee turnover, and the increasing number of baby boom retirements". Turnover is expensive for employers, and a successful employment development initiative can reduce this variable cost. Once they have established a relationship with an employment development initiative, employers can count on it to deliver high-quality, well-trained employees.

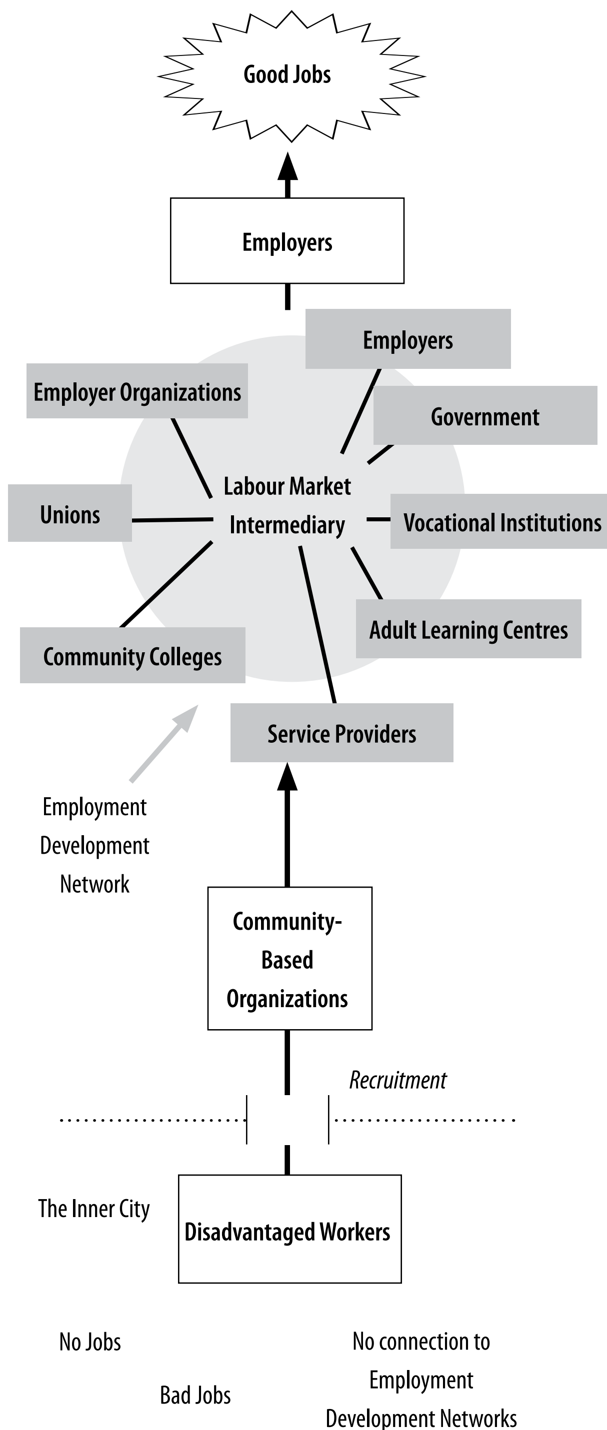
Building networks and creating partnerships is a practice of successful employment development interventions, as is engaging employers at every step of the process. Partnerships among these various actors must be strong and formalized. Building these partnerships, and co-ordinating the efforts of so many actors is a complex task. Rosenfeld (2002, p. 32) explained that community-based organizations "are unaccustomed to working with employers…employers and non-profits working with low-income populations do not even speak the same language". To do the leg work of building relationships between various stakeholders, cementing these partnerships, and coordinating an employment development initiative, an 'intermediary organization' is often required to pull it all together.

2.3 Co-ordinating the effort: The labour market intermediary

Labour market intermediaries are organizations that are "charged with bringing together diverse stakeholders from across [a] region to plan, support, and oversee [the job development] effort" (ABT Associates Inc., 1997, p. 1). Labour market intermediaries "bring together a set of key players to create long-term pathways to careers for low-skilled workers and value-added productivity for employers" (Giloth, 2004a, p. i). Intermediaries are described by Betcherman (1998, p.62) as 'brokers', brokering relationships "between consumers of labour and suppliers of labour, serving to improve the functioning of the labour market". Kazis (2004, p. 75) explains what intermediaries do: "[they] organize multiple partners and funding streams towards common goals…[they] provide and/or broker labour market services to individuals and employers…[they] project a vision that motivates and guides its partnerships and activities". The intermediary is responsible for brokering relationships with community colleges to provide training, with employers to provide jobs and guidance, with government and funding agencies to provide financial assistance, and with community-based organizations to recruit and deliver services to help clients find and keep jobs.

Osterman (2004) explains that labour market intermediaries, or 'LMIs', are an emerging necessity in today's labour market, and not just in the realm of employment development. As the new economy labour market becomes tighter, more volatile, and as jobs become less

Figure 1 **Labour Market Intermediaries**



secure, there is "a greater need for intermediary services that in the past" (pp. 155-156). "Without intervention," Osterman (p.166) warns, "it will be increasingly difficult for firms to obtain the kind of labour force they need". Shifts in the makeup of the labour market towards groups who have traditionally faced "significant" employment challenges and a shrinking supply of labour mean that more intervention will be necessary to link appropriate workers with employers. LMIs will increasingly be required. "Whereas in the past employment and training systems were viewed as essentially an extension of the welfare or charity systems, and hence not taken seriously, today well-designed programs may be able to sell their services to a wider range of employers" (Osterman, 2004, p. 167).

The concept of LMIs is simple — they are organizations who improve the functioning of the labour market by brokering relationships between employers and workers, and by creating networks that link labour market players — but the question is, whose job is it to take on this role? Examples from various cities show that many types of organizations and agencies can act as LMIs. The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Jobs Initiative is a multi-city project that has placed over 9000 clients in well-paying jobs. In different cities the role of labour market intermediary has been taken on by different groups: a city agency in one case, a state agency in another, a regional non-profit workforce organization, a community-based organization, and a community college in others.

In Philadelphia, a community development finance corporation called 'The Reinvestment Fund' [TRF], stepped up to the role of intermediary for Philadelphia's Jobs Initiative. TRF began by partnering with a retail organization and a vocational school to design a six-week customer service training program. They were then able to open a permanent Customer

Service Training centre for program participants. TRF also wanted to create a program to help high school, technical school, and community college students get into the Information Technology sector, and so they partnered with business leaders to create a successful internship program (Annie E. Casey Foundation website).

In Saint Louis, the role of LMI was taken on by the city's metropolitan planning corporation, the East West Gateway Coordinating Council (East West). The intermediary began by partnering with a trusted community-based organization which was given the task of recruiting participants, offering support services, and offering job placement and retention services. The CBO also developed a four week job readiness 'soft skills' training program. East West forged a partnership with a local community college to design a comprehensive job training program, collaborated with local employers, and forged a connection with a network of 18 local employment service providers. They also partnered with local construction unions to create a program that helps workers navigate the confusing world of trade unions and assists participants in getting internships (Annie E. Casey Foundation website).

To summarize, building networks and creating partnerships have emerged as best practices for successful employment development initiatives. Engaging employers is also crucial to the success of any jobs initiative. LMIs are responsible for building these networks, and forging strong formalized partnerships with employers and other actors in the labour market. Although well-networked initiatives are successful in getting low-income workers into good jobs, they are still not getting to the root of the problem unless they attempt to initiative change in the structure of the local labour market. The most successful employment development initiatives are not only comprehensive and networked, they are also interventionist.

2.4 Successful initiatives alter the structure of the labour market

The labour market is the structure that produces employment in an area. Like any market, labour markets feature an exchange of resources: on the supply side are workers who want jobs; on the demand side are employers who want labour. Markets do not promise to operate in a socially equitable way, and history has shown that disadvantaged, low-income people are not necessarily well-served by them. Interventionist approaches seek to change how the labour market functions so as to benefit disadvantaged workers. The theory of Labour Market Systems Reform, articulated by Plastrik, Seltzer, and Combes-Taylor (2001) assumes that what is needed to reduce significantly the incidence of chronic unemployment is a conscious intervention in the way the labour market works. Harrison and Weiss (1998, p. 150) argue that the structural causes of unemployment are linked to the labour market system itself, and only interventions that seek to alter the system get at the heart of the problem. Achieving success, according to Lisa Ranghelli (2002, p.5), "involves engaging in systemic change: altering the way key players — such as employers, government agencies, educational institutions, and unions — operate, so that their mission incorporates the goals of good jobs and career ladders for poor people". Interventionist approaches benefit disadvantaged workers by getting at an underlying cause of their marginalization: a flawed labour market system.

One type of comprehensive, networked, interventionist approach is the 'Sectoral Approach'. Sectoral initiatives target a high-potential industry, intervene in its practices

and processes, and create systemic change in the labour market (Fleischer & Dressner, 2002, p. 10). If a sector has the potential to provide good jobs to low-income workers, the sectoral initiative's labour market intermediary attempts to intervene in the local labour market and become a valued actor within the industry. Once immersed, sectoral initiatives try to alter how this system operates to benefit disadvantaged workers (Clark & Dawson, 1995, p. 10). Sectoral initiatives may attempt to influence employers' perceptions about their own needs, reform standard hiring policies, and increase the quality of jobs. According to Clark and Dawson (1995, p. 27), "a sectoral initiative cannot be considered successful until it has improved how key employers within a regional labour market employ low-income people".

The Centre for Employment Training [CET] in San Jose is a celebrated example of a successful sectoral initiative. CET became a trusted part of the human resources network in the Silicon Valley information technology industry. Once CET had established itself as a source of high-quality workers, employers began relying on it as a source of labour, drawing workers from the previously untouched population of disadvantaged job-seekers. Harrison and Weiss (1998, p. 56) note that "CET has profoundly institutionalized the process of interfacing with the already trusted recruiting and training networks of companies". The Saint Louis Regional Jobs Initiative [RJI] has also had success in changing their local labour market system. RJI was able to convince one of the largest consumers of construction resources in Saint Louis to require contractors to hire apprentices for 15% of labour hours on each job. Getting disadvantaged workers into apprenticeship positions is done with help from union partners who assist in navigating the construction trade union process. This seemingly small change has provided opportunities for disadvantaged workers to get high-quality construction jobs, something next-to-impossible before the Jobs Initiative (Annie E. Casey Foundation Jobs Initiative).

The literature on employment development shows that the most successful initiatives are comprehensive, networked, and interventionist; they engage employers throughout the process; and they provide follow-up 'post-employment supports'. In addition, successful initiatives prepare by creating training environments that simulate the real workplace, and by promoting cultural competence for employers and employees. They also focus on offering high-quality jobs with opportunities for advancement.

2.5 **Prepare workers for the workplace: Simulated workplace training and cultural competency**

The transition to work can be a shock to workers who have never held down a job, even if they have been given the most comprehensive soft skills, basic skills, and hard skills training, and have been provided with counselling and support services. Many workers are not emotionally prepared for the workplace. Becoming accustomed to time management and a highly-structured environment can be difficult and stressful for first-time workers. Although post-employment supports are a successful way of easing the transition into work, steps taken during training can also be useful. One approach is to provide training that simulates the workplace. Researchers have found that highly successful initiatives provide training environments that closely resemble the real workplace environment. Jenkins (1999, p. 9) emphasized that "the best teaching method is applied training or 'learning by doing', it is best to make instruction resemble the workplace…[to] familiarize students with basic principles of how busi-

nesses operate". Since employers are involved in successful initiatives, they can help make training as much like the actual job as possible — by providing equipment, space, or instructors to make training mirror the real job.

CET in San Jose is at the forefront of this strategy. Their 'contextual learning environment' seeks to 'duplicate the rhythms of industry' and acclimatize participants to the world of work. CET's "real-life" job environment includes demanding instructors, who prepare workers for demanding bosses; hands-on work to prepare participants for job tasks; and a time clock that participants punch to reinforce the habits of a structured workplace (Murphy & Cunningham, 2003, p. 294). Focus: HOPE in Detroit uses a sectoral initiative that trains disenfranchised workers for machinist jobs in the auto industry. Focus: HOPE has established four operational manufacturing businesses to train workers in a realistic workplace environment. A bonus of their strategy is that these businesses turn a profit, generating revenue for the program. Focus: HOPE graduates are not only well-prepared for the workplace after this training, they are particularly attractive to employers, who value the work experience that their training has provided (Thompson, Turner-Meikeljohn, & Conway, 2000).

In addition to workplace-simulating training, workers also need to be prepared for the cultural differences they may find between themselves and the mainstream workforce. Bob Giloth of the Annie E. Casey Foundation Jobs Initiative knew that issues of race and ethnicity were important when he started the JI, but soon found that "these issues had to be front and centre" (Fleischer, n.d.). Many clients assisted by the AECF Jobs Initiative were not only economically and socially isolated from the world of work, but also minorities — culturally different from the mainstream workforce. Adjusting to the culture of the workplace was not only difficult for participants, but Giloth found that many employers were "unaccustomed to working with people of colour" (Fleischer, n.d.). Fleischer (2001, p. 27) emphasizes that "disadvantaged job seekers need to develop cultural competencies and work habits that will enable them to succeed on the job", but it is not just job seekers — employers need to become more culturally aware too. Gibson (n.d., p. 6) believes that "practitioners must learn 'cultural competence' and develop strategies for integrating issues of race and ethnicity…in all facets of workforce development". The AECF Jobs Initiative recommends a "cultural competency" strategy which means "understanding and integrating the web of behaviors, attitudes and policies that foster effective work in cross-cultural situations" (AECF, 2001). In a 2001 publication, *Jobs and Race*, the AECF argues that increased cultural competency "improves output, leading to higher productivity and greater respect for diversity in the world of work" .

One way to prepare workers for the cultural differences they will encounter at work is to introduce the idea of 'code-switching'. The theory, developed by African American Anthropologist Elijah Anderson, is that people put on a 'different face' and apply a different kind of behaviour when they are at work than they do at home, and a different face again when they are in other settings. To adapt to different situations, people have to be able to 'switch codes'. This is natural to those used to the mainstream world of work, but many disadvantaged workers have to be taught to 'switch codes' at work, and then 'switch codes' back at the end of the day when they return home to their neighbourhood. Rhonda Simmons of the Seattle Jobs Initiative [SJI] realized that employers also need to "switch codes" and adopt "culturally competent behaviour" (Fleischer, n.d.).

SJI responded to this need by developing a course to teach soft-skills and cultural competency to workplace supervisors.

Preparing workers for the workplace is important for retention, and successful employment development initiatives adopt strategies to help workers adapt to the organization and structure of the workplace and the workday, and to the cultural realities of the mainstream working world. Training programs that simulate the workplace, and adopting cultural competency strategies for workers and employers, are best practices.

2.6 **Successful initiatives focus on good jobs with opportunities for advancement**

Job programs must not only prepare job seekers for work, they must ensure that jobs exist for them when they are finished their training. In Milwaukee employment developers were following "the old method of skills assessment, career counselling and training, and turning the person loose to find a job with their new skills", but were finding minimal success. They decided to "recast the problem" so that "workers no longer sought to find jobs, jobs sought workers". They developed a new model which focused first on finding good jobs…jobs that pay living wages and have benefits. After identifying the jobs, in partnership with employers, they provided workers from disadvantaged communities with the skills and supports to get those jobs (Annie E. Casey Foundation website).

Focusing on good jobs seems like a no-brainer, but it is a real departure from the 'Work First' mentality common in jobs programs, especially in the USA. The 'work first' or 'rapid attachment' approach is a response to changes in the US welfare system, requiring that workers be moved off welfare and into work as quickly as possible (Brown, 1997, pp. 5-6). The philosophy is that any job is a good job, and skills are best learned on the job, rather than in a classroom. This approach may succeed in getting people off welfare, but Jenkins (1999, p. 1) found that it does not succeed in "enabling most welfare families to become self-sufficient". A focus on poor-quality jobs does not benefit job seekers in the long term, and it does not provide long-term workers for employers. Fleischer (2001, p.10) found that AECF Jobs Initiatives participants in cities focusing on higher-paying jobs had far better retention rates than cities where the initiatives placed workers in lower-paying jobs. Focusing on low-paying jobs also does nothing to benefit employers who are experiencing or expecting skill shortages, because these tend to be higher-paying sectors.

Focusing on good jobs is about more than improving program retention rates, or providing benefits to employers. A 'good' job that pays a living wage and offers benefits and career ladders, provides a foundation upon which workers and their families can build better lives. Working in a good job makes people happier, it bolsters their self-esteem and self-confidence, and it improves their quality of life. Disadvantaged and low-income Manitobans deserve good jobs, and Manitoba industries deserve well-trained and prepared workers. A successful employment development initiative can link disadvantaged workers with good jobs, and provide the skilled workforce Manitoba's growing industries need.

2.7 **A hierarchical continuum of employment development approaches**

Based on best practices revealed from the literature review, we have developed a hierarchi-

cal continuum on which different approaches can be placed and compared. The hierarchy of approaches can also be used to highlight potential gaps in a given community's employment development landscape.

At the top of the hierarchy are approaches that are comprehensive, networked, and interventionist, and that focus on high-quality jobs. Highly ranked initiatives would also engage the employer at every step of the process, create training environments simulating the actual workplace, and promote cultural competence.

An additional factor included in our hierarchy is whether programs address truly disadvantaged populations. Some of the most successful training programs, especially in knowledge-intensive industries, "cream off" the most "trainable" individuals from a wider selection of the unemployed. Although such programs are still working with disadvantaged populations, they are ensuring a high success rate by choosing candidates that are 'almost there'. From our perspective, "creaming" is not a holistic answer to the unemployment problems of disadvantaged communities.

A model of poverty and unemployment developed by the Saint John Urban Core Support Network describes poverty using the analogy of a caved in 'mineshaft', in which people are trapped at different levels. To draw people from the different levels, differing degrees of assistance are needed. The "marginally poor" — who are newly unemployed or who are low-wage workers — are close to the surface, needing only a helping hand to get out. Those in the middle of the mineshaft may have been out of work a long time or have no work experience. They will require comprehensive social supports and extensive skills training to emerge from poverty. "At the very bottom of the shaft, where the sunlight of hope rarely penetrates, are the long-term dependent poor who have not worked for a long time or may have never been employed. They may not even be aware that there is a world above ground to which they might aspire" (Urban Core Support Network, 1998, p. 8). Our goal is to 'reach back' as far as possible to include disadvantaged people who are 'buried' in the deeper levels of the poverty mineshaft.

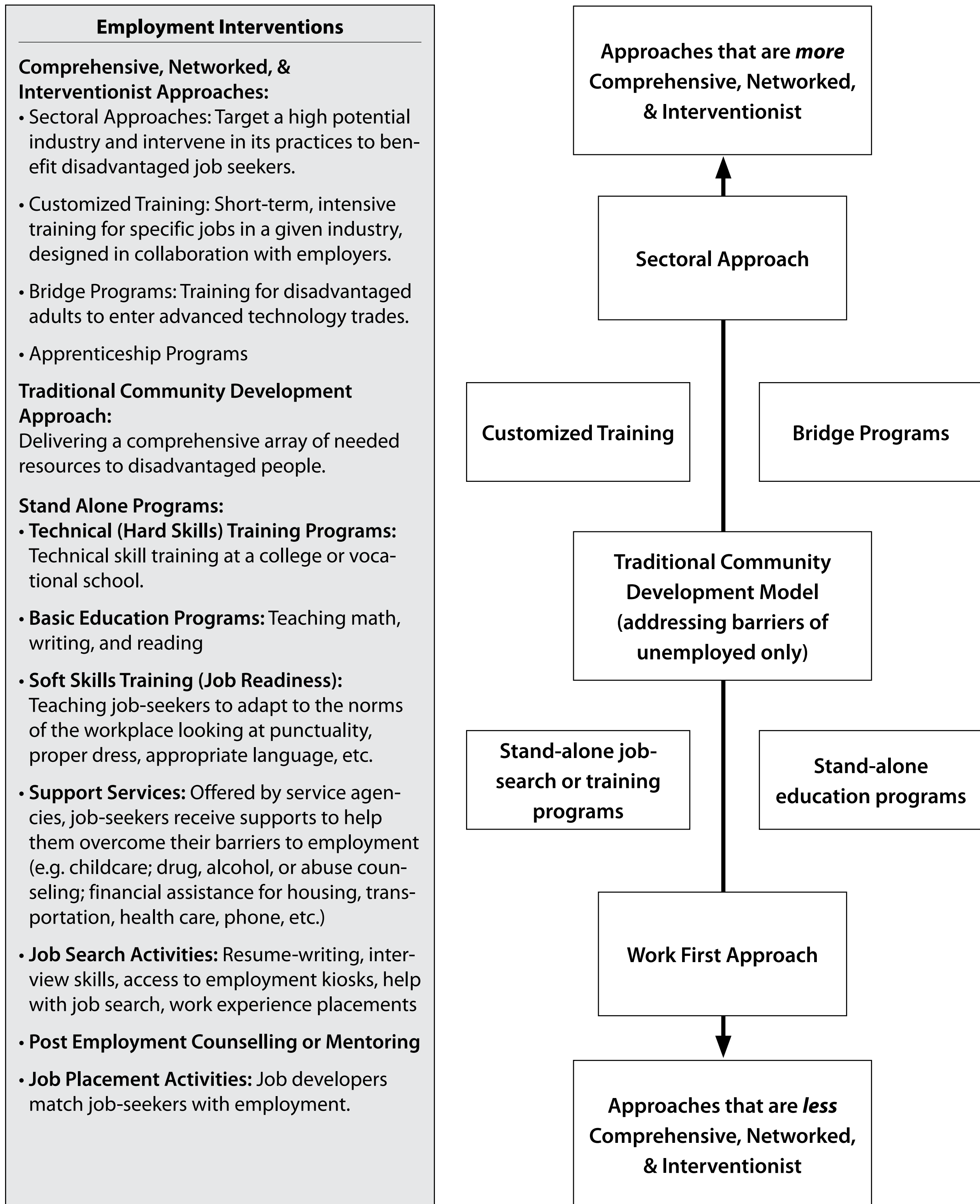
2.8 Placing common approaches on a hierarchy

We can now compare common approaches to employment development — the 'Work First' approach, the community development model, and sectoral initiatives — by placing them on our hierarchical continuum. Not surprisingly, stand-alone programs [including job search, basic education programs, and training programs] and the 'Work First' approach, occupy a low position on the hierarchy. These programs are not comprehensive, do not connect workers to employment development networks, and do not seek to alter the structure of the labour market.

At first glance, the traditional community development model seems to be a very positive approach to employment development. It is comprehensive, offering a vast array of resources to disadvantaged workers, and may even feature partnerships between different service providers. The serious limitation of this approach however, is that it focuses only on the supply-side of the labour market. Insufficient effort is made to network with other parts of the labour market system; insufficient effort is made to alter the structure of the labour market system.

Customized training and bridging programs [described below] are similar approaches that seek to link disadvantaged workers to good jobs. Their position on the hierarchy is elevated

Figure 2 **Placing Common Approaches on the Hierarchy**



because they are not only comprehensive, but also networked — involving partnerships with employers, community-based organizations, and training bodies. These approaches are also used to prepare workers for high-quality employment.

Customized training provides short-term, intensive training that prepares individuals for jobs in a targeted industry. Once the industry is selected for an employment development initiative, an intermediary organization researches the industry, and partners with employers and employer groups to determine what skills workers will need for jobs in the industry, and what jobs are available. Training may be supplied by a community-college, and designed in collaboration with employers and community-based organizations. Employers then use the intermediary as a 'hiring window' because it has pre-screened and trained prospective workers (Torjman, 1999b, p. 1). Well-designed customized training programs also incorporate comprehensive services like soft skills development, child care, basic skills, and other supports. Customized training programs have been criticized for preparing workers with a narrow range of skills, and not enough 'transferable skills'. These programs do not tend to initiate sustained change in the labour market, rather, they attempt to create workers who will fit into the job market at a particular place and time.

Bridge programs offer disadvantaged job seekers a 'bridge' to "employment as technicians and for post-secondary technical education in advanced technology trades" (Sommers, 2000, p. 3). The point at which participants get on the training 'bridge' depends on their individual attributes. 'Pre-bridge' programs can bring participants up to speed on basic education and soft skills. Bridge training provides technical skills just as customized training does, but it is typically a longer process. Sommers and Jenkins (2000, p. 3; 1999, p. 8) emphasize that bridge programs are not for the 'hard to employ', or those with limited basic skills. Some successful programs like Project: QUEST in San Antonio and Focus: HOPE in Detroit are considered bridging programs, and these, in addition to being highly networked and comprehensive, have successfully altered aspects of the labour market to benefit low-income job seekers. These programs do not rank at the top of the hierarchy, however, because of their long time frame, and their focus on the 'cream' of disadvantaged workers.

The approach that ranks the highest on our continuum is the sectoral approach. As discussed earlier, it targets a high-potential industry, intervenes in its practices, and alters the structure of the labour market to benefit disadvantaged workers. Sectoral approaches rank the highest because they aim to create a sustained change in the labour market, while providing comprehensive training and supports to participants, and linking them to a broader employment development network.

2.9 Summary: Best Practices for Employment Development

A review of a large body of employment development literature has revealed that the most successful initiatives have three qualities in common and use a number of strategies that can be considered best practices. Excellent initiatives offer a comprehensive package of supports to help workers overcome their barriers to employment, and a comprehensive training program teaching basic education, soft skills, and technical or 'hard skills'. Comprehensive programs also offer 'post-employment' supports to ease the transition into the workplace and increase worker retention. The best programs connect job seekers to an 'employment

development network' consisting of formalized partnerships with relevant actors in the local labour market system — such as community colleges, community-based organizations, governments, unions, and most importantly, employers. Engaging employers at every step is essential, and will provide the high-quality jobs that are the goal of employment development. The best initiatives try to alter how the labour market works to benefit low-income job seekers. The transition to work can be eased if training is designed to simulate the actual workplace, and if cultural competency strategies are used for employers and employees.

To prepare for anticipated skill shortages it is in the interests of employers in Winnipeg to begin tapping into previously ignored disadvantaged populations. Winnipeg already has many of the components necessary for successful employment development initiatives employing the best practices we have described.

The chart on the following pages summarizes the information presented in Part II.

Figure 3 **Placing Common Approaches on the Hierarchy**

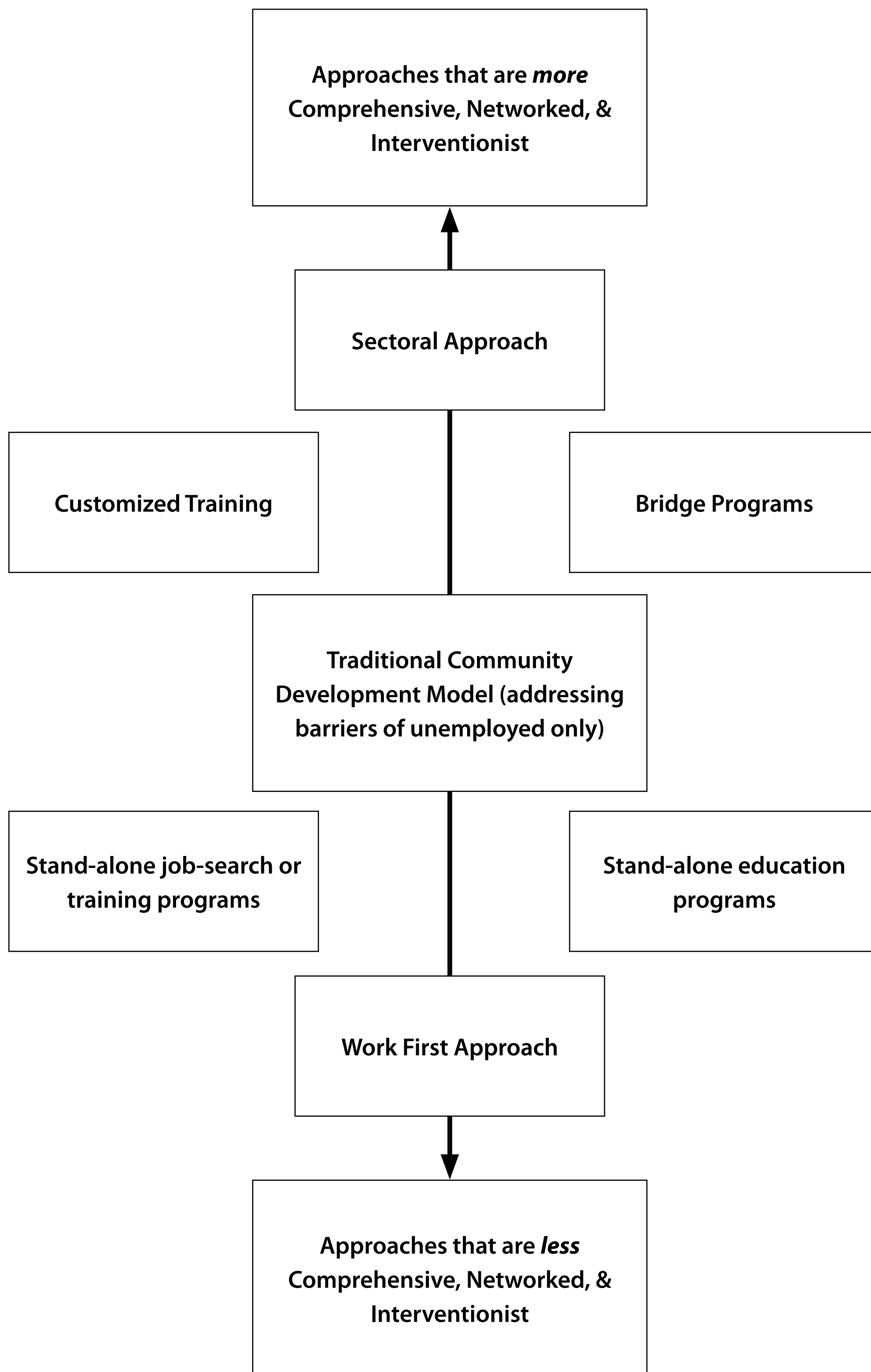


Figure 3 **Placing Common Approaches on the Hierarchy (cont.)**

Employment Interventions

Comprehensive, Networked, & Interventionist Approaches:

- Sectoral Approaches: Target a high potential industry and intervene in its practices to benefit disadvantaged job seekers.
- Customized Training: Short-term, intensive training for specific jobs in a given industry, designed in collaboration with employers.
- Bridge Programs: Training for disadvantaged adults to enter advanced technology trades.
- Apprenticeship Programs

Traditional Community Development Approach:
Delivering a comprehensive array of needed resources to disadvantaged people.

Stand Alone Programs:

- **Technical (Hard Skills) Training Programs:** Technical skill training at a college or vocational school.
- **Basic Education Programs:** Teaching math, writing, and reading
- **Soft Skills Training (Job Readiness):** Teaching job-seekers to adapt to the norms of the workplace looking at punctuality, proper dress, appropriate language, etc.
- **Support Services:** Offered by service agencies, job-seekers receive supports to help them overcome their barriers to employment (e.g. childcare; drug, alcohol, or abuse counseling; financial assistance for housing, transportation, health care, phone, etc.)
- **Job Search Activities:** Resume-writing, interview skills, access to employment kiosks, help with job search, work experience placements
- **Post Employment Counselling or Mentoring**
- **Job Placement Activities:** Job developers match job-seekers with employment.

Best Practices

Focus on High-Quality Jobs
Jobs alone will not help disadvantaged people out of poverty. They must offer benefits, opportunities for advancement, and a living wage.

Engage the Employer
Involve employers from beginning to end in designing the initiative. They can identify jobs, identify desired skills, help design training curricula, offer jobs to participants.

Build Networks and Create Partnerships
No group can do workforce development alone. Neighbourhood community-based organizations, community colleges & vocational institutions, government, unions, and especially employers need to collaborate to get people into jobs. A *labour market intermediary* works to bring these diverse stakeholders together.

Enlist Stakeholders with Clout

Offer comprehensive training with supports.
The best initiatives combine not only technical (hard skill) training *and* basic education, but also soft skills ("job readiness") training and job search / placement assistance. Furthermore, they provide a range of support services (child care, transportation and financial assistance, drug / substance abuse counseling etc.) to help clients overcome their barriers to employment.

Create Training Environments that Simulate the Real Workplace

Provide Post-Employment Support
Successful initiatives provide supports, mentoring, and/or follow-up counseling after a client is working to increase job retention.

Promote "Cultural Competence" for Both Employers and Jobseekers

Alter the Structure of the Labour Market
Promote changes in the local employment system that will benefit disadvantaged job seekers.

Part III **Evaluation of Winnipeg's Local Employment Development Context Against the Best Practices Model**

3.1 **The community-based character of employment development in Winnipeg**

Winnipeg's employment development scene has a community-based flavour. There are scores of community-based organizations offering a plethora of services to disadvantaged Winnipeggers seeking employment. Its community-based character is the real strength of much of Winnipeg's employment development system. Some of these community-based organizations (CBOs) help people overcome barriers to employment by offering support services. Others, such as the PATH resource centre in Winnipeg's North End offer job search assistance, resume help, and career counselling. Some provide basic skills upgrading, and others, such as the Urban Circle Training Centre on Selkirk Ave., provide a wide range of education and employment-related services, including technical skill training for specific jobs. Although the services offered are wide-ranging, and often overlapping, a uniting feature of Winnipeg's employment development programs is that they are community-based efforts, attempting to meet the needs of disadvantaged populations in the neighbourhoods where such populations are most concentrated.

There are many virtues of a community-based approach to employment development. Most notably, CBOs are close to the populations they serve, and accessible for people who need them, and are thus more successful at drawing in disadvantaged populations than government training programs, or employer-initiated interventions. Community-based employment service centres are located in neighbourhoods where disadvantaged people are most likely to live — many of them in Winnipeg's inner city. People feel comfortable walking into them, and they provide an informal atmosphere that is accepting, familiar, and not intimidating. In addition to being geographically accessible and safe environments, CBOs are staffed by people who understand the populations they serve, the barriers they face, and the realities of life in the neighbourhood. These organizations "generally emerge from grassroots, community efforts to tackle practical issues of local concern. As such, they are closely aligned with people who have first-hand experience of the issues being addressed" (Loewen, 2003, p. B-1).

Community-based employment development organizations are able to offer flexible and integrated responses to the needs of their clients. They recognize that different people may be at different levels in the 'mineshaft of poverty', and are equipped to meet the needs of each individual depending on the barriers they face. Many offer a number of programs under one roof, and work in partnership with other organizations to provide services that they themselves do not offer. Community-based employment service providers are often skilled at connecting different resources together to further support their clients.

3.2 **Categorizing Winnipeg's Employment Development Agencies**

We have developed three broad categories to classify Winnipeg's employment development

agencies: 'pre-employment' services; job search and placement agencies; and hard-skill training agencies. As most organizations provide more than one service, we cannot hope to develop a categorization scheme with exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories. Instead, we have tried to come up with general categories, and have placed different CBOs in those categories based on their principal employment development activities.

3.2.1 Pre-Employment Agencies: (soft-skills training, basic education, supports)

Pre-employment agencies are those that prepare people for work. These include organizations that provide soft-skill programs, personal development programs, basic education and upgrading, and support services. We have categorized all of these together as 'pre-employment', because they help job-seekers to begin to overcome the barriers preventing them from entering the world of work. These barriers may include, among others: addictions, low literacy levels, a host of family issues, lack of self-esteem and self-confidence, lack of exposure to the world of paid employment, and to the culture of the workplace. Many community-based employment development organizations in Winnipeg provide a mixture of services aimed at addressing such issues. Until such issues are addressed, consistent employment at a living wage is often not possible.

The Andrews Street Family Centre, for example, located in the North End's William Whyte neighbourhood, provides 'personal development' programming: parent and child drop-in groups, parenting classes, single-father drop-in groups, sharing circles to promote healing, adult literacy and upgrading programs. This type of CBO may not appear to be related to employment, but these services can help members of disadvantaged communities to begin to overcome their barriers and move closer to job readiness. Some of the many other organizations offering such programming include, for example, the Native Women's Transition Centre, the North End Women's Resource Centre, Wolseley Family Place and the Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre.

Many disadvantaged jobseekers need basic literacy and math skills, and educational upgrading. Adult Learning Centres in Winnipeg offer these services. The Victor Mager Adult Education and Job Training Program provides "general academic upgrading, pre-employment training, literacy classes, GED prep, and introduction to computers and the Internet" (Province of Manitoba, 2004). The Stevenson-Brittania Adult Learning Centre is another community-based learning centre, which offers daycare, counselling, bus tickets, job search and placement assistance, work experience and other supports to adult learners enrolled in literacy and upgrading courses (Province of Manitoba, 2004). A recent study of Aboriginal learners in selected Adult Learning Centres in Manitoba (Silver, Klyne and Simard, 2003) found those studied to be highly effective in meeting adult Aboriginal learners' needs, and in preparing them for employment.

Another agency offering pre-employment mentoring and counselling is the PATH Resource Centre on Selkirk Avenue in Winnipeg's North End. PATH has career coaches who assist clients in identifying a life and career path. Clients work to move along this 'path' and meet their personal development goals with assistance and mentoring. PATH helps clients prepare for employment by getting their personal lives in order. PATH also offers career counselling, a "literacy with an employment focus" program, a "job survival skills program", job search and resume writing assistance, and referral to other programs where necessary (PATH Website).

3.2.2 Job Search and Job Placement Agencies

A second category of community-based employment development organizations in Winnipeg includes those that help jobseekers prepare a resume, brush up on interview skills, and search for a job. Some also provide post-placement support or counselling to smooth a client's transition into employment. Such agencies assist clients who are essentially ready to work, helping them to connect with employers and find a job.

An example of a 'job search' agency is the Winnipeg Transition Centre. WTC offers services to clients who are unemployed and job-ready. Clients receive an assessment by a career counsellor, and may attend workshops on resume building, interview skills, soft-skills, and self-marketing. When ready, clients 'cold call' employers, who they have found in their job search sessions. The West Broadway Job Resource Centre is another example. Located in West Broadway, the Centre has a job board, computers for job searching, and offers resume-writing assistance. Other organizations in this category include The Salvation Army Work Readiness & Placement Program, the Elmwood Community Resource Centre, and House of Opportunities in the Spence neighbourhood.

Some job-search and placement programs are designed to help a particular barriered group. Reaching E-Quality Employment Services offers job search, resume workshops, assessments, and other services to unemployed job-seekers with physical disabilities. Specialized job-search services are also available for ex-offenders, Francophone clients, people with mental health concerns, immigrants, youth, Aboriginal job-seekers, and people who are blind. Some of these are summarized below:

- The Society for Manitobans with Disabilities (People with physical disabilities)
- Sara Riel Inc. (People with mental health concerns)
- Anishnaabe Oway-Ishi (Aboriginal youth)
- Youth Employment Service Manitoba (Youth)
- MMF Provincial Recruitment Initiative (Métis job-seekers)
- Pluri-Elles Inc. (Francophone job-seekers)
- Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development [CAHRD] (Aboriginal)
- Partners for Careers Aboriginal Employment Information Centre (Aboriginal)
- Success Skills Centre (Immigrant Professionals)
- Immigrant Employment Assistance Centre (Immigrants)
- John Howard Society of Manitoba (Ex-offenders)
- CNIB Employment within Reach (Job-seekers who are blind)

3.2.3 Hard skill training agencies

This third category of community-based employment development organizations offers training services that help job-seekers build specific skills. These programs may teach generic skills, such as forklift operation or computer certification; or they may be very specific, and carried out under customized training agreements with particular companies (Loewen, 2003, p. B-2). Hard-skill training organizations often provide additional services,

including pre-employment, job-search, and retention services, to complement their skill-training programs. Examples of such organizations in Winnipeg include Educare Business Centre, Opportunities for Employment, Urban Circle Training Centre, Winnipeg Industrial Skills Training Centre Inc., Red River College, and the Aboriginal People's College.

Educare Business Centre provides a 26-week Administrative Assistant training program which includes two weeks of work experience. Opportunities for Employment [OFE] offers a number of courses, most of which include job readiness and soft skills elements, and job preparation, search, and placement services. OFE offers two- to six-week courses certifying clients in air tools, food services, forklift operation, and computerized accounting. For clients who need more job preparation, OFE offers an eight-week employability skills program, a self-marketing program, and job search assistance. The Aboriginal People's College, run through CAHRD, offers training courses supplemented with employment counselling, job search assistance and retention services. Their courses certify participants in such areas as Early Childhood Education, Nursing, Cabinetry, and Power Engineering. Another training program that offers comprehensive supports is the Aerospace Manufacturing and Maintenance Orientation Program [AMMOP] at Tec Voc High School. This free program allows students to finish high school concurrently, has a training environment which simulates the workplace, and certifies students for employment in the aerospace industry. Red River's ACCESS program provides certification courses for low-income and disadvantaged Manitobans, including a nursing program, a pre-trades program, and an integrated Business and Administration program.

Some programs in this category are undertaken in collaboration with employers who offer jobs to successful participants. Trainees in the Manitoba Aerospace Human Resources Committee 'New Hires Project', for example, have jobs waiting when they complete their training. This 17-week welding program is provided to welfare recipients, Aboriginal people, and women. Red River College has programs that provide specific-skill training with job opportunities. Their professional truck driving program includes classroom training, 'in-cab' training, and 4-weeks of work experience with a trucking company. Upon completing training, participants are certified and typically stay on with the same company. The Manitoba Customer Contact Association is developing an Aboriginal Human Resources Strategy, and employs an Aboriginal Human Resource Liaison. The emphasis is on building networks between the Aboriginal community and the customer contact industry, incorporating a cultural component into the training for positions in the industry — for both potential employees and employers — and providing post-placement supports to new Aboriginal employees. Aboriginal Human Resource Liaison Barbara McMahon, when asked if the initiative had met with any resistance from employers, replied: "Not a bit, no, not a bit at all. All positive".

Many of Winnipeg's employment development organizations provide more than one type of service, and some are nearly comprehensive enough to serve as best-practice models themselves. The Urban Circle Training Centre, located on Selkirk Ave., offers Aboriginal participants a range of supports, pre-employment and soft-skills training, educational upgrading, hard-skill training, and post-employment support services. The approach is holistic, and is rooted in an innovative, culturally empowering context. Participants can earn a mature grade 12

diploma that is geared to employment, and that includes training in life skills, study skills, financial management, career counselling, job preparation, and a work experience component. In partnership with RRC and the Health Sciences Centre, Urban Circle also offers a 10-month certified health care aide/health care unit clerk program, which has a very high graduation and job placement rate. Urban Circle 'reaches back' to help truly disadvantaged individuals, serving Aboriginal men and women who are on social assistance, and who in many cases have been severely adversely affected by the impact of colonization (Silver, Klyne and Simard, 2003, pp.33-43).

3.3 Comparing Winnipeg's employment development scene to the Best Practices Model

In Winnipeg, numerous and diverse CBOs have risen to the challenge of working with disadvantaged people to find employment. When we compare the employment development landscape to our best practice model, however, some gaps appear. Winnipeg's employment development sector has the elements that can be built upon to create an employment development system that incorporates the best practices that have been described. As it stands, however, there are four areas in which it falls short of the best practice ideal.

3.3.1 We need strong, formalized networks

Employment development organizations in Winnipeg are not networked in a formalized and strong way. The current employment development system is not so much a 'system', as it is an assemblage of disparate parts. Many of the 'parts' are strong; they are not, however, connected sufficiently to form a coherent whole, a system or network.

The most successful employment development initiatives feature strong, formalized networks consisting of formal partnerships between various actors. To build such a network, organizations must sit at a common table and co-ordinate their activities. CBOs must formalize partnerships not only with each other, but also with employers, governments, unions, and educational institutions. There are some organizations which have forged partnerships with employers, as the previous section described, and many who share information and refer clients. But there is little in the way of a formalized network of the kind described in the best practices model.

3.3.2 We need a more comprehensive system

In its entirety, Winnipeg's employment development scene has all the elements of a comprehensive approach, including the full range of support services, soft-skills programming, basic-skills training, technical and hard skill training, job search and placement assistance, and post-employment supports. Taken separately, however, no community-based employment development organization in Winnipeg offers the complete continuum of services. Although some are quite close, no single agency is truly comprehensive. Organizations must partner with each other to provide comprehensive services. This is a good practice, but with each transaction of this kind — each referral of clients from one agency to another — something is lost, and clients will attest that receiving all their services from one trusted, community-based organization beats taking referrals and tromping all over town.

Many Winnipeg organizations receive funding with a narrow mandate to provide a specific service. Bound by these arrangements, and without other funding sources, such organizations are unable to expand their services — no

matter how much they might want to. It may be that Winnipeg would benefit from having more 'higher capacity' organizations, capable of providing a more comprehensive range of services, even if that were to mean fewer small organizations offering one or more stand-alone services.

3.3.3 We need initiatives that are more demand-side driven

The role of CBOs in employment development networks is important. CBOs are the gateway to these networks, and provide the crucial link to disadvantaged populations that other types of organizations simply cannot provide. In Winnipeg this 'supply-driven', community-based side of the labour market system is well developed.

Where more work needs to be done is on the 'demand-side'. By this we mean that employers need to be involved in all aspects of employment development, from program design, to providing work experiences, to integrating the programs into their recruitment practices, and even, in some cases, doing the training and instruction. Employer involvement is central to the success of any employment development initiative. No amount of soft-skills training, basic education, counseling, and even technical training will guarantee success if there are not employers on board to offer jobs to program participants. For this to happen, employers need to be involved in every aspect of the employment development program. Helen Buckley's analysis of Canadian Aboriginal training programs serves as a warning — training alone does not lead to jobs (Buckley, 1992).

There are some programs in Winnipeg that have formalized relationships with employers — the Urban Circle Training Centre's health care aide/health care unit clerk program; the Manitoba Aerospace Human Resources Committee 'New Hires' program; the Manitoba Customer Contact Association's Aboriginal Human Resources Liaison — but these examples are not the norm. A great deal of employment development work continues to be focused on the supply side, with a very low level of employer involvement in the total process.

The type of employer is also important. Our best practice model insists that the employers who are involved must be offering 'good' jobs — jobs offering a living wage with benefits and opportunities for advancement. The Hospitality Industry Training Program (HITP), which operates as a part of the Knox United Church Community Economic Development Society, is a very effective example of a community-based employment initiative closely linked to participating employers. A high proportion of participants find paid jobs; retention rates are high; promotion possibilities exist (Janes, 2005). But starting wages in the hospitality industry are so low — a function in part of Manitoba's low minimum wage — that this otherwise effective employment development program does not, despite its strengths, fully fit our best practices model.

There is some evidence that more employers — well aware as they are of labour shortage problems — may be prepared to enter into formalized relationships with CBOs to hire people from disadvantaged communities. A recent study by two University of Winnipeg students done in association with the PATH Centre involved interviews with ten North End industrial employers. The employers were asked their opinions about the development of a proposed North End Trades Training Centre (NETTC), which would be intended to move members of disadvantaged inner city communities into good jobs in the trades. Employer responses were generally positive. All identified the shortage of skilled tradespersons as a problem that

they themselves already face. Many expressed scepticism that a NETTC would be established, and all emphasized the importance of developing 'soft skills' as part of such a program, but most expressed sentiments similar to the employer who said: "…if there is a training centre set up where they could take a 6-8 month course, get the fundamentals of the trade, and then when they come out we'd hire them…. Try to find a person with any qualifications or any abilities for trades and there isn't" (Prosser and Charles, 2005). This suggests that there are more employers who would be prepared to add the crucial demand-side component to a fully-networked employment development system in Winnipeg.

3.3.4 We need an interventionist approach

The approach to employment development taken by community-based employment development organizations is not sufficiently interventionist. By that we mean that not enough effort is being made to change jobs to fit the circumstances of members of disadvantaged communities; the entire burden of change is placed on job-seekers, who are expected to fit into employment systems that have not been designed with their circumstances in mind. Some such changes could be made, we believe, relatively easily if there were a will to do so.

There are three kinds of demand-side interventions that could improve the employment chances of disadvantaged Winnipeggers. First, attempts could be made to change employers' recruitment criteria. By reassessing skills needed to do the job, and removing inflated criteria in place to screen applicants , doors could be opened to disadvantaged job-seekers. For example, it may be that in some cases where an employer requires prospective employees to have a grade 12 diploma, grade 12 is not really necessary for the job. Removing that barrier might open jobs to more members of disadvantaged communities.

A second such intervention would have employers relying more on CBOs for producing their supply of labour. In such a case the CBOs, located in and drawing upon the members of disadvantaged communities, would come to be relied upon as a more significant source of the labour supply for major employers. If employers come to depend upon CBOs as a reliable source of labour, they will be tapping into disadvantaged populations.

Finally, jobs can be restructured to meet the needs of disadvantaged workers. The aerospace industry in Winnipeg, for example, uses relatively low-skilled workers to dismantle, clean, catalogue and store the parts of aircraft engines undergoing major overhauls. In performing this work, the workers learn enough about aircraft engines to prepare them for higher level functions.

3.3.5 Summary: Winnipeg's Employment Development Context Evaluated Against the Best Practices Model

Winnipeg is well-served by a large number of employment development organizations that are genuinely community-based — physically located in low-income neighbourhoods, accessible to members of disadvantaged communities, skilled in providing a wide range of pre-employment and employment-related services in ways appropriate to the needs of disadvantaged communities. The task of reaching deep into these neighbourhoods and communities and offering to people the opportunity to begin to move toward employment in a friendly and accessible environment — an environment in which a wide range of services are available — is a strength of Winnipeg's employment development organizations.

The multi-faceted strengths of the existing employment development system notwithstanding, improvements are possible. When we measure Winnipeg's employment development system against the best practices model developed in Part II, we can identify four ways the system can be improved: first, the development of a strong, formalized network of all the actors in the employment development system; second, the creation of somewhat 'higher capacity' organizations able to provide, in one organizational setting, a more comprehensive range of employment services; third, the establishment of connections with employers, such that in many more cases people are not only being trained but also are being channeled directly into jobs; and fourth, the development of a more interventionist approach, aimed at maximizing the extent to which jobs, and hiring criteria, are structured with the needs of members of disadvantaged communities in mind.

Part IV **Jobs For Low-Income People: Some Innovative Initiatives in Advanced Manufacturing and IT Beyond Winnipeg**

Many innovative employment development initiatives are now being tried, in IT and advanced manufacturing, in jurisdictions beyond Winnipeg. In what follows we briefly summarize several of these. Each of these projects — and these are only selected examples drawn from a great many more such initiatives — is innovative in attempting to bring members of disadvantaged communities into good jobs. Some are quite successful; others are less so. There are no quick and easy ways to solve the problems this paper addresses. But there are solutions, as these and many other examples like them show. Creating made-in-Winnipeg solutions is the challenge we face.

Center for Employment Training (CET)

The Center for Employment Training (CET) is a leading employment training program in the USA. It works with farm workers, high school dropouts, welfare mothers and immigrants. In 2003 half of the almost 5000 trainees at CET sites were either limited English speakers or people who had not completed high school, or both. They were assisted to obtain employment in occupations such as computer support specialist, electronic assembler, PC technician, and computer systems hardware specialist.

Established in San Jose, California in 1967, CET is a non-profit organization that works closely with industry. Since 1967 CET has developed 33 training centers in 12 states.

CET provides training and supervision that simulates real workplaces — they pioneered the

'contextual learning model', and seek in their training to duplicate the 'rhythms of industry' — and works closely with employers. Their Industry Advisory Board, comprised of major employers, advises CET training centre directors, and provides direct contributions such as resources, equipment and instructors. The partnership between CET and industry is mutually beneficial: CET needs jobs for its trainees; industry needs skilled employees. Since 1967 CET has successfully trained and placed in jobs more than 100,000 people. In 2001, of 4316 people in all 33 of its centers, CET had a job placement rate of 74%.

FIT Initiative

FIT stands for "Fastract to IT." It is an industry-led initiative whose Board of Directors includes senior executives from 15 of the top IT companies globally. Started in Ireland, FIT has expanded across the European Union, with many requests from international organizations wishing to replicate the FIT model.

The FIT Working Group was established with the assistance of the Irish Development Agency (IDA) in September 1998, and FIT was designed with the participation of the region's major IT employers, including Corel, IBM and Microsoft, and worked closely with community-based training initiatives throughout the country, including Ireland's Ballymun Job Centre.

FIT's mission is to "meet the recruitment needs of industry in the area of IT, through providing training, support and career opportunities for unemployed people, so that they can achieve their true potential and contribute to the Irish economy."

FIT targets marginalized job seekers. To qualify for an FIT course one must be unemployed for six months, or be on lone parent's or disability allowance. FIT has developed methods of recruitment and selection which do not rely on formal education to determine capabilities, but instead use aptitude tests to forecast a person's success in the field.

FIT develops market-led IT curriculums that get unemployed people into sustainable employment, and then provides ongoing support to trainees once they have been placed in a job. FIT also has internship programs in affiliated companies, allowing employees to gain experience in the IT industry.

Between September 1998 and June 2004 FIT placed over 1,800 people in good jobs with career opportunities. This includes positions such as technical support agent, quality assurance tester, e-commerce web designer and PC maintenance technician. Industry benefits by gaining well-trained employees.

Homeboyz Interactive (HBI)

Homeboyz Interactive was founded in 1996 in Milwaukee, when the Jesuit community recognized the need for urban youth to have alternatives to the violence and poverty associated with the inner city. They organized neighbourhood groups to find solutions. The groups concluded that solutions need to be focused on economic development, need to involve work that youth find exciting, and need to lead to jobs that pay at least a living wage. The groups agreed that using computer skills would be attractive to inner city youth.

Homeboyz trains more than 20 young people each year, and since 1996 has placed 140 of them in positions such as web developer, help desk support, and network administrator. Some Homeboyz students return to school; some have started their own businesses, using their new skills to serve clients; and some have stayed to work with Homeboyz in the production aspects of the business.

Homeboyz targets the "technology have-nots." They pay special attention to youth involved in, or susceptible to becoming involved in, gang activity. The HBI motto is, "nothing stops a bullet like a job." Students range in age from 18 to 28 years and come from many ethnic backgrounds.

The Homeboyz training environment is rich in community and mentorship. A project-based curriculum provides students with a meaningful and effective experience. HBI provides continuous career mentoring in order to ensure the continued success of their graduates.

HBI has been involved in project-based learning since the initiative began in 1996. This requires students to apply their newly-learned IT skills to actual client service projects, while developing other skills such as problem solving and communication skills.

HBI Consulting is the division of Homeboyz Interactive responsible for managing consulting contracts. These contracts are used for training, and to provide a supplementary source of revenue for the program.

HBI is currently in the process of rebuilding the "Wisconsin Common Market" website, an e-commerce website for small to medium size businesses. This will also include the building of individual websites for associated companies.

HBI has also partnered with several other non-profits to provide a suite of IT products. Here, Homeboyz is attempting to find niche markets where they can capitalize on their "social enterprise" appeal. The non-profit sector appears to be reacting in favour of Homeboyz over their for-profit competitors.

i.c. stars

i. c. stars strives to prepare low-income young adults in Chicago for careers in technology. The program's vision is 'Leadership Development'. Its goal is to create 1000 community leaders in 10 years. The i.c. stars mission is to provide opportunities for inner city young adults to harness the strength of technology for social and economic leadership. By integrating technology training and leadership development, i.c.stars is 'shaping the next generation of technology leaders'.

i.c.stars targets a population of young adults that is not being effectively served in Chicago, those between the ages of 18 and 27 and without a formal education. Although this initiative targets those from disadvantaged backgrounds, there is a stringent selection process, featuring a 15 hour interview and problem-solving process to assess: technical aptitudes, resiliency, motivation, problem solving skills, and leadership potential.

The philosophy behind this rigorous selection process is that the young inner city population represent an untapped source for future economic and social leadership. The select few are not the "cream of the crop" in the traditional sense but are individuals who through overcoming adversity have developed the highest levels of resilience, problem-solving aptitude and motivation. These characteristics are standard prerequisites for leadership positions. The i. c. stars initiators feel that the more obstacles a person has overcome throughout their lives, the stronger the person will be.

i.c. stars claims very strong results in placing graduates in good jobs, or in post-secondary education. Graduates typically obtain employment in positions such as web developer and technical support.

Jane Addams Resource Corporation

Jane Addams Resource Corporation (JARC) is a not-for-profit community development organization founded in 1985 in Chicago, which works to strengthen the economy of local neighbour-

hoods. JARC receives national recognition as a best practice model for community and economic development.

JARC's Careers in Metalworking Program targets underemployed individuals who are at or below the poverty level, including those who are homeless or living in shelters. Eligible participants must be 18 years of age, have a grade 6 math level, be drug-free and not have been incarcerated for 6 months prior to entering the program, have no history of violent or sexual abuse, but need not be high school graduates.

Along with technical training in the Careers in Metalworking Program, JARC also offers a wide range of academic programs including one-on-one tutoring, math classes, writing groups, and basic computer skills to help people prepare for further job skills training, their GED, and to meet other goals that they set for themselves.

All training is done either on-site at JARC or at the Training Center for the Metalworking Trades, located one block from JARC in inner city Chicago. Training is 75% hands-on; students are able to practice their skills on machines they will encounter in the workplace, such as computer numerical control and tool and die setting machines.

JARC works in partnership with local businesses, developing training programs that link the work force needs of local industries with the job training and placement needs of disadvantaged persons in the community. Both employers, and members of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, sit on JARC's Board of Directors, and JARC is in frequent contact with local companies.

Approximately 30 people graduate annually from JARC's Careers in Metalworking Program. They are placed with participating employers in such positions as machine operator, welder and CNC operator.

Chicago Manufacturing Technology Bridge

The Chicago Manufacturing Technology Bridge (CMTB) is one of America's leading technology bridge programs aimed at preparing under-employed adults for career-path jobs in advanced manufacturing. The CMTB was established in 1997 to help alleviate skilled worker shortages facing Chicago area manufacturers. The CMTB is not a welfare-to-work program simply aimed at finding people any job. Rather, it focuses on providing a foundation for career-long learning on the job, and for formal post-secondary technical training institutions. Graduates obtain employment in positions such as assembler, set up operator, and CNC machinist. Because of their emphasis on learning in both the classroom and workplace, the Chicago Manufacturing Technology Bridge has been successful in training those who are educationally disadvantaged.

The CMTB is an intensive 16-week program offering instruction in technical fundamentals and employment skills, as well as case management and counseling, paid internships during training, job placement assistance and follow-up support.

The first step in the bridge program is conducted through the Instituto del Progreso Latino, a not-for-profit organization which provides basic training, recruitment, counseling, case management, job placement and follow-up support. Technical training begins at West Side Technical Institute, part of the City Colleges of Chicago, located two blocks from Instituto del Progreso Latino. West Side Tech is located in the middle of a Latino community that is one of the main entry points to Chicago for immigrants from Mexico and Central America. It is also on the border of Chicago's West Side, a high-poverty area with a population comprised largely of African-Americans. Participants are able to make a smoother transition to the tech-

nical training component of the bridge because of West Side Tech's close location to Instituto del Progreso Latino. Further educational opportunities are available through Greater West Town's Woodworking Program, Jane Addams Resource Corporation's Metalworking Skills Program, Humboldt Park Vocational, and the Illinois Institute of Technology.

A key feature of the Chicago Manufacturing Technology Bridge is its tiered levels of training that prepare people to start working as semi-skilled labourers in advanced manufacturing, with the freedom to work for a while before furthering their education if they choose. Career stepping stones are set at the beginning through course accreditation that participants can earn along the way, which can later be transferred into community colleges, such as the Illinois Institute of Technology.

An external evaluation of CMTB in 2001 found that graduates of the program, when compared to an otherwise similar group who did not take the program, were five times more likely to be employed, earned twice as much income on average, and were more likely to work in manufacturing and trade and less likely to work in services. The program was more successful for those with previous work experience than for those previously on welfare.

These examples are but the tip of the iceberg as regards innovative initiatives aimed at placing low-income people from disadvantaged communities in good jobs in advanced manufacturing and IT. We offer them here as tangible evidence that such initiatives can and do work, and we make some further comments in the Recommendations.

Part V **Jobs For Low-Income People: Winnipeg's Advanced Manufacturing and Information Technology Sectors**

We interviewed 34 Managers in Winnipeg's advanced manufacturing and information technology (IT) sectors between January and April, 2005. After introducing them to our project and its purpose — to find ways to bridge members of disadvantaged communities into good jobs in advanced manufacturing and IT — we asked: how many people does your organization employ; what are their jobs and their qualifications; how much turnover do you experience; and what challenges do you face in recruiting employees? We then asked what attempts had been made in advanced manufacturing and IT to hire people from disadvantaged communities, and what would have to be done to successfully introduce initiatives aimed at hiring people from disadvantaged communities in advanced manufacturing and IT.

5.1 Advanced Manufacturing

Advanced manufacturing represents one component of the overall manufacturing sector. It refers to the transformation of raw materials into marketable end products through the use of leading edge materials, processes, technologies and manufacturing methods. Advanced manufacturing is the more highly mechanized segment of the manufacturing process. Many of the best shop floor jobs involve the performance of this work. The positions tend to

require greater skills and knowledge than other shop floor positions.

Advanced manufacturing in Manitoba is diverse, producing a broad range of goods. The largest manufacturing industries in Manitoba include food, transportation equipment, primary metal and metal fabricating, machinery, and clothing. A high proportion of manufacturing companies in Manitoba are small to medium-sized, employing 50 or fewer people. Some of the biggest companies in Manitoba's advanced manufacturing sector include Motor Coach Industries (which supplies over half of North America's highway coach market), New Flyer Industries (North America's leading supplier of urban transit buses), Maple Leaf Foods, Palliser Furniture (one of Canada's largest furniture manufacturers), Monarch Industries, Canadian Tool and Die, and Melet Plastics.

The number one concern identified by manufacturers is a lack of skilled labour to support business growth. Many businesses — Monarch Industries is an example — are growing and would like to expand but are unable to because of a shortage of skilled labour. While there are plenty of people to fill low-skill, entry-level positions, it is a struggle finding high quality entry-level candidates with good work ethics and attitudes.

Our interviews with Human Relations Managers in advanced manufacturing companies in Winnipeg lead us to think that there are real opportunities here for developing the means by which to bridge low-income members of disadvantaged communities into good jobs.

5.2 The Information Technology Industry

Manitoba has over 1,500 companies in the Information Technology (IT) industry. The provincial IT industry includes two large Manitoba-based multinational corporations — Manitoba Telecommunication Services and Can West Global, which employ 3,200 and 1,200 people in Manitoba respectively; the Manitoba operations of such large IT multinational corporations as IBM and EDS, which employ 500 and 300 people in Manitoba respectively; a number of local, mid-sized IT companies like EISI-Naviplan, Momentum Healthware, Online Business Systems, Protegra Technology Group, and Vansco Electronics; and a large number of smaller companies. The industry produces a wide range of goods and services, including telecommunications equipment, computer equipment, components, instrumentation, packaged software, wires and cables, broadband data transmission, internet service provision, services to the customer contact industry, and consulting services more broadly.

Manitoba's IT industry is supported by an extensive network of research and development organizations and industry associations, and is a part of an emerging cluster of expertise around the Life Sciences, particularly in such important areas as health and bio informatics and medical imaging . The industry is strongly export-oriented, with the USA being the primary export market.

In 2003, Manitoba's IT industry employed 15,000 people. In addition, significant numbers of skilled IT employees work for the IT departments of large, private, public and non-profit organizations. The three levels of government, and large corporations like the Great-West Life Assurance Company and Investors Group, are examples.

While the industry is not currently experiencing many skills shortages, especially in entry-level jobs, employers are nevertheless interested in participating in programs that bridge workers with barriers into their compa-

nies. This is because of concerns about future skill shortages, and because some employers want to be, and to be seen to be, good 'citizens' of the province. One Manager said: "As citizens of Manitoba…we know that we have to be inclusive and not exclusive". Another added:" I think that they[IT employers] are fairly open-minded about it because when there is a skill shortage, people are looking for solutions".

IT employers knew of few employment development initiatives that bridge people from disadvantaged communities into good IT jobs. However, most employers know about, and are or have been involved in, co-op/internship type programs, and are extremely supportive of this model. Internships and co-operative placements involve employers taking in a graduate or a student for a specified work term: the student gains valuable work experience; the employer often finds good employees. A small version of such a program at Powerland Computers, which targets people with employment barriers, has been successful: "We get some very good workers out of this", Powerland told us.

Based on our interviews, we believe that there is considerable potential for placing low-income people in good jobs in both the advanced manufacturing and information technology sectors.

Part VI **The Results of a 'Collaboration' to Test Our Findings and Recommendations**

We tested the recommendations arising from this research project, as set out at the end of this paper, at a 'collaboration' held May 25, 2005 in Winnipeg. In attendance were 13 representatives of employers in advanced manufacturing and information technology, 2 representatives of educational institutions, 8 representatives of community based organizations, 12 government representatives, and 1 union representative. A total of 44 people participated in the event. Robert Giloth, Director of Family Economic Success with the Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF), and author and editor of numerous publications on employment development, made a presentation on the important work being done by the AECF's Jobs Initiative, and a representative of our research team presented the findings of and recommendations arising from our research. Participants were seated at tables in such a way that each table included representatives of employers, unions, governments, community-based organizations and educational institutions, plus a facilitator. Each table was asked to answer, with the help of the facilitator, three questions: (1) is the labour market intermediary concept something that should be done in Winnipeg? Could it be done? (2)Which particular features seem most critical in achieving the goal of bridging people with employment barriers into good jobs in advanced manufacturing and information technology? (3) What needs to be done to create one or more labour market intermediaries with the features contained in the presentation? A 'feedback' session featuring a panel selected

from the audience and a facilitator prompted a lively discussion. Finally, participants at each table were asked: From your organization's point of view, what is the step that would have to be taken to make a labour market intermediary (with the features described) a reality?

The results of the 'collaboration' were very positive. Employers were unanimous in the view that our recommendations are sound, and ought to be acted upon, and that the place to start is with creating a labour market intermediary in one sector, either advanced manufacturing or information technology. One representative of a large information technology company said: "There is a timeliness to this; the time for it is now", and later added, "if I were able to do one thing in this province, that [creating a labour market intermediary] is what I'd do". A community representative added that in Winnipeg we do partnerships really well, citing the tri-level urban development agreements in place since 1981 as an example. She added the observation that the value of intermediaries in a variety of areas, not just the labour market, is cited frequently in the literature. The sectoral approach was particularly cited as being appropriate for a labour market intermediary. As one employer put it, it makes sense to start with a smaller group, particularly where there already exists a sense of trust and some enthusiasm about such a project. Representatives of educational institutions, unions, governments and community based organizations and unions felt — with some provisos described below — similarly. As one community representative put it: "This is a huge step forward".

There were some reservations expressed. The representative of one community-based organization expressed the concern that a labour market intermediary might amount to little more than another layer of bureaucracy requiring still more time to be consumed in meetings. In response it was suggested that a new labour market intermediary ought to be conceptualized less as an organization, and more as a communications network. A business representative said: "There is a need to develop some sort of an entity to tie all the pieces together" — another way of suggesting that a labour market intermediary serve largely a networking/communications/coordination function. Another observation was that versions of the labour market intermediary concept are already in existence in Winnipeg — the Urban Circle Training Centre was cited as a good example — and we should not "re-invent the wheel". This was said, however, in a positive way, the implication being that the labour market intermediary idea has been tried in Winnipeg — albeit not in the full form described in this paper — and it works well. An important observation was that many smaller and medium-sized employers may not have the human resources capacity to manage evaluating and hiring applicants with 'alternative qualifications'. This arose in response to our observation that if entry-level requirements were re-structured — for example by eliminating the requirement for grade 12 when grade 12 was not really needed to do the job — more low-income people from disadvantaged communities would be likely to gain employment. Bob Giloth offered the interesting prospect that a 'work readiness certificate' might be created and promoted amongst employers. This would be consistent with the finding that a particularly important barrier to employment is a lack of 'soft skills', of job readiness skills. It was also observed, in this regard, that some organizations are particularly successful at training in 'life skills'. Again, the example of Urban Circle Training Centre was raised. UCTC offers a one-month 'intensive life-skills' course with a powerful Aboriginal cultural component, and they are experiencing "inter-generational well-

ness" as a result of this. Related to soft skills, one community representative emphasized the importance of cultural competency, given the prevalence in Winnipeg of racism: "racism is real" in Winnipeg, she said. Finally, it was mentioned that it might be difficult to get business involved in this idea. The response was that the 'business case', not the 'social case', has to made, and it can be — by reference to the shortages of skilled labour that are soon to emerge, and the costs associated with recruitment and retention. It was added that for the business community, the entire process being described in this paper ought to be laid out in a 'pathways' fashion, showing exactly how a person would work her or his way from the inner city, through various organizations to a good job. This would include a clear description, in the form of a 'mapping', of how the system as a whole would work, how each of the individual parts would work, and how they all fit together. Again, this observation was made in a positive way — as a means of persuading the business community of the merits of the idea.

On balance, the responses to our proposals was positive — indeed, *very* positive. It remains for some person(s) and/or organization(s) to begin the process of establishing a labour market intermediary in advanced manufacturing or information technology, putting in place the best practices described in this paper, and moving large numbers of low-income people from disadvantaged communities into good jobs. We feel confident in concluding, based on the results of our collaboration, that this is an initiative whose time has come.

Part VII **Conclusions**

This study was prompted by the coincidence of two powerful socio-economic and demographic trends of importance to Manitoba's economic future: an impending shortage of skilled labour; and a large and growing body of working age people in Winnipeg, particularly but not only in Winnipeg's inner city, who are outside of or not permanently attached to the labour market. Our purpose was to identify creative and effective ways of moving significant numbers of people from low-income, disadvantaged communities, into good jobs in the paid labour force, particularly in advanced manufacturing and IT.

We examined a large body of literature that describes a great many innovative efforts now underway to bridge low-income people from disadvantaged communities into good jobs. Abstracting from these studies, we concluded that the best employment development strategies are networked, comprehensive, employer-driven and interventionist, and using these findings we developed a best practices model. We then measured employment development efforts in Winnipeg against the best practices model. We found that Winnipeg's existing employment development organizations are strong in important respects: they are community-based, and accessible to the people who most need their services. People from disadvantaged communities feel comfortable in Winnipeg's many local, community-based employment development organizations. They are the 'gateway' through which members of disadvantaged communities who are outside the labour market can begin the journey leading to a good job.

We also found, when compared to the best practices model, aspects of employment devel-

opment practice in Winnipeg which could be improved. We set these out in four categories.

First, the employment development environment in Winnipeg is fragmented. It consists of many parts, which are not well connected, not networked. They do not constitute a system. It would be fruitful to take the steps necessary to connect the parts, to create a fully networked employment development system.

Second, most of the components of the Winnipeg employment development environment are not comprehensive. By that we mean that many community-based employment development organizations offer a limited range of services. The evidence supports the view that organizations able to offer a more comprehensive range of services are more effective in getting members of disadvantaged communities into good jobs. It would be fruitful to take steps to raise the capacity of those CBOs that currently offer a less-than-comprehensive range of services, to enable them to become more comprehensive. Care should be taken to ensure that in doing so, the crucial community-based character of these organizations not be lost.

Third, employment development organizations in Winnipeg tend to be stronger on the supply side than the demand side of the employment development equation. By that we mean that employers — the demand side — are not as involved in the process as they could be, and as is suggested they should be by the best practices model. The evidence is clear that the strongest employment development initiatives are those in which employers are involved in every step of the process, so that prospective employees who meet the agreed conditions have a job that they can go to. It would be fruitful to take steps to involve employers in the employment development process much more than is now the case — including, for example, designing training initiatives, teaching training initiatives, and offering co-op opportunities.

Fourth, most of the initiatives examined attempt to place job seekers into existing workplaces. One, Homeboyz Interactive, has taken a more entrepreneurial approach. Homeboyz has established a social enterprise that provides computer programming, network administration and graphic design services in the commercial marketplace. Homeboyz provides comprehensive personal development and IT skills training, and then hires trainees and employs them to provide services under contract to other organizations. Eventually many of these employees find their way into mainstream employment.

There is the potential to replicate the Homeboyz model in Manitoba. A suggestion that came forward in the interviews with local IT employers was to establish an enterprise to offer software testing and/or system documentation services. These functions are generally performed as part of higher paying, multi-skilled jobs, but the work could be reorganized to be performed as single function jobs by workers trained specifically for this work. This could become an important service to the local IT sector. It would be a way of making the work accessible to those with relatively low levels of education, but with training in these specific functions. Workers could use these jobs as entry level positions that prepare them for higher level, multi-skilled positions.

A software testing/system documentation enterprise could be established as a normal commercial enterprise, or as a social enterprise. A social enterprise is a revenue generating business with primarily social objectives. It produces goods and services for the market economy, but reinvests its surpluses towards its social purposes. The federal government has said that it is about to make significant new

resources available for social enterprise development. There is already an emerging social enterprise sector in Manitoba that, with some additional support, may have the capacity to establish a Homeboyz-type venture.

Finally, the literature that we examined stressed the importance of cultural competence in bridging members of disadvantaged communities into good jobs. Some of the best examples of employment development in Winnipeg — the Urban Circle Training Centre is a particularly important example — have developed uniquely powerful methods of teaching cultural competence. The literature is very clear in finding that it is both prospective employees, and employers, who can benefit from being educated in cultural competence. The transition from being outside of the labour market, to being a productive part of the paid labour force and holding a good job, is fraught with difficulties. Cultural differences are often an important barrier. Training in cultural competence is important — in many cases, essential — in overcoming that particular barrier, and is needed at every step of the employment development process: community based organizations, education and training institutions, employers and unions.

How do we move toward a more networked, comprehensive, employer-driven, interventionist and culturally competent employment development system in Winnipeg? The literature that we have examined suggests that this is best achieved by the creation of a workforce intermediary. In this paper we have identified many instances when a workforce intermediary emerged in a particular city and industry, creating significant value-added to the employment development process for members of disadvantaged communities. We have described what we mean by a workforce intermediary, and what such a body does, and we have offered considerable evidence of the success of such bodies.

Workforce intermediaries bring together around a single table otherwise diverse and separated elements of the community, in pursuit of a common objective — moving significant numbers of low-income people from disadvantaged communities into good jobs. For a workforce intermediary to be successful, it is most important that employers, including private sector employers, be actively involved. But the involvement of others — governments, unions, community-based organizations, educational institutions — is absolutely essential as well. It is necessary that a workforce intermediary be formalized, as opposed to being a more casual grouping of interested parties; that it be largely employer-driven, since it is employers who hire; and that each party bring to the workforce intermediary a particular commitment. Employers have to come to the table committed to hiring specified numbers of people who have met agreed-upon criteria. Community-based organizations have to come committed to delivering specified numbers of potential employees who they deem capable of meeting the agreed-upon criteria. Educational institutions have to come to the table committed to mounting the courses that employers have had a hand in developing, and for which CBOs have agreed to deliver suitable trainees, and which will lead to good jobs upon completion of the training. The workforce intermediary is the central coordinating body for putting into effect this kind of employment development strategy.

Pulling together the various actors — employers, CBOs, educational institutions, governments, unions — which would constitute a workforce intermediary is no easy task. Many of the parts of the would-be network rarely if ever talk with each other. Giloth has argued, in fact, that CBOs and employers speak a 'different language'. How, then, can they be drawn together to form a workforce intermediary?

There is a body of literature which speaks directly to this issue. We refer in particular to the work of American urban scholar Clarence N. Stone. Stone has argued that large urban reform initiatives require, for their success, that two conditions be met. First, a broadly-based coalition has to be built, and second, that coalition has to have a clear and commonly-held definition of the problem, and its solution (Stone, Henig, Jones and Pierannunzi, 2001).

With respect to building a broadly-based coalition, Stone argues that this can best be thought of as mobilizing civic capacity. The mobilization of civic capacity — bringing important elements of the community together around a common purpose — is a political process. That is, a broadly-based coalition working to a common purpose will not simply emerge spontaneously. It has to be built, in a conscious and deliberate manner. And once built, it has to be nurtured over an extended period of time. This is a political process, and one not easy to achieve. However, we know that it can be done. We know that broadly-based coalitions have been built in other cities to pursue a host of objectives, usually associated with the construction of physical infrastructure — sports stadiums and arenas, and waterfront redevelopment initiatives are examples. And we know that broadly-based coalitions have been built here in Winnipeg in pursuit of various objectives: United Way of Winnipeg is a good example; the staging of the Pan-Am Games is another. The participation of the corporate community in these broadly-based coalitions is considered to be an essential ingredient for success, as is the emergence of a 'champion', a community leader, to initiate the process and drive it forward.

The second condition involves what is called 'issue definition'. Issues are not self-defining. That is, problems do not necessarily emerge as public issues, and in particular do not necessarily emerge as public issues about which something is going to be done. They have to be defined or constructed as such, and that is a conscious and deliberate process. It, too, is a political process. Most important in the defining of a public issue is the construction of a problem as something that is "…amenable to solution through civic or political action" (Stone, Henig, Jones and Pierannunzi, 2001, p.26). For a problem to come to be seen as a public issue requires both that it be seen as a source of difficulties, and that it be seen as something amenable to solution if we collectively act upon it. In the case of employment development, it means that the problem of an impending labour shortage and the existence in Winnipeg of large numbers of low-income individuals from disadvantaged communities who are not now a part of the paid labour force, would have to emerge as an important problem, as a 'public issue', and as a problem for which there are solutions. For a broadly-based coalition to take this problem on, there would have to be a general agreement about what those solutions might be. These are things that do not happen simply because people write a paper about them. Rather, these are things that powerful forces in the community need to mobilize around and act upon. In this sense, this is a 'political' process. And what it requires is exceptional leadership. Forces in the community who are capable of bringing otherwise disparate elements of the community together around what they collectively define as a 'public issue' — a problem that they can come to agree is important, and about which they come to agree on a common solution — need to play leadership roles in defining the issue and building a broadly-based coalition to solve the issue.

We believe that in this paper we have contributed to "defining the issue". We have demonstrated that the problem of high rates of

unemployment and low rates of labour force participation among members of disadvantaged communities — a problem that contributes causally to the creation of many other social problems — is one that is amenable to solution. We have developed a model to describe that solution. The other necessary condition for a solution to the problem is the building of a broadly-based coalition committed to putting in place a version of that model. Building such a coalition is possible. It requires the emergence in the community of the leadership needed to make it happen.

Part VIII
Recommendations

The twin challenges that prompted this study — an impending shortage of skilled labour, coinciding with large and growing numbers of low-income people who are outside of, or not permanently attached to, the paid labour force — constitute both a challenge and an opportunity. They constitute an opportunity because we know, from our examination of the recent experience in many other jurisdictions, that it is possible to seize the initiative and take a quantum leap forward in developing a solution to both challenges. This can be done by creating a workforce intermediary that is focused on a particular industry; that is comprised of employers, unions, government, community-based organizations and educational institutions; that is committed to developing in Winnipeg an improved employment development system that is networked, comprehensive, employer-driven, interventionist and culturally competent; and that is committed to working through the network to move large numbers of low-income members of disadvantaged communities into good jobs.

We believe that workforce intermediaries ought to be established in both advanced manufacturing and IT, with the first being established in advanced manufacturing. In advanced manufacturing, skills shortages are already being experienced; IT may be five years or so away from such skills shortages. Therefore the establishment of a workforce intermediary in advanced manufacturing would be an immediate win-win situation for employers and low-income persons from disadvantaged communities. We want to emphasize, however, that IT represents an important area of potential employment for low-income people from dis-

advantaged communities, that there are many highly successful employment development programs in IT that could be replicated here in Winnipeg, and that even in the absence of an immediate skills shortage, IT represents an area with significant potential for employment equity activity.

Therefore we recommend that:

1. Steps be taken immediately to create a workforce intermediary for advanced manufacturing industries in Winnipeg.

• This is likely to require the emergence of a 'champion' — an individual or organization prepared to take the lead in ensuring that a workforce intermediary for advanced manufacturing is established, and to take the lead in nurturing the process through the initial steps until the workforce intermediary is fully functional.

• This is a process which cannot proceed without the full involvement of the business community, but for which the involvement of government, educational institutions, unions and community-based organizations is also essential.

• This is an initiative which requires that bold and decisive steps be taken in pursuit of a common goal, and for this to happen requires 'issue definition'. The issue has to be articulated publicly as a problem or challenge which is important enough that it demands that action be taken, and a problem or challenge for which there is a commonly-agreed solution.

• Achieving this is a political process, in a two-fold sense: it requires pulling together diverse parts of the community around a common goal; and it requires shaping and defining the issue in the public realm, as one worthy of action and capable of solution.

• Achieving this will require that government resources be committed to the process. There will be a need for resources: to enable the workforce intermediary to become established and to operate; to perform the full range of employment development functions that are necessary; and, in some cases, to provide financial allowances to support trainees. Existing resources can be brought to bear — for example, the CBOs and colleges that already perform a range of employment development functions — but additional resources for new functions, for example post-placement support, will also be necessary.

2. Steps be taken to build upon the considerable strengths of Winnipeg's largely community-based employment development environment, in order to move it toward the best practices model identified in this study. Specifically, we recommend that:

• Winnipeg's employment development environment should be assisted to become more networked, more of a system. Much of the good work now being done is disconnected, with one organization not knowing what another is doing. Already-existing strengths would be magnified by the development of a more networked system; the creation of a workforce intermediary would achieve this goal in any given industry in which a WI is established.

• Winnipeg's employment development organizations be assisted to become more comprehensive. Each of many small community-based organizations now

delivers some but not all employment development services. Organizations with greater capacities to deliver a more comprehensive range of services without losing their all-important community-based character would be likely to be more effective.

• Winnipeg's employment development environment be assisted to become more employer-driven. Employers are involved in some of Winnipeg's community-based employment development organizations. In some cases employer involvement is intense, and the result is that training is delivered that leads to good jobs. These positive examples need to be expanded.

• Winnipeg's employment development environment be assisted to become more interventionist. This requires that employers restructure jobs, qualifications and/or recruitment processes to best meet the needs of disadvantaged workers. This has already been done in some industries — aerospace is an example — and needs to be expanded.

• Winnipeg's employment development environment be assisted to become more culturally competent. A significant proportion of Winnipeg's low-income people who are outside the labour market are Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people, and the labour market, can to some extent be seen as Winnipeg's own 'two solitudes'. Cultural competence needs to be developed in both solitudes if strong and reliable bridges to good jobs are to be built.

3. Attention be paid to the following "best practice" considerations in the implementation of any employment development programming.
These considerations are supplemental to the ones already outlined in recommendations (1) and (2) above.

a) From the literature. A review of the literature on employment development best practice would suggest that good program design:

- **Focuses on "good jobs":**
  While an argument can be made that almost any job represents a positive developmental move for somebody with little or no work experience and long periods of unemployment, it is also clear that frequently such employment becomes a dead end trap from which the participant never escapes. Programs that focus on full time, permanent jobs that provide a living wage and some possibility of advancement, have a much stronger impact on the long term social and economic well being of the participants.

- **Simulates the work place:**
  A key challenge for many job seekers is to become oriented to the norms and rituals of the workplace. A training regime that is physically constructed like a typical workplace, and that holds the same expectations in terms of punctuality, attendance, teamwork etc. is more likely to achieve that.

- **Provides post employment supports:**
  Job preparation and placement represents a significant achievement for job seekers with employment barriers. Job retention is also a significant challenge. Programs

that continue to provide problem solving supports to participants and their employers after job placement are more likely to have the strongest outcomes.

- **Incorporates as many of the following interventions as possible and as needed:**
  - Technical (hard skills) training
  - Basic education programs such as math, reading, writing
  - Job readiness (soft skills) training
  - Support services such as counseling, child care, transportation assistance etc.
  - Job search assistance such as resume writing and interviewing skills
  - Job placement activities that match job seekers with employers

b) From the interviews with employers. Employers have suggested that programs with the following characteristics are most likely to be attractive to them:

- They include a co-op education or internship component
- They include training allowances or subsidies to employers
- They include, in organized workplaces, the full involvement of the union in all steps of the process
- They include financial assistance to students to help them through the training period

4. Consideration be given to the following program design possibilities.

The following is a list of program design features noted during the research. They are observations only, and have not been verified by independent research.

- **Case management approach:**

A number of programs assign each participant to a case worker at the beginning of the employment preparation process. This case worker assists the participant through each of the steps in the journey towards employment.

- **Career laddering:**

A few of the programs initially prepare participants for lower level positions, with the possibility of later participating in further upgrading to prepare for higher level positions.

- **Entrepreneurial possibility:**

Most of the interventions researched for this project attempt to prepare and place job seekers into existing workplaces. One of them has taken a more entrepreneurial approach. Elsewhere in this report we have described the work of Homeboyz Interactive (HBI). Homeboyz has established a social enterprise that provides computer programming, network administration and graphic design services in the commercial marketplace. Homeboyz provides comprehensive personal development and IT skills training. It then hires the trainees and employs them to provide services under contract to other organizations. Eventually many of these employees find their way into mainstream employment.

There is the potential to replicate the Homeboyz model in Manitoba. One of the suggestions that came forward in the interviews with local Information Technology professionals was to establish an enterprise to offer software testing and/or system documentation services. Both of these functions are generally performed as part of higher paying, multi-skilled jobs. It

would be possible, however, to reorganize this work such that it is performed within single function jobs by workers who are trained specifically to perform this work. This could become an important service to the local IT sector. It would also be a way of making the work accessible to job seekers with relatively low levels of education, but with training in these specific functions. Workers could use these jobs as entry level positions that prepare them for higher level, multi-skilled positions.

A software testing/system documentation enterprise could be established as a normal commercial enterprise, or it could be established as a social enterprise. A social enterprise is a revenue generating business with primarily social objectives. It produces goods and services for the market economy, but reinvests its surpluses towards its social purposes. The federal government is about to make significant new resources available for social enterprise development. There is already an emerging social enterprise sector in Manitoba that, with some additional support, may have the capacity to establish a Homeboyz type venture.

• **Project based learning:**
There is some evidence that the experiential aspect of training on real life projects can be helpful in the preparation process.

• **Youth at risk applicability:**
Two of the programs presented in this paper focus specifically on youth at risk. There is evidence that focusing these programs on current or former street gang members can produce important returns for the participants and society as a whole.

• **Self-paced, competency based training:**
Jobs in the Information Technology field often provide a high degree of flexibility for employees to structure their own work regimen. A number of the IT employment development programs also report achieving good results by providing competency based training in which participants work at their own pace.

• **Physical location of training centre:**
Some programs deliberately locate their training centres in inner city locations to increase accessibility to low-income job seekers.

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Employment Projects of Winnipeg (EPW) http://www.epw.ca/

Focus: HOPE (Detroit) http://www.focushope.edu

PATH Resource Centre (Winnipeg) http://www3.mb.sympatico.ca/~pathnecr/frameset.htm

Project: QUEST (San Antonio) http://www.questsa.com

Bridge to Advanced Technological Education (Chicago) http://www.uic.edu/cuppa/techbridge/Chicago/main.html

Urban Circle Training Centre http://www.webspawner.com/users/urbancircle/

Appendix A **List of Collaboration Attendees**

Teresa Andreychuck
Reaching Equality Employment Services

Debbie Bean
The Winnipeg Foundation

Anna Beauchamp
Advanced Education and Training

Jeff Betker
Manitoba Metis Federation

Linda Brazier-Lamoureux
United Way

Bob Brezden
Standard Aero

Patrick Bruning
Researcher

Shannon Campbell
Western Economic Diversification

Martin Cash
Winnipeg Free Press

Ron Castel
Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

Angela Delaronde
Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

Veronica Dyck
Education Citizenship and Youth

Alison Elliot
Industry Training Partnerships

Brenda Garner
A Stepping Stone Adult learning centre

Bob Giloth
Annie E. Casey Foundation

Trevor Gonsalees
Victor Mager Adult Education and Job Training program

George Gysel
Maple Leaf Foods

Jackie Halliburton
City of Winnipeg — Corporate Services

Lesley Hughes
Facilitator

Betty Juselius
North End Community Renewal Corporation

Kathy Knight
ICTAM

Ron Koslowsky
Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters

Brent Kurz
Winnipeg Techinical College

David Laird
City of Winnipeg

Sandra Larson
Province of Manitoba

Louis Leclerc
Family Services and Housing

Garry Loewen
Project Manager

John Longbottom
IBM

Tannis Magnusson
New Flyer Industries

Marileen McCormick
Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development

Molly McCracken
Community and Economic Development Committee of Cabinet

Shauna Meyerson
Researcher

Wes Penner
Powerland Computers

Jack Peterson
Consultant

Tammy Proctor
Maple Leaf Foods

Ellis Shippam
Energy Science and Technology — Knowledge Enterprise Branch

Jim Silver
University of Winnipeg

Wilf Smith
Omniglass Ltd. Ed

Norma Spence
Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat

Maria Stapleton
Winnipeg Transition Centre

Eleanor Thompson
Urban Circle Training Centre

Claudette Toupin
Province of Manitoba

Christina Weise
Province of Manitoba

Cathy Woods
MGEU

Appendix B **List of Employers Interviewed**

Information Technology

Emerging Information Systems Inc.
Heldor Morgadinho

IBM Canada Ltd.
John Longbottom

Online Business Systems
Ria Neuendorff

Protegra Technology Group
Dan Perron

Vansco Electronics
Dayna Brown

TRLabs Winnipeg
Dr. Jeff Diamond

Powerland Computers
Wes Penner

University of Manitoba
Janice Sisson

University of Winnipeg
Geri Wensel

Investors Group
Gloria Mitchell

Great West Life
Jodie Carradice

Standard Aero
Mr. Alex Yoong, and Mr. Bob Brezden

Manitoba Lotteries Corporation
Sandy Tapper

Concordia Hospital
Heather Tabin

Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
Tamara Murphy

ICTAM
Kathy Knight

City of Winnipeg
Cliff Jeffers

Jack Peterson PhD
IT Consultant

Manitoba Interactive Digital Media Association
John Jameson

Advanced Manufacturing

The Winnipeg Sun
Chris Kehler

Palliser Furniture Ltd.
Paul Gibson

Pollard Banknote Ltd.
Diane Hook

Monarch Industries
Roy Cook

Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters
Ron Koslowsky

Motor Coach Industries
Mike Cuma

Cascades
John Bogar

New Flyer Industries
Janice Harper

Maple Leaf Foods
George Gysel

Canadian Tool & Die
Frank Capasso

Omniglass Ltd.
Don Keatch

Melet Plastics
Ed Shinewald