



## **Barriers to Employment in Port Alberni:**

*What are they?*

*How can they be best addressed by the community?*

Terry Deakin, MACD candidate

School of Public Administration

University of Victoria

May 30, 2016

- Client:** Theresa Kingston, Director of Community Services  
City of Port Alberni
- Supervisor:** Dr. Herman Bakvis  
School of Public Administration, University of Victoria
- Second Reader:** Dr. Richard Marcy  
School of Public Administration, University of Victoria
- Chair:** Dr. Budd Hall  
School of Public Administration, University of Victoria

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report would not have been completed without the space and support that I received to make it happen. Thank you to the following:

- ❖ My husband, Mike, for the continued encouragement and support to stay focused;
- ❖ My staff for their fabulous team work, continued encouragement, and support;
- ❖ My family and friends who were always there to listen and encourage;
- ❖ My classmates who were the best that anyone could ask for; and
- ❖ My supervisor who was always there when I needed him.

Thank you to my client, Theresa Kingston of the City of Port Alberni for her interest and encouragement to engage in the project, and her patience while I prioritized work and events.

To the individuals who took the time to provide valuable information for the research to be conducted – a special thank you.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

A struggle to recover from industrial and economic decline over the past 30 years has the City of Port Alberni continually seeking social and economic vitality. The social issues in the uptown core have been a concern for the City of Port Alberni, and the employment barriers that local job seekers experience continue to inhibit the local labour market and negatively impact existing social issues. Neither the local government nor the community agencies have had any great success in alleviating employment barriers or other social issues.

Employment barriers include mental and physical disabilities as well as personal and external challenges that get in the way of obtaining and maintaining employment. Barriers experienced in Port Alberni create a population of unemployed individuals who are at risk of or contribute to increased social challenges. Additionally, local employers have difficulty finding suitable employees and the unemployment rate in Port Alberni continues to be higher than the Provincial average. Identification of the barriers and stakeholder input will support the City of Port Alberni, Director of Community Services with strategies to work with the community to address social issues as indicated in the City's Corporate Strategic Plan 2014-2016.

#### Primary Research Question:

*How can the community of Port Alberni work together to address barriers to employment and increase labour market attachment for people who experience multiple barriers to employment?*

#### Secondary Research Questions:

*What are the employment barriers experienced by individuals in Port Alberni?*

*What strategies can be incorporated by the community to address barriers to employment?*

*Who should be responsible for implementing these strategies?*

### METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Access to the current knowledge and work done in the community supported a social action theory methodology that used a mixed methods research design. The research included gathering local information, a comprehensive literature review, completion of questionnaires by four different stakeholder groups, and a facilitated group brainstorming session. The literature review includes a review of historical practices informing the current treatment of people who live with disabilities or employment barriers, examination of employment barriers experienced

internationally, and evaluation of strategies used to address employment barriers. The primary data was gathered through questionnaires and a group forum, then compiled and analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The finding and analysis then informed the recommendations and conclusion.

## FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The findings include the demography and views of the 57 individual research participants, a quantitative presentation of the employment barriers experienced in Port Alberni, and a qualitative presentation of the strategies as identified by participants to support the community to address those barriers. The description of barriers provided by participants was extremely similar to those revealed in the literature review: Physical, Mental, Personal/Social, Cultural/Status, Structural, and Educational barriers. Similarly, the strategies identified by participants were closely aligned with those presented in the literature view, providing the opportunity to begin coding based on the themes previously identified. However, new themes emerged and strategies were grouped under the following themes: Comprehensive Intensive Supports; Supported Employment; Early Intervention; Economic Development; City & Community Strategies; and Government Responsibilities. Consequently, the presentation and analysis of the findings provided an opportunity to link the barriers to the strategies.

The analysis points out the similarities and the differences between the local barriers and those reviewed in the literature and then links the local barriers to the strategies identified by the participants. General insight in to the limitations of the research design provides an opportunity to explore what worked and what might have worked better. The literature review and the primary data introduce four interesting research ideas: employer perspectives, the power of positive language; early intervention; and understanding ‘how to work together’. The summary indicates that the suggested strategies depend on strong partnerships to execute community plans, housing and transportation strategies, policy changes and increased funding, economic diversification, and more and better education, training, and supports for individuals.

## RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The research project resulted in ten recommendations and three additional options for the City of Port Alberni to consider. The three options to consider are:

1. Maintaining the status quo;
2. Providing continued support for community agencies to work on social issues; and/or
3. Hiring a social planning coordinator to coordinate community social services, networks, and partnerships for a concerted effort to address social issues.

The third of the three options may work best to leverage local resources; however, it is also the most costly.

The ten recommendations developed from the literature and the primary data include:

1. Request a project summary to engage community stakeholders;
2. Leverage existing groups to formalize strategic partnerships;
3. Facilitate a strategic partnership to develop and train inclusive hiring practices for local employers;
4. Work with local social services to develop and distribute the power of positive language information;
5. Encourage social service agencies to facilitate strength-based comprehensive services;
6. Promote inclusion of all stakeholders in community groups;
7. Ensure cultural awareness is a key feature of the AV Learning Council;
8. Develop a community diversity awareness campaign;
9. Coordinate non-profit social service activities;
10. Engage the economic development manager to support social issue strategies.

The multiplicities of the employment barriers in Port Alberni along with the driving social issues that are also consequences of the barriers create a complex situation. The work of the existing agencies, groups, and networks can be coordinated and merged to develop the partnerships and leverage resources required to address the barriers to employment and other social issues. The leadership of the City's Community Services Department in forming the working communities to implement the recommendations will become the fundamental building blocks needed for social and economic capacity to showcase a positive Port Alberni.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover .....	i
Acknowledgements .....	ii
Executive Summary.....	iii
Introduction .....	iii
Methodology and Methods.....	iii
Findings and Analysis .....	iv
Recommendations and Conclusion .....	iv
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Figures/Tables.....	viii
<b>Figures</b> .....	viii
<b>Tables</b> .....	viii
<b>1.0 Introduction</b> .....	9
<b>1.1 Defining the Problem</b> .....	10
<b>1.2 Project Client</b> .....	10
<b>1.3 Project Objectives</b> .....	11
<b>1.4 Background</b> .....	12
<b>1.4.1 Local Statistics</b> .....	12
<b>1.4.2 Community Reports</b> .....	13
<b>1.5 Organization of Report</b> .....	14
<b>2.0 Literature Review</b> .....	14
<b>3.0 Methodology and Methods</b> .....	14
<b>4.0 Findings</b> .....	14
<b>5.0 Discussion and Analysis</b> .....	14
<b>7.0 Conclusion</b> .....	14
<b>2.0 Literature Review</b> .....	15
<b>2.1 Historical Perspectives Reflect Today’s Reality</b> .....	15
<b>2.2 Understanding Barriers To Employment</b> .....	17
<b>2.2.1 Welfare Recipients With Difficulty Transitioning To Work</b> .....	17
<b>2.2.2 Hard To Employ</b> .....	18
<b>2.2.3 disadvantaged Job Seekers</b> .....	18
<b>2.2.4 Persons With Persistent Multiple Barriers [PPMB]</b> .....	18
<b>2.2.5 Multi-Barriered</b> .....	18
<b>2.2.6 Youth Who Require Support To Transition To Employment</b> .....	19
<b>2.2.7 Summary of Barriers</b> .....	19
<b>2.3 Strategies to Address Barriers to Employment</b> .....	22
<b>2.3.1 Job Search Supports</b> .....	22
<b>2.3.2 Supported Employment</b> .....	22
<b>2.3.3 Inclusion</b> .....	23
<b>2.3.4 Strength-Based Approach</b> .....	24
<b>2.3.5 Partnerships</b> .....	25
<b>2.3.6 Comprehensive Intensive Supports</b> .....	26
<b>2.3.7 Early Interventions</b> .....	27
<b>2.3.8 Government Policy Changes</b> .....	27
<b>2.3.9 BC Specific Strategies</b> .....	28
<b>2.3.10 Summary of Strategies</b> .....	29
<b>2.4 Conceptual Framework</b> .....	29
<b>3.0 Methodology and Methods</b> .....	30
<b>3.1 Methodology</b> .....	31
<b>3.2 Methods – Primary Data Collection</b> .....	31

3.2.1 Research Participants .....	32
3.2.2 Questionnaires .....	33
3.2.3 Research Forum .....	35
4.0 Findings .....	37
4.1 Demographics .....	37
4.2 Quantitative Findings.....	38
4.2.2 Barriers to Employment Experienced in Port Alberni .....	39
4.3 Qualitative Findings.....	43
4.3.1 Strategies Identified by Individuals .....	43
4.3.2 Group Forum Findings .....	47
5.0 Discussion and Analysis.....	50
5.1 Barriers Identified .....	50
5.2 Strategies Identified.....	51
5.3 Research Limitations.....	52
5.4 Additional Research to Consider .....	53
5.5 Discussion Summary .....	54
6.0 Options to Consider and Recommendations .....	55
6.1 Options to Consider.....	56
6.2 Recommendations .....	56
7.0 Conclusion .....	60
References .....	61

## LIST OF FIGURES/TABLES

### FIGURES

Figure 1.1 – Project Client .....	10
Figure 1.2 – Primary Research Question .....	11
Figure 1.3 – Secondary Questions .....	11
Figure 2.1 – Conceptual Framework .....	30
Figure 3.1 – Methods Process .....	31
Figure 4.1 – Participants by Age Category .....	37
Figure 4.2 – Participants by Gender .....	38
Figure 4.3 – Group 1 Status .....	38
Figure 4.4 – Group 1 Employment Status .....	38
Figure 4.5 – Barriers in PA Identified by Research Participants .....	40
Figure 4.6 – Group Specific Barriers .....	41
Figure 4.7 – Suggested Barriers to Employment .....	42
Figure 4.8 – Integral Theory .....	45
Figure 4.9 – Relationships with Strategies .....	46
Figure 4.10 – Economic System Adaptation Application .....	47
Figure 4.11 – Benefits to Hiring .....	48
Figure 4.12 – Stakeholder Focused Strategies .....	49
Figure 5.1 – Intensified Relationships .....	51
Figure 5.2 – Conceptual Framework with Strategies .....	55

### TABLES

Table 2.1 – Identified Terms & Barriers to Employment .....	19
Table 2.2 – Barriers by Group .....	21
Table 3.1 – Group 1 Questions .....	33
Table 3.2 – Group 2, 3, & 4 Questions .....	34
Table 4.1 – Barriers to Employment Grouped & Bundled .....	40
Table 4.2 – Coding of Strategies .....	44

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Decline of the BC forest industry and severe economic downturns in the 1980s and 1990s created hardship in the City of Port Alberni (Gordon, Halkett, Macauley & Saunders, 2007). Prior to the downturn, Port Alberni was the largest wood production site outside of Vancouver, BC and boasted one of the highest paid labour forces in Canada (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2013). As a result significant social issues such as: severe child poverty, elevated overall poverty rates, low education rates, high illiteracy rates, and high unemployment have plagued Port Alberni. Consequently, the local government is working toward revitalizing the economy through increasing the city's charm and appeal to attract economic vitality (City of Port Alberni, 2007; City of Port Alberni, 2014; City of Port Alberni, 2015).

An increasing need for employment services and supports for individuals who experience multiple-barriers to employment and a disconnection between job seekers, social service agencies, government assistance policies, and local employment opportunities, are all issues in Port Alberni. The ongoing work of the local government to stimulate the economy and community connections has not yet been enough to address in any significant way barriers to employment and other social issues that permeate the city and especially the uptown core. Together these two issues – the decline in the community's profile and the community disconnect – have prompted the development of this research project.

People residing in Port Alberni who experience barriers such as disabilities or other challenges that get in the way of obtaining or maintaining employment are a group of individuals with as many similarities as differences. This population is skilled in many ways, yet both intrinsic and extrinsic issues create barriers to finding and maintaining employment. For example, they survive on little money with little to no assets, navigate the social service systems to utilize as much support as possible, maintain an internal support system, and manage a successful informal trade economy. Conversely, a variety of social services and government support for six employment programs have seen minimal success in alleviating either intrinsic or extrinsic barriers for this population of individuals.

It is proposed that understanding specific barriers experienced by job seekers in Port Alberni and input from the community stakeholders will provide the City of Port Alberni with recommendations on how the community can work together to address those issues. It is further

proposed that alleviating barriers to employment will stimulate the local labour market and subsequently social and economic well being in the community. This report is provided to the City's Community Services Department to assist in understanding community specific employment barriers and recommend community strategies to mitigate those barriers.

## 1.1 DEFINING THE PROBLEM

Barriers that impact an individual's ability to find and maintain employment are often persistent and debilitating, creating attachment to social assistance and other community services. The multiple barriers to employment experienced by individuals in Port Alberni create a population of unemployed individuals, many of whom are reliant on BC Employment Assistance [Income Assistance or Welfare]. These individuals often live in poverty experiencing housing and transportation issues and social issues of crime, prostitution, and/or substance use or abuse that are prevailing in the uptown core of the City of Port Alberni.

A related and relevant problem in Port Alberni is the gap that exists between employers who are unable to find suitable employees and the available job seekers who struggle to secure the local employment opportunities. The 10.4% unemployment rate in the Alberni Valley in 2011 was 2.6% higher than the Provincial and National average of 7.8% (Alberni Valley Community Foundation [AVCF], 2015); yet, employers continually post job opportunities and note difficulty in finding suitable employees (personal observation, July 2015).

It is hoped that identification of the specific barriers to employment that are experienced by people in Port Alberni will lead to ground floor strategies and recommendations that will support the community to work together to alleviate barriers and increase labour market attachment leading to growth in social and economic capacity.

## 1.2 PROJECT CLIENT

The City of Port Alberni is the client for the project and details are provided in Figure 1.1. The operations of the client are guided by the City's Corporate Strategic Plan goals and objectives (City of Port Alberni, n.d.).

### Figure 1.1 – Project Client

City of Port Alberni  
Director of Community Services  
4850 Argyle Street,  
Port Alberni, BC V9Y 1V8  
**Contact Name:** Ms. Theresa Kingston  
**Contact Email:** [Theresa.Kingston@portalberni.ca](mailto:Theresa.Kingston@portalberni.ca)  
**Contact Phone:** 250.720.2506

The effective operation of the City of Port Alberni is reliant on a team effort including the support provided by the Department of Community Services. The City of Port Alberni Corporate Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016, 2014 Update includes “Objective 4.1: To ensure a positive image of the City of Port Alberni” (2014, p.16) with an initiative to work with the community to “address social issues in the uptown core” (p. 16). Additionally, the Department of Economic Development concentrates on diversifying the economy, business attraction and retention, and marketing community properties to achieve a “vibrant and sustainable economy” (City of Port Alberni, n.d.). A change in City Council in 2015 resulted in a new Corporate Strategic Plan: 2015 – 2018 that notes social problems and negative perceptions of the city continue to be issues for Port Alberni (City of Port Alberni, 2015).

### **1.3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES**

The purpose of this research project is twofold: (1) to identify barriers to employment experienced by individuals who are seeking employment in Port Alberni; and (2) to recommend strategies that can be employed by the City of Port Alberni in partnership with community agencies to address barriers to employment for individuals in Port Alberni.

#### **Figure 1.2 – Primary Research Question**

*How can the community of Port Alberni work together to address barriers to employment and increase labour market attachment for people who experience multiple barriers to employment?*

The following secondary questions in Figure 1.3 have been developed to support gathering of relevant data to answer the primary question:

#### **Figure 1.3 – Secondary Questions**

*What are the employment barriers experienced by individuals in Port Alberni?*  
*What strategies can be incorporated by the community to address barriers to employment?*  
*Who should be responsible for implementing these strategies?*

It is this author's assumption that alleviating employment barriers in the City of Port Alberni will increase labour market attachment for individuals who experience barriers, reduce social issues in the uptown core, and support economic development. Additionally, increasing local labour market attachment for job seekers who experience barriers means the gap that exists between employers with unfilled job vacancies and unemployed job seekers is narrowing. Increasing the employment rate leads to decreasing the poverty rate and supporting economic development. Identification of Port Alberni specific employment barriers and barrier reduction strategies are intended to assist the City's Director of Community Services and Economic Development Manager to guide appropriate partnering with community agencies, other levels of government, local employers, and job seekers to build a stronger community. The ideal outcome will be a stronger local labour market, increased community economic development, and evidence of a more positive Port Alberni.

## **1.4 BACKGROUND**

Port Alberni is a rural community situated in central Vancouver Island with a population of 17,743 within city limits and a population of 25,465 in what is known as the Alberni Valley (Statistics Canada, 2011). The forestry industry downturn in the 1980s and 90s resulted in the Alberni Valley moving from one of the highest wage earners per capita in the 1970s (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2013) to a struggling community with 40.8 per cent of the community earning incomes less than a living wage defined as \$25,000 per year and another 10 per cent of the community residents being unemployed (AVCF, 2015).

### **1.4.1 LOCAL STATISTICS**

Port Alberni has developed a reputation of being an undesirable place to live because of a high crime rate, low employment rate, and low paying jobs (Brown, 2015). The following statistics are provided to create an understanding of the challenges faced by the community. The City of Port Alberni has a higher than BC average number of persons accessing disability benefits, persons with persistent multiple barrier benefits, and regular income assistance benefits. Additionally, 2.5 per cent of the population is employment insurance recipients compared to 1.5 percent provincially (BC Stats, 2012). Additional local statistics relevant to the issue, provided by the AVCF (2015) include the following:

⇒ 18.5 % poverty rate;

- ⇒ 10.4% unemployment rate;
- ⇒ 41% of the population living with inadequate literacy skills;
- ⇒ 74.3% high school completion rate for non-Aboriginal and 41.7% for Aboriginal students;
- ⇒ 70% higher alcohol sales per person aged 19+ in Port Alberni than the BC average; and
- ⇒ 46% employment rate is 12.3% lower than the employment rate in 2001.

#### **1.4.2 COMMUNITY REPORTS**

A review of several community reports and city plans has indicated a need for change in the Alberni Valley. The City of Port Alberni Official Community Plan (2007) indicated a need to diversify the local economy and provided a framework and general guidelines for community growth and well being. In addition to recommending sustainable management of the forest industry, the Review of the Port Alberni Forest Industry indicated “moving away from its ‘mill town’ roots”, utilizing an integrated government approach to capitalize on tourism and the senior population, investing in education, and enhancing the infrastructure would be steps in the right direction for a stronger Port Alberni (Gordon et.al., 2007, p. 51).

A community sustainability report states that residents and staff of the City of Port Alberni indicated an ongoing interest in moving forward with a plan to realize sustainable objectives in environmental, cultural, social and economic dimensions. However, the 2015 social and economic indices continue to portray a struggling community. Zirnhelt (2008) adds that socio-cultural issues in Port Alberni are challenged by “deficit based thinking” and recommends community stakeholder collaboration and formal planning sessions to bring ideas together and address apathy in the community (p.19).

In 2008 a community plan to end homelessness in the Alberni Valley was released by the Alberni Valley Community Stakeholders Initiative [AVCSI] and more recently, a second report indicates an ongoing issue of homelessness (AVCSI, 2016). In 2013, the City posted a positive community profile portraying an economy that is varied and flexible – embracing change (City of Port Alberni, 2013). However, the 2015 Vital Signs report indicates that although some social issues have decreased, literacy, education, crime, poverty, and unemployment continue to be community issues that are higher than the provincial averages (AVCF, 2015). Reports, recommendations, and well meaning groups and agencies continue to work toward a positive

Port Alberni; nevertheless, the work done thus far has had limited impact on several social indices including unemployment and barriers to employment.

## **1.5 ORGANIZATION OF REPORT**

To identify the barriers to employment and strategies for the City to work with community agencies to address those barriers, this report is structured as follows:

### **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The literature review consists of three segments and a summary. The first segment identifies a historical view of the treatment of people with disabilities and how this may be affecting the treatment of persons who experience barriers to employment today. The second explores a variety of barriers to employment; the third provides an overview of strategies that have been used to address barriers, and a summary of the literature reviewed.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

This section includes two subsections: an overview of the methodology and an in-depth description of the methods – primary data collection. The methods section includes: explanation of participant sampling, description, and recruitment process; along with questionnaire descriptions and how they were completed; and the research forum process.

### **4.0 FINDINGS**

The findings section includes the demographics of the participants and presents their views. Quantitative findings present identification of the barriers to employment experienced in Port Alberni. The qualitative findings include strategies identified by individuals categorized by two different theoretical perspectives and the group forum data organized with a stakeholder responsibility focus.

### **5.0 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

This section connects the findings with the objectives and provides a discussion of the research limitations and additional research suggestions.

### **6.0 OPTIONS TO CONSIDER AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Section 6.0 presents three options related to the objectives of the research that were not identified by the research literature or data. Subsequently, ten recommendations that resulted from the data and analysis are presented for the City of Port Alberni.

### **7.0 CONCLUSION**

The conclusion ties together the importance of the research in developing recommendations that address barriers to employment in Port Alberni and the bigger picture of social and economic capacity building.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

‘Barriers to employment’ is a term that is used internationally and is inclusive of mental and physical disabilities as well as other challenges that get in the way of obtaining and maintaining employment. Barriers to employment have also been grouped together under headings such as: personal barriers; barriers related to human capital; or structural barriers (Perkins, 2008). Governments have typically addressed barriers to employment without much success through return to work programs intended to support recipients of social assistance to find employment and decrease attachment to government assistance (Butterwick, 2010; Danziger et.al., 2000; Gardiner & Fishman, 2000; Perkins, 2008).

The literature review was undertaken prior to looking at the barriers to employment and possible strategies to alleviate barriers that exist in Port Alberni. This literature review aims to provide a general understanding of the history affecting barriers to employment today, terms used to describe barriers and what those barriers are, and some of the strategies used to address barriers to employment so far.

### **2.1 HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES REFLECT TODAY’S REALITY**

In the 1600s confinement and segregation of people who were poor, had disabilities, or were considered criminals was expected, and abusive treatment of persons who lived with disabilities was accepted (Davis, 2014). Davis (2014) noted that in the late 1700s and early 1800s it was decided that greater segregation or specialized confinement was necessary to provide rehabilitation or education for people. Thus, institutions for the blind, and the deaf and dumb were developed along with penitentiaries for the criminals (Davis, 2014). By the mid 1800s the residential schools for First Nations, *lunatic asylums* for those with psychiatric illnesses, and the *asylum for idiots* or persons with intellectual disabilities, came into being. It was thought that under the right conditions criminals, people with physical, psychiatric or intellectual disabilities, poor people, or First Nations people could reach a measure of normalcy and integrate in to society as menial labourers (Davis, 2014).

Escalating capitalism in the later 1800s called for cheap labour, discouraged charitable treatment of those in need, allowed horrific institutional segregation for those not able to work, and encouraged able bodies to work by providing zero assistance or assistance with such horrendous conditions that any work seemed to be a good option. Institutionalization and treatment for the unproductive [by today's standards, those who experience barriers to employment] was decided by the medical, psychological, and educational professionals, where the cure meant these individuals would be ready for employment (Davis, 2014). Davis also notes that institutions for criminals and those with disabilities continued to increase ranging from those that were punishment in nature to those developed from a medical perspective, and both interventions were thought to be protecting society from danger.

The assumption that a significantly diverse population of people – those who lived in poverty or with a disability, or were Aboriginal, or were considered criminals – were all of a similar nature and could be institutionalized and treated or cured to become 'normal' productive citizens of society has been in existence for at least 400 years. History continues to shape societal perspectives in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Assuming that any one person or group of people is any better or worse, or that one deserves inclusion or exclusion from society is supremacist in nature and should not be tolerated or exist in today's society. However, people who live with disabilities or barriers to employment continue to be excluded from employment and education.

Jennissen, Prince, and Schwartz (as cited in Prince, 2009, Introduction, Section 2, para. 1) note that the typical Canadian definition of disability – limited functional ability resulting from a mental, physical or health problem that restricts societal inclusion – is rooted in biological and medical perspectives. Society typically thinks of people with disabilities as disabled rather than people who are able in different ways. However, Statistics Canada (2007) reports that a positive change in societal perceptions of disabilities may be responsible for the significant increase in the reporting between 2001 and 2006 of the number of people who live with disabilities. Then, in 2009, Prince states that Canadian public policy continues to focus on the identified limitations as justification for lack of achievement in education, employment, and income for persons with disabilities. Thus it remains that society today continues to identify a lack of ability and this is what keeps people marginalized and self-doubting in their own abilities.

Despite changes such as the Rehabilitation Act Amendments in 1973 that suggested "people with significant disabilities had employment potential" (as cited in Gardiner & Fishman,

2000, p. 50), exclusion continues. The historical practice of marginalizing a variety of populations and identifying people as less than able continues to propel the exclusion of people who experience barriers to employment from traditional labour market opportunities. As a result, the BC Government (2014) has stated its intention to remove barriers and have the highest rate of employment in Canada for people with disabilities by 2024, which remains to be seen.

## **2.2 UNDERSTANDING BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT**

Barriers to employment and the people who experience these barriers have been researched, written about, and described in a variety of ways, such as: welfare recipients who have difficulty transitioning to employment, hard to employ, disadvantaged job seekers, BC Government designated persons with persistent multiple barriers, and/or generally multi-barriered.

### **2.2.1 WELFARE RECIPIENTS WITH DIFFICULTY TRANSITIONING TO WORK**

Olsen & Pavetti's (1996) extensive review of research identified eight personal and family difficulties that may be barriers to employment for individuals who receive welfare: physical conditions; mental health conditions; health or behaviour of children; chemical dependency; housing instability; low basic skills; learning disabilities; and/or family violence. They report difficulty in ascertaining the prevalence of barriers to employment among the welfare recipients due to lack of common definitions of barriers. However, it is noted that most welfare recipients experience at least one barrier to employment with low basic skills being the most prevalent (Olsen & Pavetti, 1996).

Danziger et.al. (2000) surveyed women on welfare regarding 14 potential barriers to employment and compared the answers to women of the general population. The following nine barriers to employment were identified: less than high school education; limited work experience; limited job skills; perceived job discrimination; transportation issues; major depression; drug dependence; poor health; and child[ren] with health, learning or emotional problems. Danziger et.al.'s (2000) research indicated that women reporting these barriers were much less likely to gain employment than women who did not report having barriers. It was also noted that the women on welfare were far more likely to experience multiple barriers to employment which are compounded by being on welfare, adding greater difficulty in obtaining employment (Danziger et.al., 2000).

### **2.2.2 HARD TO EMPLOY**

In exploring ways to support the hard to employ, defined as individuals who continue to receive welfare despite the imposed time limits, a booming economy, and a government focus on return to work for people on welfare, Brown (2001) identifies seven barriers. Brown (2001) notes the following barriers are prevalent amongst the hard to employ: low basic skills; limited education/work experience; depression / mental health issues, chronic health; physical disabilities; substance use; learning disabilities; and language barriers. Brown (2001) also notes that these hard to employ welfare recipients may experience multiple barriers; but this does not mean that they cannot work because others facing similar barriers do work.

### **2.2.3 DISADVANTAGED JOB SEEKERS**

A group of job seekers referred to as the ‘most disadvantaged’ by Perkins & Nelms (n.d., p.1) has also been referred to by O’Donnell as the ‘very marginalized’ (as cited in Perkins & Nelms, n.d., p.1) and the ‘most vulnerable’ by the European Foundation (2002, p.7). This particular population is reported to experience extreme social and personal challenges as well as the following barriers: substance abuse; criminal record; chronic health; physical disabilities; homelessness; psychological disorders; and mental illness (European Foundation, 2002; Perkins & Nelms, n.d.).

### **2.2.4 PERSONS WITH PERSISTENT MULTIPLE BARRIERS [PPMB]**

The BC Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation [MSDSI] notes that PPMB refers to someone who has been on social assistance for more than 1 year, and has a medical condition that lasts more than one year coupled with personal barriers (BC Government, 2015). Additionally, MSDSI considers individuals as *Multi-Barriered* if two or more of the following barriers directly impact finding and keeping employment: inadequate or unstable housing, mental health conditions, physical or learning disabilities, recovering from violence or abuse, difficulty coping, addiction issues, youth or older worker, and/or a criminal record (BC Government, 2015 July, p.6). The terms PPMB and Multi-Barriered are used by the BC Government to categorize individuals while determining eligibility for financial supports and expectations of participation in additional activities.

### **2.2.5 MULTI-BARRIERED**

Outside of the BC Government, multi-barriered is used to describe an individual who is experiencing more than one barrier. Several researchers refer to individuals with multiple

barriers or multi-barriered as the population that is most vulnerable to employment exclusion and/or exclusion from active participation in society generally (Perkins & Nelms, n.d.; European Foundation, 2002; Danziger et.al. 2000; Brown, 2001). Brown (2001) also notes that the presence of multiple barriers and a higher level of severity of the barriers are likely to result in greater difficulty finding and maintaining employment.

The European Foundation (2002) states that experiencing multiple barriers creates greater challenges in securing employment in a poor economy where there is high unemployment and little growth. Additionally, multiple barriers can increase with long-term attachment to welfare (Danziger, 2000) and living in poverty intensifies existing barriers (Butterwick, 2010).

### 2.2.6 YOUTH WHO REQUIRE SUPPORT TO TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT

The Service Canada, Skills Link program provides services to a group within the youth population of 15 to 30 years of age that experience barriers to employment. These youth are typically someone with a disability or a single parent who has not completed school and are having difficulty finding and keeping employment (Government of Canada, 2015). The barriers identified for this particular group are considered moderate barriers: less than grade 12; Aboriginal origin; visible minority; rural or remote resident; single parent; and/or recent immigrant. However the Government of Canada (2015) does recognize that some of this population may experience more severe barriers such as homelessness and/or substance abuse and believes that these individuals are not job ready and require different supports prior to being ready for employment programming.

### 2.2.7 SUMMARY OF BARRIERS

Table 2.1 below summarizes the barriers, identified by each author in order of date, as representative of a particular group of individuals who experience those barriers to employment. Much like ‘barriers to employment’, the terms used to describe the various populations have negative connotations. However, as the European Foundation (2002) states “the concept of vulnerable groups [no matter what we choose to name them] denotes the risk of marginalisation from the labour market and social exclusion” (p.6).

<b>Author</b>	<b>Term Used</b>	<b>Accompanying Definition</b>	<b>Barriers Identified</b>
Olson, K. & Pavetti,	Welfare recipients who	- Personal and family problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical &amp; mental health conditions</li> <li>• Housing instability</li> <li>• Low basic skills</li> </ul>

L. (1996)	have difficulty transitioning from welfare to work		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child health or behavioural problems</li> <li>• Chemical dependency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning disabilities</li> <li>• Family violence</li> </ul>
Danziger, S. et.al. (2000)	Women on welfare having difficulty transitioning to employment	- Barriers to employment significantly affecting employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than high school education</li> <li>• Limited work experience</li> <li>• Limited job skills</li> <li>• Perceived job discrimination</li> <li>• Transportation issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major depression</li> <li>• Drug dependence</li> <li>• Poor health</li> <li>• Child with health, learning or emotional problems</li> </ul>
Brown, A. (2001)	Hard-to-Employ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On assistance for a long time</li> <li>- New to employment programming</li> <li>- Personal &amp; family barriers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low basic skills</li> <li>• Limited education/work experience</li> <li>• Depression / mental health issues</li> <li>• Chronic health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical disabilities</li> <li>• Substance use</li> <li>• Learning disabilities</li> <li>• Language barriers</li> </ul>
Perkins, D. & Nelms, L. (n.d.)	Most disadvantaged job seekers	- Combined interaction of employment & education history with personal issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substance abuse</li> <li>• Criminal record</li> <li>• Chronic health</li> <li>• Physical disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Psychological disorders</li> <li>• Mental illness</li> </ul>
Butterwick, S. (2010)	BC welfare recipients with multiple barriers	- BC Employment Program and Community Assistance Program participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Language</li> <li>• Physical appearance</li> <li>• Drug &amp; alcohol addiction</li> <li>• Work related injuries</li> <li>• Mental illness</li> <li>• Limited education</li> <li>• Dental health</li> <li>• Literacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Criminal records</li> <li>• Long-term unemployment</li> <li>• Low self esteem</li> <li>• Low English skills</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• No telephone</li> <li>• Domestic violence</li> </ul>
Butterwick, S. (2010)	BC welfare recipients with multiple barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aboriginal</li> <li>- Community Assistance Program participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depression</li> <li>• Substance abuse</li> <li>• Lack of family supports</li> <li>• No telephone</li> <li>• Residential school effects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undiagnosed disabilities</li> <li>• Poor nutrition</li> <li>• Poor social skills</li> <li>• Limited work history/skills</li> <li>• Low literacy</li> </ul>
BC Government (2015)	Persons with Multiple Barriers to Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On assistance 12 out of last 15 months</li> <li>- Medical condition &gt; 1 yr</li> <li>- Personal barriers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical condition that stops the individual from searching for, accepting, or continuing employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low employability rating plus a severe medical condition that hinders the ability to find employment</li> </ul>

BC Government (2015, July)	Multi-barriered	- 2 or more barriers impact employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate housing</li> <li>• Mental health conditions</li> <li>• Physical or learning disabilities</li> <li>• Recovering from violence or abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulty coping</li> <li>• Addiction issues</li> <li>• Youth or older worker</li> <li>• Criminal record</li> </ul>
Government of Canada (2015)	Youth 15 – 30 years	- Youth in need of assistance to overcome employment barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than grade 12 education</li> <li>• Aboriginal origin</li> <li>• Visible minority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural or remote resident</li> <li>• Single parent</li> <li>• Recent immigrant</li> </ul>

In Table 2.2 the barriers identified by researchers in Table 2.1 have been re-organized under headings that form the basis for the research analysis themes regarding the question “*What are the employment barriers experienced by individuals in Port Alberni?*”. Grouping the barriers under these headings has served to identify both intrinsic barriers: physical, mental, and personal/social; and extrinsic barriers: cultural/status, structural, and educational.

Table 2.2 – Barriers by Group					
Physical	Mental	Personal/Social	Cultural / Status	Structural	Educational
Physical Disability	Mental Health Condition	Difficulty coping	Aboriginal	Inadequate housing	Less than Grade 12 / Limited Education
Work-Related Injury	Learning Disability	Criminal Record	Visible Minority	No telephone	Low Literacy
Medical Condition / Chronic Health	Intellectual Disability	Lack of Family Support	Recent Immigrant	Rural or remote resident	Limited Work Skills
Dental Health	Addiction	Poor Social Skills	Age	Undiagnosed disabilities	Limited Work Experience / Skills
Violence / Abuse	Violence / Abuse	Poor Nutrition	Single Parent	Transportation	Low English Skills
		Low Self-Esteem		Discrimination	
		Long Term Unemployment		Residential School Effect	
		Physical Appearance		Childcare	
		Violence / Abuse			

It is understood that individuals may experience any one or more of the barriers listed in varying intensities, all of which make it difficult to find and maintain employment increasing marginalization and exclusion. Additionally, the language used to describe the target population may be marginalizing, creating greater difficulty (European Foundation, 2002). Therefore, it may be worth exploring if using more positive language supports decreasing barriers to employment.

For example, individuals with diverse abilities, a term used by Community Living BC (2015), rather than disabilities may be more appealing to employers and more empowering to individuals resulting in higher rates of employment.

## **2.3 STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT**

Recommendations to increase labour market attachment for persons who live with barriers to employment typically include government interventions and increased community support services. The literature most commonly suggests intensive integrated approaches to address multiple barriers. The following review identifies common support strategies and accompanying characteristics of strategies used or recommended to support individuals who experience barriers to employment: job search supports; supported employment; comprehensive/intensive supports; inclusion; strength-based approach; partnerships; early intervention; and government policy changes. Additionally, this section identifies strategies specifically discussed for BC: government interventions; greater support services; and building capacity through social enterprises.

### **2.3.1 JOB SEARCH SUPPORTS**

Job search supports on their own are thought to be effective for persons with only one employment barrier in a fairly good economy (Danziger et.al. (2000) and when coupled with other supports such as “basic education, short-term training, and [or] work experience” they are more effective in supporting individuals with multiple barriers to employment (Brown, 2001, p.12; Gardiner & Fishman, 2000). Therefore, it is proposed that job search supports may be necessary as a tool to support obtaining employment; but supported job search activities – resume/cover letter writing and access to job boards/computers – on their own, have little success in labour market attachment for individuals with employment barriers.

Matching the job seekers skills, abilities, and work preferences to the employer needs or wants is an important strategy in supporting individuals who experience barriers to find and maintain employment (Blumenberg, 2002; Brown, 2001). Thus, more in-depth job search supports or job search coupled with additional supports will increase opportunities for job seekers who experience barriers.

### **2.3.2 SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT**

Supported employment is a job-coaching strategy used within the disability community. The idea is that all people, no matter what the level of ability is, are able to do some type of employment if the right supports are in place for whatever length of time is needed (Brown, 2001; Gardiner & Fishman, 2000).

Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation [MDRC] completed a study using a supported employment program with four target populations – women on welfare, ex-addicts, ex-offenders, and youth with no high school - all of which could be classed as individuals with multiple barriers to employment. The findings were that all participants in the supported employment program were more successful in finding and maintaining employment than individuals from the same population groups that were not assigned to the program (Gardiner & Fishman, 2000).

*Accommodations in the workplace* – accessibility, specialized equipment, or flexible scheduling – may also be part of supported employment. Gardiner & Fishman (2000) suggest that because these accommodations in the workplace have successfully supported individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment that accommodations in the workplace could be successful in supporting individuals with other types of barriers to employment.

*Social Enterprise opportunities* are said to be a supportive work and/or training environment for people with barriers to employment (Cohen et.al., 2008). One research study advocates for social enterprises as a fix for people who struggle with employment barriers and recommends encouraging public, private, and government entities to purchase from social enterprises, creating a centralized database and networking for social enterprises, and focusing employment spending on social enterprises rather than programming (Shahmash, 2008). In 2008, Cohen et.al. recommended that the BC provincial government provide financial support and coordination of business development for three to five social enterprise ventures (p.49).

### **2.3.3 INCLUSION**

The individuals who experience barriers to employment must be involved in the development of services designed to support them. However, inclusion in the development of programs or supports is not often cited in the literature regarding employment barriers. Inclusion does deserve a heading of its own to ensure that no matter what intervention, strategy, or recommendation is put forth or what barrier is being addressed – inclusion is involved in the

solution. The one area that inclusion is being utilized is within the developmental disability community.

The BC Centre for Employment Excellence (2015) included self-advocates in a research project and reports that key aspects to successful employment inclusion are: flexibility in hours of work and job duties; good working environment with co-workers; and a good fit for the individual preferences and strengths (p.20). Understanding what types of supports or interventions would be helpful from the target populations' perspective may lead to innovative interventions.

Ball (as cited in European Foundation, 2002) reports “strategies to actively involve vulnerable groups in the design, planning, implementation and monitoring of policies and services enhance the development of [employment] programmes which are flexible and fit for their purpose” (p. 16).

#### **2.3.4 STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH**

A strength-based approach has been recommended by the European Foundation (2002). Strength-based strategies promote empowerment for the individuals who experience barriers to employment where needs-based interventions promote agency fixes that create a client-oriented culture amongst the individuals who are accessing the services (Allen, 2007; McKnight & Kretzmann, 1996). Allen (2007) further explains that strength or asset-based approaches look to the individuals' skills and abilities to build momentum and move forward, which empowers the individual rather than looking for external resources to fix a problem which gives the power to the service provider.

An employment program may need to acknowledge the barriers that an individual is facing, but a key element to an effective program is focusing on the desires and the strengths of the individuals (Perkins, 2008). An integral theory approach as introduced by Ken Wilber can be used to analyze complex situations using a quadrivia framework. The quadrivium is four quadrants that identify various dimensions through examining the interior on the left, the exterior on the right, and the individual in the upper half and the collective in the lower half (Esbjörn-Hagens, 2012). Using the integral theory approach to understand the intrinsic and extrinsic barriers through the individual and collective aspects can support development of comprehensive and strength-based strategies.

A strength-based approach can shift appropriate responsibilities to the individual experiencing the barriers and promote personal accomplishments. As Brown (2001) notes, concentrating on alleviating barriers can challenge the success of a program, where balancing work on barriers with identifying goals, skills, and strengths support more successful interventions. A strength-based approach may also include personal development so that individuals can learn to understand and act on their strengths and abilities.

### **2.3.5 PARTNERSHIPS**

Strong partnerships and coordination are fundamental in developing successful attachment to the labour market for individuals who experience barriers to employment (Perkins & Nelms, n.d.; European Foundation, 2002; Brown, 2001). The ability to refer individuals to community agencies for specific supports and finding employers that would be a good fit for the individual are both based on building strong partnerships.

**General Partnerships** – The European Foundation (2002) has several examples of innovative and creative partnerships that have worked to increase employment opportunities for people experiencing barriers to employment. One example is a partnership between four public, five private, and 14 non-profit entities that resulted in creating employment in a variety of sectors – such as, 40 jobs for unemployed individuals to provide care for elderly individuals. To develop integrated programs, effectively utilize resources, and efficiently coordinate services, partnerships need to involve the people who experience barriers to employment and the public, private and non-profit sectors (European Foundation, 2002). Strong partnerships can lead to increased social and economic participation creating a fairer society (Perkins & Nelms, n.d.) especially for those who experience barriers to employment.

**Coordination** – Coordinating a variety of community support services through “one-stop-centres” has proven successful in supporting individuals who experience barriers to employment (Blumenberg, 2002, p.323; European Foundation, 2002). Easy access to a variety of support services will support the development of comprehensive services. Ditch and Roberts (as cited in European Foundation, 2002) acknowledge that service coordination needs to happen at a local level with support from coordinated or integrated “policies and services at a local, regional and national level” (p. 18).

**Employer Partnerships** – Including employers in community partnerships can be a valuable tool in supporting a good fit for the job seeker experiencing barriers to employment

(Brown, 2001) and valuable in creating supportive work environments (Cohen et.al., 2008). Employer partnerships are a priority within the disability community's employment strategies and will likely be crucial in supporting individuals who experience barriers to find and maintain employment (Gardiner & Fishman, 2000).

### **2.3.6 COMPREHENSIVE INTENSIVE SUPPORTS**

Gardiner & Fishman (2000) discuss a systems approach indicating that job seekers with barriers to employment require a variety of services to find and maintain employment. Suggested services include: employment supports – job search, training, work experience etc.; financial supports; barrier specific supports – substance abuse treatment, child care, or transportation etc.; and transitional supports – case management, job maintenance, or career decision making etc. Utilizing systems theories and systems thinking can be crucial in developing comprehensive supports as each system impacts the next (Mele, Pels & Polese, 2010).

Perkins (2008) points out that as well as addressing structural causes, interventions that include “intensive support and integrating personal and vocational assistance can improve employment outcomes” for barriered clients (p. 23). Paying attention to small case loads, long-term supports, appropriate job matches, using placements to support the process, and a substantial amount of encouragement is needed to augment the intensive supports (Perkins, 2008). The European Foundation (2002) supports high quality, intensive programs to address complex and diverse client needs. Ball adds that accessing trained staff to provide flexible, personal supports, address underlying issues, and accommodate complex and varied needs is part of intensive programming (as cited in European Foundation, 2002, p.13).

Long-term or ongoing support is an essential piece of the intensive supports required to address multiple barriers and support sustainable employment (Blumenberg, 2002; Brown, 2001; Butterwick, 2010; Perkins & Nelms, n.d.). Many individuals experience multiple barriers to employment and additional factors compound those barriers; therefore, it makes sense that comprehensive intensive supports utilizing community agencies that specialize in key areas are best suited to address the multiple barriers. Additionally, as each individual has a unique situation, individualized action plans are imperative (Brown, 2001) and an opportunity to “address underlying issues rather than simply being pushed into employment” is fundamental to success (Perkins & Nelms, n.d., p. 13).

The European Support Unit (as cited in Perkins & Nelms, n.d.) advocates for the “empowerment approach” (p. 11), which provides support to individuals to practice newly developed skills through projects that focus on:

- ⇒ Quality of life: accommodation, health, finance management;
- ⇒ Wider employment support: basic skills, social skills, communication, team work;
- ⇒ Personal development: confidence, motivation, self-identity, initiative taking; and
- ⇒ Participation: opportunities to participate in project design, delivery and evaluation; access to childcare, access to information and support to use it for decision making.

This section of literature indicates that integrated, intensive, or comprehensive services are best suited to support the individuals who experience barriers to employment. However, this is contrary to the assertion of McKnight and Kretzman (1996) that services create a client-oriented culture where individuals are more motivated to access services to solve their problems than they are to be proactive and develop independence.

### **2.3.7 EARLY INTERVENTIONS**

Early interventions are said be the best and most cost-effective strategy for the long-term. Reducing the number of people who experience multiple barriers to employment and those who require social assistance and employment programming is a logical and cost-saving measure (Butterwick, 2010; European Foundation, 2002). Specific early interventions were not identified in the literature. However, Cohen, et.al., (2008) remark that more recent high school programming has supported students with disabilities to be more job ready than individuals with disabilities who are older and did not receive the high school programming. Therefore, life and employability skills along with disability awareness/empathy taught in elementary and secondary schools may be effective in reducing the number of individuals who experience barriers to employment later in life.

### **2.3.8 GOVERNMENT POLICY CHANGES**

Butterwick (2010) recommends changes to the BC welfare system, such as: raising assistance rates; decreasing waiting periods; improving access to support programs and long-term training; and focusing on social supports before prioritizing employment for individuals who are receiving BC Benefits (pp. 22-23). Suggestions by Brown (2001) to adjust program participation and work requirements for welfare recipients who experience multiple barriers to employment in the US, may be transferable to the BC welfare system. Similarly the provision of

financial incentives for working welfare recipients can promote work and reduce poverty (Brown, 2001).

More generally, the European Foundation (2002) recommends that as well as helping with job search, training, education, and work experience, the government can help with subsidizing jobs or reducing taxes for the employer. Shahmash (2008) suggests policy changes such as: wage subsidies and earning exemptions for provincially designated persons with disabilities; appointing a Minister responsible for the social economy of BC, and ensuring a commitment to social enterprise research.

### **2.3.9 BC SPECIFIC STRATEGIES**

The BC provincial government released a report indicating a goal to have every BC resident living with a disability who is job ready, be attached to the labour market by 2020 (BC Government, 2004). The report recommends several government strategies including policy changes, re-organization, publicly funded training opportunities, employer incentives, public-private-nonprofit partnerships, and specific to barriers “an accommodation fund to help remove barriers to the recruitment and retention of workers with disabilities in the private sector”, (BC Gov., 2004, p. 19).

Cohen et.al (2008) suggest that the BC government can alleviate barriers to employment through increased employment and training funding for provincially designated persons with disabilities, independent audits boosting accountability for employment programs, developing more post-secondary special education programs, and providing long-term funding for three to five social enterprises.

In 2014, the BC Government released a Labour Market Agreement Annual Report that identifies several strategies, policy changes, and programs that have been implemented to support persons with disabilities to secure labour market attachment (BC Gov., 2014); yet 3.8 percent of BC’s population remains on social assistance with over 63 percent of those being designated as persons with disabilities (BC Gov., 2016). Accessibility 2024 (BC Gov., 2015, June) identifies a goal of having the highest employment rate in Canada for people with disabilities and has implemented a disability employment month and supported several “WorkBC Community and Employer Partnership projects” intended to provide work experience for individuals with disabilities, to the tune of \$1,560,259. Yet, the unemployment rate in BC for persons living with disabilities remains higher than for those without disabilities.

### **2.3.10 SUMMARY OF STRATEGIES**

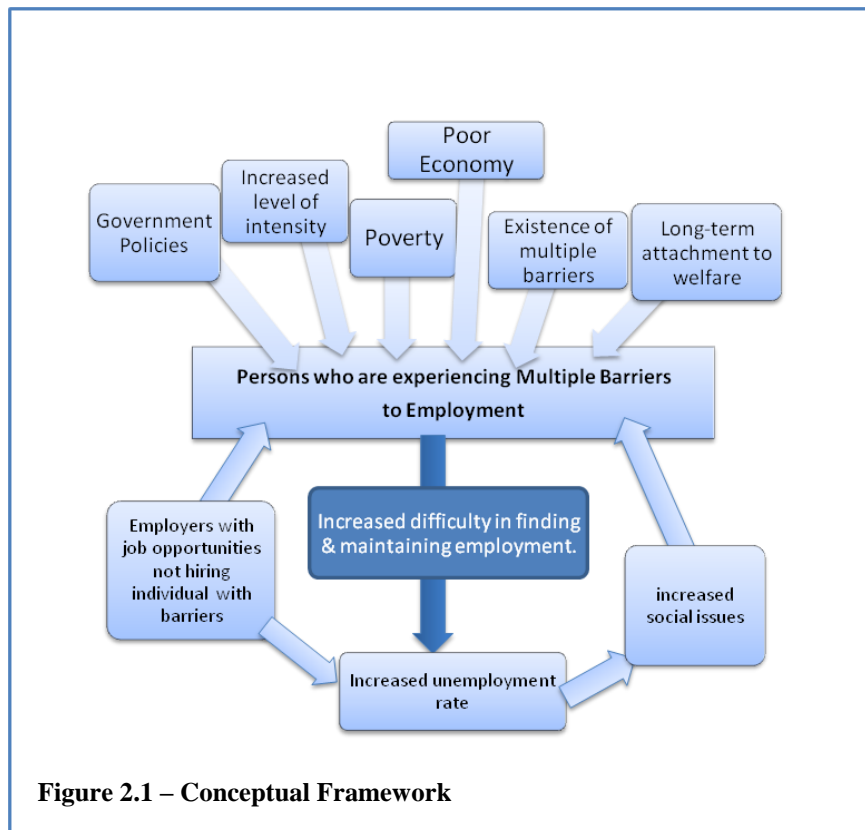
When considering recommendations and strategies to alleviate barriers to employment it is crucial to have stakeholder involvement in policy development (McCarthy & Hooley, 2015, p.2), including the individuals who live with barriers to employment. Also, a developmental change strategy can incorporate problem-solving strategies to slowly improve the current systems and processes (Proehl, 2001, pp 40-41) and not overwhelm the community. A systems theory application that addresses the interactions of relationships and viable systems as posed by Mele, Pels & Polese (2010) may be helpful in determining how strategies can work together to address the complexity of both the intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to employment. Understanding how systems affect one another may be crucial in developing partnerships.

Furthermore, researchers include that labour market attachment provides both social and economic benefits for people with multiple-barriers (Cohen et al., 2008) and that “flexible employment supports and income assistance policies make a difference” (p. 6) so that labour market attachment is possible. The current unemployment rate for individuals who live with barriers to employment is a problem. Many individuals have become accustomed to having services rather than being productive community members. With this in mind, services and programs as they are, may be imposing greater barriers or at the very least supporting existing barriers. Therefore, a drastic change in how services are delivered and accessed is required to promote personal development and accountability within the job seekers. Comprehensive, integrated supports that include strength-based approaches developed through an integral theoretical perspective to address both intrinsic and extrinsic barriers may be very powerful. However, this will require policy changes and financial resources which take time, energy, and a great deal of coordination which is not an easy task.

With that said, some BC government strategies have included changes to increase employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, such as: increased allowable asset levels, increased earnings exemptions, greater access to training and supports through the Employment Program of BC. However, it is difficult to determine the success of these strategies when the disability caseload continues to dramatically increase.

## **2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The conceptual framework in Figure 2.1 depicts the various issues or drivers, in the top boxes, that are compounding the employment barriers that individuals are experiencing. Simultaneously, the multiple barriers that are being experienced can significantly increase difficulty in finding and maintaining employment which in turn increases the unemployment rate. Additionally, there are employers with job opportunities that are not hiring individuals who experience barriers which also feeds the high unemployment rate which increases social issues such as crime, substance use/abuse, domestic violence, and homelessness, which increases employment barriers – creating a full circle.



**Figure 2.1 – Conceptual Framework**

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The methodology and methods section describes a research design using both quantitative and qualitative methods to develop greater insight in to the complex issue of having a community work together to address barriers to employment (Creswell, 2009, p.203). The literature review supported a quantitative process to identify the various barriers to employment

experienced in Port Alberni and a qualitative process to discover some innovative strategies that the community could use to address some of the barriers.

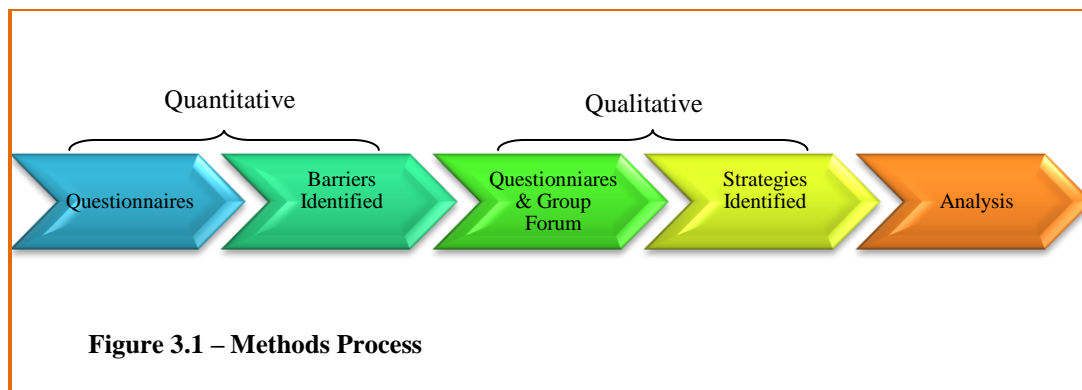
### **3.1 METHODOLOGY**

The community of Port Alberni's knowledge, understanding, and efforts to address social issues provides the groundwork for social action. Therefore, the project methodology was based on the social theory perspective of Somekh who asserts that existing knowledge to construct social action will advance current situations (as cited in Ozanne & Saatcioglu, 2008, p.425). Additional considerations in developing research methods were the acquired sympathy that can be developed by researchers studying individuals whose behaviour is different from the typical population (Becker, 1967, p.240), and the literacy, skills, and abilities of the individuals to be involved in the project.

Furthermore, identifying and understanding the employment barriers experienced in Port Alberni can lead to enhanced services and community development through active community participation. Consequently, a mixed methods research design that involves the stakeholders, awareness of a personal bias, and the need to gather enough information to compile a comprehensive list of barriers and a creative list of strategies provided the foundation to develop the data collection methods.

### **3.2 METHODS – PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION**

A mixed methods process was used to gather data with the expectation of generalizable compilation of comparison and statistical data together with some in-depth creative data (Patton, 2002, p.14). Questionnaires, attached as Appendix A – Sample Questionnaires and a research forum, process attached as Appendix B – Group Process were developed considering the literature review and local knowledge of employment barriers. The questionnaires gathered both quantitative and qualitative data, and the group forum was used to gather additional qualitative data. The two methods were used sequentially [Figure 3.1] to assemble the information to be used to address the complexity of the barriers to employment in Port Alberni (Creswell, 2009, p. 203 & p. 209).



### 3.2.1 RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The sampling process was a combination of self-selection and researcher selection based on current knowledge of individuals who experience barriers to employment, agencies who work with individuals who experience barriers, government representatives and employers who may have insight in to the barriers in Port Alberni. A comprehensive review of the recruiting process and material, informed consents, and questionnaires, along with the research forum process was conducted and approved by the University of Victoria Human Research Ethics Board prior to recruitment of participants and beginning of the primary research.

All participants were invited via written formal invitations [Appendices C & D], either face-to-face or via email, to participate in the research project. Group one participants consisted of individuals who experience barriers to employment and were recruited through third party recruiters to avoid any conflict of interest or belief of coercion due to the researcher being the owner of a local employment service. Third party recruiters were community agency employees who had no vested interest in who chose to participate or not participate. The recruiters were provided a script, a poster, a formal invitation to participate, and a participant consent form, attached as Appendix C – Group 1 Invitation, as well as a copy of the questionnaire to show individuals. The recruiters were asked to invite individuals who they believed had experienced or were experiencing barriers to employment to participate in the research project. When an individual indicated they were interested they were explained the process, read the consent, and signed the consent to be forwarded to the researcher.

#### Participants by Group

**Group 1** – Job Seekers who experience barriers to employment.

**Group 2** – Employers

**Group 3** – Government Agency Representatives

**Group 4** – Community Agency Representatives

Group two participants consisted of community employers, group three participants were members or employees of the city, provincial, or federal local government offices, and group four participants consisted of employees or managers of community agencies. Nine invitations to each of group two, and group three, and eleven invitations to group four possible participants were delivered along with a consent form [Appendix D – Groups 2, 3, & 4 Invitation] and a copy of the questionnaire in-person or via email, as individuals who might have some insight or knowledge to share regarding barriers to employment experienced by individuals in Port Alberni.

### 3.2.2 QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires [Appendix A] were developed based on an understanding of what barriers to employment exist, and hoping to capture a large measure of data with a minimal number of questions (Patton, 2002, p.14). Questionnaires included questions regarding: what work means to you, what barriers to employment are, who or what causes barriers to employment, what strategies could be implemented to alleviate barriers to employment, and who should be responsible for alleviating barriers to employment. Questions were designed to gather as much information as possible about barriers to employment and how the community could work together to address barriers to employment. The following Table 3.1 provides a list of the questions and the insight that was hoped to be gained from group one participants.

<b>Table 3.1 – Group 1 Questions</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Information expected</b>
	<i>Age, Gender, Community Identification</i>	Understanding the demographic.
1	<i>Are you looking for work? Why or Why Not?</i>	Indication that individuals who experience barriers to employment do want to work.
2	<i>What does work, or job, or employment mean to you?</i>	Supporting information that individuals who experience barriers to employment want work.
3	<i>Please tell me what you think “barriers to employment” means. If you are not sure do you understand that barriers mean “things that get in the way of or stop you or another person from getting a job?”</i>	Evidence that the individual answering the questions understands the researcher’s definition of barriers to employment.
4	<i>Tell me what you think gets in your way or other people’s way of finding employment in this area.</i>	What barriers the individual believes he/she is experiencing
5	<i>I am going to read out some things that might stop people from finding work and you tell me if you agree or not.</i>	What employment barriers the individual believes may be existing for others in Port Alberni
6	<i>Now, who or what do you think causes these barriers or blocks that stop people from finding a job? If it is other people’s fault, who are these other people?</i>	The individual’s beliefs around intrinsic or extrinsic causes and who might be responsible for the barriers, if it is not themselves.
7	<i>What do you think would make things easier for people to find work or jobs in this area?</i>	Potential strategies or recommendations to address barriers.

8	<i>Who should be responsible for making things easier for people to find work? Why?</i>	Potential change agents or partnerships that could be recommended to address barriers in the community.
9	<i>Who is working on making things easier for people who find it difficult to get work? In our community? In our government?</i>	Strategies that are currently working to address barriers in the community.
10	<i>Do you have anything else to add?</i>	Additional information that might be important and had not been asked.

Group one individuals were recruited and completed consents to participate prior to being provided the questionnaire. Group one questionnaires were read by the researcher to the individuals who experience barriers to employment during scheduled appointments and the researcher recorded the answers as spoken. The answers were read back to the individual or the individual was asked to read and make sure it was what he/she intended. Some anomalies to the process occurred when questionnaires were answered in-person by Group 1 individuals and submitted to the researcher by a community agency representative along with the signed consents to participate.

Questionnaires were provided to Groups 2, 3, and 4 participants via email or in-person to complete and return to the researcher. Group 2, employers were invited to complete questionnaires and were provided many requests and reminders to complete the questionnaires. Group 3 invitations to participate and questionnaires were provided to government representatives at the local, provincial, and federal level via email or in-person. Group 4 community agency participants were provided with a formal invitation to participate and a verbal invitation for one or more staff or managers to complete the questionnaires. Although questionnaires are expected to be standardized instruments of measure (Patton, 2002, p.14), the questions were posed slightly different in Group 1 questionnaires because it was assumed the participants in this group were not working and may struggle with literacy, and this was not an assumption for Group 2, 3, and 4 participants. Table 3.2 provides a list of the questions and what information was expected to be gathered from the answers.

<b>Table 3.2 – Group 2, 3, &amp; 4 Questions</b>		
<b>#</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Information expected</b>
	<b><i>Age, Gender, Community Identification</i></b>	Understanding of the demographic
1	<i>What does work, or job, or employment mean to you?</i>	Indication that employment means the same for employed and unemployed.
2	<i>What is your definition of barriers to employment?</i>	Indication that the individual understanding of barriers to employment was similar to the researcher’s definition.
3	<i>What do you believe to be the barriers to employment faced</i>	What the community believes to be barriers to

	<i>by people who are struggling to find and maintain employment in Port Alberni?</i>	employment experienced by individuals in Port Alberni.
4.a	<i>Please read through the following list and place an X in the box if you agree that this is a barrier to employment for individuals in Port Alberni.</i>	Additional insight in to what the community perceives as barriers to employment in Port Alberni.
4.b	<i>Which barriers are personal or self imposed which ones are systemic or imposed by others? You can place a "P" for personal or "S" for systemic beside the boxes above or write you answer below.</i>	The community's beliefs around intrinsic or extrinsic causes attributed to the identified barriers to employment.
5	<i>Who or what causes these barriers that you marked with an "S"?</i>	Insights into the perception of who or what causes are attributed to the barriers.
6	<i>What are some suggestions for removing, alleviating, or decreasing these barriers?</i>	Recommendations or strategies to address barriers to employment in Port Alberni.
7	<i>Who should be responsible for working towards removing the barriers? Why?</i>	Who the community believes is responsible for addressing the barriers / issues.
8	<i>Who is working toward removing or alleviating barriers right now? In our community? In our government?</i>	Understanding what agencies or levels of government the community believes to be currently addressing barriers.
9	<i>Do you have anything else to add?</i>	Any additional information that was not previously identified.

If the questionnaires were partially completed the information available was used. The researcher followed up with Group 2, 3, and 4 participants to collect the questionnaires if they were not returned within two weeks, on occasion the researcher followed up several times with potential participants via telephone, email, and/or in person. After several weeks the questionnaires were collected, and a list of barriers experienced by people in Port Alberni was developed from the returned questionnaires, prior to the research forum taking place.

### 3.2.3 RESEARCH FORUM

A qualitative process was used for the research forum to gather information from an inclusive group of research participants. All participants were invited to attend a group session to explore some strategies or recommendations on how the community could work together to address barriers to employment in Port Alberni. The group session was held one afternoon after all the questionnaires had been completed and collected. North Island College - Port Alberni Campus provided the venue for the group session, where snacks, beverages, and lunches were provided for all participants. Four local individuals with demonstrated group facilitation skills provided support in the room to document comments, facilitate small group sessions, and support active participation. The facilitator supporters were briefed on the process prior to the meeting and asked to support active participation without sharing personal perspectives that might influence participants during the session.

The group meeting process [Appendix B – Group Process] was intended to build on the list of barriers and strategies that had been gathered in the quantitative process (Creswell, 2009, p. 211). A variety of stakeholders were provided equal opportunity to share information and hear from each other. The researcher welcomed and thanked the participants, facilitated introduction of the participants and group supporters, and provided an overview of the research project. The process included a review of the list of barriers that had been compiled from the completed questionnaires. Participants were asked not to deliberate whether any one item was a barrier or not and were provided an opportunity to add to the list if something had been excluded.

After reviewing the barriers to employment with an opportunity to add to the list, the large group was divided in to four smaller groups. Each group was provided with sheets of flipchart paper and asked to identify a writer to document information. Two questions were posed both verbally and in writing, to gather information during the remainder of the session. Group question # 1 (GQ1) regarding benefits of hiring a person with a disability or barriers to employment was posed to the groups and the groups were given a time of 15 minutes to discuss and record answers. The purpose of GQ1 was to generate some dialogue around hiring individuals who experience barriers to employment and what that might look like. It was intended for the individuals to keep the benefits in mind while strategizing ways to address the barriers that are experienced by people in finding and maintaining employment in Port Alberni. After compiling benefits, each group had a few minutes to present the benefits and/or strengths to the large group and a brief discussion ensued.

Group question # 2 (GQ2) was posed, seeking information around working together as a community to address barriers to employment. Groups were advised that they had 30 minutes to discuss and record options. Participants were advised that all answers were valid and that we were not here to judge or contemplate suggestions or answers, but to generate and record as many suggestions as we could. The facilitator support persons circulated the room to support the discussion process, answer questions, and diffuse and record any conflict if it arose during both GQ1 and GQ2.

**Group Question # 1 (GQ1)**

*What benefits or strengths do job seekers who live with a disability or those who experience barriers to employment bring to the table?*

**Group Question # 2 (GQ2)**

*Considering all of the stakeholders: employers; local, provincial, and federal governments; social service agencies; and job seekers ... how can we work together to decrease some of the barriers to employment and close the gap between employers and job seekers in Port Alberni.*

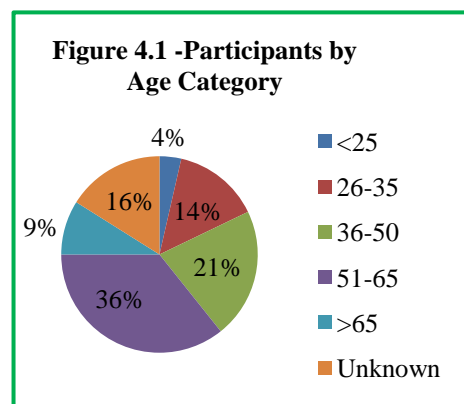
During the last 15 minutes of the session, the large group highlighted some of the strategies that were suggested and the facilitator shared the next steps in the research project with the group: analysis and report writing. The session completed with acknowledgment and appreciation for the value that all the participants provided and gratitude to the support persons and lunch was served.

## 4.0 FINDINGS

The questionnaires provided demographic information, valuable quantitative data regarding the barriers to employment experienced in Port Alberni, and suggestions on how to address barriers. The question regarding what work means revealed that all but one participant attributed positive words to the meaning of work. However, the questions regarding causes to barriers and who is currently working toward addressing the barriers to employment in Port Alberni did not provide information relevant to the research questions. Information gathered through the group forum process was a valuable addition to the research.

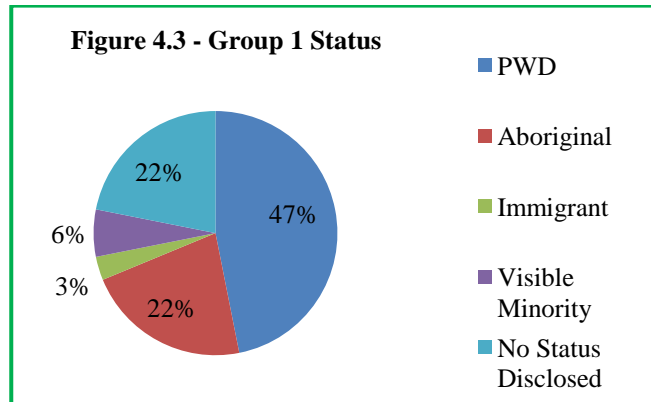
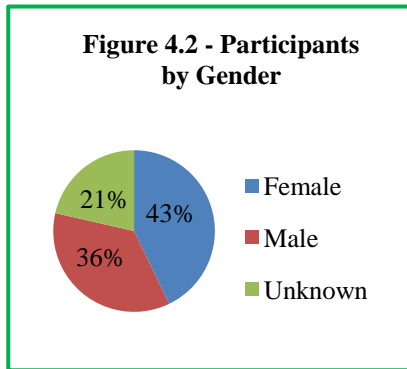
### 4.1 DEMOGRAPHICS

The following demography is reflective of the 57 individuals who participated in the research project. Fifty-six individuals completed a questionnaire of which 24 identified as females, 21 identified as males, and 12 did not disclose a gender. The largest participant group by age were 51-65, with 21 percent being 36-50, 14 percent 26-35, nine percent over 65, four percent under 25, and 16 percent unknown. There were 29 participants in Group 1 – Individuals who experience barriers to employment, and 27 participants between Groups 2, 3, and 4. Group



2 - employers, was severely underrepresented with three of the sample of nine completing questionnaires. Employers were difficult to get hold of and unresponsive to many attempts. Within Group 3 - Government Representatives, six of the sample of nine completed the questionnaire, and Group 4 - Community Agency Representatives were most responsive of the three community groups with 18 responses coming from the sample of 11 agencies. Group 1 was the only group in which a status was identified: 47 percent identified as having a disability, 22 percent as Aboriginal, six percent as a Visible Minority and one individual or three percent

identified as an immigrant. A visual representation of the group demographics can be seen in: Figure 4.1 – Participants by Age Category; Figure 4.2 – Participants by Gender; and Figure 4.3 – Group 1 Status.



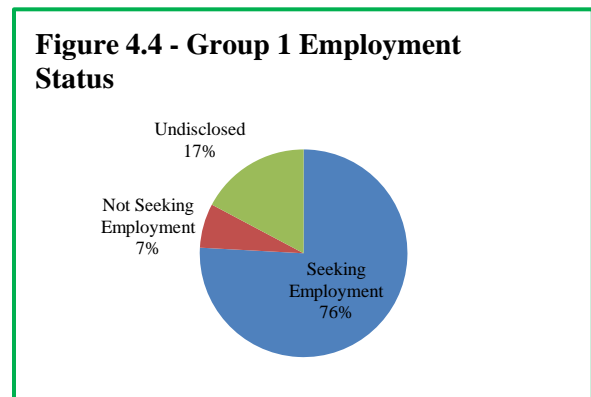
The Research Forum group consisted of 22 individuals – three employers, one local government representative (who had not completed a questionnaire), one provincial government employee, seven agency representatives, and 10 individuals who identified as experiencing barriers to employment.

## 4.2 QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS

The quantitative analysis includes information gathered from the questionnaires which had been compiled and examined in order to answer the first of the secondary research questions which when brought together with the qualitative analysis answers the primary research question. The first two questionnaire questions provided an understanding of Group 1 participants: whether they were seeking employment or not; and if the meaning they attribute to employment was similar to the working participants meaning of employment. Question three for group one and question two for groups two, three, and four, illustrated that all participants had a similar understanding of the meaning of barriers to employment.

### 4.2.1 Group 1 Participant Data

Of the 29 participants who experience barriers to employment, 22 were seeking employment, 2 were not, and 5 were undisclosed. One of the individuals not seeking employment indicated difficulty with a child’s needs and was unable to look for a job at the time and the other



had recently been granted a monthly disability allowance and was not looking at the time. Of the 56 participants [working and not working] only one used negative language to describe the meaning of employment and the other 55 used words like “contributing”, “quality of life”, “belonging”, “earning a pay cheque”, “self-esteem, confidence”, “stability”, “taking care of self [family]” “routine”, and “relationships” [Appendix E – Meaning of Work Data]. The findings indicate that the majority of the Group 1 participants were seeking employment when completing the questionnaire and valued work in a similar manner to the other research participants who were employed at the time.

#### **4.2.2 BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCED IN PORT ALBERNI**

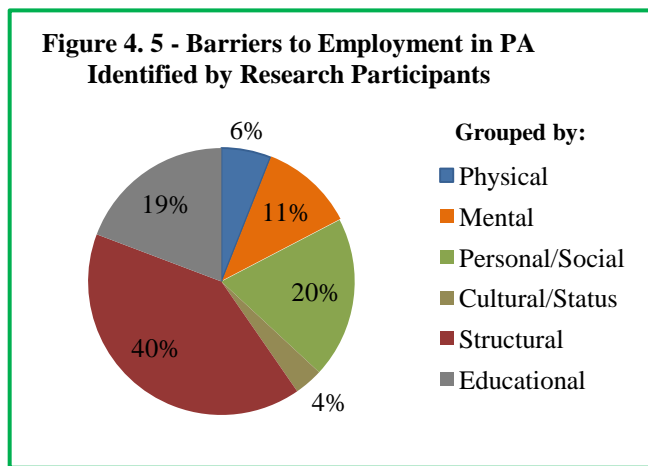
Using headings as informed by the research the barriers to employment that were identified by all participants, prior to reading the list of possible barriers, were color coded and matched to the color coded headings [Appendix F – Barriers Colour Coded]. The six major headings: Physical, Mental, Personal/Social, Cultural/Status, Structural, and Educational, were each broken down in to subheadings – a full description of the headings can be found in Appendix G – Glossary of Barriers. This allowed for grouping of barriers that were similar in nature to fall under the appropriate headings and then be bundled and counted when the wording indicated a similar meaning. For example, “lack of jobs”, “limited jobs”, “seasonal employment”, or “lack of high paying jobs” were all counted as lack of jobs. Upon completion of the questionnaires, the listed possible barriers were also grouped under the same headings and responses were counted.

***Barriers Identified by Participants*** – When responding to the question on barriers to employment experienced by self or others in Port Alberni, there were a total of 317 responses. Table 4.1 below presents the grouped and bundled barriers to employment in Port Alberni as identified by the research participants. The majority of the identified barriers fell under the structural barriers heading which was grouped in to three sub-headings of community systems, community agencies, and poverty. Community systems accounted for 99 of the 128 responses that fit under the structural barriers heading. The list of barrier groups also serves to identify intrinsic and extrinsic barriers.

**Table 4. 1 - Findings of Barriers to Employment - Grouped and Bundled**

Physical																			Mental					Personal / Social					Cultural / Satus				Structural			Educational		
Disability	Medical Health	Dental	Mental Health	Learning Disability	Intellectual	Substance Abuse	Family Related	Personal Attributes	Social Issues	Ethnicity / Culture	Status	Community Systems	Community Services	Poverty	Formal Education	Informal Education	Job Education																					
Physical challenge limitation	8	6	2	12	3	3	5	13	8	4	2	38	14	8	23	5	9																					
Vision	1	2	7			4	2	6	3		4	18	2	5	3	5	5																					
						2		5	2		1	14			4	3																						
								3	10			6				4																						
								3				7																										
								4				3																										
												13																										
9	8	2	19	3	3	11	5	34	23	4	7	99	16	13	30	17	14																					
			19			36			62		11			128			61																					

Figure 4.5 clearly illustrates the greater percentage of the barriers being identified as structural at 40 percent of the responses with the second highest being personal/social at 20 percent and educational a close third at 19 percent. Mental barriers such as mental illness and learning disabilities were identified in 11 percent of the responses, with physical barriers at six percent and cultural/status barriers such as age and ethnicity being the least reported responses at four percent.



The breakdown of barriers by heading for Group 1 – Individuals Who Experience Barriers to Employment was similar to that of the consolidated group; however Group 1 individuals indicated more personal/social barriers and fewer educational barriers. Group 2 - Employers reported only two structural barriers, and one mental barrier and the rest fell under the educational or personal/social categories. Compared to the consolidated group, Group 3 participants identified a greater percentage of structural barriers, a similar percentage of educational barriers, fewer personal/social barriers, and a greater percentage of mental and physical barriers. Group 4, the Community Agency Representatives identified a similar percentage of structural barriers and only 13 percent of the group’s identified barriers fell under

the personal/social heading compared to 20 percent of the consolidated group total. A visual representation of the percentage of barriers identified by individual groups is presented below in Figure 4.6, to illustrate the differences in perspectives regarding employment barriers. As employers were underrepresented the identification of barriers may look different with input from a larger participant group. Additional research to understand employers’ perspectives, needs, and interests on barriers and inclusive hiring practices would be a valuable addition.

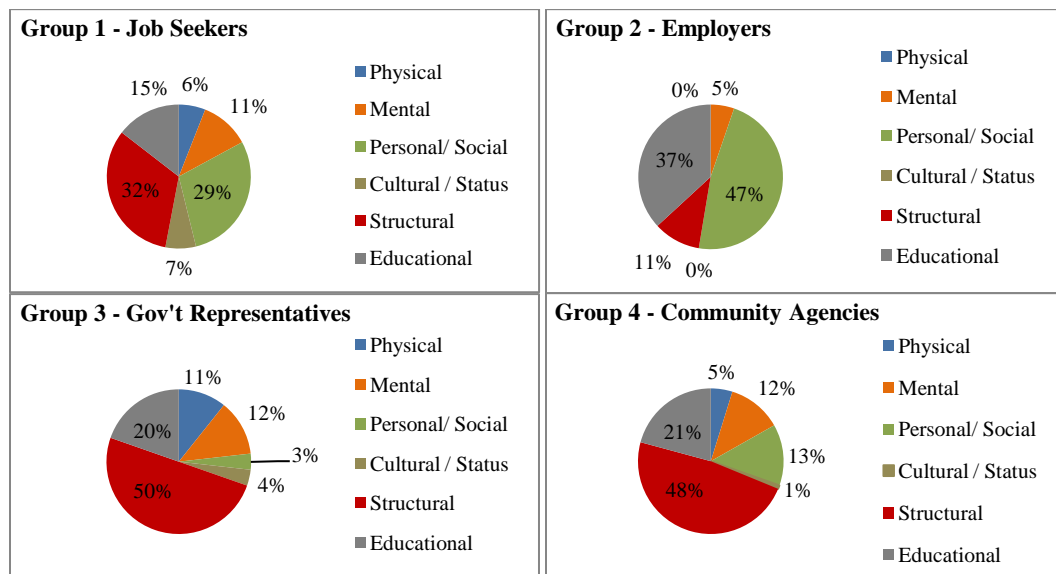
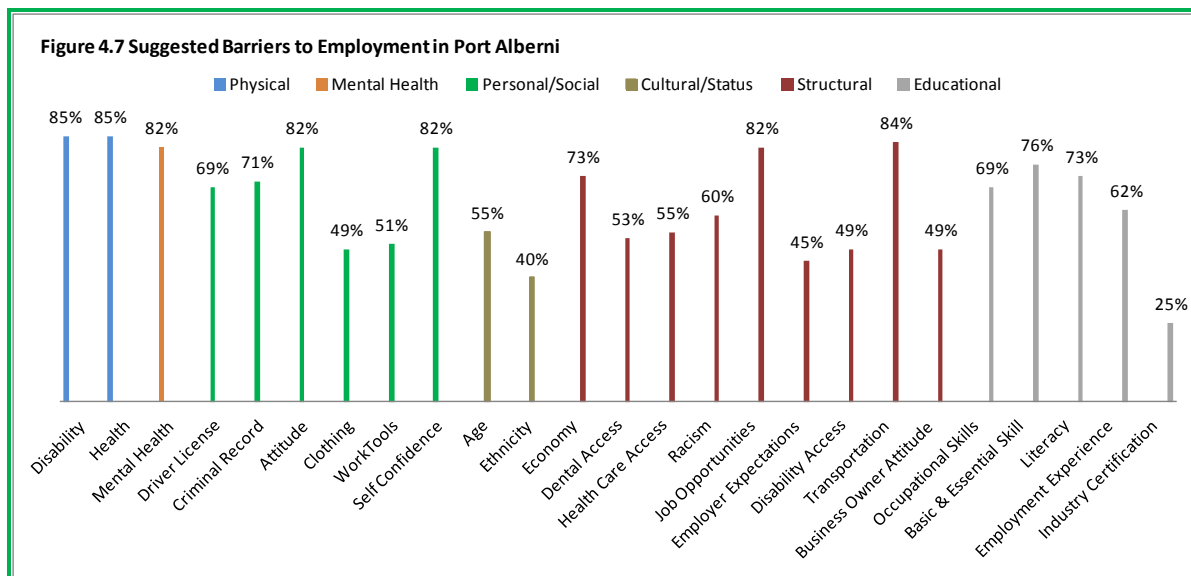


Figure 4.6 – Group Specific Barriers

**Presented to Participants as Possible Barriers** – When presented with a list on the questionnaire of possible barriers to employment in Port Alberni, the participants indicated agreement with a mark in the box beside the barrier or left it blank if they did not agree that it was a barrier. The list included 28 possible barriers identified by the researcher with room to add additional barriers if the participants thought of others not already mentioned [Appendix A]. The lists of possible barriers were grouped using the same headings as used for the barriers identified by individuals. When presenting barriers as possible, participants were more likely to consider it a barrier than when left on their own to identify barriers to employment in Port Alberni.

Figure 4.7 identifies the percentage of the 55 participants who reviewed and answered the question and agreed that the possible barrier was a barrier experienced by individuals in Port Alberni. Answers that included “maybe”, “not sure”, “could be” or other non-committal comments were not counted. The suggested as possible barriers grouped under the six major headings identified in Table 2.2, page 20 are represented in Figure 4.7:

1. **Physical** – (Blue lines) disability; and health.
2. **Mental Health** – (Orange line) mental health.
3. **Personal/Social** – (Green lines) driver’s license; criminal record; attitude; clothing; work tools; and self-confidence.
4. **Cultural/Status** – (Brown lines) age; and ethnicity.
5. **Structural** – (Maroon lines) poor economy; access to dental; access to health care; racism/prejudism; limited job opportunities; employer’s expectations; disability access; transportation; and business owner attitude.
6. **Educational** – (Grey lines) occupational skills; basic and essential skills; literacy; employment experience and industry certification.



Barriers indicated by participants under the heading of ‘Other’ in this section included: childcare times 10, and substance use/abuse times 4, with single responses of: unqualified interviewers, employers don’t hire who they don’t know, computer skills, following instruction, workplace abuse, and lack of rehabilitation services. The listed possible barriers that were agreed to by less than 50% of the respondents were: industry certification at 25%; gender at 29%; ethnicity at 40%; employer expectations at 45%; and disability access, clothing, and business owner attitude each at 49%. The barriers that were agreed to by more than 80% of the respondents include: physical disability, health, attitude, self-confidence, limited job opportunities, and transportation – indicating that it is likely a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic characteristics causing multiple barriers to employment.

### 4.3 QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

An excel spreadsheet was used to complete a qualitative data analysis to reduce and display the data and draw out conclusions regarding the strategies to address barriers (modelled on approach used by Region of Waterloo, n.d). Using a thematic approach, both the individual responses to the question “*what are some suggestions for removing, alleviating, or decreasing these barriers?*” and the group responses to the question “*considering all of the stakeholders: employers; local, provincial, and federal governments; social service agencies; and job seekers ... how can we work together to decrease some of the barriers to employment and close the gap between employers and job seekers in Port Alberni?*” were recorded and grouped together in themes. A topic guide consisting of six topics was used to guide the understanding of themes: Strategies for Community; Strategies for Agencies; Strategies for Government; Strategies for Job Seekers; and Strategies for Employers.

The qualitative findings section includes: strategies identified by individuals; the group forum analysis, and some anomalies found in the responses.

#### 4.3.1 STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED BY INDIVIDUALS

The topic guide was originally used to group and organize the suggested strategies; however, this proved to be difficult due to the overlap of themes under the topics. Therefore, organization by the themes identified in the literature review was attempted: Job Search Supports; Supported Employment; Early Intervention; Comprehensive/Intensive Supports; Partnerships; Strength-based Approach; Inclusion; and Government Policy Changes. As data was reviewed and reorganized new themes were identified and subtopics emerged. Continued analysis and reduction in data resulted in seven key themes, some of which were identified in the literature review and some new ones as indicated in Table 4.2 – Coding of Strategies.

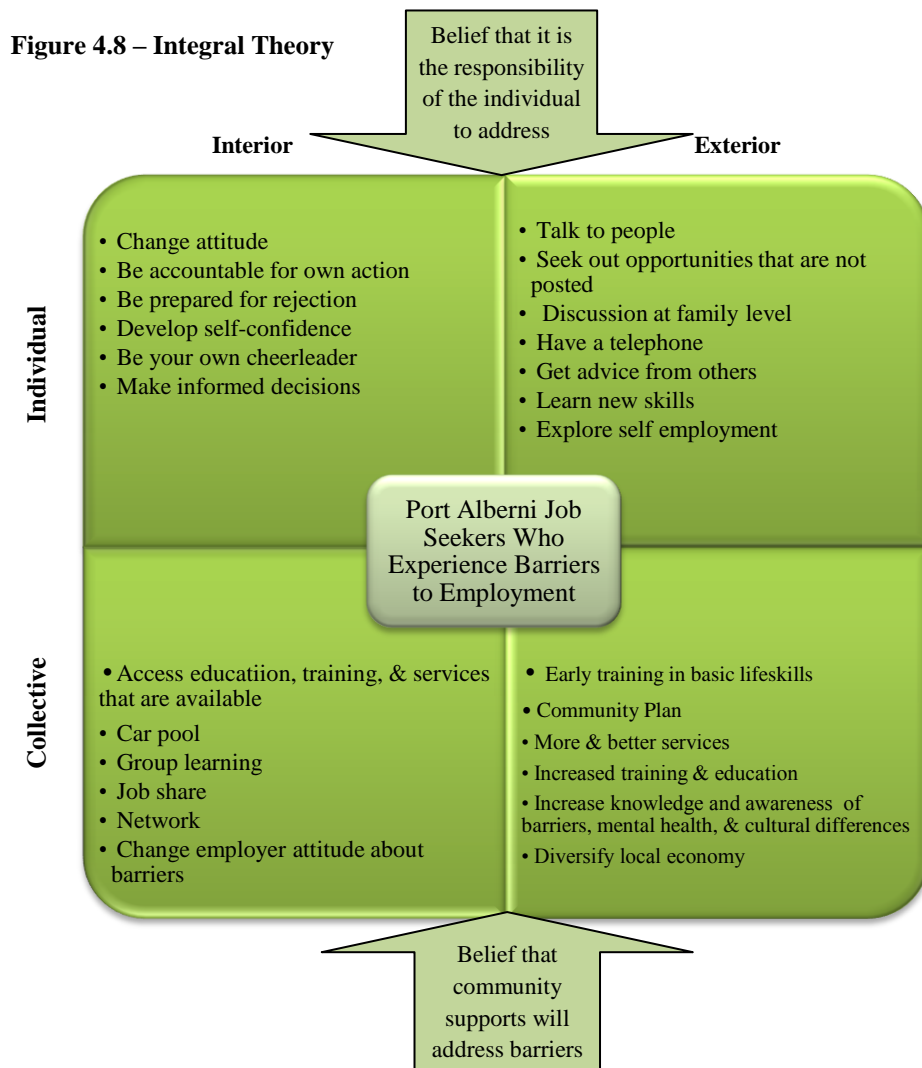
<b>TABLE 4.2 - Coding of Strategies</b>				
<b>Themes Identified in Lit Review</b>		<b>Index Emerged from Data</b>		<b>Subtopics</b>
<b>1</b>	<i>Job Search Supports</i>	<b>1</b>	<i>Comprehensive Intensive Supports</i>	1.1 Inclusion
				1.2 Strength-based Approach
				1.3 Job Search Supports
				1.4 Personal Development
<b>2</b>	<i>Supported Employment</i>	<b>2</b>	<i>Supported Employment</i>	2.1 Social Enterprise support
<b>3</b>	<i>Early Intervention</i>	<b>3</b>	<i>Early Intervention</i>	3.1 Job related / life skills taught in schools
				3.2 Cultural awareness taught in schools
				3.3 Human rights, & history of racism in elementary & secondary schools
<b>4</b>	<i>Comprehensive/ Intensive supports</i>	<b>4</b>	<i>Education</i>	4.1 Educate Employers / Businesses
				4.2 community education on disabilities/ stigma / barriers /racism
				4.3 Increased training and education for job seekers
<b>5</b>	<i>Partnerships</i>	<b>5</b>	<i>Economic Development</i>	5.1 Increase/Diversify Economy
<b>6</b>	<i>Strength-based Approach</i>			5.2 Increase wages
				5.3 Support Self-employment/Small Business
		<i>Inclusion</i>	<b>6</b>	<i>City / Community Strategies</i>
	6.2 Community Plan / Plan to End Poverty			
<b>7</b>	6.3 Housing & Transportation strategies			
<b>8</b>	<i>Government Policy Changes</i>	<b>7</b>	<i>Government Responsibilities</i>	7.1 Policy changes; Restructure laws
				7.2 Increased funding for education, services, employers, & advocacy

Multiple topics or subtopics in a single response, similar topics with different wording in a single response, and similar wording in multiple responses were considered as individual indexes and coded separately. The strategies were coded [Appendix H – Strategies Coded], arranged and presented in qualitative analysis using two different theoretical perspectives: Integral Theory and Systems Theory Applications.

**Integral Theory** - Addressing complex issues often demands an integrated look at the complexities of the issue. Looking through an Integral Theory lens provides insight in to the strategies through a variety of perspectives. A quadrivium [Figure 4.8], a four quadrant framework, has been used to illustrate the subjectivity, inter-subjectivity, objectivity, and inter-objectivity of the strategies presented by individual participants (Esbjorn-Hargens, 2012). With job seekers who experience barriers to employment in Port Alberni in the middle and arrows to indicate the influences driving the suggested strategies, the quadrivium demonstrates a number of strategies suggested by individual respondents. A reduction of data where responses of a

similar nature were grouped together indicates a similar number of strategies within each of the objective and subjective perspectives. As well, there are a comparable amount of suggestions that fall to the individuals on the top half of the quadrivium and to the collective or community on the bottom half of the quadrivium.

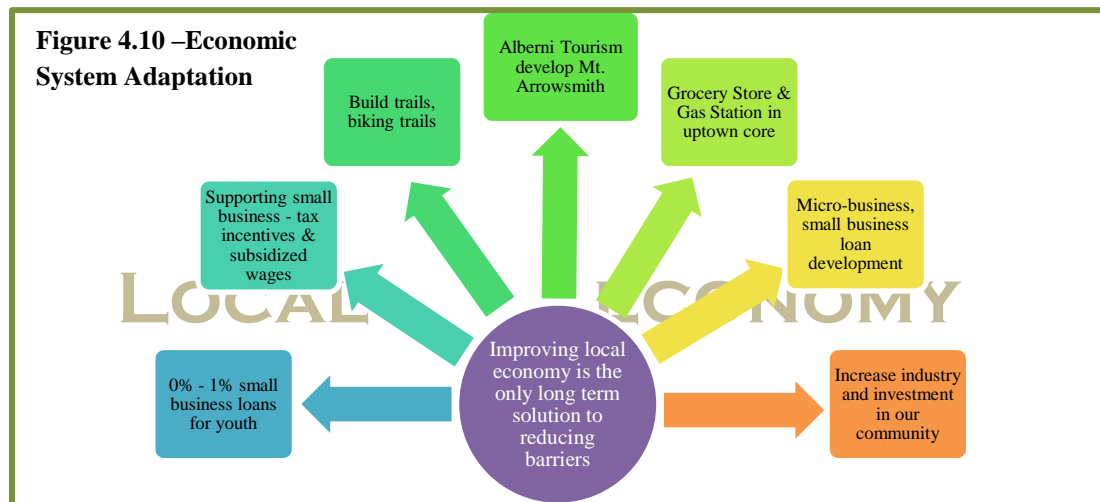
The quadrivium in Figure 4.8 represents four different perspectives regarding strategies to address both intrinsic and extrinsic employment barriers as well as strategies that can be incorporated by individuals as well as the community. However, the perspectives do “co-arise and tetra-mesh” with one another to allow a holistic view that honours the complexity of barriers to employment and the multiple strategies required to address them (Esbjorn-Hargens, 2012, p.5). For example, developing self-confidence hinges on learning new skills, which centers on the ability to access education/services, which depends on early education/training, more services, and/or increased training opportunities.



**Systems Theory Relationships Application** - The suggested strategies were also reviewed from the perspective of whose responsibility they might be and how the stakeholders can form relationships to implement some of the strategies. Participant answers to whose responsibility ranged from – individual, business owners, different levels of government, retired community, community agencies, City Economic Development, the whole community, to a variety of partnership ideas. Figure 4.9 illustrates the findings in how inter-relationships, partnerships, and integrated services can support the job seekers to achieve successful labour market attachment and address some of the disconnect between employers seeking employees and job seekers seeking employment. By having a common goal of labour market attachment for individuals who experience barriers to employment the government, community/agencies, employers, and job seekers can change “static structural relationships” into dynamic interactions by incorporating some of the suggested strategies (Mele, Pels & Polese, 2010, p.131). For example in Figure 4.9, the government policies can provide incentives for employers to accommodate a flexible work environment for job seekers resulting in education and skill building for those job seekers that then leads to successful labour market attachment.



**Systems Theory Adaptation Application** – Many of the suggested strategies were non-specific or generalized and lacked concrete actionable steps. However, some suggestions coded as ‘economic development’ were very specific ideas geared toward adapting the local economy, which was suggested by one participant as *‘the only long term solution to reducing barriers’*. To maintain its system viability and stability the local economy must develop an “internal environment that is able to respond effectively to external stimuli” such as barriers to employment (Mele, Pels & Polese, 2010, p.131). Some specific strategies indicate that the local economy may be a viable system if it is able to adapt by incorporating active processes and internal changes (Mele, Pels & Polese, 2010, p.131). Depicted in Figure 4.10 are the specific economic development suggestions to support a viable local economic system.



### 4.3.2 GROUP FORUM FINDINGS

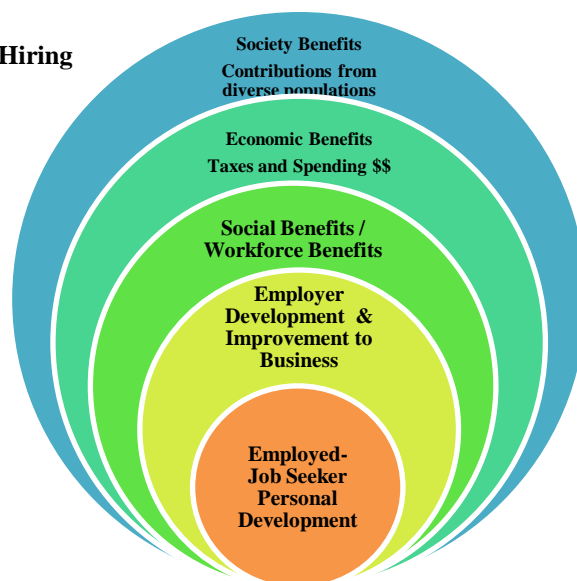
It was anticipated that the group process might be difficult for the job seekers to vocalize about barriers and strategies when included in a group with service providers, potential employers, and government agency representatives. Nonetheless, inclusion is imperative so that job seekers have an opportunity to be involved as part of a larger community in strategizing about what might work to address some of the barriers they experience. Therefore, facilitators were included in the process to support active participation of all stakeholders. The group forum was observed to be an excellent experience for participants – interactions and conversations occurred between all participants. Many participants reported positive feelings and indicated that

they would like to meet on a regular basis or at least a couple of times a year to talk about similar issues. This section contains the qualitative analysis of the answers to the two group questions:

1. What benefits or strengths do job seekers who live with a disability or those who experience barriers to employment bring to the table?
2. Considering all of the stakeholders: employers; local, provincial, and federal governments; social service agencies; and job seekers ... how can we work together to decrease some of the barriers to employment and close the gap between employers and job seekers in Port Alberni.

***Benefits of Hiring Job Seekers who Experience Barriers to Employment*** – The question was posed with the assumption that answers would be positive and serve to stimulate the group activity toward identifying strategies to support the inclusion of job seekers with barriers in the local labour market. A complete list of answers found in Appendix I, indicate that there are far reaching benefits as illustrated below in Figure 4.11, when a job seeker who experiences barriers is provided the opportunity to be employed. Some of the benefits identified include: a sense of purpose, independence, increased self-esteem, reliable employee, hard worker, low employee turnover rate, diversity, inclusion, community contributor, more tax payers, culture of compassion and community, contribution to economic development, and a decreased reliance on social assistance.

**Figure 4.11 – Benefits to Hiring**



***Strategies for Working Together To Address Barriers*** – The strategies identified by the group were similar to those identified by the individuals and full list can be found in Appendix J –

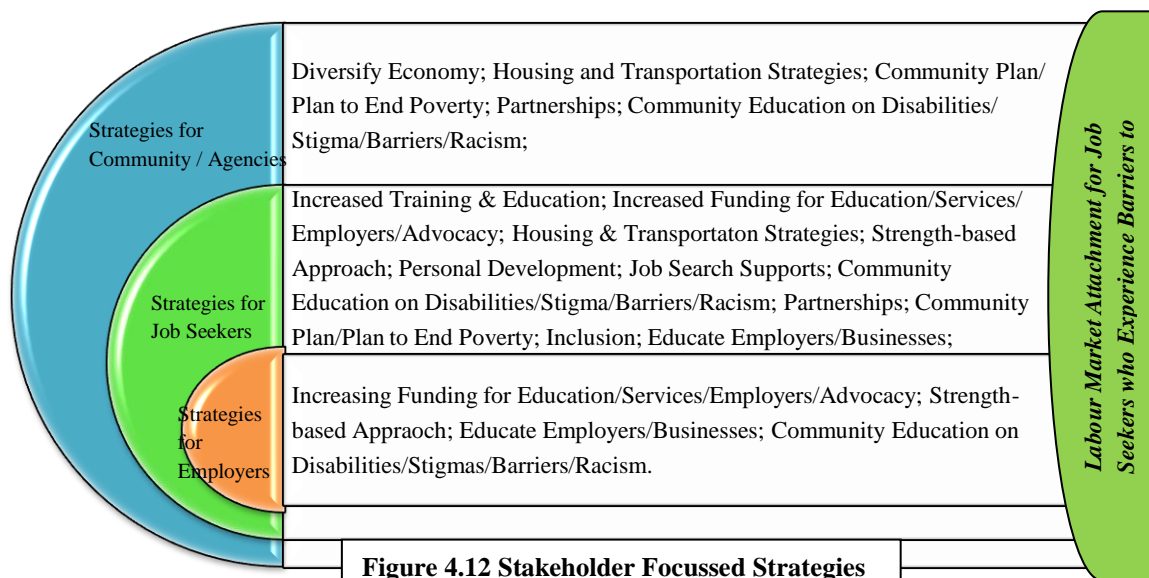
Strategies. It was hoped that the group forum would stimulate strategies that were more specific; however, given the time constraints it was difficult to delve deeper in to the suggestions and flush out what might be actionable steps. The main benefit to the group forum was the observation of the interactions and communication occurring between the stakeholders: employers, job seekers, government representatives, and community agencies. There were no negative comments recorded by facilitators and some of the positive comments regarding the group process included:

- ⇒ *“we should do this again”*
- ⇒ *“can we make it an annual thing”*
- ⇒ *“this was really good”*
- ⇒ *“thank you for inviting me”*
- ⇒ *“I learned a lot”*

Constructive criticism included:

- ⇒ *“it wasn’t enough time”*
- ⇒ *“I wish there were more employers”*
- ⇒ *“we need to hear from people with more severe barriers to employment”*

While the strategies identified during the group process were similar to those identified on the questionnaires by individual participants a slightly different approach was taken to organize the responses. The diagram in Figure 4.12 groups the strategies using a stakeholder focus developed from the topic guide and indicates the overlap in where the responsibility for the strategies is thought to be. Using the topics and subtopics described in Figure 4.2 - Coding of Strategies on page 41, there were fewer responses falling under subtopic 7.2 Increased funding for education, services, employers, and advocacy, and zero responses coded as 7.1 Policy changes; and Restructuring laws, identified during the group forum.



## **5.0 DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

Connecting the findings to the objectives of the research project included reducing data along with arranging and re-arranging data into themes that related to the main points of the research: *working together as a community to address barriers to employment*. It was first necessary to identify the barriers to employment that were specific to Port Alberni. The following discussion includes: a comparison of the barriers identified as specific to Port Alberni and those identified in the literature review; how the strategies relate to the barriers and to the primary objective of the research project; and the research limitations.

### **5.1 BARRIERS IDENTIFIED**

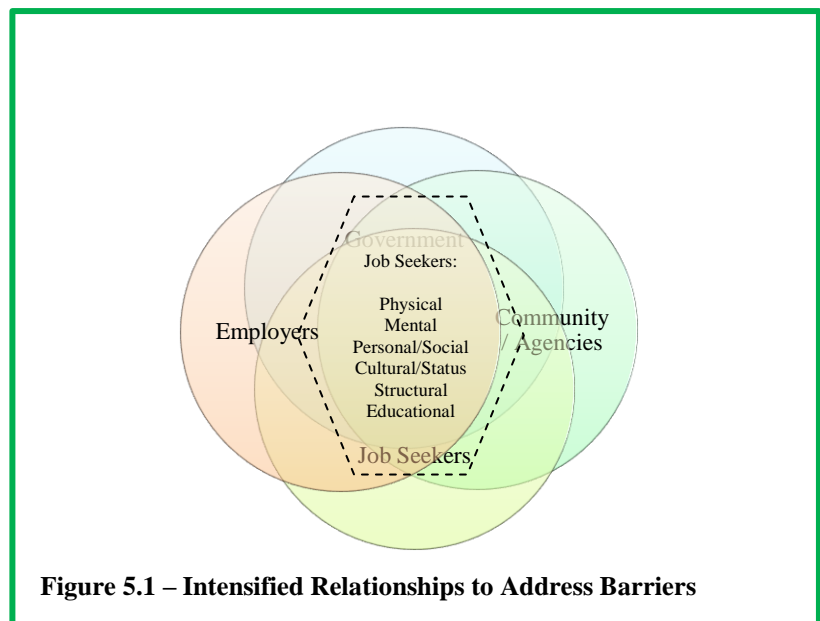
The themes that emerged from the barriers identified by research participants aligned with the themes that emerged from the literature review. However, the barriers unique to Port Alberni included more specific issues under each theme. For example: Physical Barriers included many of the same subheadings but also included such specifics as weight, arthritis, and vision that were not mentioned in the literature, and did not include work-related injury that was mentioned in the literature. Additional barriers unique to Port Alberni were noted as: attitude or lifestyle of the job seekers, no driver's license, disclosing a disability, limited resources, lack of computer skills, interview skills, nepotism, and the fact that Port Alberni is a small town and many individuals who experience barriers to employment get painted with a tainted brush and are not hired because of it.

The lack of jobs or the poor economy along with poverty and the education system were noted as big issues in Port Alberni and can be considered the major drivers of the employment barriers, rather than the barriers themselves. Group 1 participants and employers (group 2) tended to identify more personal & social barriers than the other two groups [See color coded barriers in Appendix F]. Additionally, the community agencies (group 4) and government representatives (group 3) identified more structural and educational barriers which may be because these are the systems they are more familiar with.

Using the topic guide as theme headings to analyze barriers may have helped to align barriers with the identified strategies: Job Seeker Focused; Employer Focused; and Other Focused [Community or Government]. However, there was a great deal of overlap in assigning the barrier subtopics to these particular themes. For example: barriers related to education or skills would fit under job seeker focused and under other focused which would indicate that it is not totally the responsibility of the individual but may be related to the Alberni Valley education system. It appears difficult to address any one barrier in isolation, or to determine any one entity to be responsible for addressing barriers to employment.

## 5.2 STRATEGIES IDENTIFIED

Relating specific strategies to specific barriers proved as difficult as grouping the barriers in to themes that were job seeker focused, employer focused, or other focused. What did emerge was a number of strategies that require stakeholder partnerships to accommodate the relationship effort that is essential to address



employment barriers in Port Alberni. Figure 5.1 identifies the overlap that is required of the government, community agencies, job seekers, and employers to increase stakeholder relationships to address employment barriers in Port Alberni. The blending and overlapping of the circles along with the blurred lines and titles illustrates the extent of the merging that needs to occur to solidify substantial partnerships. Strong relationships are expected and strategic partnerships are required to ensure success and inclusion of all stakeholders.

Note in Figure 5.1 the identification of Job Seekers in the yellow circle as a stakeholder group and in the center as the target group central to the change strategies. When developing strategic partnerships and specific action steps the Job Seekers experiencing employment barriers must be included as partners.

In relating the strategies to the secondary question: ‘*What strategies can be incorporated by the community to address barriers to employment?*’ it is conceivable that most of the identified strategies can be incorporated by the community in some form. However, many of the strategies are high level actions that require existing or new community partnerships and additional work to develop smaller actionable steps. To answer secondary question number three: ‘*Who should be responsible for implementing these strategies?*’ all stakeholders need to take responsibility for and work in cooperation to address the barriers to employment in Port Alberni. In developing relationships and partnerships it is important to recognize joint responsibility and acknowledge the assets of each stakeholder group.

Leading to the primary research question ‘How can the community of Port Alberni work together to address barriers to employment and increase labour market attachment for people who experience multiple barriers to employment?’ the research clearly identified the barriers specific to Port Alberni and the strategies that are believed to address those barriers. The key word ‘How’ in the primary question is evidently not addressed by the research project. However, relationship and partnership development are key components to addressing the ‘how’.

Similar to the participant identified barriers, many of the strategies identified by local research participants were similar to those identified in the literature review indicating that the primary data is verifiable. The suggested strategies leading to recommendations for the City of Port Alberni are realistic and achievable.

### **5.3 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS**

Weaknesses in the research design created limitations in generating outcomes:

- ⇒ A power over position generated by the researcher being the owner of an employment agency that works primarily with individuals who experience barriers to employment may have altered participants’ answers. Answers may have been provided based on what participants thought the researcher wanted to hear, or subdued for fear of affecting potential service delivery provisions. Agencies, employers, and government representatives may have participated or not participated to maintain a relationship with the researcher. A neutral research assistant to recruit participants and ask the questions may have alleviated this issue. However, the learning that occurred during the process and the information gathered are both valuable.

- ⇒ Recording answers for Group 1 participants may have encouraged expanded answers for participants who experience writing challenges, but may have stifled answers for others. Voice recording may have allowed the researcher opportunity for active listening and encouraging more in-depth answers.
- ⇒ Suggesting barriers that might be present in Port Alberni may have had the ‘power of suggestion’ effect and therefore identified barriers that may or may not be present for Job Seekers in Port Alberni. However, when compared to the list of barriers identified in the literature, the list of local barriers can be considered realistic.
- ⇒ A voluntary participation method for completion of the questionnaire proved to work well for Group 1 participants but not so well for Group 3 – Employers. It was expected that the employers would want to be heard; however the response rate from employers was extremely low. This could be due to how busy employers are, or that they don’t want to share their ideas about barriers to employment in Port Alberni. However, recruiting from a larger sample may serve to increase the number of respondents.

#### **5.4 ADDITIONAL RESEARCH TO CONSIDER**

Four ideas that emerged throughout the project deserve additional research: employer opinions, next the power of positive language; early intervention; and how to work together:

1. ***Employer Perspective*** – Employer perspective is imperative to understanding how to build relationships between job seekers with barriers and employers. As employers were underrepresented in this research project, additional research to understand employer perspectives may prove essential to moving forward.
2. ***Power of Positive Language*** - Barriers to employment may be reduced by doing away with marginalizing language which may cause a self-fulfilling prophecy effect and intensify barriers to employment. Using positive language based on strengths or attributes may have the same self-fulfilling prophecy effect and work to minimize barriers. The National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health (2013) notes labeling can cause marginalization and victimization as well as anxiety and stress for the individuals.
3. ***Early Intervention*** – Focusing resources and energy on early intervention rather than problem solving is becoming more prevalent in social innovation (Huddart, 2010, p.222)

and is well worth exploring to assess the role it plays in reducing the number of employment barriers that are experienced by individuals.

4. ***Understanding ‘how to work together’*** – Another level of research may be required to understand how the community develops the ability to work together – to give up control of the individual issues being served, to develop real partnerships where ideas and resources are shared, and to let in new members including the target populations to get the work done.

## **5.5 DISCUSSION SUMMARY**

It is expected that strategies linked to the drivers increasing barriers will weaken those drivers and result in fewer and less intense barriers experienced by job seekers. For example:

1. Partnerships merging a community plan to end poverty with transportation and housing strategies can weaken poverty as a driver which can address barriers of poor nutrition, access to education, and poor health; and
2. Community education including inclusion and cultural awareness can result in employers developing inclusive hiring practices, decreasing workplace discrimination and increasing self-esteem and attitude, which weakens the driver of multiple barriers and long-term attachment to welfare.

Decreasing drivers and barriers will then lead to increased labour market attachment for individuals who were experiencing barriers to employment, stimulating positive social and economic growth.

Linking the strategies with the conceptual framework presented earlier in Figure 2.1 changes the outcomes resulting from the drivers affecting the barriers and inhibits the looping of the outcomes then increasing the barriers to employment. As illustrated in Figure 5.3 – the drivers are weakened and the barriers begin to fade in to the background. When barriers are less intense and job seekers gain skills, confidence, and esteem, the community benefits – the gap between employers seeking employees and job seekers seeking employment is narrowed, community social and economic changes occur, and social issues decrease.



## 6.0 OPTIONS TO CONSIDER AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The primary objective of this research project is to provide the City of Port Alberni with some recommendations on how the community can work together to address barriers to employment in Port Alberni which is hoped to decrease social issues in the uptown core. The research indicates that partnerships with specific strategies, as identified in section 6.2, are recommended; however, section 6.1 first provides three additional options to consider.

## 6.1 OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

The following three options provide alternatives outside of the research recommendations and an opportunity for the City to explore actions that may fit the City's goals and objectives but are not necessarily supported by the research:

1. ***Maintain the Status Quo*** – By leaving things as they are in Port Alberni, employment agencies will continue to work toward addressing barriers to employment; however, the drivers – poverty, long-term attachment to social assistance, impeding government policies, and a slow economy – may continue to gain strength and increase barriers. The provincial government has a plan to increase employment for persons with disabilities and this may or may not address some of the barriers to employment in Port Alberni.
2. ***Support Local Social Initiative Groups*** – Continued support for the ongoing local group initiatives, may slowly advance the community in addressing social issues. However, a challenge with this option is that the individuals working in these groups are an ageing population who are becoming tired and hoping to retire which makes it difficult for groups to maintain forward momentum. New 'young blood' needs to be recruited and partnerships need to develop to support ongoing social development initiatives.
3. ***Hire a Social Planning Coordinator*** – Hire an individual to work within the City's Community Services department in a role that will coordinate social service efforts, form partnerships, and help the multitude of social service agencies and non-profits with strategic, coordinated planning to address social issues. Creating a new employee position or a contract position will be costly and time consuming. However, this may work best in the long run to coordinate and leverage local resources to address the drivers that are behind the barriers to employment experienced in Port Alberni.

## 6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The analyses of the data and the information presented in the literature have resulted in ten recommendations on where the City of Port Alberni can provide leadership and support to existing community agencies and networks to incorporate strategies to further address barriers to employment. Recommendations 2 through 9 are somewhat labour intensive and require time from the existing Community Services department and/or other relevant personnel to coordinate addressing both intrinsic and extrinsic barriers to employment. Recommendations 1 and 10

require the researcher to develop and share additional resources with the City. The following recommendations provide the City to:

1. **Request a short project summary** that both the researcher and City staff can use to support community education on local barriers to employment and encourage active participation by agencies, group, and/or networks in addressing these barriers.
2. **Leverage existing agencies, groups, and networks** to formalize strategic partnerships that take on strategies relevant to their current interests and objectives that can address some of the educational and structural barriers. Examples include:
  - ⇒ The Alberni Valley Learning Council (AVLC) incorporating education and training strategies that allow individuals who experience education/training barriers to access training leading to employment opportunities;
  - ⇒ The Alberni Valley Community Stakeholder Initiative to End Homelessness (AVCSI) partnering with the Social Planning Council (SPC) to identify a community plan to address poverty, housing, childcare, and transportation issues that represent structural barriers to employment; and
  - ⇒ AVLC, AVCSI, and SPC coordinate social service agencies and other community groups to work with the MLA to pressure the provincial government to develop a provincial poverty reduction plan that supports community plans. Poverty reduction will alleviate one of the major driver's affecting barriers such as childcare, health, transportation, and self-esteem affecting employment.
3. **Coordinate and support the local Employment Services** – Alberni Valley Employment Center, Nuu-chah-nulth Employment & Training Program, PA Friendship Center, INEO Employment Services, Port Alberni Association for Community Living (PAACL)-Supported Employment Program, and Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)-Employment Program – to work with the Alberni Valley Chamber of Commerce and Community Futures Development Corporation to develop material and training for employers to support adoption of inclusive hiring and cultural awareness practices within their businesses – using existing resources where possible. True inclusion eliminates cultural/status and discrimination barriers to employment.

4. Work with local social service agencies to **develop and distribute educational material** regarding the power of language to alleviate discrimination associated with hiring individuals with barriers to employment.
  - ⇒ Start by adopting positive language in everyday use – people with diverse abilities; and
  - ⇒ Use existing resources when possible; for example:
    - *Let's Talk Populations and the Power of Language* by the National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health
    - *Celebrate Diverse Abilities: Stories from around BC* by Community Living BC
5. Support and encourage social service agencies to develop formal networks that provide **strength-based comprehensive services** that prioritize personal development and personal accountability for individuals who experience barriers. Provide training and education to community agencies on strength-based approaches and integrated services to promote self reliance and address the intrinsic barriers that individuals are experiencing.
  - ⇒ Expecting individuals to do well and accomplish something has proven to be a successful program tactic (Brown, 2001, p. 27); and
  - ⇒ Shifting a client-oriented culture to a self-reliant oriented culture can make a big difference to the uptown core, decrease reliance on social services, and increase labour market attachment.
6. **Promote inclusion** within all networks, groups, and councils that are working toward social development – this means include the individuals experiencing the very issue the group is addressing – during all planning sessions. Inclusion alleviates some of the intrinsic barriers by building confidence and self-esteem, and changing attitudes within those who are experiencing the barriers, and can lead to creative or innovative strategies not yet determined.
  - ⇒ Listen to and learn from the individuals who experience homelessness, abuse, poverty, and other barriers – innovative strategies will likely emerge.
7. Use the AVLCC to promote **cultural awareness in all educational settings/programs**. Cultural competency beginning in early education and throughout the community eliminates discrimination and cultural barriers.

- ⇒ Use the Human Service Worker program at North Island College as an example of how to include cultural awareness and sensitivity in to programming.
8. Develop a campaign to **educate the community and create positive awareness** around mental health, disabilities, and community diversity – understanding diversity decreases stigma and discrimination of people who experience barriers to employment.
- ⇒ Engage Vancouver Island Health Authority, CMHA, PAACL, and Community Living BC to pool resources to develop local material for educational purposes;
- ⇒ Include individuals who experience a variety of disabilities when developing educational material; and
- ⇒ Support presentation of diversity awareness to local schools, community agencies, service clubs and other networks.
9. **Coordinate non-profit social services.** Leveraging resources, knowledge and expertise strengthens the community agencies’ ability to address multiple barriers.
- ⇒ Form a cooperative network to develop a strategy to manage non-profit funding, fundraising activities, and social enterprise development;
- ⇒ Leverage existing financial resources wherever possible including implementing accommodations in the workplace that decrease barriers for job seekers; and
- ⇒ Work with the MLA to pressure the provincial government to:
- Increase income assistance supports; and
  - Increase streamlined and consistent funding strategies for education, social enterprise development, and non-profits serving the marginalized populations.
10. **Engage the Economic Development Manager** to connect social issue strategies with economic development. Share economic and small business ideas developed from the project with the economic development coordinator to be assessed and acted upon.
- ⇒ Encourage and support social enterprise ventures;
- ⇒ Low interest micro-loans for youth with creative business plans;
- ⇒ Recreational and economic diversity in the uptown core; and
- ⇒ Tax incentive and wage subsidies for small businesses.

Partnerships and relationship building take time and effort and sometimes groups experience resistance to giving up power and control and joining forces to share resources and

energy. However, with a strong definition of what partnerships mean, mutual respect for all stakeholders, a willingness to make changes within and address issues without, and a negotiated outcome – partnerships can be dynamic and productive (Brinkerhoff, 2002).

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

Complex issues require complex solutions. The complexity of the employment barriers prevalent in Port Alberni and especially in the uptown core can be alleviated by working with the community strengths and building on existing and new partnerships rather than looking for a quick fix. Recognizing that social issues are drivers and consequences of the employment barriers experienced in Port Alberni serves to align strategies that address barriers and concurrent social issues.

Port Alberni has several groups, agencies, and individuals who work tirelessly to improve social and economic capacity. It is through growing relationships and strategic partnership activities that the City of Port Alberni will step up the effort to address social issues. “As networks grow and transform into active, working communities of practice, we discover how life truly changes, which is through emergence” (Wheatley & Frieze, 2007, para.2). The power and ability of well developed community networks will make change happen.

Partnerships and working relationships takes time and effort on the part of all stakeholders. However, when the City incorporates multiple skills and resources in a context that is inclusive, a comprehensive planning tool that generates innovative thinking and doing is created. When leaders make space for and encourage others to be involved, everyone is involved in developing their own solutions. The use of an integral framework ensures inclusion, consideration of internal and external influences, and provides space for innovative and creative actions to take place.

The literature review and data analysis have identified the barriers and indicate that the alleviation of employment barriers and greater social issues can occur through deliberate actions co-opted by well developed partnerships utilizing existing local resources. The City of Port Alberni can take the leadership role to expedite positive social and economic capacity. Working with community agencies and the identified strategies to address employment barriers builds the fundamental building blocks for the social and economic development required to showcase a positive Port Alberni.

## REFERENCES

- Allen, J. (2007). Morphing Rural Community Development Models: The nexus between the past and the future. *Community Investments*, 16-30. Retrieved from <http://www.wpri.info/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Rural-Community->
- Alberni Valley Community Foundation (2015). Alberni valley's vital signs. Retrieved from, [http://www.albernifoundation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/albernivalley\\_report\\_2015.pdf](http://www.albernifoundation.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/albernivalley_report_2015.pdf)
- Alberni Valley Community Stakeholder Initiative (2015). Still at home in the Alberni Valley. Port Alberni's strategic plan to house our community & end homelessness 2016 – 2026. Final report and community plan. Retrieved from, <http://www.slideshare.net/AmandaRidgway/avcsi-still-at-home-pa-housing-homelessness-plan-2016-57959481>
- Becker, H. S. (1967). Whose side are we on? *Social Problems*, (14)3, pp. 239 – 247. Retrieved from, [www.jstor.org/stable/799147](http://www.jstor.org/stable/799147)
- BC Centre for Employment Excellence (2015). Mapping inclusive employment practices for individuals with development disabilities. A participatory research project. Final report. Retrieved from, <http://citizenship.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2015/10/MEIE-Final-Report-201509301.pdf>
- BC Government (2004). Workable Solutions, An Initiative of the Minister's Council on Employment for Persons with Disabilities. *Recruiting and Retaining Persons with Disabilities in British Columbia: An employer handbook*. Retrieved from, <http://www.eia.gov.bc.ca/epwd/docs/Handbook.pdf>
- BC Government (2014). BC Gov News. Ministry of social development and social innovation: Flexibility helps people with disabilities earn. Retrieved from, <https://news.gov.bc.ca/stories/flexibility-helps-people-with-disabilities-earn>
- BC Government (2015). Ministry of social development and social innovation. *Persons with persistent multiple barriers (PPMB)*. Definitions. Retrieved from, [http://www.gov.bc.ca/meia/online\\_resource/employment\\_planning\\_and\\_exemptions/ppmb/definitions.html](http://www.gov.bc.ca/meia/online_resource/employment_planning_and_exemptions/ppmb/definitions.html)
- BC Government (2015, June). Accessibility 2024: Making B.C. the most progressive province in Canada for people with disabilities by 2024. June 2015 one year progress update.

- Retrieved from, <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/about-the-bc-government/accessibility/accessibility-2024/progress-update>
- BC Government (2015, July). *Province of British Columbia employment program of BC July 2015 monthly report*. For the period ending July 31, 2015. Retrieved from, <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/StatisticsBySubject/SocialStatistics/CommunityFacts.aspx>
- BC Government (2016). Ministry reports. BCEA caseload statistics. Ministry of social development and social innovation BC employment and assistance summary report. Retrieved from, <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/social-development-social-innovation/bcea-caseload-6page.pdf>
- BC Stats (2012) Community Facts, *Port Alberni City*, Retrieved from, <http://www.sdsi.gov.bc.ca/publicat/reports/epbc-monthly-report.pdf>
- Blumenberg, E. (2002). On the way to work: Welfare participants and barriers to employment. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 16(4). pp. 314-325 doi: 10.1177/089124202237196
- Brinkerhoff, J. M. (2002). Government-nonprofit partnership: A defining framework. *Public Administration and Development* 22, pp. 19-30. doi:10.1002/pad.203
- Brown, A. (2001) Reworking welfare. Technical assistance for states and localities. A how-to guide: Beyond work first. How to help hard-to-employ individuals get jobs and succeed in the workforce. Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. Retrieved from, [http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/beyond\\_work\\_first.pdf](http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/beyond_work_first.pdf)
- Brown, M. (2015) Port Alberni: on its way up. MoneySense.ca Retrieved from, <http://www.moneysense.ca>
- Butterwick, S. (2010) Meaningful training programs for BC welfare recipients with multiple barriers: Help first, not work first. Vancouver, BC: Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives BC Office. ISBN 9781926888095
- Canadian Encyclopedia (2013). Port Alberni. Retrieved from, <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/port-alberni/>
- City of Port Alberni (n.d.). Department fact sheet. Corporate services, finance & administration. Retrieved from, <http://www.portalberni.ca/>
- City of Port Alberni (n.d.). Department fact sheet. Economic development. Retrieved from, [www.portalberni.ca](http://www.portalberni.ca)

- City of Port Alberni (2007). City of Port Alberni official community plan. Schedule one of official community plan. Bylaw no. 4602. Retrieved from, <http://www.portalberni.ca/sites/default/files/users/cfoden/OCP-Final-2007-WithMapsSmaller.pdf>
- City of Port Alberni (2013). Alberni valley community profile. Retrieved from, <http://www.portalberni.ca/sites/default/files/users/sstevens/Alberni%20Valley%20Community%20Profile%20May%209%202013.pdf>
- City of Port Alberni (2014). City of Port Alberni corporate strategic plan 2012 – 2016. 2014 update. Retrieved from, [http://www.portalberni.ca/sites/default/files/doc\\_library/2012%20Strategic%20Plan%20Council%20%202014%20Update.pdf](http://www.portalberni.ca/sites/default/files/doc_library/2012%20Strategic%20Plan%20Council%20%202014%20Update.pdf)
- City of Port Alberni (2015). Strategic plan for the city of Port Alberni 2015 – 2018. Retrieved from, <http://www.portalberni.ca/sites/default/files/users/tfeltrin/2015%20-%202018%20Strategic%20Plan%20Final%20-%20September%202015%20Update.pdf>
- Cohen, M., Goldberg, M., Istvanffy, N., Stainton, T., Wasik, A. & Woods, K-M. (2008) Removing barriers to work: Flexible employment options for people with disabilities. Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives Full Research Report, CCPA Website. Retrieved from, <http://www.policyalternatives.ca>
- Community Living BC (2015). Celebrating diverse abilities - winter 2015 edition. Retrieved from, <http://www.communitylivingbc.ca/news>
- Cresswell, J.W. (2009). Mixed methods procedures. Chapter 9 in *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. 3rd ed., pp. 203-225. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage.
- Danziger, S., Corcoran, M., Danziger, S., Heflin, C., Kalil, A., Levine, J., Rosen, D., Seefeldt, K., Siefert, K., & Tolman, R. (2000). Barriers to the employment of welfare recipients. PSC research report. Report 02-508 June 2002. Revised version February 2000. Retrieved from, <http://www.psc.isr.umich.edu/pubs/pdf/rr02-508.pdf>
- Davis, A. (2014) *Disability incarcerated. Imprisonment and disability in the United States and Canada*. [Kindle Version] doi: 10.1057/9781137388476.
- Esbjorn-Hargens, S. (2012). An overview of integral theory. An all-inclusive framework for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *MetaIntegral Foundation, Resource paper no. 1. June 2012*. pp. 1-20.

- European Foundation (2002) *Access to employment for vulnerable groups*, Foundation paper No. 2, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. Retrieved from, [http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef\\_files/pubdocs/2002/44/en/1/ef0244en.pdf](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_files/pubdocs/2002/44/en/1/ef0244en.pdf)
- Gardiner, K. & Fishman, M. (2000) Employing welfare recipients with significant barriers to work: Lessons from the disability field. Prepared for Annie E. Casey Foundation. October 2000. Retrieved from, [http://www.lewin.com/~media/Lewin/Site\\_Sections/Publications/1315.pdf](http://www.lewin.com/~media/Lewin/Site_Sections/Publications/1315.pdf)
- Gordon, H., Halkett, P., Macauley, G., & Saunders, H. (2007). Review of the Port Alberni forest industry. Retrieved from, <http://www.portalberniportauthority.ca/pdf/Port%20Alberni%20Forest%20Industry%20Review.pdf>
- Government of Canada (2015) Service Canada people saving people. Funding: Skills link program. Eligible participants. Retrieved from, <http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/epb/yi/yep/newprog/skillslink.shtml>
- Huddart, S. (2010) Patterns, principles, and practices in social innovation. *The philanthropist* (23)3 pp. 221-234.
- McCarthy, J. & Hooley, T. (2015). Integrated policies: creating systems that work. 2015 International Symposium. Retrieved from [www.AS2015.org](http://www.AS2015.org)
- McKnight, J., & Kretzmann, J. (1996). *Mapping community capacity*. Evanston: Institute for Policy Research Northwestern University. Retrieved from, <http://www.northwestern.edu/ipr/publications/papers/mcc.pdf>
- Mele, C., Pels, J., & Polese, F. (2010). A brief review of systems theories and their managerial applications *Service Science* 2(1/2), pp. 126-135. Retrieved from, [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2003159](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2003159)
- National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health. (2013). Let's talk: Populations and the power of language. Antigonish, NS: National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health, St. Francis Xavier University.
- Olson, K. & Pavetti, L. (1996). Personal and family challenges to the successful transition from welfare to work. The Urban Institute 2012. Retrieved from, [www.urban.org](http://www.urban.org)

- Ozanne, J. L. & Saatchioglou, B. (2008). Participatory action research. *Journal of consumer research* (35) August 2008. doi: 10.1086/586911
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications
- Perkins, D. (2008). Improving employment participation for welfare recipients facing personal barriers. *Social policy and society*, 7, pp 13-26  
doi:10.1017/S1474746407003971
- Perkins, D. & Nelms, L. (n.d.). Assisting the most disadvantaged job seekers. Retrieved from, file:///C:/Users/Owner/Downloads/PerkinsNelms\_disadvantaged\_jobseekers\_CoffEEpaper.pdf
- Proehl, R.A. (2001), The context of change, *Organizational Change in the Human Services*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications
- Prince, M. (2009). *Absent citizens. Disability politics and policy in Canada*. [Kindle Version]
- Region of Waterloo, (n.d.). Region of Waterloo public health quick guide. Qualitative data analysis. Docs #556671
- Shahmash, S. (2010). Social enterprise: Creating jobs and community wellness one small business at a time. Research Centre, Sauder School of Business, UBC. Retrieved from, [http://www.sauder.ubc.ca/Faculty/Research\\_Centres/ISIS/Resources/~media/6196C5D2961E4665BC3639F3266CF6A5.ashx](http://www.sauder.ubc.ca/Faculty/Research_Centres/ISIS/Resources/~/media/6196C5D2961E4665BC3639F3266CF6A5.ashx)
- Statistics Canada (2007). The daily. Monday, December 3, 2007. Retrieved from, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/071203/dq071203a-eng.htm>
- Statistics Canada (2011). Focus on geography, 2011 census. Census conglomeration of Port Alberni, British Columbia. Retrieved from, <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Facts-cmaeng.cfm?LANG=Eng&GK=CMA&GC=940>
- Wheatley, M. & Frieze, D. (2007). Using emergence to take social innovation to scale. The Shamabala Institute for Authentic Leadership. Fieldnotes, Winter 2007.
- Zirnhelt, A. (2008). *Sustainable Cities Port Alberni Community Assessment: Taking Action for Community Sustainability Planning*. Retrieved from, [http://www.portalberni.ca/files/u4/ERNI\\_SUSTAINABLE\\_CITIES\\_COMMUNITY\\_ASSESSMENT.pdf](http://www.portalberni.ca/files/u4/ERNI_SUSTAINABLE_CITIES_COMMUNITY_ASSESSMENT.pdf)

**GROUP 1 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

**Interviewee #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Start Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**End Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Place:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age category:** < 25       26 – 35       36 – 50       51 – 65       >65

**Gender:**  Female  Male  Other

**Do you identify as any of the following:**

Person with a Disability  Aboriginal  Immigrant  Visible Minority

---

**1. Are you looking for work? Why or Why Not?**

**2. What does work, or job, or employment mean to you?**

**3. Please tell me what you think “barriers to employment” means. If you are not sure, do you think that barriers can mean “things that get in the way of or stop you or another person from getting a job?”**

**4. Tell me what you think gets in your way or other people's way of finding employment in Port Alberni.**

**5. I am going to read out some things that might stop people from finding work and you tell me if you agree or not.**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability            | <input type="checkbox"/> Racism / Prejudice        | <input type="checkbox"/> Disability Access       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health                | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Skills       | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnicity               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Economy          | <input type="checkbox"/> Limited job opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to dental care | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health             | <input type="checkbox"/> Work Tools              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education             | <input type="checkbox"/> Basic & Essential Skills  | <input type="checkbox"/> Self Confidence         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to health care | <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's License      | <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Experience     | <input type="checkbox"/> Business owner attitude |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wages                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Attitude                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry Certificates   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Record       | <input type="checkbox"/> Gender                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Others _____            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Employer's expectations   | _____  |

**6. Now, who do you think causes these barriers or blocks that stop people from finding a job? If it is other people's fault, who are these other people?**

***7. What do you think causes these things or makes these things happen that stop people from getting work?***

***8. What do you think would make things easier for people to find work or jobs in this area?***

***9. Who should be responsible for making things easier for people to find work? Why?***

***10. Who is working on making things easier for people who find it difficult to get work? In our community? In our government?***

*11. Do you have anything else to add?*

---

*Thank you so much for taking the time to talk with me about this issue.*

*Would making a map of the good and or helpful places or things in the uptown area be helpful to people who have a hard time finding work? Yes  or No*

*Do you want to review these notes? Yes  or No*

*Do you want a copy of the notes from this interview? Yes  or No*

*Do you want a copy of the report after it is finished? Yes  or No*

**Group 2, 3, and 4 Questionnaire**

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Participant #:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Gender:** Female  Male  Other

**Age category:** < 25  26 – 35  36 – 50  51 – 65  >65

**Do you identify as any of the following:**

Person with a Disability  Aboriginal  Immigrant  Visible Minority

**Please complete the following questionnaire adding paper or using the back side if needed and return it to Terry Deakin:**

**Email:** [terry@ineoemployment.com](mailto:terry@ineoemployment.com); **Mail:** 4908 Argyle Street, Port Alberni, BC V9Y 1V7 **Call for pick up:** 250.723.4675 Ext:23

---

**1. What does work or employment mean to you?**

**2. What is your definition of barriers to employment?**

**3. What do you believe to be the barriers to employment faced by people who are struggling to find and maintain employment in Port Alberni?**

**4. Please read through the following list and place an X in the box if you agree that this is a barrier to employment for individuals in Port Alberni.**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability            | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Employer's              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Physical Health       | <input type="checkbox"/> Limited job         | <input type="checkbox"/> expectations            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Economy          | <input type="checkbox"/> opportunities       | <input type="checkbox"/> Disability Access       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to dental care | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health       | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnicity               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education             | <input type="checkbox"/> Basic & Essential   | <input type="checkbox"/> Clothing                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Access to health care | <input type="checkbox"/> Skills              | <input type="checkbox"/> Work Tools              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's License      | <input type="checkbox"/> Literacy            | <input type="checkbox"/> Self Confidence         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wages                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Employment          | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Criminal Record       | <input type="checkbox"/> Experience          | <input type="checkbox"/> Business owner attitude |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Age                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Attitude            | <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please list     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Racism / Prejudice    | <input type="checkbox"/> Gender              |  |

***Which barriers are personal or self imposed? Which ones are systemic or imposed by others? You can place a "P" for personal or "S" for systemic beside the boxes above or write you answer below.***

**5. Who or what causes these barriers that you marked with an "S"?**

**6. *What are some suggestions for removing, alleviating, or decreasing these barriers?***

**7. *Who should be responsible for working towards removing the barriers? Why?***

**8. *Who is working toward removing or alleviating barriers right now? In our community? In our government?***

**9. Do you have anything else to add?**

*Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Your knowledge and expertise is valuable in compiling my research and supporting the development of a change strategy for the uptown core of Port Alberni.*

**Do you want a copy of these notes Yes  or No**

**Do you want a copy of the final report? Yes  or No**

### **Research Project Group Meeting Process**

**Welcome** – Welcome and thank you all for taking the time to participate in this research project. I think it is important to collect the knowledge and information that all of you have to share. I also appreciate that everyone is busy and will do my best to get as much information as possible in the next couple of hours.

**Introductions** – we will go around the room and introduce ourselves and you are welcome to mention the agency you work with or not. And the lovely ladies that are assisting me today are: Dana Durmuller, Janice Nielsen, Becky Gifford, and Tara Christensen.

#### ***Overview of the Project***

As the owner/manager of INEO Employment Services, I work closely with several agencies in the community to support individuals who may or may not be members of a vulnerable population and who may or may not experience barriers to employment. I work alongside agencies, employers, and provincial and civic government representatives to support our community to address social issues. I have witnessed an ongoing disconnect between employers seeking suitable employees and individuals seeking employment. There are five employment programs in Port Alberni that provide services to people who are seeking employment.

While completing my Master of Arts in Community Development through the UVic, my assignments were always about our community and what can be done which has led me to this final project.

My client for the purpose of the research is the City of Port Alberni, Director of Corporate Services, Theresa Kingston. Theresa is seeking information that will support the City of Port Alberni Corporate Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016, 2014 Update – “Objective 4.1: To ensure a positive image of the City of Port Alberni” (2014, p.16) with an initiative to work with the community to “address social issues in the uptown core” (p. 16).

The uptown core of Port Alberni presents visible signs of social issues such as prostitution, homelessness, mental health related challenges, alcohol and drug addiction, poverty, crime, and unemployment. I live and own two businesses in the uptown and have faith that Community Economic Development projects can make a difference.

Coming from the perspective where employers are continually seeking employees and we have no shortage of job seeker, I thought it important to understand from the perspective of all the stakeholders – the individuals who experience barriers to employment, the local agencies, service providers, and government representative. So, I interviewed people and circulated Questionnaires asking the same questions, what does “work” mean to you, what are barriers to employment, what can we do to alleviate some of these barriers to employment?

***What does employment mean to you?*** So first I would like to acknowledge what has been identified by those who have participated so far. (reading the flip chart) Does anyone have anything to add to this?  
\_\_\_\_\_ will record on a new flipchart paper.

***Employment Barriers*** – Please note that I have combined things that were similar and captured specific barriers under group headings such as depression, anxiety, and stress under Mental Health Challenges. Does anyone have anything to add to this list? \_\_\_\_\_ will record on a new flip chart page.

We won't be deliberating the list of barriers because if it is on the list at least one person and likely many considered it a barrier.

Now I am looking to you for more answers... In a few minutes we will break in to small groups (numbers dependent on number of people present) and the first topic will be “what benefits do job seekers who live with disabilities bring to the table? Or to word it differently, what are the benefits of hiring someone who lives with a disability.

***Benefits and Strengths (20 minutes)***

We will break in to smaller groups which usually work to get people talking (15 minutes).

We will reconvene as a larger group to highlight some of the benefits (5 minutes).

***Strategies to Decrease Barriers (30 minutes)***

I considered breaking the barriers in to groups but decided that I do not want to stifle any creativity by dictating what barriers any one group could discuss. As it is hoped that the information gathered from this research project will support the community to work together to make things easier for people to find employment in Port Alberni and to decrease the gap between employers and job seekers needs.

Considering all the stakeholders: employers, local, provincial, and federal governments, social service agencies, employment programs, and job seekers... how can we work together to decrease some of the barriers to employment and close the gap between employers and job seekers needs in Port Alberni.

***Putting it all together (15 minutes)***

Back as a large group we will highlight some of the strategies.

Let the group know what the next steps of the project are:

- Compiling data
- Analyzing data
- Summarizing and report writing
- Orally defending/presenting my project at the University of Victoria
- Submitting the written report for grading.

I will thank everyone for their participation, and share my contact information for any additional comments, questions or suggestions.

**Script for Third Party Recruiter**

I have been asked by Terry Deakin, owner of INEO Employment Services, who is also a graduate student with the University of Victoria to provide you with an invitation to participate in a research project that she is conducting. The research is about things that get in the way of finding employment for people in Port Alberni. The research project will be shared with the Port Alberni City Hall, Director of Corporate Services, Theresa Kingston, the University of Victoria - School of Public Administration, and any participant who wishes to see the result of the research.

You have been Or have self identified as a person who may have difficulty finding work and you live in Port Alberni, so I am providing you with the invitation both verbally and in writing. It is up to you to decide if you would like to participate or not.

Participation is totally voluntary and there is no pressure for you to participate. I am not in a position to make decisions on what services you are or are not eligible for, so whether you agree or not has no affect on your participation in any employment program or with any service provider. There is no advantage or disadvantage to participating. If you are interested I will go over the Invitation to Participate, which explains what is included in your participation. You will have an opportunity to ask Terry questions any time during the process. You are able to decline or withdraw from participation at anytime during the process and there will be no negative consequences. Also, none of your information will be used in the study, and I will not be told whether you choose to participate or not. My job is only to provide the invitation to participate.

## **INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A LOCAL RESEARCH PROJECT**

You are invited to participate in a research project with Ms. Terry Deakin, owner of INEO Employment Services and a graduate student at the University of Victoria, School of Public Administration. The research project is gathering information on things that might make it difficult for people to find jobs in Port Alberni. The information will be provided to Theresa Kingston, Director of Corporate Services at the City of Port Alberni and the University of Victoria.

Terry Deakin will complete the research as part of the course requirements to complete a Master of Arts in Community Development degree and to provide City Hall with an understanding of:

1. Things that make it hard for people to find jobs in Port Alberni;
2. Who or what makes it hard for people to find work; and
3. How we might make it easier for people to find work in Port Alberni.

You are receiving this “Invitation to Participate” because you may be a person that is having a hard time finding work in Port Alberni. If you agree to participate, Terry Deakin will set up a time and place that you are okay with, to ask you some questions about things that get in your way of finding work. This will take about 30 minutes.

You are also invited to come to a group meeting where there will be employers, government people, and community agency people. The meeting will be used to review the barriers or blocks that stop people from getting work and to discuss the strengths and benefits of hiring someone who lives with barriers to employment. You will not be invited or expected to talk to about your own personal barriers in a group setting. We will be concentrating on things to help decrease barriers. The meeting will take about 2 hours.

Your participation in all or part of this project is completely voluntary and you may drop-out at any time with no negative consequences or trouble for you. You are welcome to bring a support person with you to the interview or to the meeting.

A Participant Consent form is attached and describes how Terry will take care of concerns you might have. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Terry at INEO Employment Services, 250.723.4675; or her supervisor Dr. Herman Bakvis at UVic, 250.721.8065; or Theresa Kingston at City Hall: 250.723.2146

May I pass on your contact information to Terry Deakin? Yes .

If No . I will leave this information with you and you can choose to contact Terry Deakin yourself or not. Please remember that you are under no obligation to participate and whether you agree, or not, has no effect on your participation in any employment program or with any service provider. I will not be told whether you choose to participate or not.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

*Preferred Method of Contact:*

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**In person at:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Please insert address

**To Contact Terry Deakin**

*Place:* INEO Employment Services

*Address:* 4908 Argyle Street, Port Alberni

*Phone:* Office – 250.723.4675 or Cell 250.720.6604

*Email:* [terry@ineoemployment.com](mailto:terry@ineoemployment.com)

## **Participant Consent Form**

You are invited to participate in a research project designed to provide the City of Port Alberni, Director of Corporate Services, Theresa Kingston with information regarding employment barriers in Port Alberni. The project is being conducted by the owner of INEO Employment Services, Terry Deakin, as part of the requirements in completing a Master of Arts in Community Development with the University of Victoria, School of Public Administration. The project is supervised by Dr. Herman Bakvis. If you have questions or concerns, you may contact Terry Deakin by email at [terry@ineoemployment.com](mailto:terry@ineoemployment.com) or cell 250.720.6604 or contact Dr. Bakvis at 250-721-8065.

---

### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of the project is to provide the City of Port Alberni with information and recommended strategies to alleviate some of the employment barriers as social issues in the uptown core of Port Alberni.

### **Importance of this Research**

The City of Port Alberni Corporate Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016, 2014 Update states an objective “To ensure a positive image of the City of Port Alberni” (2014, p.16) with an initiative to work with community partners to “address social issues in the uptown core” (p. 16). The information will provide an understanding of what the employment barriers are and how we can decrease some of these barriers.

### **Participants Selection**

You are invited to participate in this study because you have identified as having difficulty finding employment in Port Alberni.

### **What is involved?**

Your consent to voluntarily participation in this research project will involve:

1. An interview conducted by Terry Deakin in-person or by telephone. The interview will use open-ended questions and require approximately 30 minutes of your time. The interview can be scheduled at your convenience. A record of the interview will be notes written by the researcher, Terry Deakin.
2. Attendance at one [1] group meeting to discuss (1) identified employment barriers and causes; and (2) possible solutions. The meeting will be scheduled after the interviews are completed and Terry will let you know when and where the meeting will be held. You are able to withdraw your consent at any time during the process and your information will be removed from the research. Information will be passed on to you as per your preferred method of contact.

### **Inconvenience**

Participation in this study may cause inconvenience because it requires approximately 3 hours of your personal time.

### **Risks**

Participation or non-participation will not affect access to employment support services from any of the local employment programs, including INEO Employment Services. However, at the group meeting there is a possibility that employers and service providers will be present and any information that you share out loud will not be confidential because of the group setting. If you choose to share personal challenges, it may affect your ability to find employment with the employers that are present at the group meeting. The researcher, Terry Deakin, will facilitate the meeting which is designed to concentrate on strategies to decrease barriers to employment and individuals will be asked to share strengths or benefits of hiring someone who lives with barriers to employment.

### **Benefits**

The potential benefits of your participation include an opportunity to share your knowledge and experience related to the issue of employment barriers in Port Alberni and to be part of the solutions to address those barriers. You will have an opportunity to share your strengths and the benefits to hiring someone who finds it difficult to find employment.

### **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. If you participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact Terry Deakin immediately (contact information below) and your data will not be used in the analysis. Data will be shredded and erased from analysis and all electronic data will be destroyed at the end of the project. Your participation or your non-participation will not affect your ability to access employment services.

### **Researcher's Relationship with Participants**

Because this is a small town, the researcher, Terry Deakin, may have a relationship to potential participants as a friend, acquaintance, a client, or a colleague. To ensure that a relationship does not influence your decision to participate, the following steps have been taken:

- Your invitation to participate was provided by a third party and if you decided not to participate your name id not passed on to Terry Deakin
- Participation is voluntary and you may choose to withdraw at any time and your information will not be used in the research.
- Interviews for the purpose of the research will be conducted objectively and professionally by Terry Deakin
- Your name will not be used on the interview sheet and will not be used in any of the research data, results, or report.
- If at any time you are participating in a program or receiving services from INEO Employment Services, Terry Deakin, will not be involved in any decisions regarding the services you are receiving.
- If you are receiving case managed services in the Employment Program of BC and there is a concern about an eligibility decision, Island Work Transitions, the primary contractor will be responsible for making the eligibility decision.
- Anonymity and confidentiality clauses have been incorporated below.

### **Anonymity**

Anonymity in this study means that your name will not be included in the analysis or any written or oral presentation of results. Interviews will be coded with a Group number and the group meeting content will be recorded as comments only with no names attached. However, the group meeting includes people who struggle with employment, service providers, government representatives, and employers that may or may not know who you are but may recognize you outside of the meeting.

### **Confidentiality**

Please note that due to the small population of Port Alberni and the limited geographical area this covers, there may be some limits to the researcher's ability to guarantee your confidentiality. However, your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data gathered during the interview, questionnaire and group meetings will be identified by a number not your name. The researcher will keep a list of names and corresponding numbers in a locked cabinet. Written notes from your interview, your completed questionnaire, and the group comments will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's office. Any interview notes transcribed electronically will be password protected and destroyed at the end of the project.

### **Dissemination of Results**

The results of the study will be presented as a summary identifying barriers to employment, causes of the barriers, and recommendations to address the issues of employment barriers. The research project report will be shared with the City of Port Alberni, Director of Corporate Services, Theresa Kingston, and presented orally and in writing to the University of Victoria, School of Public Administration. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the results please indicate YES below. The report will be available to any and all participants.

### **Disposal of Data**

Data, including consents, notes from interviews and the meeting, along with completed questionnaires from this project will be shredded at the end of the project. Any and all data that has been entered electronically for the purpose of analysis will be kept on a data stick and which will be physically destroyed with a hammer by the researcher.

### **Contacts:**

- Terry Deakin, Researcher Email: [tdeakin1@uvic.ca](mailto:tdeakin1@uvic.ca) or [terry@ineoemployment.com](mailto:terry@ineoemployment.com);  
Office Phone: 250.723.4675 Ext: 23 or Cell Phone: 250.720.6604
- Dr. Herman Bakvis, Graduate Supervisor, University of Victoria Email: [hbakvis@uvic.ca](mailto:hbakvis@uvic.ca)  
Phone: 250-721-8065
- Theresa Kingston, Director of Corporate Services, City of Port Alberni, Email:  
[Theresa\\_Kingston@portalberni.ca](mailto:Theresa_Kingston@portalberni.ca) Phone: 250.723.2146

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria, Email: [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca) Phone: 250-472-4545

---

*Your signature below indicates that you:*

- Understand the above conditions of participation in this research project;
- You have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher; and
- You voluntarily consent to participate in an interview with Terry Deakin.
- You voluntarily consent to participate in a group meeting as described above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

---

*Are you interested in receiving a summary of the report after the defense of the report has taken place at the University of Victoria, School of Public Administration?* Yes  No

### **INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN A LOCAL RESEARCH PROJECT**

You are invited to participate in a research project being conducted by Ms. Terry Deakin, owner of INEO Employment Services and a graduate student of the University of Victoria, School of Public Administration. The project will provide the City of Port Alberni, Director of Corporate Services, Theresa Kingston, information on employment barriers as a social issue in Port Alberni.

The City of Port Alberni Corporate Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016, 2014 Update includes the following: “Objective 4.1: To ensure a positive image of the City of Port Alberni” (2014, p.16) with an initiative to work with community partners to “address social issues in the uptown core” (p. 16).

I, Terry Deakin, will complete the research as part of the course requirements to obtain my Master of Arts in Community Development degree and to provide the City with an understanding of:

1. Employment barriers faced by individuals who live in Port Alberni;
2. Who or what imposes employment barriers faced by individuals; and
3. Recommendations that may alleviate employment barriers for people who may or may not live in the uptown core of Port Alberni.

You are receiving this “Invitation to Participate” because you are a working in a business, non-profit, or government agency within the geographical area of the uptown core and may have some knowledge of the employment barriers that exist in this area.

Participation in this project will consist of completion of a questionnaire, (approximately 30 minutes), and participation in one group-based meeting (approximately 2 hours) to acknowledge the identified employment barriers, causes, and possible solutions. The group meeting will be structured, with opportunity to share information regarding strengths of individuals who live with barriers to employment and the benefits of hiring an individual who lives with barriers to employment, ask questions, or add to your input.

Please note that your participation in this project is completely voluntary and you are welcome to withdraw at anytime without any consequence or impact to you and your community relationships, including any relationship with INEO Employment Services and/or myself. A free and informed Participant Consent form is attached and describes how I plan to address ethical concerns with regards to the research. Informed consent must be provided prior to participation. Should you have questions or concerns, please contact me at INEO Employment Services 250.723.4675 or by email: [terry@ineoemployment.com](mailto:terry@ineoemployment.com). I have also attached a copy of the Questionnaire, which can be completed and dropped at INEO or I can arrange to have it picked up from your office/organization.

Sincerely,

Ms. Terry Deakin, Graduate Student  
University of Victoria, School of Public Administration

## **Participant Consent Form**

You are consenting to participate in a research project designed to provide the City of Port Alberni, Director of Corporate Services, Theresa Kingston, with information regarding employment barriers in Port Alberni. The project is being conducted by Terry Deakin, owner of INEO Employment Services, as part of the requirements in completing a Master of Arts in Community Development with the University of Victoria, School of Public Administration. The project is supervised by Dr. Herman Bakvis. If you have questions or concerns, you may contact Terry Deakin by email at [terry@ineoemployment.com](mailto:terry@ineoemployment.com) or cell 250.720.6604 or Supervisor: Dr. Bakvis at 250-721-8065, or the Client, Theresa Kingston at 250-723-2146.

---

### **Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of the project is to provide the City of Port Alberni with information and strategies to address the employment barriers as a social issue in Port Alberni.

### **Importance of this Research**

The City of Port Alberni Corporate Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016, 2014 Update states an objective “To ensure a positive image of the City of Port Alberni” (2014, p.16) with an initiative to work with community partners to “address social issues in the uptown core” (p. 16).

### **Participants Selection**

You have been invited to participate in this study because of your professional role in the private, non-profit, or public sector serving Port Alberni.

### **What is involved?**

Your consent to voluntarily participation in this research project will involve:

3. Completion of a questionnaire delivered in person or via email. The questionnaire can be completed at your convenience in a timely manner, sealed in an envelope, and dropped off to Terry at 4908 Argyle Street, Port Alberni. Alternatively, I can arrange to have the completed Questionnaire picked up. No name will be attached to the Questionnaire.
4. Attendance at one [1] group meeting to (1) acknowledge employment barriers and causes; and (2) discuss possible solutions and benefits to hiring individuals who live with barriers to employment. The meeting will be scheduled upon completion of participant recruiting and information regarding date and time of meeting will be shared via email or telephone. .

### **Inconvenience**

Participation in this study may cause inconvenience because it requires approximately 3 hours of your work or personal time during regular business hours.

### **Risks**

There are no known or anticipated risks to you from participating in this research questionnaire. There is no advantage or disadvantage to your participation.

The group meeting will include individuals who live with barriers to employment, employers, government representatives, and service providers. The purpose of the meeting is to acknowledge identified barriers, and to discuss strategies to alleviate barriers and the strengths and benefits of hiring individuals with barriers to employment – this will minimize the risk of associating barriers to individuals, businesses, service providers or government representatives.

### **Benefits**

The potential benefits of your participation include an opportunity to share your knowledge and experience related to issue of employment barriers in the uptown core of Port Alberni and to be part of the solutions to address those barriers. It is hoped that the results will be beneficial to the City of Port Alberni in working to alleviate social issues in the uptown core. It is hoped that local service providers who work with individuals who experience barriers to employment will benefit from a better understanding of the barriers leading to more effective service delivery and more employment opportunities for individuals who live with barriers to employment.

### **Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research project must be completely voluntary with an understanding that there is no advantage or disadvantage to your participation. If you participate, you may withdraw at any time without any consequences or any explanation. If you wish to withdraw from the study contact Terry Deakin immediately (contact information provided below) and your data will not be used in the analysis and will be destroyed.

### **Researcher's Relationship with Participants**

The researcher may have a relationship to potential participants as a friend, acquaintance, or a colleague. To ensure that a relationship does not influence your decision to participate, the following steps have been taken:

- Participation is voluntary and you may choose to decline participation or withdraw at any time.
- Your agreement or disagreement to participate does not affect any relationship either positively or negatively.
- Anonymity and confidentiality clauses have been incorporated below.

### **Anonymity**

Anonymity in this study means that your name will not be included in the analysis or any written or oral presentation of results. Interviews will be coded with a Group number. Group meeting outcomes will be recorded as comments with no names attached; names will not be recorded at the meeting.

### **Confidentiality**

Please note that due to the small population of Port Alberni and the limited geographical area this covers, there may be some limits to the researcher's ability to guarantee your confidentiality. However, your confidentiality and the confidentiality of the data gathered during the interview, questionnaire and group meetings will be identified by a number and not a name. The researcher will keep a list of names/agencies and corresponding numbers in a separate locked cabinet for the purpose of clarifying answers and the list will be destroyed once the report is completed. Your completed questionnaire and the group comments will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's office and will be destroyed after completion of the analysis and report.

### **Dissemination of Results**

The results of the study will be presented as a report identifying barriers to employment, causes of the barriers, and recommendations to address the employment barriers. The research project report will be shared with the City of Port Alberni, Director of Corporate Services, Theresa Kingston and presented orally and in writing to the University of Victoria, School of Public Administration, and with any participant indicating a desire to receive a copy of the results.

### **Disposal of Data**

Paper data from this project will be shredded at the end of the project. All notes will be hand written. Any and all data entered electronically will be on a data stick that will be physically destroyed with a hammer after completion and submission of the project has occurred.

**Contacts:**

- Terry Deakin, Researcher Email: [tdeakin1@uvic.ca](mailto:tdeakin1@uvic.ca) or [terry@ineoemployment.com](mailto:terry@ineoemployment.com); Office Phone: 250.723.4675 Ext: 23 or Cell Phone: 250.720.6604
- Dr. Herman Bakvis, Graduate Supervisor, University of Victoria Email: [hbakvis@uvic.ca](mailto:hbakvis@uvic.ca) Phone: 250-721-8065
- Theresa Kingston, Director of Corporate Services, City of Port Alberni, Email: [Theresa\\_Kingston@portalberni.ca](mailto:Theresa_Kingston@portalberni.ca) Phone: 250.723.2146

In addition, you may verify the ethical approval of this study, or raise any concerns you might have, by contacting the Human Research Ethics Office at the University of Victoria, Email: [ethics@uvic.ca](mailto:ethics@uvic.ca) Phone: 250-472-4545

---

***Your signature below indicates that you:***

- Understand the above conditions of participation in this research project;
- You have had the opportunity to have your questions answered by the researcher; and
- You consent to voluntary participation in all aspects of the research project as outlined above.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINT NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

---

***Are you interested in receiving a summary of the report after the defense of the report has taken place at the University of Victoria, School of Public Administration? Yes  No***

CD598/TDeakin  
Appendix E – Meaning of Work Data

Part #	Responses							
101	earning a pay cheque	self-sustainability	taking care of myself					
102	sense of belonging	dignity	without you wander feeling lost					
103	stability	no financial problems	everything would be good					
104	means of making a living	something to society	not a burden to society					
105	1/3 of our life	biggest place where I am who I am	build relationships	personal growth	figure out who I am	income	support myself to have quality of life	
107	it's a way of living financially & emotionally	for years it's what kept me sane						
108	extra money	I can live without having to scrimp & save	gives a better comfort of living	I enjoy the social aspect				
109	bondage	non-freedom						
110	just work - no meaning	it will get me up	happy	a little extra				
111	full-time	secure permanent employment	salaried FT position w/benefits					
112	purpose	stability	life is not always about the money	5 d/week give a purpose	part of society	\$10/hr is better than welfare	allows me to feel better about myself	working & contributing to society is a purpose
113	steady income	bettering my life	getting out and doing stuff that I wouldn't be doing if I didn't have a job					
114	it is important	I grew up seeing my Dad as a hard worker and I need to be a hard worker						
115	means I have a lot of experience	I have a HSW program						
116	stress emotionally and physically							
117	money	social freedom - go to theatre, gum, crafts	better transportation - car/expenses	better food choices				
118	helps with planning life, finances, future	sets up a daily routine for managing & making positive changes in yourself						
119	opportunity to earn	improve lifestyle	improve self-esteem	satisfaction				
120	earn responsibility	extra income	i am well enough to work					
121	make money							
122	supplementary income	pay cheque						
123	a source of income	a sense of achievement						
124	I fit in to society enough to function successfully	proof of that success is the the pay cheque	if I could work 10-20 hr/week and earn \$800 / mth or more I would feel I really belong to this community	a quality of life I need to achieve				

Appendix E – Meaning of Work Data

125	structure	stability	accomplishment	feedome to make more choices	a sense of stability		
126	financial stability	personal fulfillment	out of work for 1.5 years it's pretty empty, pretty unfulfilling				
127	something that makes me feel like I am contributing to my passion	that includes volunteer					
128	security	pay bills	be comfortable,	don't have to worry	have good food		
129	means to pay the bills						
130	exchange services to earn a living						

201	pride	confidence	independence	opportunity				
202	life	purpose	well being	networking				
203	enjoyment	learning something new	helping others	being professional - success of business				
204								
205								
206								
207								
301	ability to care for self and family financially	opportunity to express or live my purpose	confidence	self-respect				
302	provides structure & purpose	identifies strengths and areas needing improvement	builds character & confidence for other areas in life					
303	paycheque	participation in the community	self-esteem	mental health	moves you up Maslow's hierachy of needs	financial independence	promotes personal accountability	inclusion in society
304	personal satisfaction		some ?	Ability to pay bills	fair wage			
305								
306	Activity for which you get paid							
307	growth for a healthy community	abling to support a family	key factor to a community					
308								
309								
310								

Appendix E – Meaning of Work Data

401	sense of purpose & pride	belonging to a community	giving back	security	leaning	have a routine/schedule		
402	work is anything where you make an effort, paid or unpaid	employment means paid	job is anything you just get paid to do	career as a long term commitment where you gain something as well as provide some kind of service or good				
403	some form of task that is completed in order to gain a salary or some type of compensation							
404	sense of self-worth	contributing to community / society	making a living - comfort					
405	key component to building our self-esteem	when we have a level of self-esteem we are in a better position to make a contribution and those around us; our family, our community, our nation and our fellow man	It lets us deliver a service, get rewarded for it and feel that we have somewhere we belong on the world					
406	creating, making, producing, growing, caring and sharing something useful, beautiful and joyful with my family, my community and my world							
407	a routine that organizes my life	a reason to get up in the morning	a place to interact with people	a place to exchange ideas	where I develop self-worth and a sense of accomplishment			
408	receive payment for a task or service done/completed	financial freedom and independence	showing responsibility for oneself towards the employer and society	contributing to the economy of the community	means for a persons family to live well and be part of the community	supports a healthier more productive life	promotes self fulfillment and self-esteem	
409	a contract between employer and individual wher work completed is paid for							
410	a purpose	a reason for getting up in the morning	feel like I have contributed to something	gives me a sense of self-worth by helping others and doing my job well				
411	providing income to support self and dependents	self-sufficiency	a way of meaningfully contributing to society	inextricably linked to confidence	confidence building	how you situate yourself in the work and among your peers		

CD598/TDeakin  
 Appendix F – Barriers Colour Coded

Barrier ID	Physical					Personal / Social					Cultural / Value					Organizational / Systemic				
	Health	Ability	Medical/Health	Dental	Other Physical	Attitudes	Skills	Knowledge	Resources	Support	Values	Beliefs	Norms	Expectations	Structures	Processes	Resources	Support		
101																				
102																				
103																				
104																				
105																				
106																				
107																				
108																				
109																				
110																				
111																				
112																				
113																				
114																				
115																				
116																				
117																				
118																				
119																				
120																				
121																				
122																				
123																				
124																				
125																				
126																				
127																				
128																				
129																				
130																				
131																				
132																				
133																				
134																				
135																				
136																				
137																				
138																				
139																				
140																				
141																				
142																				
143																				
144																				
145																				
146																				
147																				
148																				
149																				
150																				
151																				
152																				
153																				
154																				
155																				
156																				
157																				
158																				
159																				
160																				
161																				
162																				
163																				
164																				
165																				
166																				
167																				
168																				
169																				
170																				
171																				
172																				
173																				
174																				
175																				
176																				
177																				
178																				
179																				
180																				
181																				
182																				
183																				
184																				
185																				
186																				
187																				
188																				
189																				
190																				
191																				
192																				
193																				
194																				
195																				
196																				
197																				
198																				
199																				
200																				

<b>Headings Level 1</b>	<b>Includes ...</b>
<i>Cultural/Status</i>	Ethnicity, culture, status (age, gender, disability, Aboriginal)
<i>Educational</i>	Formal education; informal education; on-the-job education.
<i>Mental</i>	Mental health disorders, intellectual disability, learning disability, addiction, substance use/abuse.
<i>Personal/Social</i>	Lack of family support, criminal record, difficulty coping, violence or abuse, physical appearance, low self-esteem, lack of understanding of issues, no driver's license, personal motivation, attitude,
<i>Physical</i>	Physical challenges, disabilities, limitations, hearing, vision, chronic health, medical condition, dental issues
<i>Structural</i>	Community systems (Transportation, discrimination, labour market, housing, residential school effect, childcare, access to health/dental care, other); Community Services; Poverty
<b>Barriers that have been bundled to fit one index – TERM</b>	<b>Includes ...</b>
Discrimination	Racism, sexism, employer judgement, employer expectation, nepotism
Education System	Cost of education; poor system – non-aboriginal worldviews & teaching methods.
Lack of Education/Training	Lack of certificates, post-secondary, grade 12, training, suitable education, skills-based training programs, variety training, training to match market demand
Lack of Jobs / Employment Opportunities	Limited jobs, seasonal work, no social enterprise, no flexible work environments, lack of employment diversity, lack of entry-level/apprenticeship jobs, labour market, industry downsizing, lack of suitable employment, lack of hands-on processing jobs, resource-based economy, struggling local businesses, high paying jobs, sustainable employment, low wages, liveable wage jobs, lack of support for small business
Lack of knowledge	Lack of job search knowledge, job application process; knowledge of supports available; information;
Lack of Support	Lack of job search support; access to jobs; job board; wage subsidy; lack of support for employers; access to job search support; preparation; lack of access to funding for education; lack of exploration of individual needs; social services not keeping up to demand; lack of community connections; no government unemployment office
Lack of Understanding	Mental illness, mental health, mental & physical disabilities, poverty
Limited resources	No vehicle, can't afford travel,
Limited skills	Lack of skills that fit labour market; skills suitable to tasks, peer abilities, employer standards; lack of qualifications
Other, Community Services	Undiagnosed disabilities; process of self-employment
Other, Community	Having to relocate; access to self-employment, small loans, micro-

Systems	business opportunities; socio-economic conditions; competition; government, lack of funding, technology, labour standards, small town mentality, lack of community leadership, leadership attitude,
Other, Informal Education	Not able to network; lack of resources; lack of work ethic; unsuitable resume
Other, Medical Health	Arthritis, weight
Other, Personal Attributes	Appearance, clothing; personal issues; over qualified; no credit card
Other, Social Issues	Fines; abusive employers; employer attitude toward people with barriers; socially imposed entitlement; frustrated employers due to high employee turnover; hygiene
Poverty	Lack of food/clothing; housing; not having basic needs met



<b>Group Forum - Benefits to Hiring by Group</b>					
<b>Benefits of hiring someone who live with a disability or experiences barriers to employment</b>	<b>IS</b>	<b>IB</b>	<b>EB</b>	<b>CB</b>	<b>SB</b>
Group 1 <b>Loyalty</b>	x		x		
<b>Keen</b>	x		x		
<b>Benefit local economy</b>				x	
<b>Contribution to community culture</b>				x	
<b>Fostering empowerment/confidence</b>		x	x	x	x
<b>Connection to community</b>				x	
<b>Keeping people local / non-relocation</b>				x	
<b>Dedicated employee</b>	x		x		
<b>Improvements to employers business</b>			x	x	
<b>Health benefits</b>		x	x	x	x
<b>Extra support and subsidy for employer</b>			x	x	
<b>Stronger workforce</b>				x	x
<b>Creating a culture of inclusion</b>		x	x	x	x
<b>Bringing positivity to work place</b>	x		x	x	x
Group 2 <b>Loyalty</b>	x		x		
Fostering a culture of compassion		x	x	x	x
Specific abilities / strengths	x		x		
Matching skills to job		x	x		
Fostering empowerment / competence		x	x	x	x
Removing from social assistance				x	x
Acceptance and inclusion		x	x		
Appreciative / grateful employees	x	x	x		
Building community / basis of community development				x	
Ripple effect		x	x	x	x
Engaging more people in society		x		x	x
More people paying taxes / contributing to economy				x	x
Stimulates business			x	x	
Heightened strengths		x	x		
Connection to place / community attachment		x		x	
Adds different perspectives /more knowledge		x	x		
Purpose		x			
More profit for employer			x		
Self development for individuals / employer		x	x	x	
Group 3 <b>Stronger community</b>				x	
<b>Dedicated employee</b>	x		x		
<b>Employer better / stronger</b>			x		
<b>Contributor to community</b>		x		x	
<b>Job sharing</b>			x		
<b>Self esteem for all</b>		x	x	x	
<b>Buy locally / pay cheques spent locally</b>				x	
<b>Choices</b>		x			
<b>Become a true contributor to local economy</b>		x		x	
<b>Add / contribute to a positive environment</b>		x	x	x	x
<b>Not clock watchers</b>	x		x		

Appendix I – Benefits of Hiring Individuals who Experience Employment Barriers

Group 4	Loyalty	x		x		
	Keen interest	x		x		
	Work support		x	x		
	Subsidy		x	x		
	Hard worker	x		x		
	Low turn over rate	x		x		
	Positive attitude	x		x		
	Diversity	x		x	x	
	Create positive customer relations	x		x		
	Punctuality	x		x		
	Reliable	x		x		
	Self improvement (employee)		x			
	Adaptability	x		x		
	Respect	x		x		
	Initiatives	x		x		
	Work habits		x			
	Motivated	x	x			
Large Group	Loyalty	x		x		
	understanding of disabilities & overcoming barriers			x		
	Contributing to the community				x	x
	Can change the culture of the community (inclusion)				x	x
	Increases communication skills of employer and employees		x	x		
	Promoting independence benefits society as a whole		x	x	x	x
	New perspectives	x		x		
	Health benefits (improvements)		x			
	Sense of accomplishment		x	x		
	Builds compassion empathy		x	x		
Promoting creativity also flexibility			x			
Humor		x	x			
KEY						
IS	Individual Strength					
IB	Individual Benefit					
EB	Employer Benefit					
CB	Community Benefit					
SB	Society Benefit					

	Strategies for Community / Agencies			
	Additional programs, services, education for Job Seekers	Strategies specific to job seekers		
		Strategies for Employers		
Diversify/build economy		build employer-job seeker relationships	Incentive for employers	Training for employers
5.1 Diversify economy	4.3 Volunteer training/work experience	6.1 Get employers and job seekers together	7.2 Training subsidy (incentive to train)	4.1 employer education - how to hire the employee that suits the position and culture
5.1 Temp agency	4.3 free life skills counselling	6.1 communication both ways (employer-employee)	7.2 wage subsidies	4.1 Workshops/training for employers
6.3 improvements in 'transportation'	7.2 Subsidy programs for childcare	6.2 employers being community focused by recommending an employee that is not suited to their establishment to another business they may be suited to	1.2 focussing on hiring people to train more	4.2 Open minds regarding disabilities
6.2 City council can let agencies know about new businesses silently coming to town and needing employees	6.3 bus passes / subsidies	1.1 acceptance of employee skills	7.2 increasing training subsidy	4.1 employers shifting requirements for employment/broader/various backgrounds validated
6.1 All work together	4.3 learning new skills, moving forward from and abusive relationships	1.1 informal meet and greet (different from job fair / employer-employee interaction)	1.2 job sharing programs	4.1 unconventional hiring processes expanding
6.2 common voice to city hall to do something locally or higher	4.3 3 month job carve	6.1 Honesty from both employer and employee		4.1 screening processes
4.2 developing community awareness	7.2 Training subsidy (incentive to train)	1.3 reliable information on resume		1.2 more opportunity for on the job training
6.2 addressing systemic issues	6.3 secure stable housing / living	4.1 reliable information on what skills employer is looking for		4.1 education and support for hiring managers
4.2 Open minds regarding disabilities	1.2 networking with others for childcare	4.1 job pooling/job splitting availability		1.2 recognizing education that is self taught / learned
4.2 shift in societal perceptions/judgements/values place on formal education	1.4 fulfillment of basic needs - food, cleanliness, communication	1.1 giving the chance to the person to obtain training versus person who already has training - opportunities for training/skills upgrading		
4.2 promoting awareness, understanding, knowledge	1.3 job pooling/job splitting availability	1.2 creative solutions (varied schedules etc)		
4.2 perceptions	1.3 more support throughout jobsearch, employment, and after	1.2 employment centres newsletter promoting job seekers to employers		
6.2 proactive versus reactive	1.2 continuum of service	opportunities for employers - employees to meet/network		
4.2 reducing stigmatizations	4.3 focussed skill building	more focus / persistence		
6.3 safe housing / childcare / transportation	7.2 advocacy	fostering open lines of communication		
	1.3 recruiting data base	marketing successes		
	1.3 expanding job fairs	transparency in hiring / honesty on resume		
	1.2 job experience program	intergroup communication forum / continued awareness building		
	1.2 before and after resumes	employers shifting requirements / holding a broader vision		
		volunteering / networking		