The New Inclusive Economy: Literature Review in Plain Language

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Introduction

The purpose of the New Inclusive Economy project is to generate knowledge that helps people find suitable employment regardless of gender, ethnicity, or disability. The goal is to help employers change their workplaces to suit all people and abilities.

In addition to typical jobs, included in the research are new and different ways of making work accessible to workers. This could include a daily check-ins and flexible schedules that suit workers needs as well as permission to take breaks when needed. These changes would create more inclusive work conditions, as the current workplaces do not accommodate all abilities, read more in the section titled *Excluding people with disabilities in the workplace (page 5)*.

From this research we will help employers understand how to improve their business for inclusive employment and a changing economy.

The research question guiding this process is:

> What workplace conditions and practices lead to meaningful employment for people with disabilities? What are the alternative economic approaches to providing meaningful employment?

Over the course of two years, this research looked into:

- Examples of meaningful jobs for people with disabilities.

- Workplace Conditions to help employers make changes so they can hire people with disabilities or who have other barriers to employment.

- Affordable Models is making sure the business is profitable and at the same time assuring people and the planet are treated fairly.

- Different Ways of doing business where hiring and employing people respectfully is a priority. We want people in the community to know how important having a job is for the well being of a person with a disability. The impact of their employment largely benefits the community as a whole.

- Understanding the Supports and Barriers that either assist or hinder employers in creating more jobs for people with disabilities or other work barriers.

The first step of this project is to review already existing material on inclusive employment such as news articles, books etc. The second step is to find out what can still be improved upon to lower barriers to employment.

Definitions

Ableism: is a word for discrimination against a disability.

Capitalism: is a profit-based system where people or businesses act in self-interest where making money is typically the most important goal. Inequality is capitalism's most common and controversial characteristic.

Disability: A person is considered disabled because they do not fit into the current social structure. It might be that a person can not get around physically, or socially. Most disabled people are put into one category rather than being looked at as an individual. There is no single definition of a disability.

For the purpose of this project, we will continue to refer to the definition of Disability given above. For instance, encountering people who don't understand, being hindered by one's physical surroundings, or interacting with others that don't face the same challenges all get in the way of a person's full participation in their community.

Economy: The economy is driven by people buying and selling items. Examples of this are people buying and selling material objects such as clothes, houses, cars and food. It also includes buying and selling services such as internet, phone, healthcare, mechanical, etc. Years ago, both parents did not need to work. The economy used to include one parent being able to stay home for childcare and other domestic work but our wages are not keeping up with the cost of living. Now the economy is almost solely focused on financial growth. The 'social economy' includes money and important social elements that make the economy work like childcare and eldercare.

Economic Models: are ways of doing things to enable the exchange of goods and services. We use money to measure the value of goods and services and exchange money.

Employment : is usually understood as paid work. Having fairly paid work is a human right according to the UN, when it comes to persons with disabilities. Meaningful paid work is having a choice of where one works and what one does. It'll be different for everyone; people associate it with independence, and feeling like they are contributing to society, and feeling good about themselves.

Inclusion: is a term that includes everyone whether a person has a disability or not, so that everyone feels like equals. The biggest part is being able to find meaningful and well paying work, regardless of a disability. This provides equal access to jobs, without having to explain one's disability.

Inclusive Design/Universal Design/Accessible Design: is a term used so everyone understands the object, area, equipment, furniture or space can be used by all.

Inclusive Economy: This refers to people making a fair wage and having input and participation. Inclusive economy means that goods and services are sold at fair market value, where profit is not always the motivating factor.

Policy: is a plan or set of guidelines that an organization follows when making decisions or doing things. It's like a roadmap that helps people know how to behave or what steps to take in certain situations.

Structural barriers: This can mean where we work, if there is a bus route to get there, if you can afford other transportation like a car, or be able to afford a house in the area where you work. This can also describe if a person feels safe at their job and appreciated. It also refers to the way government, hospitals, families, religion, and schools provide emotional and practical support.

Work: Work includes all the things people do to contribute to their families, communities , the environment and themselves. Most people understand work as a means to making money, so we can pay for the things we need to live, such as food, rent, mortgage, and the clothes we wear etc. Volunteer work that benefits our community such as helping people or animals is often overlooked. Volunteering can improve our mental and physical well being and can also be a way for someone with a disability, gender difference, ethnicity or varying ability feel like they are contributing and appreciated.

Looking at the New Inclusive Econom outside the box

When we have conversations about paid work and disabilities, employers and businesses need to think about how to employ someone with a diverse ability. We need to think more about how to become a fully inclusive economy as more people with varying abilities are entering the workforce.

Addressing workplace inclusion requires big changes. Employers alone might not be able to solve this problem. There needs to be conversation between employers, the government as well as the inclusion community. Employers need to speak with other employers who already have inclusive workplaces to find out what is working and how they are being successful. Employers should also talk with their employees to find out what's working within the job and what is not. This effort puts people before profit.

This project connects the knowledge and practices that have not previously been linked:

a) the many ways of doing business and making money

b) including people with disabilities

Current responses to structural barriers to paid work

Life is unpredictable and the pandemic reminded us how fragile life can be. This is especially true for people with disabilities, because they already have so many challenges in life and this can affect their mental wellbeing on a greater level.

Due to Covid 19, society had to re-evaluate the way people worked and address their vulnerabilities. One of the vulnerabilities was isolation and mental health. It was a time of reflection for the world and it became clear some things had to change. Employers started to understand workers' needs more. Flexible work schedules became more important and accepted. Work was approached differently and there was more support for individuals thus changing the way business was done. Those changes made it easier to hire people with disabilities or other disorders. Since the pandemic, it has been more challenging keeping employees.

The world is in the middle of a big change around work, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic either meant some people were out of work or they worked from home. That gave businesses an opportunity to change how they do things when it comes to employment. It also created new businesses geared to people with disabilities allowing people to do jobs without going into an office. It allows people with mobility issues to gain employment as they can work from home, without having to arrange for transportation. Covid-19 has changed the way we look at business and the impact on workers. It gives employers a new way of doing business because we want a world where everyone is treated fairly.

Excluding People with disabilities in the workplace

Jobs are hard to find especially for people that have a disability. With the economy the way it is now, it's even tougher. The United Nation Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was signed by 164 countries. In 2017 only 59% of disabled people were employed, well 80% of non-disabled people were employed. It is the same all around the world.

One study shows that people with disabilities are the least likely to be working out of any group. In Canada as many as 40% of people's disabilities are invisible and as our population ages, the number of workers and job seekers with invisible disabilities will grow. Someone with an intellectual disability faces the greatest difficulty in finding paid work.

This can be people who have had an injury to the brain or from an illness like a stroke or head trauma. As of March 31st 2019 24.2% of individuals supported by Community Living BC reported making money from working, with 82% of these people making below $10,000 a year, despite that research shows workers with intellectual disabilities are typically reliable and capable. Inclusive workplaces show benefits, such as minimal staff changeover, high productivity and profit. It also shows that workers enjoy working and are happier in an inclusive workplace.

Structural barriers that exist outside of paid work settings

There are proven links between poverty and disability all around the world. People who are poor are often excluded from healthcare and education and are more likely to experience poor nutrition, abuse and other trauma. People with disabilities are more likely to be uneducated, have a more difficult time finding paid work and are lonelier. Lifelong poverty can affect mental health, self esteem and isolate them further from society. This can also affect a person's physical health and be a hindrance in finding work. These are issues that affect people with disabilities the most and prevent them from finding work.

The individual's disability is not the main issue, it is the attitudes and beliefs of society that says that these people are not employable. This is why the percentage of people with disabilities who are working is so low. This requires a shift in thinking. We cannot assume that because a person has a disability that they cannot do the work. This type of change will require change in almost every way things are being done.

Research has shown that there is still discrimination for people with disabilities when it comes to finding work. This is happening not only in Canada but all over the world. Discrimination is easy to identify, but not easy to fix. Someone with a disability might go for an interview and not get the job and not know why. It involves educating employers and the public about discrimination of people with disabilities.

Due to discrimination in finding work, or the difficulty of just functioning in society, people with disabilities will experience things like depression and suicidal thoughts. This can lead people with disabilities to either not look for work or be passed over for a promotion etc. This discrimination usually starts at a young age, while still in school and continues into work life and beyond. A person without a disability might not understand because they have not had the same experience.

More structural barriers: economic and cultural

It is important to be clear about the reasons for discrimination against people with disabilities. People with disabilities are usually looked at by society as having something wrong with them and in the past people with a disability were put in an institution away from society. In some Indigenous communities they believe people should look after one another and not be shut out from the rest and everyone has a place and belongs.

In the last century Indigenous people have lost their lands, their beliefs, language and teachings of their families. That has been very disabling for the entire culture, maybe more so than an individuals' physical or intellectual disability. The connection to the land and way of life is very important to the Indigenous people. What western culture sees as a disability by many people, they would see as a special gift or connection with the spirit world.

Indigenous authors point out how we have lost sight in the way we do business and treat our families and communities. They believe the way we do business is bad for the world and is causing irreversible damage to the environment.

Since the time of colonialism many Indigenous cultures lost their connection to the land and in many places were not able to take care of themselves and their families as they lacked clean air and water. Whereas before, people would grow their own food and be able to provide for their families and we were not damaging the planet. We need to get our connection to family and land back.

There is a study that looks at how Indigenous people, immigrant groups and people with disabilities were kept in prisons and asylums in Victoria, BC. These people were thought to be unfit and both the legal and medical systems allowed this to happen. This also resulted in taking people's land in the early days of colonization as land, labour and profit was highly sought after rather than treating people with respect.

Systems of the past still continue today, in the same way some groups of people are still excluded today. Some groups of people don't have access to education, jobs or even owning land and they are not able to make a living off the land like they once did. We need to come up with new ideas to address people that are marginalized.

We are still operating in an out of date economic and social structure.

Things have gotten better in the way certain groups of people are being taken into account, but there is still a long way to go in addressing the needs of these groups, especially when it comes to racism, sexism and the way disabilities are looked at, whether it's physical, or intellectual.

Status quo will remain the same unless challenged.

For instance, the design of a building or neighbourhood, the routing of buses, the cost of rent are some of the things that can impact paid work. These public design decisions made by the government affect the decisions that we make in life. This requires that all levels of government (municipal, provincial, federal) and communities have conversations and work together to invest into our communities. It is key to include people with disabilities in the conversation who have life experience to figure out how we can make things better for everyone.

Some policy and laws that address inclusion at work

There have been new changes in government and legislation regarding fair treatment of people with disabilities. Examples are: the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Canadian Human Rights Act, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This legislation has been revamped so that these people are not marginalised from society when it comes to being heard as well as paid work.

In 2021, the Accessible British Columbia Act created standards to remove obstacles to full and equal participation in society. The document outlines barriers which can affect our surroundings, attitudes, practices, policies, information and technology. This new act sets accessible standards for communities with the goal of eliminating discrimination. There is a strong commitment by the government of Canada to be fully accessible by 2040.

The Stronger BC Economic Plan written by the government, released in February 2022, acknowledges that 'if an economy is not working for people, then it's simply not working.' They know for the economy to do well in meeting the needs of society, there needs to be more opportunities that include the participation of people with disabilities. This is key to having a healthy and inclusive society. As our communities evolve we must adapt to ever changing demographics and the way we work.

In this project, we look at paid work as part of the broader economy and society. We need to look at and consult individual communities to understand what is working and what we can improve. The model that works in one community may not work in another.

Seeing outside the box

This report is a review of everything written to date about what has gotten in the way of inclusive paid work; what things in the workplace needed to shift as well as the benefits of inclusive employment. A newer report looks at a much larger picture - the way society is

structured and how that influences the way businesses operate. It is also looking at new ideas and solutions to overall inclusivity in the workplace and in the community.

Reviewing and shifting practices: teachings from Tla'amin

Tla'amin teachings about disability and the economy

When this report was written, five members of the research team were living on the traditional and (modern-day) treaty territory of the Tla'amin Nation. When looking at the writings of Tla'amin and other Indigenous scholars, two important points were made.

First, inclusion in the community has always been a way of life. Each person has strengths and talents to offer the community and there is a place for everyone to be included. The teachings of an inclusive community are central to living a good life.

Second, there is a broader understanding of inclusivity and the connectedness of all things. For instance, we can see this in the way the Indigenous community takes care of their families and community. When one family has an abundance of food, they share with others in need in the community and make sure loved ones are taken care of during a funeral or time of grief. Financial gain is not the first priority. Another important teaching is recognizing our relationship with the rest of creation and being good caretakers of the land for future generations. This encourages us not to take our surroundings or anything else for granted.

The Tla'amin economic structure and the way they govern themselves includes potlatches. Each family has a heh-goos (head). This person manages the property and works for the prosperity of the entire family. Hosting feasts for example is a way of providing for the people, but also establishing good relations. The structure is around family rather than a business. If your family is managing well then you are capable of contributing to the community and if your family is struggling there is support in the community.

Many of these teachings have been interrupted over the years due to the takeover of colonial powers i.e. the English, French and Spanish people in Canada. Many of Tla'amin traditional laws (ums nah motl) are still upheld today and should be included in plans for the future.

In a recent participatory research project, parents and caregivers of Tla'amin children with disabilities highlight the importance of cultural safety. This includes such things as teaching children where they came from, who they are, being proud of their culture, and being respectful of themselves, people with a disability and elders.

The study highlighted the barriers faced by children with disabilities and their families and what needs to change in the community:

- Making sure children are considered all the time.

- Support for workers and caregivers.

- Teaching their traditional language, music, art and their history.

- Building a new generation of leaders.

- Taking control of their own future based on their values.

We can use Tla'amin's model of inclusivity in our own businesses.

A diverse economies framework: shedding new light

'Economy' and 'market' basically mean the same thing. Inclusive economy relates to a more diverse economy; it includes keeping households and countries running well. It doesn't just mean the flow of money and goods but also opens the door for people with disabilities entering the workforce, unlike the capitalist model. Capitalism is based on private ownership and making money. In Canada and other parts of the world we are looking more at how and who we employ to make it a more inclusive work environment.

As we have an ever-changing economy, we can see the potential in local businesses starting up and employing people with disabilities. People are paying attention to how these businesses are impacting the community and making sure everyone is a part of the transformation.

A case study involving one woman's garden shows how it can build connections in the community where everyone can participate and benefit. If for example, one person grows potatoes and another grows lettuce, there can be an exchange of nutritious produce and also develop friendships. These might be small efforts but in the long run they help and grow social connection in the community without the exchange of money. This is how farmers used to live a century ago. This example shows how we can create the economy through connection and everyday activities.

There are examples all over the world of the economic role of activities such as bicycle sharing, food sharing, gardening, manufacturing and vehicle sharing. These examples

include for-profit and non-profit businesses, and may involve the exchange of money, trade, or other forms of payment. An interesting example of sharing resources and building community is bike sharing. A person could ride a bike to where they are going and leave it and someone else can pick it up and ride to where they are going. This can be done by trade with the bike owner or a fee in the form of money.

Here are some examples from around the world of new ideas for doing business:

- Economic practices that change with the times

- Flexible schedules

- Practices that consider the wellbeing of people, animals, the environment

- Daily check-ins

- Ability to take breaks when needed

- When there is extra it is shared with others

Looking at the state of the current work environment or activities gives us the opportunity to see the other alternatives we are seeking and realise inclusive paid work may already be in reach.

Changing the story

When businesses and organisations accept that there is inequality in the workplace, only then can change happen and workplaces become inclusive settings. People with disabilities will then feel comfortable and not have any barriers or need to disclose that they have a disability. It will make the work environment more enjoyable. People with disabilities would no longer be asked to change or fit into a system.

A social model of disability means that the government continues to work with employers, so that more people with disabilities are employed. There is still work to do regarding changes to the disability act in government, as it relates to employment.

Employer attitudes and beliefs

Employers have a positive attitude to hiring people with disabilities but are reluctant to do so because of changes they have to make, like changing the work environment. Employers may worry about safety or if the person will get enough done, which affects the employer's

profit. There is evidence that these worries are not true. Employers need to be educated on hiring somebody with a disability and perhaps governments could make incentives.

Ongoing education is still needed for employers, so that more people with disabilities are employed in the workforce. If an employer has a disability themselves, it is very likely they will hire someone with a disability. The person at the top is key to changing the attitudes of the employees that work for them as well as the environment around them. The more employers we train about inclusion and discrimination in the workforce, the more they will understand the benefits of an inclusive workplace. If we can continue the ongoing education, we will soon have a diversified work environment that benefits the community as a whole.

Non-standard paid work

Even if a person with a disability has paid work, the job itself might be unsatisfactory or demeaning. Sometimes volunteering with a charity can be more rewarding than a paid job if they feel appreciated, so we must find other ways that lead to paid work. Some people choose to start their own entrepreneurial or not for profit endeavours to be happy and productive and feeling like they belong.

Paid work that is described as 'non-standard' can be part time, on-call work, or contract work which might be a temporary thing. During the pandemic along with changes in technology shifted the work environment, which increased the amount of non-standard paid work taking place. This might mean a job that you can do from home, temporary contract work or part-time work.

For many, non-standard or alternative paid work is not a choice, while some people choose and prefer it. Non-standard paid work generally consists of short-term contracts or freelance work as opposed to permanent jobs. Though some people choose to take temporary positions, this is not always the case with people with disabilities as this work is not usually protected; the work can be terminated at any time and can be very underpaid even though there is accessibility legislation. Temporary or part-time work can lead to poverty, isolation and other challenges. Although the flexibility and independence is nice, it is not financially stable. This is something that needs to change as this kind of work has become the norm since the pandemic and more people are choosing this option. Some research shows us that we should look at non-standard paid work as an opportunity rather than as a danger and put in place protection for workers who choose it.

This does not mean employers should not use this information to not set up an inclusive workplace. We still need to look inside and outside the regular job market as people with

disabilities have created meaningful work opportunities. This research has shown that people who have found non-standard paid work can shed light on support inclusion in diverse paid work settings and change views about work.

Redefining success

Today's society is set up for certain individuals and excludes others. As we have read in previous areas of this document, things still need to change when it comes to attitudes of employing people with disabilities. If a work environment does not work well for someone with a disability, it likely doesn't work that well for anyone else.

During change where new ideas are being tested, how we measure success should not be forced on us from the outside world. This needs to be decided from the people who are affected by this change, meaning people with disabilities. We also need to learn from the changes being implemented if the results are different than expected. When new ideas are put in place by people, they need to be measured in new ways since the old standard of success regarding making money does not apply.

In Canada and around the world, there are new ideas regarding business and how we make money as we have an ever-changing economy.

One study redefined success on the basis of the learning and how it affects the community. There are new experiments taking place in job creation.

Taking risks are important, not just in business and hiring practices, but also in the government's participation. It takes everyone to be involved in these ventures and have social protection for the people that are taking risks in creating jobs for people with disabilities.

A BC-based organisation tested an inclusive paid work project, thanks to the funding it received from the BC government and the support of other partners. The project, 'OneLight', was an 18-month pilot that focused on inclusive and social employment that paid a fair wage. It also focused on the wellbeing of the employees and gave these individuals a chance to feel like they were included in the community by focusing on building their social skills and confidence rather than how much product they made that day. The project also measured employee retention as well as how the employees felt working on the project.

Making your own measures for success expands possibilities. Instead of fitting the job market to the workers it is about the market fitting the workers.

Other ideas that surfaced are having a "visionary leader", seeking advice, having a solid plan, and ongoing evaluation.

A business can be inclusive and profitable

It is proven that an inclusive employer can increase productivity and profit at the same time.

Proof shows that businesses and social enterprises can be just as successful employing people with a disability. People respect inclusive employers and many will choose their business over someone who is just about profit and not socially conscious.

While the social business model can be financially competitive, we don't want to suggest that the social model is better, rather the focus should be on treating people fairly.

In recent publications it has shown us that workplaces have changed making them more inclusive. What are the new promising practices?

Inclusive design

Inclusive paid work can help businesses. Often there is little or no cost to changing things to include a worker with a disability and the cost usually decreases over time.

For inclusive paid work to become more common we have to change the way people with disabilities are seen by employers and we need to include people with disabilities when we are talking about how to create more inclusive workplaces.

Tools and roadmaps now exist to help change workplaces

- Understanding the problem
- Exploring solutions
- Understand work from the workers' point of view
- Supporting the worker

Looking at what each individual needs to be successful makes sure that everyone can be included. It is easy to put in place and it does not cause extra work or cost, and it benefits everyone – it is good for all workers, not just people with disabilities.

If employers change the way they hire and employ people and offer promotion opportunities then the changes will become part of how they do business. Hiring to people's strengths and interests and creating an inclusive way to hire and interview are

strongly recommended. During job postings and interviews, employers can let the worker know they are inclusive and that flexibility and accessibility are important. This can encourage applicants' with disabilities to apply and to know they are welcome and make them feel comfortable. In some cases, employers can partner with other organisations in their region to support hiring. Educational institutions can connect employers with applicants, or community service organisations can connect them with people looking for jobs.

Company-specific policies and practices should be written for the whole workplace. Ensuring the workplace – including the building, transportation, communications, technology and the way the work gets done – are accessible from the beginning. This will enable all employees to do their jobs.

Having an emotionally and physically safe and diverse workplace is important to a healthy employer /employee relationship.

Many of the ideas and goals listed above make a more friendly and flexible workplace, making it easier to hire and keep employees and allow for new ideas to become an important part of the workplace. While inclusive and accessible workplaces have often been forced by legal human rights requirements or by charity, the main reason is to improve the business and make things better for society as a whole. For instance, such things as reading glasses and adjustable desks are all ideas that began by looking at what leaves people out, and they have become common in our daily lives and workplaces. Being inclusive is not only good for business, it also helps us to be more creative and make things better in the long run.

In a successful initiative at a large distribution centre, three commitments the business made at the start included:

1. partnering with social service agencies on an ongoing basis,

2. building a physical workplace that would work for a lot of different abilities and needs, and

3. creating a welcoming and inclusive culture from the beginning, with safety as a top priority.

Changes over time at this distribution centre have also led to:

- Matching employee skills and interest with the job

- Better training for employees especially for those with disabilities or new workers

Being clear about beliefs and what is important

Whether acknowledged or not, our values determine the economic and social decisions we make. Making money is usually the most important but it limits the possibilities when it comes to inclusive work.

There is a long and successful history of what is now called the *social economy.* The way things are done, make it hard for us to move forward with new inclusive ideas, to become part of the norm and be recognised in the world since people have many different ideas when it comes to inclusion and the wellbeing of the planet.

Taking care of the planet is a belief that has become important to many businesses. Instead of using up the resources that are taken from the earth and throwing them away we are reusing and recycling the resources so that the planet can be healthy and be around for a long time.

People today believe the rights of people are important. New business ventures are starting up that both include the employees' help in making decisions and at the same time making products that are healthy for the planet. These initiatives include cooperatives, social enterprises, non-profit organisations, and private enterprises.

Making money continues to be the motivating factor in how businesses make decisions and there is no agreement about the best way for people to work and be in community together.

Taking care of the planet and human rights and profit can be seen by many as competing interests of the business, so it is important that an organisation or business be very clear about its beliefs and what is important to them.

Doughnut economics is an idea that describes taking care of the planet, people, and still making money. This way of doing business aims to support business while at the same time respecting and taking care of the planet, its resources and supporting the wellbeing of others. In the doughnut economy, money is made, but not at the expense of people or the planet.

Some scholars like the idea of replacing efficiency (machine-like with no wasted time or effort) with sufficiency (adequate or enough), in other words making a profit, without thinking about the social aspect of employing people with disabilities.

Changing the way we do things can be difficult as there is no roadmap. A business has to decide what is most important to them. Using available support and finding partners that can help is a good approach. Being able to respond quickly is important when trying to

balance between what we believe in and practice. Careful, simple ways of making decisions that include workers can help maintain that balance and increase the chance of success. This will include measuring success in new ways.

Workplace policy

Workplace inclusion is the key to creating a society where people are treated fairly and the most important asset to business. Some people think that it is best to focus on one person at a time and meet the needs of each person but others think it is better to change the whole way of doing business. Some people think that protecting workers makes more sense than protecting jobs. Covid 19 and climate change are changing how we think about these things.

Organisations and businesses can work to become "disability confident" and have inclusive policies, ways of doing their work and improve accessibility of their buildings. It begins by figuring out how well your business or organisation is at including people and then coming up with a plan to help make decisions for the company. This can help for training staff, writing policies and procedures, it will help when making your space accommodate people with disabilities, i.e. changing washrooms and doorways so you're able to hire and retain employees with disabilities.

Workplace policies and practices can change the things that create/reinforce disadvantage" in the workplace. Businesses with policies and programs in place are more likely than others to be inclusive employers. Having policy is important; however putting those policies in place is also important. Making change is very difficult and will need all employees to participate. People with disabilities especially need to be included when making decisions. These could mean big changes in some places, or small in others. Making any kind of organisational change takes time and effort and should be approached in a person-centred way.

Inclusive participation at every level

One of the problems with the way we do business today is that some people are getting extremely wealthy while the majority are getting poorer. When business is conducted in an inclusive way people work together rather than some people having all the power and money. Everyone has to be included in making decisions and have a job which could mean that the effect of big changes in the world would be more equally shared, in the good times and the bad.

This approach points to the very important idea of having people with disabilities participate in decision-making, ownership, and other leadership positions. It is important we address all forms of inequality such as gender or racism and change the way we look at certain groups or the way we do things so that everyone is equal in the mainstream workplace. Ways we can accomplish this are: sharing money earned, training about discrimination and training our youth. We can also have boards and leadership of mixed gender, races, ages and abilities to connect with other groups who are not fully included i.e. persons with diverse abilities. We can also change how we communicate and how we use signage.

People with disabilities are usually passed over for career advancement. Case studies in Ontario, Alberta, and BC show this can be changed by:

- Finding the right job for them so they have a chance to advance

- Fostering a healthy work environment that includes people with disabilities

- Flexible scheduling. This requires attentive and skilled management who are successful at doing this

A network of Canadian solidarity economy enterprises called 'Solid State Community Industries' (SSCI) shows the large range of possible forms a business can take when everyone is committed to participating. This means doing business in different ways if companies want to be inclusive, when it comes to their staff. This approach will mean hiring people with disabilities, paying them a fair wage, involving them in decision making and protecting their community and environment.

Organizational structure: Spotlight on the social economy

People are changing the way they do business such as worker owned social enterprises. People like having a business that has social values and offers people a fair wage. A Spanish study found that social enterprises (that were also sheltered workshops for people with disabilities) had a good track record of continuing to create jobs, even during economic crises. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a social enterprise in BC had very high employee retention (people did not leave) when other employers couldn't get enough employees.

A social enterprise is a "non-profit organisation that participates in business to achieve their goals". This can be done in a number of different ways. Social enterprises can provide "higher quality work experience compared to sheltered paid work, and be more supportive than a business whose goal is mainly to make money."

A social enterprise is a way to achieve social goals and run a business and this is sometimes also referred to as 'social economy.' Sometimes social enterprises are cooperatives. A cooperative is owned by the workers and so decisions are made by the workers.

There are important questions that organisations and businesses should ask of themselves, to ensure they do not continue doing business in the way we always have, where people with disabilities do not have a say in their workplaces.

It is difficult for social enterprises to find start-up money, earn enough money to pay fair wages, and balancing social and economic goals. Another challenge for social enterprises is that there is not enough money to offer full time work. The work is generally part-time which is generally not enough money for workers to sustain themselves. Earning money beyond a certain level can interfere with getting your disability benefits, which can be a problem. This is why it is important to find ways of funding social businesses.

It is also recommended that social enterprises:

1. have their own management structure

2. are well-supported by the main organisation (if they have one)

3. have a good business plan and competent people to make it happen, and

4. track both successes and challenges over time

For-profit businesses of various sizes are also demonstrating inclusive responses to many of the challenges discussed so far. Larger companies and organisations are more likely to have written disability policies and practices, but we also need small and medium sized businesses to play an important role.

Looking at how much difference that "small and medium enterprises are making in supporting activities that make our planet healthier, we can see how making money is also important and can also have a social purpose. Sometimes they have better stories of success in running businesses than not-for profits. Rural communities are finding new ways and initiatives that are seeing results in helping people and the planet.

Research on four manufactures (one shareholder corporation, one family-owned company, one cooperative, and one social enterprise) show how manufacturing can contribute to both the wellbeing of the planet and people. We take care of our planet by reducing waste, treating it as a resource and finding new ways of using this waste. Social care is shown by paying people a fair wage, opportunities for career advancement, and making it easier to apply for a job. The most innovative strategies were shown by leadership who have a vision

for the future, rather than making short term business decisions in response to immediate pressures or demands. It involves taking chances and approaching things creatively. All of them are financially successful, but they are also changing how they measure success.

There is a large social economy in Canada. In this research we would like to increase awareness on the social economy and to have a better understanding of helping persons with disabilities find paid work. Social enterprises are beneficial to people with barriers to employment.

Conclusion

Once again, the research question guiding this process is: What things do employers do that result in meaningful inclusive paid work for people with disabilities and others with barriers to paid work? How can these be shared with and used by more employers?

What is known

1. The things that get in the way of paid work for people with disabilities are our attitudes and the way we see people with disabilities and the way business is set up and the way our workplaces are set up.

2. There is now both federal and provincial legislation that acknowledges and seeks to change things by making accessibility and inclusion important at every level, and in all ways – including but not only paid work.

3. Legislation is not enough, employers have to understand and participate in the change.

4. There are many good ideas that employers can do to recruit, hire and promote people with disabilities.

5. Looking at these practices and researching new ideas can create more inclusive workplaces.

6. Businesses that are guided by social values show promise for hiring people with disabilities and ensuring barriers are removed.

7. Research shows that people with disabilities are working more in non-standard jobs, such as people who have created their own jobs by starting their own business.

8. Social purpose can be compromised by focusing solely on profit. Being clear about values is important.

9. There is not just one answer. There are many small things that an employer can do that can make a difference over time. We can learn from the actions of small, medium-sized, and large enterprises of various kinds that we see. This can help us see how they are making changes that we can learn from.

10. We are not looking to provide a plan that any business can follow, rather getting small and medium business on board by putting inclusive plans in place or incentives regarding hiring people with disabilities.

11. To make change you have to be willing to take a chance. Employers who imagine a different society are paving the way for exciting possibilities. Once we do this we see people and what they can achieve.

What we hope to learn

1. Largely missing from the literature are the views of business people with disabilities themselves, or other persons with disabilities in leadership positions so we want to learn from them.

2. Most of the inclusive paid work research literature focuses on either social enterprise or private enterprise. We want to look at a wider range of possibilities. It would be useful to learn more about inclusive paid work possibilities in different kinds of paid work settings such as non-profits, governments, co-operatives, and others.

3. We hope to learn more from employers about what's getting in the way of meaningful paid work for people with disabilities.

4. To learn new things, we must ask questions about the things that are getting in the way both within and outside of the workplaces, and what people are doing about them.

5. Most importantly we want to learn more about how to set up businesses so that there is more inclusive paid work. By learning from what is already working well, we can better understand what people are doing to reduce barriers.

6. Each story is individual, and spending time with each employer or entrepreneur who chooses to participate will give us rich information from specific locations

Next steps

- Find out what new initiatives are going on in BC and Canada and around the world, so we can learn new approaches.

- Invite these people to participate in the research to find out what they have done to become successful: employers, people with disabilities and their families, disabled entrepreneurs.

- Making research material available for employers and workers.

- When ready, we will start on primary research through interviews, focus groups, and case studies, in order to better understand the ways that workplaces are inclusive.

- The final step is to share the knowledge as widely and accessibly as possible through a multimedia website, and ask businesses to share with each other.

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