

# Atlantic Dialogue on Moving Forward Together: A pan Canadian strategy for disability and work

October 28, 2020



Centre de  
recherche sur les politiques en  
matière d'invalidité professionnelle



Centre for  
Research on  
Work Disability Policy



SafetyNet  
Centre for Occupational Health & Safety Research



# Housekeeping

Remain **muted**

“Raise Hand” or “Chat” to be added to **speaker’s list**



# Program Overview

## We will be recording this event

- Presentations
- Dialogue, Q and A and Discussion will be recorded for note-taking purposes only

## Event materials will be posted after the event

- Presentation recordings and slidedecks
- Summary report **AFTER REMOVAL** of Identifying content
- We will **NOT** post recordings of dialogue, Q and A, and discussions



# Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge the territory in which we gather as the ancestral homelands of the Beothuk, and the island of Newfoundland as the ancestral homelands of the Mi'kmaq and Beothuk. We would also like to recognize the Inuit of Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut and the Innu of Nitassinan, and their ancestors, as the original people of Labrador.

We strive for respectful relationships with all the peoples of this province as we search for collective healing and true reconciliation and honour this beautiful land together.



# OPENING REMARKS

**EMILE TOMPA**

**Director**

**Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy**





Centre de recherche sur les politiques en matière d'invalidité professionnelle (CRPIP)  
Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy (CRWDP)

## The Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy

Improving Canadian work disability policy to ensure access to employment and income security for all citizens

Promoting a population health focus lens—  
work disability touches all people at some point in their lives

(2013-present)



## CRWDP Goals

(as identified in our original operating plan in 2013)

1. To provide a forum for within- and cross-provincial and national dialogue on challenges and opportunities for improving the work disability policy system for working age individuals
2. To identify problems and challenges associated with program coordination and complexity
3. To identify relevant and favourable alternative approaches to system design and service provision through small scale trials and select comparisons with other countries
4. To mobilize knowledge developed within and outside of the initiative in order to inform policy
5. To build capacity for partner engaged research and knowledge mobilization on the topics of work disability policy, and related income security and labour-market engagement of individuals with disabilities



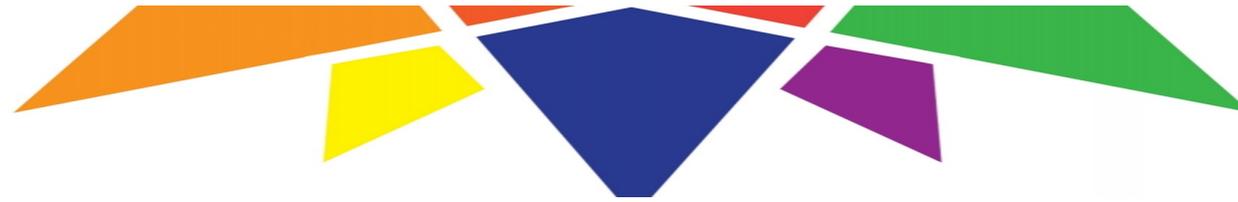
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## CRWDP Mandate

- Bring together various stakeholders in the Canadian work disability policy system, including employers
- Identify problems and challenges associated with program coordination and complexity
- Facilitate dialogue, problem identification, and policy action
- Support multiple transdisciplinary research projects, including international comparative work
- **Build capacity for research on applied work disability policy**
- **Build capacity for active partner engagement in research and knowledge mobilization on work disability policy challenges**
- **Build consensus on a roadmap for work disability policy change**



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## Moving Forward Together Disability and Work in Canada (DWC) Initiative

- DWC Initiative started in 2017 as the community caucus of CRWDP
- Our initial partners were ONIWG; CCRW and InclusionNL
- Since then it has developed in independent initiative that spearheads strategy development and implementation, an annual federal-provincial policy roundtable, and annual stakeholder conference
- 2020 marks the 4<sup>th</sup> yearly DWC conference





## Target Outcomes

***Intermediate outcome via  
research:***

Extensive knowledge base for evidence-informed policy  
decision-making

***Intermediate outcome via  
partner engagement:***

Network of partners and mobilised work disability community

**Ultimate outcomes:**

Improved Canadian work disability policy system  
Establishment of an applied work disability policy field of study

***Intermediate outcome via  
training and mentoring:***

Increased research capacity and work disability policy expertise

***Intermediate outcome via  
knowledge mobilization:***

Improved societal awareness of need for inclusiveness,  
engagement, and income security



## We have made huge progress in achieving our goals and target outcomes over our 7 years of working together

- Disability and Work in Canada Initiative—strategy, annual conference, annual federal-provincial policy roundtable
- CSA Z1011:20 Work Disability Management System Standard, including a webinar series
- Built substantial capacity for partnered research and knowledge mobilization, including mentoring dozen of new researchers at the graduate and post-graduate levels
- Funded a number of seed grants and other projects
- Spawned dozens of spin-off projects including a SSHRC partnership development grant on wage subsidies and other financial incentives
- Undertook a large study for ESDC on the cost of exclusion, in which we identified an untapped potential of \$338B (18% of GDP)
- Spearheaded a special issue of the journal Equality, Diversity and Inclusion soon to be releases

**THERE'S STILL A  
LOT OF WORK TO  
BE DONE.**





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## Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy Future Directions (CRWDP 2.0)

IDEA Social Innovation Laboratory

A transdisciplinary, partner driven initiative focused on expanding capacity of employers to leverage the opportunities offered by persons with disabilities via a transdisciplinary, multi-sectoral social innovation laboratory to identify, pilot and evaluate co-designed solutions.

Four thematic hubs: 1) workplace systems and partnerships; 2) inclusive environmental design; 3) employment support systems; and 4) transitions to work and career development.

Plan is to integrate the social sciences, health sciences and physical sciences, especially engineers and other experts in design of the built environment and information technology.



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# THANK YOU!



# STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

## Hon. Arlene Dunn

Minister of Aboriginal Affairs

Minister responsible for Economic Development and Small Business

Minister responsible for Opportunities New Brunswick

Minister responsible for Immigration

Government of New Brunswick



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inclusionNL  
...FOR EVERYONE

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UNIVERSITY

# MOVING FORWARD WITH THE PAN-CANADIAN STRATEGY ON DISABILITY AND WORK

**ALEC FARQUHAR**

**Chair, Engagement**

**Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy**



# Objectives

- Provide background on the Disability and Work Canada strategy
- Identify the current challenges for real progress on the employment of persons with disabilities
- Start the conversation on how best to meet those challenges and move forward together



# Background on the DWC strategy

- These are not new problems. Persons with disabilities have experienced tremendous barriers to inclusion and employment for a very long time.
- Over the years, numerous disability organizations, civil society partners, activists and governments have addressed these barriers and developed programs and strategies intended to make progress. I've been part of these efforts myself.
- This has given all of us much to learn from and build on.
- Disability and Work Canada has been a recent important initiative to coordinate these many efforts and provide a framework for collaboration and increased impact.



# Background - 2

- DWC came together in 2017 as a small coalition of Inclusion NL, the Ontario Network of Injured Workers' Groups, Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy, Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work and Ontario Office of the Worker Adviser.
- The group consulted widely and developed a draft strategy on disability and work, which was launched in December 2019 at a national conference in Ottawa. By then we had achieved significant support from across Canada by persons with disabilities, governments, especially the federal government, labour, employers, disability organizations and researchers.



# Background - 3

- The DWC strategy is not intended to replace anyone else's strategy – but to be a framework to help bring greater coordination and impact to everyone's efforts.
- It's consensus based, which has disadvantages of course, but also the advantage that we can move forward in a more nimble and independent way.
- At the 2019 conference, there was tremendous collective energy. Many people committed to join DWC working groups to help move the strategy forward.



# Challenges

- Within two months of the 2019 conference, COVID 19 arrived in Canada. This has changed many things, including the on the ground realities for persons with disabilities and the overall context for employment.
- On the ground, both anecdotal reports and survey data show that many persons with disabilities have either lost their jobs or face the threat of job loss. This is in addition to the overall challenges of navigating transportation, disability supports and other issues made more difficult by the pandemic.
- DWC partner organizations have had to re-orient their efforts to respond to the impact of COVID19. Many have seen their revenues reduced or re-directed just when their services are most needed. Some employers which have been strong supporters of inclusion and employment are struggling and unable to be as responsive as before.



# Challenges - 2

- As plans are developed for recovery from the pandemic, we can already see the fiscal constraints which could become dominant as it proves impossible to maintain the initial scale of spending.
- Powerful economic sectors are pressing for relief. Their voices are influential and not many of them are speaking about disability as a consideration in recovery planning.
- In general, there are so many voices crying out for help that governments may understandably tune out all but the most urgent.
- This is unfortunately not an unfamiliar place for persons with disabilities and their allies to find ourselves in.



# Opportunities and pathways

- As a result of all this, until very recently it appeared that persons with disabilities would not only face setbacks without sufficient supports but would also be left behind again in the recovery. But there are major opportunities and we must figure out how best to take advantage and build on them.
- Overall, can we use this moment when Canadians realize that “we’re all in this together” to make sure that persons with disabilities are fully included?
- This will involve strategic thinking and collective action.



# Opportunities - 2

First, the Throne Speech:

- COVID-19 has disproportionately affected Canadians with disabilities, and highlighted long-standing challenges. The Government will bring forward a Disability Inclusion Plan, which will have:
  - a new Canadian Disability Benefit modelled after the Guaranteed Income Supplement for seniors;
  - a robust employment strategy for Canadians with disabilities;
  - and a better process to determine eligibility for Government disability programs and benefits.



# Opportunities - 3

- When I saw these lines in the Throne Speech, I was thrilled but also realistic: this a foundation, an opening, but it won't happen without our full and determined engagement.
- A second opportunity is the sometimes extraordinary collaboration in civil society in response to COVID19. As one example, the Canadian Labour Congress and Canadian Chamber of Commerce jointly approached the Prime Minister with a high level proposal for the response and recovery. This sort of collaboration is also happening at the sectoral level (for example, automotive manufacturing, construction) and workplace level. We must find a way to get a disability lens for all these conversations and initiatives.



# Opportunities - 4

- Third is the state of mind of the general public. Many Canadians are re-thinking their priorities. Facing a life and death situation together clears away unimportant things and helps people find the best in themselves. It opens their eyes. Just as one example, around systemic racism. Why can't that new vision and thinking include disability?



# Ideas for a strategy going forward

Use the DWC virtual national conference as a platform to press for making the Throne Speech commitments real.

- **Wednesday November 25, 2020 – The Big Picture--Challenges and Opportunities.** We have Bob Rae opening the conference on November 25 with an international human rights perspective. We have Minister Qualtrough attending later that day.
- **Thursday November 26, 2020 – Progress in the Workplace**
- **Tuesday December 1, 2020 – Strengthening Supports for Workers**
- **Wednesday December 2, 2020 – Moving Forward Together.** We are trying to arrange a joint CLC/Chamber of Commerce presentation to explicitly include disability and employment as a priority in the COVID19 recovery.



# Moving forward together - 2

- Identify players and partners that we haven't engaged sufficiently with in the past – and connect with them. Just one example – Minister Arlene Dunn in New Brunswick, who can help position disability and employment as part of the economic recovery, not just a human rights issue.
- Take advantage of the “new workplace”, which includes much more openness to working from home. While there can be downsides, this could benefit a significant number of persons with disabilities.
- Identify sectors of the economy which haven't traditionally been seen as receptive to persons with disabilities.
- Undertake an ambitious public campaign highlighting the costs of exclusion and the benefits of inclusion – we have the groundbreaking research of Professor Emile Tompa to build on.



# And what do you think we should do?

## Discussion question



# FACILITATING DIALOGUE: ATLANTIC CANADA SNAPSHOT ON INCLUSIVE EMPLOYMENT

**KATHY HAWKINS**

**Manager, InclusionNL**

**Employer Supports and Services Program of  
Empower, The Disability Resource Centre**



# DISABILITY AND WORK IN CANADA STRATEGY: ATLANTIC PERSPECTIVES

## Q & A



# DISCUSSION:

## Atlantic Canada perspectives on the Disability and Work in Canada Strategy objectives and themes



# DISCUSSION:

## Objectives

- Achieving disability-confident and inclusive workplaces
- Achieving comprehensive supports for persons with disabilities

## Core themes

- The Big Picture - Challenges and Opportunities
- Progress in the Workplace
- Strengthening Supports for Workers
- Moving Forward Together



# Pillars, Foundation, Principles

*Core Values, Guiding Principles & Evidence-Informed Approach*

Vision – Employment throughout Canada is inclusive. Persons with and without disabilities have equality of opportunity and choice in careers, jobs and work.



# THANK YOU AND NEXT STEPS ...





## Annual Conference

### **DISABILITY AND WORK IN CANADA**

Registration is now open!

**November 25 & 26 and December 1 & 2, 2020**  
**To be held virtually**

**JOIN US!**

**[www.crwdp.ca](http://www.crwdp.ca)**

