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Robert Shea, Editor/Rédacteur en chef

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The Inukshuk... *"These magnificent Stone Cairns show that you should always have hope in where to go because they are the leaders that lead the way to safety which brings food, shelter, and life. All the years that I have been traveling through the barrens, I have always been amazed how these Inukshuks can bring you to your destination and they ask nothing in return."*

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CONTENTS

ARTICLES

Welfare to Work: Creating a Community Where all Can Work

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Abstract

Finding the right mix of policy options to ensure that all members of society who are able have the opportunity to work is a key challenge facing Canadian governments. In Manitoba, the challenge is complicated by an aging workforce, significant barriers to labour force participation facing the rapidly increasing aboriginal population, skills shortages, and low wages in many sectors. Manitoba's current government rejected the prevailing philosophy that tax cuts and workfare programs would reduce the number of people on assistance. Instead, the Government adopted a balanced approach, restoring key services, strengthening communities, expanding education opportunities, and reducing both the debt and taxes in a sustainable manner. The approach focused first on getting the economic and fiscal fundamentals right, and then on finding the right mix of policies and programs to help people find permanent, meaningful work. This approach has been successful. Manitoba's unemployment rate remains the lowest or second-lowest in Canada, while its youth unemployment rate is well below the national rate. The number of general social assistance cases has fallen by half. Future policy work may focus on accurate poverty measurement, asset building and reducing high marginal tax rates on benefits.

Trouver un mélange adéquat de politiques afin que tous les membres de la société capables de travailler aient la possibilité de le faire constitue un des principaux défis des gouvernements canadiens. Au Manitoba, plusieurs facteurs compliquent ce défi : le vieillissement de la population active, des obstacles importants à la participation à la vie active des Autochtones dont la population augmente rapidement, les pénuries de main-d'œuvre et de faibles salaires dans de nombreux domaines. Le gouvernement actuel du Manitoba a rejeté l'idée dominante que la réduction des impôts et les programmes de travail obligatoire permettraient de réduire le nombre de prestataires de l'aide sociale. Il a plutôt adopté une approche équilibrée en rétablissant les services clés essentiels, en renforçant les collectivités, en offrant davantage de possibilités de formation et en réduisant la dette et les impôts de manière durable. Cette approche visait d'abord à bien maîtriser les principes économiques et fiscaux fondamentaux, puis à trouver la bonne combinaison de politiques et de programmes afin d'aider les Manitobaines et les Manitobains à obtenir un emploi permanent et valorisant. Cette approche a donné de bons résultats. Le Manitoba continue de se classer au premier ou au deuxième rang au pays quant à la faiblesse du taux de chômage. Chez les jeunes, le taux de chômage est nettement inférieur à la moyenne nationale. Le nombre de prestataires de l'aide sociale a diminué de moitié. L'élaboration des prochaines politiques pourrait être axée sur la mesure juste de la pauvreté, l'accumulation d'actifs et la réduction des taux marginaux d'imposition élevés s'appliquant aux prestations.

Welfare to Work: Creating A Community Where All Can Work

Finding the right mix of policy options to ensure that all members of society who are able to, have the opportunity to participate in the work force is a key challenge facing governments across Canada. In Manitoba, the challenge is complicated by several factors.

Overview of Issues

Manitoba's diverse and stable economy has led to one of the lowest unemployment rates in the Canada. However, the low unemployment rate does not reflect a number of issues.

Manitoba's workforce is aging (Figure 1). Between 1996 and 2002, the number of people aged 55 and older grew by 6.4%, while the number of people aged 15 to 54 grew by only 1.5%. While the number of persons aged 15 to 64 will increase by 5% over the next ten years, the older cohort of 65 plus years will have an even stronger growth rate of 6%.

Within the 15 to 64 year age group, where most labour force participants lie, the older age groups will have the largest increases. Those aged 45 to 64 will increase by over 66,000 persons. Meanwhile, those in the 25 to 44 age group will decline by some 32,000 persons. The number of young persons aged 15 to 24 will increase by only 5,000 in this period.

Aboriginal persons represented 13% of Manitoba's population in 2001. As this segment of the population is younger than the non-Aboriginal population, it is likely to contribute an increasing proportion of the province's population and labour force growth over the next few decades (Figure 2). Between 2000 and 2010, the proportion of Aboriginal individuals in the youth population will increase from 10% to 13%. Similar increases will occur with 25 to 44 year olds and 45 to 64 year olds. The inclusion of Aboriginal Manitobans in the labour force is crucial to Manitoba's continuing prosperity.

However, Aboriginal Manitobans face significant barriers to participating in the work force. Aboriginal educa-

tional achievement trails achievement in the population as a whole, economic opportunities on reserve are limited and rates of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Fetal Alcohol Effects are higher than rates in the provincial population as a whole.

In response to these challenges, an Aboriginal Issues Committee of Cabinet has been established. Chaired by the Premier, the committee will build on new partnerships that have been struck with Aboriginal communities in priority areas such as justice, hydroelectric development, education and training, and services for children.

The low unemployment rate and aging workforce have highlighted skills shortages that need to be addressed.

While Manitoba's cost of living is relatively low, wages in many sectors of the economy are also low, resulting in many families living with low incomes. For example,

- 12% of two-adult families with children fall below the before-tax Low Income Cut-Off (LICO-IBT), the second-highest rate in Canada;
- 52% of lone-parent families fall below the LICO-IBT, the second-highest rate in Canada; and
- 22% of children live in families that fall below the LICO-IBT, the second-highest rate in Canada (Human Resources Development Canada, 2003).

There is some concern that the use of LICO-IBT results in higher rates of low income in Manitoba than is actually the case. The limitations of LICO-IBT are well known (Gilbreath, 1997; Wolfson and Evans, 1989). Furthermore, internal Finance Department work suggests that before-tax LICOs may not be an appropriate measure for interprovincial comparisons, because they do not reflect differences in costs of living, dramatically different provincial tax systems, or differences in age.

For example, when lower tax rates, enhanced provincial tax credits, and federal and provincial benefit programs are included, a senior couple in Manitoba with $40,000 in income has more disposable income than a two-earner non-senior family of four with $60,000 in income. Before-tax LICOs do not reflect the increased fiscal capacity of seniors as compared to non-seniors with the same income.

Recent federal-provincial work on Market Basket Measures (Human Resources Development Canada, 2003) may provide a further tool for assessing the breadth and depth of low income in Manitoba.

The Fiscal Context

The provincial government's capacity to act is constrained by fiscal circumstances. Weakness in the American economy, the beef crisis and drought have dampened economic growth and put pressure on the Budget. There is little public support for deficit financing. In fact, Manitoba's Balanced Budget legislation is the most restrictive in the country. It requires a balanced budget every year, mandates annual debt reduction payments and requires approval by referendum of increases to the rates of the major tax bases.

While recent political events seem to indicate that the era of dramatic tax reductions has run its course, health care spending continues to consume a large share of increasing revenues. Since 1999, increases to the health budget have taken up over three-quarters of new revenue (Figure 3).

While economic circumstances have tightened Manitoba's fiscal situation in 2003/04, beyond 2003/04 Provincial Government revenue is projected to increase at an average annual rate of 3.0% over the medium term, a rate that reflects solid economic growth, an ongoing commitment to tax relief and further progress in addressing fiscal imbalance in the Canadian Federation.

Program expenditure is targeted to increase at an average annual rate of 2.0% after 2003/04 – a rate that would effectively sustain key public services and provide for modest improvements in areas of greatest priority, such as health care reform. It would also give the Province some latitude in making key public investments and replenishing the Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

In addition to the general purpose debt, Manitoba has an unfunded pension liability of $3.4 billion. In 2000, the Government took steps to eliminate this liability over 35 years by making regular payments against it. As well, pension costs of newly hired employees have been fully funded since 2000. Since 2000, Manitoba has paid $396 million to reduce its debt and pension liability. While these payments have resulted in interest savings, and will provide greater fiscal flexibility in the future, they currently constrain program spending.

Within this framework, a small draw on the Fiscal Stabilization Fund in 2004/05 will complete the adjustment to the lower revenue track resulting from a federal accounting error, which cost the Province $168 million in 2001/02 and a further $91 million over 10 years. Future fiscal stability will depend in part on improvements to federal equalization and health transfer payments.

Policy Response – Putting the Right Programs Into Place

When the New Democratic Party took power in 1999, it decided to reject the existing philosophy that tax cuts and workfare programs alone would reduce the number of people on employment assistance. Instead, the new Government believed that educational opportunity, accessible child care, fair income support programs, maintenance enforcement and other initiatives would provide an effective springboard to employment and greater independence.

Setting the stage - getting the fundamentals right

The first step in creating a community where all can work is to get the economic fundamentals right. Simply put, if people are expected to move from welfare to work, there has to be jobs for them to move to.

The Government adopted an approach that was balanced, responsible and put the needs of Manitoba families first. It undertook to put the Province's financing on a sustainable footing, by implementing a debt reduction plan, introducing responsible and sustainable tax reductions, and making investments in both physical and social infrastructure.

The Government's goal has been to maintain Manitoba as an affordable place to live, work and invest. Each year Manitoba Finance compares interprovincial taxes and living costs, and Manitoba consistently ranks as one of the two most affordable provinces to live in, across all income and family types (Figure 4).

Manitoba Finance also has a model that evaluates Manitoba's tax structure and cost environment for manufacturing firms. Again, Manitoba consistently ranks as one of the most affordable places in North America to do business.

The success of this approach is shown by the fact that Manitoba has had continuous growth in private sector investment. By 2002, private sector investment in Manitoba was at a record high - 12% higher than in 1999.

While the Government is focused on creating an environment where the private sector can create jobs, direct intervention is also used where necessary. Some of the direct interventions to encourage economic growth include:

- Manitoba Hydro is currently looking at building a new power plant in Northern Manitoba. The spin-off benefits will create new economic opportunities, and will provide much-needed training and job opportunities for northern residents;
- Targeted tax incentives, such as the Equity Tax Credit, the Labour-Sponsored Venture Capital Tax Credit, and the Community Enterprise Development Tax Credit have been used to leverage further private investment, often from individuals who have not previously made equity investments;
- Direct loans through the Manitoba Industrial Opportunities Program and training grants have been provided to major Manitoba manufacturers, to assist them to retool their plants and expand their operations in Manitoba; and
- Direct government investment in necessary infrastructure such as roads, health facilities and education facilities has been increased.

Training and education is the key to realizing opportunities

Getting the economic fundamentals right has created employment opportunities, and the Manitoba unemployment rate is correspondingly low. However, there is still a mismatch between available jobs and the skills of unemployed workers and people on income assistance.

In particular, people need the skills to access the jobs that are available. There is a need to focus on specific groups such as aboriginal people, Northerners and rural Manitobans. Finally, training and services need to be delivered where those people live.

The Government has undertaken several initiatives to increase education and training opportunities, especially for groups which have traditionally been disadvantaged.

The College Expansion Initiative was created to remedy the chronic underdevelopment of Manitoba's four public colleges that has placed them near the bottom of interprovincial training comparisons. CEI is intended to be a catalyst for the growth and evolution of Manitoba's college system. It is an economic priority of Government and is intended to double community college enrollment over 4 years (Figure 5).

To date CEI has funded approximately 50 programs, in areas such as nursing, aerospace manufacturing, civil technology, and early childhood education.

The Government instituted a program of Industrial Training Partnerships, working with industry associations to develop sectoral approaches to human resources solutions. The sectoral approach provides opportunities for joint ventures between companies and education/training providers.

These partnerships work best in sectors that have an umbrella association representing a significant number of companies that:

- demonstrate a long-term commitment to strategic human resource planning;
- provide employees with portable skills; and
- are willing to share in the cost of training.

By bringing together companies, education/training providers and other labour market partners, the sectoral approach provides opportunities not readily available to individual companies.

Through the Canada-Manitoba Labour Market Development Agreement, Manitobans get assistance to prepare for, gain and maintain sustainable employment through direct service and partnerships with community, industry and employer groups. A continuum of education, training and employment programs are provided through the Employment and Training Services Branch, including:

- employment benefits
  - employment partnerships - designed to create meaningful work experience opportunities for eligible individuals or to provide short-term work experience to enable the acquisition of skills needed by the local community. Participants may receive pre-employment preparation, skills enhancement, work experience, a job placement and/or job maintenance or support services.
  - skills development - designed to encourage individuals to acquire skills through education and training for purposes of ending dependence on EI benefits and entering employment.
  - sponsorship and coaching of self-employment initiatives.
  - wage subsidies - designed to help workers, who are at risk of long-term unemployment, lack experience or face other barriers to employment, to find a job and gain work experience.
- employment measures
  - employment assistance services - under this measure, third-party partners such as community-based organizations are contracted to help unemployed and job-threatened individuals to prepare for, find, obtain or maintain employment that meets the needs of the community.
  - labour market partnerships - Manitoba will form partnerships with employer and employee groups, associations and other delivery agents to facilitate activities to assist the unemployed to return to work or those threatened with job loss to find other employment.

The Access Program provides funding to post-secondary education institutions for specialized programs for individuals who traditionally have faced barriers to post-secondary education.

Examples of Access Programs include:

- the Brandon University Northern Teacher Education Program (BUNTEP), an off-campus Bachelor of Education degree program serving the North;
- University of Manitoba Access - North and South, which provides access to educational opportunities on-campus for northern and rural residents;
- The Special Pre-Medical Studies Program, a 2 to 4-year program preparing Aboriginal students for entrance into medical and dental schools or other health-related faculties;
- The Northern Bachelor of Social Work Program, a 4-year Bachelor of Social Work program in Thompson run by the University of Manitoba;
- An off-campus Bachelor of Social Work Program training social workers for Winnipeg's inner city;
- The Engineering Access Program provides a 4-year Bachelor of Engineering degree for Manitoba Aboriginal students;
- The Winnipeg Education Centre runs an off-campus Bachelor of Education program and an off-campus Bachelor of Social Work Program training teachers and social workers for Winnipeg's inner city; and
- The Northern Nursing Program and the Southern Nursing Program, which provide training to obtain a nursing degree.

The Government supports the Urban Circle Training Centre, which provides a holistic approach to training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal people in the fields of health care, academic upgrading and computers. All programs include life skills, cultural awareness of work experience components.

Manitoba has also signed employment and training agreements with First Nations to provide skills training closer to where First Nations peoples live.

The Government is establishing a University College of the North, to improve post-secondary education opportunities for Northerners.

In 2003, the Cooperative Education Tax Credit was introduced, to give employers an incentive to hire and train students in a recognized coop education program.

Lending a hand - welfare to work

Even when the economic fundamentals are right and the education and training programs are in place, the Government needs to go further and work directly with people on income assistance, as well as low income families, to ease the transition into permanent, meaningful work.

Ending ineffective initiatives

The first step was to stop doing what was not working. To this end, the previous practice of taking a punitive approach to people on income assistance, in the hopes of driving them off the assistance rolls out of desperation, was ended.

The new Government also ended the experiment with workfare. It has been Government policy all along that people who are able to work should do so and be expected to do so. However, the new Government focused on effective employment training and lowering the barriers that people encounter when trying to take advantage of opportunities for permanent long-term work, such as services for people with addictions and inflexible child care services.

The welfare fraud line was terminated. The fraud line was a phone number that people could call to report suspected cases of welfare abuse. Accompanied by large billboards in certain areas of the Province, the fraud line encouraged people to inform on their neighbours, and mostly served as a forum for escalating disputes between neighbours.

Income assistance remains an important part of the social safety net. Effective January 2004, general income assistance rates for individuals were increased by 4.5%, and by an equivalent amount for persons with disabilities. This will help pay for the costs of a phone to help in job searches, providing greater flexibility and dignity for citizens on assistance.

The income assistance regulations were changed to allow persons with disabilities to establish trust funds that can be used to improve their quality of life without reducing their benefits.

The Government ended the clawback of the National Child Benefit Supplement from families on social assistance, for all children up to the age of majority. Most recipients felt that the clawback was unfair and punitive. The Government ended the clawback as a matter of principle, and because there was no evidence to support the theory that clawing back the NCBS improved labour force participation (Centre for the Study of Living Standards, 2002).

Getting the policy mix right

The second step was to get the policy mix right, to encourage people to move from welfare to work.

First, the minimum wage has been steadily increased, from $6 per hour in 1999 to $7 per hour on April 1, 2004, which has maintained the relative value of work over welfare. This offsets any negative effect from ending the NCBS clawback and raising assistance rates.

The Government also increased resources for maintenance enforcement, to ensure non-custodial parents shared in the responsibility of raising their children, and to make sure that single parents had access to the resources they need. Manitoba led a national initiative on reciprocal enforcement of maintenance orders, so that non-custodial parents cannot evade their responsibilities by moving out of the Province.

Funding for Access Programs was increased, after more than a decade of frozen funding.

The two-tier social assistance system, where municipalities administered general assistance and the Province administered other types of assistance, was replaced with a single-tier, provincially administered system. In return, municipalities agreed to provide job opportunities for employable assistance recipients.

Perhaps most importantly, the *Building Independence* initiative was introduced, which promotes opportunities for income assistance participants who are looking for work and wanting to participate meaningfully in their communities.

Building Independence:

- provides substantive links to training and employment for income assistance participants with other

government departments;
- provides a range of supports to reduce barriers to employment;
- provides job readiness assessments; and
- develops and supports initiatives in partnership with agencies.

The *Building Independence* initiative develops and coordinates initiatives that help income assistance participants make real links to employment. The initiative also provides support for projects aimed at promoting job opportunities and increasing job skills and employability.

The Government also introduced significant tax relief. The middle and top bracket tax rates were reduced, the value of non-refundable tax credits was substantially increased and the Family Tax Reduction was expanded. These changes have benefited low income families. While tax reductions for the poor have limited direct benefits, they are important because they build faith in the future. Too often low income families view tax reductions as a benefit for the well-off. By extending tax reductions to low-income families, governments demonstrate their commitment to progressivity.

Making cross-sectoral linkages

The third step was to make cross-sectoral policy linkages.

Child Care

Perhaps one of the most important cross-sectoral linkages is child care. Access to affordable quality child care is a significant barrier to moving from welfare to work. Often, this critical link to employment is overlooked when transition programs are designed. Manitoba has made the link between affordable, accessible child care and work opportunities through its new five-year plan for child care.

The plan identifies three major areas to be addressed over the next five years by the Manitoba government, in a partnership with key stakeholders and the Government of Canada - quality, accessibility and affordability.

Since April 2000, Manitoba has increased its investment in child day care by 43 per cent (Figure 6). The percentage of funded spaces has increased by almost 19 per cent since then.

It is anticipated that by the end of March 2007, an additional 450 newly trained early childhood educators will have graduated, there will be 5,000 additional funded spaces, subsidy income levels and allowable deductions will be adjusted to ensure more low and middle income families are eligible for full or partial fee subsidies, the $2.40 non-subsidized daily fee for subsidized families will be reduced, and more subsidies for child care will be available to support newly created spaces.

More support for infant care has been provided, and the amount of time parents can leave their children in child care while the parents look for work was increased from two weeks to eight weeks.

This should dramatically improve opportunities for parents to make the transition to work.

Healthy Child

The Healthy Child initiative was introduced to complement other early childhood interventions such as child care. To help children reach their potential, Healthy Child Manitoba works with families to support their children within strong communities. This support has short-term effects, by giving parents resources to move to employment, and long-term effects, by breaking the cycle of dependency.

An important feature of Healthy Child is leadership. Led by the Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, Healthy Child Manitoba bridges departments and governments and, together with the community, works to improve the well-being of Manitoba's children and youth.

The Province of Manitoba, with its community partners, has developed a continuum of programs and services for children, youth and families including:
- Parent-Child Centred Approach - Brings resources together through community coalitions across the province to support parenting, improve children's nutrition and literacy, and build capacity for helping families in their own communities;
- FAS Strategy - The Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Strategy helps with the prevention, intervention and care and support of individuals with FAS or alcohol related birth defects;
- Healthy Baby - A two-part program of financial assistance for nutrition during pregnancy and community programs that offer nutritional and health education to expectant and new families;
- BabyFirst - A community based home-visiting program offering information and support to parents facing the many challenges of caring for a baby;
- Early Start - A community based home-visiting program for families with children aged 2 to 5. The goals of Early Start are to help support families to strengthen parenting skills, connect with the community and get children ready for school;
- Healthy Schools - Bridges the gap between health and education to improve the wellness of children and families in communities with higher than average factors of risk to good health. This initiative is in the early stages of development; and
- Healthy Adolescent Development Strategy - Supports healthy adolescent development, including initiatives for teen pregnancy prevention, through teen-centred prevention and intervention programs.

Child Welfare

Manitoba has devolved child welfare authority to First Nations and Métis agencies, and expanded the off-reserve authority of the First Nations agencies, so that child welfare services are provided in a culturally appropriate manner. This initiative will complement other early childhood strategies. An added benefit will be the creation of further employment opportunities for Aboriginal people.

Affordable Housing

The Government has also made the link between affordable housing and moving from welfare to work. A shortage of affordable housing can be a barrier to moving off welfare. In response, the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI) was introduced.

The AHI is a five-year joint venture of the federal and provincial governments, developed to increase the

supply of affordable rental units and new housing available in Manitoba. This will be achieved by supporting the development of new rental and home-owner units, offering a repair/conversion option, and providing homebuyer down payment assistance. New or renovated units may also be supported through rent supplements.

The AHI targets low- to moderate-income renters, urban families, off-reserve aboriginal people, northern residents, seniors, persons with disabilities and new immigrants.

To complement the AHI, a rent regulation regime is maintained to keep rents predictable and affordable, while providing flexibility for landlords with high-end rental units and investors who build new rental units.

Community Development

The final cross-sectoral program is Neighbourhoods Alive!.
Neighbourhoods Alive! is a long-term, community-based, social and economic development strategy that recognizes that building healthy neighbourhoods requires more than an investment in bricks and mortar. As a result, Neighbourhoods Alive! supports and encourages community-driven revitalization efforts in designated neighbourhoods in a number of key areas including:

- housing and physical improvements;
- employment and training;
- education and recreation; and
- safety and crime prevention.

Finally, these disparate elements of social and economic policy have been drawn together into three regional community and economic development plans – for Winnipeg, rural Manitoba and the North.

The Winnipeg plan emphasizes downtown revitalization, safe neighbourhoods, affordable housing, inner city partnerships, expanding research and development, and maintaining key industries.

The rural plan emphasizes agricultural diversification, health and education, infrastructure, conservation and alternative energy.

The Northern plan emphasizes an integrated approach to health, education, transportation, housing, hydropower and ecotourism.

Results

These policies are yielding results. Statistics show that employment opportunities in Manitoba are as strong as they have ever been:

- Manitoba had the best unemployment rate in Canada in 2002.
- Manitoba's youth unemployment rate was also the best in Canada at 10.2%, well below the 13.6% national rate. Manitoba's youth employment exceeded 98,000 in 2002, its highest level since 1990. After falling through most of the 1990s, Manitoba's youth employment has increased for four consecutive years.
- Interprovincial migration losses are the lowest they have been in years (Figure 7).
- The province achieved low unemployment rates despite a record-high increase in the labour force in 2002. Total labour force increased by 1.9%, the strongest rate of labour force growth in over 15 years. Similarly, Manitoba's labour force participation rate increased to 69.2% from 68.1% in 2001, the highest labour force participation level ever recorded, and second in Canada behind Alberta.
- Manitoba's total employment rose by 9,100 jobs. Manitoba achieved record-high levels of employment in 2002.
- While the rate of employment growth was low, this was largely due to the fact a record number of people were already working.
- Manitoba's private sector accounted for approximately three-quarters of all net jobs created in Manitoba in 2002.

These changes in the labour force have yielded results for income assistance caseloads. The average annual caseload has declined by over 4,300 cases, or 12%, since 1998/99 (Figure 8). Furthermore, the composition of the caseload has changed. General assistance cases have fallen by over 50% since 1998/99, while the disabilities caseload has increased 32%. Persons with disabilities now make up 51% of the caseload, up from 34%, while general assistance cases make up less than 20% of the caseload (Figure 9).

Getting the Mix Right – Focus on the Future

While progress is being made in helping people move form welfare to work, there is still work to be done.

Employment growth needs to be strengthened over the long-term. Manitoba's emphasis on increasing immigration and building and restoring major infrastructure should increase employment growth. In turn, these newly employed Manitobans will generate demand, which will increase employment growth further.

Manitoba Finance officials have completed a spreadsheet-based computer model that predicts the impact that changes in income or family circumstances will have on the financial position of individuals or families. The model includes all sources of income, federal and provincial income taxes and payroll taxes, cash benefits such as the Child Tax Credit or provincial rent support, and in-kind benefits such as child care subsidies and Pharmacare.

By changing family circumstances, such as the addition of another child, or by changing incomes, the model determines whether a family gains or loses, and by how much, when their circumstances change. It also derives the effective tax rates facing individuals or families over a range of incomes.

Preliminary results indicate that work is needed on reducing marginal effective tax rates. For example, a single parent with one pre-school age child making $23,000 per year faces a marginal effective tax rate of 64% when items such as the reduction of child care subsidies and the clawback of child benefits are factored in (Figure 10).

If the single parent moves from income assistance to a full-time minimum wage job, her marginal effective tax rate is negative. In other words, moving from welfare to work triggers an increase in income over and above the difference between earned income and income assistance, as she is now eligible for a number of refundable tax credits.

High marginal effective tax rates are often the result of stacking of program benefits. The working supplement model tracks 13 different provincial benefits and 6 different federal benefits,

as well as 1 provincial tax and 3 federal taxes. In the example above, the single parent is affected by 6 different programs and 4 different taxes.

In the future, Manitoba will examine whether the broad range of boutique programs that are available can be modified or consolidated to reduce high marginal tax rates that may be a disincentive to participating in the labour force.

Manitoba is also closely monitoring the development of market-basket measures of low income to determine their usefulness as a policy tool for setting welfare rates and establishing non-refundable income tax credits.

Finally, efforts to date have focused on income support and the provision of in-kind services or benefits. However, the ability of low-income families to build assets is also a concern. Research has shown that families need to build sufficient assets to obtain education, purchase homes and start their own businesses (Ganzglass and Kane, 1997; Sherraden, 1991)). Asset building stabilizes families and communities and generates many positive returns. (Clones, Friedman, Grossman and Wilson, 1995; Page-Adams and Sherraden, 1997)

To this end, the Manitoba Government is supporting a pilot project on Individual Development Accounts in Winnipeg. The initiative includes asset-building for business and home ownership, and therefore complements the federal *learn$ave* pilot project, which focuses on education. Preliminary results from this pilot project have been encouraging.

Conclusion

Manitoba's approach to moving people from welfare to work has not been limited to either coercive or microeconomic techniques. Instead, it has focused on both the demand side - providing greater opportunities - and the supply side - building greater capacity.

This strategy was not developed centrally. Rather, it was the result of a Government composed of people with shared values, a common vision, and a defined purpose, each acting in their own area of responsibility.

The strategy on moving from welfare to work is part of our overall economic growth strategy, as developed by the Premiers Economic Advisory Committee. The strategy is:

- education first;
- building through research and innovation;
- raising and retaining capital;
- affordable government;
- growth through immigration;
- building communities; and
- building on our energy advantage.

By integrating social policies with economic strategies, Manitoba has made significant progress in creating a community where all can work.

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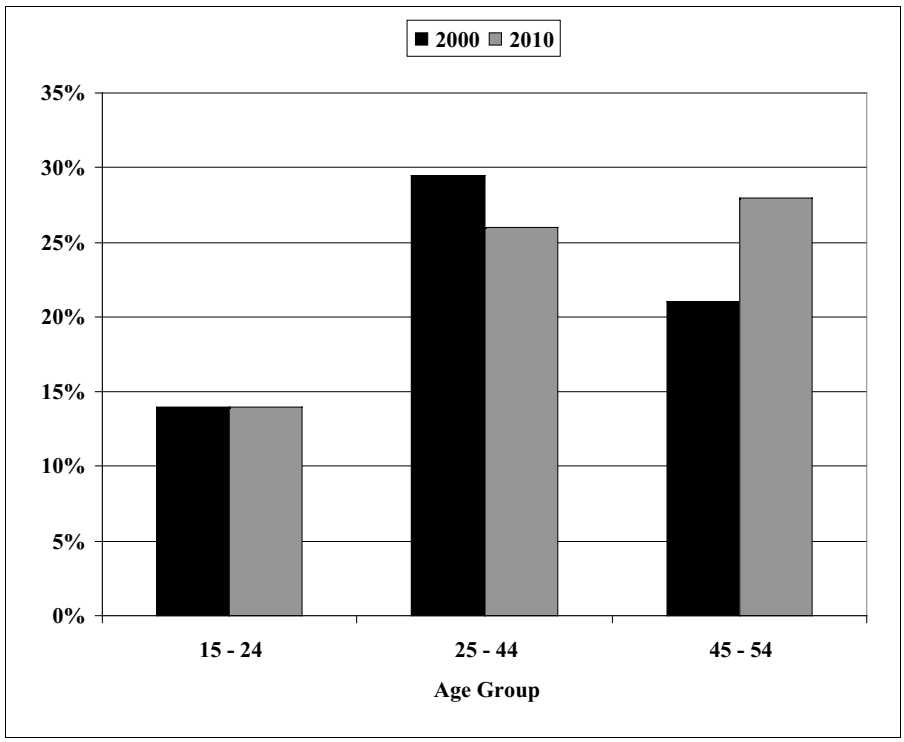
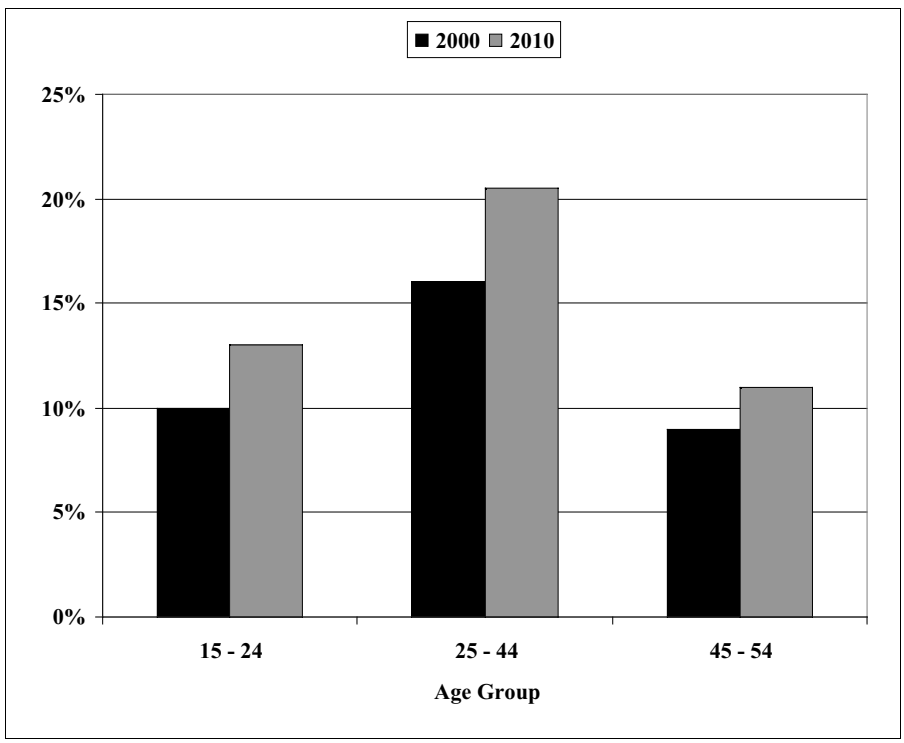
Figure 1. Labour Force Population



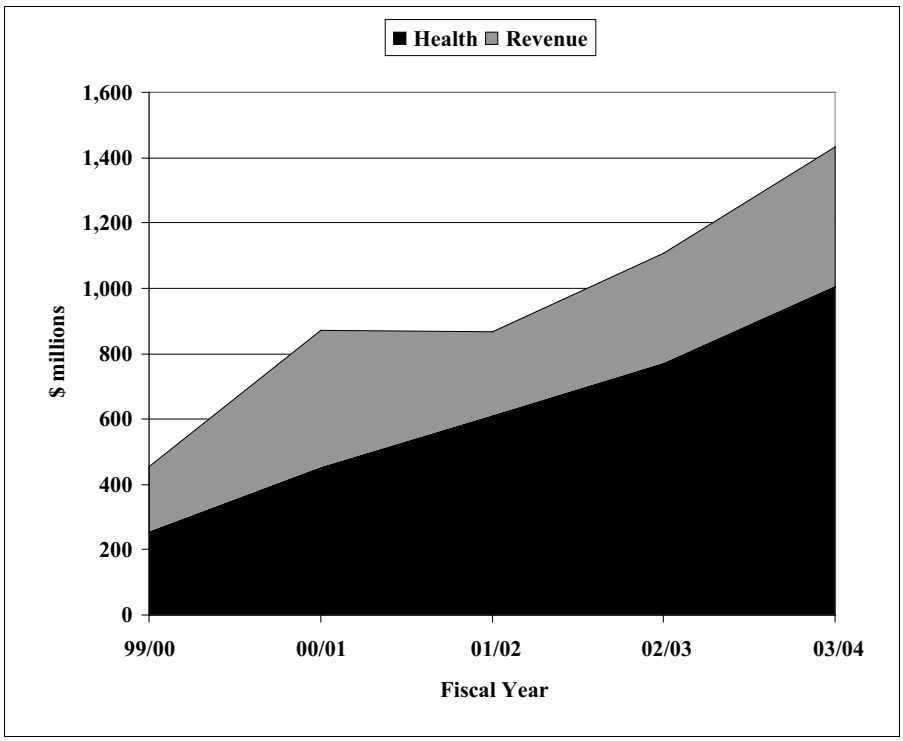
Source: Manitoba Education and Training

Figure 2. Aboriginal Population by Age Groups



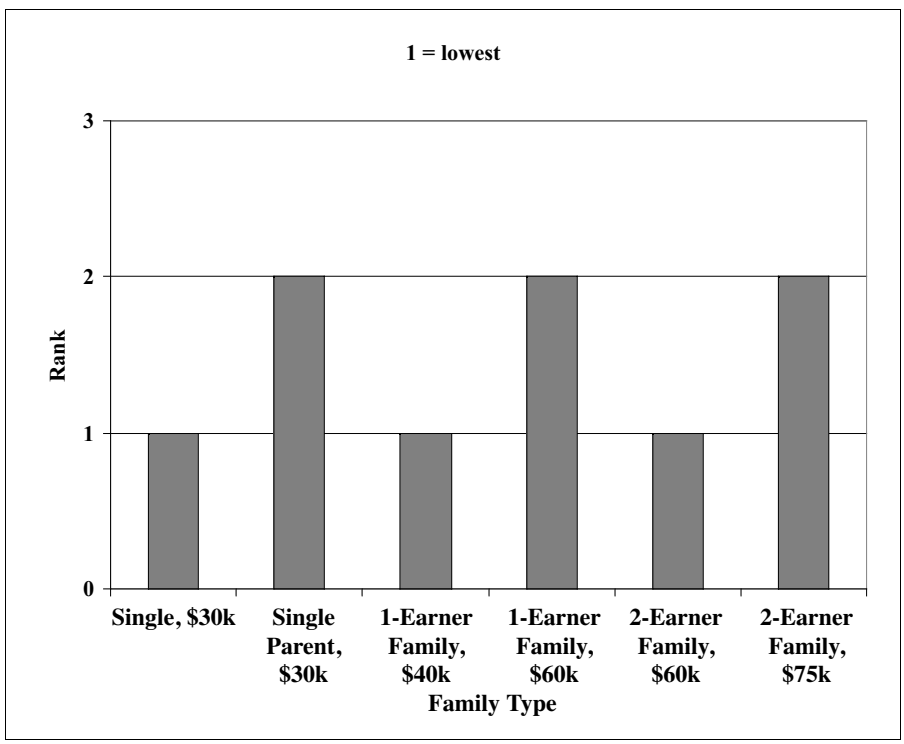
Source: Manitoba Education and Training

Figure 3. Change in Health Spending vs. Growth in Revenue



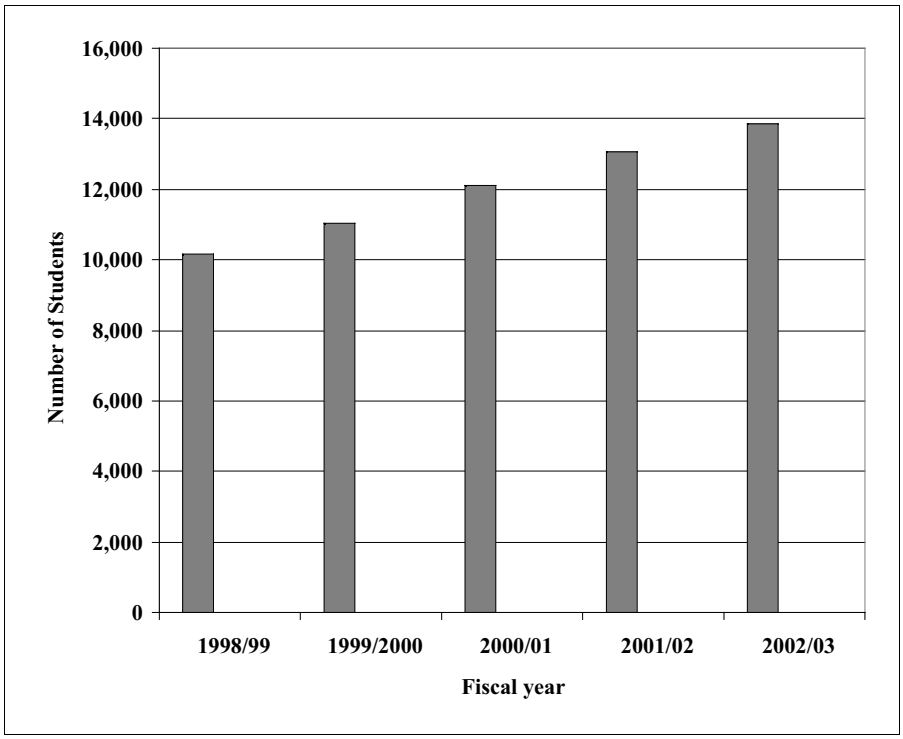
Source: Manitoba Finance

Figure 4. Manitoba Interprovincial Rank on Taxes and Living Costs



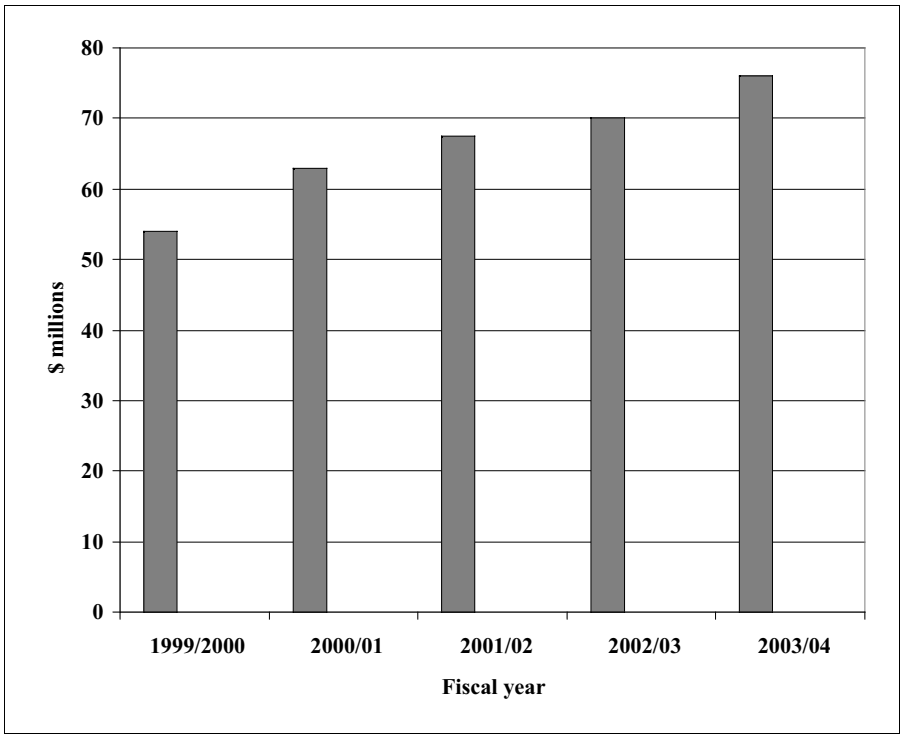
Source: Manitoba Finance

Figure 5: Enrollment in Manitoba Colleges



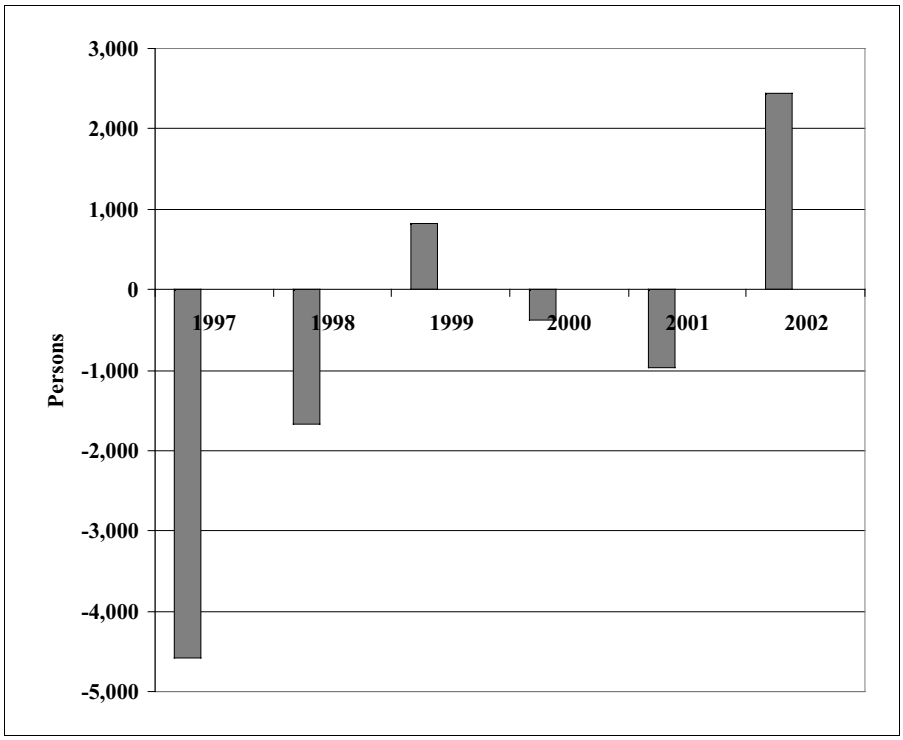
Source: Council on Post-Secondary Education

Figure 6: Child Care Funding



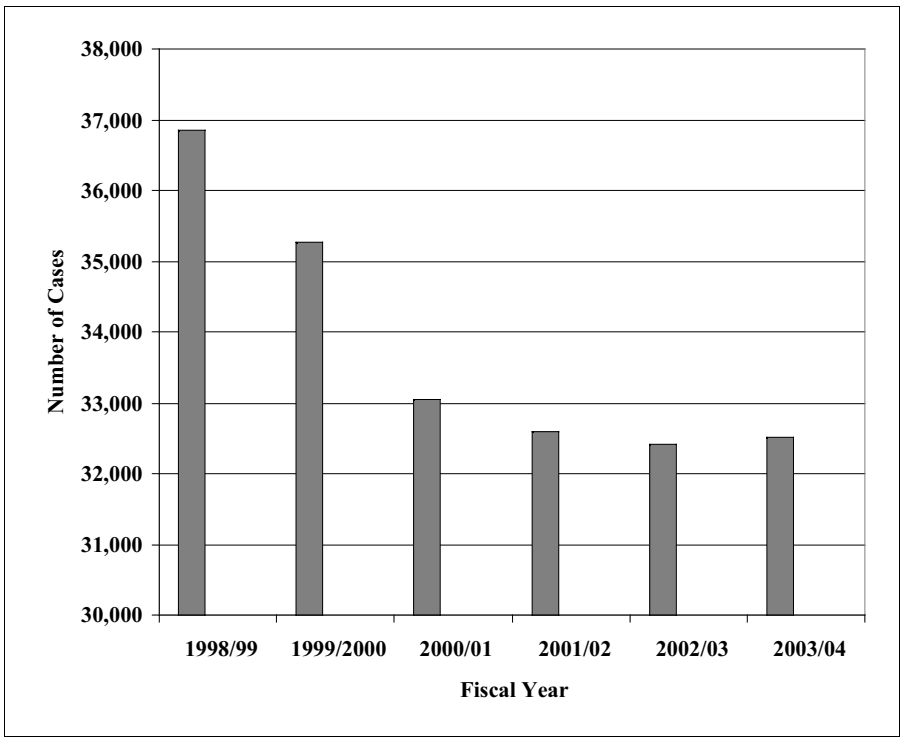
Source: Manitoba Family Services and Housing

Figure 7. Manitoba Total Net Migration



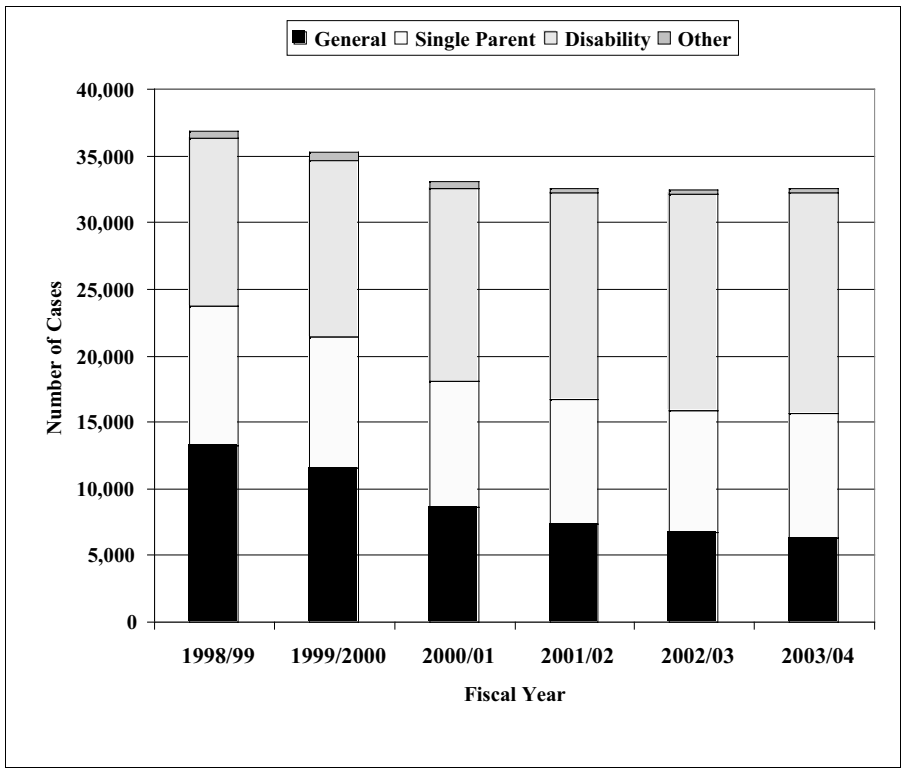
Source: Statistics Canada

Figure 8. Decline in Assistance Cases



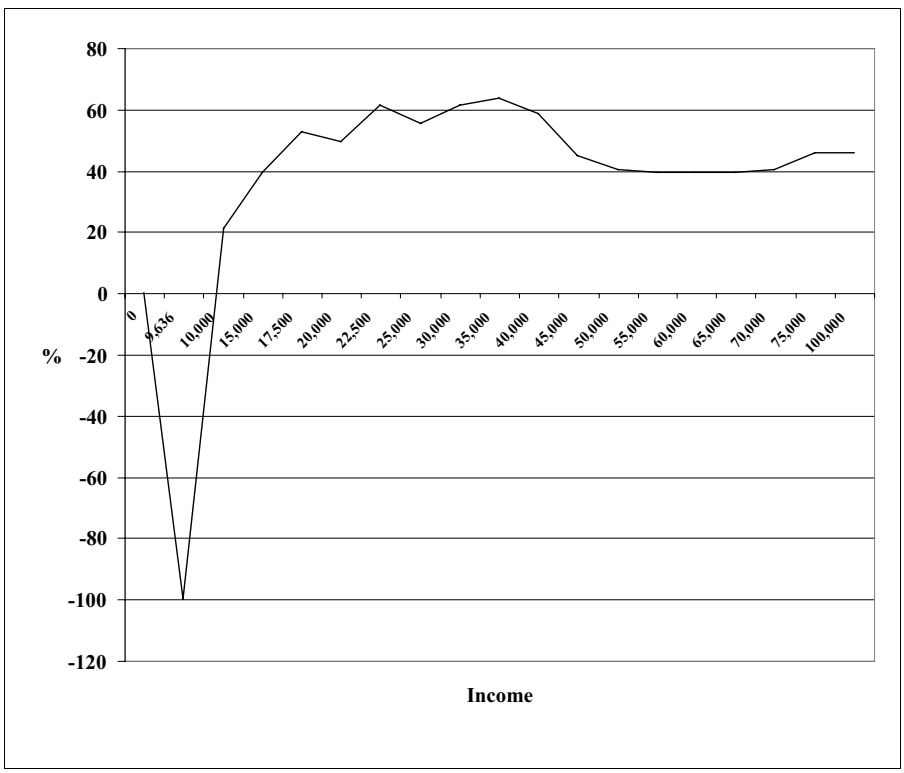
Source: Manitoba Family Services and Housing

Figure 9. Change in Assistance Case Composition



Source: Manitoba Family Services and Housing

Figure 10. Marginal Effective Tax Rates – Single Parent



Source: Manitoba Finance

Collective Intervention Strategies for Intervention by the Economic

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Summary

This paper presents collective intervention strategies that promote the creation and development of democratic economic initiatives focusing on integration by the economic. Integration by the economic aims at sustainable social and professional integration from a standpoint of democratization, social cohesion and the well-being of individuals, with the help of entrepreneurial, group-oriented activities useful to a community. One may consider an intervention through integration by the economic as the outcome of a process resulting, on the one hand, from the influence exerted by structural phenomena which, as the case may be, favour and limit intervention and, on the other hand, strategic managing by players and groups associated with the initiative. The author has identified three types of strategies associated with integration by the economic: interpretative (analysis of local context, education, persuasion), institutional (institutionalization, conflicting cooperation, renewal of community initiatives) and organizational (mobilization of resources, creation of a consensus-building support organization).

Collective Intervention Strategies for Integration by the Economic

Introduction

This paper proposes a categorization for collective intervention strategies encouraging integration by the economic. The presentation is based on several empirical reports consisting of research studies exploring associations and cooperatives, observations of cooperative educational activities, discussion groups and interviews with professionals involved in integration by the economic.[1]

The question of strategy is completely relevant in the field of intervention in general, and totally so in the field of professional integration, in particular. According to several authors (Checkoway, 1995; Weil, 1996, cited by Raber and Richter, 1999), the importance of intervention strategies has been largely demonstrated, with practitioners also acknowledging their vital contribution to the success of their interventions. However, intervention strategies are low on the agenda in the initial training afforded practitioners. Although they evolve in restrictive contexts with few resources, their methods of response to situations remain reactive at best.

Following presentation of the context leading players from different countries to opt for integration by the economic, the paper defines this type of intervention. Then the concept of intervention strategy is considered from the standpoint of Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration and Alain Touraine's actionalism. This conceptual framework makes it possible to distinguish interpretive, institutional and organizational strategies, which are then identified and explained.

Elements of Context Favourable to the Dissemination of Integration by the Economic

The perception that integration by the economic can fight poverty and exclusion, and promote a type of development other than new liberalism, is the result of circumstances involving structural and interpretive phenomena, to employ the terms of Gidden's theory of structuration (1997). Social and economic change at the end of the twentieth century, the limitations of the welfare state which banked on public assistance and intervention centered on manpower qualifications rather than job creation, and promising experiments carried out by popular social economics[2] movements explain why integration by the economic gradually built up a field of intervention between 1985 and 2000. Let us examine more closely each of these phenomena.

In terms of social change, a capitalist information society began emerging in the mid 1970s as a result of three totally unrelated events that occurred simultaneously: a major economic crisis and restructuring, the technological revolution and affirmation of new social movements. Interaction between these phenomena produced a social structure characterized by networks, an information-oriented global economy and a virtual reality culture (Castels, 2000b). This society organized production according to the principles of maximization of productivity based on knowledge, use and development of information technologies and the implementation of infrastructures to apply these technologies (Castels, 2000a). If this New Economy produced wealth on the one hand, it also increased inequality, on the other hand, by excluding a significant aspect of economic and social life (Ramonet, 1998; Castels, 2000a). The delocalization of businesses, the decline of economic activity, the exodus of youth and the deterioration of infrastructures affected entire neighbourhoods and territories. Exclusion now became one of the social risks facing the middle class (Beck, 2001) and threatening less qualified individuals bypassed by production, consumption, social relations and influence networks (Castel, 1995).

Interventions inherited from the post-war period proved futile in confronting these new territorial situations of poverty and exclusion. The latter

were anchored in a providential, financial logic based solely on government assistance focusing more on people seeking jobs that on job creation itself. From a financial point of view, staggering increases in the number of welfare recipients at the end of the 1970s prompted governments to experiment with programs aimed at reinforcing the desire to work, even obliging people to work in exchange for welfare benefits now subject to new conditions. In addition to lack of available jobs for unskilled labour, conditional benefits were in line with a new outlook termed *workfare*[3], triggering mounting opposition from social movements. This caused some governments to slowly begin to evince overture to alternatives that might offset exclusion while promoting salaried work for insertion.

The other drawback associated with these interventions was that they focused on manpower supply (stressing the skills and qualifications of the jobless) and very little on manpower demand (number of jobs offered). Accordingly, until the end of the 1980s, there was an emergence of social practices in favour of insertion: community services, psychosocial and consciousness-raising approaches[4]. In education, during the same era, there were at least three types of intervention to fight exclusion and poverty: development of employability, qualifications and entrepreneurial training[5]. There were many advantages to be gained from theses interventions, but also some limitations: tentative efforts at job creation and the tendency of some interventions to individualize the unemployment problem and center on the professional dimension of exclusion. The social dimension, territorial aspects and institutional dynamics of exclusion and poverty were often part of the analysis, but not always sufficiently integrated in the intervention.

Faced with disadvantages and deadlocks prompted by these interventions, practitioners and associations created social innovations spearheading collective ways of thinking, doing things and consuming, breaking with former practices that were embraced optimistically by other players and institutions (Chambon, David and Devevey, 1982; Bouchard et al., 1999). Backed by the State, some communities progressively developed a mainstay of collective social and economic initiatives resulting from the integration by the economic approach.

Integration by the Economic

Integration by the economic refers to a type of integration complementary to other types of integration, and aims at sustainable integration from a standpoint of democratization, social cohesion and the wellbeing of individuals, with the help of entrepreneurial, group-oriented activities useful to a community. This approach to integration groups together a wide range of practices underlying the tradition of social economics that took root in the nineteenth century and resulted from a communal or united orientation in local development. In this type of collective intervention, groups are supported and allowed to build networks in the community. They are encouraged to help each other, mobilize resources, bring people and the community to change in response to needs and achieve greater social justice (Henderson, 2000). To this effect, integration by the economic can improve a population's wellbeing in terms of economics (jobs represent a sustainable means of doing away with poverty, and the production of accessible goods and services is likely to improve living conditions), politics (democracy is likely to impart power to users, consumers and salaried producers) and culture (the development model proposed is founded in democracy, justice and solidarity).

This social and economic approach to integration by the economic encompasses five kinds of initiatives (Ninacs, 1996):

- Self-help economic groups are initiatives lacking legal status that are based on the mutual support of the group. They include buying groups, service exchange networks and group kitchens. There are 500 group kitchens in Quebec (Fréchette, 2000) where people gather together to prepare menus on a monthly basis that are shared according to the number of mouths to feed in a household;
- Public program initiatives consist of a variety of self-sufficient organizations receiving a large portion of their resources from the State and offering social and professional integration services. These organizations provide physical locations for women, immigrants and young people to define life or work projects, learn how to look for a job or create their own job. Among other things, this category encompasses job integrations agencies (Assogba, 2000) and community and residential centres for people experiencing personal difficulties and needing a down period to rebuild their lives;
- Integration businesses are authentic businesses whose goal consists of the social and professional integration of persons experiencing difficulties through the exercise of one or more economic activities. Through its global insertion approach, the integration business becomes a teaching aid offering the reality of contract work and space and time to build a life project which may encourage participants to seek better qualifications (Bordeleau, 1997);
- Community businesses are cooperatives established to provide jobs and decent living conditions for workers, and goods or services of use to the community. This type of initiative includes work cooperatives grouping together individuals who establish and manage an organization based on the principles of cooperation. They participate in a general assembly that decides coop orientations based on the principle of "one person, one vote." Work cooperatives strive to develop rewarding jobs and advocate maintaining jobs during difficult economic periods. Many community businesses are non-profit organizations;
- Intermediaries are at the crossroads of partnership, joint action and participation within a given territory. This category encompasses community economic development corporations that allow different local players to pool their resources to revitalize a neighbourhood, offer training and technical assistance in the establishment of cooperative businesses and facilitate access to

credit through initial financial contributions from local development funds (Favreau, 1994). These funds consist of real local savings originating from caisses populaires, municipalities, businesses and the population (Servet, 1999).

There are different levels of requirements inherent in initiatives involving integration by the economic for excluded individuals and intervening parties. In the case of excluded individuals, participation in a self-help economic group such as a group kitchen, for example, involves less commitment in terms of time and resources than the creation of a collective business with a strong presence on the market, as is the case with most cooperatives.

The Concept of Intervention Strategies

Generally speaking, an intervention strategy represents both the art and science of orchestrating resources in order to attain certain objectives. It involves co-production with partners (Gadrey, 1994), a thinking process, an approach to action and a correlation of means directed at a desired option. An intervention strategy involves arranging choices in order, considering their progression and synchronization within the given context, and their proper implementation. An intervention strategy must demonstrate an anticipatory capacity, the development of alternatives and the achievement of results (Checkoway, 1995). An intervention strategy differs from a tactic in that it is deployed on the long term and is the result of an action plan developed in accordance with the group's orientation, goals to achieve and obstacles to overcome; tactics represent special means to implement the strategy (Home, 1991).

By combining social and economic dimensions, integration by the economic seeks to recreate the social fabric and improve the living conditions of people within a given territory. Therefore, integration by the economic reacts to local economic and social degradation from a global perspective, allowing a community to acquire the resources needed to take control of its destiny and launch a revitalization process within the territory.

Giddens' (1997) theory of structuration situates intervention strategies within a general explanatory framework of social and economic phenomena by drawing on the broad paradigms of sociology. On the one hand, the theory of structuration considers the existence of political, economic and organizational structural phenomena that are forced, to a certain extent, on players without the players' always being able to completely grasp their effect. Structural phenomena are primarily symbolic instructions imposed by the greater or lesser recognition they impart to integration by the economic (for example, the value assigned a private initiative as opposed to a group initiative); structural phenomena also involve political and economical institutions that more or less restrict access to resources for integration by the economic (public programs supporting integration by the economic initiatives, among other things); finally, legal institutions are responsible for providing, or not providing, legitimacy afforded to the choice of integration by the economic (notably, recognition by law).

On the other hand, there are aspects of strategic action taken by players that favour the emergence and expansion of collective activities typical to integration by the economic. The strategic capabilities of players are acknowledged here, but within certain limitations: they are never completely informed of the context and are unaware of all the consequences of their actions.

If structural phenomena condition players' conduct, players may in turn have an effect on the former, because their actions can change representations and the manner in which constraints and standards are implemented. Indeed, structural phenomena involve both a context and the resulting effects of reflexive and interactive phenomena; then again, reflexive and interactive phenomena are reconstituted, to a certain extent, into structural phenomena. In this respect, social movements can lead to significant changes in the direction development may take because they express the demands of dominated social classes, provide them with a source of identity and challenge certain social institutions (Touraine, 1993).

The more or less innovative nature of reflexive and interactive phenomena is dependant on the method of structuration implemented. Indeed, the study of the structuration of social systems imparts special attention to methods of structuration and interpretation patterns in particular. Interpretation patterns are methods of representation and classification inherent in people's wealth of knowledge. The extent of knowledge and information comprising interpretation patterns depends on communication, in the strict sense of the word, between players and groups. Resources mobilized by players and groups provide them with the ability to create and act otherwise (power) in order to influence integration. The possibility of promoting certain rights and obligations, as well as making sanctions null and void, can lead to new norms being implemented.

This outlook concurs somewhat with that of Touraine (1993). In his opinion, sociological analysis involves at least two fundamental dimensions: institutional and organizational (Touraine, 1993: 58-67). The institutional dimension refers to the "political system" that allows the transformation of historic activities and conflicts "into a corpus of decisions and laws" and "mechanisms ending in legitimate decisions" (Touraine, 1993: 59). In this sense, group intervention and action seek to resolve differences existing between aspirations and unfulfilled needs on the one hand and institutionalized rules prevailing in a society on the other. The institutional component privileges relations between players leading to recognition of political pressures abounding in the field of integration. The organizational dimension concerns the "system of means" and "techniques" (Touraine, 1993: 62), in other words, means to produce activities and services encouraging integration. Although relatively independent, the organizational dimension is influenced by institutions seen as the synthesis of conflict in which players on the fringes and those within the field of integration are engaged. In this sense, even if the organizational component is relatively independent, it is in large part determined by institutional phenomena. Concretely, the organizational compo-

nent concerns means implemented by the intervention to achieve integration goals. These are mainly phenomena with an impact on financial and human resources, the coordination of activities and the production and consumption of goods and services.

In light of the preceding, aligning collective intervention strategies might ultimately limit the ability to proceed with their conceptualisation. Three types of strategies emerge from this theoretical perspective: interpretative, institutional and organizational. Interpretative strategies refer directly to interpretation patterns as a means of structuration in the field of integration. Institutional strategies concern relative changes to standards (rules and customs) that serve as the framework of integration by the economic. Organizational strategies concern resources mobilized by integration. The following singles out strategies possibly belonging to these three categories where integration by the economic is concerned. Each group of strategies is presented on the basis of challenges that may be faced by the intervention[6]. Each refers to already proven means applied in situations of integration by the economic.

Interpretive Strategies

Interpretive strategies in integration by the economic consist of ways of voluntarily developing means to change the methods of representation and classification inherent in the knowledge base of players involved in integration by the economic, and the knowledge base of their opponents and other parties. Our analyses led to the identification of three interpretive strategies: analysis of the local context, education and persuasion.

A first interpretive strategy concerns the *analysis of the local context* in order to understand several parameters central to the intervention. First, this strategy encourages the detection of existing situations that might exacerbate an economic recession. The economic recession in the early 1980s led to a need for emergency action on the job market, even more so since unemployment was hitting persons who had considered themselves impervious to such a situation because they were educated or specialized workers. Some populated city neighbourhoods experienced deterioration over a long period of time during the 1950s to 1980s following demolitions and the displacement of families to the suburbs. The economic recession also forced the State to curb social spending and even resort to budget constraints. The social makeup of some neighbourhoods led to

Summary of Intervention Strategies in Integration by the Economic and Their Connection with Structural Phenomena

	Order Phenomena…		
	Interpretive	**Institutional**	**Organizational**
Structural Phenomena	Liberal development model Concealment of the stakes in relation to exclusion and poverty Low education levels and deskilling of the population and the promoters Controversies surrounding integration by the economic	Indifference of authorities Ambivalence of State intervention Disagreement among social movements with respect to integration by the economic Disintegration of the social fabric Collapse of collective initiatives	Low population concentration Poor rural territory Very small number of associations Dispersal and squandering of resources
Intervention Strategies	Analysis of the local context Education (of the public, concerning the creation and consolidation of collective economic initiatives) Persuasion (in matters regarding diagnosis, prognosis and motivation)	Institutionalization (territorial and sectorial) Conflicting cooperation Renewal of collective economic initiatives through internal institutional change	Mobilization of resources Creation of a consensus-building support organization

the need for special homecare among the elderly, for example, or job integration for women and young people. Therefore, an analysis of local context first helps pinpoint requirements that might generate a need for action.

Secondly, analysis of the local context allows assessment of the effort required for collective economic initiatives to emerge and grow. Indeed, practitioners involved in integration by the economic acknowledge that some situations are more demanding than others, owing to the existence of certain phenomena[7]: the presence of associations already within the territory that normally serve as the foundation for the emergence and dissemination of integration by the economic; geographic population concentration that facilitates players' involvement and cooperation; and, the openness of local political authorities. In addition, organizations in poor rural regions risk having fewer human and financial resources than organizations in urban, even underprivileged, settings[8].

Education is the second interpretive strategy that cannot be overlooked in integration by the economic. Education can influence means of representation and classification in people's knowledge base and their habits in order to structure economic organizations differently from capitalist entities and make them conform, insofar as possible, to principles of integration by the economic. This strategy can remove obstacles such as popular resistance to an innovative intervention, drawbacks experienced by collective entrepreneurs in terms of competency on the job market, knowledge usually acquired through job experience and education, and networks of contacts.

An empirical[9] approach involves three types of educational practices in social economics: educating the public, educating in implementation and educating in consolidation. As regards educating the public, targeted goals are rather limited, and the learning method of choice is media dissemination and activities bordering on leisure pursuits. The main advantage of this practice is that by referring to exemplary achievements, it fosters joint action between organizations backed by different social movements and supports players in integration by the economic whose actions may be at cross purposes with new liberalism.

Education in the creation of a social economics initiative allows individuals to learn about associations, prepare business plans, market products or services and launch production operations, among other things[10]. In this type of education in social economics, learning methods are exceedingly varied, and education through action aims at solving unusual problems such as implementing a learning method based on discovery.

Education in consolidation is introduced when projects effectively drift away from the democratic ideal and degenerate, meaning they lose their democratic, participative dimension as a result of control by a handful of individuals whose decision-making is motivated solely by economic considerations (Meister, 1974; Batstone, 1983; Cornforth et al., 1988). Therefore, one should expect interventions to consolidate or regenerate projects experiencing a democratic drift. Regeneration develops participation, increases economic performance and improves the operations of social and economic projects originating as a result of integration by the economic. Regeneration includes an interpretive strategy (education) and an institutional strategy (regeneration through institutional change – refer to the section on institutional strategies). A diagnosis of problems affecting the project will determine the choice between training and organizational change, or opting for both alternatives.

Persuasion represents the third interpretive strategy. Practitioners resort to this strategy because the kind of development advocated by integration by the economic clashes with the liberal approach to development. Moreover, like other approaches to integration, it is the object of public controversy and disagreement among social movements and integration proponents. In such a context, proponents rallying with other players in favour of integration by the economic set in motion a "*framing process*" (proposed by Benford and Snow, 2000) in order to promote their approach. There are three steps in the establishment of a collective interpretation proposal: the diagnosis (problem of improper development); the prognosis (solutions and means to implement); and motivation (arguments for mobilization).

Therefore, persuasion employed as an interpretive strategy first surmises a quality demonstration of the need for integration by the economic. The analysis of the position of proponents of integration by the economic reveals that they raise social issues such as poverty, exclusion and unequal development (Boulianne et Comeau, 2001). Generally, information originating from different sources (colleagues, sectorial and territorial groups, researchers) represents the source material of the diagnosis to promote. Secondly, persuasion involves the ability to promote proven solutions envisioned for integration by the economic. Naming the development approach supported (integration by the economic, in this case)[11] and showcasing achievements produced by integration by the economic and its capacity for achieving results[12] serve to justify action and persuade opponents and fence sitters. Proponents direct specific arguments at recalcitrant players: complementarity of integration by the economic with conflicting strategies of social movements, wide range of dimensions considered in integration by the economic and progress of various social and economic indicators.

Thirdly, persuasion rests on the development and maintained mobilization of players involved in integration by the economic. Parties acknowledge that players' choices are based on different kinds of rationalities (Weber, 1995): instrumental, affective, traditional and ethic[13]. Practitioners are also aware that people involved in integration by the economic experience a sense of accomplishment associated with economic (project becoming reality, offering a service, profitability and expansion of an organization, job integration and improvement in working conditions); social (having provided recognized training, having had a significant impact on an individual's development, bridging the gap between generations or players, fulfilling needs); political (causing the State to adopt a policy or standard); and personal (for example, having succeeded in overcoming a challenge) achievement. These

people become convincing and enduring militants of the cause for integration by the economic.

Institutional Strategies

Institutional strategies involve ways of combining means to establish a community setting favourable to integration by the economic and introducing an internal political system for collective initiatives that is democratic and participative. Institutionalization, conflicting cooperation and renewal of collective economic initiatives through internal institutional change are three institutional strategies emerging from empirical studies.

As an institutional strategy, *institutionalization* designates a dissemination and codification process of principles and rules applying to integration by the economic in different locations or instances. One must remember that institutions embody written codifications or accepted behaviour, routines, rules, standards and laws that govern social relations and shape interaction, making behaviour predictable. Touraine confers dynamic impetus to institutions: they correspond to a political system dominated by class relations; in other words, they are the "location where a field of action is transformed into an organization" (Touraine, 1993: 212). Through their mediating role, institutions produce decisions and rules applying to certain realms of society. Institutions provide impetus to act or not to act because of constraints and sanctions supporting compliance with rules; however, institutions also represent a place for reform and may be sensitive to the actions of "institutional players", in particular players involved in integration by the economic.

Institutionalization is a key factor because of the relationships that are established between State and integration by the economic initiatives. Owing to the complex nature of its functions, the State is in turn "integrating", "repressive" and an "agent of social change" (Touraine, 1993: 221), attempting to "unite opposing and contradictory factions" (p. 241) and "masking the tensions of past systems of action, class conflicts and political relations" (p. 242). Approaches are presented in ambiguous and contradictory fashion. On the one hand, the position may consist of a form of recognition of integration by the economic, but policies and support programs may appear inadequate to proponents of integration by the economic, rightly raising mistrust of the State, even if the latter's support is vital to the dissemination of integration by the economic. In spite of such ambiguity, institutionalization may represent an opportunity to integrate a variety of practices within a group of rules with a measure of permanence, granting autonomy to these practices rather than spontaneous practices, establishing formal relations with the rest of society and building on the legitimacy of the practices.

Players associated with integration by the economic endorse two kinds of institutionalization: territorial and sectorial. Territorial institutionalization involves the establishment of rules, practices and partnership configurations conducive to integration by the economic in a territory. Sectorial institutionalization refers to a particular field of activities. Concretely, institutionalization takes the following forms:

- grouping together of projects or collective initiatives into a federation allowing promoters to establish themselves as spokespersons before local and national governments;
- capitalization, in particular of immoveable assets;
- garnering an exclusive market segment (for example, an agreement with a public or private partner);
- formal recognition of rights or obligations in a charter, policy, contract or legal declaration.

Conflicting cooperation represents the second institutional strategy. It designates coexistence between joint action and partnership on the one hand, pressure and demands on the other hand, and a junction with players espousing differing points of view concerning the pertinence of these actions. The justification underlying the strategy of conflicting cooperation is twofold. First, there are various obstacles linked to government programs, the market, and mentalities impeding project realization. Removal of these barriers sometimes requires local mobilization of pressure tactics. Secondly, social movements diverge in their opinion of integration by the economic. More demanding social movements criticize integration by the economic initiatives insisting that too much income is obtained from marketing services which should be offered free of charge to the population. In their opinion, the State should be solely responsible for funding and offering these services, and for the poor working conditions of employees – for the most part women – in projects based on integration by the economic.

At least four comments may be made concerning the complementarity of these practices (pressure and cooperation). First, integration by the economic is not solely the result of consensus – even if consensus is the sustaining factor of its operation – it is also the result of conflict. Secondly, integration by the economic often associates different organizations that do not relinquish their individuality and autonomy. The cohabitation of players resorting more or less to confrontation and pressure in different issues should not harm the coalition in favour of integration by the economic. Practitioners are aware of the existence of the fundamental right of local communities to participate freely in their development and the right of the most underprivileged citizens to get organized and participate in the social life of their society. Thirdly, support of consensus or conflict depends, of course, on group ideology (Home, 1995), but also on the situation. Political maturity serves to judge if the situation is better adapted to joint action (aggregation of resources, for example), or better adapted to demands (notably, for improved working conditions though more financing). The strategy of conflicting cooperation is anchored in social movements (trade unions, feminist movements, cooperatives and others) and in the establishment of bridges between integration by the economic players and government and financial elite. Fourthly, the resolution of conflict can lead to a dynamic reappraisal, refined strategies and new outlooks that broaden the base of support.

Renewal of collective economic initiatives through internal institutional

change represents the third institutional strategy. We have seen that in interpretive strategies, education in consolidation can, to some extent, encourage the regeneration of collective initiatives. Sometimes internal institutional changes must be made to collective initiatives because the power base is more or less democratic, and the quality of cooperative relations existing in collective initiatives remains the primary reference of internal players. In many collective initiatives showing signs of deterioration, changes in the power base and the organization of work accompany education. From this standpoint, democratic functioning provides a framework for unintentional apprenticeship of the reality of integration by the economic on a daily basis. Institutional changes involve opening membership to new members, the establishment of a new member selection process, a direct control option by members and the broadening of employees' and users' rights through their representation in the decision-making process. Organizational changes may also be deemed pertinent: ethical control of a product of service, enlarging on and enriching tasks, autonomous working parties and teamwork.

Organizational Strategies

Organizational strategies consist of means employed by practitioners and players involved in integration by the economic to produce services and coordinate activities likely to result in the allocation of sufficient resources for the emergence and development of collective economic initiatives. The main organizational strategies used are resource mobilization and the creation of an organization committed to joint action and collective initiatives.

Resource mobilization combines various activities drawing on human, material and financial resources in support of joint action and the emergence of collective initiatives. Activities connected with resource mobilization include:

- information: inventory of available resources;
- organization: the establishment of rational procedures to coordinate the various types of resources;
- negotiation with partisans of integration by the economic to obtain their commitment on the medium term;
- appeals for contributions;
- demands for resources: mobilization of players to table demands with State agencies.

This strategy is vital, given that experiences analyzed and many studies have shown the need for support and advice in the creation of a collective business (Defourny, 1994; Staber, 1993; Cornforth et al., 1988). Collective businesses set up with no form of accompaniment are a rather rare occurrence indeed.

From a human standpoint, integration by the economic is based on the presence of trained practitioners, competent players, experts aware of social and economic issues, community leaders who have established networking with associations through the accumulation of political functions exercised and a variety of organizations providing true partnership efforts. From a financial standpoint, support must be obtained in the form of government financing programs, creation of development funds originating with voluntary local savings initiatives and contributions from businesses, trade unions and financial institutions.

One notes that in certain instances, practitioners prefer to introduce integration by the economic with realistic, modest projects in order to ensure that care is taken in the mobilization of resources (Breton, 1995) and that they are present for the duration of the project. Integration by the economic sometimes emerges as a result of spontaneous and rather loose initiatives taking the shape of committees or issue tables grouping together partners drawn by the devitalized local situation for the purpose of planning and coordinating projects; it is then followed by a public event during which the creation of an organization in support of integration by the economic is announced.

The creation of an organization to spearhead joint action among local players and support social economic initiatives is a phenomenon of singular importance for local development in general (Klein, 1992). This is an intermediate-level organization that seeks to promote joint action favourable to integration by the economic and that concretely supports the establishment of collective initiatives. Practically speaking, completion of these projects serves to fulfill integration by the economic players' aspirations for territorial revitalization.

Analyses have shown that the success of such an organization is attributable to a number of factors:

- cooperative character of the founders' approach providing the impetus to launch activities;
- adoption of rules encouraging the broadest possible representation of local players (associations, trade unions, public establishments and private companies) and procedures for naming decision-makers;
- ability to marshal resources (development specialists and venture capital corporations, among others);
- dissemination of information and offering of made-to-measure training;
- networking between players who have had little contact with each other or have had antagonistic dealings in the past;
- straightforward coexistence in an environment with other intermediate organizations involved directly or indirectly in collective initiatives.

Conclusion

The review of strategies in this paper was an attempt to highlight several challenges. One of these challenges was to conceptualize intervention by considering the social and economic aspects of integration by the economic. Another challenge consisted of conciliating theory and practice, in other words establishing a bridge between thought and action. We deemed it useful in our analysis to review integration by the economic practices and collective initiatives that endure the test of time and are based on general theories of social sciences (Giddens' theory of structuration and Touriane's actionnalism).

In terms of intervention, integration by the economic involves several strategies that seek to remove obstacles to the creation and development of col-

lective economic initiatives, encourage appropriation of the approach by the excluded in society and marshal resources to achieve these objectives. Given this perspective, strategies discussed in this paper may contribute to the organization of economic activities and their democratic management by both producers and user-consumers.

Efforts to conceptualize intervention strategies in this paper are likely, among other things, to draw attention to theories on collective intervention. In a context of social change, theories on collective intervention must be re-examined because representations, poverty, social policy and scientific knowledge also change. These reasons alone justify the review of intervention strategies, but there is more still. Groups and players face structural and cyclical phenomena such that the end result of interventions in integration, like any other form of intervention, is fraught with a large measure of uncertainty. This is why strategy concerns are likely to decrease the determinism affecting intervention. The crux of strategy concerns resides in information that is as complete as possible prior to taking action and in special attention paid to the study of the consequences of action taken.

Finally, the paper shows the pertinence of research in inspiring the contents of training offered to players and calls for the renewal of this training to introduce strategic aspects. The practice of integration by the economic represents a complex, thought-provoking process. It demands a high level of professional autonomy, an in-depth understanding of the problem of exclusion and poverty, and flexibility. The creation of permanent, territorial and inter-agency premises for reflection and exchange on the renewal of practices may also constitute a singular approach to facing the challenges discussed in this paper.

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[1]This research work took place between 1993 and 2000. It is based on 20 research studies completed using a common grid to collect information, interviews conducted with 17 professionals (Comeau 2001) and two different discussion groups with 24 professionals (Boulianne and Comeau, 2001), and the observation of 15 different training activities grouping together heads of collective initiatives (Comeau, 1998).

[2]In the definition of social economics, university tradition encompasses several points of view. Classical authors (Desroche, 1983; Vienney, 1980 and 1994) and other more recent authors (Defourny, 1992; Laville, 1994) propose criteria to recognize a social economics initiative: legal status, presence of an association, values and the social project (Lévesque and Ninacs, 1997). Thus, social economics designates businesses first in terms of legal status: cooperative, mutual or non-profit company. Secondly, one finds the combination of a group of persons and a business characterized by democratic functioning, determination of business activities by the people, distribution of surpluses and group ownership of reinvested surpluses. Thirdly, the economic activity is of the associative type based on values of solidarity, self-reliance and citizenship, the finality of which is services to members or to the community rather than profit. Fourthly, these businesses can draw on a new development model acknowledging the respective place and advantages of social economics, private economics and public economics. If efficiency is a positive characteristic of private economics and redistribution the hallmark of public economics, social economics encourages democracy through the presence of users/consumers and professionals/producers in decision-making positions, and espouses activities of reciprocity because they integrate economic activities that include sales, monetary activities other than sales (public financing and donations) and non-monetary activities (volunteer work).

[3]As a state initiative for marginalized individuals, *workfare* targets categories of people, relies on constraint, focuses solely on professional aspects and operates under the aegis of administrative logic; this is the American approach. The punitive aspect of conditional benefits saps individual motivation, because it fuels the guilt and deprecation associated with public assistance. The insertion approach is transversal, centering on the social and professional steps of empowerment, counting on the solidarity of community partners and adopting a logic based on integration; this is the French approach (Morel, 2000).

[4]The community services approach centers on help with immediate needs or custom-oriented information on government programs (Girard, 1989). The psychosocial approach allows the expression of difficulties experienced in a situation of exclusion and the reconstruction of a social network (Schore, 1989). The consciousness-raising approach aims at developing a balance of power with the state in the definition of social policy (Ampleman et al, 1983 and 1987). These intervention approaches allow the creation of social links or political or economic gains, as the case may be, without striving to manage the economy and direct job creation.

[5]The development of employability (acquisition of attitudes and aptitudes favourable to the search for employment) can encourage individual self-reliance, self-sufficiency in family relations, immediate social networking and the ability to deal with community resources (Paugman, cited by Morel, 2000: 24); however, by postulating that manpower demand is adequate, it overlooks the precarious nature of work in capitalist information societies. Qualifications (custom training to occupy a position with a company, alphabetization, basic training), often end in the abandonment of study programs, dead ends

and the dump yard when conducted in a self-contained environment in the absence of a connection to a community economic project and lack of integration into an insertion itinerary (Sylvestre, 1994; Stercq, 1994; Lefebvre, 1995). Finally, entrepreneurial training (education in business start-ups) is for individual entrepreneurs who can mobilize a certain amount of capital for investment, showcase their competence on the job market and benefit from a network of connections.

[6]These challenges were identified in two different discussion groups made up of professional players employed by organizations involved in the support and development of collective businesses. Each group met four times; the first two meetings addressed the difficulties and challenges faced by players, while the last two meetings explored avenues to overcome these difficulties. Between two meetings, researchers drafted a paper that served as the starting point for the next discussion and a summary that the group might have to amend in order that it mirror the true contents of earlier discussions (Boulianne et Comeau, 2001).

[7]Earlier research defined structural phenomena contributing in Quebec to the dissemination of community economic development. The research was conducted between 1996 and 1999 in central neighbourhoods in Quebec City and is backed by 10 surveys of collective economic initiatives, as well as interviews with 20 managers from seven of the initiatives under study (Comeau, 2001).

[8]The inequalities between associations in these two types of territories are, for the most part, organizational. In comparison to associations in underprivileged urban areas, associations in underprivileged rural areas are run by people with less education or management experience. Among other things, association income was significantly lower. Finally, gender differentiation in the job place was stronger, with women more prevalent in clerical positions than in management in rural associations (Comeau et al., 2002).

[9]This research sought to build categories of educational practices in social economics and identify the strong and weak points of these practices. Social economics education strives to impart knowledge about, establish, and consolidate, collective businesses. Research was based on the observation of 15 educational activities, a questionnaire completed by 302 participants in these activities and semi-structured interviews with 17 practitioners involved in teaching social economics (Comeau, 1998).

[10]Attempting to transform individuals excluded from the job market for long periods of time into entrepreneurs is a huge challenge, giving rise to the problem of volume of human and financial resources that a community is prepared to invest in their accompaniment. Indeed, these people need close, prolonged support to overcome the many obstacles they face (for example, difficulties expressing themselves in writing, relational isolation, lack of knowledge of the sector of activity and deficiencies of certain resources).

[11]Things occur as if one were witnessing a shift from practical awareness (description of action taken and behaviour) to discursive awareness (explanation of the context underlying the behaviour and its justification) (Giddens, 1997). Read Comeau (2001) for more details.

[12]This aspect of the persuasion strategy shows that valuation of integration by the economic is a question of credibility (Comeau, 2001).

[13]Weber (1993) specifies that instrumental rationality is mostly based on the search for economic (obtaining a job and improving one's living conditions, for example), social (acquiring a network of contacts, achieving status or a measure of pride, among other things), cultural (learn, remain active and informed, express oneself, among other things) and political (the ability and the power to bring about change) benefits, in return of the cost invested in the form of unpaid work and perseverance. Affective rationality emerges when development activities allow people to create significant ties with other people. Traditional rationality associates mutual help with family spirit and the tradition of "corvées" (days of unpaid labour). Ethic rationality justifies participation in voluntary organizations through support of community values (self-sufficiency, mutual aid, taking charge of one's destiny and justice) (Lamoureux, 1991).

Integrated Service Delivery to Humanize the Welfare to Work System

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Abstract

An integrated model of service delivery, combined with community partnerships for provision of childcare, focused training related to specific employer needs, and other resources related to return to employment, provide a system that is effective and humanizing in assisting individuals to find meaningful employment.

A number of factors have contributed to the dehumanizing of Welfare clients. Recent deep cuts to welfare amounts have left individuals without adequate funds for food and housing. Services divided between many agencies, requires clients to navigate a maze of places, people and paperwork. Agencies limited to one or two services must turn over a large numbers of clients to provide revenue lessening their ability to build relationships with clients.

An integrated model, such as the one that Pathways Skill Development and Placement Centre is using, provides full service from assessment to employment. Clients begin with an assessment and job search skills training. Community Placement offers short-term experience to develop skills and confidence. Employment Placement liaises with employers and clients and creates a fit between the two. Job mentors coach clients for long-term job maintenance.

This model provides an interactive, holistic and client centred approach to the Welfare to Work system. It maintains client dignity, builds a stable support and contains elements that build the independence of the client.

Abstraire

Un modèle d'approvisionnement de services intégrés combiné au partenariat communautaire de services de garde, une formation centrée sur les besoins spécifiques de l'employeur et autres ressouces reliées au retour à l'emploi, assurent aux individus une méthode efficace et humaine d'assistance à la recherche d'emplois significatifs.

Bon nombre de facteurs ont contribué à la déshumanisation des clients du Bien-être social, notamment les réductions considérables récemment effectuées qui ont occasionnées aux usagers un manque de fonds pour se nourrir et se loger convenablement. Également, la répartition de services entre plusieurs agences suscitent la nécessité de naviguer parmi un labyrinthe de locations, de faire affaire avec un personnel trop varié, et de négocier une abondance de paperasse. De plus, les agences étant limitées à un ou deux services se voient forcées d'effectuer la rotation d'un grand nombre d'usagers afin de produire un revenu, réduisant ainsi leur chance de développer un rapport avec leurs clients.

Ce modèle intégré employé par *Pathways Skill Development and Placement Centre* procure un service complet de l'évaluation jusqu'au placement d'emploi. Les usagers débutent avec une évaluation d'aptitudes, ils passent ensuite à une formation en recherche d'emploi. Le placement communautaire offre de l'expérience à court terme contribuant au développement des compétences et de la confiance en soi. Le placement d'emploi assure la liaison entre l'employeur et l'usager de façon à corroborer une adéquation maximale. Les conseillers en emploi guident les usagers vers le maintient d'emploi à long terme.

Ce modèle procure une approche interactive et holistique du système *Welfare to Work*, centrée sur le client. De plus, il conserve à l'usager sa dignité, établit un soutien stable, et comporte les éléments qui engendrent l'indépendance chez le client.

Integrated Service Delivery to Humanize the Welfare to Work System

No one ever set out to dehumanize delivery systems for social assistance. However, the confluence of a series of events, policies and environmental factors did indeed lead to a system that often left social assistance recipients feeling nameless, degraded and marginalized.

In Ontario, the Progressive Conservatives brought about a 21.6% cut in assistance amounts. The PC party's document outlining these cuts relates, "Under the plan, a family of four currently on welfare would receive less than it gets today. However, we will allow anyone on welfare to earn back the difference between the current rate and the new, lower rate without penalty and without losing their eligibility."(PC Party of Ontario, 1994) This plan did not account, however, for two important facts. Most individuals are not on assistance because they do not want to work, but rather because they have numerous obstacles to finding employment. Therefore, a program that seeks to offset cuts to their assistance dollars, by allowing them to earn income, misses the essential issues facing recipients. The other fact is that during the period of these cuts the cost of living increased by approximately 18%, with no accompanying rise in assistance.

Another result of the *Common Sense Revolution* was a restructuring of service delivery under the auspices of the "Business Transformation Project", which introduced the two-stage application process, including the telephone pre-screening and the consolidated verification project. This initiative, designed to bring new levels of efficiency and accuracy to the delivery of social assistance has instead brought a

new level of rigidity and bureaucracy to the system. In his article "Rhetoric and Retrenchment" Herd (2002) writes that the "social safety net in Ontario is being eroded piece by piece and the constant adjustment of labyrinthine rules to winnow the rolls has become an ongoing part of administrative practice" (p.5). While there are other, happier, stories of those who found sensitive caseworkers guiding them through the system, the level of frustration is rising.

As a result, fewer and fewer individuals qualify for assistance, while greater numbers of discouraged individuals simply give up on the application process altogether (Herd & Mitchell, 2003). Those who do endure the application process and qualify are subjected to a more rigid, less personal system that often requires the client to fulfill exacting regulations that they neither understand nor are equipped to accomplish.

At the same time that the legacy of the *Common Sense Revolution* has made accessing the social net more difficult, the economic climate has added to the burden. Leschied, Whitehead, Hurley and Chiodo (2003) report a 17.1% family poverty rate in London and Middlesex County. For children under the age of 15 the poverty rate is 24.5%. According to the same report, 693 children seen by Children's Aid Society (CAS) London between 1995 and 2001 65% were on social assistance. The Canadian Policy Research Network (Maxwell, 2003) indicates that families and individuals are being asked to bear greater social risks stemming from costs of education, benefits and pensions, costs associated with frequent job changes and the potential trap of low paying jobs.

The combined effect of these factors is the creation of new levels of frustration, stress, and dehumanization of social assistance recipients. In Herd and Mitchell's 2002 report for the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, they interviewed dozens of social recipients in seven different focus groups. They reported that social assistance recipients experience repeated frustration with having to move from agency to agency; aggravation due to inability to contact caseworkers; confusion and humiliation caused by regulations, directions and forms that require more education than many recipients possess; and an aura of suspicion and hostility as though they are trying to "get away with something".

Social service agencies were facing their own challenges in this environment. Downturns in the economy and cuts in available revenue place financial stress that threatened viability. Outcome-focused funding with no infrastructure revenue available placed great pressure on agencies to focus on statistics rather than client interaction. The "workfare" tag created a level of animosity between agencies and clients alike and became a significant attitudinal barrier. The temptation to get numbers through the system rather than to provide significant relational assistance grew as the financial pressures increased.

The Response

The challenge for the London Community generally and for Pathways specifically has been to retain a sensitive and personal approach to client care within this difficult environment, and within the constraints of the changes to the social assistance system. The remainder of this article will focus on the significant choices made by the City of London, the role of the Employment Sector Council of London Middlesex (ESCLM) in integrating agencies for ease of client movement and on Pathways' particular service delivery model as means of providing value-based, client-centered service within the context of the Ontario Works System.

The City of London

The City of London made two significant choices that have shaped their delivery of service and which have helped them alleviate some of the problems identified in other areas of Ontario. The first of these was to deliver Ontario Works programs through purchase of service contracts with community based training organizations. The partnership with purchase of service agencies has grown in the London area to encompass 14 different agencies, providing a full range of services from employment planning and counselling to employment related clothing. Each of these agencies is a member of the ESCLM. The mission of the ESCLM is to be "a dynamic service delivery system that provides opportunity for all people to meet the changing labour market needs in our community." Educational partners who are also members of the ESCLM include the London District Catholic School Board, Thames Valley District School Board, Fanshawe College and community based literacy organizations.

This decision to use community agencies has brought a number of advantages to the London Middlesex Community and to the area social assistance recipients–advantages that have gone a long way to counteract the negative impacts described in the opening section of this paper. Community agencies offer clients a sense of advocacy, a support for the clients in dealing with the regulations of the system. As the partner agencies of the ESCLM continue to integrate and improve communication, the need for clients to redo paperwork and retell their stories is diminished.

Community partnerships enable participants to experience collaborative support for addressing multiple issues. The dialogue built over a period of a decade in the London Middlesex region through ESCLM has enabled organizations to celebrate their strengths and offer real value to participants. This environment has required mature leadership from funders, ESCLM and community based agencies. Shared training for employment planning, service delivery standards, information sharing agreements and common technology platforms have enabled closer working relationships, which translates into less duplication of information, maximization of resources and a client-centred community infrastructure.

Another significant choice of the City of London was to resist the *workfare* concept, and instead focus on Community Placement as an employment preparation tool for those who are not yet job ready. In conjunction with the purchase of service partners, Community Placement was positioned and implemented as a positive employment step, which at times ended in individuals being hired by the agencies with which they volunteered.

Community Placement offered the opportunity to gain experience which resulted in improved skills, increased self confidence and filled gaps in resumes. Furthermore, many clients reported, a renewed sense of meaning and purpose.

The impact of these two decisions has had a significantly beneficial impact on the delivery of Ontario Works in the London Middlesex Region. While clients still face the difficulties of meeting the requirements of the validation process, the added layer is one of advocacy and support that assists them in navigating those requirements.

Pathways Skill Development and Placement Centre

The move to purchase of service agencies by the City of London proved to be a defining moment for Pathways Skill Development and Placement Centre. Prior to that time period Pathways primary service was a ten week property management training course funded through the Transitional Skills Development Fund of HRDC. The opportunity to become a Purchase of Service provider allowed Pathways to expand its service to the community and more fully express the mission and values upon which it was built.

Pathways entered into purchase of service agreements with the City of London for Employment Planning and Preparation, Community Placement and Employment Placement. At the same time, Pathways redefined its understanding of the mission and values and the critical stakeholders in achieving its goal. A focused strategy integrated the values and key success factors for all stakeholders but particularly for clients and front line workers.

The mission of the agency was to assist individuals to overcome multiple barriers to meaningful employment. However, the mission at times was overly focused on employment as the end result and the vision was reframed to better reflect the individual and community development impact desired. The vision has become "unleashing the potential of individuals to build new futures."

The core values were identified as follows:

Value of Work
: We believe that work is essential and gives dignity and provision to people.

Integrity
: We strive to live and work consistently. We are committed to aligning our actions with our words.

Proud of What We Do
: We believe our service is essential to assist people. We believe in its value and consider it a privileged mission.

Embrace Change
: Change is the constant of life. We do not fear change but welcome it as a fresh opportunity for growth.

Value of the Individual
: We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of each person.

Cooperation
: Our mission cannot be accomplished alone, but only as we work together with various stakeholders.

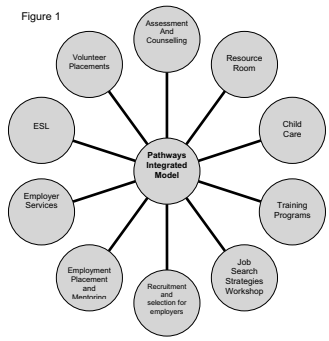
Quality & Efficiency
: We seek to provide quality and satisfaction to all stakeholders.

Leadership
: We seek to be a leader in our community and develop leaders for our community

In order to support the intent of the mission and values, Pathways established new offices (7000 square feet) in order support the delivery of these intents and values. The offices are accessible by all public transit, one block from Ontario Works offices and are decorated in warm and inviting colours. A full employment resource with online resources, phones and staffing is provided.

The heart of Pathways' contribution to the humanization of the welfare-to-work system is the integration of Client Services. As shown in figures 1 & 2, Pathways is able to take clients from Employment Planning, through job search strategies, Community Placement, if needed, on through Employment Placement. Training in WHMIS, First Aid and basic computer literacy is available at each of these steps. Pathways' strategic plan for the next phase of growth and development is to further enhance this breadth of delivery by forming intentional partnerships which will allow us to offer a variety of skill development for clients.

Figure 1



The database system, *WebTracker*, tracks client activity and counsellor's notes in a way that allows any staff member to quickly understand the client's history with the organization and reduces need for duplication of paperwork. *WebTracker* provides access to timely and comprehensive information about available programs and services, enables appropriate referrals and reminders for case management, reduces staff administrative time and so enhances client service. Nine of the purchase of service agencies are using *WebTracker*, leading to a greater facility of information sharing. An information sharing agreement has been signed by key agencies across the community that will enable inter-agency transfer with client consent for effective service.

Front-line staff nurture and develop strong working relationships with Ontario Works caseworkers and are effective advocates for both sides. Caseworkers rely on Pathways staff for communication of client activity and also respond fairly rapidly to requests from Pathways staff for client interventions. Pathways intentionally frames itself as a service organization to both the client and the caseworker and the fruit of that relationship is consistently positive service delivery to our clients. Four placement coordinators network with employers providing them with pre-screened candidates for positions. An employment mentor is available to assist employer and employee with any retention issues.

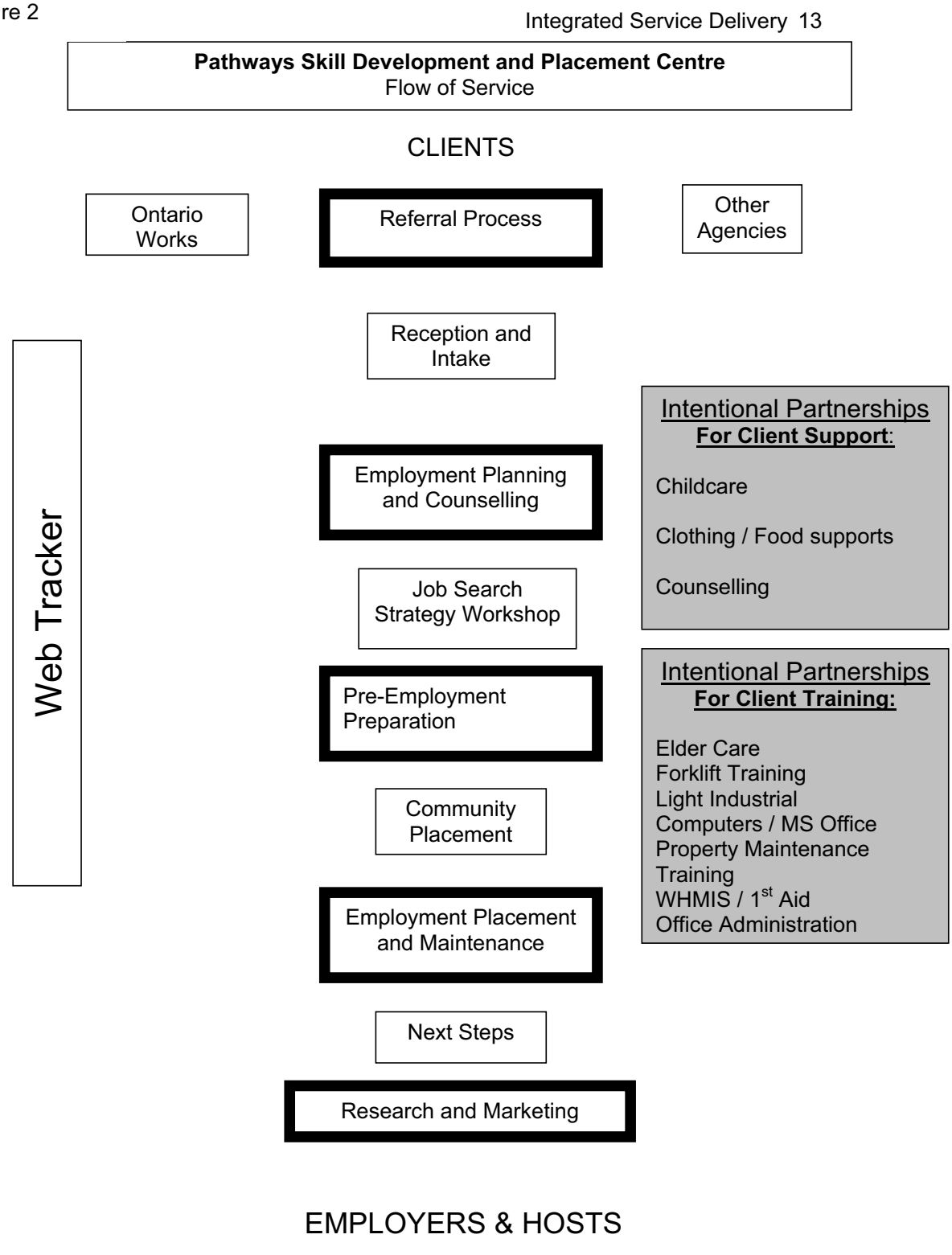
This combination of integrated service delivery, information tracking, and client-caseworker intervention has enabled Pathways to be a non-intimidating, supportive environment for Ontario Works clients. From the

Receptionist to the Employment Counsellor, Pathways staff is focused on creating an open and welcoming environment that affirms the value and dignity of each individual. Pathways Skill Development and Placement Centre has created a wrap around service to clients through integrated service delivery, community partnership and focused attention to the needs of participants. Integrated service delivery is not only an efficient means of providing services by maximizing economies of scale but also minimizes the distraction and frustration experienced by participants with fragmented service delivery. With the effective use of technology, staff have been able to keep track of participants, identify key windows of opportunity for intervention and follow up.

Implications

While Pathways Skill Development and Placement Centre has been able to

Figure 2



effectively serve many clients, it has also experienced and continues to experience significant challenges which impact both clients and agencies seeking to serve them.

A lack of funding available for infrastructure has made the upgrades in computer technology and the purchase of software for client management the responsibility of agency reserve funds. Agencies are delivering services at the same unit costs as five years ago and are wholly dependent on referrals from caseworkers.

Outcome based funding has threatened the soul of compassion. Pathways finds many clients who are in need of the resources we offer, but for whom no funding is available. The outcomes are at times overly restrictive and do not recognize the process steps that overcoming barriers requires. Client needs must drive these outcomes.

Participants require intensive case management. Humanization requires that someone know their name, needs and is able to intervene effectively at key junctures in their journey towards full employment. Employment counsellors who are available and aware of the barriers being addressed provide a critical catalyst and support to participants. The availability of caseworkers must be increased in order to respond to the needs and questions of participants.

One of greatest challenges for the provision of effective service is the development of competencies for the current employment situation. The Ontario Works participant is arguably the most in need of resources and yet has limited access to skills development resources. Skills development and education have been identified as the clearest path to career advancement and higher wage jobs. Specific skill development is critical to avoid increased marginalization. Basic computer skills are needed to combat the linking of "technology poor" and "working poor" (Heldrich Policy Guide, 1999).

There is a documented need for additional envelopes of funding to be able to provide entry level training in a timely manner without incurring debt and unreasonable delays. The spectrum of services provided for skill development must increase. While GED upgrading is critical, along with basic literacy and language skills, often there are little skills that will have relevancy in the current market place.

The enhancement of future productivity in the marketplace and the development of a skilled workforce will require greater levels of social investment from the public sector and higher wages for workers in low paid jobs. It will require a medium to long term perspective in program design, services offered and the roles assumed by public and private sectors and the individual citizen.

Finally, there is a constant need to be vigilant about the essential values that birthed the concept of social assistance. The case of Pathways in London, has demonstrated that a values driven service delivery model can, when delivered in concert with other like minded agencies and funders, provide service that will assist individuals to return to productivity.

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2. The first page should contain the article title, author's name, affiliation, mailing address and e-mail address to which correspondence should be sent, and acknowledgments (if any). To ensure anonymity in the reviewing process, the author's name should not appear anywhere else on the manuscript.

3. The second and third pages should contain an English/French version of an abstract not exceeding 200 words.

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5. All figures and tables must appear on separate sheets and be camera-ready.

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CONTENTS

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