



INCLUSIVE DESIGN FOR EMPLOYMENT ACCESS  
VISION RADICALE POUR L'ACCÈS INCLUSIF À L'EMPLOI



**AUÐVELDUM ENDURKOMU TIL VINNU**

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# Advancing Employment Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities through Demand Side Capacity Building

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New Frontiers in Research Fund  
Fonds Nouvelles frontières en recherche

# Overview & Key Themes

- Disability is a social construction
- Current efforts to employ persons with disabilities are inadequate
- Wasted human capital and substantial societal cost of exclusion
- Need for a new paradigm for inclusive employment
- Equality of opportunities in careers, jobs and work
- Skilling up employer abilities—demand side capacity building
- Culture change required across all facets of society

# What is the Challenge?

- Persons with disabilities excluded from careers, jobs, and work
- In Canada, substantially lower employment rate (57% vs 75% of work age persons) and earnings (\$34K vs \$40K) in 2017
- Marginalization compounded by additional systemic barriers
- COVID-19 has further exacerbated disparities
- The cost of excluding persons with disabilities from work and other social roles is substantial

**wasted human potential**





## Urgent need for a new approach

- Employment is transformative for people's lives
- Article 27 of the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* notes the right to work
- To date, the focus has been on skilling up workers, getting them job ready
- Employers are ready and willing, but they struggle to accommodate workers
- **We have a unique opportunity for breakthrough change**

# Collaborative Training Program – Denis' Story



Full video can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SyXJnkzpjI>

**Would you have hired this person if they showed up for an interview?**



# Estimation of the Societal Benefits of an Accessible and Inclusive Society

The full study can be found here: <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/EDI-07-2020-0186/full/html>

# Key Question

**What would be the benefits to Canadian society in reference year 2017, if Canada was accessible and inclusive in all domains relevant to full participation?**





# 14 Domains Considered

1. Healthcare Expenses
2. Out-of-Pocket Expenses
3. Output and Productivity
4. Quality of Life and Social Role Engagement
5. Life Expectancy
6. Informal Caregiving
7. Children with Disabilities
8. Human Rights
9. Transportation
10. Tourism
11. General Productivity
12. Administration of Social Safety Net Programs
13. Pensions
14. Market Multiplier Effects

# Benefits of Inclusion Conceptual Framework





**Total Benefits (one year): \$338 Billion (17.6% of GDP)**  
**Labour-Market Benefits: \$62.2 Billion (3.2% of GDP)**

Category	Lower healthcare expenses	Direct Output & productivity gains	Quality of life & social role engagement	Spillover effects	Market multiplier effects	Total benefits	Range
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$19.4 B</b>	<b>\$62.2 B</b>	<b>\$132.2 B</b>	<b>\$76.7 B</b>	<b>\$47.3 B</b>	<b>\$337.7 B</b>	<b>\$252.8-\$422.7 B</b>
<b>Percent</b>	<b>5.73%</b>	18.42%	39.13%	22.70%	14.02%	100.00%	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Per person</b>	<b>\$3,100</b>	\$9,957	\$21,156	\$12,273	\$7,578	\$54,066	<b>\$40,473-\$67,675</b>
<b>Percent of GDP</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>3.2%</b>	6.9%	4.0%	2.5%	<b>17.6%</b>	<b>13.1%-22.0%</b>

# Public Sector Revenues

Type of benefit	Federal	Provincial	Percent
<b>Tax revenue from output and productivity impacts</b>	<b>\$17.0 B</b>	<b>\$18.0 B</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Tax revenue from tourism and the market multiplier effects</b>	\$5.4 B	\$6.0 B	19%
<b>Averted healthcare expenses</b>	\$0.3 B	\$3.9 B	7%
<b>Averted social safety net programs expenses</b>	\$5.2 B	\$5.2 B	17%
<b>Averted human rights discrimination complaints costs</b>	\$0.001 B	\$0.04 B	0.1%
<b>Sum</b>	<b>\$27.9 B</b>	<b>\$33.1 B</b>	<b>100%</b>

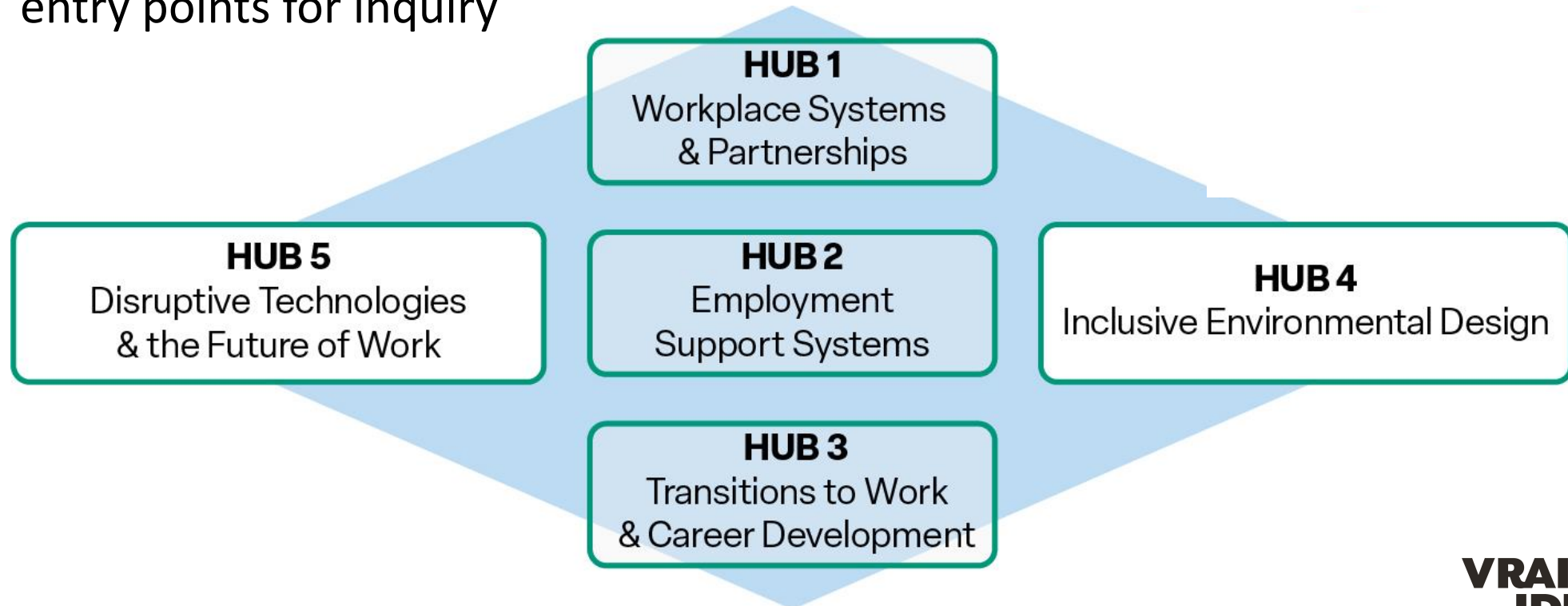
# VRAIE IDEA

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**Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility**

# Our Approach

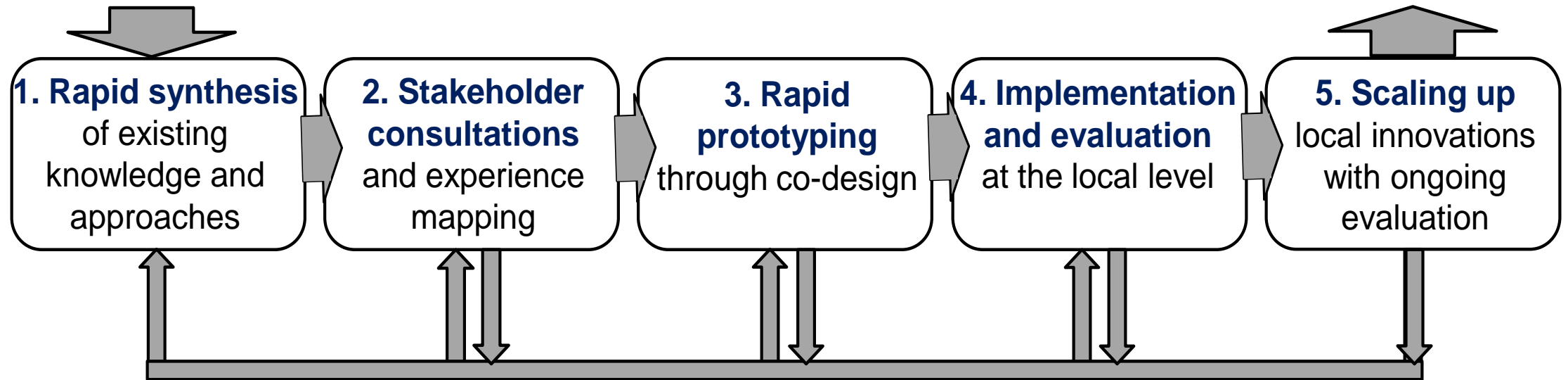
- Focus on demand-side capacity building
- Multi-disciplinary, multi-sectoral, **partner-driven** social innovation laboratory
- Incubator hubs, co-led by a researcher and partner representative, serve as entry points for inquiry



# IDEA Signature Methodology

**Deliberative process**  
to identify priority areas

**Target setting**  
to ensure impact



Iterative process that may require return to an early step

# Outputs, Impacts and Measurement



**Committed to mobilizing stakeholders to a stretch target of 5% increase in the employment rate across Canada—125,000 more persons employed**





# Key Concepts Central to Our IDEA



# Accessibility

How products, services, operational systems and the physical and social environments in the workplace are designed and organized to be free from barriers for all persons.



## Universal Design (UD)

An approach to the design of products, services, operational systems and environments based on simplicity, flexibility and efficiency, that promotes useability for the most diverse range of people possible.



## Inclusive Design (ID)

Current terminology that describes methodologies to create products, services, operational systems and environments for people of all backgrounds and abilities, addressing the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age and other forms of human difference.



# Disability Confidence

- May people involved in disability justice have started using the term “disability confidence.”
- Describes the confidence that workplace parties – employers and unions – have in their capacity to fully include persons with disabilities in the workplace.
- Sometimes the term “disability capacity” or “disability maturity” are used as well.
- A disability confident workplace puts policies into practice to ensure persons with disabilities are included, belong and do not have barriers to employment or promotion.

# Insights on Quality of Life from Key Informant Interviews

## Recent Study Undertaken for Employment and Social Development Canada

Full Report Title: Development of a Broader and More Focused Indicator/Model for the Measurement of Quality of Life (QoL) of Persons with Disabilities in Relation to Accessibility and Inclusion (2021)  
(available from <https://www.crwdp.ca/en/crwdp-reports#2023>)

# Highlights of What We Heard

## **Accessibility**

- Accessibility is about equitable access not just equal access
- An individual with a disability may have access to an activity, but that does not necessarily mean that they feel included in that activity
- A distinction exists between accessibility and inclusion, with inclusion being the end state and accessibility being a process to reach inclusion
- A person can feel that an event is accessible, and yet not feel accepted or included



# Highlights of What We Heard (cont'd)

## Disability Inclusion

- Disability inclusion means that all disabled persons are able to benefit from opportunities to the same extent as their able bodied and other disabled peers
- A definition of inclusion needs to capture that agency, and control must be with the person with the disability
- The concept of belonging comes to mind—accessibility gets you in the door (metaphorically), inclusion means you are in the space, but belonging means that you are an integral part of the social fabric

# Workplace Systems Change

Best Practices in Work Disability Management CSA Z1011:20

<https://www.csagroup.org/store/product/CSA%20Z1011:20/>

Best Practices with Inclusive Employment  
Accessibility Standards Canada (forthcoming)

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility in the Trades  
CSA Z301 (forthcoming)

# Areas to Target

1. Best practices in recruitment, hiring and onboarding of diverse workers.
2. Essential skills for inclusive mentorship, coaching and advancement.
3. The role of the union in supporting an inclusive workplace.
4. Beyond the built environment—creating inclusive work environments.
5. Flexible work arrangements and virtual work.
6. UD/ID in information and communication technologies (ICT).
7. Implementing a robust disability management system by maximizing accommodation and inclusion.
8. Weaving UD/ID and accessibility into procurement and the supply chain.
9. Accessibility planning, reporting and a roadmap for change.
10. Continual improvement and measurement of progress through audits and assessment tools.

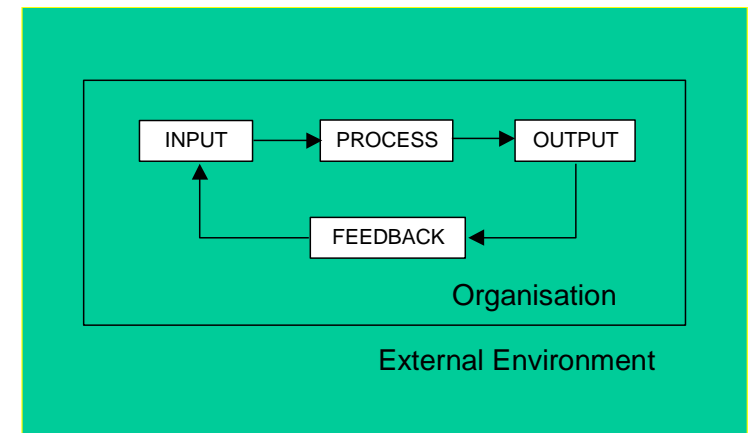
# Purpose of the CSA Z1011:20 Standard

- Provide organizations with guidance on how to incorporate best practices on work disability management into their systems and day-to-day operations
- Provide a broadly applicable, consensus-based framework for the management of work disability at the organizational level for **both physical and mental health needs of workers**
- Also provide consensus-based guidance for **recruitment, hiring and onboarding** of workers with disabilities
- Provide supporting materials including implementation tips to complement the standard



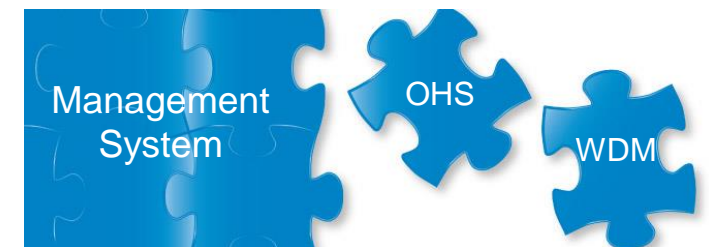
# Systems Approach

- Traditional approach used for work disability issues within organizations
  - Assign role of work disability manager to a particular person
    - Within human resources department
    - Within OHS department
  - Some organizations farm out some or all their disability management functions
  - Take a reactive role to performance measurement using indicators such as absence days
- Systems approach is proactive and considers roles and responsibilities across the organizations
  - Considers **inputs, process, outputs and feedback**
  - Evaluation and improvement on a continual basis



# What is a Management System?


- A formalized framework of policies, processes and procedures used by an organization to meet its objectives
- Documented and tested step-by-step method for smooth functioning
- Ensures clarity, consistency and integration with other organizational activities
- Audits and continual improvement are vital parts of the system approach
- A proactive approach means that health needs of workers are addressed before they become disabling – **work disability prevention**

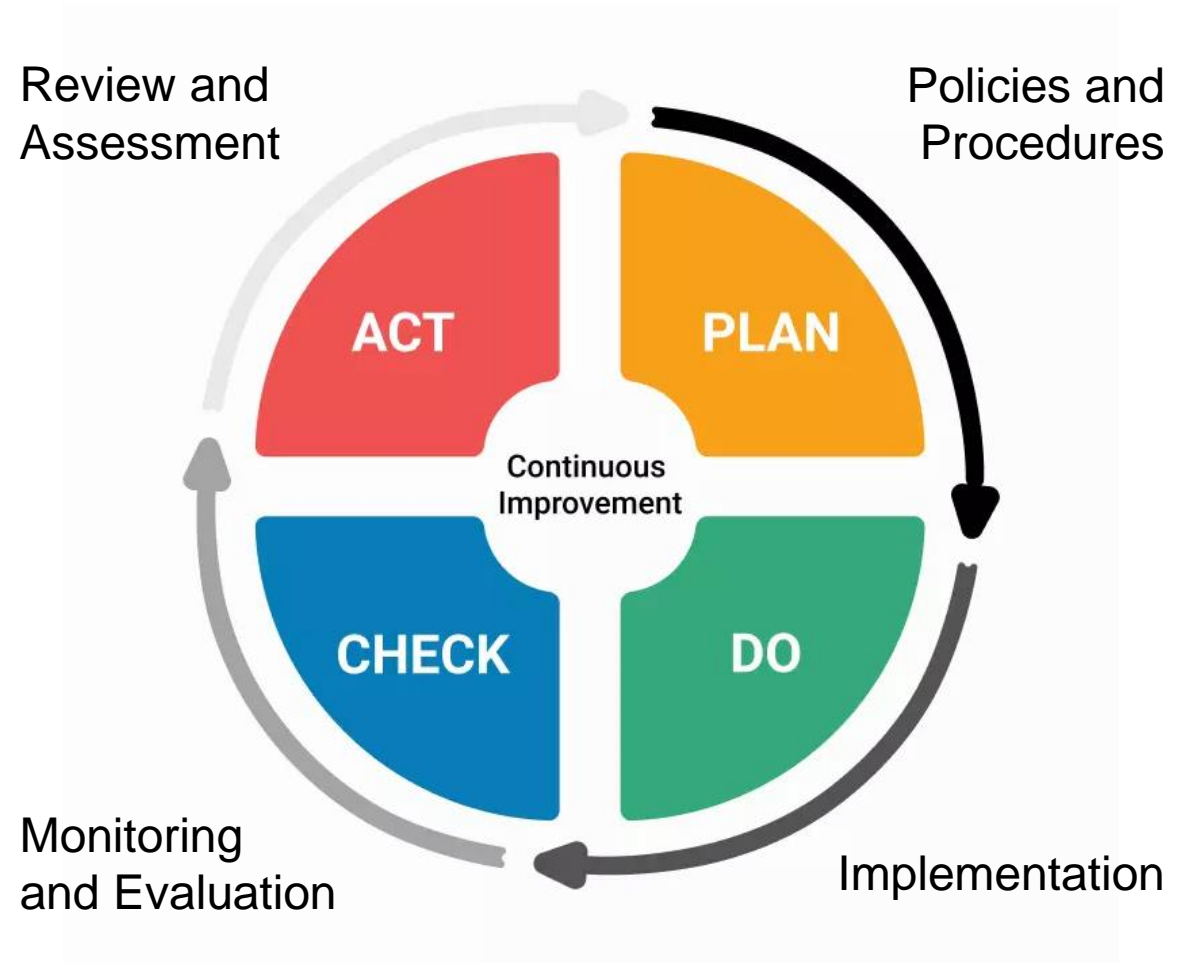


# Continual Improvement Cycle

## Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA)

### Continual Improvement Cycle

- 
1. Plan: Establish improvement objectives
  2. Do: Implement the plan
  3. Check: Monitor and evaluate progress
  4. Act: Review and take action to improve



# Framework and Some Principles

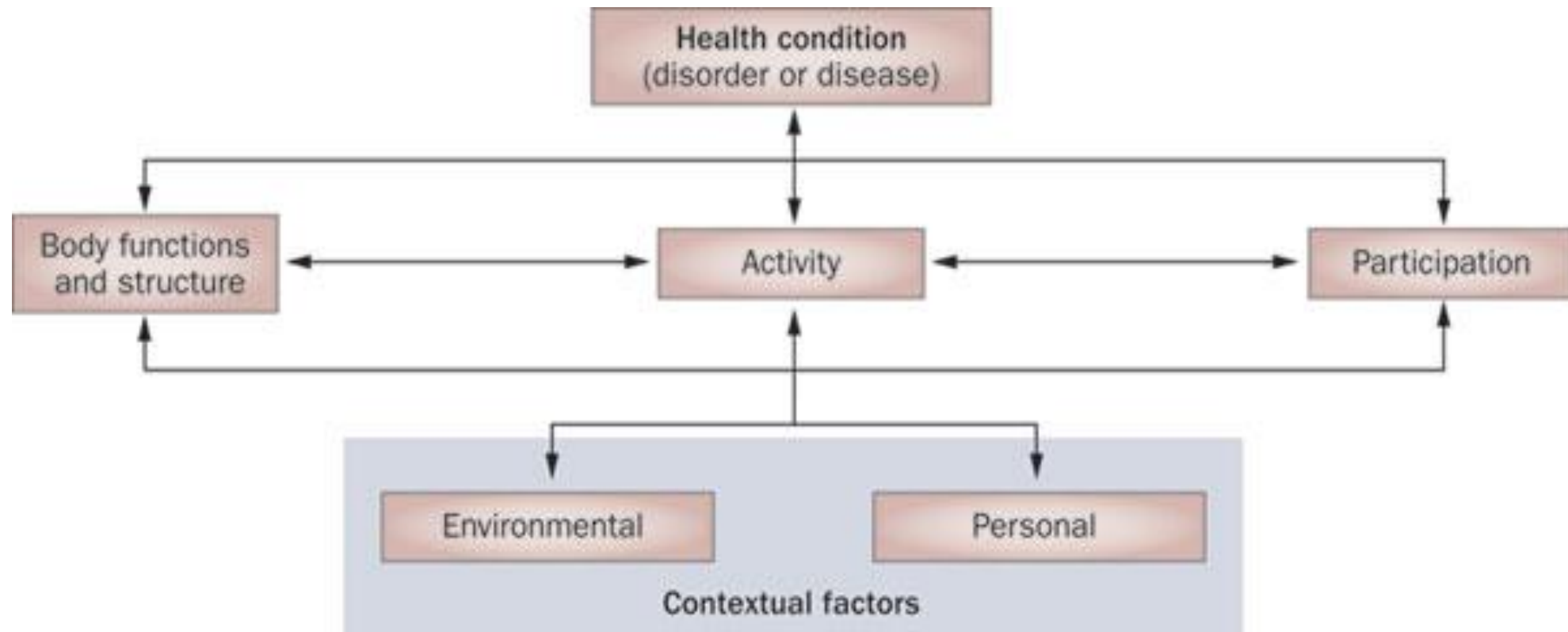
- A well-functioning system is **worker-centred**, takes a **case-by-case**, **contextualized**, **biopsychosocial** approach, and focuses on **maintaining work engagement**
- **Important to avoid viewing a disability exclusively through a healthcare lens**
- WDM process considers the worker's role within the organization, their essential duties, and the physical and psychological demands of their job
- The organization and the worker to take joint responsibility for the accommodation process, including monitoring and evaluation
- NB: Term “worker” used rather than “employee”





# Biopsychosocial Approach to Health

**Biopsychosocial approach:** Takes into consideration the associations between biological, behavioural, physical, psychological, and social factors that create the disabling condition/situation. **Contextual factors are a key considerations.**



# Working Life Course Perspective

- Disability management may also be framed as a continuum
- Managing worker health and well-being over their time with the organization
- Recruitment, hiring, and on-boarding
- Job continuity and advancement
- Eventual departure (exit) from the organization



# Contents and Annexes

## Contents

0 Introduction

1 Scope

2 Referenced Publications

3 Definitions and Abbreviations

**4 Work Disability Management System**

**5 Planning**

**6 Implementation**

**7 Performance Monitoring, Evaluation,  
and Continual Improvement**

**Core Sections**

## Annexes

- Developing a Business Case for WDM System
- Role of Experts
- Management of Confidential Information
- Implementation Tips
- Systemic Barriers and Unconscious Bias
- Using Evidence-informed Methods, Technologies, Resources and procedures
- Benchmarking and Monitoring Progress Using Quantitative and Qualitative Data
- Case Studies on Reasonable Work Accommodation
- Relevant Legislation

# Skills Development Barriers for Persons with Disabilities and the Promising Practices to Address Them

Recent Study Undertaken for Employment and Social Development Canada

Full study can be found here: [https://www.crwdp.ca/sites/default/files/oles\\_study\\_report\\_-\\_knowledge\\_gaps\\_about\\_skills\\_pwds\\_feb\\_10\\_2023-en\\_for\\_distribution\\_cover.pdf](https://www.crwdp.ca/sites/default/files/oles_study_report_-_knowledge_gaps_about_skills_pwds_feb_10_2023-en_for_distribution_cover.pdf)

# Project Background

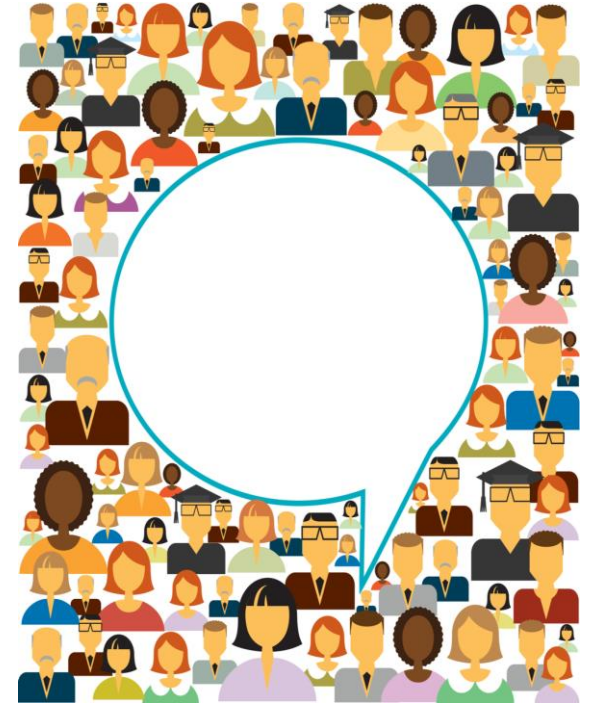
- Three research questions:
  1. What are the main barriers faced by PWDs to increasing their skill levels and further integrating into the labour market?
  2. What are some proven or promising practices or avenues to address these barriers?
  3. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the skill development and labour market barriers for PWDs?



# Summary of What We Heard

## Eight themes/prescriptions identified:

- i. Mainstream training opportunities
- ii. Contextualize skills training
- iii. Value and accommodate different learning styles
- iv. Promote barrier-free hiring approaches
- v. Promote on-the-job training opportunities
- vi. Consider the whole person and their needs
- vii. Provide training for supervisors, managers, and co-workers
- viii. Support careers, mentorship, and advancement



## i. Mainstream training opportunities

- Critical for society to adopt a social model of disability
- Barriers exist at all levels of the educational system due to view that persons with disabilities are unable to work
- Persons with disabilities are often not encouraged, or not given an opportunity to take on part-time jobs, summer jobs or internships in high school and post secondary studies
- Persons with disabilities need to be integrated into the mainstream to avoid them being pigeonholed into programs with low expectations



## ii. Contextualize skills training

- Consider 1) soft skills, 2) accessibility skills, and 3) technical skills
- Focusing solely on advancing skills sets of persons with disabilities is misdirected, as they do not necessarily lack skills—their abilities are on a bell curve like others
- Barriers exist even for the most talented and skilled persons with disabilities
- Better to explore job matching based on existing skills and interests, than skilling up the individuals without a specific job career opportunity in mind





### iii. Value and accommodate different learning styles

- Accommodate different learning styles in educational programs
- Different learning styles should not be viewed as deficits
- A lot of cognitive strengths come with neurodivergences
- Cognitive differences are a gift if they are aligned with the tasks in a particular field

“Their cognitive gifts made them so effective at their jobs”



## iv. Promote barrier-free hiring approaches

- Multiple barriers are created by conventional hiring practices
- Online resume submission platforms bias against persons with disabilities
- Move away from a focus on resumes and interviews
- Consider task-based assessment processes
- Internships are seen as a better way to identify and recruit talent
- For large employers, portfolio approach suggested—having multiple interns concurrently

## v. Promote on-the-job training opportunities

- Focus on experiential learning on-the-job rather than classroom training that mimicked real work context
- Blend educational setting and industry experiences
- Bring industry representatives into the classroom setting
- On-the-job training needs to be in the competitive labour market
- Sheltered workshops in their various forms need to be dismantled



## vi. Consider the whole person and their needs

- Take a “whole person approach”
- Employment cannot work for a person unless all their life needs are addressed
- Consider the skill needs for a lifetime of employment, rather than a specific job
- Promote support circles (team of people who support the individual)



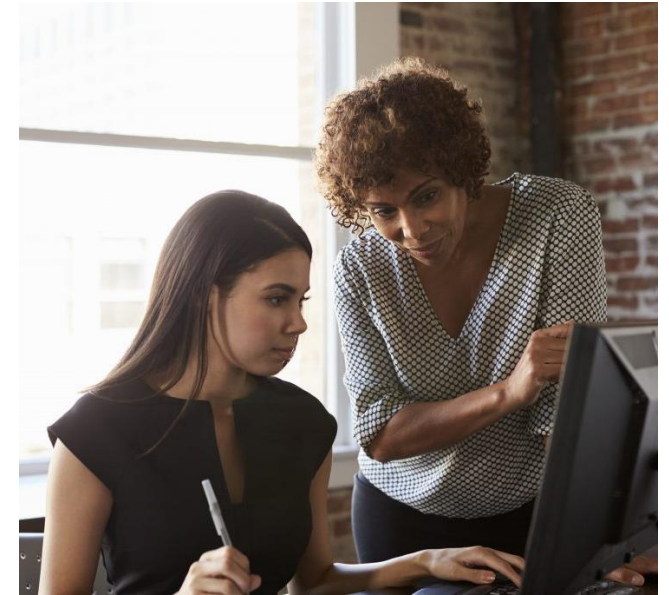
## vii. Provide training for all workplace stakeholders

- Training for supervisors, managers and co-workers is critical
- Could be an afternoon session where people are taught about autism, neurodiversity, and what to expect from persons on the spectrum
- Provide a forum for people to ask questions and get comfortable with diversity
- Mainstream management training on disability inclusion in post-secondary management training programs

*“when supervisors and the department are trained, the experience is phenomenal...it is not as big an undertaking as some might think.”*

## viii. Support careers, mentorship, and advancement

- Programs fail to look to the future and only address the immediate needs of an employer
- Persons with disabilities are often pigeonholed into entry-level positions for life
- Focus on careers not just jobs
- Career pathways may not be linear but should always be progressive



*“How do we shift out of celebrating someone in the same position at McDonald’s for 25 years?...To shifting the narrative from just employment to career development and growth across the lifespan”*

# Programs, Services and Other Resources

A wealth of programs, services and other resources identified that support inclusive employment ... some examples from the 66 identified

1. Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments (GAATES) <http://gaates.org/>
2. The Global Initiative for Inclusive ICT <https://g3ict.org/>
3. Life Sherpa app (developed by Washington DC based group) <https://lifesherpapp.com/>
4. Uptimize platform—web platform with training regime for persons with Autism based in Australia <https://uptimize.com/neurodiversity-to-neuroinclusion/>
5. Neurodiversity Hub—community of practice <https://www.neurodiversityhub.org/>
6. Dandelion Program by DXC Technology (Australia)—program that is based on the ecosystem approach—team of people, consultant, tools [www.dandelionprogram.com](http://www.dandelionprogram.com)
7. Untapped Group—suite of ecosystem services with links to other platforms <https://www.untapped-group.com/>
8. Specialisterne—works with stakeholder around the world to support equal opportunities in the labour market for persons with neurodiversity <https://specialisterne.com/>
9. Autism Co-operative Research Centre (Australia) “myWAY Employability” initiative: <https://www.mywayemployability.com.au>
10. Disability: IN—Resources that empower businesses to achieve *disability* inclusion and equality <https://disabilityin.org/>

# Tim's Story

## CIBC, Senior Disability and Diversity Consultant



Full video can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VkB4OoaUZk>



**I imagine you would want to  
have hired this person if you  
had interviewed him!**





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# Thank You!!

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