**Session details**

**Session name:** Partnerships

**How many people attended:**

**Goal:** Building best possible opportunity to establish partnerships and to make partnerships work best.

**Overview**

Partnerships between stakeholders underscore the strategy

**Main points**

Key aspect of partnership highlighted in the DWC strategy

1. Persons with disabilities are integrated in all aspects of the strategies; “nothing about us, without us”

* Small group; we need to build the size of this group to make sure people are engaged
* Examples of previous
* All partnerships should have a majority of people with disabilities leading the way
* Need for resources and accessibly environment where people with disabilities feel like they have meaningful
* **All partnerships have to enhance the capacity of participants**
* Intergenerational transfer of leadership; emerging leaders needed in the field

1. All levels of government working together; Federal, Provincial, Territorial, First Nations all work together

* Partnerships are the foundation for all pillar
* We need to build trust; break down skepticism
* Build trust horizontally vs. vertical
  + Not all stakeholders within a level will have an understanding of the key issues and solutions
* Need to recognize the missing voices; often the most marginalized can’t have a seat at the table
* Central hub needed for information and communication; which is not owned by one group
* Equal representation of all stakeholders in true and trusting partnerships
* Identify areas where all groups can identify a common benefit; track those areas of common benefit.
* “Change happens at the speed of **trust”**

1. Business and labour working together to implement the strategy and promote inclusion

* Business is complicated; but including business is critical for success
* Don’t just speak to the converted
* Highlight organizations like Air Canada who are doing positive activities
  + Peer-to-peer supports
* Highlight the changing nature of work; ways of people are working are changes
  + Need for cross-sectoral business task force and cross-governmental
  + Unionized, non-unionized, private sector
* Get employers engaged: Chambers of commerce, business professional associations
* By not working with businesses; there is a chance that business will develop solutions without us
* Highlight policy gaps that could impact people with disabilities
* Tangible conversations: Both best practices and worst case/challenges

1. Educational institutions work with people with disabilities and stakeholders to increase employability across the life course
   * Systemic barriers that arise in the traditional school sectors
   * Employment service providers should have access to school systems
   * Need to close the gaps when youth enter the labour market
   * Having service providers and employers working together to build partnerships. These partnerships should be brought into the education sectors
   * Need for resource sharing to pool resources
   * Build skills in the educational sector; building resilience in children, how to manage adversity, how to deal with change, provide positive feedback
   * Getting supports for children should happen early within the public school system; also possibility to get supports outside of the school system
   * Looking for best practices and sharing them with others for organizational learning opportunities
   * Not just about academic; students should get opportunities for recreation and leisure and build partnership with education
2. **& 6.** Researchers work with all stakeholders to identify evidence gaps, document best

practice, evaluation of programs; all partners connect together with support hub

* Sharing best practices in a lot of different ways
* Having standardized approaches to reporting in order for information sharing, evaluation and program development; long-term implications to extract data that can shape policy
  + Challenges to get government and the many organizations involved in this space to standardize reporting
* Social innovation opportunities and enterprises; taking advantage of opportunities within sectors outside of business (e.g., volunteers) and apply to business practice
* Clearing House; Indigenous group that enables information sharing
* Different groups doing the same work but not connecting. This is a big problem. We need mechanisms to share information and best practices
* Create a network of different centres so that everyone know what they are doing
* Information sharing that is forward thinking. Trying to anticipate data that would will need and taking steps to get there
* Building agreement among partners regarding the goals of partnerships

1. Key partnerships reviewed on an ongoing basis to ensure that meaningful

partnerships; highlight exemplary partnerships

* Formalizing partners; partnership acquisition framework which is a clear approaching to assess value of partnership; build a value proposition of participating in activities; all partners need to benefit from
* Define partnerships
* Ability to say no to a partnership
* Looking at outcomes
* What is the one overarching objective of partnership activities
* Recognize the partners that aren’t traditionally involved; example small business and other types of business that may not have been involved
* Build case studies

***Vision*:**

***Short-term elements***

***Medium-term elements***

***Long-term elements***

***Current initiatives***

***Intersectionality***

***The partners involved***

***Gaps***

***Challenges***

***Potential plans***

**Background**

In this session we discussed the role of partnership development within the context of the DWC strategy. Partnership themes that were discussed included

* Role people with disabilities play within partnerships
* Intergovernmental integration
* Role of business and labour
* Collaboration with the educational system
* Research and academic partnerships
* Review of partnerships on an ongoing basis to ensure meaningfulness

**Overarching key points**

* Partnerships are the foundation of the DWC strategy and all related activities moving forward
* All partnerships should provide value for all participants and enhance our ability to deliver programs and make policy change that promote the employment of people with disabilities
  + Also, partners should all be on the same page with regards to the goals and objectives of the partnership
  + Partner should also have the confidence to say no to a partnership
* Meaningful integration of persons with disabilities within all partnerships, especially in leadership roles
* Need for financial, physical and other types of resources so that people living with different disabling health conditions feel like they can play a meaningful role in partnerships
* To effectively build meaningful partnerships we need to make sure all potential participants are invited and provided opportunities
  + We need to recognize the missing voices; often the most marginalized don’t have a seat at the table
  + We also need to make effort to include all levels of business in our partnerships, who are often not part of the process but play a critical role
* Trust was a key element of meaningful partnership development
* Participants mentioned a quote: “Change happens at the speed of **trust”**
* There is a need to build trust and capacity horizontally and vertically across levels of the government
  + For instance, when we are thinking about different levels of government, not all stakeholders will have the same understanding of key barriers and facilitators facing people with disabilities
  + Similarly, different levels of government may have a different understanding of the employment landscape for people with disabilities and may be measuring things differently.
* In building partnerships with business, we need to acknowledge the diversity of workplaces
  + Workplace can differ according to their size, unionization, sector
  + Determine opportunities to engage with all types of business
  + There is a risk that by not engaging with business, they will build interventions in isolation adding to silos
* The importance of engaging business is underscored by the changing labour market
  + We need to understand how occupations are changing and the skills that are required
* There is a lot of value in sharing best and worst practices in our partnerships. These stories need to be shared widely.
  + Business can particularly benefit from learning initiatives being launched by other similar organizations with regards to the employment of people with disabilities.
* Information sharing across partners can enable us to breakdown silos and ensure that different groups who are doing the same work are connecting with one another, and not replicating efforts
* Participants talked about the importance of building partnerships within the educational system to ensure that students have access to job skills necessary to succeed in the labour market
* When we think about the school-to-work transition there is a requirement to build programs that integrate the insights of diverse partners including business, sport and leisure, recreation, academia
* The role of partnerships can be beneficial for research, program development, monitoring and evaluation
* Partnerships can enable standardized approaches in terms of reporting, and common indicators and outcomes measures can enable us
  + Identify long-term implications from data and shape policy and practice

**Three recommendations:**

1. “Nothing about us, without us” must be the core of all partnerships. People with disabilities should have leadership and decision-making opportunities. The goal should be that partnership activities are tailored to the needs of diverse people living with disabilities.
2. Create a process to Formalize partnership development. Utilizing a partnership acquisition framework to build a value proposition participating. A value acquisition framework will enable stakeholders to approach to assess costs and benefits of participation.
3. Create a network hub made up of all stakeholders. The goal will be to ensure that everyone knows about initiatives, research and plans. Through a network hub we can build common approaches to monitoring and evaluation and developing common metrics, sharing best and worst practices.

**Who is volunteering and how:**