

Backgrounder



It's Time . . . A Call to Action

It's Time ... A Call to Action

The Community Career Centre (CCC) is a collaborative effort, begun in February 2000, by businesses, labour, school communities, government departments, and community organizations to support the career development of youth.

Our common goal is to help youth develop the skills they need to continually make effective career decisions throughout their lives.

Without financial support, the Community Career Centre will shut down by September 27, 2002. This will happen in spite of positive evaluation results, coupled with dynamic community involvement and a shared commitment to help young people develop effective career plans.

(See flyer, "Look at the Company We Keep!")

A funding proposal, **It's Time, A provincial proposal to collaborate on addressing the career development needs of youth, in-school and out-of-school, employed and unemployed, "at risk" and not "at risk"**, has been submitted to Human Resources Development Canada, July 18, 2002, with no response to date. Letters requesting support and financial assistance have been written to: Premier Roger Grimes, Hon. Judy Foote, Department of Education, Hon. Sandra Kelly, Department of Youth Services and Post Secondary Education, Hon. Ralph Wiseman, Department of Human Resources and Employment, and Hon. Gerry Byrne, MP, Newfoundland and Labrador's representative in the federal cabinet and Minister Responsible for ACOA.

The quote below summarizes where we are in terms of career development support:

"...There is a multitude of research...that shows we need to DO more to support our youth in addressing their career development needs as they grow into young adults and make the transition from school to employment and/or post secondary educational opportunities.

In spite of the overwhelming evidence, very little gets done. The usual provincial response to a request for additional support is that "we have no money" and/or "we have given all we got to the school boards". The school boards' response is often "we didn't get enough from the Department of Education, we can barely maintain our existing programs". The federal government's response is usually "we would love to help but educa-

tion is a provincial responsibility". These kind of responses, no matter how legitimate, tend to lessen the pressure on any one party to take a leadership role in developing a more responsible and collaborative approach to helping our youth address their care development needs."

(Direct Quotes, p.4) (see flyer, "Direct Quotes")

Change and Challenge

Change and Challenge - A Strategic Economic Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador, stated in 1992 that: "Education is the key to economic development...the education curriculum should be more focused, more relevant and more challenging; ...there is a tremendous need for better guidance and career counseling." That statement is even more true ten years later. **It's Time.**

Look at some of the indicators (see flyer, Career Development...Vital Statistics) that make it blatantly clear much more needs to be done to support our youth in their career development:

- A report on high school graduates, showed 64% of the 2001 graduates went on to some form of post secondary education while 36% of the 2001 graduates did not go on to any form of post secondary education. These figures do not include those students who dropped out of high school (estimates range from 11% to 19%), or who failed to meet provincial graduation requirements, or who may have graduated later in the fall through upgrading. Those students who do go on to post secondary education are dropping out in significant numbers.
- Research indicates a graduation rate at both Memorial University, and the College of the North Atlantic to be lower than 50% for many of their programs. (Census Data 1996, Post Secondary Indicators, 1998 Report).
- Research also indicates that many of those who fail to complete their post-secondary programs felt they were not given enough career development support and direction prior to enrollment at post-secondary educational institutions.

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- Statistics Canada reports that this province's youth (15-24 years) unemployment rate over a twenty year period (1981-2000) averaged out to be 28%. In June, 2002 it was at 27 %.
- A number of provinces have career education courses and work experience/community service as compulsory graduation requirements for all high school student. Only 27% of high school graduates, 2000-2001, completed a career education course...only 11% completed a cooperative education program
- According to a 1998 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Report, only 17% of high school students in our province were able to obtain part time employment while still in high school...83% leave high school without any exposure to the workplace.
- A Statistics Canada Report, 2002 estimated that 11% (855 young people) of our high school students drop out of school before graduation. This same report indicated that these drop outs were less likely than other young people to have been exposed to career and job skills courses while in high school.
- Adding to the challenges of personal and career development is the number of our children in who live in poverty. In 2000, we had 25, 330 children (0-17 years) living in families receiving social assistance throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

One must conclude that these and other indicators reflect a **"career development crisis."**

Where do we go from here?

The response, as in any crisis, to meeting these kind of personal and career development challenges has to be immediate and a collaborative effort involving the entire community.

We realize financial resources are limited and the importance of maximizing those we do have. Our proposal, we and others feel, maximizes these resources in addressing our career development challenges.

There is a high level of frustration amongst many of our community stakeholders with the significant lack of career development resources, particularly in our K-12 system, to help young people with making effective career decisions. People are shocked when they review the statistics and challenges young people face as outlined above, and yet we struggle to obtain minimum funding support to provide them with assistance.

This frustration is heightened even more when one considers

the richness and disproportionate amount of resources that are allocated to other areas of personal development. Let me preface my following remark by expressing our unanimous support for French Language development throughout our Province and our appreciation for jurisdictional responsibilities. However, there is something drastically wrong, when the Government of Canada is able to support the employment of seven (7) full time Program Development Specialists, one(1) full time manager, and one(1)full time secretary in our Department of Education's Language Programs Section/Section des Programmes de Langues. (www.gov.nf.ca/edu/dir/dept/pd.htm) while at the same, there is not one (1) full time person responsible for the career development of young Canadians in our schools throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

We are not suggesting with the above comments a reduction or a redirecting of funds away from the Language Program Section. It's because of this very significant financial commitment of resources over the past thirty years that French Language Programs have flourished throughout our Province.

We are suggesting that the **"career development crisis"** that we face today has been contributed to by our lack of collaborative action in the past. Not enough has been done or is being done to address these significant issues that have far reaching consequences on the lives of our youth, our Province, and our Country. For the sake of our young people and their future well being and the well being of our Province and Country, we ask our provincial and federal leaders to examine ways and means of providing similar support for the career development of our young people.

We need an action orientated approach to build a common vision, a shared commitment, and the provision of adequate resources to help our young people on their career development journeys.

We believe the Community Career Centre has a strategic role to play in tackling these challenges by providing our youth with increased direction and support they need to make more effective career decisions resulting in maximizing their full potential as human beings and as contributing members of our communities.

Maintaining and expanding the Community Career Centre initiative is a critical step forward.

It's Time.

*Visit the Community Career
Centre Website at:*

www.communitycc.ca