



# Social Return On Investment (SROI) Introduction to Supported Employment 2009-2010

## Fast FACTS:

In 2009, the Yorkton Branch of the Saskatchewan Abilities Council delivered a pilot project as part of the overall Employment Services Division range of services.

### By the Numbers:

- 8 youth enrolled in the program
- 7 youth completed the program

### Intended Outcomes

- 7 youth increased their skills,
- 7 youth avoided applying for or no longer required social assistance
- 7 youth increased their earnings by securing employment and becoming contributing members of society

### Unintended Outcomes:

- Participants developed meaningful friendships
- Participants felt reduced stress and increased level of personal well being
- Participants had access to support services that allowed them to transition out of school when they were 18 years old vs. 21 years old.
- Parents assisted in the development of participant employment and community outcomes which significantly reduced the stress and anxiety of future planning for an adult child with a disability
- Teachers felt more supported and reallocated time to academics vs. work experiences

### Additional information:

*The Saskatchewan Abilities Council works closely with people of varying abilities to assist them to reach their optimal potential.*

## FACT

**Youth with disabilities are amongst the most marginalized and poorest of the world's youth. Although they face the same issues as their non-disabled peers, societal prejudices, barriers and ignorance further exacerbate their concerns.**  
– Youth at the United Nations – 2010 [www.un.org](http://www.un.org)

### Background:

Students with disabilities and their families experience anxiety and stress during the difficult transition from school to adult life. Prior to the Introduction to Supported

Employment program there was no link between the schools, communities and employment services. This resulted in lack of supports, services and post secondary opportunities for young adults with disabilities. These individuals often applied for social assistance to meet their basic needs and lived below poverty levels.

Along with their families they attempted to determine which community services would best match their needs. Parents and youth found it very difficult to channel through the complicated processes and protocols of accessing agencies that could facilitate community connections. As a result, years went by with young adults not receiving the same opportunities as their peers, leading to segregation and an increase in negative stigmas. The segregation and the stigmas associated with a disability often led to decreased self-esteem, lack of social relationships, lack of skills needed to become independent and loss of hope for the possibility of having the same opportunities as their peers. In particular, it is our experience that lack of smooth transition to employment services during high school years led to increasing number of individuals presenting with multi-barriers. As adults, these

individuals often need multiple interventions and a longer period of time to become job ready. The interventions required include social assistance, mental health programs, addiction services and health care services.

The three way partnership was developed with a focus on the needs of young adults with disabilities leaving the school system and entering the labor market. The program connects individuals to post-secondary employment opportunities and community supports. The goal of the pilot

project was to bridge the gap between schools, employment and community based services.

### Participant Overview:

Young adults with disabilities long for the same outcomes in their adult life as their peers. They want to establish meaningful relationships, have a social network that provides them opportunities to leave their home and “go out with friends or coworkers”, to become employed and eventually “move out of their parents home.” Often these outcomes appear to be out of reach when they watch their peers leave school as they graduate grade 12 and turn 18, while they continue to attend until they are 21 years old due to lack of seamless supports.

### Theory of Change

If young adults with disabilities participate in learning opportunities that enhance their life skills, personal management skills and employability skills they will be more likely to secure and maintain employment and avoid a lifetime of dependency on social assistance programs.

# SROI Case Study: Introduction to Supported Employment Program

## Starting from a Foundation of Hope

Parents and teachers have expressed frustration and stress over lack of services available to ensure that the young adults described above have the same opportunities as their peers.

Through multiple consultations it was determined that “just getting a job” would give these youth hope for their future. Once they were employed, they could be more independent, meet new friends and began thinking about less dependent living arrangements.

The initial program participants were somewhat apprehensive about having the opportunity to become employed and yet they could not wait to see their first pay cheque. Upon finding employment and successfully transitioning into adult life these participants became role models for future young adults, giving them hope that they too could become independent. The feeling of hope was also experienced by parents whose worries about their child’s future were reduced, knowing that there was alternative program to high school and adult day program.

## Social Value Created for Participant

The participants who attended the program reported improved personal well being as a result of learning how to increase their self-esteem and confidence. One of the most valuable and yet unintended outcomes for these young adults was the opportunity to make new friends, meet people that they did not know before and create meaningful relationships with them. While in the classroom setting, participants learned vocational and interpersonal skills which they later applied to a real work setting in the form of a work experience. By preparing for employment and becoming “job ready” young adults were able to meet employers’ expectations and demands and were hired by local employers. Once employed the Introduction to Supported Employment staff

continued to provide support in the form of job coaching or one on one coffee meetings. The initial and on-going support contributed to a significant decrease in the anxiety and stress that young adults experienced prior to starting the program.

### QUOTE

“Without this program I would honestly have stayed in school until I was 21, and then I don’t know what I would have done or where I would ended up.” J.W.

## Social Value Created for Stakeholders

The young adults were the targeted beneficiaries of the program. When the program was designed in partnership with both Christ the Teacher and Good Spirit School Division the outcomes that were to be achieved all focused on the needs of those beneficiaries. During the initial year of operation it became evident that there were multiple indirect beneficiaries that experienced value and change as a result of the program implementation and the outcomes experienced by the participants.

Parents reported reduced anxiety and stress as a result of learning about supports and opportunities available, and from participating in the decision making process. When students received supported employment/transition services from the ISE program teachers were able to reallocate their time to academic activities vs. supported employment activities. Seven young adults became employed and financially independent and the indirect impact on the Ministry of Social Services was a reduced number of applications for social assistance.

Although seven young adults may not be a significant number, it is important to mention in order to track the long term impact if more students had access to a program such as this one. The school divisions worked closely with the Saskatchewan Abilities Council to ensure equal opportunities for all their students. These increased opportunities led to students leaving school at an earlier age. Increased programming also resulted in more choices for young adults and reduced enrollment in Day Program services.

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This profile represents an 18 year old male who resides with his family and attends the grade 12 Alternative Education Program. He is diagnosed with Autism and has been described to exhibit mental illness symptoms although no formal assessment of the latter has been conducted.

His teachers reported that he lacked coping skills, social skills and was unable to express his emotions. Joe had no friends in school and preferred to be alone. The school made arrangements for him to complete all his academics in the library where the noise level was quiet and there were no interruptions or distractions. Joe communicated in a written form and in the three years that he had attended this school he had spoken only to his resource teacher, and this was very rare and required emergency and crisis topics. In his spare time at school, Joe liked to read books about serial killers and draw pictures of superheroes.

When Joe first came to ISEP, he refused to greet anyone in the building. He walked with his hands in his sleeves so that he would not have to touch anything and kept his head down. Initially, Joe sat at the back of the room and did not communicate with anyone. He felt that the class was a waste of time and to express his anger he broke multiple pencils that he brought with him. Within a month, Joe expressed that all he wanted was to have a job in the community that paid him, preferably at the Co-op Grocery Store.

Joe attended a work experience that was unpaid. The purpose of the work experience was to increase his stamina, skills and awareness of a real work setting. Joe did not like his placement. The employer's evaluation indicated that Joe had some definite

strengths and areas that needed improvement. He returned for the second part of his classroom program, where he continued to learn about the expectations of work and specifically the skills that required improvement. Joe's second work experience was arranged at the Co-op Grocery Store.

The employer described him as punctual, detail oriented, focused, well groomed and very polite. It was decided that he would be a great asset to their organization. Joe attended a job interview for a Produce Stock Clerk. He was the successful candidate and was offered paid employment. Joe has maintained this employment for over a year now.

## QUOTE

*"For the first time in a long time he smiles and seems to have a purpose in life. He cannot wake up early enough to get to work and we cannot thank the staff here enough for assisting him in making that change".*

- Parent of a participant

## QUOTE

*"...would like to hire ten more young, responsible men like him."*

- Employer

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## Calculating the SROI of the Program

Financial Proxy	Value per person	Quantity	Notes
Value of increased personal well being	\$ 2,750.00	7	Contingent valuation with participants, staff and funders. Median of the responses was used for FP Value.
Cost of membership of a social club/network	\$ 270.00	7	Annual fees for a bowling league in Yorkton. <a href="http://www.yorktonbowlarena.com/YBC.html">http://www.yorktonbowlarena.com/YBC.html</a>
Average of income earned by participants	\$ 7388.00/per year	7	Saskatchewan Abilities Council records show each participant's hours of work and rate of pay in the client file/database.
Cost of coping skills/stress management workshop for youth	\$ 195.00	7	Enterprise Saskatchewan subsidized fees for a 2 day PX 2 workshop that teaches young adults how their mind works and how to make positive changes through affirmations and positive thinking/goal setting <a href="http://www.seda.sk.ca/images/file/e_Youth-Leadership-Fund.pdf">http://www.seda.sk.ca/images/file/e_Youth-Leadership-Fund.pdf</a>
Cost of coping skills/stress management workshop for adults	\$ 110.00	4	Current subsidized fee for a Mental Health Matters workshop delivered through Yorkton Mental Health Drop In Centre as reported by Executive Director (yorktonmentalhealthdropin@gmail.com)
Cost reallocation of teacher resources	\$ 9,465.00	3	Teachers vary in salaries to account for this difference we used an average weekly salary <a href="https://www.stf.sk.ca/portal.jsp?Sy3uQUnbK9L2RmSZs02CjV6+6OHjz12FDs7D0hVvz7oc=F">https://www.stf.sk.ca/portal.jsp?Sy3uQUnbK9L2RmSZs02CjV6+6OHjz12FDs7D0hVvz7oc=F</a> and multiplied it by 20% (increased time in the classroom) and then multiplied by 40 weeks of school to determine annual amount
Cost avoidance of social assistance funding	\$ 6,060.00	7	Monthly cost of Saskatchewan Social Assistance per disabled adult multiplied by 12months. <a href="http://www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca/SAP-rateCard.pdf">http://www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca/SAP-rateCard.pdf</a>
Cost reallocation of student funding for the school division	\$ 5,000.00	4	One teacher and one educational assistant receive a combined salary of \$75,000 to work with 15 students this equates to \$5,000 per student as reported by the local School Division
Cost avoidance of participant day program fees	\$ 11,035.00	3	The Day Program operates on a \$684,177 annual budget to support 62 clients this equates to \$11,035/per participant as per contract agreement between Community Living Services Division and the Yorkton Branch Sask. Abilities Council.

**For more information on social return on investment (SROI)  
Contact [sroi@abilitiescouncil.sk.ca](mailto:sroi@abilitiescouncil.sk.ca)**

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## Impact

Total value created after one year is \$198,581. However, SROI evaluative analysis measures the overall impact of the program and it is calculated as the financial proxy multiplied by the quantity of the outcomes minus any attribution, displacement and deadweight. This calculation has been carried out for each row of the impact map.

Therefore, the initial impact of the investment (\$56,360) when the above three factors are considered and subtracted from the present value for year one plus a discount rate of 3.0% is applied the value created equals to \$159,165. This results in a Social Return on Investment of 2:83:1 meaning that for every dollar invested \$2.83 of value is created after the initial year of operation.

It is important to acknowledge that some outcomes will last beyond the initial year and after the activity has stopped. Based on organizational benchmarks and empirical research we anticipate that for this particular project the duration of some of the outcomes (increased earnings, reduced stress and anxiety, avoidance of further school programming or alternative day programs, and applying for social assistance) will be up to three years. We have applied a drop off rate to each of these outcomes to account for the fact that some stakeholders may not experience the same benefits as the initial year of activity.

	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Present Value Created	\$159,165.00	\$ 93,176.59	\$ 68,230.18	\$ 320,571.00

The total present value created over a three-year duration frame equals to \$320,571.

This results in a Social Return on Investment of \$5.69 for every dollar invested.