

# **Provincial Poverty Reduction Strategy**

## **CETABC Post-Secondary Perspectives, March 30, 2018**

### Background

The Continuing Education and Training Association of BC (CETABC) is pleased to submit this Brief as part of the provincial poverty reduction strategy consultations. CETABC provides a forum for continuing education, contract training, and workforce training and development in the Province, representing 15 member institutions and five Regions. The purpose of the Association is to share expertise and resources, build professional and systems capacity, and pursue joint ventures. One of its main objectives is to work proactively with government, industry, and non-governmental organizations to advance lifelong learning, continuing education and contract training services in educational institutions, the workplace, and the community. We believe that the post-secondary sector plays a pivotal role in the socioeconomic development of its regions, delivering education and training that builds on regional assets and contributes to the economic resiliency of both individuals and communities. Through creative partnerships and retraining initiatives, CETABC member institutions work in partnership with government, business and industry to deal with periods of rapid social, economic and cultural change—incorporating technology and innovation into economic development activity, as well as offering workforce retraining and development to deal with downsizing and closures in BC’s major resource-based industries. The resultant, responsive education and training solutions can contribute toward providing a pathway out of poverty for community members and support the survival of rural regions.

### Strategic Post-Secondary Impacts

It is generally accepted that successful poverty reduction strategies bring key sectors together to find interconnected solutions. Integrated approaches involve a broad range of policy issues, including access to affordable housing, preventative health, education and literacy learning, sustainable employment with a living wage, childcare and parenting supports, addictions treatment, and a network of community services. Our Brief will focus on the main pillars that post-secondary institutions can impact at individual, community, and regional levels, namely: essential skills (literacy and numeracy), employability and job readiness skills, targeted skills training for sustainable employment, and education pathways to recognized credentials.

### Best Practices/Innovative Education & Training Models

The following project-based examples are some of the innovative training solutions, partnership ventures, and capacity-building initiatives that CETABC member institutions are delivering to facilitate economic and social inclusion for marginalized community members. Four programs are profiled, within four distinct BC regions, to emphasize the cross-sectoral work that post-secondary institutions are engaged in to contribute to sustainable livelihoods and regional economic development.

## Vancouver Island/Coast Region (North Island College & Camosun College)

### *Tofino Container Housing Project Crew Training: Partnership between Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation and North Island College (Alberni Clayoquot Region)*

In April 2016, over 20 agency partners in the Alberni-Clayoquot Region participated in round table discussions facilitated by Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council. Representatives from industry, education, First Nation, and community-service organizations came together to explore the feasibility of designing a pilot project to convert shipping containers into workforce and community housing in Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation (TFN) territory, on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. TFN's vision was to use this project-based learning opportunity to build a locally-trained, skilled workforce with certification in the construction trades. The Tofino Container Housing (TCH) Training Project was launched in August 2016, with joint funding provided by Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, Canada Mortgage and Housing, and Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council. North Island College offered the three-week Project Crew Training Program, at its Port Alberni campus, to orient community members to the pilot project and to offer introductory trades training in four construction trade areas (carpentry, welding, electrical, and pipe-fitting). Training was provided in worksite safety, equipment/tool use, industry-recognized essential skills, short-term industry certificates, and applied basic woodworking, metal work, and teamwork skills.

In addition to enhancing participants' immediate employability skills to work as general labourers, the training project also served as the starting point for mapping educational pathways into certified trades, enabling community members to work towards apprenticeship training in their chosen fields—with the ultimate aim of building the Nations' capacity for developing their local workforce for current and future housing development projects. Building on the successes of the TCH Training Project (video can be accessed at: [TCHProject2016](#)), project partners are now embarking on the next phases of apprenticeship training by offering Level 1 Carpentry Training at the TyHistanis Reserve, Tofino. Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation is working in collaboration with North Island College, Camosun College, and Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council to offer Level 1 Carpentry Apprenticeship Training for experienced work-crew members, as well as new workforce entrants, in a supported-entry, apprenticeship-level training program. This Carpentry Career Pathways Program is supported by funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training (ACBTP Funding).

## Kootenay Region (College of the Rockies)

With access to one-time, government funding, the College of the Rockies (COTR) developed and delivered the *Skills to Employment Program* for 12 cognitively disabled students in three communities (totalling 36 participants). The Creston and Golden programs experienced successful student outcomes, and the Cranbrook program is currently underway. In Creston, the six-month program included foundational skills, as well as specific work skills targeted for the local economy (primarily agriculture-focused employment). A full-time faculty instructor was hired, and a half-time assistant provided individualized support for students with cognitive and behavioural challenges. In addition, COTR partnered with the local WorkBC office to provide job coaches and to oversee three, 2-week job placements throughout the six month delivery. The

businesses and companies agreed to accept job placements at a Chamber of Commerce meeting during Disabilities Week, with follow-up support provided by COTR and WorkBC staff.

Project funds were used to pay the job coaches, and the WorkBC contract for disabled training (federal funds) was used to sponsor tuition for 75% of the students. Several of these students secured long-term employment as a result of the program's work placements, and some were able to advance toward Independent Living. Colleges are well-positioned in their communities to develop meaningful curriculum and delivery models, and also to work with local employers, Chambers of Commerce, and WorkBC offices to achieve successful and sustainable employment outcomes. One of the strongest features of the program was the flexibility in adapting the training focus and partnering agencies to meet the specific needs, skills gaps, and labour market demands in Golden and Cranbrook. COTR has been approached to extend these programs, in both Creston and Golden, for this target group of clients; however, without ongoing government funding, it will be difficult to offer additional intakes, or new programs, in these communities. Successful student outcomes make a strong case for ongoing program funding. An integrated poverty reduction strategy requires ongoing training funds for addressing special needs, as opposed to one-time or project-based funds. In the long run, these ongoing funding commitments will have meaningful and long-term impacts.

#### Mainland/Southwest Region (Douglas College)

*Education Reboot* is a transitional training program for youth at risk, between the ages of 18 and 20 years, who have not graduated from high school. The program has been running successfully at Douglas College for the past three years. The goal of the program is to motivate participants to complete their dogwood diploma and then transition into post-secondary education, other training, and/or employment. The innovative program model includes:

- Hope-centered career development to identify potential careers and educational pathways;
- Essential skills coaching to build the foundational skills required for these careers and pathways; and
- Exposure to the post-secondary education environment to build participant confidence in, and enthusiasm for, achieving higher education.

Participants meet, for 2.5 hours twice a week, with an experienced career development and essential skills facilitator who leads them in skill-building exercises, personality assessments, and career research. Faculty and staff from the College visit the group to tell them about the services they provide and the programs they teach, while also leading group tours of their labs and other facilities. Participants also spend 30 hours online doing relevant assignments and learning how to navigate the College's learning management system. Participants receive credit for one high school course, upon completion.

As a result of the partnership between Douglas College and participating School Districts, *Education Reboot* successfully reorients youth from associating education with impediments and failure to see a clear path of potential and opportunity, thus improving their own economic

prospects and those of the province. Participants report that, without the program, many of them would never have returned to school. They could have been relegated to a demographic with a 67% employment rate for men and a staggering 41% employment rate for women (Stats Can report on young men and women without a high school diploma). Instead, they have rejoined the educational stream to experience better life, learning, and employment prospects.

In each year of the program, research provided by the College's Humanities and Social Sciences faculty has shown radical improvements in students' academic self-efficacy and confidence. Anecdotal evidence to date also points to positive impacts on graduation rates.

### North Coast/Nechako Region (Northwest Community College)

Northwest Community College (NWCC) partnered with Ksan Society in Terrace to obtain a Co-op Community Spaces Grant. Over the past two years, NWCC has had the pleasure of partnering with Ksan Society, in particular Ksan Place (a multi-service community centre), on numerous initiatives around food security, work experience, training programs, and hands-on experiential learning.

NWCC has collaborated with Ksan Place on several program initiatives (Professional Cook, Intro to Trades and Construction Essentials). NWCC's Professional Cook students have prepared community lunches on an ongoing basis for Ksan Place, and NWCC has sponsored various community dinners prepared by the Professional Cook students, including the very successful Canada 150 BBQ that was funded through the Terrace Community Foundation (serving nearly 400 community members). In addition, Ksan Place has acted as a volunteer work-experience site for NWCC students who require work-based hours to complete their Professional Cook 1 and 2 certifications. Intro to Trades was funded by the ITA through the Canada/BC Jobs grant to provide a pathway to trades programs for students who were non-EI clients. Ksan Society received funding through the Rural Dividends Grant for the Construction Essentials program. Both programs focused on providing students with skills for future education or employment. Students completed hands-on construction experience by working on the extensive renovations to the Ksan Place building. Several students continued to volunteer with the organization after program completion, because of their profound connection to Ksan Place.

All of these partnership projects have been extremely rewarding and have benefitted NWCC students, Ksan clients, and the overall community. NWCC and Ksan Society are connected as like-minded, service-oriented organizations that are committed to community capacity-building to ensure that community members have access to the essentials of food, shelter and social services, as well as education and employment opportunities. Through our continued partnerships, many of our NWCC students' access Ksan Society services and many of our students' education has been enriched by community-based learning opportunities.