

The ***Social Services Sector Human Resource Summit*** was hosted in partnership by the Federation of Child and Family Services (now known as the Federation of Community Social Services of BC) (FCSS) and the Government Non Profit Initiative (GNPI) on May 6 and 7, 2009 at the Century Plaza Hotel in Vancouver.

The 52 participants that attended the two-day Summit, spanning frontline practitioners to senior leaders; regional, cultural, and demographic diversity; and government, non-profit, and union representation (see Appendix A for list of attendees).

The objective of the Summit was to begin to develop a strategic human resource plan for the social service sector as well as to discuss overall recruitment and retention issues facing the community social services workforce. It was emphasized that this would be an iterative process, with further stakeholder engagement to ensure that strategies will continue to be representative of the multiple perspectives within the sector.

DAY ONE:

The Summit began by setting context for the discussions and familiarizing attendees with the work of FCSS and GNPI. The morning was predominantly spent by sharing the research conducted over the past twelve months by FCSS with regards to the first stage of FCSS's Recruitment and Retention project: "*Understanding the Phenomenon*". Some of the key findings of the research included:

- Approximately 79% of the community social service sector is comprised of women
- The Community Social Services sector in B.C. is experiencing a skills-shortage, but has not yet faced a labour-shortage
- There are a number of factors that influence the motivations of people to join, stay, or leave the social services workforce. For example, the community social services sector offers work experience that has been identified as meaningful and satisfying. However, the average salary in the community social services is \$33,160 compared to the BC average of \$38,792.
- With respect to potential sources of labour for the social service workforce, there are approximately 650,000 people (22% of the available B.C. labour supply pool) who are not yet participating in the labour market but who could possibly participate. This group is predominantly represented by 'traditionally barriered' groups: women, persons with disabilities, at-risk youth, Aboriginal people, and immigrants.
- Some of the barriers facing immigrant workers precluding them from full labour market participation have been identified as a lack of recognition towards post secondary credentials and previous work experience outside of Canada.

Guests participated in an appreciative inquiry exercise before the lunch break to help illuminate the value of the work and the importance of having a skilled and sustainable work and volunteer force in the social sector.

The afternoon centered around *World Café* style discussions that examined the themes of joining, staying, and leaving / reconnecting to the social services sector. Specifically,

summit participants were asked to brainstorm strategies and actions and discuss factors associated with attracting employees and volunteers to join the sector, retaining people within the sector, and how to leave the door open for those exiting the sector. There were nine different tables (with three tables addressing the issue of joining, staying, or leaving / re-connecting) of which guests rotated to three different tables for 25 minute discussions. Participants were encouraged to speak to each of the three themes, but were supported to speak on the same subject if they felt so inclined. This process enabled summit participants to interact with a number of different people for rich and thoughtful discussions. These conversations formed the foundation for a strategic human resource plan for the social services. Emerging themes and a summary of findings are presented in Appendix B and D.

DAY TWO:

The second day of the Summit began with an enriching dialogue around the scope of the strategic human resource plan. Although the defined scope of the plan was not agreed upon, there was a general consensus that strategies and actions should focus on the social service sector within the context of the non-profit sector. Additionally, the scope of the strategic human resource plan should remain cognizant of the work and volunteer force within other subsectors of the overall non profit sector as well as other social organizations or affiliations (including the B.C. Government). It was articulated that **collaboration** is key, and was recognized that strategies should not be formed in isolation from other sub-sectors.

A number of guest speakers presented on other key resources and collaborators including the work of the Labour Market Information Branch at the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, the Community Social Service Employers Association (CSSEA), the Labour Market Partnership, and the National HR Council for the Voluntary and Non-profit Sector.

The remainder of the second day was spent in small groups, discussing the themes and strategies developed at the previous day's World Café discussions. There were six different break-out groups: one for joining, one for staying, one for leaving/ re-connecting, and three groups addressing overarching strategies. Each group reviewed the data collected from the previous day, and were instructed to list their top priority items. It was up to the discretion of each group to define how they prioritized actions, however, guests were reminded to consider factors such as resources required, feasibility, and impact.

As a result of the group discussions, key priority items were listed under the themes of joining, staying, leaving and overarching strategies. A "dot.mocracy" voting exercise was used to further prioritize the strategies posted around the room. Each participant

was given eight votes – four of the votes had to be used in each of the four themes, and the final four dots could be used on any strategy within any theme (however, votes for the same strategy was not permitted). See Appendix C for priorities and voting results.

The top voted priorities and themes include wages and benefits, marketing and public education, immigrant engagement and recruitment, Aboriginal engagement and recruitment, leadership support and development, and policy support to help organizations become more flexible and adaptable to the needs of its employees and volunteers.

The Social Services Sector HR Summit served as the first of many important conversations that brought together a broad range of diverse stakeholders to discuss workforce issues. The Summit concluded on a positive note with a commitment to ongoing collaboration, lots of goodwill and new relationships developed around the tables, and recognition that we are moving in the right direction towards helping the social service sector sustain and further build a strong, healthy, and skilled workforce. Strategies developed at the Summit will go towards informing HR planning on multiple levels in BC, as well informing priority areas for funding opportunities for labour market developments and partnerships.

**Social Service Sector Human Resource Summit
Summary of Proceedings**

APPENDIX A: List of Attendees

FIRST	LAST	ORG	EMAIL
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Social Service Sector Human Resource Summit Summary of Proceedings

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APPENDIX B: DAY 1 THEMES AND STRATEGIES FROM WORLD CAFÉ DISCUSSIONS

Overarching themes and strategies:

Theme	Proposed Strategies
Wages and benefits	Wage equity strategies
	Benefits strategies
	Pension strategies
Good HR/LR practices throughout the sector	HR management information systems
	Consistency in the sector re: HR/LR management; high standards, e.g. template for components, policies, procedures
	Benchmark jobs
	Career planning, performance reviews, etc
	Succession planning
Public awareness Social marketing and branding	Persistent and long term marketing strategy
	Focus on marketing the value, importance and utility of the sector, competitive alternative, contemporary, attractive, results for citizens and communities
	Develop a triple bottom line model of the sector, profile contribution to all three.
	Engage staff as 'marketers' of the sector within their circles of influence, e.g. during annual performance reviews ask for evidence of how they have 'sold the sector's value
Marketing the sector as a desirable place to work	Market the transferability of skills acquired in the sector and their value in the new economy, e.g. alliance building, collaboration, influence management, communications
	Emphasize professionalism, support and market sector work as a profession.
Collective action; Clusters of agencies working together	Build structure/capacity/alliances to develop and implement joint strategies
	Joint recruitment, e.g. shared casual labour pool
	Multi-agency/cross-sector succession planning and development
	Joint training and development programs
	Professional association/ accreditation or community planning HR Council for sector
	Definition of sector and sub-sectors
	Regional Councils to promote/market opportunities (e.g. job fairs)
	Ensure mechanisms for engagement within a sector when developing unifying strategies (get buy-in)
Positive culture of the sector and positive organizational culture in agencies (will influence choices about joining, staying, reconnecting)	Leadership development
	Organizational development (creating healthy and positive workplaces)
	Create a supportive environment for staff who are in their own healing process, recognize the impacts and provide support for vicarious traumatization.
	Clinical supervision is a given
	Monitor employee engagement and respond to issues and opportunities
Recognize life course stages in strategies	Develop age cohort strategies
Increase aboriginal and immigrant opportunities and representation	Recognize qualifications
	Develop specific marketing and recruitment strategies
	Develop proactive links with representative organizations

Social Service Sector Human Resource Summit Summary of Proceedings

JOINING

Theme	Proposed Strategies
Exposure incentives	Interns/co-op programs
	Pay student loans/ credits for volunteering against student loans (follow Rural Physicians model)
	Educational development program (1 year post-secondary for 1 year commitment to the sector/org)
	Subsidized/paid mentoring
	Volunteer opportunities
	Job Fairs/ field trips in educational institutions
	Day cares
	Mandatory volunteer hours – high school
	Opportunity to build networking/ influence management skills
	Map out career path/ educational pathways (e.g. booklets, stories of individuals)
	Benchmarking salaries and benefits
	Leadership Exchanges between the public sector and social/non-profit sector
	Pension opportunities
	Youth initiatives/engagement
	Buddy programs for youth – e.g. grandparenting programs (living history)
	Central website for job opportunities in the sector/ standardization of job descriptions
Create family-friendly volunteer opportunities	
Regionally based reps with orgs in the sector	
Marketing Strategy/ Branding	Demographic targeted marketing (youth, mid-career, nearing retirement, women, men, Aboriginal groups, immigrants, etc.)
	You can be your own boss
	Peer to peer marketing
	Promote core values of sector
	Need to bring clarity definition to what we are promoting
	Create stronger professional support groups
	Promote professional careers in sector (e.g. lawyers, accountants)
	Promotion of the richness of diversity of work
	Market positions as stepping stones
	Sectors support families/communities in crisis
	New term – social economy
	Live our values
	Encourage volunteerism at a young age
	Leverage technology and methods for attracting youth (e.g. Facebook)
	Focus on skills/ competencies
	Appealing via diversity
	Create your own job
	Address first five year issue
	Promote economic value of sector – quantify the value of the asset; asset = investment that grows
	Shift focus from we help disadvantaged to we support vibrant communities
	Reduce stigma of employee burnout in the sector
	Promote diverse type of work (not just service delivery but financial, HR, technical, etc.)
	Marketing the fit – unique working conditions in the sector
	Promote job satisfaction based on psychological research on happiness and satisfaction (related to core values rather than economic gain)
	Planned and systematic social networking
	Describe more than just the title
	Describe the job dynamically – opportunity
Capture all roles for recruiting professional staff/worker levels	

Social Service Sector Human Resource Summit Summary of Proceedings

Theme	Proposed Strategies
Support flexibility within orgs	More strategic view – allow movement
	Secondments, TA's between orgs
	To encourage ppl to look at other opportunities
	Strategies to help ppl take the next career step
	Flexibility of commitment
	Share short-listed candidate names with other orgs in the sector (create talent pools)

STAYING

Theme	Proposed Strategies
Employee Recognition	Evaluations to ensure people are being utilized effectively
	Recognizing people who do social services work
	Awards for contributions to work
	Being recognized by clients
Wellness	Flexibility
	Employee assistance with how people are doing
	Awareness of risk of burnout for staff
	Ethic – work hard/play hard
	Having fun while at work
	Chocolate policy
Employee engagement	Policies and practices
	Employee evaluations – articulate what jobs can prepare employees for, i.e., transferable skills
	Participation in strategic planning
	Importance placed on workplace culture and treating people well
	Break down feeling of isolation in the field through strategies such as identifying and addressing systems issues
	Opportunities for staff to innovate and be supported
Common 'beacon'	Foster the team environment
Community Clusters to undertake work across agencies	Shared community training
	Shared services
	Recruitment of staff and volunteers
	Recruitment of boards
	Centralized education or training institutes for people working in the field
Cross sectoral strategies	Wage parity
	Sector wide benefits
	Transferable skills
	Stable funding across the sector to address sector inequities
	Recruitment and retention strategies for the sector as a whole
	Develop competencies for the field to enhance movement across sector
Incentives to stay	Housing allowance, or assistance for downpayment
	Look at prime competitors, pick apart what they do and copy it
	Mentors who care for and invest in an employee – assisting with things such as career mapping

Social Service Sector Human Resource Summit Summary of Proceedings

	In the absence of a sector pension – build senior citizens home for older community social services workers
	BC Housing – building communities by building homes – guaranteed level of housing
	One-third student loan payout
Valuing of the sector	Education across general province about what kind of work we do in the sector
	Mentorship opportunities across the sector
	More opportunities to ‘celebrate the work’
	Sector wide recognition of wages
	Legitimization of impact of sector on population as a whole
	Process for benchmarking: benchmarking positions against others - government / health authorities
	Strategies for people to see the scope of the sector
	Shifting the perception and reducing stigma of the sector – value creation
	Carving out a definition and identity for the sector
	Reframing the work that is being done to increase the value
	Branding strategy that shifts the perception of the ‘poor cousin’
	Branding strategy that addresses the fact that we are often too ‘modest’ as a sector, which influences our ability to fundraise and do our work
Intrinsic rewards	Strategies for ‘keeping the flame alive’
	Storytelling across the sector – web based technology to support the sharing of meaningful stories / inspiring stories
	Articulate the opportunity to meet new people and undertake new challenges
	Increase in salary when enrolling in graduate studies
	Opportunity to engage with career shifters – people who are looking for value and who can afford to work for less pay
	Feeling good about what you do – making a difference
	Witnessing changes in individuals you work with, as well as students who go through human service training
	Having an impact on the lives of children
	Empowering people
	Opportunities to ‘make your mark’
	Inspired by people’s stories
	Honorable and noble calling to help others
	Pay attention to emphasizing ‘meaningful work’ as it may legitimize lower pay etc
	Feeling like you are a part of progress and change
	Being connected to a community through one’s work with community members – the intrinsic reward of ‘being known’ and a sense of belonging
Training and development	Supervision standards
	Professional development
	Sector career pathing
	Secondments and capacity to move around in the sector – labour sharing opportunities
	Raising professional standards and then sustaining them through training
	Variety within organizations: continually offer new challenges

Social Service Sector Human Resource Summit Summary of Proceedings

	Training for managers
	Volunteer opportunities
	Clinical supervision training
	Exposure to policy issues
	Post secondary training and practicums: if students are exposed to the field in their education, they are better prepared for the work and tend to stay
Personal characteristics	Expectation that people like change
	Paying attention to burnout: when one is feeling like they are not making a difference anymore
	Having an understanding of where others' are coming from given the diverse perspectives in the field
Career preparation	Articulate what the jobs can prepare workers for
Flexibility	Work life balance
	Control over schedules
	Opportunity for staff to innovate
	Flexible education / post secondary programs to meet needs of people working in the field
Wages and benefits	Flexible wage scheme based on hours, not on salary or overtime
<i>Is the poor compensation in this sector a cause of people not staying or because people stay?</i>	Wage scale as a professional standard
	Educational incentives and benefits
	Wages that reflect the costs associated with raising children
	Board offering extra benefits to staffing team such as extra days off at Christmas
	Married to spouse who makes a better wage
Succession Planning	Provide opportunities for advancement

LEAVING / RECONNECTING

Theme	Proposed Strategies
Honouring relationships and maintaining connections over time Staying connected, "tethered" to the sector	Communications tools
	Agency alumni-focussed actions and communication tools, e.g. annual newsletters, 'you are always welcome here'; boomerang club
	Sector alumni focussed actions and communications tools
	Promote continued involvement as volunteer, mentor, advisor.
	Positive personal touches: Birthday cards, Christmas cards
Information gathering and learning, e.g., staff interests, career plans	Point of hire interviews, e.g. what are your expectations and hopes for your work here
	Annual professional review/planning processes.
	Check in with mid-career practitioners
Recognize that there are many different reasons for people leaving	Exit interviews (with intent to learn what is influencing the choices and how the door could be kept open)
Options to leaving; e.g. secondments, leave of absence	Coordinate TA's, secondments, transfers, etc across agencies
	Strategically support people to move around in the sector to develop skills, sustain interests, etc.
	Redefine success in retention, i.e. if staff person or volunteer stays in the sector, even though they have left the agency, this is still successful retention

Social Service Sector Human Resource Summit Summary of Proceedings

Theme	Proposed Strategies
	Develop strategies to address burnout
Second career marketing, e.g. 2 nd career fair	Strategically target people for whom income is not a significant factor, e.g. 45-65 age cohort, two income families, empty-nesters, former corporate employees
Gracious leaving	Acknowledgement of contributions made
	“So long for now” – respect choices being made but make it clear that they’d be welcomed back
	Redefine ‘leaving’ – multiple possible reasons with different prospects for the future, requiring different employer strategies, e.g. maternity leave vs wages and benefits
	Redefine temporary leaves as a positive choice
	Propose other ways to stay connected, e.g. volunteering, mentoring, advising
Make it easier to come back Flexible options for re-engagement	Short term contracts
	Part time/ part year work
	Ensure life/work balance
	Incentives re: educational supports, leave, tuition
	Child care (for returning parents), e.g. collaborative child care model
	No disruption in seniority and benefits upon return (within specified period of time)
	Transferability of seniority and benefits across sectors
	Allow people to reapply as an internal candidate for specified period of time
Sustain what makes us unique e.g., making a difference, positive work environments, congruence of personal and sector values	

APPENDIX C: Day 2 Action Planning & Voting Session

JOINING STRATEGIES

1. Aboriginal (13 votes)

- Better linkages of clients of existing employment programs to social service sector
- More exposure to the people doing the work – role models and career fairs
- Understanding/ openness to skill is education
- Community level training
- Dedicated summit
- More aboriginal stakeholders
- Refocus/refrain hiring practices to remove barriers to hiring aboriginal peoples

2. Immigrant (24 votes)

- Better linkages of clients of existing employment programs to social service sector
- Open skills Connect to social service workers (Grants/Mentor)
- \$ for associations of immigrant professionals
- Fast track training to job ready
- Dedicated HR summit focused on this issue
- Refocus/re-examine/ reframe hiring practices to remove barriers to hiring from diverse populations

3. Marketing/ Branding (20 votes)

- Branding first priority
 - Define vision/ value statement for sector in BC
 - Why work for sector – what's in it for me
- Marketing: Hows
- Develop Promotional Plan
 - Develop a sector wide recruitment website/service to market/connect people to jobs in the sector – resources: \$/collaboration, agreement
 - schools, youth, college and universities
- Resources
 - Hire expert to develop brand
 - Leverage other funding sources
 - LMPs, JCPs, Feds (work sharing)
 - Develop section advisory group to work with expert
 - Identify ongoing sustainability organization to manage

4. Wages/ Benefits (25 votes)

- Develop compensation package parity/standards
- Self care plans – wellness
- Open definition “benefits”
 - Childcare
 - Housing subsidy
 - Flextime
 - Training \$

5. Training (4 votes)

- Short (1 yr or less) training specific to a particular position
 - Eg a teacher by training could shift to social sector as a social worker with intense < one year training without requirement for another degree

STAYING STRATEGIES:

Create a mechanism to bring emerging leaders together to harness knowledge that is available within the system

1. Leadership: (volunteer, board, management, staff) (24 votes)

- Wellness
- Employee engagement
- Culture creation and development
- Incentives
- Intrinsic rewards
- Personal characteristics
- Flexibility

2. Livelihood (23 votes)

- Valuing sector
- Wages and benefits

3. Career Advancement (10 votes)

- Community cluster
- Cross sectoral
- Succession planning
- Training and development
- Develop strategies that build and expand on these capacities

LEAVING / RECONNECTING STRATEGIES

- 1. Create an alumni toolkit to help organizations maintain relationships with staff that have left (short-term, low resources) (4 votes)**
 - Mailing lists, websites, annual get-togethers, templates, etc.
- 2. Create an Exit toolkit (1 vote)**
 - Templates for exit interviews
 - Processes/ methods to recognize and acknowledge work of leaving staff (events, goodbye party)
 - Cultural and diversity acknowledgement (eg invite back to help host/facilitate/teach about a cultural celebration)
 - Ask to keep staff on “resource list” (eg mentoring, coaching, expertise,) with activity and hours willing to commit
- 3. Develop procedures/policies to help organizations be more flexible and adaptable/ accommodating for staff (25 votes)**
 - Use exit interviews, discuss how we can adapt orgs to better allow staff to rejoin/ stay
 - Short term contracts, TAs, secondments, co-ops, interns
 - Incentives: educational support, leave, tuition, house down-payment
 - Child care subsidies
 - Deferred pay schedules/ Flex days, etc.
- 4. Develop a central website to promote opportunities in the sector (14 votes)**
 - TAs, secondments
 - Promote opportunities, allow freedom of employees to look for other cross-training or developmental opportunities (EPDPs)
- 5. Create regional annual job fairs for the social sector to re-attract people (2nd career fairs), and new entries (8 votes)**
 - More resource intensive
 - Attract people where income is not a significant factor (eg 45-65 age cohort, two income families, empty-nesters, former corporate employees)

OVERARCHING (amalgamated priorities from the 3 groups for voting):

1. Wages and Benefits (25 votes)
2. Marketing and Public Education/ branding (36 votes)
3. Business Plan/Professionalize (6 votes)
4. Policy Response (7 votes)
5. Research and Development (long-term) (9 votes)
6. Meeting the needs of Aboriginals and Immigrants (13 votes)

Overarching Group Notes

Group 1:

Priority A: Wages and Benefits

- Funding reform pilot shifts project which funding focus from FTE's to outcomes (agency or community based)
- Resources: policy latitude; link to GNPI and LMP
- Advocate for non-union pension plan to match union pension plan

Priority B: Marketing and Branding

- Engage whole sector in developing and defining the brand
- Quantify the value of the sector
- Reach out to high school students in collaboration with post-secondary

Priority C: Immigrant Engagement

- Develop partnerships
- Social networking opportunities
- Website to list employment posting and information
- Pilot with immigrant integration to expose to NPS opportunities

Priority D: Policy Response

- Create capacity in non profit sector to analyse policy and reflect back to government and ourselves the impact of policy on HR

Priority E: Aboriginal Collaboration

- Working with Aboriginal organizations to gain understanding and awareness
- Difference between funding issues (federal/provincial) in Aboriginal and First Nations

Group 2:

1. Develop an overarching definition of who we are and what we do
2. Explore the possibility of a sector wide credentials recognition and accreditation system
3. Strategic business plan to include:
 - a. Sector profile (achievements, money, contributions, GDP, economy, contributions to social/health determinants, strong and positive messaging)
 - b. Communication strategy (to include public, government, professional association, prospective funders, employees, media, etc.)

- c. Build consensus/decide how the plan will be implemented and outcomes measured
- d. Develop HR Strategy
- 4. Explore sector wide wages and benefits coordination
- 5. Create a resources and needs inventory and matching service

Group 3 (represented in pictures in Summit):

- 1. Wages and benefits
- 2. Compelling story telling (evidence based, healthy communities, positive outcomes)
- 3. Research and development

APPENDIX D – SUMMARY OF DAY 1 THEMES AND STRATEGIES FROM WORLD CAFÉ DISCUSSIONS

The dialogue on Day One of the HR Summit produced 12 overarching themes that permeated the overall areas of joining the sector workforce, staying in the sector, and leaving / reconnecting to the social services sector workforce. Many of these themes contained a number of strategies and considerations, while others were briefly touched upon and later evolved into more detail on Day Two (see Appendix C). Overall:

1. **Wages and benefits** were noted as a key consideration for attracting and keeping workers in the social service sector. Notably, a pay increase was not the only recommendation to the issue of wages. That is, dialogue emerged regarding an overall strategy to address equalizing the disparate wages and benefits across the sector such as wage differentials between workers in the community sector versus the government sector. Creating a sector pension plan for all employees was also seen as a key strategy.
2. **Marketing and Branding** the sector was an overwhelmingly popular theme at the summit. Branding the sector could involve articulating the value added component of the social services to the community and province, distinguishing job positions and titles, emphasizing the social economic value of the sector, and defining the overall identity of the sector. Marketing strategies need to consider the 'life course' perspective, that is, unique and targeted approaches for groups such as children and youth in the schools, the immigrant community, Aboriginal communities, or those individuals in their later career who have more financial freedom and are looking for a shift towards more meaningful career.
3. **Sector Collaboration** was noted as key to developing effective recruitment and retention strategies. Working together as a sector towards collective action was felt to hold promise in building and ensuring a skilled and sustainable workforce across the province.
4. **Effective HR practices** were identified as a necessary component to building the sector workforce, such as ensuring the sector has access to an HR management system, and organizations have 'good HR practice'.
5. **Increasing Opportunities and Workforce Accessibility for the Aboriginal Community** was identified as a key area, warranting unique considerations from Indigenous perspectives and considerations.
6. **Increasing Opportunities and Workforce Accessibility for the Immigrant Community** such as more effective efforts at recognizing internationally trained

- professionals and work experience outside of Canada was noted as a key strategy in the area of joining the sector workforce.
7. **Organizational and Employee Development Strategies** were discussed as having an overall meaningful and positive impact on workers who join, stay, and/or leave and reconnect to the sector workforce.
 8. **Flexible Workplaces and Employment Practices** were noted as useful strategies in recruiting, retaining, and re-engaging workers and volunteers in the sector. Flexible workplaces also include the flexibility to engage in 'career mapping and pathing' within organizations and across the sector.
 9. **Leadership Development** was identified as a key component in workforce strategies.
 10. **Partnerships With Secondary and Post Secondary Institutions** were discussed as both pathways into the sector workforce and volunteer-force, and ways of sustaining and engaging workers and volunteers in the social services.
 11. Recruitment and retention approaches were noted as needing to account for **Developmental Approaches**, that is, acknowledging and understanding the diversity of different ages and generations in the workplace and volunteer work force.

12. Succession planning

I. Wages and Benefits

Overall, considerations need to be made towards an increase to the average wage in the sector workforce, as well as towards wage and benefit equity strategies, and pension opportunities.

Strategies for Joining:

- Offer to pay student loans or count credits for volunteering against student loans (following the Rural Physicians model)
- Provide an educational development program (1 year post-secondary for 1 year commitment to the sector/org)
- Subsidized/paid mentoring opportunities

- Provide day care resource to employees across the sector
- Benchmarking salaries and benefits sector wide

Strategies for Staying:

- Offer incentives to stay such as a housing allowance, or assistance for a down payment for a first home
- In the absence of a sector pension – build senior citizens home for older community social services workers
- Offer one-third student loan payout for those who stay
- Provide an increase in salary when enrolling in graduate studies
- Provide wages that reflect the costs associated with raising children
- Have the Board offer extra benefits to staffing team such as extra days off at Christmas
- Be a part of a ‘two income family’, that is, having a spouse who makes a higher wage in a different sector

Strategies for Reconnecting Employees Who Have Left or May Leave

- Offer child care (for returning parents), e.g. collaborative child care model
 - No disruption in seniority and benefits upon return (within specified period of time)
 - Transferability of seniority and benefits across sectors
-

II. Marketing and Branding

Overall, a marketing and branding strategy needs to be a persistent and long term strategy that reduces the stigma associated with the sector, and builds public awareness towards the value, importance, and utility of the social services sector. Marketing and branding will result in supporting a clearly articulated identity for the social services sector, and the sector will emerge as a desirable place to work, that embodies professionalism and a supportive environment.

Marketing and branding should develop a triple bottom line model for the sector, and profile the contribution to all three components: social equity, economics, and the environment.

The responsibility for marketing and branding is a shared responsibility, and needs to engage sector employees as ‘marketers’, within their circles of influence amongst their friends, families, and communities.

Marketing messages / strategies could contain:

- Promotion towards the core values of sector
- Promotion of the richness of diversity of work
- Furthering the new term – *social economy*
- Promote economic value of sector – quantify the value of the asset; and show that the investment through the asset will grow
- Marketing that will result in the legitimization of the positive impact of the social services sector on the B.C. population as a whole
- Shift focus from ‘we help disadvantaged’ to ‘we support vibrant communities’
- Education campaign across general province about what kind of work we do in the sector
- Branding strategy that shifts the perception of the ‘poor cousin’ and the reality of the sector often being too ‘modest’ (which influences our ability to fundraise and hence do the work)

Marketing and branding strategies have an opportunity to make a ‘fit’ with the personal characteristics of many individuals in this province, such as:

- People who are ‘career shifters’, that is, individuals who are looking for value in a job and who can afford to work for less pay (such as former corporate employees)
- People who like to feel good about what they do, and who want to ‘make a difference’
- People who are inspired through witnessing changes in individuals they work with, as well as witnessing the personal transformation students go through who undertake studies in the human service training programs
- People who desire to have a positive impact on the lives of children
- People who value the opportunity to empower others, and to ‘make one’s mark’
- People who value being inspired by the personal stories of those they work with
- People who value the ‘honourable and noble calling to help others’
- People who like to feel like they are a part of progress and change
- People who want to be connected to their community through one’s work with community members – this offers an intrinsic reward of ‘being known’ and a sense of belonging
- People who enjoy the opportunity to honour relationships built through work in the social services, and maintaining the connections over time.

Strategies for Joining:

- Job Fairs / field trips in educational institutions

- Demographic targeted marketing (youth, mid-career, nearing retirement, women, men, Aboriginal groups, immigrants, etc.)
- Peer to peer marketing
- Need to bring clarity definition to what we are promoting
- Market positions as stepping stones
- Live our values
- Focus on skills / competencies
- Appealing via diversity
- Address first five year issue (statistics that support the reality if employees leave the sector within the first 5 years, they often do not return back to the sector workforce)
- Reduce stigma of employee burnout in the sector
- Promote diverse type of work (not just service delivery but financial, HR, technical, etc.)
- Marketing the fit – unique working conditions in the sector
- Promote job satisfaction based on psychological research on happiness and satisfaction (related to core values rather than economic gain)
- Describe more than just the title
- Describe the job dynamically – opportunities!
- Articulate the opportunity to meet new people and undertake new challenges

Strategies for Staying:

- Market more opportunities to ‘celebrate the work’
- Process for benchmarking: benchmarking positions against others - government / health authorities
- Strategies for people to see the scope of the sector
- Reframing the work that is being done to increase the value

Strategies for Reconnecting Employees Who Have Left or May Leave:

- Second career marketing, e.g, 2nd career fair
 - Sustain what makes us unique e.g., making a difference, positive work environments, congruence of personal and sector values
-

III. Sector Collaboration

Overall, the social services sector needs to engage in collective action, and consider ways for clusters of agencies to work together to build structures, capacities, and alliances to develop and implement joint strategies. For example, joint recruitment

imitatives for a casual labour pool, or multi-agency / cross-sectoral succession planning strategies.

Agencies, regions, or the provincial sector may find ways to offer joint training and development programs, and build ways of furthering the definition of the sector and subsectors within the province.

Strategies for Joining:

- Central website for job opportunities in the sector/ standardization of job descriptions
- Create stronger professional support groups
- Share short-listed candidate names with other orgs in the sector (create talent pools)

Strategies for Staying:

- Break down feeling of isolation in the field through strategies such as identifying and addressing systems issues
- Community Clusters to undertake the complex work across agencies
- Shared community training
- Shared services
- Shared recruitment of staff and volunteers, such as boards
- Centralized education or training institutes for people working in the field
- Sector strategies to address wage parity and offer sector wide benefits
- Develop competencies for the field to enhance movement across sector such as promotion of transferable skills
- Stable funding across the sector to address sector inequities
- Mentorship opportunities across the sector
- Storytelling across the sector – web based technology to support the sharing of meaningful stories / inspiring stories
- Raising professional standards and then sustaining them through training

Strategies for Reconnecting Employees Who Have Left or May Leave:

- Staying connected, “tethered” to the sector through alumni focussed actions and communications tools (e.g. annual newsletters)
- Establish a ‘boomerang club’
- Promote continued involvement as volunteer, mentor, advisor within the sector

- Redefine sector success in retention, i.e. if staff person or volunteer stays in the sector, even though they have left the agency, this is still successful retention
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IV. Effective HR practices

Overall, strategies need to support good HR/LR practices throughout the sector such as through:

- HR management information systems
 - Consistency in the sector re: HR/LR management; high standards, e.g. template for components, policies, procedures
 - Benchmark jobs
 - Within organizations: career planning, performance reviews, etc
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V. Increasing Opportunities and Workforce Accessibility for the Aboriginal Community

See Day Two proceedings.

VI. Increasing Opportunities and Workforce Accessibility for the Immigrant Community

See Day Two proceedings.

VII. Organizational and Employee Development Strategies

Employee Development:

Overall, promoting and monitoring employee engagement activities and respond to the issues and opportunities.

Strategies for Staying:

- Strategies that recognize employee contributions
 - Evaluations to ensure people are being utilized effectively and assist in articulating what jobs can prepare employees for, i.e., transferable skills
 - Recognizing people who do social services work
 - Awards for contributions to work
-

- Opportunities to share workers being recognized by clients
- Opportunities for staff to innovate and be supported
- Strategies that promote employee wellness:
 - Employee assistance with how people are doing
 - Awareness of risk of burnout for staff: when one is feeling like they are not making a difference anymore
- Having fun while at work
- Participation in strategic planning
- Mentors who care for and invest in an employee – assisting with things such as career mapping
- Exposing staff to policy issues to understand and engage
- Opportunities for staff to innovate

Organizational Development:

Overall, a positive culture within the sector and a positive organizational culture in agencies will influence choices about joining, staying, leaving, and reconnecting. Organizational development (creating healthy and positive workplaces) will help to attract and retain skilled staff and volunteers.

As the nature of the work in this sector is often complex and challenging, organizations which create and sustain a supportive environment will assist employees who may still be in their own healing process, or who are / have been vicariously traumatized through the work. Clinical supervision is a 'must' in organizations.

Strategies for Staying:

- Importance placed on workplace culture and treating people well
- Fostering a 'team' environment
- Training and professional development opportunities
- Supervision standards
- Variety of jobs within organizations: continually offer new challenges
- Training for managers and clinical supervision

Strategies for Reconnecting Employees Who Have Left or May Leave:

- Positive personal touches: Birthday cards, Christmas cards
- Recognize that there are many different reasons for people leaving
- Annual professional review/planning processes.
- Exit interviews (with intent to learn what is influencing the choices and how the door could be kept open)
- Develop strategies to address burnout
- "So long for now" – respect choices being made but make it clear that they'd be welcomed back

- Redefine 'leaving' – multiple possible reasons with different prospects for the future, requiring different employer strategies, e.g. maternity leave vs wages and benefits
 - Redefine temporary leaves as a positive choice
 - Make it easier to come back
 - Short term contracts
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VIII. Flexible workplaces and employment practices

Strategies for Joining:

- Leadership Exchanges between the public sector and social/non-profit sector
- Create family-friendly volunteer opportunities
- Create your own job
- Support flexibility within orgs
- Flexibility of commitment to agencies and within the sector

Strategies for Staying:

- Secondments and capacity to move around in the sector – labour sharing opportunities
- Control over schedules
- Flexible education / post secondary programs to meet needs of people working in the field
- Flexible wage scheme based on hours, not on salary or overtime
- Build opportunities for mapping out a career path within the sector, as well as educational maps, thus enhancing strategies for people to see their next steps

Strategies for Reconnecting Employees Who Have Left or May Leave:

- Options to leaving; e.g. secondments, leave of absence
 - Strategically support people to move around in the sector to develop skills, sustain interests, etc.
 - Flexible options for re-engagement
 - Part time/ part year work
 - Ensure life/work balance
 - Allow people to reapply as an internal candidate for specified period of time
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IX. Leadership Development

See Day Two proceedings.

X. Partnerships with secondary and post secondary institutions

Strategies for Joining

- Interns/co-op programs
- Mandatory volunteer hours – high school

Strategies for Staying

- Post secondary training and practicums: if students are exposed to the field in their education, they are better prepared for the work and tend to stay
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XI. Developmental Approaches to Recruitment and Retention:

Overall, it is important to recognize the life course stages in all strategies.

Strategies for Joining:

- Develop age cohort strategies
 - When considering who is joining the sector, focus on engaging with youth and implementing youth initiatives
 - Buddy programs for youth – e.g. grand parenting programs (living history)
 - Encourage volunteerism at a young age
 - Leverage technology and methods for attracting youth (e.g. Facebook)
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XII. Succession planning

Overall, it is important for social service agencies and the sector to provide opportunities for career advancement. See Day Two proceedings for further details.