**Meeting Agenda – April 2017**

1.  New members of POD and interests

2.  Beginning of the action document

a) Review Action Table

b) Strategize ways in which we can move this table into action

3.  Action members are willing to take

a) Who can/has interest in taking on which action

b) What supports POD members may need to take on a particular action

c) Which Pod Members want to work with one another

4.  Ideas for follow up

Attachments:

- Appendix - February 7th 2017 Meeting Minutes

- Appendix B – Policy Pod Overview

- Appendix C - Policy Pod Action Plan and Responsibilities Table

**Appendix A**

**Ontario Cluster Employers’ Capacity**

**Summary of meeting themes from Tuesday, February 7, 2017 Meeting**

**Attendees**

Co- Coordinator and Meeting Chair: Marcia Rioux;

Student Lead: Douglas Waxman and;

Student Lead and Moderator: Samadhi Mora Severino.

Pod Members Attendees: Monica Ackermann, Florence Chapman, Young Jung, Bonnie Kirsh, Mala Naraine, Romona Omidvar-Khullar, Susan Picarello, Kathy Padkapayeva, Wendy Porch, John Rae, Tim Rose, Firat Sayin, Emile Tompa, and Mark Wafer.

**Introduction**

There are three pods in the Ontario Cluster: (1) Income Replacement, (2) System for monitoring employment rights, and (3) Building and Transforming Employer’s Capacity. We want to move our project from research into action-based policy initiatives. The premise would be to bring about change. We want to identify key areas of interest from the Pod Members. Keeping in mind, there are critical openings to influence policy levels from micro (i.e. organizations) to macro as both the Federal & Provincial governments are undertaking work related disability initiatives.

**Four Identified Sectors for Consideration for Our Pod:**

*Advocacy Sector*

1. Disability policy groups are siloed and fractured making seamless delivery of programs not effective for people with disabilities – there is no safety net
2. Policies currently existing are not working to address issues of persons with disabilities

*Private Sector*

1. Employment rates are not increasing by much and it has become clear that employers are not prioritizing hiring people with disabilities.
2. Businesses do not appear to trust advocacy groups promoting business case for employment of persons with disabilities directing their attention instead towards business consulting firms as their advisors. In short, businesses need other business champions to talk to one another. An employer to employer approach has been shown to be more effectiveIt is important to target business leaders. It is equally important that top management have people who can implement steps twords organizational cultural change quickly.
3. Business messaging (in relation to hiring people with disabilities) can only occur with top down support - with a strong clear message for the initiative.

–For instance, what is the connection to disability for their business? What is the talent pool?

1. *Sustainable inclusion:* It is about diversity not only about people with disabilities.
2. *Culture of Business needs shifting*: Culture change is slow and will take time so has to be built into any action plans.
3. Employers can be the barriers when they have expectations of flexible employees and rely on precarious employment.
4. Need to find employers who will serve in a consultative process/ILO model ie. using a leadership consultation modelled by business champions.
5. Need to establish employers’ participation on the issue within the parameters of their engagement (i.e. not in the business of hiring persons with disabilities or spending their day on the issue).

*Government Focus*

1. Federal Level: Canadian with Disabilities Act will focus on employment and on accessibility – should be an incentive for federal employers.
2. Provincial Level: Employment initiatives occurring through Ontario’s Department of Accessibility – should be an access point for policy initiation.
3. Labour Market Agreements carry weight and should be seen as opportunities.
4. Government needs to set an example of hiring persons with disabilities, which could be monitored.
5. Government needs to create national campaign/strategy to dispel employers’ misconceptions about employing persons with disabilities
6. Important to develop new programs by the government to improve the situation of employment for people with disabilities *–* ie to meet their own targets and goals.

*Workplace Accommodations Focus*

1. Important to distinguish between soft and hard accommodations.
2. Businesses need to be provided training and information on ways accommodation may change over time – for instance, episodic disabilities.
   1. Through creating a national workplace fund to support people with disabilities and employers. Two rationales: (1) The burden of responsibility is reduced for the employer (so they do not face undue hardship) and;

(2) employers cannot hide behind the idea that hiring people with disabilities is too costly.

1. Lack of understanding of what accommodations are and what they should be needs to be explored and information provided.
2. Need sources of best practices.
3. HR professionals, as well as top management, would be important to target. They are on the front lines**.** We also have to keep in mind that small-to-medium size businesses do not have HR department resulting in the a lack the support in hiring people with disabilities.
4. List of resources available for small-to-medium businesses is needed.

**Systemic Factors to be addressed e.g. Transportation and accessibility Sector**

1. Transportation to get to place of employment: This issue would have to be initiative in itself because it very complex. There is a lack of fully integrated accessible transportation. Transportation issues are going to vary from city to city and from urban to rural areas. There is an overload of issues with accessible transit.
2. Focus of CRWDP POD should remain on employment.
3. Not specifically an employer capacity issue, more a government infrastructure issue

**Concluding Remarks**

In our pod, we have individuals from diverse discipline backgrounds, which will allow for actionable policy outcomes. Future meeting to be scheduled in short order. Eventually all three pods will come together to support each other.

**Documents to be sent to Pod Members**

1. Numbers labour market
2. Two-page document on accommodations
3. List of resources (i.e. funding for accommodations for employees with disabilities) for employers hiring people with disabilities

**Appendix B**

**CRWDP Ontario Policy Pod Overview**

The Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy (CRWDP) is a transdisciplinary initiative on the future of work disability policy in Canada. The CRWDP objective is to identify how people, when disabled, can be better retained and integrated into the Canadian labour market. CRWDP is funded by Social Sciences Humanities and Research Council (SSHRC) and started in 2012. CRWDP has a national office and 4 provincial clusters: Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador.

The policy pods is an initiative started by the CRWDP Ontario cluster. The CRWDP Ontario Cluster has put forward a number of efforts and developed resources that identify work disability policy issues and challenges, such as Posen et al. article (2015), *An Environmental Scan of Policy Initiatives to Address Coordination Issues in the Canadian Work Disability Policy System* and the CRWDP Ontario Cluster discussions (2014; 2015). The next important phase of the Ontario Cluster is to influence policy in order to address the issues and challenges identified.

We have identified 3 pods based on the outcomes from the past two Cluster meetings (November 25, 2014; September 29, 2015). Each policy pod will focus on addressing a policy issue through immediate action-oriented strategies. The pods will consist of students, researchers, community partners and policy decision-makers. The 3 pods that have been identified include:

1. Building and transforming employer’s capacity - Research Lead Marcia Rioux (mrioux@yorku.ca) and Student Lead Douglas Waxman ([douglaswaxman@gmail.com](mailto:douglaswaxman@gmail.com)) and Samadhi Mora Severino (vsamadhi@my.yorku.ca)
2. Income replacement for people with disabilities - Research Lead Rebecca Gewurtz (gewurtz@mcmaster.ca) and Student Leads Pamela Lahey (laheypm@mcmaster.ca) and Dana Corfield (dccorfield@gmail.com)
3. Systems for monitoring and reporting on human rights in employment - Research Lead Cameron Crawford (cameroncrawford@sympatico.ca) and Student Lead Tammy Bernasky (tammyphd@yorku.ca)

Each policy pod will develop a plan to influence policy. Pods will focus on policy issues that have the potential for immediate change. The focus of the pod will be placed on implementing the plan, rather than creating the proposal. Pods should implement multiple strategies in order to effectively create change. Strategies could include setting meetings with policy decision-makers to share research findings and evidence on policy issues and strategies, creating policy briefs, joining existing groups that are working on policy change, bridging dialogue between employers and policy-makers, etc.

**Appendix C**

**Policy Pod Action Plan and Responsibilities Table**

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| Policy Issue | Corporate Change | Government Change |
| Goal | 1. Bridge Advocacy/business trust barrier 2. Develop business disability champions to talk to business leaders about disability 3. Develop a consultative group to promote Corporate Social Responsibility 4. Broaden corporate diversity plans to be inclusive of disability 5. Effect shift of corporate culture | 1. Government to hire more persons with disabilities/become a model employer 2. Information campaign to dispel market myths about persons with disabilities 3. Leverage Labour Market Agreements 4. Create National/Provincial Accommodation Fund 5. Create accessibility best practices resource & a list of resources for small and medium size businesses |
| Action | Goal 1   * Advocacy groups to engage in business terms   Goal 2   * Develop recruitment group * Target business organizations that can identify and develop potential champions   Goal 3   * Develop consultative group/network to promote Corporate Social Responsibility including disability * Source precedents of similar groups   Goal 4   * Produce case summaries of success stories * Target business and HR conferences * Interface with diversity promotion organizations * Create model diversity plans * Advocate for systemic diversity monitoring * Reward model actors with tax incentives   Goal 5   * Disseminate Business Case for hiring persons with Disabilities * Produce case summaries of success stories * Target business and HR conferences * Create model disability integration plan * Advocate for systemic diversity monitoring. Leverage ROI reporting * Reward model actors with tax incentive | Goal 6   * Government to become a model employer * Lobby Government * Create case studies of governments that are doing this well * Demonstrate a business case for government hiring persons with disabilities * Target governments accessibility and diversity plans * Advocate for equity monitoring   Goal 7   * Lobby Government * National/ * Provide precedents of other corporate disability surveys * Develop market failure rational memo * Source any precedents of information campaigns done elsewhere   Goal 8   * Lobby Government * Encourage federal government leadership * Encourage federal government to tie spending to central standards and Provide sufficient funding to encourage  specific results * Advocate for monitoring of compliance with agreements/ Impose real accountability mechanisms * Advocate the Creation of a Ontario labour market strategy for people with disabilities   Goal 9   * Lobby Government * Find precedents for similar funds * Government to establish national standards * Component part of the Canadians with Disabilities Act * Tax credit for compliant businesses   Goal 10   * Survey existing resources * Seek out appropriate entity to develop this and encourage production |
| Target who to address | Goal 1   * Non Profit Organizations who focus on disability and employment.   Goal 2   * Business consulting organizations * Senior Corporate Leadership * H.R. managers * Business associations  Goal 3 * Business consulting organizations * Senior Corporate Leadership * HR Managers * Employer Organizations * Organizations for People with Disabilities * Advocacy groups   Goal 4   * Corporate boards * Senior managers * H.R. managers * Diversity organizations   Goal 5   * Corporate boards * Chief Diversity officers * Chief Executive Officers * Senior managers * H.R. managers | Goal 6   * Various federal and provincial ministries * The Treasury Board * The Public Service Commission/Ontario Public Service   Goal 7   * Ministry of Accessibility * Ministry of Labour * Employment Standard Division – Accessibility * Employment Agencies   Goal 8   * Minister of Human Resources and Social Development * Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities   Goal 9   * Ministry of Sport and Persons with Disabilities * Employment and Social Development Canada   Goal 10   * Ministry of Sport and Persons with Disabilities * Employment and Social Development Canada * Ministry of Accessibility * Ministry of Labour * Employment Standard Division – Accessibility * Trade Unions & Various Unions * Social services/ vocational Agencies/Disability Advocacy groups |
| Pod Members |  |  |