Executive Summary (Plain Language)

This summary is part of a larger report. The report was done by the following groups.

- Challenge Factory
- Canadian Association for Supported Employment (CASE)

The report is about the supported employment in Canada. It looks at what kind of research is available about this sector.

The report looked at information from the following sources.

- public information
- government resources
- specific studies and websites related to supported employment

These sources helped to answer the following questions.

- How much research is out there?
- What are the gaps in the information?
- How well known is the supported employment sector?

Key Findings

The key findings of the report are summarized below.

Supported employment plays an important role

Supported employment is important for people with disabilities. It helps them to find and keep jobs. It increases their job opportunities. It is important to the way that people are educated and prepared for work. It is also important to the labour market in Canada.

Supported employment is available all across the country. Every province and territory has these services. They are part of larger programs and systems. They can be part of programs that are about career development. Or they can be part of programs related to disability supports.

There are issues with the research data

Research helps to provide information, also called "data." There are gaps in the data about supported employment. There is a lack of detailed research. There is very little information from the professionals who deliver these services.

The data is hard to find. It can be hidden in other areas like the following.

- employment services
- career development
- disability supports

Previous research helps but more is needed

There is a report from a project done by Challenge Factory. It is called "Hidden Sector, Hidden Talent." It has some useful information. It has data about supported employment programs. It has information about the ministries that are responsible for these programs. But the report lacks information about how big the sector is or how many people it serves.

Government supports matter

There is an agreement for funding from the federal government. It is called the "Labour Market Transfer Agreement." It is between the Government of Canada and the provinces and territories. This funding is meant to help people with disabilities get and keep jobs.

These agreements could be a good way to get more information. This could help to better understand the sector.

Networks exist but workers are hidden

There are provincial and territorial networks. They bring supported employment groups together. This helps to give them a voice. But the data from networks still has gaps. There is very little information about the people who provide the day-to-day services in the sector.

Academic research is limited

Most studies focus on one model of supported employment. This model is called Individual Placement and Support (IPS). It is mainly for people with severe mental illness. Other approaches don't get as much attention. People with other disabilities or invisible disabilities are left out.

Studies show that there is a need for special skill sets for those working in the sector. But there are gaps in the data in the following areas.

- the role of professionals
- details on how services are delivered
- details on what training is needed

Future research is needed

This report shows the areas that need more research. It also shows the following benefits of getting better data.

- It will make the supported employment sector more visible.
- It will help governments make stronger policies.
- It will help build more inclusive workplaces in Canada.