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# **PERSON-DIRECTED PLANNING 2010-11 FISCAL INNOVATION FUND PROJECTS: IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW FINAL REPORT**

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Prepared For: Community and Developmental Services Branch  
Ministry of Community and Social Services

November 2011



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ontario has been transforming the way it delivers services for adults with developmental disabilities. Changes are reflected in Ontario's recent *Services and Supports to Promote the Social Inclusion of Persons with Developmental Disabilities Act, 2008*, and feature person-directed planning (PDP) as a new category of funded services and supports.

As one means of furthering the growth of person-directed planning (PDP) in the province, the Ministry of Community and Social Services (i.e., the Ministry) established the Person-Directed Planning 2010-11 Fiscal Innovation Fund (PDP-FIF). This fund was a one million dollar investment to support one-time projects that prepared the developmental services sector and the broader community for implementation of person-directed planning.

Funded projects were supposed to address critical strategic elements associated with person-directed planning (i.e., important elements of an effective Person-Directed Planning framework). Thirty-seven projects from nine regions of the province were funded from October 2010 until March 31, 2011 (a five-month period). The Community and Developmental Services Branch of the Ministry commissioned Sue Weinstein, Research & Evaluation Consultants to undertake a third-party Implementation Review of the 37 funded PDP-FIF projects, commencing three months after the end of the funding period. The Review assessed:

- the PDP strategic elements that were implemented and the manner in which they were delivered;
- whether funded projects were implemented as proposed;
- the short-term results of project implementation, occurring by the end of the funding period; and
- opportunities and issues emerging from project implementation and the potential for future sustainability.

In general, the Implementation Review methodology included:

- initial document reviews of Ministry information on Person-Directed Planning, PDP-FIF project proposals as well as final reports from all funded projects, followed by detailed qualitative content analyses (i.e., information gap analyses);
- individualized structured telephone interviews (with the 37 project leads), to validate project-specific information and to address information gaps in project proposals and reports, followed by additional content analyses;

- final data aggregation and analysis to generate provincial-level findings for the 37 projects.

The Implementation Review's provincial-level findings including quantitative, descriptive data and qualitative, thematic data were organized as follows:

- **general descriptive information** about the initiatives as reflected in project proposals and reports (i.e., descriptions of general types of project activities undertaken, critical PDP elements addressed, project partnerships, and participating stakeholder groups);
- **specific findings** about the nature of PDP project activities as indicated in proposals and reports;
- **project results of note** (i.e., the presentation of short-term findings occurring by the end of the funding period, as indicated in project reports and interviews and pertaining to PDP in general, to PDP for self-advocates and families, to independent PDP facilitation, and PDP through agencies);
- **evidence of project sustainability** (i.e., the identification of outcomes occurring beyond the funding timeframe, as indicated in projects' final reports and interviews, and pertaining to PDP for self-advocates/families, independent PDP facilitation, PDP in agencies and PDP in general);
- **issues emerging** that affected project implementation or that may have an impact on future PDP developments (as indicated in project final reports, interviews and as identified by the consulting team);
- **lessons learned** as a result of project implementation (as indicated by project partners in final reports and in interviews with the consultants); and
- **successful strategies/opportunities** (i.e., consideration of implementation strategies that appear to have contributed to projects' successes, and that could be worthy of replication in the future. These strategies and opportunities were identified by the consulting team based on project reports and interview information).

Key findings within each of the above categories are summarized below.

### **General Nature of Funded Initiatives**

The general descriptive findings about PDP-FIF projects indicated that:

- the Ministry's critical PDP elements (i.e., developing community and personal support networks, fostering independent facilitation, and undertaking PDP knowledge transfer) were addressed in the projects and

these projects often focused on multiple elements;

- independent facilitation efforts had strong representation amongst the funded initiatives (included in 43 per cent of all projects);
- project implementation involved a range of cooperating partners and participants from the developmental services sector and beyond traditional service delivery organizations. Partners primarily included developmental service (DS) agencies, but also advocacy groups and organizations, non-DS service providers, planning and connecting entities whose main focus is PDP and connecting individuals and families to their communities, as well as existing networks and steering groups. Participants in PDP project activities included DS agencies, family and community members, individuals with disabilities, independent facilitators, other service agencies, and to a more limited extent, education system personnel.

### **Specific Nature of Funded PDP Activities**

The specific findings about PDP-FIF activity indicated that:

- the projects' interpretation and implementation of the Ministry's critical PDP elements, i.e., knowledge transfer, network development and independent facilitation, was varied and included additional PDP-related activities. More specifically, these additional PDP-related activities included resource development and adaptation, undertaking PDP development with individuals and families as part of facilitator training or pilot testing planning tools, as well as planned PDP sustaining activity (procuring funds, creating new PDP staff positions and roles etc.);
- the depth of training provided across projects was varied, with some communities requiring initial PDP awareness-raising while other communities were ready for a more advanced learning experience. It is likely that the extent of communities' preparedness for PDP was highly varied prior to the grants, resulting in variations in the depth of knowledge transfer activities undertaken;
- the projects' network efforts were designed to make connections for/with clients, but also to make supportive connections among facilitators (both independent and/or agency based facilitators); and
- within independent facilitation projects, the full range of the Ministry's critical PDP elements was addressed.

## **PDP Results of Note**

The findings regarding short-term results of note indicated that:

- a large majority of the projects implemented PDP activities as proposed;
- there were important achievements for each of the stakeholder groups affiliated with the funded projects (i.e., for self-advocates and families, independent facilitators and service agencies) as well as for PDP in general, regardless of the particular stakeholder group;
- linkages and partnerships fostering PDP were established and included all stakeholder groups affiliated with the projects. Many projects also played a role in connecting people across different groups (e.g., families with facilitators and agency-based facilitators with independent facilitators);
- in general, it was reported that families and self-advocates felt supported as a result of their participation in PDP-FIF sponsored activities;
- independent facilitation in some communities gained legitimacy as evidenced by increased referrals; and
- a large number of agency-based staff were trained in PDP approaches.

## **Evidence of Project Sustainability**

The sustainability findings suggested that:

- there is evidence that all stakeholder groups (i.e., families, self-advocates, independent facilitators and service delivery agencies), have experienced sustaining activity beyond the funding period;
- there is a sizeable proportion of projects (just over 25 per cent) that have shown little evidence of longer-term sustainability;
- some self-advocates have accomplished meaningful goals and connections as a result of social capital building opportunities offered through the projects;
- families have been maintaining connections they have made with each other;

- some newly formed independent facilitation networks have established sustaining financial resources, planning structures and on-going learning opportunities; and
- some agencies have established infrastructure to maintain and grow staff PDP knowledge and experience.

### **Emergent Issues in the PDP-FIF Projects**

Some of the factors that made project implementation more difficult, or that could potentially impact the implementation of person-directed planning in the future included:

- **Timeline Challenges** – A number of project leads indicated that proposal and implementation timelines were too short, making it difficult to complete all that was proposed and limiting possibilities for observable project impacts. It should be noted however, that most projects did manage to implement the majority of their planned activities.
- **Sharing Responsibility** – Some project partnerships did not fully share responsibilities and resulted in smaller than anticipated attendance at some of the planned PDP-related events.
- **Geographic Challenges** – In more remote or isolated parts of the province, it was difficult to form personal support circles because group members could not attend meetings due to distances, transportation, physical, technical and time constraints. In some projects it was difficult to get family members and/or self-advocates to commit the time needed to develop PDPs as part of facilitator training.
- **Independent Facilitation Challenges** – In some project locations there were so few independent planners that their presence at training sessions was less than expected. Also, many families cannot afford to pay for independent facilitators, making this option inaccessible to some, even if trained facilitators are available.
- **PDP Facilitator Skill Sets and Training** – Some questions about the skill sets and depth of training required to undertake PDP have surfaced. Some view PDP work as quite a different skill set from service planning activity, requiring extensive training and practice for future facilitators. Others see PDP work as a natural extension of existing service planning, which does not necessarily represent a large shift in practice requiring in-depth training experiences.
- **Situating Skilled PDP Facilitators** – Some project partners questioned whether PDP can be adequately undertaken by agency-based providers

even if they are well trained. They questioned whether agency affiliation enables PDP facilitators to “hear” individuals’ goals and dreams in order to facilitate on-going connections with a range of community supports, which may not be part of their own organization.

Some stakeholders believe that service agencies can provide PDP facilitation, as evidenced by the in-depth and on-going training that has occurred in some organizations prior to, during and following PDP-FIF grants. Others feel that service agencies need to know enough about PDP approaches to properly explain the process to their clients, and then to re-direct them to well-qualified, unencumbered and independent facilitators who have had in-depth PDP training. Finally, some stakeholders suggested that both agency-based and independent facilitation are viable options for assisting clients with person-directed planning, providing a broader range of facilitation choices for self-advocates and their families.

### **Lessons Learned About PDP**

The nature of lessons learned as a result of project implementation (as expressed by project leads) focused upon:

- the underlying philosophy and approaches to PDP;
- organizations’ variable knowledge about PDP;
- potential positioning of PDP in the future (similar point as in previous “issues” section);
- the degree of isolation experienced by individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

### **Successful Strategies and Opportunities**

The implementation strategies that have contributed to projects’ successes and that are worthy of replication in the future include:

#### **Knowledge Transfer Strategies**

- The use of funded knowledge transfer sessions in retreat formats, held away from work environments, for training independent facilitators, who cannot afford these training opportunities and for independent facilitation entities which lack the funds to train the facilitators who work with them. These retreat formats also enabled both agency and independent participants to immerse themselves in the learning experience and mentoring conversations.

- The development of facilitators' and planners' networks as venues for expanding PDP knowledge and skills, and in particular, for decreasing the sense of isolation among independent facilitators.
- The continuation of family retreats held away from home environments, which made participants feel "taken care of" and appreciative of opportunities to be heard and to tell their stories. These retreats also made participants feel safe enough to share their experiences, and in some cases, gave them a new sense of hope.
- The continued use of a number of experienced, well-known trainers and facilitators in the province who were contracted for services by more than one project. They facilitated sessions with self-advocates and families, agency staff, and independent facilitators as well as combinations of all of these stakeholder groups. They conducted inspiring sessions that excited participants.

### **Network Development Strategies**

- Employment of a paid consultant for a year, to establish facilitator or family and community networks. The hired consultants gave network members the opportunity to learn how to model and operate their groups in the future. It also avoided intensive time commitments required for network initiation, which can often discourage volunteer participation.

### **Creating Resources**

- The creation of DVD documentaries with individuals and families has inspired the imagination about future possibilities for individuals with disabilities and has created a place for families to begin to think and talk together about planning.

### **Recommendations Relevant to PDP Policy and Program Development**

The consultants' recommendations relevant to PDP policy and program development are addressed the following categories:

- comprehensive PDP training
- guidelines for the PDP process
- funding models for PDP facilitation
- resources and planning tools
- fostering further PDP development.

## **Recommendation #1: Comprehensive PDP Training**

Drawing together some of the more common facilitator training techniques employed in the PDP-FIF projects, **it is recommended that a phased, comprehensive PDP training program could include:**

- one to two days of theory/philosophy of PDP;
- two to five days of experiential/theory application;
- shadowing a senior facilitator working with families (but for a limited time only, so that learners have the chance to practice their own facilitation skills);
- planning and implementation of person-directed plans with at least two families, accompanied by individual mentoring/coaching from a skilled facilitator;
- mentoring/coaching in small groups comprised of a skilled facilitator and other facilitators or family members, while more independently undertaking PDP work with at least two families;
- on-going mentoring and skill building through facilitator's network membership; and
- training that is spread over time, rather than condensed into a short timeframe.

## **Recommendation #2: Guidelines for the PDP Process**

**Person-directed planning guidelines should not be prescriptive.** “Cookie cutter” approaches should be avoided, and guidelines should have room for flexibility, because every individual and family will have a different planning style.

**PDP facilitation efforts should focus upon on-going facilitation of an individual's plan, beyond the time of its initial development.** On-going facilitation should ensure the plan is working to the individual's satisfaction and should adapt the plan in collaboration with the individual over time. PDPs should not be static documents, but must reflect client-paced movement and choice.

**The development of social capital should go hand-in-hand with the development of PDPs.** Therefore, person-directed plans should involve individuals' selection of support circles comprised of community members who will assist them to achieve their dreams and goals.

**Many hours of connector time (including administrative time) are required** to facilitate both the establishment and implementation of support circles and person-directed plans. It can take at least a year to develop and implement a support network and accompanying plans and to see them evolve.

### **Recommendation #3: Funding Models for PDP Facilitation**

**It is recommended that the Ministry explore the “pros and cons” of the following range of models of PDP facilitation**, identified through research undertaken by one of the projects. These models vary by their source of funding and should be considered individually and in combination:

- Fee-for-service, where consumers pay for facilitation;
- Local agencies share funding for a group of independent facilitators;
- Agencies hire a trained planning facilitator (in-house);
- Base funding for facilitation through independent facilitation entities and/or through agencies; and
- A cooperative business model where socially-minded corporations fund or provide in-kind resources, such as operations-type manpower, to a community-based PDP entity.

### **Recommendation #4: Awareness of PDP Resources and Planning Tools**

**It is recommended that the Ministry make PDP stakeholders aware of the PDP tools and planning resources** developed or adapted by a number of the projects. Attention is drawn to three particularly innovative resources described below:

**Networking System** – TYZE is a secure on-line support network system (part of PLAN; pilot tested in one of the PDP-FIF projects), and can be used to facilitate formal or informal connections or personal networks. It may be particularly useful in remote areas to link support network members who cannot convene for in-person meetings. It can also be used to remotely coach/mentor facilitators who are working with families to develop and implement PDPs.

**Website** – A website ([facileperth.ca](http://facileperth.ca)) that provides an inclusive e-community dedicated to PDP and independent facilitation was developed in one of the projects. It incorporates a number of features that make it accessible to a wide variety of users. It includes videos, voice over PowerPoint, Read Speak, a downloadable PDF, facilitator reflection questions, classroom reading, and conversation lounges for families, facilitators and youth.

**Online Workshops** – Two online workshops providing an overview of augmentative and alternative communication in relation to PDP are being developed by connectABILITY.ca. These workshops and a guidebook will be available to the general public for free, indefinitely.

### **Recommendation #5: Cautions Regarding Development and use of Planning Tools**

**There seems to be little need for new planning tools.** Many good planning tools currently exist and are in frequent use (e.g., PATH, MAPS and others developed with PDP-FIF funds).

**Existing tools should be used as a support to personal network development and planning,** and should not direct or replace facilitation activity. The individual and their personal choices must be kept in mind when selecting planning tools. If planning tools are to be used, facilitators should make use of the multiple tools that exist and not limit their facilitation activity to a single approach.

### **Recommendation #6: Opportunities to Foster PDP Development**

**It is useful to identify a local PDP champion/leader to initiate independent facilitation in a community.** In some communities, service agencies cannot be seen as taking the lead in developing independent facilitation, although they may need to initiate the concept and provide some start-up resourcing to jump-start PDP activity.

**It may be counterproductive to undertake PDP in separate sectors** (e.g., disabilities, mental health and the homeless), but rather to consider the PDP environment as one that deals with diversity in general, combining PDP resources across sectors.

Since educators have been involved in some of the PDP-FIF projects, **it will be important to keep abreast of MCSS/MCYS collaborations with the Ministry of Education** and their mutual work on transition planning, as indicated in the document, “Draft Provincial Transition Planning Framework” (May 2011).

**The Ministry should bring together the well-known leaders in PDP development** across the province for a discussion of future guidelines, and directions. To date, these leaders have not come together as a group but would likely have valuable contributions to make to coordinated PDP efforts.

## Key Messages of the Implementation Review

There are a number of key messages generated from the Implementation Review findings that the consultants would like to convey:

- The findings represent 37 funded projects and do not necessarily offer a complete picture of the status of PDP across the province.
- A high proportion of PDP-FIF projects (84 per cent) implemented what they had initially proposed.
- Fiscal Innovation Fund grants were a “good idea” and were used well. They stimulated PDP activity and community interest, as evidenced by high rates of attendance at many of the sponsored events and activities.
- The Fiscal Innovation Fund grants generated additional momentum for independent facilitation in particular, as evidenced by the number of projects that were funded (43 per cent of all projects had a focus on independent facilitation), the variety of PDP-related activities that were undertaken, and the level of interest demonstrated.
- Sustainability of funded activities was generally good, but just over one-quarter of projects showed little evidence of continuation beyond the funding period.

There are, however, existing planning tables/committees that used the Fiscal Innovation Fund opportunity to launch or continue PDP-related activity. This suggests there are some strong community structures that can sustain and move PDP forward in the future.

- There seems to be room for both agency-based and independent facilitation in Ontario communities, a situation which would provide more planning choices for individuals and families. However, there is some question as to whether service agencies can undertake person-directed planning with their own agency affiliated facilitators.
- Finally, there seems to be a sense of co-operation and good-will among agencies and independent facilitation stakeholders who were involved with PDP-FIF projects. All were working towards preparing for and maximizing the planning opportunities for individuals and families in their communities.