

About the Building a Bridge to Self-Employment for People with Disabilities program

Concluded in January 2009, the Building a Bridge to Self-Employment for People with Disabilities program was a four-year experiment to test the use of information technology to assist people with disabilities starting their own business.

The program, which was coordinated by SEDI and funded by the Office of Learning Technologies, provided participants with an accessible online self-assessment workbook course and one-on-one support by local coaches from disability and business development organizations.

The five initial communities involved – Halifax (NS), Richmond and Nelson (BC) and Thunder Bay and Sudbury (ON) – grew to include other regions such as La Crete (AB), Saskatoon (SK) and Kapuskasing (ON). Together, organizations in these communities created a National Community Learning Network to share ideas and resources and to participate in capacity building workshops. Through the program, these communities mapped online all of the local initiatives for people with disabilities.

The pilot also discovered that many barriers still exist for people with disabilities and the organizations that serve them. SEDI will continue to participate in future learning in this area.

About the NewStart program

NewStart is a SEDI program that promotes financial literacy and entrepreneurship among youth who are new to Canada. Funded by the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, NewStart aims to make a difference for many newcomer youth who are faced with the challenge that workers new to Canada are losing their jobs at over three times the rate of workers born here. This Ontario-wide program ran until the end of March 2010 and reached over 750 newcomer youth.

For more information on these entrepreneurship programs, please contact Jenni Bolton at jbolton@sedi.org.