

EATI: A NEW PARTNERSHIP

EQUIPMENT AND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE (EATI)

ANNUAL REPORT 2011



“The results and the outcomes are so much better when you start from the person and move outward. It’s not necessarily quicker and it’s not always easier. But, the outcomes always seem to be much better.”

“Because of the equipment I got through EATI, I’m working as a program leader at a local community centre. I run two programs that involve children: a family-centred drop-in and a newborn educational seminar.”

“In many ways, I think EATI is becoming a model for what engagement among community organizations, people with disabilities and government can look like and how it can be a win-win-win situation.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was prepared by the BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities for the BC Personal Supports Network and the Equipment and Assistive Technology Initiative.

Thank you to the many staff, partners and clients who offered insights and experiences for this report.

The BC Personal Supports Network is supported by the Kinsmen Foundation.

Funding for the EATI project is provided by the Province of British Columbia, through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Agreement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER _____	3
INTRODUCTION _____	4
MILESTONES _____	5
THE VISION FOR PERSONAL SUPPORTS IN BC _____	6
HOW EATI OPERATES _____	7
THE COMMUNITY NETWORK _____	8
THE COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP _____	8
HOW EATI INNOVATES _____	9
WHO DOES EATI SERVE? _____	14
EATI FINANCIAL PROFILE _____	15
GOING FORWARD _____	17

CONTACT EATI

Toll free: 1-877-333-7554 | Email: eti@bcpsn.org | Fax: 604-326-0176
Office/Mail: #103-366 East Kent Avenue South, Vancouver BC V5X 4N6

VISIT US ONLINE

Web: www.bcpsn.org | YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/bcpsn2011

This report was designed to be read electronically. Please go to the BCPSN website to access an electronic version which includes hyperlinks to resources and videos.



Funding provided through the Canada-British Columbia Labour Market Agreement.

A MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

**HONOURABLE STEPHANIE CADIEUX
MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

I'm pleased to acknowledge the vision and hard work of the Equipment and Assistive Technology Initiative over this past year.

The assistive technology provided through this program helps individuals break down barriers and achieve their employment goals.

The initiative was put together by the BC Personal Supports Network which is a group of organizations working to improve access to personal supports for people with disabilities. This collaboration is a demonstration of what happens when people come together to ensure individuals with disabilities have access to the assistive technology needed to reach their employment goals.

The BC Personal Supports Network co-manages the initiative with the Ministry of Social Development, benefiting more than 800 people since September 2009. Funding is provided by the federal government through the Labour Market Agreement.

This Annual Report of the Equipment and Assistive Technology Initiative affirms how we are working to meet the obligations established by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and is in alignment with British Columbia's mandate of an open and accountable government.

**YOURS SINCERELY,
HONOURABLE STEPHANIE CADIEUX
MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**



INTRODUCTION

| BY CHRISTINE GORDON

CO-CHAIR: PROVINCIAL EQUIPMENT AND ASSISTIVE DEVICES COMMITTEE

MODERATOR: BC PERSONAL SUPPORTS NETWORK



Initiative (definition): an act or strategy intended to resolve a difficulty or improve a situation; a fresh approach to something

Initiative (synonym): dynamism, enterprise, inventiveness, leadership, originality, push, resourcefulness

It is unusual to produce an annual report about an initiative. Most initiatives don't last long enough to be reportable and many defy a linear narrative.

The Equipment and Assistive Technology Initiative, otherwise known as EATI, is not a fleeting initiative. It is a determined strategy to approaching a long-standing problem: how can we best provide people with disabilities in British Columbia with the assistive technology that they need to participate in the economic and social life of the province?

Some provinces in Canada solved that problem by adopting universal access assistive technology programs. Although these programs have guaranteed access, it is a limited access to a limited range of assistive technology. Most programs do that by necessity – square pegs have to fit into round holes. These kinds of programs did not appear to us in British Columbia to represent the best ways to do things.

EATI demonstrates a fresh approach to the problem of meeting the essential need for assistive technology by beginning with individuals' employment goals and then engaging with them to identify the functional barriers to these goals and the unique solutions.

EATI does not use a medical approach and never requires a medical certification of disability. EATI does not apply a means test because it adopts a universal access principle.

EATI encourages people with knowledge and experience to apply it to self-assessment, as an alternative to professional assessment. EATI allows people to choose the solution that will work for them. This could mean off-the-shelf generic products, cutting-edge technology or a customized one-of-a-kind solution.

As a bold initiative, EATI incorporates the principles and aspirations of people with disabilities as they have been expressed in countless community forums, in research and in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. EATI rolls the right of self-determination and the individual responsibility that accompanies it into the heart of the initiative.

EATI is an initiative that has been supported by dynamic, inventive and resourceful leaders in government and the non-profit sector. They have been risk-takers and innovators, and they have sacrificed conventional rewards in order to bring an idea to reality.

We believe EATI's fresh approach to enabling people to overcome functional barriers to employment will also help people overcome the many other barriers they will face. We also believe that neither government nor the non-profit sector on their own can solve the problem of the exclusion of people with disabilities.

There must be mature partnerships based upon mutual respect and trust. There must also be a shared vision that the way to the future is to endow people with disabilities with the resources they need to control their own futures. EATI is an initiative that aims to do that.

Because disabilities involve functional limitations, it is often difficult or impossible for people with disabilities to interact with their communities and societies without assistive technology. Whether they be specially designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities (e.g. Braille writers, prosthetic devices, wheelchairs and hearing aids) or innovative adaptations of mainstream technological innovations (e.g. email, the Internet and personal computers), assistive technologies are vital to the process of providing social and environmental access to a significant cross-section of people with disabilities.

THE WORLD BANK: 2004

MILESTONES

An annual report marks one distinct milestone – the end of a year. For the BC Personal Supports Network (BCPSN), and the Equipment and Assistive Technology Initiative, this annual report marks the culmination of a number of important milestones, all of which took prodigious energy, resourcefulness, commitment and integrity to surpass.

2004 The Provincial Equipment and Assistive Devices Committee (PEADC) is created by community organizations, professional groups and disability advocates to lobby government to improve access to personal supports, beginning with equipment and assistive devices. PEADC vows to stay together until the job is done.

2005 PEADC representatives meet with several members of the British Columbia Cabinet who are positive about the idea that access to equipment and assistive devices become a hallmark of the government's disability strategy. They ask their Ministry staff to help to make it happen.

2006 January The Ministry of Social Development (MSD), the lead Ministry for government's Disability Strategy, signs a memorandum of understanding with PEADC to work collaboratively with several Ministries on a Personal Supports Program Working Group. The goal is to create the best system of supports for people with disabilities.

2006 March The joint community/government Personal Supports Program Working Group unanimously adopts a vision, values and principles for personal supports programs in British Columbia (please see page 6). The goal is to recognize the aspirations of people with disabilities and our collective responsibilities for full inclusion.

2006 June The Working Group unanimously adopts the person centered Participation Model for Personal Supports as the best way to operationalize the vision and values for personal supports in BC. Everyone agrees that the best practice is citizens driving programs, not programs driving people.

2007 Recommendations from several working groups on how to implement the Participation Model are accepted by the Working Group. It is unanimously agreed to demonstrate the Participation Model through 5 model Personal Supports Centres in BC. Victoria, Prince George, Vancouver, Nanaimo and Cranbrook are chosen!

2007 Summer The Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians trials the Participation Model in its 6-month low-tech assistive devices program funded by the MSD. The Western Institute for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing follows suit with a similar MSD-funded program. The Participation Model is found to be a success!

2008 Demonstration Personal Supports Centres open in Victoria and Prince George, while Cranbrook and Vancouver are geared up to open next. Then the economic downturn surprises the world with its force and extent. Future demonstration centres are put on indefinite hold.

2009 PEADC and the Ministry of Social Development regroup and try to think out of the box on how to keep demonstrating the Participation Model in the face of the economic crisis. The BC Personal Supports Network is created to coordinate and maximize community capacity and the federal/provincial Labour Market Agreement is used as a resource for eliminating assistive technology barriers to employment. Innovative thinking and lean management are married in order to keep driving a Personal Supports Program in British Columbia forward!

2010 The Equipment and Assistive Technology Initiative completes its start-up year. Early results indicate that, despite the challenges of serving all people with disabilities across the province, enthusiasm for EATI is growing. The government/community co-managers are challenged to keep revising policies and practices in keeping with what is being learned in the field.

THE VISION FOR PERSONAL SUPPORTS IN BC

EATI is a demonstration of a Personal Supports Program that puts into practice the vision, values and principles that were established by the joint community/government Personal Supports Working Group in 2006. EATI also demonstrates how to meet the obligations established by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>.

VISION

British Columbians have access to the personal supports that they need in order to achieve their goals and have the opportunity to participate fully in the life of the province.

VALUES

INCLUSIVE

British Columbians with disabilities have the right to participate fully in society and have access to the personal supports that they need to do so.

CHOICE

British Columbians with disabilities have the right to self-determination and will be given every opportunity to make decisions about the resources they need for their participation. Individuals who require assistance with their decision-making can be represented by their family and/or support network.

ACCESSIBLE

Access to personal supports is based on need and is not tied to other factors such as individual or family income, assets, eligibility for other services, geographic location or age. Disability programs and supports are barrier free and able to accommodate all forms of communication.

RESPECT

Programs and supports respect language and cultural diversity, protect individual privacy and treat all citizens equitably, compassionately and respectfully.

PRINCIPLES

CITIZEN-CENTERED

Personal supports are tied to the person throughout the life span and follow the person anywhere in the province. The individual and their support network, in open and informed consultation with health professionals and service providers, guide the functional assessment.

FLEXIBLE AND RESPONSIVE

Programs and services are flexible, adapting to the changing needs of the individual and to changes in technology.

COMPREHENSIVE

Individual need determines the range of personal supports that will be made available in British Columbia. Provision of equipment and assistive devices includes training in the use of the equipment/assistive device as well as delivery, installation, specified maintenance and repair.

EFFECTIVE AND SUSTAINABLE

Programs and supports are managed in a timely and efficient manner utilizing a variety of delivery models to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability. Policies and procedures are not duplicated or intrusive and maximize the ability of participants to achieve positive outcomes.

ACCOUNTABLE

Programs and supports are monitored on the basis of outcomes and regular follow-up and evaluation occurs to ensure the best possible supports for persons with disabilities. Program participants take responsibility for ensuring that personal supports are used effectively and for the purposes that they are intended.

INTEGRATED

Government, people with disabilities, families, community organizations, health professionals, technology specialists and vendors work together in partnership to provide the full range of personal supports.

HOW EATI OPERATES

EATI works with individuals to overcome functional barriers that stand in the way of achieving an employment goal. Functional barriers are just one of the many barriers that people with disabilities must overcome in order to reach an employment goal. For some EATI participants, overcoming a functional barrier will be the first step in getting out into the world, giving them a chance to meet a long-term goal for employment.

EATI uses the person-centered Participation Model to assist people to plan and implement their personal strategy for overcoming the functional barrier to an employment goal. EATI's navigators assist them every step of the way.

WHAT NAVIGATORS DO

I start with an interview to determine the person's eligibility. As people with disabilities ourselves, the Navigators know and understand, to some degree, what the person is experiencing.



Once this paperwork is out of the way, the real navigating begins. The person then answers three questions which act as a starting point.

GOALS: What things do you wish to do in your home or community related to employment and/or volunteering?

BARRIERS: What is stopping you from doing these things?

NEEDS: What do you think you need to help you do these things?

The first question helps me to understand the person's employment goal. Some people have a very clear goal, while others are still clarifying theirs.

For some, the employment goal is immediate, while for others, the goal may be several steps and several years down the road—beginning with volunteering and moving from there to part-time and full-time work.

The second question looks at the barriers stopping the applicant from achieving or pursuing their goal. We're all aware of the many barriers that people with disabilities face, but EATI is primarily concerned with

the functional barriers related to a disability that can often be overcome, at least in part, by equipment and assistive technology.

What makes this work so rewarding is the third question. Our hope is to be able to fund a piece of equipment or assistive technology that will help the person overcome the barriers to employment. It's not unusual for the applicant's frustration and despair to become tears of excitement and hope. I will confess, I've shared those tears on occasion.

After we've discussed these three questions, the next step is to determine which specific equipment or assistive technology is needed. In some cases, a professional assessment is required and, in others, the Navigator will guide the person through a self-assessment.

Once the assessment is complete, another Navigator takes over the application. It is this Navigator's role to ensure the quote for the equipment or assistive technology being requested reflects the applicant's needs and removes their functional barriers. Navigators monitor the adjudication and provide follow-up support.

LINDA BARTRAM, EATI NAVIGATOR

THE COMMUNITY NETWORK

EATI is delivered by a network of community organizations—the BC Personal Supports Network—whose members work collaboratively to provide outreach, education, navigation, solutions and follow-up to all EATI participants.

The EATI program hub for the BCPSN is the BC Association of Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities (BCITS). The hub provides the day-to-day coordination, service delivery and administration for EATI. BCITS takes its policy direction for EATI from the Network Partners Council made up of member organizations of the Network and representatives from the Disability Services Branch of the Ministry of Social Development (MSD).



ACCOMMODATING OUR NAVIGATORS

As the EATI hub, BCITS was obviously committed to hiring people with disabilities, so we had to make some workplace accommodations. Some

of our Navigators have visual impairments and some have very limited use of their hands.

Some of the challenges were technical, like how can our BCITS computer network “communicate” with people who are accessing it using a JAWS screen reader or Dragon NaturallySpeaking voice input software.

We also had to make some adjustments for the Navigators who have functional barriers that make handling paperwork challenging. And, we accommodated people by letting them work from home.

We incorporated some administrative time, as part of our in kind contribution to EATI, and we’ve made it all work.

In the end, we were able to hire 5 people with disabilities full time—who wouldn’t have been able to work without these accommodations—which we’re really happy about.

KIRSTY DICKINSON, BCITS CLIENT SERVICES COORDINATOR

THE COMMUNITY GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP

Since 2006, community organizations, through the Provincial Equipment and Assistive Devices Committee and its offshoot the BC Personal Supports Network, have been in partnership with the MSD to develop a personal supports program in British Columbia. As the milestones timeline illustrates, EATI is the latest in many joint efforts to demonstrate a person-centered, values-driven approach to delivering personal supports like assistive technology.

Marcel Lauziere, the president and CEO of Imagine Canada, has identified community/government collaboration as crucial to social development. Despite the many challenges of partnership, this long alliance has been held together by the commitment to a shared vision and values.

As our partnership has matured, we have actively engaged in evaluating our efforts and their impact on people with disabilities, and planning for ways to expand the process and practices of EATI into more and more corners of government and community service.



BUILDING TRUST

I’ve been involved with disability supports and equipment since 2004, and that work has culminated in the BC Personal Supports Network and EATI.

As someone who sells mobility equipment to people with disabilities, and as a rep for a medical equipment association, this has been an experience for me and I’ve learned a lot. I hope I’ve been able to give something back. We try to strengthen the community and our clients by contributing to BCPSN and EATI.

EATI is a new adventure, it’s a different kind of community/government partnership. There’s a huge amount of volunteer time put in by community groups. They do it because the work fits in with their mission or vision.

And EATI strengthens the relationship between community and government, and I think that’s a good thing. It’s contributed to a growing trust.

JOHN ARMSTRONG, NETWORK PARTNER, HOME MEDICAL EQUIPMENT DEALERS ASSOCIATION

BREAKTHROUGH IN COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The main thing about EATI is that it's the first truly effective working model—the Participation Model—to provide assistive devices to people with disabilities who have employment goals. By effective, I mean in the way that it fulfills needs, without a lot of bureaucracy. People get equipment that truly fits their needs, rather than getting what's available.

Other than the model itself, another plus is the cohesion of the network. It includes community and government social services agencies who work together. It's a huge initiative and I think it's a breakthrough in collaboration.

Community groups like ours, the Richmond Centre for Disability (RCD) make our contributions without any funding. In our case, we see the value of the project, even though it demands a lot from us.

The down side, if there is one, is that it's a new initiative, so there's been a lot of trial and error—both on the part of community organizations and government. So sometimes it's been slow going and there has been some miscommunication. But, roles and responsibilities and the vision are becoming clearer.

At RCD, we feel the Participation Model conveys our philosophy of independent living loud and clear. We want to embrace the model. It fits our culture.

ELLA HUANG, NETWORK PARTNER, RICHMOND CENTRE FOR DISABILITY

HOW EATI INNOVATES

INDIVIDUALIZED PLANNING AND SOLUTIONS

EATI offers the opportunity for people to choose the solution that will work for them. No one size must fit all, no lists, no ceilings.

CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

Bob had been a barber in the past. Now, as a double leg amputee, he was interested in returning to this work full time. He came to us with the idea of a custom-built barber chair. Bob researched many options and ideas, but it was clear they wouldn't work.

He had a loaned power wheelchair, for example, but in the chair he couldn't get close enough to people to cut their hair. And, you need to be able to get around the person—from the back and sides.

Finally, CanAssist in Victoria was approached. They worked with Bob and developed a plan to create a custom-built barber chair. It's a chair with an attached platform that Bob transfers onto out of his wheelchair. The platform moves around the barber chair and the person having the haircut. Bob is now using his customized chair in his newly re-opened barber shop.

Bob's situation is one good example of why a pre-defined list of equipment choices doesn't work. In his case, if there had been a list, you can bet that 'custom-built barber chair with revolving platform', wouldn't have been on it! But, because EATI starts from what the person's needs and goals are, we were able to think outside the box and eventually find an incredibly creative solution.

WENDY COX, EATI NAVIGATOR



■ **READ MORE ABOUT BOB IN A GLOBE ANE MAIL FEATURE AT [HTTP://TINYURL.COM/6M6H5QE](http://tinyurl.com/6M6H5QE) (ACCESSED JULY 15/12).**

INVESTS IN PEOPLE AND THEIR GOALS

EATI supports big and small ideas that eliminate functional barriers while promoting entrepreneurial spirit.

In 2009, as the President and founder of the Accessible Wilderness Society (AWS), Dan Bauer was invited to speak about his vision at a gathering in Prince George. Sitting near him at the head table was Minister Shirley Bond of the provincial government. “I love this,” she said. “How can I help?”

Now the AWS has a contract with the provincial government for over 20 acres around Lake Roberts, near Campbell River. Dan’s vision of a barrier-free wilderness facility is on its way to becoming reality.

Lake Roberts is a heavily-treed area, so Dan approached EATI about getting a mobility device to help him access the area and oversee the resort project.

“These guys were amazing,” Dan says. “When I first met with them, their criteria seemed more geared to typical devices like wheelchairs and what I needed was a working vehicle.” But EATI soon approved a device called the Rhino.

The Rhino looks and drives like a small all-terrain jeep, with hand controls for the brake and accelerator. There’s also a bucket in the back where Dan can put his wheelchair.

The Rhino has made it possible for Dan to be directly employed in the development of the project.



■ **FOR ANOTHER STORY ABOUT HOW EATI INVESTS IN PEOPLE, GO TO [HTTP://TINYURL.COM/9N864VO](http://tinyurl.com/9N864VO).**

■ **TO VIEW MORE VIDEOS ABOUT EATI PARTICIPANTS, VISIT US ON YOUTUBE AT [HTTP://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/USER/BCPSN2011](http://www.youtube.com/user/BCPSN2011).**

MAKES CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE

New technologies are opening up new possibilities and leveling the playing field for people with disabilities. EATI supports people to embrace up to the minute technologies that will overcome functional barriers

ACCESS TO INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY

Jason, one of our EATI participants who is visually impaired, was doing a self-assessment, looking for equipment to help with his volunteer work in writing and research. He was using DocuScan, online scan and read software, that worked really well, but he could only work from home, hooked up to his computer scanner. He wanted to work from libraries, his home office—wherever—and be able to store all his research in one place.

I asked Jason if he knew about HoverCam—a portable camera he could use anywhere in conjunction with DocuScan. He hadn’t heard of it, so he went away, did some research and came back amazed at the portability and flexibility a HoverCam would give him. It essentially allows him to plug into any internet-connected computer and scan documents to his DocuScan account.

So, with just a bit of information from me, and some research on his part, he found something that really fit his needs. Now that he has the HoverCam, and some other equipment from EATI, he’s been able to get some contract work.

ALBERT RUEL, EATI NAVIGATOR



PUTS PEER SUPPORT AT THE HEART OF PROGRAM DELIVERY

Self-worth takes a beating when people with disabilities must access programs by describing how needy they are. EATI's peer Super Navigators focus on individual strengths with an empathetic and encouraging approach.

NEW KNOWLEDGE OF SELF-WORTH

When Katherine first called, she had a long-term employment goal, but in the short-term she was going to be interviewed for a volunteer position.

Katherine is visually impaired, in middle age and has never worked. We talked about her situation, and the kind of assistance and technology EATI could potentially offer. We also talked about how it's still common for organizations or businesses to value our skills and training as volunteers, but when we talk about paid employment—it's a different story.

A few weeks after our initial call, Katherine got in touch again and told me she wasn't going to pursue the volunteer position. She said, "I'm going to find paid work. I'm worth being hired." She had enrolled in an employment program with the Neil Squire Society and was on her way.

The transition she went through, in such a short time, was so rewarding to me. Somehow, through talking to me and hearing some of my experience—I'm visually impaired too and have a job—and learning about types of technology available that she could get through EATI, she began to see new possibilities for herself. To me, this is what EATI is all about.

LINDA BARTRAM, EATI NAVIGATOR



BUILDS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CAPITAL

People with disabilities are vital to building the human and social capital that is desperately needed for an inclusive society. Assistive technology can unleash this enormous potential.

UNEXPECTED SUCCESSES

When Sarah applied to EATI, she was volunteering with the Red Cross and the volunteer fire department in her very small northern community. She is also a volunteer peer support person with the MS Society. Her goal was to find employment doing bookkeeping from her home, so she applied to us for equipment to help with the barriers created by her MS: a laptop, Dragon NaturallySpeaking software and Microsoft Office.

Her application was successful and, not long after she got her equipment, she had a part-time contract with the volunteer fire department ordering supplies and inventory. Then, she had an opportunity to work with the regional district, but she would need to take minutes which was difficult with her MS. So, she applied to EATI again for an electronic voice recorder. We found one compatible with Dragon, so she got that part-time job, in addition to another contract doing bookkeeping for a local logging company.

In our follow-up, we learned about the part-time work she'd found and another enterprise she's launched. Sarah had noticed there was no real meeting place in her community, so she opened a small coffee shop. Not only that, but it was employing a couple of people.

A coffee shop was not something she had ever envisioned. But with the equipment she received, she far exceeded what she had originally wanted to do and that just seemed to light up her creativity and her natural desire to give back to her community. Sarah is the kind of person that EATI is meant to help: she's got the skills and amazing drive, but she didn't have the tools to do what she wanted to do.

With a fairly small investment, we were able to help her reach her employment goals—and achieve some new ones!—and even to employ other people.

FRANK SIEGRIST, EATI NAVIGATOR



ALLOWS EMPLOYERS TO SEE HOW TECHNOLOGY LEVELS THE PLAYING FIELD FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Many employers cannot overcome their hesitation about people with disabilities being able to do the job that is required. EATI participants can show employers what they can do when assistive technology levels the playing field.



LAILA'S STORY

Laila Cappellini has a background in early childhood education and approached EATI to help her reach a goal of obtaining employment in this field. Laila's progressive vision loss made it impossible for her to obtain or manage information

independently, despite her best efforts.

Laila requested several pieces of equipment. A color detector helps her to identify what clothes to wear together. A laptop computer equipped with JAWS enables her to navigate the Internet and do research. An Intel reader converts any printed text into digital text and then reads it aloud to her. This means that Laila can read things like food labels, pamphlets and letters without the assistance of another person.

Laila is now working as a program leader at a community centre in Coquitlam. She runs two programs that involve kids: a family centered drop-in and a newborn educational seminar. The drop-in is a free service that operates much like a preschool. The newborn seminar is intended to educate parents on some of the challenges that come with raising a child.

Before being hired as a program leader, Laila volunteered once a week at the community centre. Her new assistive technology helped her to convince her potential employer of her ability to be independent. Laila is also quick to credit the supportive attitude of her co-workers at the community center. The equipment Laila received was just one part of the equation. Her persistence and her employer's positive attitude helped to complete the circle.

■ **FOR ANOTHER STORY ABOUT HOW ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY LEVELS THE PLAYING FIELD, GO TO [HTTP://TINYURL.COM/9HWKEUF](http://tinyurl.com/9HWKEUF).**

HARNESSES COMMUNITY CAPACITY

EATI is delivered by a network of organizations who work collaboratively and donate their capacity to help people solve problems. They are driven by their mission and not their bottom line.

Mike is in his early 50s, extremely smart, dedicated, likeable and has cerebral palsy. He had been trying to find work for many years and was committed to finding employment. His CP affects his speech and mobility, and he also has some vision issues. As a result, it's difficult to convince employers that he is capable.

Several years ago, he decided to become an "advertising billboard." It was a creative idea: selling ad space on his scooter. He had developed a roster of businesses who loved an innovative way to get their message out. Unfortunately, due to safety concerns by the city, he was forced to shut down.

Mike was also living in sub-standard housing. There were tenants with addiction issues and poor building management: people broke into his apartment monthly and stole from him. This went on for over 15 years. He lived in fear, but couldn't find anyone to help him with a better place to live.

One day, his scooter was losing power near a Simply Computing, Apple computer store. He started talking to an employee who knew about EATI, and was put in touch with our group. We talked about what he wanted to do, groups he'd tried to get equipment from before and basically how defeated he felt. He had spent his entire life trying to break through and participate in his community.

He wanted to work, to take part in things, but the combination of his communication barrier, lack of equipment and his scary living situation just wouldn't let him get ahead. He was industrious enough to find employers who were willing to hire him, but there was so much paperwork for employers to seek equipment, they just didn't hang in there. Mike kept his hopes up and continued to seek a way.

After listening to him, it was clear he had several barriers to address in order to just get on the road—the first being where he was living. Whatever equipment he got through EATI, he was fairly sure it would be stolen. So, between Mike, Simply Computing, BC Housing, and Measuring Up, he became eligible for subsidized housing. He was able to achieve what he thought was

impossible: a brand new bachelor apartment, suitable for a person using a wheelchair, in a secure building with a 360-degree view of Kelowna and the mountains. Mike is in heaven.

Soon after he moved in, his EATI equipment came through: his new power wheelchair, a new Mac laptop and iPad, complete with training. He uses the iPad for communication. At the time, we weren't able to get website-building software for him, but we worked with him to find a community donor who purchased it for him.

With some other resources we helped gather for him, Mike is now training in building websites and is doing some volunteer work in the field.

There are many amazing things about Mike's story, I think, but in particular it shows how there is no one doorway into the EATI process. Mike was able to define the steps he needed to take to make the EATI work for him.

HEATHER WALKUS, NETWORK PARTNER, KEREMEOS MEASURING UP GROUP,

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Heather Walkus, and the Keremeos Measuring Up Team, are doing an incredible job supporting South Okanagan EATI applicants, and facilitating investigation and trialing for those applicants who are self-assessing. They assist clients at every stage of the process from promotion of EATI, to assisting with submitting applications, to trialing, and finally the provision of the self-assessment write-up and quote. Once the connection between the applicant and the Measuring Up Team is made, all that is required from the Navigator is to check in now and again to see how things are going. They provide an invaluable service second to none elsewhere in the province. Their efforts demonstrate best practice for service delivery to clients living outside the large urban centres.

LINDA BARTRAM, EATI NAVIGATOR

MODEL LEADS TO BETTER OUTCOMES

The value of EATI and PSN—why I've hung in there forever—is in the elegance of the Participation Model.

For me, the model means starting with the person first; looking at what the person tells us are their equipment needs.

The results and the outcomes are so much better when you start from the person and move outward. It's not necessarily quicker and it's not always easier. But, the outcomes always seem to be much better.

I've learned a lot about what outcomes mean, too, in terms of people's ability to participate at whatever level they define as participation.

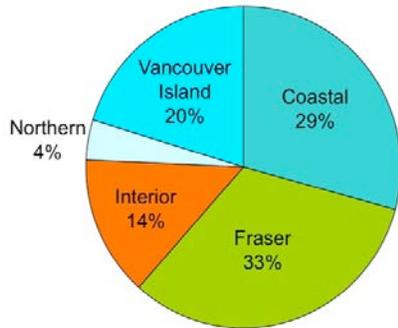
SUSAN MASTERS, NETWORK PARTNER, WESTERN INSTITUTE FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING



WHO DOES EATI SERVE?

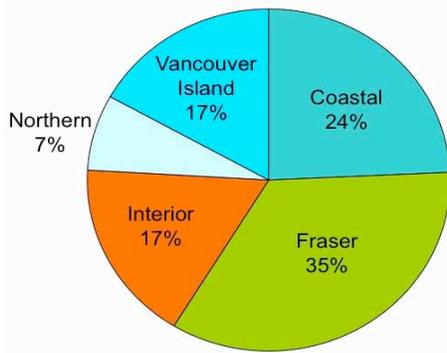
Since 2009, EATI has put over \$5 million of assistive technology into the hands of more than 800 people with disabilities from around the province.

EATI Participant Distribution 2011-2012



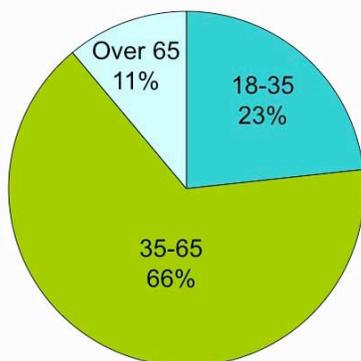
EATI participants closely reflect the overall distribution of the population in BC.

Distribution of General Population 2006

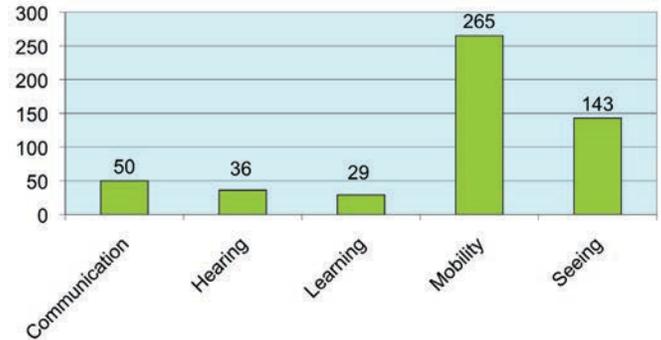


EATI participants range from 18 years of age to over 65. The largest groups fall between the ages of 35 to 65 reflecting the fact that disability increases with age.

Distribution by Age

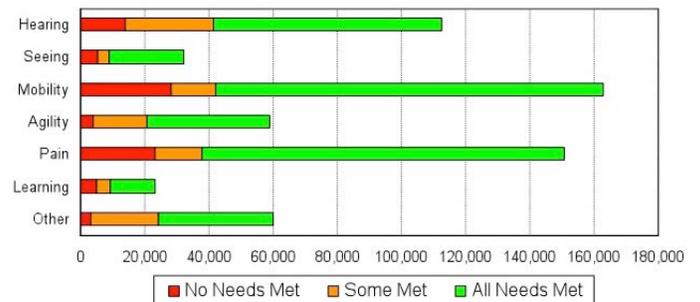


Distribution of Participants by Functional Category 2011-2012 Total 523



The high percentage of participants with mobility needs reflects their high unmet need, as reported in the Participation Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) in 2006.

Need For Assistive Technology by Disability Type BC (PALS 2006)



EATI FINANCIAL PROFILE

| BY SIMON COX, BCITS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STAYING TRUE TO THE MISSION

BCITS has been proud to be a member of the BC Personal Supports Network and the hub for EATI. We have always dreamed of building an integrated personal supports program in British Columbia and I have been around long enough to know that this dream goes back more than 20 years.

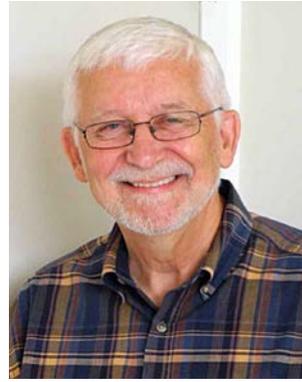
With EATI, we are trying to make the dream a reality by harnessing both the government's capacity and the community's capacity and working together to deliver a cost-effective program for personal supports for employment.

One of the ways we do this is by ensuring that only 10% of the overall yearly funding allocation goes into program delivery. This means that 85% of the annual allocation is dedicated to the purchase of equipment and assistive devices. In 2011/2012, \$3.3 million was spent on equipment and assistive technology for British Columbians with disabilities.

We keep program delivery costs low by having super navigators work from their homes around the province. We borrow office space from BCITS, and meeting space from Network members and government partners. We use volunteers who provide peer support and follow-up.

Cost effectiveness is also underwritten by the voluntary contributions of all of the members of the BC Personal Supports Network. Since 2009, these contributions have accounted for more than 25% of funding available for EATI. This means that we have been able to use these contributions to provide primary navigation for EATI participants, facilitate peer support, provide accommodations for our navigators with disabilities, as well as managing and administering the program using the expertise of many experienced Executive Directors. EATI participants have also benefited from the financial contributions of community foundations like the Kinsmen Foundation to assist them in acquiring assistive technology that may be outside of the scope of EATI.

We have a lot of community organizations, government departments and foundations in British Columbia. EATI demonstrates that you can pull all of these



different players together onto one team with one unifying philosophy.

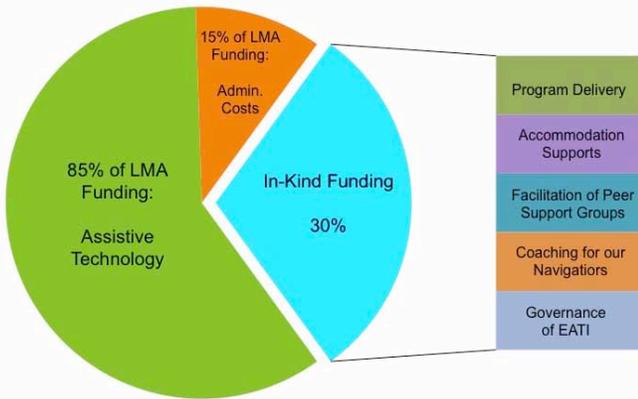
No group or individual who has been part of EATI has been concerned about their own bottom line or growing their organization. They have given that up in a concerted effort to be true to

the mission of enabling British Columbians with disabilities to have the assistive technology they need to overcome functional barriers to employment.

Demarcation disputes between federal and provincial authorities are frequently touted as the reason for the fragmented state of Canada's system of employment supports and benefits. However, the problem is much wider insofar as federal and provincial governments, private and community service providers, advocacy groups and a sizeable private disability insurance sector all play important roles, but rarely sit down together to discuss how they might work in unison. It is not surprising that Canada currently lacks a coherent public-private policy mix because there are relatively few fora for these various players to communicate on a periodic ongoing basis.

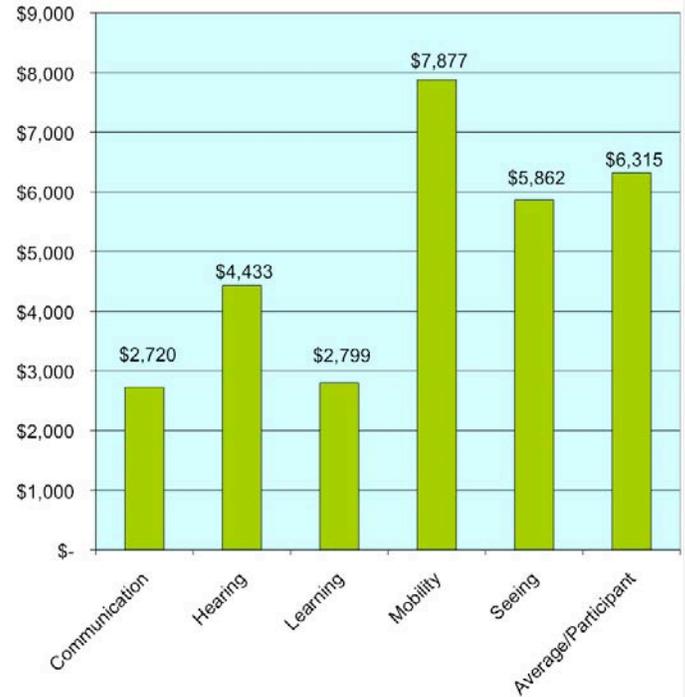
ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD): SICKNESS, DISABILITY AND WORK: BREAKING THE BARRIERS CANADA, OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION. 2010

**LMA And In Kind Funding Contributions
Oct 2009 - March 2012**

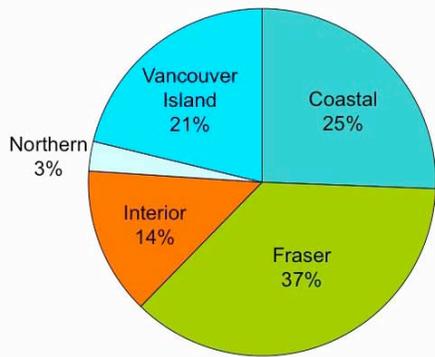


The average approved funds per client and per functional category are shown below. The higher average costs for mobility reflect the costs of devices such as wheelchairs and van conversions.

Average Funds Approved By Functional Category

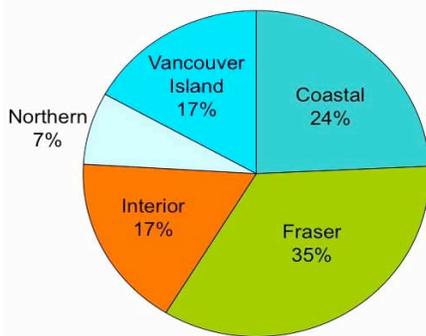


Funding Approved By Region



The regional funding for EATI mirrors the distribution of the population in British Columbia.

Distribution of General Population 2006



GOING FORWARD

EATI is a work in progress. It operates by constantly changing in order to be responsive both to the aspirations of participants and the responsibilities of management. Here are some of the issues that EATI will tackle in the coming year.

- Streamline navigation to speed up the process and confer greater responsibility on participants to manage their journey toward their goal
- Determine the best ways to respond to increased demand
- Evaluate the effectiveness of EATI
- Share the learning from EATI, both at home and abroad

All of the partners in this bold initiative are committed to expanding the values, principles and the practices of EATI into the operations of both government and community organizations. This annual report is another step along the way.

EATI isn't perfect and it's still a work in progress. But, we are seeing a kind of ripple effect of "engagement" that flowed from our person-centered approach: from engaging community groups to come together, engaging government in the idea of a person-centered approach, engaging people with disabilities in defining their goals, and being able to deliver supports that help people to engage in our communities."



PAUL GAUTHIER, BC PERSONAL SUPPORTS NETWORK COORDINATOR

SUCSESSES AND GAPS TO BRIDGE

I believe the philosophy and delivery model for EATI is the best way to support people with disabilities. As an added benefit, it also turns out to be the most cost-effective approach because it ensures the supports meet the needs of the individuals.

We've had our challenges along the way, but I hope EATI will be seen as a demonstration of how well community and government can work together to innovate and provide effective services. That's a big reason why I'm involved. I'm very encouraged about the work that both sides have put into making this partnership work.

We're able to reach an important sector of the disability community through EATI—people who have employment goals. The frustration is that we know there are other big gaps out there—more people who also need these types of supports to participate in our communities.

One of the big EATI gaps is that people who are already working are not eligible and are in danger of losing their jobs because of the lack of appropriate supports. And, this can create a huge financial burden for people as they age or as their job changes. Also, people in school are not eligible.

These are some of the next frontiers we need to look at, if we really want to create a society where people with disabilities are appropriately supported to be full participating members of our community.

GARY BIRCH, NETWORK PARTNER, NEIL SQUIRE SOCIETY



I decided to get back into creating art. Of course, it was very hard to see with my visual impairment. I got a special camera from EATI. It was life-changing. I'm more independent—from writing emails, painting pictures or grocery shopping—thanks to all the new tools I have. I'm working on turning my talents into a full-time business. Without these tools, none of this would have been possible.

PJ ARTMAN, EATI PARTICIPANT

EATI: A NEW PARTNERSHIP

EQUIPMENT AND ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVE (EATI)

ANNUAL REPORT 2011