Implementation of the Jobskills Program by the Brotherhood of St Laurence

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Brotherhood of St Laurence
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<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Brotherhood</td>
<td>Brotherhood of St Laurence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERES</td>
<td>Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CES</td>
<td>Commonwealth Employment Service</td>
</tr>
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<td>CESAC</td>
<td>Commonwealth Employment Service Advisory Committee</td>
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<td>DEET</td>
<td>Department of Employment, Education and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSS</td>
<td>Department of Social Security</td>
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<tr>
<td>FEAC</td>
<td>Fitzroy Employment Action Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MADEC</td>
<td>Mildura and District Educational Council</td>
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<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Tertiary and Further Education</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the first of three reports on the Jobskills program delivered by the Brotherhood of St Laurence. It presents the findings from the evaluation of implementation issues in the program, focusing on community sector clerical and outdoor Jobskills placements from March to December 1993, and also drawing on the experience of child-care Jobskills placements from March 1992. The evaluation was undertaken prior to the introduction of significant changes to the program in 1994-95 and before the announcement of the Government's Working Nation strategy in 1994.

Grieves (1995) reports the results of a survey of 116 participants some six to 12 months after program completion. The report outlines the participants' experiences and discusses employment outcomes and other personal and vocational benefits from the program. A third report (MacNeill 1995) analyses the results of the Brotherhood's evaluation in terms of labour market policy and program developments in the Working Nation strategy (Commonwealth of Australia 1994).

The Jobskills program has represented a significant commitment by the Brotherhood to providing work experience and training to people who have been long-term unemployed. Jobskills is a labour market program funded by the Commonwealth and administered by the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET). Briefly, the program involves the Department contracting Jobskills places to brokers, such as the Brotherhood, who are responsible for organising 26 weeks work experience and off-the-job training. Jobskills participants are paid and they must be supervised.

Between March 1992 and December 1993 the Brotherhood assisted about 500 job seekers in metropolitan and rural Victoria. It organised work experience in community sector agencies, such as in neighbourhood houses and child-care centres, and negotiated training by recognised providers, such as SkillShare. The Brotherhood was itself been a broker, employer and/or a trainer in the program.

In evaluating its involvement in the Jobskills program, the Brotherhood has sought to inform its own development and delivery of employment and training services for disadvantaged job seekers. At the same time, the organisation has used its service experience and research and policy expertise to assess the impact of the program and to inform national policies on labour market programs.

The objectives of the evaluation are:

- to document the process of program implementation from the point of view of brokers, employers and trainers;
• to identify areas where the implementation process can be enhanced in order to facilitate future broker, employer and trainer involvement in the program; and
• to identify areas where the implementation process can be enhanced in order to improve participant job prospects.

Evaluation of the program’s implementation has involved gathering information and opinion from a range of individuals including participants (job seekers undertaking a Jobskills placement), brokers, trainers, employers and union representatives. A range of methods were used to consult with program representatives in order to document the process of program implementation and to identify the strengths and weaknesses in that process from their point of view. The consultation process was undertaken between June and December 1993 and involved the following methods:

• three group discussions with participants involved in each of the occupational categories represented in the Brotherhood’s program (child-care, clerical and outdoor);
• Level 2 and Level 1 broker interviews;
• mail survey of 53 employers randomly selected from a stratified list of total employers;
• trainer interviews; and
• union representative interviews.

The evaluation has documented implementation of the Jobskills program in terms of recruitment to the program, work experience (including on-the-job training), and off-the-job training. Implementation difficulties in terms of administration, tendering and the relationship between the Department of Social Security (DSS) and DEET have been identified, and the value of the program from the point of view of participants and employers has also been described.

Findings

With a few exceptions, the Jobskills program has provided valuable work experience and training for participants. The benefits to participants in the program have included improvements in their vocational skills, self-esteem and confidence. Jobskills is an important labour market program which extends the existing range of employment and training programs for job seekers who are disadvantaged in the labour market. With persistent high levels of long-term unemployment the Jobskills program should be continued.

Employers in the program have also benefited. At times, they have been better able to deliver their service and even extend their services. Employers have valued being able to assist job seekers who have been
disadvantaged in the labour market in a program they regard as significant.

The following modifications to the Jobskills program have been identified in the evaluation in order to facilitate future broker, employer, and trainer involvement and to enhance participant job prospects.

1. Orientation sessions for employers would improve their understanding of their role and responsibilities for participants in the program.

2. Involvement of participants, brokers and employers in early identification of on-the-job training plans would extend participant skills, better meet employer needs and formalise a less structured component of the program.

3. Liaison between employers and trainers in devising off-the-job training plans for participants would improve the relevance of training for employers and participants.

4. Training which is nationally accredited would most likely lead to further education and training, and competency-based training would be most beneficial to participants.

5. Post-program assistance for participants, in terms of job-search advice and resources and broader personal support, would improve their employment prospects.

6. Job seekers require a range of choices for participation in labour market programs in order to extend their skill levels and improve their employment prospects. Compulsion to participate in Jobskills to fulfil Newstart Agreements is likely to be counterproductive to individuals and organisations in the program.

7. Participants in the program receive relatively low wages and may have experienced financial hardship during long periods of unemployment. Retention of Health Care Card entitlements and removal of delays in receipt of income support at program completion are needed in the program.

8. Changes to the program which reduce the reporting requirements of brokers to the DEET while maintaining accountability would be welcomed in the program.

9. Sufficient length of time for program commencement is necessary to enable the referral of a group of 'appropriate' job seekers for selection by employers and recruitment to the program. The three to four weeks given early in the program was not adequate for
brokers to set up the program, contact interested employers and recruit eligible job seekers.

10. Child-care participants require delineation of their status in child-care centres which recognises that they are employees who are also undertaking training.

11. Participants require an independent advocate if the broker is also the employer and trainer in the program.

12. The tension between achieving positive outcomes and assisting highly disadvantaged job seekers would be reduced if DEET allowed for the degree of labour market disadvantage of the intended client group in specifying outcomes, as recommended by the Commonwealth Employment Service Advisory Committee (CESAC 1994). There is also a need for the DEET to review its outcome measures in order to ensure that they promote participation by the most disadvantaged in the labour market in the program.
CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW

This chapter provides a brief overview of the employment and training programs provided by the Federal Government during the early 1990s and raises some issues which are pertinent to this evaluation including targeting, funding, and costs of programs. The chapter also provides an outline of the structure of the Jobskills program and the Brotherhood of St Laurence program in particular. Initially, this chapter introduces the study by describing the rationale for the Brotherhood's evaluation and the focus of this report.

Background to the study

Through the Jobskills program, the Brotherhood has been contracted by the Federal Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) to provide paid work experience and structured training to job seekers who have been long-term unemployed and assessed by the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) as likely to remain unemployed without the benefit of participation in the program. Between March 1992 and December 1993, the Brotherhood has assisted about 500 job seekers either directly or by arrangement with other organisations with 26 weeks work experience and training.

The Jobskills program has provided an opportunity for the Brotherhood to deliver a combination of training and work experience to people who are disadvantaged in the labour market. It represents a significant commitment by the organisation to training and work experience for people who have been long-term unemployed. The Metropolitan, Central Highlands, Peninsula and Barwon Regions of the Brotherhood have all been involved in Jobskills. In order to document program implementation issues and participant employment outcomes, the organisation has therefore taken the opportunity to conduct a detailed evaluation of its own involvement in this important labour market program.

This is the report of implementation of the Brotherhood's Jobskills program undertaken from March 1992. It focuses on community sector clerical and outdoor Jobskills placements from March to December 1993, but also draws on the experience of child-care placements from March 1992. The report is based on extensive consultation with representatives of the program which is described in Chapter 2. The evaluation was undertaken before the Commonwealth Employment Service Advisory Committee's (CESAC) review of implementation of Jobskills (CESAC 1994), and before the Federal Government announced its Working Nation strategy (Commonwealth of Australia 1994). Other reports present the results of a survey of participants (Grieves 1995) and analyse the evaluation findings more broadly in terms of implications for labour market policy and programs (MacNeill 1995).
Labour market programs in the 1990s

The Employment Access Program is a generic title for a range of labour market programs administered by DEET. The program is central to the Federal Government's Active Employment Strategy which links receipt of income support for long-term unemployed people (Newstart Allowance) to participation in labour market programs. There are four major groupings of labour market programs for CES clients (DEET 1992a, p.4). Included within it are:

- training programs which are broadly designed to improve job seeker skill levels and to increase the competitiveness of the labour market overall. These programs may be preparatory and short term, longer and accredited (Jobtrain), training in job search techniques (Job Club), community-based (SkillShare), or they may offer training and financial assistance to establish new business (New Enterprise Incentive Scheme);
- a wage subsidy program (Jobstart) which assists employers to take on people who have been unemployed for at least six months by providing assistance with wages;
- programs which combine paid work experience and training (Jobskills and the Land and Environment Action Program); and
- programs for people with a 'special' disadvantage (such as having English as a second language) and literacy programs.

For DEET, reasons of economic efficiency and social justice lead the Employment Access Program to target those most in need of assistance. In the first instance, labour market program assistance is broadly targeted to job seekers who have been long-term unemployed (i.e. unemployed 12 months or longer). Early access to programs may also be provided for other groups of disadvantaged job seekers, including sole parents, people with disabilities and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

Stretton & Chapman (1990, p.59) comment briefly on the issue of targeting of labour market programs during a recession. They suggest 'that there could be a benefit from more broadly-based targeting' during a recession on efficiency grounds, especially in relation to wage subsidy programs, by providing employers with greater choice and reducing the possibility of negatively labelling job seekers. However, the authors point out that narrower targeting may be preferred for equity reasons, so that a higher proportion of job seekers who are more disadvantaged are assisted in programs.

Sloan (1993, p.3) identifies three objectives that labour market program expenditure may fulfil:

1. to improve the trade-off between the rate of unemployment and inflation, by providing a less inflationary form of government expenditure;

2. to improve the labour market position of the disadvantaged in the labour market; and
3. to redistribute employment and earning opportunities to the least advantaged in the labour market.

Expenditure on labour market programs has increased from $1.3 billion in 1993-94 to $1.7 billion in 1994-95 (Australia Budget Statements 1994-95). Some 585,000 program places have been made available in 1994-95. Jobskills is one of the higher cost programs which has grown significantly from $45.4 million in 1991-92 to an estimated $150.5 million in 1994-95 (CESAC 1994, Table 1, p.12; Australia Budget Statements 1994-95). Program places during the same period have risen from 6,500 to 12,600 (CESAC 1994, Table 1, p.12; Australia 1994). Jobskills has a gross cost per participant of $12,300 including major program delivery and infrastructure costs such as broker’s fees, training wage, and funding for special projects (CESAC 1994, p.13). These program elements are described below.

In May 1994 the Federal Government announced the Working Nation strategy in order to support long-term unemployed people (Parliament of Australia 1994). The strategy combines a range of employment, training, income support and other measures designed to improve employment and growth in Australia. In 1995-96, some $2.1 billion in Government outlays is expected to be added to employment and training programs. An analysis of the initiatives contained in Working Nation and the implications of findings from the evaluation of the Jobskills program is provided by MacNeill (1995).

The Jobskills program

The Jobskills program is a community-based labour market program administered by DEET. Its two objectives are:

... to improve the long term employment prospects of people who have been unemployed for 12 months or more by broadening their employment experience and equipping them with new skills through work experience and training; and

... to provide additional financial assistance to support special projects of benefit to the community, including maintenance or development of local tourism, heritage or recreation infrastructure, and conservation and environmental activities such as land regeneration projects or local government recreation facility projects ... while providing long term unemployed people with work experience and training. (DEET 1992b, p.1).

Eligibility for Jobskills

To be eligible for assistance in the Jobskills program job seekers must be:

1. assessed by the CES as likely to remain unemployed without the benefit of participation in Jobskills;
Implementation of the Jobskills program

AND

2. aged 21 years or over, in receipt of Department of Social Security (DSS) allowance for 12 months, and registered with the CES for a minimum of 12 months;

OR

3. spouses of job seekers in category (2) who have been registered with the CES for a minimum of one month.

Access to the program is by referral from a Special Service Centre or a Country Service Centre in the CES to a Jobskills broker (defined below). In 1993/94 Jobskills assisted some 10,700 participants, about half (5,418) of whom had been unemployed for longer than two years (DEET 1994). In 1994-95 Job Compact clients, defined in Working Nation as job seekers who have been on unemployment allowances for 18 months or more, will be given priority access to places in the Jobskills program (DEET 1994, p.152).

Program structure

Delivery of the Jobskills program has been through community-based and local government organisations acting as intermediaries or brokers. DEET has contracted organisations to provide eligible job seekers with work experience and training, either directly or by arrangement with other organisations. Placements have been with organisations for indoor or outdoor activities, or in special projects of benefit to the community. During 1991/92 and 1992/93, more than three-quarters of Jobskills participants were employed in either clerical occupations (approximately 42 per cent) or outdoor work (approximately 37 per cent). The majority of participants were employed in local government (approximately 54 per cent) (Sharman 1993, p.1).

DEET has contracted brokers at two levels - Level 1 brokers and Level 2 brokers. Level 1 brokers received a minimum of 20 participants for 26 weeks each, and Level 2 brokers received a minimum of 250 participants for 26 weeks each. Level 2 brokers could 'sub-contract' or purchase places with Level 1 brokers. A significant recommendation in the recent report of CESAC (1994, p.2) was for DEET Area Offices to be the only Level 2 brokers and Level 1 brokers to be contracted directly by the Area Offices. CESAC believed this proposed restructure of the Jobskills program would remove administrative inefficiencies and provide an opportunity for the CES to become more directly involved in program delivery (CESAC 1994, p.18).

Level 1 and Level 2 brokers were paid a fee of $3,500 for each participant to cover:

- contributions towards additional costs directly associated with employers providing work experience such as administration, workers compensation premiums ... supervision, equipment and materials, etc.;

- a contribution toward training costs, especially off-the-job training, including participants' books and equipment; and
the broker's fee (DEET, 1992b, p.8).

Level 2 brokers also received a $50,000 fee for the 'first 250 average participant numbers' and an extra $10,000 for each additional 50 participants. The Level 2 broker fee was provided by the Federal Government 'in recognition of the additional demand on resources arising from their coordinating function, the number of participants involved, and their supervisory relationship with any Level 1 Jobskills brokers appointed by them' (DEET, 1992b, p.8). Employers undertaking special projects of benefit to the community may receive an extra $2,000 per participant provided they are prepared to match the $2,000 either in cash or in kind and meet specific criteria.

Brokers were required to complete a detailed Participant Plan for each participant including a needs' analysis, work experience and training arrangements, referral outcome and commencement advice, and cessation advice. In addition, brokers provided monthly financial (expenditure) and activity (work experience and training) statements for each participant. At completion of the contract period, brokers also submitted final financial and participant reports (DEET, 1992b, p.16).

Program elements

The Jobskills program is one of the few Federal Government labour market programs which combines training and work experience for eligible job seekers. Over a 26-week period, Jobskills participants spend about 75 per cent of their time undertaking work experience and the remaining 25 per cent of their time in off-the-job training. During the work experience component of the program, about 15 per cent of their time is spent in on-the-job training. Therefore, participants' time on the program is about 60 per cent work experience and 40 per cent training.

Placements in the program are for 26 weeks. During their placement, participants receive a training wage of $300 per week (increased from $280 per week in October 1993). They may also be eligible for family payments and rent assistance. Appendix A provides a table of the income of Jobskills participants. Prior to changes introduced in Working Nation (1994), they also retained eligibility for a Jobstart wage subsidy and other DEET labour market programs such as Job Club following program completion.

Jobskills participants were placed in occupations with 'appropriate' award coverage and union representatives signed the Jobskills Participant Plan. According to the Jobskills program guidelines (DEET, Jobskills program guidelines 1992-93, p.14) placements must be additional to the normal work force and the employer must have the capacity to supervise and train participants:

... work experience placements are additional to the normal workforce of the employing organisation or business in which the placements occur, so that Jobskills participants shall not replace paid workers or volunteers or reduce the hours worked by existing employees;
Implementation of the Jobskills program

... the employer has the capacity to manage and supervise participants, equip them with skills relevant to the Jobskills Participant Plan and provide the agreed amount of on-the-job training.

According to DEET, structured off-the-job training which forms about 25 per cent of participants' time should wherever possible be accredited and provided by a qualified and experienced training provider such as TAFE, SkillShare or private training provider. Training may be arranged in blocks of time to suit employers, trainers and participants and the percentage mix between off-the-job and on-the-job training may be varied to the benefit of the participant.

In 1991-92 and 1992-93, the largest training providers in the Jobskills program were TAFE colleges (approximately 31 per cent) and SkillShare (approximately 20 per cent). In 1992-93 approximately 33 per cent of training was accredited, and a further 13 per cent provided credit transfer (Sharman 1993, p.1). In her report, Sharman (1993, p.1) recommends that 'as there is a significant proportion of the training which is non-accredited, the barriers preventing the use of accredited courses require further investigation'.

In her report, Sharman (1993, p.1) argues that the long-term employment prospects of participants undertaking clerical and outdoor work may not be enhanced because 'trends for employment growth are toward more highly skilled occupations'. She supports this contention with reference to projected employment growth for occupations and industries as reported by DEET (1991, in Sharman 1993, p.5). Sharman writes:

The areas with the highest proportions of Jobskills participants, Clerical and Outdoors, are also those with the lowest projected employment growth, (15.2 per cent and 8.3 per cent respectively) relative to other occupations. The areas with the lowest proportions of Jobskills participants, Professional, Human Services and Trades, have the highest relative projected employment growth (33 per cent, 24 per cent and 21.2 per cent respectively).

Changes to the program

In 1994-95, following CESAC's review of implementation of the program (1994) and the announcement of the Working Nation strategy (Commonwealth of Australia 1994), significant changes have been introduced to the Jobskills program. The changes to the program relevant to this report include:

1. The function of the Level 2 broker has been removed and taken on by DEET Area Offices.

2. Brokers tender directly to DEET Area Offices for places within a given region.
3. Pilot brokerages covering the private sector have been introduced.

4. On completing the program, participants may lose eligibility for Jobstart wage subsidies and may not be eligible for Newstart benefits because they are now viewed as recently unemployed rather than returning to their long-term unemployed status.

5. Placements in a wider range of occupational areas have been introduced, such as horticulture, marketing, library assistance, community development assistance, project assistance.

Structure of the Brotherhood Jobskills program

The Brotherhood has been involved in the Jobskills program since March 1992 as a Level 2 broker located at the Fitzroy Employment Action Centre (FEAC). As a Level 2 broker, the Brotherhood was given designated industry areas and permitted to operate state wide. The Level 2 broker has also subcontracted to Level 1 brokers including Brotherhood regions as well as other community agencies.

The Brotherhood Level 2 broker undertook an initial contract with DEET in March 1992 for 350 places. A subsequent contract for 150 places was undertaken by the Level 2 broker in March 1993. Table 1 below lists the number of participants and their vocational occupations for each broker who has been involved in the second contract of 150 Jobskills places. The focus of this report is on this second program of 150 Jobskills clerical and outdoor participants. Additional information for child-care participants from the first Brotherhood Jobskills program has been included in order to examine issues in the program for those in this occupational category.
Table 1: Brokers and participants in the second Brotherhood Jobskills program, March 1993.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brokers</th>
<th>Vocational occupation</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>% of Total participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brotherhood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Highlands Region</td>
<td>outdoor</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>clerical</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barwon</td>
<td>clerical</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEAC (Level 1)</td>
<td>clerical</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEAC (Level 2)</td>
<td>clerical</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SkillShare</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunshine</td>
<td>clerical</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knox/Sherbrooke</td>
<td>clerical</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mildura and District</td>
<td>outdoor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Council (MADEC)</td>
<td>clerical</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Education &amp; Research in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Strategies (CERES)</td>
<td>outdoor</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total outdoor</td>
<td></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total clerical</td>
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<td>124</td>
<td>82.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Level 1 and Level 2 broker program records.

Table 1 shows that a large percentage of the Jobskills participants in the second Brotherhood program were involved in clerical work (82.7 per cent), with a much smaller percentage involved in outdoor work (17.3 per cent). In the first Brotherhood program, some 56 participants (16 per cent of the total 350 places) undertook child-care work. The child-care participants were located with the Level 1 broker in the Brotherhood Peninsula Region (20 participants) and with the Level 1 broker in the FEAC (43 participants).

The Brotherhood Level 2 broker gained support from Level 1 brokers for the Jobskills program for the first contract of 350 places by advertising through the National SkillShare Association and by word of mouth through TAFE and the Brotherhood regions. By the second program, participating Level 1 brokers indicated their willingness and ability to quickly place a further 150 participants in work experience and training. The Level 1 brokers who were involved in the first program but who were unable or unwilling to accept additional participants included Employment 2000 (Salvation Army), Kyneton/Woodend SkillShare, Education Impressions (Victorian Education Industrial Staff Association) and Brotherhood Peninsula Region.
Implementation of the Jobskills program

In the second Brotherhood Jobskills program, the focus of this evaluation, Level 1 brokers have provided training and work experience in four models. Those program models can be characterised in terms of the Level 1 broker's relationship to employers, trainers and participants in the program:

1. broker is the trainer and the legal employer, but the participant is seconded to a host agency to undertake work experience (e.g. Brotherhood Central Highlands Region);
2. broker is also the trainer and the employer for the participants (e.g. CERES);
3. broker contracts out most training and work experience (e.g. Brotherhood Barwon Region); and
4. broker is the trainer for all participants and employer for some (e.g. Knox/Sherbrooke SkillShare, Sunshine SkillShare).
CHAPTER 2: EVALUATION METHODS

This chapter describes the purpose of the Brotherhood's evaluation of its own Jobskills program and how that evaluation was undertaken.

Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

There are two main components of the evaluation of the Brotherhood's Jobskills program: implementation issues and participant outcomes. This is the report of the evaluation of program implementation issues which was undertaken during June to December 1993. A separate report examines participant outcomes, some six to 12 months after completion in the Jobskills program (Grieves 1995).

An evaluation of the Brotherhood's Jobskills program has been undertaken for two reasons. First, data from the evaluation can be used to inform the organisation about future directions in its own development and delivery of employment and training services for disadvantaged job seekers. The second reason for this evaluation was to use the Brotherhood's service experience and research and policy expertise to assess the impact of the program and to develop proposals which seek to inform national policies on labour market programs.

This report has therefore been prepared for DEET policy makers and program managers, both nationally and at the state level, who are involved in implementing and monitoring the Jobskills program, as well as for Brotherhood service providers and program managers. It will also be useful for other Jobskills program providers who may wish to inform their own service delivery and program development policies and practices.

The objectives of the evaluation of the Brotherhood's Jobskills program regarding implementation issues are the following:

- to document the process of program implementation from the point of view of brokers, employers and trainers;
- to identify areas where the implementation process can be enhanced in order to facilitate future broker, employer and trainer involvement in the program; and
- to identify areas where the implementation process can be enhanced in order to improve participant job prospects.

Scope of the evaluation

The Brotherhood Jobskills program involves only community sector (non-profit) employers, such as Neighbourhood Houses, Child-Care Centres, SkillShare and the
Implementation of the Jobskills program

Brotherhood itself. While other Jobskills programs have been undertaken in the Local and State Government sectors throughout Victoria and Australia, this evaluation is limited to an analysis of community sector employers who have been involved in the Brotherhood program in country and metropolitan Victoria.

Due to the timing of the evaluation and the availability of records, this report refers to the second contract of 150 places undertaken by the Level 2 broker in the Brotherhood in March 1993. Because no child-care participants were represented in this second Jobskills contract, the evaluation also undertook to include samples of child-care participants, trainers, brokers, union representatives and employers from the first contract of 350 Jobskills places. The three major occupational categories represented in the Brotherhood's program - clerical, outdoor, and child-care - were therefore examined in the evaluation.

The consultation process

Evaluation of the program's implementation has involved gathering information and opinion from a range of individuals including the participants (job seekers undertaking a Jobskills placement), brokers (Level 1 and Level 2), trainers, employers and union representatives. A range of methods were used to consult with representatives of the program in order to document the process of program implementation and to identify the strengths and weaknesses in that process from their point of view. The consultation process was undertaken between June and December 1993. These methods are described here and Appendix B lists individuals and their organisations who have been consulted in the evaluation.

Participants

Three group discussions were held during October 1993 with participants involved in each of the occupational categories represented in the Brotherhood's Jobskills program: child-care, clerical and outdoor. Nine women child-care participants in the Brotherhood Peninsula Region program, nine clerical participants (five women and four men) in the Brotherhood Barwon Region program, and four male outdoor participants in the Brotherhood Central Highlands Region program were consulted in the group discussions.

Consultation with program participants was limited for this stage of the evaluation because a more extensive survey of 116 participants was undertaken for the second stage of the evaluation. The purpose of the group discussions with participants was to canvass the range of issues which were significant in their experience of the program. Exploration of participant views has guided further consultation with other program representatives.

The list of questions provided as Appendix C was used to guide the group discussions with participants, however less structured discussion about their experiences and
views was encouraged. Each of the group discussions was taped and subsequently transcribed with their permission.

**Brokers**

Seven Level 1 brokers and the Brotherhood Level 2 broker were interviewed using the questions provided as Appendix D. Brokers provided detail of the implementation process in the Brotherhood Jobskills program, identified the strengths and weaknesses of the program for employers, participants and themselves, and offered suggestions for the future development of the program.

**Employers**

A sample of employers was surveyed by mail in November 1993 for the evaluation. A list of all employers involved in the second Brotherhood contract and child-care employers in the first contract was provided by the Level 2 broker. Approximately 112 employers were identified. To achieve a regional and occupational distribution of employers in the sample, employers were grouped according to the Level 1 broker and to the occupational category of participants they employed (i.e. clerical, child-care and outdoor). A random sample of 53 employers was selected across the stratified list of total employers.

One employer of outdoor participants and one employer of child-care participants participated in the pilot of the questionnaire. Their responses were incorporated in the final analysis because few changes to the questionnaire were required.

The employer contact nominated on the program records (i.e. the Participant Plan) was identified as the contact for the survey. The mail survey, provided as Appendix E, was sent to each of the selected employers and one follow-up telephone call was made to employers who had not completed and returned the survey after 10 days.

Of the 53 surveyed employers 43 completed the questionnaire. Two employers who returned the questionnaire had outdoor participants, 14 had clerical participants, and 27 employers had child-care participants. Between them they had 74 participants.

**Union representatives**

The Level 2 broker identified the union contacts for the Brotherhood Jobskills program. Three of the four identified union representatives were contacted by telephone and interviewed using the questionnaire provided as Appendix F. No representative from the Federated Clerks Union was identified.

**Trainers**

Trainers who provided off-the-job training in the second Brotherhood Jobskills program were identified by brokers during the broker interview. Some brokers (i.e.
SkillShare) were themselves trainers and they discussed off-the-job training issues during the broker interview. An additional three trainers (SkillShare, TAFE and private provider), offering either clerical, child-care or outdoor work training were interviewed by telephone using the questionnaire provided as Appendix G. Trainers involved in the Brotherhood Metropolitan Region child-care program and in CERES Region could not be contacted due to the timing of the consultations.
CHAPTER 3: PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

This chapter presents the implementation issues identified by brokers, employers, trainers, union representatives, and participants who have been involved in the Brotherhood's Jobskills program and consulted in this study. The evaluation methods have been described in Chapter 2 and a list of participants consulted has been provided in Appendix B.

The chapter first discusses the implementation of components of the Jobskills program: recruitment, work experience, and off-the-job training. On-the-job training issues are discussed within the work experience section of the chapter. Difficulties in program implementation experienced by program representatives including administration, the tendering process and funding arrangements, and DSS/DEET interface are also highlighted in this chapter. A final section documents the overall value of the program for participants and employers.

Recruitment to the program

This section presents findings from the consultations in terms of recruiting participants to the program. Issues about referral, eligibility and selection of Jobskills participants are discussed.

The referral process

According to the Jobskills program guidelines, Special Service Centres and Country Service Centres, which are located in some CES offices, refer eligible job seekers to Jobskills brokers for assessment of their suitability in the program. While it seems that this process has been adhered to in most cases, in practice brokers may also contact job seekers by referral from other program providers or by word of mouth among job seekers themselves. Eligibility for the program would then be checked with the CES for job seekers who do not come directly via the CES network referral process.

Variations from the program guidelines in the referral process seem to have arisen due to quick commencement times for the program and due to the nature of the relationship between some brokers and eligible job seekers.

The Brotherhood Level 2 broker explained that while job seekers were usually referred to the program by the CES, problems arose when a CES office had to match job seekers with two or three brokers at the same time. The inadequate commencement times for the program to date (some three to four weeks from the time of signing the contract with DEET) have caused difficulties in the program in terms of appropriate referrals.

One Level 1 broker explained the reasons for referral to the program by recommendation from host employers (i.e SkillShare) as well as by referral from the
CES. The broker stated that because the CES referred only sufficient eligible job seekers for the available places this meant that each job seeker had to be accepted in the program whether they were considered 'appropriate' or not. While most job seekers were considered appropriate because they were 'work ready' and therefore they could be placed in a work place for work experience almost immediately, others were not appropriate because they may not have wanted to undertake the work being offered (e.g. clerical) or they may have had other problems, such as alcohol addiction, which could not be dealt with in the context of the requirements of the Jobskills program. The broker also felt that the problem of recruitment was exacerbated by the limited commencement times for the program which could lead to inappropriate referrals.

A further reason for inappropriate referrals to the program from the CES was offered by brokers. They reported that some job seekers believed that their participation in the Jobskills program was compulsory because of the requirements of their Newstart Agreements. The brokers emphasised the importance of voluntary participation in the program for maximum benefit to the participants and to their employers and that compulsory participation would be counterproductive for all individuals and organisations involved in the program.

Eligibility and the selection process

The primary target group for the Jobskills program is very broad. Job seekers must be registered with the CES and assessed as likely to remain unemployed without Jobskills assistance, and aged over 21 years, in receipt of DSS Allowance for at least 12 months and unemployed for 12 months or more, or be the spouses of such job seekers. That is, the eligibility guidelines for the program do not specify target groups of disadvantaged job seekers, such as those with multiple disadvantage, in order to ensure that those least advantaged in the labour market are assisted in the program.

At the same time, a primary positive outcome for the measurement of the success of the Jobskills program is the participant achieving an unsubsidised full-time job after completing their placement. Other outcomes, such as gaining a subsidised job, part-time employment, or further education and training are measured as secondary positive outcomes for the program.

These two factors in the program - eligibility and performance indicators - mean that there is little incentive in the program to select job seekers who may be the least advantaged in the labour market, such as those with multiple disadvantage or those with the fewest vocational skills. 'Creaming' of the least disadvantaged job seekers seems to be possible at several stages in the recruitment process.

Brokers and CES staff are constrained by the narrow performance indicators for the Jobskills program. Some brokers reported the importance of allowing employers to interview and select from a small group of participants (two or three) to 'authenticate' the employment experience for both groups. That is, employers and participants may be more committed to the program if a selection process has been undertaken. While
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not asked directly, some employers who responded to the mail survey mentioned the importance of being given adequate opportunity to interview and select job seekers for their work place. Participants also reported that they preferred some choice in their employer by being offered at least two interviews. Job seekers who have been referred to the program but not selected have been placed on a waiting list by some brokers.

Brokers for child-care participants noted the special case of this occupation in which TAFE colleges were involved in the selection of job seekers. One broker explained how TAFE was 'very pedantic' about taking people whom they thought were suitable for child-care work. On the other hand, the broker described how one TAFE college involved in the program undertook oral assessments with candidates with English language and literacy difficulties instead of the usual written application. Another broker added that a police check may be appropriate in the future for potential child-care participants.

Work experience

The work experience component of the Jobskills program comprises about 75 per cent of participant time. Fifteen per cent of their work experience is on-the-job training. Overall, the on-the-job training is less well defined and less structured than the off-the-job training component of the program. Participant supervision is also a significant aspect of the work experience component of the program as one criterion for selecting employers is their ability to manage and supervise Jobskills participants.

This section is presented according to each of the occupational categories represented in the Brotherhood Jobskills program: clerical, child-care and outdoor work. Within each is a discussion of issues in the provision of on-the-job training and supervision.

Clerical work

Clerical participants in the program have undertaken a range of office procedures including reception, administration, computer operation and public liaison. Some of their specific tasks may have included answering telephones, filing, making appointments, faxing, photocopying, receipting money, sorting mail, bookkeeping, accessing data base and word processing.

The value of the work experience component of the program to clerical participants consulted for the evaluation varied according to their level of previous work experience and their satisfaction with their work place including supervision and the nature of on-the-job training.

In the group discussion with clerical participants, most reported that they had learned a lot from their placement and they felt that they had 'taken the first step back to employment'. However, one older woman stated that she had not learned anything from her experience because she had been employed as a secretary for the previous 20
years. Two participants had experienced difficulties with their placement (in the same organisation) because they felt that no on-the-job training plan was in place and little or no supervision had been provided. They stated that they were given menial work to complete, such as photocopying and shredding, and they felt that they were therefore taken advantage of by the employer. These participants consulted the broker who arranged an alternative placement. However, their experience illustrated the importance of employers being made aware of their obligations to participants in the Jobskills program. According to the participants, it should be the broker's responsibility to 'educate' and monitor employers in the program. Participants have suggested that the broker should provide a structured introduction to the program for employers which provides details of their responsibilities in the program.

Employers of clerical participants reported that the amount of supervision they provided varied depending on the perceived maturity of the participant. They stated that sometimes participants required only initial instruction in new tasks, while others received general monitoring and briefings each morning with follow-up on completion of tasks. Employers reported problems with maintaining supervision at all times when staff were absent, unavailable or too busy. This was exacerbated in some organisations where many staff were part-time.

In terms of on-the-job training, employers suggested that it would be useful to know at the beginning of the placement where participants felt they required extra training in order to incorporate instruction into their job activities. This could be negotiated between employer, broker and participant at the commencement of the placements and monitored throughout.

Brokers for clerical participants suggested some improvements to the provision of on-the-job training in the program. One broker stated that it was unrealistic to expect formal on-the-job training to be provided in the program because it was usually offered on a needs' basis, and therefore it varied between participants given their personal requirements. At the same time, brokers suggested that the provision of on-the-job training could be improved with clearer definitions and classifications of it in the program guidelines. This could be supported with the diversion of a portion of funds to on-the-job training.

Children work

Child-care participants in the program have undertaken placements in long day care centres, occasional care centres, and family day care. Usually they have assisted in the care of children including preparing meals and undertaking kitchen duties, providing educational experiences and cleaning up. Government regulations stipulate full and constant supervision of participants in child-care centres. They work closely with more experienced staff and receive close guidance in the care of children. One employer explained the duties of a Jobskills child-care participant in the centre as:
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Staff worked closely with the trainee over the six month period assisting with tasks, advising on resources, giving directions and advice on interacting with children and parents.

The issue of the status of Jobskills child-care participants was raised as a concern in the evaluation because people undertaking training in child-care centres could be students on formal placement as part of their TAFE training or Jobskills participants on longer-term placement and receiving a wage. One broker of child-care participants explained the confusion in the delineation of Jobskills participants as students or employees. TAFE viewed them as students and as such they required constant supervision, yet employers understood they were getting an employee for their child-care centre which was an incentive for their involvement in the program.

Some child-care participants in the group discussion for the evaluation expressed their dissatisfaction with their placement because they felt they were treated like students and not employees by being given menial tasks to complete, inconsistent supervision and no say in what duties they would undertake. The experience of other participants was clearly different:

I felt like a member of staff, not treated like a student in terms of training and supervision. I felt comfortable. I could choose to move to different rooms.

Employers of child-care participants also noted their lack of clarity regarding the status of Jobskills participants and therefore their confusion about the level of responsibility and supervision to give them on-the-job.

In terms of on-the-job training, employers in child-care centres who responded to the mail survey did not usually differentiate between the constant supervision they provided and on-the-job training for Jobskills participants. One broker for child-care participants stated that the on-the-job training component of the program needed to be more structured for a formal commitment to it by employers. The broker believed that participants benefited from increasing amounts of responsibility and complexity of task throughout their placements which was supported by structured on-the-job training.

Outdoor work

Outdoor work for participants in the Jobskills program has involved ground work (planting, revegetation, and landscape gardening) and property maintenance and repairs. One Level 1 broker was funded to undertake a Special Project which involved installing and maintaining an indigenous plant nursery.

Outdoor participants consulted in the evaluation emphasised the importance of adequate supervision and on-the-job training during their placement. They believed that it was necessary to work with management who were committed to the goals of the program, especially in terms of on-the-job training because of the difficulties of
teaching outdoor work in a classroom off-the-job (discussed below). That is, the nature of outdoor work seemed to require extensive 'hands-on' experience on-the-job, therefore highlighting the importance of good quality supervision and on-the-job training.

One Level 1 broker supported the sentiments of the outdoor participants. That broker, who was also the employer in the program explained:

* The employer underestimated the time required to supervise participants. The trainers who provided the off-the-job training also supervised on-the-job training, as well as performing their other duties. In hindsight, the employer should have employed staff whose sole responsibility was to supervise participants.

The two outdoor work projects in the Jobskills program involved a model of provision in which the Level 1 broker was also the employer and trainer. This may have caused some difficulties in the programs for participants who were dissatisfied with their employer, as there were no alternative employers available, unlike the range of possible employers for clerical and child-care participants. Participants may have also lacked options for expressing their grievance with an aspect of the program, such as training, given the lack of participants in this model. In this model of program delivery, there was no built in accountability as there may have been in a model where a broker, an employer and a trainer would possibly be responsible to each other as well as to the participant.

Summary

While participants have valued the work experience component of the Jobskills program overall, some participants in the three occupational categories represented here have expressed dissatisfaction. Problems arose when the employer was not committed to the provision of on-the-job training, and when the participants' supervision was perceived to be ill-defined and inconsistent. Participants' satisfaction with their placement also varied according to the level of individual experience and their expectations. Employers in agencies where many staff were part-time due to their funding arrangements often found it difficult to provide the consistent supervision that may have been required in the program.

Underlying these difficulties was the lack of clear definition and classification of on-the-job training in the program guidelines. Brokers were divided on the value of structuring the on-the-job training component of the program to the extent that individual needs could not be accommodated. Brokers in favour of more structured on-the-job training suggested the need to divert some funds to the provision of this component of the program.

Participants have suggested that it would be beneficial if the broker provided a structured introduction to employers about the latter's responsibilities in the program.
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in terms of supervision and on-the-job training. Employers have added to this suggestion the idea of identifying individual participant skill development needs which could be incorporated into on-the-job training and other activities.

This section has raised the issue for child-care participants and employers of lack of clarity of status in terms of whether Jobskills participants are treated as students or employees in child-care centres. Also discussed was the problem of providing a program in which the broker was also the trainer and the employer.

Off-the-job training

Off-the-job training is a significant portion of participants' placement in the program comprising 25 per cent of their time. Brokers are responsible for arranging training. In the Brotherhood Jobskills program it has been offered through TAFE, SkillShare or private providers.

This section discusses issues in the provision of off-the-job training from the point of view of program representatives consulted in the evaluation. The discussion is structured according to the occupational categories represented in the program: clerical, child-care and outdoor work. Themes discussed in this section in relation to off-the-job training include accreditation and competency-based training, relevance to employer needs (liaison between agency and trainer), flexibility (participant needs, self-paced and modular).

Clerical training

Off-the-job training for clerical participants in the Brotherhood Jobskills program was provided by SkillShare or by a recognised private provider. It involved computing, administration and communication skills training. The range of topics offered to clerical participants encompassed telephone awareness, first aid, meeting procedures, bookkeeping, work ethics, job search, English language and literacy, personal development, and word processing. Clerical training in the program was not accredited, however, administration and communication topics comprised modules of the Certificate of Office and Secretarial Studies which entitled participants to credits if they undertook further education in this field.

Clerical participants consulted in the evaluation reported favourably on this component of the Jobskills program. They valued the vocational skills they acquired through off-the-job training, such as computing skills, and they appreciated the opportunity to meet as a group in order to develop relationships with other participants and peer support networks. Participants in the group discussion noted the importance of training which was self-paced, especially computing, because of their different levels of expertise and interests.
Trainers of clerical participants consulted in the evaluation noted the confidence gained by participants as their placement progressed. They believed that this came from learning new skills, from personal development topics offered in some of the courses, and from the support they received from their peers. One trainer explained the importance of peer support in the program as:

It is a chance for participants to meet as a group. Because they are together so often they support each other. They have someone to talk to. That helps with their self-esteem and confidence.

Trainers emphasised the importance of improved self-esteem for people who have been long-term unemployed. They added that participants with the least experience gained more from the off-the-job training component of the program than more experienced participants because they were able to take their new skills directly back to the work place and implement that knowledge. According to trainers, for maximum benefit to the participant, it is important that the off-the-job training is linked closely to the work experience component of the program.

In terms of peer support and being able to implement new skills in the work place almost immediately, training which was ongoing and occurred one day per week throughout the program, instead of in a block, seemed more appropriate for the needs of most participants. Weekly training was usually supported in the program by one week preparatory training at program commencement and completed with a one or two-week period of intensive job search and résumé preparation.

The relationship between trainers and employers in the program varied between trainers. One private provider and one SkillShare had little ongoing contact with employers in the program, while two other SkillShare-based trainers reported that they had a lot of contact with employers. For example, one SkillShare trainer (who was also a broker in the program) stated that they conducted regular employer surveys in the local labour market and summarised employment data from job advertisements in order to identify the most relevant computer packages. That trainer/broker noted the importance of employer, trainer and participant consultation in designing the training program.

Employers of clerical participants, while satisfied with the off-the-job training component of the program, suggested accredited and competency-based training which extended the existing skills of participants, would improve the program. They also emphasised the importance of using compatible equipment and packages in off-the-job training which were relevant to employer needs.

Child-care training

Accredited training for child-care participants in the program was provided by TAFE colleges. Participants received a Certificate of Child-care (Assistant) for successfully completing their placement which articulated into the Associate Diploma of Social
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Sciences (Child-care) offered through some TAFE colleges. The off-the-job training was theory oriented, including topics such as early childhood development and program planning, and the course has been designed to complement practical application required to care for children in child-care centres. Child-care participants undertook one or two days per week off-the-job training at TAFE college during their placement.

Child-care participants valued the combination of work and training which they believed enhanced their skills. One participant reported that she had difficulty keeping up with the homework set by TAFE because she was not used to training, but also because she had a child at home. Other participants felt that the course was very easy, and they did not view all topics as relevant to their job requirements. Again, these participants emphasised the importance of off-the-job training which related directly to their work experience. They also recognised the importance of undertaking accredited training which made them more competitive for employment than an untrained child-care worker. One participant who had been successful in gaining employment by the end of the placement stated:

I got a job because I had a certificate. It means you are prepared to learn to get more skills.

The child-care trainer consulted in the evaluation was very favourable about the Jobskills program and its suitability for child-care participants. She emphasised the importance of the off-the-job training and work experience which occurred simultaneously, which was beneficial both to the participant and to the child-care centre. She stated that the funding provided in the program for the purchase of TAFE training was adequate to provide the training and support which was required by participants in the program. She was very satisfied with the role of the broker and noted the important role of the broker liaising between trainers, employers and participants. The trainer did not believe that increased involvement directly between trainers and employers was practical given the limits of working hours.

Brokers for child-care participants also emphasised the importance of combining work experience and training in this occupational field, especially because access to accredited training is limited to people already working in a child-care centre. Accredited child-care training is recognised throughout Australia and it is a prerequisite for employment within community sector agencies. Also, they suggested that accredited training promoted participant satisfaction and it was a mechanism for quality control in the program.

One broker for child-care participants in the program believed that the relationship between the trainer and employer needed to be enhanced to correlate off-the-job training with the work experience component of the program. That broker provided employers with a course outline prior to program commencement, but employers had little input into its development. Employers in child-care centres who responded to the mail survey for the evaluation also suggested that increased contact between TAFE and employers was one way the program could be improved in the future.
Training for outdoor work

Off-the-job training for outdoor workers in the Jobskills program involved classroom sessions provided by the broker/employer and by SkillShare. It included topics such as landscaping, horticulture, furniture restoration, pruning, first aid, and business management. That training was not accredited.

Outdoor participants consulted in the evaluation were disappointed with the off-the-job training component of the program. They believed that it could have been better organised and more practical. They emphasised that it would have been useful to undertake courses for which they received certificates, such as a light truck licence and chemical handling.

A broker/employer for outdoor participants agreed with the participants' views on accredited off-the-job training in the program and added that 26 weeks may not be sufficient experience to enhance participant job opportunities in this occupational category:

Off-the-job training must be accredited in order for the participant to feel that they have achieved something and to be of use to their future job opportunities. Participants would see more value in it if they did something that gave them credits in other courses and if they completed modules. Many don't see it as leading to a job because six months isn't long enough in this occupational category - 12 months would be better.

Brokers and trainers for outdoor participants agreed that there were difficulties providing training in outdoor work in a classroom setting, given the 'hands-on nature' of the work. One broker who was also the employer in the program explained:

Landscape gardening is quite a difficult occupation to put into a classroom learning/theory situation. I think participants benefited from the theory on horticulture and were better able to put this into practice.

For the same reason, the SkillShare trainer consulted in the evaluation emphasised the importance of a balancing off-the-job training with the on-the-job training component of the program.

Summary

Jobskills participants agreed on the importance of accredited training which was recognised by employers and articulated into further education and training. Outdoor participants were less likely to receive accredited off-the-job training in the program compared to participants in other occupational categories and they expressed their frustration with the lack of certification provided in the program. The situation of outdoor participants can be contrasted with the child-care participants who received a certificate which articulated into further accredited TAFE training.
A disadvantage of the program for the participant was that the off-the-job training was not tailored to meet individual needs as most of the training was time based and not competency-based. Training which was competency-based would allow for self-paced learning and enhance the flexibility of the program to meet individual needs. However, individual training is more expensive than group training, so that funding limitations may mean that it is difficult to tailor training to individual needs. Program guidelines for training which are time-based are incongruous with national moves toward competency-based training.

Employers, brokers and some trainers have recognised the need for increased trainer contact with employers in order to develop the content and timing of the off-the-job training component of the program.

Overall the advantages of the off-the-job training seem to have outweighed the disadvantages of training for the participant and the employer, especially when that training is seen to enhance and extend existing skills and when it is linked to the work experience and on-the-job training components of the program.

Difficulties in implementing the program

This final section raises some additional issues which program representatives have identified as weaknesses in the implementation process of Jobskills. They are grouped in the following subheadings: administration, tendering process and funding agreements, and DSS/DEET relationship.

Administration

The reporting requirements of Jobskills was one area in which program representatives agreed improvements could be made. Brokers, employers and union representatives all raised this issue as a concern. Level 1 brokers were required to complete monthly financial reports for each participant for the duration of the placement and submit this to the Level 2 broker who would summarise this in monthly reports for DEET.

While participants recognised the importance of financial accountability in the program, they believed that the quantity of reporting was excessive and created repetition. The time-consuming administration requirements of the program impeded the liaison role of the broker. One broker suggested that it should be necessary to demonstrate expenditure for each participant only once at the completion of the program. Another broker added that DEET's monitoring role could be expanded beyond a financial audit of the program by staff visiting work sites and broker locations. The broker believed that this could have enhanced accountability in the program.
Tendering process and funding arrangements

At the time of the evaluation, Level 2 and Level 1 brokers were experiencing anxiety and frustration due to the delay in announcing the results of tenders for the 1993-94 Jobskills contracts. Delays between contracts meant that brokers had to employ staff from their own funds, if possible, in anticipation of further Jobskills places. At a time when community awareness about the program had been increasing, and brokers had developed waiting lists of potential employers and participants, the delay in announcing the results of the tendering process was problematic.

Some brokers noted that the funding agreements with DEET did not recognise the work undertaken by the broker before program commencement and after completion. This involved establishing and maintaining program infrastructure such as employer and trainer contacts, participant follow-up and post-program support, and final financial reporting. Brokers suggested that the accounting systems did not recognise the ‘before and after’ time spent by the broker on the program, and that this time needed to be recognised and paid for in the broker fee.

DSS/DEET relationship

Difficulties were reported by brokers and participants regarding the participants’ receipt of DSS allowances after completing the program. The issue seemed to arise from the different interpretation of a Jobskills placement between the DSS and DEET administrative systems. For DEET administrative purposes, Jobskills participants were regarded as receiving training during their placement so they remained on the CES register and ‘officially unemployed’. For DSS administrative purposes, Jobskills participants were regarded as employed and therefore their entitlement to benefit ceased.

Difficulties arose for participants at program completion when they were required to reapply for DSS allowance and to serve waiting periods for application of payment (one week) and a further two weeks equivalent to their annual leave payment.

Additional problems were experienced by some Jobskills participants during their placement when some DSS offices misinformed them about their continued eligibility for Health Care Card during their Jobskills placement. Participants reported that their eligibility for Health Care Card ceased during their Jobskills placement but in fact their eligibility should have continued. This problem was often resolved by brokers who intervened at local DSS offices on behalf of participants.

Value of the program for the participant

Jobskills participants consulted in group discussions for the evaluation talked about personal and vocational gains from their involvement in the program. The child-care participants specified the value of combining work and training, especially when the
training was directly relevant to their work experience, while the clerical participants also emphasised the importance of their off-the-job training. The outdoor participants were less positive about the vocational value of their participation in the Jobskills program.

Clerical, child-care and outdoor participants all mentioned the personal value of their involvement in the Jobskills program. The child-care participants described the value of the program to them in personal terms as:

If you have been out of work for a long time it is good to be given the opportunity and encouragement and to get back into working with others. You get more confidence, not just thinking about yourself, increased social options, it gives you a chance and brings you back to life ... motivation.

However, many of the participants expressed their frustration from their increased self-confidence but with no guarantee of a job after program completion, and they emphasised the importance of ongoing support to minimise their disappointment. One participant expressed the difficult reality of unemployment:

Once I am unemployed it is difficult to get a job. Employed people get the job.

These feelings may have been stronger because of the timing of the group discussions with participants which was near the completion of their placement. Some participants also stated that they had been promised further employment at the end of their placement which had not been forthcoming therefore adding to their disappointment.

One union representative consulted in the evaluation also stressed the importance for all participants of not unrealistically raising expectations for paid employment at the end of the placement. All union representatives consulted noted the value of the program for participants in terms of providing recent and relevant work experience, which for some, such as the child-care participants, also included accredited training.

The majority of employers, 41 of the 43 who responded to the mail survey, stated that they thought participant job prospects had improved by undertaking the Jobskills program. Employers also described the personal and vocational gains for most participants including:

- up-to-date and relevant skills through work experience and training which was supported by a certificate and/or references;
- improved confidence and communication skills; and
- motivation to go on to further training and/or employment.
Brokers consulted in the evaluation reiterated that most Jobskills participants gained personally and vocationally from the program. Some Level 1 brokers noted the value to participants of structured personal development and support, alongside formal skills development, in the off-the-job training component of the program. The peer support among participants themselves was mentioned for its positive effects, in addition to the support provided by the broker.

In order to enhance participant job prospects, some brokers and employers consulted in the evaluation suggested that the Jobskills program could be extended to a wider range of occupational categories, such as in the health, hospitality and retail industries. This program expansion would incorporate private sector employers and provide industry experience in the existing range of occupational categories and others. They cautioned that the program in the private sector should be closely supervised and monitored, and the role of the broker should be to support both the employer and the participant.

Value of the program for the employer

All of the 43 employers who responded to the mail survey for the evaluation stated that they had benefited from their involvement in the Brotherhood's Jobskills program. They all reported that they would be involved in the program again in the future if the opportunity arose because of the benefits to their agencies and to participants.

Employers mentioned the benefits of the program for their agencies in terms of being able to undertake work which they would not have been able to do otherwise - a benefit both to the agency and to their clients. In addition, employers were happy to be involved in an important labour market program which they thought assisted people who have been long-term unemployed.

One child-care centre representative described the value of the program to the agency as:

We have benefited by gaining an insight into the current training for child-care, and the children have benefited by the amount of care they have received.

For 31 of the 43 surveyed employers, the Jobstart Wage Subsidy would be (or has been) useful to enable them to retain a participant in paid employment. However, the 12 employers who said that the subsidy would not be useful or that they were uncertain about its usefulness nominated overall budget constraints as the problem. This issue would be most relevant in the Victorian context given the recent and extensive cuts to many State Government funded non-government agencies. The difficulty for future employer involvement in the Jobskills program related more to the uncertainty of the employing agencies' own funding rather than to the operation of labour market programs themselves.
Brokers and union representatives consulted in the evaluation all agreed that employers have benefited by their involvement in the Jobskills program because of the additional resources it offered. Some brokers stated that the Jobskills program had provided an 'extra pair of hands' at a minimum cost to the organisation which enabled them to undertake additional work they may have wanted to do but could not because of funding cuts.

A Level 1 broker for child-care participants elaborated on the impact of funding reductions in child-care centres and its relationship to the issue of additionality in the program. The broker explained that child-care centres are obliged through government regulation to employ, as a minimum standard, a set ratio of qualified staff members to children. However, because of increasing and continuing reductions in State Government funding, the broker believed that many centres were operating at a minimum level. Therefore, while it appeared that all Jobskills participants were additional to the existing staff in child-care centres, the centre could save on costs because when a staff member went home sick the centre could use the participant instead of calling in relief staff.

The survey of employers showed that in 35 of the 43 monitored work sites Jobskills participants were additional to existing staff members in that they did not replace an existing paid worker or volunteer, nor did they undertake work which reduced the hours of any other worker. In the minority of cases (eight) where additionality was in question, three involved a Jobskills participant who replaced a volunteer (clerical), two involved a participant who reduced the hours of another paid worker (clerical), and three involved a participant who replaced a paid relief worker (two child-care and one clerical).
CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSION

This evaluation has been concerned with the Jobskills program which was provided by the Brotherhood in the community sector throughout Victoria. Some 500 participants have been involved in the program from March 1992 to December 1993. This evaluation was conducted during June to December 1993 and has focused on issues in the implementation of the program for the second Brotherhood Jobskills contract of about 150 participants (as well as an additional group of child-care participants from the first Brotherhood contract). A follow-up of participants has been undertaken some six to 12 months after program completion in order to gain information on participants' experiences of the program and their long-term employment outcomes (see Grieves 1995).

The evaluation has elicited the views of many of the Jobskills program representatives: participants, brokers, employers, trainers and union representatives. This chapter identifies areas where the implementation process can be enhanced in order to facilitate future broker, employer and trainer involvement in the program. It also identifies areas where the implementation process can be enhanced in order to improve participant job prospects. Relevant findings from the review of the Jobskills program undertaken by CESAC (1994) are also discussed in this chapter.

Work experience and on-the-job training

Overall, program representatives consulted in the evaluation agreed on the value of the program for the participants. They emphasised the personal and vocational gains from participating in paid work experience which is linked to training. This study concurs with the finding by CESAC that:

... the program is providing a valuable contribution to assisting the unemployed, in particular by providing attachment to the workforce, greater self esteem and confidence and the necessary skills training to improve participants' labour market competitiveness (CESAC 1994, p.17)

Persistent high levels of long-term unemployment and the benefits to participants in Jobskills point to the importance of continuing this labour market program.

Participant satisfaction with their placement varied according to the extent of their previous work experience and the quality of supervision and training they received on-the-job. In order to improve their Jobskills placement, participants believed that brokers should educate and monitor employers regarding employers' responsibilities when accepting Jobskills participants. Participants did not value being given menial tasks to complete with little supervision and apparently ad hoc on-the-job training. The evaluation identified the need to provide orientation sessions for employers in terms of their role and responsibilities for participants in the Jobskills program.
On-the-job training and work experience which was linked to off-the-job training was valued by the participants. Some participants, brokers and employers agreed on the importance of involving the three parties to the placement in early identification and negotiation of on-the-job training which extended participant skills and met employer needs. This would formalise an important component of the program which seems less structured and less well defined than other elements of the program.

Off-the-job training

Employers who responded to the mail survey for the evaluation preferred earlier involvement in the program regarding the development of off-the-job training plans and increased involvement with trainers. They believed that this would benefit the participant and better meet their own needs by improving the links between the work experience and training components of the program. Liaison between employer and trainer has not been an explicit component of the Jobskills program model to date. The evaluation identified the need for liaison between employers and trainers in order to devise off-the-job training for participants which is relevant to employer needs as well as to participant needs.

All program representatives agreed on the importance of providing off-the-job training which is accredited and articulates into further education and training. As reported by Sharman (1993), accredited training would improve participant satisfaction with the program and probably enhance participant job prospects. CESAC (1994, p.58) also recommends the use of accredited courses and training providers where appropriate. Off-the-job training for child-care participants was a model of accredited training which progressed the participant toward further accredited TAFE training. The evaluation identified the need to provide training in the Jobskills program which is nationally accredited and leads to further education and training for the participant.

Off-the-job training for outdoor participants was least likely to offer certification and accreditation, and it seemed the most difficult to provide given the 'hands-on nature' of their employment. In this context, the experience of outdoor workers illustrated the importance of employer commitment to the provision of quality on-the-job training which improved participant competencies in a range of vocational settings.

Brokers and some trainers suggested improvements to the off-the-job training component of the program for participants by providing competency-based training rather than the current time-based model of delivery. They believed training which was competency-based and offered in modules would be flexible and self-paced to better meet the individual needs of participants. The provision of competency-based training would conform with reform of the national, vocational training agenda. While competency-based training would be more expensive to provide than group training which is time-based, participants would receive credits for modules completed and competence achieved which could be recognised in a 'Statement of Competence' at
program completion. A Jobskills Certificate is provided for successful completion of the program which does not specify participant competence levels.

Enhancing participant job prospects

Program representatives consulted in the evaluation cautioned on unrealistically raising participant expectations for paid employment at program completion, and the participants themselves expressed some anxiety about their future employment opportunities. They emphasised the value of the support component of the program, toward completion and following program completion, especially in terms of job search and support at a time of uncertainty, but brokers noted that this aspect of the program had not been recognised by DEET in terms of funding.

CESAC (1994, p.34) recognises the importance of post-placement assistance in terms of improving employment outcomes for participants. The committee recommends that 'brokers be required under the contractual arrangements to provide post-placement assistance to participants' (CESAC 1994, p.36). Unfortunately, the Committee’s recommendation does not acknowledge the financial burden post-placement assistance for participants would add to brokers. This evaluation has identified the importance of DEET both recognising and funding brokers to provide post-program support to participants in order to improve their employment outcomes.

Some brokers and employers believed that participant job prospects could be enhanced by extending the occupational categories represented in the program and by extending the program to the private sector. They suggested work experience and training in health, hospitality and retail industries for program expansion, but they also recognised the importance of monitoring work sites and supporting employers and participants. These views were also expressed in the recent investigation of the Jobskills program by CESAC (1994, p.20). Changes to the Jobskills program since this evaluation was undertaken have included pilot brokerages in the private sector and expansion of the occupational coverage of placements.

Improving administration of the program

Representatives of the program consulted in the study were concerned that some participants may have been compelled by the CES network to undertake a Jobskills placement in order to fulfil their obligations in the Newstart system which specifically links receipt of income support with participation in employment and training programs. They believed that compulsion to participate in the program would be counterproductive for all individuals and organisations involved in Jobskills. Program representatives consulted for the evaluation emphasised the need to provide job seekers with a range of choices for participation in labour market programs in order to extend their existing skill levels and to improve their employment opportunities.
The study documented difficulties experienced by some Jobskills participants regarding delays in receipt of entitlement to income support at program completion and withdrawal of Health Care Card during placement. Delays in restoration of Newstart Allowance on program completion seem to have occurred largely because of administrative and computer interface difficulties between the DSS and the CES network (CESAC 1994, pp. 63-66). This study supports the Committee's recommendation that:

... the Department [DEET] develop a procedure to ensure that participants do not suffer financial hardship through gaps in income support because of inefficiencies in the transfer arrangements in either direction between JOBSYSTEM and the DSS system. (CESAC 1994, p.66)

In terms of receipt of Health Care Card, some Jobskills participants have incorrectly had their entitlement suspended by DSS during their placement. CESAC (1994, p.65) reports that some DSS officers have been unaware that entitlement to Health Care Card has been extended for six months for recipients of Newstart Allowance who return to work (including Jobskills participants). The problem for Jobskills participants seems to have arisen because of inaccurate interpretation of DSS policy by some department officers. There is a need for participants to continue entitlement to Health Care Card during their Jobskills placement because of their relatively low income during Jobskills and because many have experienced financial hardship stemming from long periods of unemployment.

Brokers have a pivotal role in liaising with participants, employers, trainers, the CES and DSS. Although brokers recognised the importance of accountability to DEET, brokers were frustrated with the financial reporting requirements of the program which sometimes interfered with their ability to adequately undertake their liaison and monitoring role. Brokers felt that monthly financial and activity statements for each participant were time consuming and excessive. Some brokers suggested that one financial statement for each participant during the placement was adequate. A further suggestion regarding accountability, besides financial accountability, was to encourage CES staff to visit brokers and work sites.

The issue of excessive reporting requirements for brokers in the Jobskills program was also noted by CESAC (1994, pp.37-38). The Committee has recommended the removal of Level 2 brokers from the program and DEET Area Offices assume their responsibility, thereby removing a layer of administration in the program and reducing the reporting requirements of brokers. This reform has been introduced into the Jobskills program. Given the concerns of brokers consulted for the evaluation, this study supports the recommendation by the Committee that:

... the Department review the reporting requirements of Brokers with a view to reducing the amount of paperwork, while ensuring that there is an appropriate balance between accountability requirements and efficiency of program delivery. (CESAC 1994, p. 38)
Brokers were dissatisfied with the tendering process which offered short-term contracts, inconsistent and insecure funding, and did not recognise the 'before and after' nature of their role in establishing and maintaining the program. They felt that this seriously impared the potential quality of the program.

Facilitating employer involvement in the program

Benefits of the Jobskills program for employers included being able to undertake work which they would not otherwise have been able to do because of funding limitations. This allowed staff to better meet their existing service obligations and to extend their service delivery. Employers also valued the opportunity to be involved in what they saw as an important labour market program which assisted job seekers who have been long-term unemployed.

Employer frustration with the program stemmed from not being able to offer ongoing employment to participants, nor to offer additional Jobskills places because their staff were mainly part-time and unable to offer adequate supervision. Both limitations were a result of funding constraints experienced by many State Government-funded community sector agencies involved in the Brotherhood's Jobskills program. In a few cases, the inadequacies of State Government funding may have contributed to the use of Jobskills participants in positions previously held by other paid staff. In some child-care centres, Jobskills participants were at times used instead of paid relief staff when another worker was unwell.

Employers valued having a pool of participants from whom to select and sufficient time to interview and select participants for their work places. Some brokers believed that this choice enhanced the 'authenticity' of the program for employers. Inadequate time for recruitment at commencement of the program frustrated the process of referral by limiting the number of job seekers from the CES for each available place and therefore increasing the likelihood of 'inappropriate referral'. At the same time there was a need for brokers to attempt to appropriately match job seekers with potential employers.

Child-care employers (and participants) required clear definitions of the status of Jobskills participants in their centres in order to remove confusion regarding participant responsibility and the level of supervision. An agreed definition of participant status should also include TAFE colleges who are the providers of accredited child-care training in Victoria. That agreed delineation of status and responsibility could intersect a student on placement and a paid employee, therefore giving the Jobskills child-care participant increasing levels of responsibility with adequate supervision. The evaluation identified the need for DEET to negotiate with TAFE providers of child-care training and child-care employers an acceptable status for child-care participants which provides appropriate levels of responsibility and adequate supervision in the Jobskills program.
Future Brotherhood involvement in the program

The model of program delivery which involved the broker as the trainer and employer was questioned by some brokers and implicated in the dissatisfaction expressed by some participants. The absence of a third party in this model may have meant that there was less accountability to the participant and fewer choices for the participant in the provision of training and work experience. The evaluation pointed to the need for an independent advocate for the participant to ensure that their employment and training needs are met by the program.

Some Jobskills brokers consulted in the evaluation have expressed the tension inherent between the program guidelines which encourage the achievement of positive employment outcomes for participants and the Brotherhood’s own mission to work with the poorest members of Australian society. The CESAC report states (1994, p.35):

CESAC is mindful of the tension created by forcing positive outcome performance on brokers. Increasing the pressure to achieve positive outcomes may prompt brokers to choose long-term unemployed people with a higher level of work skills, neglecting highly disadvantaged people who perhaps may never regain entry to the workforce without assistance from the program.

This is an issue for the Brotherhood given the explicit mission to work for the ‘well-being of the poorest members of Australian community to improve their economic, social and personal circumstances’. CESAC recommends that the contracts with brokers specify expected outcomes for participants and DEET allows for the degree of labour market disadvantage of the intended client group (1994, p.36). If these changes were adopted in future implementation of the Jobskills program, the Brotherhood would be better able to focus its involvement within the program guidelines on the most disadvantaged job seekers. This study supports the Committee’s recommendations on outcomes for participants and emphasises the need for DEET to review its outcome measures to ensure that they promote the participation in Jobskills of the most disadvantaged in the labour market.

In conclusion, this evaluation has identified that the Jobskills program, with a few exceptions, has provided valuable work experience and training for the participants. In many cases, it has enhanced their vocational skills and improved their self-esteem and confidence, thereby probably improving their employment prospects. This labour market program is important because it combines paid work experience and training and therefore extends the range of employment and training programs available to job seekers.

Jobskills has also been valued by the employers involved by enabling them to expand and improve their existing services, and to provide assistance to job seekers disadvantaged in the labour market. Trainers and union representatives have been positive about their involvement in the Jobskills program and the benefits to participants. The difficulties encountered by brokers implementing the program,
which have been identified by the evaluation, have not overshadowed their recognition of the value of the program for participants and employers.

This evaluation has been based on extensive consultation with representatives of the Brotherhood's Jobskills program throughout Victoria and it has drawn on the findings of the CESAC review of the program (1994). Program improvements identified in the study seek to enhance participant job outcomes, and facilitate future involvement by trainers, employers and brokers. The Brotherhood's own involvement in the program should in future be undertaken in view of the findings of this evaluation.
## Jobskills training wage at 1 October 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Training wage/fortnight at 1/10/93</th>
<th>Deduct tax; add rebate</th>
<th>Basic family payment</th>
<th>Additional family payment</th>
<th>Rent assistance</th>
<th>Health care card (overpage)</th>
<th>Total jobskills tax deducted family payment added</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
<td>($90.40)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>$509.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single 21 with 1 child</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
<td>($90.40)</td>
<td>$20.90</td>
<td>$61.90</td>
<td>$68.00</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Up to $702.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married - no dependent children</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
<td>($90.40)</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Up to $554.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married - 1 dependent child</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
<td>($90.40)</td>
<td>$20.90</td>
<td>$61.90</td>
<td>Up to $74.00</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Up to $720.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married - 2 dependent children</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
<td>($90.40)</td>
<td>$41.80</td>
<td>$121.60</td>
<td>Up to $74.00</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Up to $801.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married - 3 Dependent children</td>
<td>$600.00</td>
<td>($90.40)</td>
<td>$62.70</td>
<td>$182.40</td>
<td>Up to $85.20</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Up to $894.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family payments calculated on all children being under the age of 13 years.

## Newstart Allowance at 20 September 1993

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Basic NSA Per fortnight</th>
<th>Tax</th>
<th>Basic family payment</th>
<th>Additional family payment</th>
<th>Rent assistance</th>
<th>Health care card</th>
<th>Total newstart nil tax deducted family payment added</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>$286.40</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Up to $68.00</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Up to $354.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single any age with 1 child</td>
<td>$316.20</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$20.90</td>
<td>$61.90</td>
<td>Up to $74.00</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Up to $473.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married - no dependent children</td>
<td>$527.40</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Up to $64.00</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Up to $591.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married - 1 dependent child</td>
<td>$527.40</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$20.90</td>
<td>$61.90</td>
<td>Up to $74.00</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Up to $684.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married - 2 dependent children</td>
<td>$527.40</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$41.80</td>
<td>$121.60</td>
<td>Up to $74.00</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Up to $764.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married - 3 dependent children</td>
<td>$527.40</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>$62.70</td>
<td>$182.40</td>
<td>Up to $85.20</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Up to $857.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family payments calculated on all children being under the age of 13 years.
APPENDIX B: JOBSKILLS REPRESENTATIVES CONSULTED

Participant group discussions
Outdoor workers, Brotherhood Central Highlands Region
Clerical workers, Brotherhood Barwon Region
Child care workers, Brotherhood Peninsula Region

Broker consultations
Brotherhood Level 2 Broker - Jo Hurley
Level 1 Brokers - Catherine Scarth, Brotherhood Peninsula Region
Janine Dawson and Karen Petty, Brotherhood Barwon Region

Peter Magee and Andrea Chapman, Brotherhood Central Highlands Region
Julie London, Brotherhood FEAC
Tania Dunne, CERES
Jennifer Campbell, Knox/Sherbrooke SkillShare
Sandra Castano and Cheryl Winnell, Sunshine SkillShare

Julia Lewis, MADEC

43 employers responded to a mail survey

Union consultations
Robyn McCloud, Australian Workers' Union
Terry Breheney, Miscellaneous Workers' Union
Julie Collier, Australian Services Union

Trainer consultations
Trevor Webb, Ararat and District SkillShare
John McLeod, Langs Business College, Geelong
Ros Morgan, Frankston College of TAFE

Level 1 Brokers Sunshine and Knox/Sherbrooke SkillShares were also consulted about the off-the-job training which they provided
APPENDIX C: GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. Let's begin with you describing to me what you do in a week. What is a typical week like for you in the program?

2. What are some of the good things about Jobskills? What things have been useful to you in the program?

3. What are some of the things about the program which have not been so useful to you?

4. How can these be changed or improved? How can they be done differently. (Go through one at a time).

5. Now I would like to talk specifically about the questions which you think are important to ask other people who are involved in Jobskills.

First, the brokers. What are the important questions you think I need to ask the Jobskills brokers? (Do you know what they do? What is their role? How important is it to have brokers? What do you think it would be like being a broker in Jobskills?). Is there anything else you would like to say about the brokers? Any other issues you would like to raise about brokers?

What are the important questions I need to ask the trainers in Jobskills? (What off the job training do you do? Is it good? Is it relevant? Is it important? Can it be improved? Is there training you need but have not received? What do you think it would be like being a trainer in Jobskills?)

What about the on-the-job training? (repeat questions). Is there anything else you would like to say about the training and the trainers? Are there any other important issues you would like to raise about training?

What are the important questions which I need to ask the employers in Jobskills? (What has been good about your work experience? What has been difficult about your work experience? How do other staff treat you? Do you feel part of the work place? Is work experience important? What do you think it would be like being a Jobskills employer?). Is there anything else you would like to say about work experience? Are there any other issues you would like to raise about work experience or employment generally?

6. What about other issues (if they haven't been raised)? What do you think are the important questions I need to ask other Jobskills participants about? (Wait for response then prompt).

Wages: What is your wage? Is it adequate? What is a reasonable wage?
Transport: How do you get to and from work? Is transport a problem?

Child-care: Who here has children? How old are they? Who looks after them while you are at work? Is child-care a problem for you?

7. What about the CES? Are there important questions or issues which you think I should raise with the CES? (What is their role? Does it work? Can it be improved?)

8. What did you expect to gain from the Jobskills program? Have you got what you expected from the program?

9. What do you want to do next, after you have finished on the program? Do you think you will be able to do this?

10. Is there anything else you would like to add? Are there any aspects of the program which I have missed out on?
APPENDIX D: QUESTIONS FOR BROKERS

1. Please describe the process from recruitment to graduation? (ie. How did the trainees become involved? How did employers become involved?)

2. What have been the benefits of the program:
   - to you
   - to the trainee
   - to the employer?

3. What have been some of the difficulties/disadvantages with the program?

4. Has the program improved trainee job prospects? Which components are most useful (on-the-job training, off-the-job training, work experience?)

5. Could the program be improved/changed to facilitate employer involvement? In what ways?

6. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the Jobskills Program?
APPENDIX E: EMPLOYER SURVEY

Background information

1. How many Jobskills trainee(s) did you have who commenced in March to May 1993?

2. Other than the Jobskills trainee(s), how many employees currently work in your agency?
   Full-time.................. Part-time.................. Voluntary..................

3a. Why did you initially become involved in the Jobskills program?

3b. Have your expectations been met? ☐ YES ☐ NO
   Please explain..................................................................................................

4a. Did the trainee(s) replace any existing paid worker? ☐ YES ☐ NO
4b. Did the trainee(s) replace a volunteer? ☐ YES ☐ NO
4c. Did the trainee(s) undertake work which reduced the hours of any other worker? ☐ YES ☐ NO

5. Have you incurred any of the following on-costs in relation to employing the trainee(s)?
   (Please state amount of costs per annum for one trainee.)

   Superannuation costs ☐ YES, $.................... ☐ NO
   Worker compensation costs ☐ YES, $.................... ☐ NO
   Payroll tax ☐ YES, $.................... ☐ NO

   Other costs (please specify)....................................................

Work experience, supervision and on-the-job training

6. What main tasks/duties has the Jobskills trainee(s) undertaken during their placement in your agency?

7. What type and amount of supervision has been provided to the trainee(s)?

8. Did you experience any problems providing supervision for the trainee(s) on the job?
   ☐ NO ☐ YES (Please explain)

9. What type and amount of training did the trainee receive on-the-job?
   (i.e. structured training provided by the employer during the work experience placement.)

10. Did you have any difficulties with on-the-job training for the trainee?
    ☐ NO ☐ YES (Please explain)
11. Did you have sufficient, good quality and appropriate equipment for the trainee's work experience? 
☐ YES ☐ NO Please describe any shortfalls in equipment and resources you may have had.

12. How satisfied have you been with the logbook? (i.e. the logbook is a work experience and training diary recorded weekly by the trainee, supervisor and training instructor.)
☐ VERY SATISFIED ☐ SATISFIED ☐ DISSATISFIED ☐ VERY DISSATISFIED

12a. Why is that?

12b. How could the logbook be improved in the future?

13. Please describe any ways in which the work experience, supervision and on-the-job training components of the Jobskills program could be improved in the future.

Off-the-job training

14. What type of off-the-job training has the trainee(s) received during their placement? (i.e. structured training provided by a recognised vocational training provider such as TAFE, SkillShare or another agency.)

15. Has the off-the-job training component of the program assisted the trainee to undertake the work in your agency? ☐ YES ☐ NO Please describe ways in which the off-the-job training has or has not assisted the trainee in the workplace.

16. How satisfied have you been with the off-the-job training component of the program? 
☐ VERY SATISFIED ☐ SATISFIED ☐ DISSATISFIED ☐ VERY DISSATISFIED Please explain.

17. Please describe any ways in which you think the off-the-job training component of the Jobskills program could be improved in the future.

The role of the Broker

18. What type of involvement and how much contact have you had with the Jobskills broker?

19. How satisfied have you been with the role of the broker for the Jobskills program? 
☐ VERY SATISFIED ☐ SATISFIED ☐ DISSATISFIED ☐ VERY DISSATISFIED

Please explain

20. In what ways, if any, do you think the role of the Jobskills broker could be improved in the future to facilitate employer involvement in the program?
The future

21. Has participation in the Jobskills program improved the trainee(s) future job prospects? □ YES □ NO
   Please explain why you think their job prospects have or have not been improved by this program.

22. Would you be willing to be involved in the Jobskills program again?
    □ YES □ NO
    Please explain why you would or would not be involved in the future.

23. Would the Jobstart wage subsidy be useful to assist you to retain trainee(s) for a further period of paid employment? (A Jobstart Subsidy is a temporary wage subsidy to employers)
    □ YES □ NO
    Please explain why the wage subsidy would or would not be useful to you.

24. Overall, have you benefited from your involvement in the Jobskills program?
    □ YES □ NO
    Please describe the ways in which you have or have not benefited.

25. Are there any other ways in which you think the Jobskills program could be improved in the future to facilitate employer involvement?
    □ NO □ YES (Please describe)

26. Any other comments

Name of person who completed this questionnaire: ..............................................................

Contact phone number: ..................................................................................................

Thank you for your assistance with this survey. I can be contacted on (03) 483 1381 for further information.

Please return it by MONDAY 22 NOVEMBER in the self-addressed envelope which has been provided to:

Helen MacDonald
Brotherhood of St Laurence
67 Brunswick Street
FITZROY VIC 3065
APPENDIX F: QUESTIONS FOR UNIONS

1. What has been your involvement with the Jobskills Program to date?

2. What, if any, have been some of the benefits of the program:
   for the trainee?
   for the employer?

3. What, if any, have been some of the difficulties or disadvantages of the program:
   for the trainee?
   for the employer?

4. In the work places you have contact with, have Jobskills trainees been additional to existing staff? (i.e. Has the trainee replaced an existing staff member or volunteer or reduced the hours of an existing staff member?)

5a. Overall, how would you describe the Jobskills trainee working conditions - satisfactory or unsatisfactory? (If unsatisfactory, why is that?)

5b. How would you describe the level of the trainee wage - satisfactory or unsatisfactory? (If unsatisfactory, what would be a satisfactory level?)

6. Overall, have you been satisfied with the quality of the off-the-job training which Jobskills trainee’s receive?
   If not satisfied, why not?
   How could it be improved in the future?

7. Overall, have you been satisfied with the quality of the on-the-job training which Jobskills trainee’s receive?
   If not satisfied, why not?
   How could it be improved?

8. Are there any other ways in which the Jobskills program could be improved in the future?
APPENDIX G: QUESTIONS FOR TRAINERS

1. What type of training has been offered to the trainees? Is that training accredited?

2. What, if any, are the benefits of the off-the-job training to the Jobskills trainees? How important is this component of the program?

3. What, if any, have been the disadvantages/difficulties of the off-the-job training?

4. How relevant is the off-the-job training to the work experience component of the program?

5. Has the Jobskills program improved trainee job prospects?

6. What type of involvement have you had with the Jobskills broker?

7. What type of involvement have you had with employers in the program?

8. How satisfied have you been with the role of the broker for the Jobskills program?

9. Are there any ways in which the Jobskills program could be improved in the future to facilitate the provision of off-the-job training?
REFERENCES


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