**CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT SKILLS AND QUALITY OF LIFE FOR ADULTS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES IN A CO-OPEARATIVE MODEL OF EMPLOYMENT**

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**Objectives:** This study examined the nature and impact of Common-Ground-Cooperative, a social enterprise from the perspective participants in the Foundations training program and the agency training coordinator. The focus of the study was to examine changes in job skills and quality of life for the participants using established measures of employment skills and quality of life that were designed for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

**Method**: Seven participants from 2 Foundations training program were interviewed. Two female and 5 male participants with IDD were interviewed. Participants were interviewed at 3 different phases in their training: program entry, apprenticeship entry, partnership entry, and 3 and 6 month follow ups. The participants were interviewed using the ‘Quality of Life for People with IDD Instrument Short Version Package’ (Renwick & Myerscough, 2012), the ‘Job Observation and Behavior Scale’ (JOBS; Rosenberg & Brady, 2000), the JOBS: Opportunities for Self-Determination (JOBS:OSD; Brady, Rosenberg, & Frain, 2006), and a semi-structured interview. The same measures were used at each time period. The executive director of the program was asked to rate the utility of the measures to determine whether they would be helpful in future evaluation of Foundations students.

**Results**: Results are still pending. Analysis will examine whether the scores on the subscales of each measure changes as participants progress through the Foundations training program and up to 6 months after being voted into partnership. Furthermore, thematic analysis of the interviews with participants at each phase in the evaluation will reveal commonalities amongst the participants’ experiences as they engage in different phases of the training. It is expected that themes related to changes in job skills and improvements in quality of life will be reported by participants.

**Discussion/Conclusions**: Social enterprises are an under-utilized employment support for persons with IDD. Previous research exploring the benefits of social enterprises have demonstrated that partners reported a sense of belonging and improvements in quality of life. This research will also demonstrate benefit for persons with IDD, including changes in job skill and quality of life as measured on standardized measures. This research will demonstrate that further consideration should be given to social enterprises as a form of employment support. Limitations, including the sensitivity of the selected measures; and future research will be discussed.

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