



# A YEAR IN REVIEW

QATHET INCLUSIVE MANUFACTURING PILOT PROJECT  
YEAR ONE EVALUATION REPORT



**A note about terminology:** For the purposes of this report, the word 'participant' refers to all employees at OneLight (including but not limited to those who engaged with the researcher directly), as well as Advisory Committee members, managers, and family members who participated in the research. We acknowledge that this use of the word 'participant' is broader than that used by the Project Based Labour Market Training Program.

The logo for Canada, featuring the word "Canada" in a black serif font with a small Canadian flag to the right.

This program is funded by the Government of Canada  
and the Province of British Columbia.



Funding for qathet Inclusive Manufacturing Pilot Project (qIM) is provided through Project Based Labour Market Training (PBLMT) stream of the Community and Employer Partnership (CEP) fund. The project holder is inclusion Powell River Society in partnership with Powell River Model Community Project for Persons with Disabilities Society (PRMCP) who is responsible for all operations of the fire starter manufacturing business. Published by inclusion Powell River Society January 28, 2022.





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A person is working in a factory setting, possibly a food processing plant. They are using a long metal tool to handle small, cylindrical items, likely food products, which are arranged in rows on a tray. In the background, there is a red fire extinguisher and a white box with the number 'A204' on it. The scene is dimly lit, with a focus on the worker's hands and the items they are handling.

“I HAVE A DISABILITY AND IT’S REALLY HARD TO GET JOBS. IT’S NICE TO HAVE A JOB THAT KNOWS I HAVE A DISABILITY AND I CAN JUST BE MYSELF THERE. ... THERE’S NO JUDGEMENT OR ANYTHING. THERE’S A TOTAL SENSE OF BELONGING. WHAT IT’S DONE IS IT’S MADE ME LESS DEPRESSED. MADE ME HAVE MORE CONFIDENCE IN MYSELF. IT’S MADE ME LESS SUICIDAL; I USED TO FEEL REALLY SUICIDAL. IT IS A HUGE DEAL. ONELIGHT’S REALLY IMPORTANT.”

- MICHELLE, ONELIGHT EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT

# INTRODUCTION

qIM Inclusive Manufacturing Pilot Project (qIM) is a Project Based Labour Market Training (PBLMT) project that includes a research component. qIM is funded by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction's Community and Employer Partnerships (CEP) fund.

The project restructures a social enterprise (OneLight) to make it inclusive in design to address employment barriers and to build competencies among employee participants. Over 18 months our team is testing and researching an inclusive model of employment in manufacturing where employee participants with and without disabilities are engaged in manufacturing and selling OneLight fire starters made from recycled materials. qIM utilises OneLight as an inclusive employment setting that can deploy, test and adapt an inclusive employment model from day one of its operations. OneLight is not operating as a viable business with profitability as its focus.

OneLight began its operations in earnest in January 2021. During these first seven months, retention has been high, production has improved over time, and more policies and practices have been implemented based on emergent learning and with input from employee participants. The learnings captured in this report will benefit any business or organization that wishes to create inclusive employment conditions - and in turn increase employee participant satisfaction, retention, morale, and productivity over time.

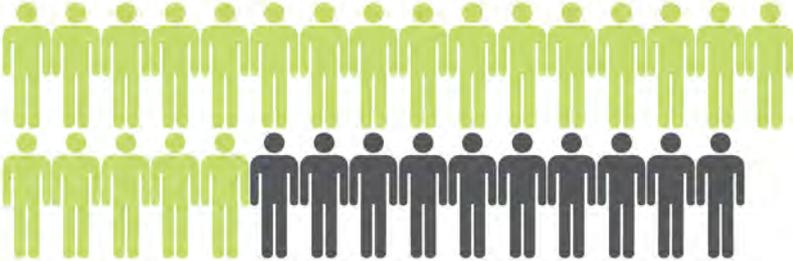
Research and evaluation of this unique project follows five "Teachings". Each teaching is outlined in the following sections of this report, they include:

- Inclusive culture
- Natural supports
- Training
- Flexible schedule and task modification
- Equitable duties and compensation.

# ABOUT OUR TEAM



FOR **16%** OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANTS  
ONELIGHT IS THEIR FIRST JOB



**68%** of employee participants were unemployed before working at OneLight

For information about the research process please see *Appendix A*





**81%**  
**OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANTS  
 IDENTIFY AS HAVING A  
 DISABILITY**

*PEOPLE WHO SELF-IDENTIFY AS HAVING DISABILITIES ARE DIVERSE.  
 THIS NUMBER INCLUDES: INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES, PHYSICAL DISABILITIES,  
 MENTAL HEALTH DISABILITIES, AND OTHER BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT*

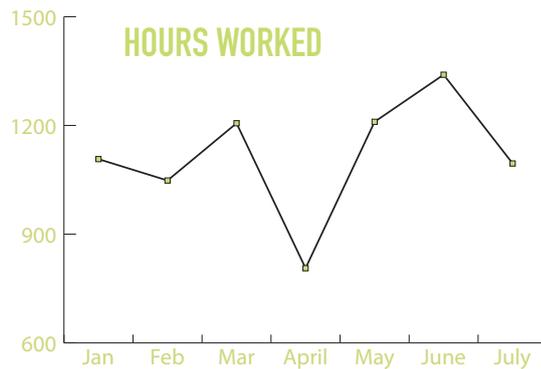


**26%**  
**OF EMPLOYEE  
 PARTICIPANTS REQUESTED  
 FORMAL  
 ACCOMMODATIONS**



**39%**  
**OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANTS  
 WERE CONNECTED WITH  
 HOUSING, HEALTH, LEGAL AND  
 OTHER SERVICES**

*AS A RESULT OF ONLIGHT EMPLOYMENT*



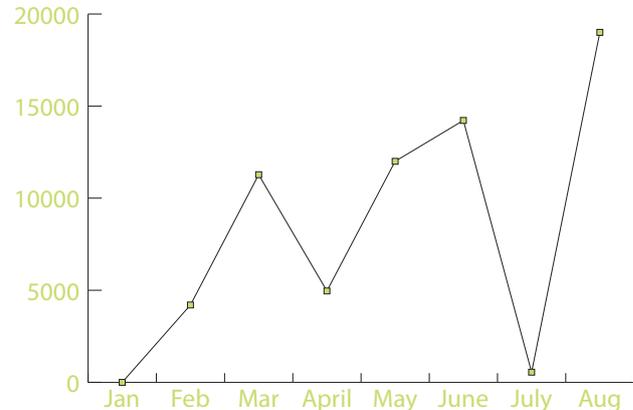
# PRODUCTION AT A GLANCE

**UNITS PRODUCED 01/01/2021- 08/31/2021**



NOTE: Spikes in production may be attributed to the introduction of the production bonus (March), and increased skills and efficiencies (July). Dips in production may be attributed to leaves of absence (April, May), a temporary closure due to heat (June), and a closure in August for safety incident.

**SALES 01/01/2021- 08/31/2021**



NOTE: Sales are growing on a positive trend that follows our production capacity as we add more distribution partners and continue to restock our retail partners and loyal customers.



**IN 8 MONTHS  
ONELIGHT  
PRODUCED OVER  
50,000 UNITS**

**AND HAD SALES  
TOTALLING \$66,000**

**IN JULY ALONE  
ONELIGHT  
PRODUCED  
9000 UNITS**





# BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE TEACHING #1

Teaching #1 - INCLUSIVE CULTURE





# INCLUSIVE CULTURE

When asked what they hope *doesn't* change at OneLight moving forward, all but one interview respondent said: the commitment to inclusion. They pointed to kind and caring management and a commitment to diverse hiring as **two keys** to fostering an inclusive culture.

*Employee participants* shared how life-changing this experience of inclusion is for them: **individually** (by reducing feelings of depression and suicidality and increasing self-esteem), **at work** (by creating a sense of purpose and belonging), and in their **communities** (by increasing their networks and community involvement).

*Management* helped make visible what it takes to foster an inclusive workplace culture, when the broader context favours a capitalist, profit-oriented, and individualist business model. Without a broader economic and political ecosystem that values inclusive employment, management does not have the structural support to do this well without it taking a personal toll of time and emotional energy.

# SUCCESS

**82%** of employee participants said the best part of being involved in OneLight is participating in something meaningful

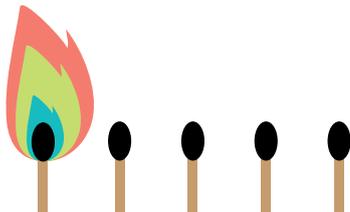


- There has been *no* turnover in management, and very little turnover in employee participants
- Management is very good at communicating during and between shifts.
- Management supports increased production through encouragement and guidance (not penalties or shame).
- Employee participants who did not feel they required an inclusive employment model still report benefits.
- OneLight has a track record of hiring and retaining employee participants who have not been successful in finding or keeping other employment.
- Team training contributed to the cultivation of an inclusive culture, as does good communication, and modeling respect and a commitment to inclusion.

**35%** of employee participants said OneLight has made improvements to the inclusive atmosphere over time. \*



\* From baseline of an already inclusive model

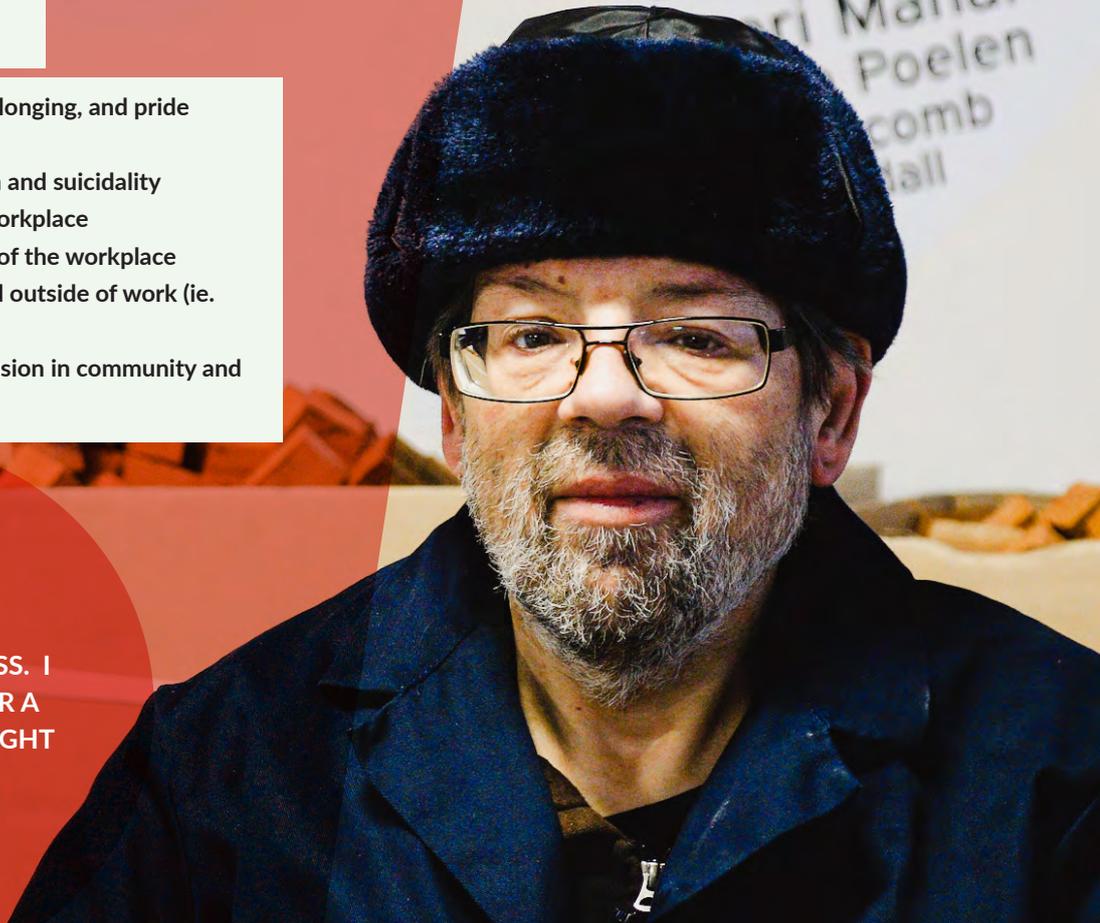


# IMPACTS

- Increased sense of purpose, belonging, and pride
- Increased self-esteem
- Reduced feelings of depression and suicidality
- Friendships made within the workplace
- Friendships extending outside of the workplace
- Informal peer support provided outside of work (ie. Sharing rides)
- Increased commitment to inclusion in community and family life

**“IT’S RAISED MY SELF ESTEEM A LOT AND MY FEELING OF USEFULNESS. I WASN’T EMPLOYED FOR A LONG TIME AND ONELIGHT PROVIDES THAT.”**

**- CRAIG, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT**



# IMPACT: MICHELLE'S STORY

*OneLight employee participant Michelle shares the impact that inclusive culture has had on her life.*

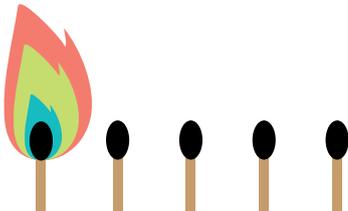
"I have made a quality of life – before I was just surviving, I was really depressed. Once I started working at OneLight I had more confidence, more self esteem, and felt like a productive member of society. So, it's just been really integral to my experience and my growth as a person. I don't know what I'd do without it, actually. When we've been off, I've been dying to go back to work.

OneLight's just been this beacon of light to go to during the pandemic. We were working in November in the pandemic and thank god, because there was nowhere else to go and nothing else to do.

I've made friends, I've made money, I'm out of debt.

So it's so nice to have something to gain income. Without OneLight I don't know what I'd be doing for money. I was able to go see my family, and I've been able to buy clothes which is great because I've never been able to have a nice wardrobe and now I do. I've been able to get my cat and get him neutered. So the compensation has been really good.

I'm never hating it because I know they're taking care of us. You see them every day, and they're super nice to us



too. They're just really encouraging and kind and helpful and personable. It's just not a chore. I used to only work at places for a few months and then I'd get burnt out and wouldn't be able to work any more. But at OneLight, it's just so flexible and that's what's so great about it – it's super flexible and super inclusive.

I went to the island with my coworker to do some sales. I wanted to get into sales, and it's just been amazing. It feels like a total career. I've learned how to communicate better, how to listen better. I've learned that I'm worth something and I didn't know I was.

We just want it to be able to continue. There are so many people with disabilities who just need a place to go where they can feel safe and comfortable, where they can just be themselves and apply whatever skills they have, and be paid."



“PRETTY WELL 90% OF THE JOBS I’VE WORKED IN MY LIFE WERE HIGHLY CRITICAL. SO HAVING NO CRITICISM THERE IS A BLESSING. NOW I CAN TAKE CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM WITHOUT GETTING MY BACK UP.”

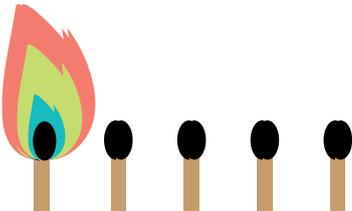
- SANDRA, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT

“THE FOUR THAT WE’VE GOT HELPING RUN THIS PROJECT HAVE BEEN SO COMPASSIONATE, UNDERSTANDING, AND EASY TO APPROACH IF THERE’S ANY ISSUES. ... THEY’RE THE ONES WHO MAKE IT A REALLY GREAT SET UP. THEY’RE EASY TO TALK TO; THEY’RE NOT INTIMIDATING.”

- BARB, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT

“THEY HIRE PEOPLE THAT SOME OTHER PLACES WON’T HIRE. I’VE TRIED APPLYING AT [OTHER BUSINESS] BEFORE AND BEEN TURNED DOWN TWICE.”

- GABE, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT (PSEUDONYM)



# CHALLENGES

- It can be hard for some employee participants to take initiative in making friends, or for those who don't work a lot of hours to get to know their colleagues
- Some employee participants would like (professional development) opportunities to learn more about inclusion and diversity
- There is a lot of invisible emotional labour taking place on the part of management, to model and foster inclusion. This can take a personal toll, and there is little structural support to support their longevity
- The commitment to inclusion can at times bump up against the expectations for production and profit. This tension contributes to stresses and challenges at a management level
- COVID-19 protocols interfere with ability to socialize/mingle





**EMPLOYEE  
PARTICIPANTS  
REPORT A  
DECREASE IN  
SUICIDALITY AND  
AN INCREASE IN  
POSTIVE PEER  
CONNECTIONS**





# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Introduce new employee participants to old ones.
2. Structure in ways for employee participants to learn each other's names over time.
3. Coordinate break times, when COVID-19 protocols allow.
4. Introduce more social opportunities outside of work and structured opportunities for social interactions at work, when COVID-19 protocols allow.
5. Provide professional development opportunities that include education regarding inclusion and diversity.
6. Create a clear working definition of inclusion to help ground decision-making.
7. Increase structural supports for management (this may include: increased budget for strategic planning, risk management, administration, policy development; more staff; time off; emotional supports; training).
8. Make visible the emotional and other forms of labour that contribute to inclusion in management job descriptions (ie. Good communications skills, cool under pressure, passion for the project, and ability to problem solve).



Teaching #2 - Natural Supports

# FOSTERING NATURAL SUPPORTS TEACHING #2





# NATURAL SUPPORTS

One of OneLight's goals is to foster natural supports within the workplace. And indeed, we have learned about what natural supports have emerged, how they have been cultivated, and where there is room for improvement.

A surprise that emerged through the research process has been how OneLight serves to foster natural supports for employee participants *outside* of the workplace. Having a stable and inclusive workplace (in the midst of a global pandemic) has provided purpose, routine, increased independence, and social connectedness during a time when many people have found themselves increasing isolated and disconnected.

However, the experience of natural supports does not seem to extend to management - outside or within the workplace. Without a broader system of policies, funding, values, and organizational structure that prioritizes an inclusive employment model, their natural support systems (family/community) can be taxed and their workload increased. This suggests that a functional and sustainable inclusive employment model might benefit from deliberate integration of management and organization into its structure.

# NATURAL SUPPORTS INSIDE THE WORKPLACE

41%

of employee participants said OneLight has made improvements by modifying tasks, or supporting task modification.



- Working at OneLight felt like being part of a team during the pandemic
- Finding ways to make the job more efficient and easier for everyone; sharing tips
- Getting to know personalities and checking in on each other
- Relaxed atmosphere
- Trustworthy and safe people who care about each other

24%

of employee participants said OneLight has enhanced accessibility in the worksite. \*



\* From baseline of an already inclusive model





# WHAT MADE IT WORK?

- Making great sticks or cutting perfect rolls to make each other's jobs easier
- Taking out slivers; buying finger protectors
- COVID-19 lexan (plexiglass) barriers also serve as protection from debris
- Creating visual cues (ie. A line on the bin) to help guide work
- Saying hi and checking in to see if someone needs support
- Cheering each other on
- Music lifting the mood for some and (maybe even!) increasing production
- Option for headphones if employee participants don't like the music being played
- Calling family members or other supports in employee participant's lives
- Clock at work station
- Noise cancelling ear protection for those who want it
- Air conditioner
- Moving stations around for comfort
- Policies that clarify roles and expectations
- Bonus systems that create incentives and shared goals
- Cell phone policy helps people focus
- Accessible location, on a bus route for some/walkable for some
- Low staff turnover means familiarity and comfort
- Phone tree, to keep lines of communication open when OneLight is closed

# NATURAL SUPPORTS OUTSIDE THE WORKPLACE

53%

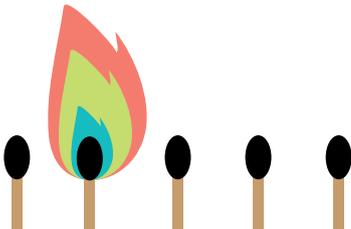
of employee participants said  
OneLight gives structure to their days



- OneLight provided a safe place to be during the pandemic
- Having a job at OneLight during the pandemic reduced stress and contributed to mental wellness
- Learned important life skills at OneLight

18%

of employee participants said they  
have become more independent as a  
result of working at OneLight





## HOW ARE ONELIGHT EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANTS GETTING TO WORK?



**12**

Take the bus

**9**



Walk or bike

**10**



Drive or are driven

## HOW ARE ONELIGHT EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANTS SUPPORTING EACH OTHER OUTSIDE OF WORK?



Sharing rides



Visiting friends at home or in hospital



Going out for meals together



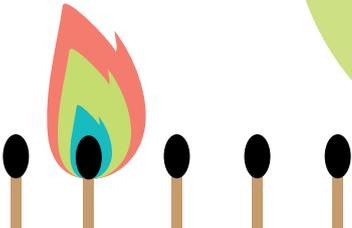
Housesitting for each other

**“WE HAVE A NEW WAY OF ASSEMBLING NOW: THE PEOPLE THAT SPLIT THE WOOD WILL PUT IT INTO BLUE BOXES AND THEN WE’LL GO FROM THERE. WE USED TO DO IT IN THE TOTES, SO IT WAS TOO SLOW. ONE OF THE EMPLOYEES CAME UP WITH THAT AND IT’S WORKING MUCH FASTER!” - THOMAS, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT**

**“THEY ASKED A LOT OF QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW I GET THERE, LIKE IF I WANTED CARPOOLING OR NOT, AND I THOUGHT THAT WAS REALLY NICE.” - STEFAN, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT (PSEUDONYM)**

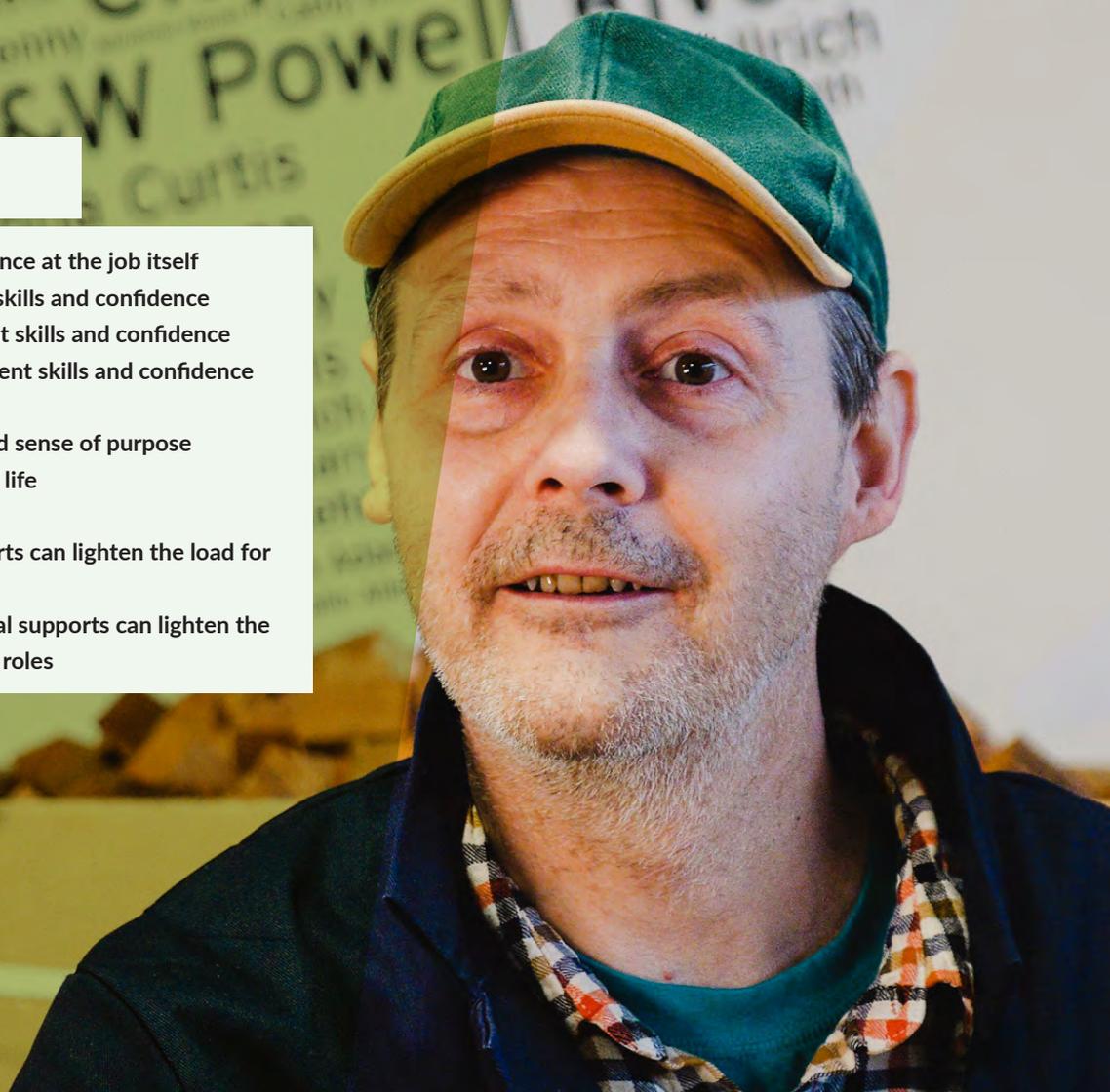
**“SO WHEN HE WAS HURT WE WERE DEVASTATED BECAUSE IT WAS LIKE ONE OF OUR FAMILY MEMBERS WAS HURT. SO YESTERDAY I WENT OVER AND HAD AN HOUR LONG VISIT AT HIS HOUSE.” - BARB, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT**

**“I USED TO HAVE TO TELL YOU. NOW YOU KNOW WHAT TIME YOU WANT TO TAKE YOUR SHOWER, YOU KNOW WHAT TIME YOU WANT TO GO TO BED. YOU KNOW WHAT TIME YOU WANT TO GET UP. SO IT’S GIVEN YOU A LOT MORE INDEPENDENCE, ESPECIALLY WITH TIME. AND SAVING MONEY TOO.” - JENNY, FAMILY MEMBER OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT**



# IMPACTS

- Improved skills and confidence at the job itself
- Social and communication skills and confidence
- Improved time management skills and confidence
- Improved money management skills and confidence
- Increased independence
- Increased mental health and sense of purpose
- Overall improved quality of life
- Sense of safety
- At OneLight, natural supports can lighten the load for those in management roles
- Outside of OneLight, natural supports can lighten the load for those in caregiving roles



# IMPACT: ROBERTA'S STORY

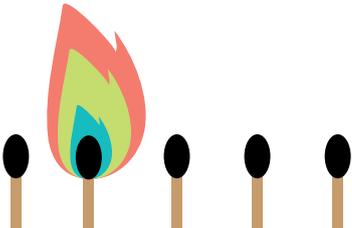
***OneLight employee participant Roberta and her father Doren in conversation about the unexpected social, emotional and mental health benefits of OneLight employment.***

Doren (Roberta's father): "She was part of the Special Olympics: There was bowling on Monday nights, there was the gym on Duncan, and she had curling. But with COVID-19 everything stopped, so she wasn't socializing or anything, and then OneLight happened. It is amazing. It kept her socializing even through COVID-19 shut downs. She's busy here. She's really lucky."

Roberta (employee participant): "Walking here and back home is good exercise. Same day, same time. It's refreshing to hear the sea lions

bark. I like it the way it is. The management and co-workers are friendly. Rick is the funny one, he's a comedian! It's all good changes going on. It's awesome!"

Doren: "She's really committed to this. No matter what, even if she's tired, she just – when she's committed to something she really goes for it. She never misses a day. It suits her situation perfectly. It's a godsend that she got this job here. Before this happened, we went to WorkBC and tried to get her some kind of a job. There were a few in-



terviews, and there was nothing happening. The only thing you could find was working in the kitchen dishwashing at a restaurant, but that would be high pressure.”

Roberta: “That would drive me insane, I wouldn’t stand it!”

Doren: “It makes her very happy to have something to do. For longer than I care to imagine she was just sitting at home with no reason to get up in the morning. Now she’s earning money, she can spend it for herself, she is contributing to her house for the roof. So she’s happy with that.”

Roberta: “That’s why I’m happy with this job. It’s awesome.”



“IT’S JUST AN INCH TOO FAR, UNLESS I’M UP HIGH. I KNOW I USE THE CHAIR AS FAR AS IT’LL GO. AND IT’S STILL A BIT TOO SHORT, SO I JUST REARRANGE EVERYTHING ON THERE SO IT’S MORE ERGONOMIC FOR MYSELF.” - CAROLA, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT

“THE DEEPER I GO INTO THIS PROJECT THE MORE I SACRIFICE MY ROOTED COMMUNITY. I HAVE SACRIFICED TIME WITH MY KIDS AND HAD TO GIVE UP BEING A HELP TO ANYONE WHO IS CLOSE TO ME BECAUSE I AM WORKING SO MANY HOURS IN A WEEK THERE IS ONLY JUST ENOUGH OF ME LEFT TO DO THE BASIC THINGS LIKE CLEAN MY HOUSE, CARE FOR MY KIDS, SLEEP, EAT, REPEAT.”  
- LENI, PROJECT MANAGER

“EVEN IF THEY COULD DO STRETCHES - LIKE, EVERYBODY GET UP FOR ONE MINUTE, JUST TO GET THEM MOVING. IF EVERYBODY GOT UP MOVING AROUND FOR ONE MINUTE, THE BLOOD GETS FLOWING AND YOU FEEL A LITTLE BIT BETTER.”  
- JENNY, FAMILY MEMBER OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT





# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ergonomic chairs/workstations for everyone.
2. Regular stretches during shift.
3. More than one bathroom.
4. More safety measures (ie. Eye protection).
5. A physical space designed for manufacturing.
6. A dry quiet place to go during break to get away from the noise (ie. An indoor lounge).
7. Structuring breaks so people are off at the same time (supporting relationship building).
8. Introducing people working on the same shift before it begins.
9. More rigorous COVID-19 protocols.
10. Continue creating policies that clarify workplace expectations (ie. Code of Conduct).
11. Knots in the wood can lead to poor quality sticks, slower progress, and potentially accidents.
12. Safety program (in progress).
13. The natural supports experienced by employee participants outside of and within the workplace do not necessarily extend to management, which can challenge the sustainability of the model.

# TRAINING TEACHING #3

Teaching #3- TRAINING





# TRAINING

Most employee participants expressed appreciation for the experiential nature of training at OneLight. They like having a hands-on approach with encouragement and opportunities to try new things. As new skills are learned through experience, there are informal opportunities to learn from each other (by sharing tips, or watching), but some people would appreciate formal opportunities for ongoing professional development and learning. Creating formal opportunities to learn from each other about increased efficiencies, for instance, can enhance confidence, job satisfaction, and production rates.

Some changes to training are underway, including the development of a new safety program, and revised team training. Two areas recommended for further attention are to support management in their leadership roles in an inclusive workplace, and to formalize opportunities for employee participants to skill share.

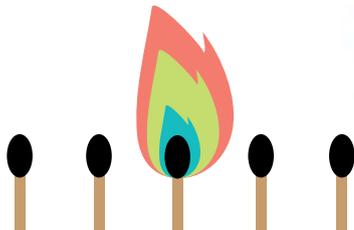
# SUCCESS

**39%** of employee participants said working at OneLight has strengthened their resume.



- Employee participants appreciate the experiential nature of on-the-job training. Guidance has been described as clear and supportive
- Lots of opportunities to try out new things
- Encouragement from management has enabled learning and employee participants remark on lack of pressure and competition
- Visual cues and other modifications help with learning and production
- Temporary additional support brought in as needed to help provide one-on-one training
- Employee participants learn by watching each other
- The job is modified to work for particular employee participants (not the other way around) increasing satisfaction, production, and retention

**46%** of employee participants said working at OneLight has given them skills they can use in other aspects of their lives.

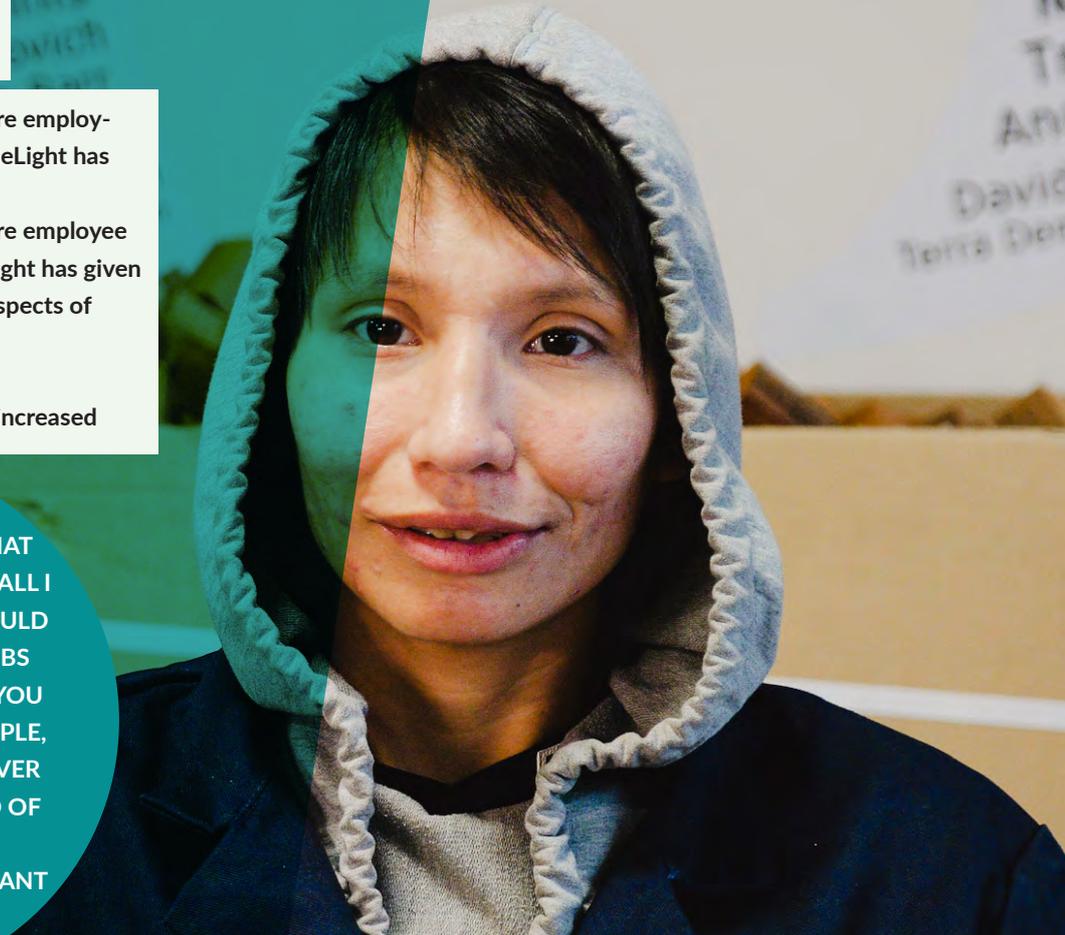


# IMPACTS

- 39% of survey respondents who are employee participants said working at OneLight has strengthened their resume
- 46% of survey respondents who are employee participants said working at OneLight has given them skills they can use in other aspects of their lives.
- Productivity has increased
- Confidence and satisfaction have increased

“AFTER GOING THROUGH THAT INTENSIVE TRAINING IN THE FALL I THOUGHT, OH WOW WE SHOULD HAVE HAD THIS IN MANY JOBS THAT I’VE HAD. THAT HELPS YOU TO UNDERSTAND OTHER PEOPLE, AND SOME PEOPLE HAVE NEVER BEEN SUBJECT TO THAT KIND OF INFORMATION.”

CAROLA, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT



**ENCOURAGEMENT  
FROM  
MANAGEMENT  
HAS ENABLED  
LEARNING.  
EMPLOYEES  
REMARK ON  
LACK OF  
PRESSURE AND  
COMPETITION.**





# RECOMMENDATIONS

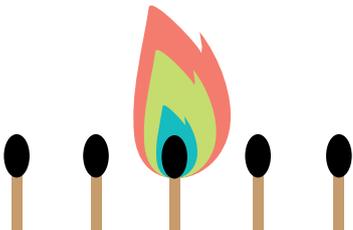
1. Some people found team training very useful; others did not. Ongoing bridging of team training content to the workplace was recommended.
2. Specific attention to Code of Conduct during team training, to provide more clarity around expectations in the workplace.
3. Mixed reviews on the team training, particularly in relation to the films. Choice is recommended.
4. Need separate training for people in leadership roles. Current job descriptions do not include all aspects of management in an inclusive workplace. Specific leadership training and adding otherwise 'invisible' labour to job descriptions would be helpful.
5. For people who started after initial intake, there was less training – on different stations, and team training- more direction would be helpful.
6. Many employee participants are learning tips and efficiencies through experience. Formalizing a way to share that knowledge among coworkers could increase confidence and productivity (ie. Workshops or staff meetings as ongoing professional development).
7. Updating the training manual to include new tips and efficiencies that emerge on the job would be helpful for new employee participants.
8. More attention to safety was recommended (and is underway).

“THEY FIGURED OUT A WAY TO INCREASE PRODUCTION: THEY MADE A LINE ON THE BASKET - A FEW VISUAL AIDS AND A FEW MODIFICATIONS. IT WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL. I THINK EVERYBODY BENEFITED FROM IT.”

- JENNY, FAMILY MEMBER OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT

“We have two very high producers on a leave of absence right now, and we still made the most we’ve ever made in the month of July. Not because we worked harder, we just worked more efficiently. It just takes some stepping back from your process, having a look at it: I have this person, what can they do? Totally different way to think about it, and better on every facet of the scale.”

- George, floor manager





“He showed me the ropes – told me to make sure to look out for knots, which helped but I feel like there could have been a bit more information about that: the type of wood to look for, what’s the best way to cut it, and other stuff. Honestly, I just watch other people from the side. I can just look at the people that are doing better than me, and be like: oh, they organize beforehand, that’s smart. It’s just that I felt like I needed more information.”

- Stefan, employee participant  
(pseudonym)



# IMPACT: LENI'S STORY

***OneLight Project Manager Leni Goggins shares how a critical incident provided important learning for staff and managers.***

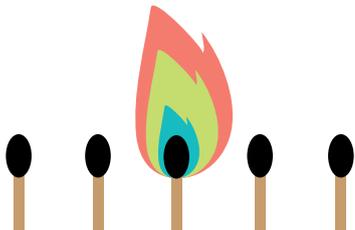
“Because I was trained as a front line worker, I have years of experience of working with people with intellectual disabilities, so that gives me a lot of confidence. I think there’s probably some training at the get go that could have been useful – even something like our health and safety training. Something with the lens of somebody who has a unique body or a unique situation.

Then meds training, seizure training. We’ve pushed back from doing too much of that kind of training because we thought then the management would be responsible for too much and the system would want to replace support workers and put it on managers. So we

consciously didn’t want to do too much training that would negate the need for support workers, because support workers add a whole other level of safety, inclusion, belonging – all those things. Tricky.

Other changes to training: We gathered for two 4-hour sessions to revise team training. There were 12 employee participants present, one supervisor on day 1 and my assistant. The newly revised team training will run in January.

I then began the very long process of WorkSafe BC compliance, after the critical incident at OneLight in July. I was told by our officer that we had done al-



most every piece of paperwork required in a critical incident situation. He was very inspired by the project and assisted us in many ways to get compliant and to improve our safety protocols. The Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction requested hiring an outside consultant, which we have done. She is very qualified in terms of health and safety and works in the construction industry mostly. The new safety program is very easy to use: it's compliant, it's beautiful.

Looking back, maybe I would have had more clarity up front to say this is a process that takes a long time. If you're going to hire inclusively, things are going to come up. So be patient and over time things are going to find their place. For concrete thinkers emergent situations are not comfortable. I would have had more of a disclaimer about the emergent nature of this project, rather than throwing people into a leadership or supervisory position and them feeling that it's expected of them to know what to do and address things as they come up."



A person wearing a dark beanie, a blue hoodie, and a black face mask is leaning over a large white bin. They are pouring a large quantity of small, cylindrical objects, possibly electronic components or tools, from a grey plastic bin into the larger white bin. The background shows a warehouse setting with metal shelving units containing various cardboard boxes, some of which are Amazon boxes. The scene is lit with warm, indoor lighting.

**FLEXIBLE  
SCHEDULE  
& TASK  
MODIFICATION  
TEACHING #4**





# FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE AND TASK MODIFICATION

Flexible scheduling and task modification are central to the experience of inclusion at OneLight. Rather than accommodations being the exception, responsiveness to employee participant needs and abilities is built into OneLight's operations at every step, beginning with the Intake Interview.

Flexibility contributes to employee participant retention, production efficiencies, and morale. It also enables employee participants to retain other commitments they have outside of OneLight, contributing to their families, communities, local economies, and personal mental health.

Flexible scheduling and task modification require attentive managers who know employee participants well, think creatively, and problem-solve quickly. It also requires up front clarity and open communication with employee participants about accountability and responsibilities in an inclusive workplace.

# SUCCESS

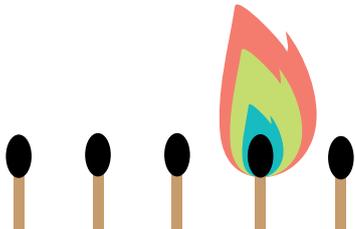
**94%**  
OF EMPLOYEE  
PARTICIPANTS

HIGHLY VALUED THE  
FLEXIBILITY OF  
ONELIGHT AS AN  
EMPLOYER

**65%**  
OF EMPLOYEE  
PARTICIPANTS

SAID ONELIGHT HAD  
BECOME **MORE**  
**FLEXIBLE** OVER TIME  
WHEN IT COMES TO  
DUTIES AND  
SCHEDULING

“THE MINDSET IS AROUND  
SCHEDULING AND ADAPT-  
ING THE JOB TO THE PERSON  
WHO’S THERE - INSTEAD OF  
ADAPTING THE PERSON TO  
THE JOB. WHEN YOU START  
LOOKING AT IT THAT WAY,  
WE CAN MAKE THE LABOUR  
FORCE WORK A LOT BETTER.”  
- GEORGE, FLOOR MANAGER



# IMPACTS

- Employee participants can schedule work around other needs and commitments such as: providing childcare for family members, bus and ferry schedule, other jobs, household responsibilities, mental health or other supports, pain, medication, highest performing time of day
- Flexible scheduling has contributed to high retention because employee participants do not have to choose between OneLight and other commitments
- Flexible schedule, task modification, and high retention have contributed to increase production because people can work at optimal time and capacity
- Integrating employee participant feedback into production modifications increases both morale and efficiencies
- Several employee participants have increased the number of shifts or length of shifts they work
- Flexible scheduling reduces anxiety and increases job satisfaction



# IMPACT: STEFAN'S STORY

## [PSEUDONYM]

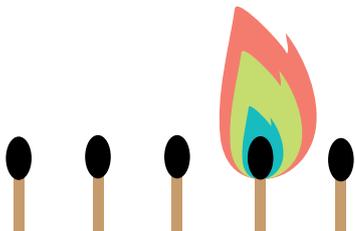
*Stefan shares how flexible scheduling supported his mental health and lessened his need for his support worker.*

"I was kind of nervous about talking about the schedule because when I worked at other places they just chose your hours for you. At my previous job they gave me a ridiculous number of hours I couldn't deal with because I was a student. And now I comfortably chose my hours. I started at eight hours, and that gave me a lot of time because it was summer and that was pretty cool and I got more hours in September. I requested them because I need more money.

I was in a bum mood at the start of the year, and the fact that it was so flexible made it easier on me to talk to my support worker. Normal jobs would make it

so you have to plan your mental health around your schedule, but here I planned my schedule around my mental health. So it's to the point where I barely see my support worker because he says I'm good now. He's going to switch our sessions to once a week. The reason I changed my schedule to work more hours at OneLight - other than money - was because I'm seeing him less.

I had a side job too - landscaping. The hours changed a lot. And the fact that I got to choose my hours beforehand really helped because that side job paid a lot. And when OneLight was closed because of the incident, it was really cool that I had that side job, because it gave me in-



come – I had a sustainable income even though my main job was gone. I got to go see my mom, and I spent that money on that – and it was all me doing that. Other than the gas money for the rides, that's it. I paid for dinner, I paid for my ferry, and it was awesome. The flexibility helped me do that too: because of my hours I had enough time to actually take that trip.

If there's anything that I would make sure in my future – because of this place actually – I wouldn't want to go back to a job that had strict firm hours. I enjoy scheduling a lot, but I also enjoy my mental health. It's weird because I wouldn't normally say so many good things about a job that I've only had for five months."



“THEY GOT ME DOING A FEW DIFFERENT JOBS, AND THEN THEY FOUND OUT WHERE I LIKE TO BE, BECAUSE I DON’T LIKE ALL THE NOISE BECAUSE OF MY AUTISM. SO WHEN IT’S NOISY DOWN BELOW THE WAX TANK AREA IS NICE AND QUIET.”

– GABE, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT (PSEUDONYM)

“THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE REALLY SLOW AT MAKING ONELIGHT, BUT BECAUSE OF THEIR METICULOUSNESS THEY’RE REALLY GOOD AT STAMPING THE ROLLS. BECAUSE IT REQUIRES SOMEONE TO BE METICULOUS. EVERYONE HAS SOMETHING TO CONTRIBUTE. IT’S FINDING THE RIGHT POSITION WITHIN WHAT WE DO TO DO THAT.”

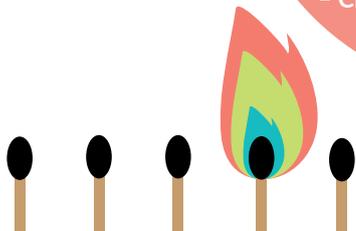
– LENI, PROJECT MANAGER

“EVAN DOES BETTER WORKING IN SMALL CHUNKS, HE ALSO HAS A PAPER ROUTE, AND STRIVE ACTIVITIES . I WAS WORRIED ABOUT HAVING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THIS AND OTHER COMMITMENTS -WILL EVAN BE ABLE TO FIT IT IN WITH HIS OTHER THINGS? BUT THEY’RE VERY GOOD ABOUT THAT.”

– CLAUDIA, FAMILY MEMBER OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT

“THE FLEXIBILITY THAT IS THERE REALLY CONTRIBUTES TO PEOPLE OF ALL ABILITIES TO COME, AND THAT’S ONE OF THE REASONS I DECIDED TO TAKE THE JOB. I HAVE CHRONIC PAIN, AND WHEN I FIRST STARTED I DIDN’T KNOW IF I CAN DO ALL OF THIS ASSEMBLING. I’VE BEEN SURPRISED BY HOW MUCH I’VE BEEN ABLE TO DO, JUST KNOWING THE FLEXIBILITY IS THERE.”

– DUSTY, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT



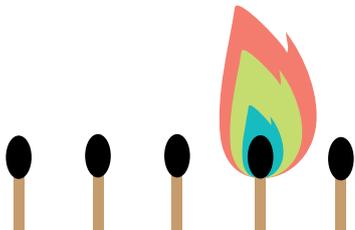
# CHALLENGES

- At the beginning, there was less clarity that flexibility still requires accountability (ie. Flexibility is meant to accommodate needs and abilities, not wants or whims)
- Managing flexible schedules and duties is time consuming and unpredictable; it requires nimbleness on the part of management
- Balancing a commitment to flexibility with the production needs of the business can at times be challenging (ie. Providing employee participants with their preferred task or shift, when assembly is what is most needed for production or when certain shifts are in high demand)
- In addition to the tasks and scheduling, personalities are also a factor in which shifts work for some people
- Some behavioural and production challenges emerged that were at first thought to be related to flexibility, but open communication brought other (resolvable) issues to light



# RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Track average length of shift per employee participant.
2. Track average numbers of hours worked per employee participant.
3. Diversify the job: more variety in products/positions would increase opportunities for employee participants to be working at preferred station.
4. Clear communications during intake about what flexibility accommodates (and what it cannot accommodate).
5. Consider capacity for night and evening shifts (to create more choice, more positions, more products).
6. Formalize employee participant input about the employment structure, including supports and modifications.





"I'D LIKE IF THEY GET A NIGHT SHIFT GOING, BECAUSE IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR ME TO GO FROM 1 IN THE AFTERNOON TIL 9 AT NIGHT, BECAUSE THEN YOU'VE GOT THOSE MORNINGS FREE." - GABE, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT (PSEUDONYM)

"I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE MORE PROJECTS - IF WE HAD A BIGGER FACILITY, WE COULD GET OTHER PRODUCTS." - CAROLA, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT

"I'D LIKE TO SEE THE PRODUCT DIVERSIFY TOO. NOT ONLY FOR THE PRODUCTION, BUT ALSO FOR THE SANITY OF THE EMPLOYEES. WE HAVE TURNED IT INTO A MORE OF AN ASSEMBLY LINE PROCESS, BUT THIS WOULD GIVE YOU MORE DIVERSITY IN YOUR JOB MORE REGULARLY, IF NOTHING ELSE." - GEORGE, FLOOR MANAGER

A person wearing a black cap, a purple face mask, and blue gloves is using a power drill on a shelf in a warehouse. The shelf above contains a large cardboard box, a Corona Extra beer box, and a roll of paper. The shelf below contains several red plastic bins. The person is looking down at the shelf they are working on.

# EQUITABLE DUTIES & COMPENSATION TEACHING #5



# EQUITABLE DUTIES AND COMPENSATION

Prioritizing equity is highly valued by both employee participants and management. However, while it dramatically increases the quality of life for employee participants, management bears a particular administrative and even emotional burden when striving to create an equitable work environment. This is at least in part due to broader structural inequities and economic priorities that permeate the employment landscape. At present, OneLight does not have an economic model that can sustain its operations over the long-term.

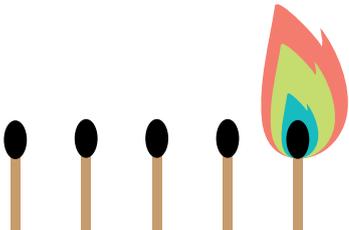
The curse and the blessing of being a pilot project means that on the one hand there is a great deal of flexibility for OneLight to create systems and a shared understanding of what works with input from everyone. On the other hand there are no systems and shared understandings already in place that could provide stability and structural support from the outset. The opportunity in this is that this pilot project can create new possibilities and system-level changes that may benefit not only OneLight, but also other businesses and organizations that are committed to equity as a bottom line.

# SUCCESS

# 47%

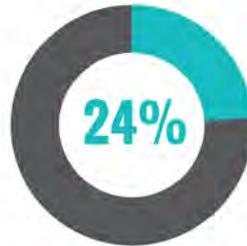
OF EMPLOYEES SAID THAT ONELIGHT  
HAS CREATED OPPORTUNITIES TO  
EARN HIGHER WAGES

- The financial support provided through the project is considered exempt income and is not deducted from provincial disability assistance, which has made a big difference to many employees. Some employees are earning the same (because they work fewer hours than a non-exempted income would impact), some are earning/saving more due to this exemption, and some are *actually choosing* to work more hours because they can keep their earnings.
- OneLight's budget is flexible, which allows for creative solutions to problems (such as bonus system for following COVID-19 protocols)
- Many employee participants are experiencing an enhanced quality of life due to increase earnings

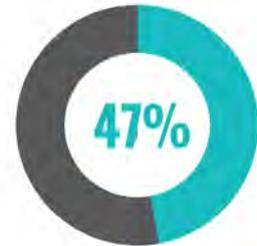




OF EMPLOYEES SAID THEY  
FEEL DUTIES AND  
COMPENSATION ARE  
EQUITABLE



OF EMPLOYEES SAID THEY  
CAN NOW SUPPORT OTHERS  
IN THEIR LIFE, FINANCIALLY  
OR IN OTHER WAYS



OF EMPLOYEES SAID THEY  
CAN AFFORD TO DO MORE  
OF THE THINGS THEY ARE  
INTERESTED IN DOING

**18%**

OF EMPLOYEES SAID THEY NEED  
**FEWER FINANCIAL SUPPORTS**  
SINCE WORKING AT ONELIGHT

"I THINK THE PAY IS FAIR. AND I MIGHT BE GOING TO CALIFORNIA BECAUSE OF IT. I GO TO MOVIES. BOUGHT A SIDE BY SIDE. I GET TO GO IN THE BUSH."

- HENRY, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT

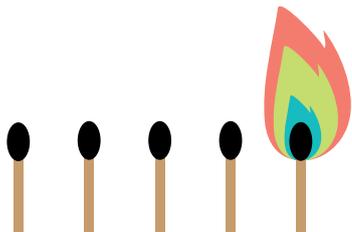
"THE WAGE WENT UP WITH THE MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE. I'M NOT TOO WORRIED ABOUT THAT - IT FEELS FAIR FOR ME. I'M ON DISABILITY - IF IT WAS CLAWED BACK THAT WOULD SUCK. IT'S HUGE. I MEAN, WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? I'M INTO LOGGING AND CONSTRUCTION, AND I JUST CAN'T DO IT ANYMORE. SO I WAS JUST SITTING AROUND BEFORE THIS CAME ALONG.

FOR ME IT'S GREAT."

- RICK, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT

"THE SIDE-BY-SIDE HAS IMPROVED HIS QUALITY OF LIFE HUGE. IT WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE. SO NOW HE HAS A WAY TO GET OUT AND GET FRESH AIR, AND IT'S NOT SOMETHING WE COULD HAVE AFFORDED - AND IT'S HIS. IT GETS US OUT AS A FAMILY TOO - IT'S AMAZING!"

- JENNY, FAMILY MEMBER OF EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT





# IMPACTS

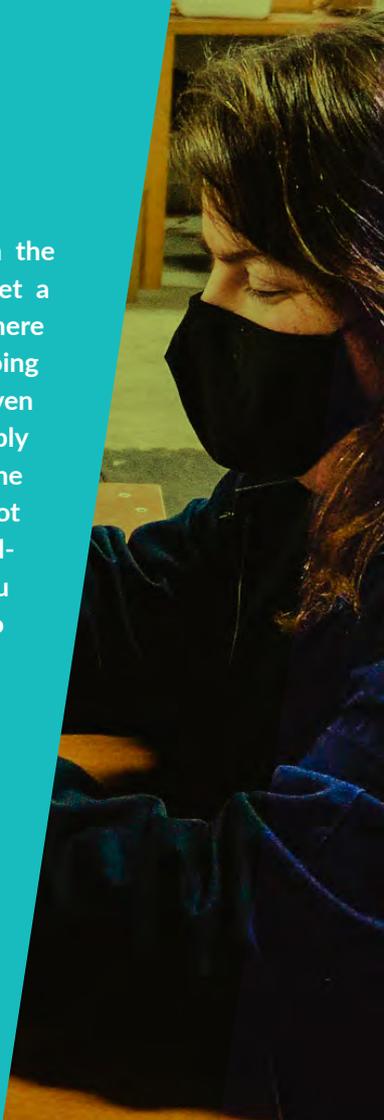
- Increased earnings have led to material improvements in people's lives, including: saving money for the first time, increasing retirement savings, doing home improvements, buying a car, fixing a car, buying a bike, buying a phone, buying a side-by-side, upgrading a computer, getting a pet, buying new clothes, eating healthier food, visiting loved ones, taking a vacation, catching up on bills, reducing debt, paying more in rent
- All of these material improvements have contributed to increased quality of life

INCREASED EARNINGS  
HAVE ENABLED  
EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANTS  
TO REDUCE DEBT  
LOAD, BUY THINGS  
THAT SUPPORT  
LOCAL BUSINESSES,  
AND ENGAGE IN  
COMMUNITY EVENTS  
AND ACTIVITIES

“You’re keeping the dollar in the community longer – and I bet a lot of it is being spent right here in the community. It’s not going overseas, it’s not going to even other communities. It’s probably not even going to Vancouver, the majority of it. I mean, I know a lot of it is spent right inside this building [Townsite Market]. When you look at how much business we do at the coffee shop, the grocery store, how much business Hearth and Grain gets because there’s people working here every day.”

– George, floor manager

COMPENSATION





“HE GIVES HIS HUNDRED PERCENT. IT’S CERTAINLY NOT MY HUNDRED PERCENT OR HER HUNDRED PERCENT, BUT IT’S HIS HUNDRED PERCENT. AND THAT’S GIVEN AN UNDERSTANDING FOR ALL OF US.”

– BARB, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT

“SO NOW IF I DON’T PHONE IN AND I DON’T SHOW UP, I DON’T GET THE BONUS THAT EVERYBODY ELSE DOES. SO THERE AGAIN, WHEN SOMETHING DOESN’T SEEM RIGHT AND YOU TALK TO THE SUPERVISORS ABOUT IT, THEY GET A LITTLE BIT OF TIME TOGETHER AND THEY IRON IT OUT. SO THE BONUS HAS BEEN FABULOUS BECAUSE WE’RE NOW MAKING MORE THAN MINIMUM WAGE IF WE GET THE BONUS.”

– BARB, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT

“WELL I EAT PROPERLY. I HAVE MONEY TO BUY THINGS AND DO THINGS NOW. ABLE TO BUY THINGS THAT I NEED: CLOTHES. CLOTHES ARE BLOODY EXPENSIVE. SO, I’M ABLE TO DO THAT.”

– CRAIG, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT

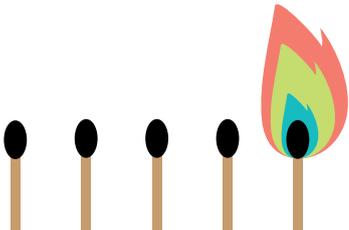
# IMPACT: BARB'S STORY

*OneLight employee participant Barb shares how OneLight has improved quality of life, and how the Ministry could help her even more.*

“The lack of fear of being fired because you’re not producing as much as the person sitting beside you. The understanding that everybody works at different rates and produces differently. These things have given an understanding for all of us, and what I’ve been seeing is people starting to relax. There’s a lot of people – and this is just from my opinion – who have struggled with whatever barriers they’ve got, and they’ve been really shunned and isolated from society. I see a lot of people now starting to feel like they’re part of something.

It feels equitable now – now that we’ve got things like the cell phone policy in place. Those wrinkles have been ironed out, and now we all take reasonable breaks. I don’t mind if there’s little glitches here and there, as long as it’s not every shift.

This job has given me the opportunity to do some improvements to my trailer. I have a painter hired to paint my ceiling and scrape the ‘popcorn’ ceiling off my two bathrooms. As well, I have ordered new flooring and am having the carpets ripped out. Thank you, One-Light! I just had an appointment with my financial guys, and thanks to OneLight I just added more into my TFSA.



OneLight had clarified to me that my income was an Educational Stipend and wouldn't interfere with my disability pension, which is great. However, during the early months of the project I had to explain this to multiple Ministry workers, including those in Victoria, when submitting my form. It was frustrating, but it's smoothing out. And I have to say the ladies in this office here are wonderful. So it's way nicer now that we've got the wrinkles out between our office and the office in Victoria. Now it's way better."



WE GET PAID STRAIGHT HOURS AND NOTHING IS TAKEN OFF, THAT'S DIFFICULT. THERE'S NO EI AND I'M GOING TO HAVE TO BE OFF ON MEDICAL SO THAT'S GOING TO BE HARD FOR ME. SO MAYBE HAVE AN OPTION FOR EI OR CPP OR TAXES. ... BECAUSE OF MY AGE, AND BECAUSE I'M ON A SMALL PENSION

- MY ISSUE IS NOT KNOWING HOW MUCH TO PUT ASIDE FOR TAXES AND STUFF."

- SANDRA, EMPLOYEE PARTICIPANT

"What's happening in the world right now is not working. People are still living in isolation, people do not get to self actualize, people are living in poverty. Social determinants of health and well being are not part of our structures, and they're not given enough importance. There are a bunch of things in place that are preventing something like this from being successful, and we're going to have to shake them a bit."

- Leni, project manager



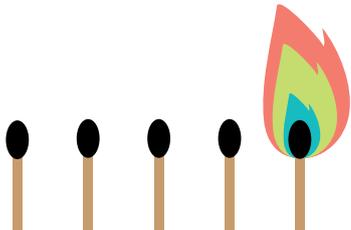


# CHALLENGES

- Still few opportunities for upward mobility
- No stable ongoing funding model to keep employment going
- There remains a tension between the commitment to inclusion and the need to produce
- The rate of production and sales does not support all the costs of running the social enterprise (management, employee participant wages, training, and overhead)
- The bonus structure requires even more tracking/paperwork on the part of management
- The broader system of employment (and economic model at large) is not aligned with what OneLight is striving to accomplish, creating systemic barriers to success
- Increased coordination and communication between local and central Ministry offices about this exemption is improving the experiences of participants over time.
- Some provincial policies are not inclusive
- One person mentioned eating and drinking more because of earning this much for the first time
- Two people mentioned not being experienced in managing money independently

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ONELIGHT

1. Refine HR data tracking system so it is more useful and less onerous on management
2. Some professional development related to money management could be beneficial
3. Continue developing internal policies at OneLight that contribute to equity, accountability, and sustainability
4. Continue seeking stable, long-term funding
5. Continue exploring opportunities to diversify the social enterprise, including consideration of products with a higher profit margin
6. Continue integrating OneLight firmly into the organizational structure of inclusion Powell River Society (parent organization) for structural support (with such things as administration, risk management, and funding)





# SYSTEM-LEVEL RECOMMENDATIONS

“I THINK EMPLOYEES ARE ALL CONCERNED ABOUT KEEPING THE PROJECT GOING - THAT’S EARNEST. BUT DOES MAKING 7000 UNITS A MONTH REALLY MAKE THAT HAPPEN? NO. IT PROBABLY INCREASES MORALE IN THE SHORT TERM BUT IN THE LONG-TERM IT HAS VERY LITTLE IMPACT ON THE LONGEVITY OF THE PROGRAM.”

– GEORGE, FLOOR MANAGER

1. Address current labour shortage by providing inclusive employment learning opportunities for employers to create more hospitable workplaces for all workers - with and without disabilities.
2. Ensure funded training opportunities do not exclude people based on age, if they have experienced barriers to employment.
3. Ensure the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction is educating its people, so OneLight employee participants do not have to bear the burden of advocating for their compensation rights in relation to this project.
4. Continue providing sustainable funding for inclusive employment such as OneLight.
5. Consider EI, CPP, and tax deduction options for employee participants at OneLight and other related employment situations.

**THANK YOU TO OUR PROJECT PARTNERS!**

Victoria Foundation  
Vancouver Foundation  
Powell River Community Forest  
The Social Innovation Academy

Michael Prince  
Malerie Meeker  
Alison Taplay  
Vancity Community Foundation



Appendices are available at

<https://www.qimproject.com/phase-two-report>

Published by inclusion Powell River September 25, 2021.

**Canada**



This program is funded by the Government of Canada  
and the Province of British Columbia.





# CONCLUSION

gathet Inclusive Manufacturing Pilot Project launched and OneLight opened its doors just when others worldwide began to shutter, due to COVID-19. Working at OneLight, many people in this region have found inclusion, natural supports, meaningful employment, and equitable working conditions for the very first time - even during a global pandemic that has been isolating. And while countless businesses are now posting help wanted signs like never before, OneLight has seen remarkable retention and satisfaction among employee participants.

The gains made at OneLight are happening thanks to dedicated managers and employee participants, flexible government funding for the pilot project, and a commitment from inclusion Powell River as a parent organization. However, they are also happening despite systemic constraints that exist due to dominant economic and social models, and these constraints threaten its sustainability. While there have been growing pains – and there remains room for improvement – the refusal of OneLight to limit itself based on pre-existing norms, funding models, and values has led to the emergence of something worth paying attention to.

As our region and province strategize to tackle the complex systemic challenges we collectively face (such as poverty reduction), we might turn to OneLight as a model for creatively learning and responding through action.



## A YEAR IN REVIEW

### QATHET INCLUSIVE MANUFACTURING PILOT PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

<https://www.qimproject.com/phase-two-report>

