schedule and, if necessary, in their own home. Over the next few years, these workers are expected to represent a significant share of the demand for training, including technology-based training and distance learning.

Problems of skills acquisition affect young people as well as older workers. Approximately 60 percent of young people enter the work force directly from high school, with no additional structured education or training. Many leave school ill-prepared for the workplace, and have difficulty making the transition from school to work.

The education and training sector has the opportunity and the tools available to address the demand by older workers, the young and the unemployed for training that is relevant to the workplace. Because training firms and private career colleges develop their curricula with the employability of their clients in mind, they are very responsive to the skills needs of Canadian industry. Monitoring the needs of the job market allows them to design their courses accordingly and provide their clientele with the skills essential to job placement.

4.1.6 International Markets

The world market for education and training services is growing. Canada's reputation for professional, high-quality services combined with an increasingly multicultural society offers Canadian companies the potential to become major players in the international market.

The North American market offers great potential because Canada's culture (business and otherwise) is similar to that of the United States, and the exchange rates make Canada's services cost-competitive. Training firms that sell to local subsidiaries of U.S. companies may be able to leverage this experience to generate business from the head office or other branches. Despite occasional hiccups, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) has made the process of selling training services into the United States and Mexico more stable and predictable.

In Europe, the European Commission has allocated approximately 5 billion European Currency Units or ECUs (worth about $8.5 billion) to the European Social Fund, which focuses on human resources development by funding training, retraining and job creation. In addition, many European Union (EU) member states have their own Human