



## ***Focus on Poverty***

This issue begins with an overview of poverty, researched and written by Chris Harwood, and an interview Chris undertook with Andrea Dickinson, Executive Director, Tri-County Literacy Network. We also introduce a new resource on assessment by Pat Campbell. Patricia Ashie and Ellen Szita from MCLs Learners Advisory Network (LAN) share their reflections on the *Confintea VI* conference in Brazil.

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## ***Poverty Overview***

Your own interest in poverty elimination may be as a result of your own poverty or the knowledge that you are vulnerable and could become trapped in poverty. It might be because you see the widening gap between the rich and poor in Canada and recognize the need to act. You will almost certainly see the connection between poverty and a lack of literacy skills.

### **Definition of Poverty**

Unlike many countries Canada does not have an official definition of poverty, nor does it have a way to measure poverty. However, using low income measures, we know that 11-12% of the population, that's about 3.4 million Canadians, lived in poverty in 2006.<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this article we will use the following definition (taken from UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights) because it shows the importance of personal security, civic engagement and human rights as well as an adequate income.

[Poverty is] “a human condition characterized by sustained or chronic deprivation of the resources, capabilities, choices, security and power necessary for the enjoyment of an adequate standard of living and other cultural, economic, political and social rights.”

## Facts about poverty from the National Council of Welfare

Fact	Food for Thought
<i>About 970,000 Canadian babies, children and teens</i> are likely to be living in poverty.	Research shows poverty contributes to impaired brain development of children due to unhealthy levels of stress hormones.
<i>Single people between the ages of 45-64</i> have about a one in three chance of living in poverty.	The person may be underemployed or unemployed and lack the skills needed for today's workforce.
<i>Recent immigrants</i> have a 1 in 4 chance of living in poverty, even with high educational standards and professional qualifications from their country of birth.	What happens to immigrants who are even less fortunate and don't have a solid educational background?
<i>Single Parents and their children</i> have a three in ten chance of living in poverty. The risk is even higher for single females.	There may be insufficient affordable daycare increasing the likelihood of having to depend on social assistance.
<i>People with disabilities</i> have a 1 in 3 chance of poverty. Many people on social assistance have disabilities.	Did you know that many Canadians with disabilities look forward to reaching age 65 because income support for seniors is better?
<i>Aboriginal people</i> living off reserves have a 1 in 3 chance of living in poverty.	Studies show mothers sacrifice their own diet so that children will not go hungry.
<i>High school dropouts</i> earn lower wages, pay less tax, commit more crime and have higher social service costs than students who graduate or those who have achieved post-secondary education.	Rural areas tend to have higher drop-out rates than urban parts of Canada.

### Who Pays?

Everyone pays for poverty. Poverty increases health care costs and policing burdens. It diminishes educational outcomes, which depresses productivity, labour force flexibility and economic expansion. It reduces life spans and limits social progress. The result is a huge cost to taxpayers, federal and provincial treasuries and overall economic health. Poverty costs federal and provincial governments about \$13 billion a year in lost income tax revenue due to lost productivity.<sup>2</sup>

Poverty induced costs related to health care have an estimated annual public cost in Canada of \$7.6 billion<sup>2</sup>. You will likely have seen evidence of the connection between living on a low income and negative health outcomes. Illness can also intensify existing poverty and can lead individuals and families into poverty.

## Implications for people living in poverty

The effects of poverty on an individual often include marginalization and social exclusion, frequent moves, low self-esteem, poor health (physical and/or mental), a feeling of being stretched beyond one's limits and a low standard of living – if not actual hunger and homelessness. People living in poverty often have to make difficult choices about how to spend their limited income.

Low income drives people to a food bank or a shelter. Don't make the mistake of assuming that these people are receiving social assistance. Some jobs just don't pay enough to support a family. In 2006 about 25% of poor families had a major income earner who worked full-time for the whole year. According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), 19.2%, or almost one in five, Canadian workers earn less than \$10 an hour. Employment should allow Canadians to support themselves and their families with an adequate income to meet their basic needs. Clearly, low wages are one of the reasons why so many Canadians stay poor.

Family poverty can negatively affect every aspect of a child's physical, emotional and intellectual well being. It can also mean the difference between staying in school or dropping out to help the family. It can mean looking for work instead of improving literacy and essential skills in order to get a better paying and/or more secure job.

While we would prefer to think that there is no class distinction, there is still a difference between those living in poverty, the middle class and those who are wealthy. There is also a "them" and "us" mentality that perpetuates stereotypes. Everyone has the right to adequate opportunities to improve skills, upgrade or get a high school diploma (or its equivalent). However, because of systemic inequality, the acquisition of literacy skills alone does not automatically lead to a better standard of living.

Government policies need to include the following issues if they are to mount a serious attack on poverty.

a living wage	education
sufficient food	literacy and essential skills training
affordable housing	training
childcare	labour standards
early childcare development	job creation
health supports	unemployment insurance
supports for vulnerable people	

## Who is working on the issue?

*Canada Without Poverty* (CWP) believes that poverty is a violation of the human right to security of the person. It believes that poverty is an affront to the values of fairness, justice and the inclusion of all persons in Canadian society. CWP envisions the eradication of poverty through political will, community engagement and corporate social responsibility. Go to [www.cwp-csp.ca](http://www.cwp-csp.ca) for more information.

*The National Council of Welfare* (NCW) is an arm's length advisory body to the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development on matters of concern to low-income Canadians. Go to <http://www.ncwcnbes.net/en/home.html> for more information.

## What can be done?

Current programs and income levels maintain people in poverty. How can we collaborate with our fellow Canadians as they struggle to get out of poverty and into a life of full participation in the economic and social life of their communities? How can Canadians acquire opportunities to upgrade their education and literacy skills at any stage in their lives? How can parents of children in low-income households provide for their children's needs in areas of school readiness and education?

Do you support a comprehensive, integrated federal plan for poverty reduction? Should we have indicators to identify and measure poverty? Should we be able to monitor people's climb out of poverty?

Do you believe that MCL has a role to play in sharing information and promoting social equality and access? Should MCL be working with organizations promoting the eradication of poverty in order to make sure that they understand the importance of literacy in the poverty equation? Share your ideas with us [mcl@literacy.ca](mailto:mcl@literacy.ca).

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<sup>1</sup> Using after-tax Low Income Cut Offs (LICOs)

<sup>2</sup> Ontario Association of Food Banks. The Cost of Poverty: An analysis of the economic cost of poverty in Ontario

## Tony's Story

Tony found it pretty hard growing up with a disability. He had epilepsy and spent two months in hospital when he was ten years old. After that he didn't go back to school. Instead, his family moved to the Northwest Territories and Tony spent a lot of his time fishing.

He got involved with alcohol and his life turned upside down. Although that was bad for his epilepsy he didn't quit. He ended up on the streets, eating from garbage cans. His friends were mostly into drugs and Tony got involved too. In 1999 he was sent to the "Pen" for three years. There he was lucky to meet a counsellor who believed in him. He was paroled after twenty-one months. He quit drugs and went to a Sweat Lodge to pray to keep off them but that was difficult because he couldn't read, he couldn't even sign his own name. Social Services found him an apartment and while he was riding the bus he saw an ad for help with reading and writing. Tony decided he would try the program.



The first day was hard and he didn't want to go back, but he did. From there, he joined Read Saskatoon. That was back in 2004. He had a good instructor, Larry, who has now retired. And the best news of all – he now has his Grade 10. Lyn is his tutor these days and he is helping him with his reading and writing skills. His goal: to write his life story.

Tony was living in poverty but now he has a job at a recycling depot and his life has changed for the better. It has been a long, hard journey but Tony is thrilled with his new skills and happy to be able to make speeches to tutors about the importance of literacy.

### ***LAN Member's Story – Dianne Smith***

Prior to enrolling in the literacy program, Dianne had been holding down three jobs to support her family. She had been doing manual work and was getting older. She knew that she could not keep up that pace. Dianne realized that she had to start “working smarter, rather than working harder,” as she puts it.

Dianne's efforts finally paid off. She obtained her Grade 12 certificate on the eve of her 50th birthday; this gift to herself meant a positive future and a secure retirement.

Improving her literacy levels has also opened new doors for Dianne. It has enhanced her self-esteem and helped her to establish her own licensed community care facility in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. To hear more of Diane's story go to [http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/corporate/success\\_stories/literacy/2008/dianne0425.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/corporate/success_stories/literacy/2008/dianne0425.shtml)

### ***Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction***

Andrea Dickinson is Executive Director of Tri-County Literacy Network and kindly agreed to speak to MCL about this project.

**MCL:** First, could you describe the project for our readers from across the country.

**Andrea:** The project was designed to improve the capacity for Windsor-Essex Ontario Works and the Tri-County Literacy Network to work more effectively with people living in poverty. This project was also designed to meet the three Employment Ontario Network Development Fund (EONDF) funding priorities by developing strategies and sensitivities for staff working with clients in poverty; identifying systemic changes that are necessary to improve services; and identifying effective Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) strategies and programs that address poverty.

The Advisory Committee is made up of representatives from Tri-County Literacy Network, Ontario Works, Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities and Pathway to Potential. The project is definitely a team effort!

**MCL:** Why did a regional literacy network take the lead on this issue?

**Andrea:** We already had a strong partnership with Ontario Works. Tri-County Literacy Network has organized *Getting Connected* workshops since 2006. The first workshop

helped us to get to know each other; in the second we worked together to learn more about Essential Skills and in the third we examined ways to improve the referral process. After the last workshop we decided that it was time to work together on some issues. Obviously we are living in trying times with so many folks laid-off and some long-term unemployed people. Out of that we decided that poverty should be our focus. We broadened our collaborative base to include other organizations within Employment Ontario as well as other groups such as Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) and Pathway to Potential (Poverty Reduction Roundtable).

**MCL:** What are the impacts that you are seeing so far during this project?

**Andrea:** People and organizations are already beginning to change what they do, based on what they have learned during this project. As a result of the workshop, a significant percentage of staff (98%) indicated an increase in their understanding of poverty with 91% of them also indicating a *good, or excellent* likelihood that they would work with those living in poverty in new ways.

An important by-product is that it has put adult literacy on the map. Other organizations see literacy providers as key players and come to us for information. Also, other organizations invite literacy programs to their workshops which results in enhanced professional development for literacy staff. Collaboration is very positive.

**MCL:** Tell me a little about the *Bridges out of Poverty* workshop.

**Andrea:** It was incredibly well received. We looked at generational poverty and its impacts. We looked at the three classes: poverty, middle class and wealthy and considered some of the hidden rules that make it difficult to move between the classes. A key point in the *Bridges out of Poverty Workshop* is the quote by Dr. James Comer, “No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship.” Supportive relationships help people to move out of poverty.

We learned that our mental models of class affect how we act and learn. The presenter spoke about how people living in poverty are focused on survival and often feel they have no choice. She stressed how important it is for us to provide a place where people can dream and to help nurture a sense of choice. She also showed us how to use visualization – an effective technique. The process encourages clients to picture something they want and then picture their life without it. Then they can decide if this is something they really want. She also encouraged participants to use a “planning backwards” approach. Imagine yourself in Hawaii, or doing whatever your goal is, now think back to what you needed to do to get there.

During the workshop lots of people had “Aha!” moments. You can go to their website [http://www.ahaprocess.com/Community\\_Programs/](http://www.ahaprocess.com/Community_Programs/) to learn more.

**MCL:** What is the Agency Self-Assessment Tool?

**Andrea:** It is a way for organizations to reflect on how they address identified poverty reduction strategies in terms of individual action, program elements and community engagement.

**MCL:** Can you give me an example of a best practice that will help literacy programs address the issue of poverty?

**Andrea:** Best practices will continue to evolve as staff work with the information that was presented in the *Bridges out of Poverty* workshop. The external evaluator for the project interviewed some of the participants from the workshop and found that people had already started to make changes. One assessor said she no longer sat behind her desk, instead preferring to sit beside the learner to make the relationship more equal and informal. Another participant talked about the importance of finding out about each learner's motivation and taking those goals into consideration.

We have looked at what people can do at an individual, program and community level as related to poverty reduction. At an individual level it is often about raising awareness. At a program level it is about providing relevant training, such as financial literacy programming. At the community level it is about providing joint professional development and engagement in community activities.

At an organizational level some programs revisited their policies and procedures around attendance. They realized that learners living in poverty are often faced by circumstances beyond their control which may make regular attendance at a program problematic or may mean that they are not able to get to class on time. This is particularly true of learners with young children in kindergarten or daycare.

At a program level, a need has been identified for financial and health literacy together with curriculum for communications, relationship building and problem solving.

Even in terms of the project itself, the advisory committee did a wonderful job of promoting the *Bridges out of Poverty* workshop within their own agencies and the turnout was tremendous. We could never have done that alone.

**MCL:** When will the final report be ready? What will it include?

**Andrea:** It will be available in April 2010 and will include detailed information on the activities that occurred throughout the project as well as information that will provide guidance for future activities.

**MCL:** What impact will this have for future activities in Tri-County Literacy?

**Andrea:** This is an ongoing process. Activities that do not require additional funding have been incorporated into our Work Plan but we are hoping to apply for funding for additional activities. We have collected some useful information about best practices and collaborative approaches but what we have heard most is that people want to continue learning. Joint professional development with other agencies in the community is such an important feature in our community and we want to build on that to offer more training. Participants feel they benefit from the diverse experience of people from other community agencies. There is still so much work to do around poverty and the other issues that affect learning in our community.

## ***MCL Update***

MCL's board of directors is pleased to announce that Lindsay Kennedy has taken on the role of Senior Manager. Lindsay has worked in the field of literacy at the local, provincial and national level for 20 years.

It is an exciting time for MCL! In recent months Lindsay and the board have been working with James Page to examine and set new strategic directions for the organization. Changes to how the organization is structured and governed are also being discussed. We will send out updates and announcements in the coming months.

We are moving! As of July 1, 2010 MCL will be located at 342A Elgin Street, Ottawa. Our phone and fax numbers will remain the same. Watch our website for more information.

## ***Highlights from the LAN***

Three LAN members, Patricia Ashie, Dianne Smith and Ellen Szita travelled to Brazil in December 2009 in order to attend the *Civil Society Forum* and the UNESCO conference, *Confinteia VI*, which drew together 1500 delegates and provided a platform for policy dialogue and advocacy on adult learning and non-formal education. Here are some excerpts from their reports.

### **Patricia Ashie**

Sharing this event with my colleagues from the LAN gave me a feeling of pride and connectedness. Can you imagine what was going through our minds; three women with much the same story in life, realizing that literacy and education as adult learners had brought us this fantastic opportunity and the key to positive possibilities?

During my first day at the *Civil Society Forum* I participated in a women's demonstration for the right to education. The display of courage, support and commitment made it very difficult for me to hold back the tears. I did not want to cry. I wanted to demonstrate strength.

Because I had attended the *A Time for Learning* conference held in Scotland I was part of a documentary of learners' voices from around the world. This documentary was presented at *Confinteia VI*. The documentary created extensive discussion throughout the conference, resulting in a very diverse attendance at the Adult Learners' Workshop.

The *Adult Learners' Workshop* was attended by over a hundred participants and the platform was set for the distribution of the draft of the International Adult Learners Charter. After the conference, Susan Nielsen, Executive Director of the Toronto Adult Student Association and Vice President of International Council for Adult Education,

reported that according to UNESCO the learners and our charter came out as the clear winners of *Confinteia VI*.

The forum and conference gave us, as adult learners, the opportunity to speak with our own voices. We were not surveyed and represented by others. We were not there as tokens or for demonstration purpose. We were there because we are the experienced experts of adult learning. This experience leads me to ask how I and other adult learners can help you, our governments, UNESCO, the community of education, literacy organizations, health and commerce. Teach us about the challenges you face and we will teach you how it applies to our lived experiences.

### Ellen Szita

Going to Brazil was a learning experience within itself. The style of living, language and food, together with the heat during Christmas season was so new to me.

On the first day, on my way to the university, I felt a deep sadness to hear people begging us to buy their goods and to see the abandoned animals. For me to get past that I had to remember the many people who are lost in my own country.

Arriving at the university to register, I was in awe, seeing people from all over the world dressed in the most magnificent clothes and stunning colours. I could hear the many different languages being spoken. The opening day of *Confinteia VI* was beyond my imagination. Brazilian dancers and music greeted us as we arrived, I felt so special. One hundred and fifty countries were represented.

I learned that throughout the world sixty seven percent of women have low literacy skills. The numbers are staggering. Two thirds of those are African women, many of whom know what it's like to go hungry. Three hundred million in Africa live on a dollar a day. Thousands die of malaria, HIV and AIDS. Only one percent of government finances are spent on education and unemployment leaving youth at the highest risk, (our future generation).

I attended a workshop for Adult Learners and we listened to some of them share their stories. It was very moving as I could relate to so much of what was said. I think it would have been very beneficial if more adult learners had been invited to *Confinteia VI*. I feel strongly that some of the learners should have been keynote speakers.

Literacy is an indispensable foundation for life. It is a prerequisite for the development of personal, social, economic and political empowerment for all people. It is the right and the future of our children's generation. It is our responsibility as human beings to see these needs are met. I wonder, if those in need cried loudly, would those who run our countries hear them? I truly wonder how many care.

We talk of the economy being at a low. Where are the talks about what is possible if all people had an education? We know it costs into the billions for incarceration, health care, workers' compensation, lawyers and social services every year. When will we wake

up and realize if some of those billions went into literacy, millions would have a better way of life and our countries economy would improve.

I have volunteered as an adult learner for twenty three years and find little has changed. Governments play snakes and ladders with people's lives. It's time for the government to wake up to their responsibilities. Please help us meet the challenges and complexities and create a fully literate world.

Seven Canadian learners went to Brazil. All attended different workshops and at the end of each day's session we shared what we learned and wrote a quote according to what we felt. We all shared the feeling of pain, sadness, laughter and joy.

## ***Good to Know... Resources, Reports and Articles from Around the Globe***

**FEATURED RESOURCE:** *The Diagnostic Adult Literacy Assessment for Beginning Readers (DALA)*, Pat Campbell, (funded by OLES, available March 2010)

My mother tells a story about me when I was three. I was obsessed with books and I desperately wanted to read. One of my favourite books was *The [Tale of the] Flopsy Bunnies* by Beatrice Potter. I would make my mom read it to me over and over again until I had memorized it, including when to turn the pages. My party trick was to read the book to people, including the line, "It made them feel soporific." It always terrified people to see this three-year-old talking about feeling soporific. (Ouchi, 2005, p. 57)

Think back to your childhood. How did you learn to read? Quite often, fluent readers do not remember how they learned to read, but with a bit of reflection, they can remember the journey. Some people, unfortunately, did not fully experience the journey. They were left behind. *The Diagnostic Adult Literacy Assessment for Beginning Readers (DALA)* is an assessment tool for educators working with students who want to experience the literacy journey.

In 2005, a national survey on assessment practices was conducted with 400 adult educators who worked in colleges, school boards, community-based programs, and workplaces across Canada (Campbell, 2006, 2007). Among the respondents, the highest ranked need was for an assessment tool that could be used with students whose literacy and numeracy skills and processes are at a very basic level. DALA, a user-friendly assessment tool, was specifically designed to meet this need.

The primary purposes of DALA are to inform instruction and measure progress. The assessment begins with a set of interview questions about reading concepts. Sometimes, beginning readers have restricted notions about what it means to be a reader and how one learns to read. Their misconceptions about reading might hinder their ability to learn. The interview is followed by ten subtests that provide diagnostic information that

allows the educator to identify areas of strength and weakness. Educators can use this information to create an individual profile of and plan effective lesson plans for each student. The subtests are described below.

### ***Environmental print***

The first subtest, which serves as a screening test, assesses the student's knowledge of environmental print. The student is asked to look at a set of photographs and identify common words found in the environment such as "stop" and "exit." After the student has read the words in context, the words are presented in isolation, without the visual and contextual cues.

### ***Text functions***

This subtest shows whether a student is familiar with the uses and purposes of text, such as providing instructions. A student is shown samples of text used in different situations and is required to answer a question about the text. (e.g., which of these can be cashed at a bank?)

### ***Print concepts and conventions***

This subtest, which is based on Marie Clay's work, helps to discover what a student knows about print. The student is presented with an easy-to-read book and asked specific questions to see if he understands concepts such as letter, word, and sentence.

### ***Letter names***

The student is presented with a deck of cards that contains upper and lower case letters and is asked to sort the cards into two piles: letters she knows and letters she needs to learn. Then, she is asked to identify to name the letters she knows.

### ***Phonemic awareness***

The first subtest examines whether the student is able to perceive the beginning sounds in spoken words. The student listens to a word and is asked to say the beginning sound. (Adults who have phonemic awareness skills will likely have an easier time learning to read and spell.) The second subtest examines whether the student is able to identify oral rhymes. This may be difficult for some students as it requires a concept of rhyming words.

### ***High frequency words***

This subtest examines the student's ability to read 20 high-frequency words in isolation.

### ***Phonics***

This subtest pinpoints the letter-sound relationships the student needs to learn. The student is shown the consonants and vowels in isolation and is asked to identify the sound that goes with each letter.

### ***The alphabetic principle***

The alphabetic principle is the understanding that letters in written words stand for sounds in spoken words. In other words, sequences of letters map onto sequences of sounds. In this subtest, the student will demonstrate this understanding when he tries to spell the words needed for a grocery list.

### ***Literacy Practices***

This subtest looks at how well a student can engage in common literacy activities such as reading medicine bottles or bills. The student is shown a photograph depicting a literacy activity such as reading the label on a medicine bottle. Then, the student is asked to engage in a self-assessment of their ability.

In addition to the assessment, the DALA kit contains a 45-minute DVD that demonstrates how to administer DALA's subtests and how to teach beginning readers, using effective strategies such as duet reading, phonemic awareness, word families, and the think-aloud process. The kit also contains an instructional manual entitled Teaching Beginning Readers. This manual, which can be photocopied, provides principles for working with beginning readers, twenty teaching strategies, and sample lesson plans.

The assessment toolkit will be available through Grass Roots Press. You can order the tool at <http://www.grassrootsbooks.net/ca/assessment>

### **Patients as Partners**

On December 10, 2009, innovative doctors in BC invited the health literacy community to *Get Real: Partnerships for Moving Health Literacy Forward*. Different teams explained how they had worked together to accomplish significant health literacy outcomes. Excellent videos showcase the work done so far; *Nothing about me without me*, captures the spirit and goal of the PAP program.

Some of the lessons learned so far are:

- Isolated health literacy efforts not backed by a broader framework are unlikely to accomplish system-wide improvement.
- It takes integrated teams to address health literacy issues.
- Bringing the medical and literacy cultures together can be a challenge and requires flexibility, adaptability, trust and openness.
- A successful health literacy strategy needs to entail action-oriented effort
- The ideal approach encourages small scale experimentation with imperfect ideas and eliminates fear of failure because the emphasis is on learning; identifying measurable changes. It supports data collection and recognizes that the improvement journey is not smooth.

To learn more go to: <http://shebamuturi.wordpress.com/2009/12/15/innovative-bc-doctors-embrace-patients-as-partners-part-i/>.

## Canadian Social Trends

Subscribing to this publication, published by Statistics Canada, will give you information on topical issues, emerging trends and accurate first-hand Canadian data. You can pay for a print subscription or go to [www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca) for the free online version.

## Investing in Human Capital: Policy Priorities for Canada

In a research paper for the University of British Columbia, Craig Riddell provides a comprehensive overview of the evidence on the private and social returns to education. He makes a strong case for increasing return at the margin where we currently apply limited resources to skills formation. The three policy proposals he identifies are:

- increase support for early childhood education for vulnerable children,
- reduce the high school dropout rate, and
- improve equity in university access.

You can download the report from: <http://www.irpp.org/cpa/>

## Understanding and Addressing Low Literacy

The article by Judith Maxwell and Sylvia Cheuy, emphasizes the importance of community economic and social development as a lever for strengthening the literacy system by:

- addressing the personal barriers to literacy education,
- creating an infrastructure for adult learning, and
- defining more ambitious goals to reach a bigger proportion of the population.

<http://www.peacockpoverty.org/2010/02/16/understanding-and-addressing-low-literacy-by-judith-maxwell-with-sylvia-cheuy/>

## The ACME Guide to Literacy Practice in Community

This Guide is a product of the project, *From the Ground Up: A Research-in-Practice Approach to Outcome-Oriented Program Evaluation*, managed by RiPAL-BC in partnership with Literacy BC, and funded by the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. Information is presented in an innovative and engaging way. It is intended as a professional development tool that will spark dialogue, debate, ideas and reflection about how we define literacy, how we define literacy progress, and other “big picture” questions. You can download the guide from:

[http://ripal.literacy.bc.ca/fromthegroundup/acme\\_guide.pdf](http://ripal.literacy.bc.ca/fromthegroundup/acme_guide.pdf)

## Social Return on Investment (SROI)

SROI is an innovative way to measure and account for the value you create with your work. This methodology comes from the UK and is fairly new. It is attracting interest from not-for-profit organizations, the government and funders.

The values we create go far beyond what is captured in financial terms but financial returns are often the only type of value that is measured. SROI is a framework for measuring and accounting for a broader framework of values that include social, environmental and economic costs and benefits. SROI is based on involving stakeholders in determining which outcomes are relevant. It helps organizations maximize their social impact and improve the lives of the people they work with. SROI can be used to evaluate retrospectively and to forecast how much social value will be created if the activities meet their intended outcomes. It can be used as a tool for strategic planning, communicating impact and attracting funding. It can help make your organization more sustainable.

Learn more at: <http://www.sroi-uk.org/>

## *Have a project “in the works”?*



If you want to share information about interesting resources, new research or the work you are doing, then send an email to Lindsay Kennedy at [lindsay@literacy.ca](mailto:lindsay@literacy.ca). We will include your information in the next edition of our newsletter and post it on our website. **Deadline for articles for the next issue is August 31, 2010.**

## *Upskilling - Events, Conferences and Workshops from across the Continent*

### Summer Institute 2010: Workplace LES: What Counts? and Why?

The Centre of Literacy of Quebec's 2010 Summer Institute will take place at Dawson College in Montreal on June 28-30, 2010. The conference will examine what is currently being used to evaluate the results of Workplace Essential Skills programs.

Visit <http://www.centreforliteracy.qc.ca> for details.

## Cultivating Connections: Global Perspectives & Practices in Family Literacy Conference

**July 15 - 17, 2010**

Registration Now Open! Over 80 sessions to choose from, plus seven remarkable keynote speakers. The conference will take place at the Shaw Conference Centre in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, from July 15 - 17, 2010, with three days of pre-conference training from July 12 – 14.

Register now at [CultivatingConnectionsConference.ca](http://CultivatingConnectionsConference.ca).

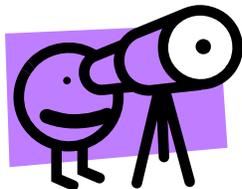


If you have an event or conference you would like us to include in literacy.ca *EXPRESS*, send us an email. The next issue will be published in October 2010. **Deadline for submissions is August 31, 2010.**

## Membership

If you aren't already a member, or haven't renewed your membership, please click on [www.literacy.ca/?q=membership](http://www.literacy.ca/?q=membership) to go to the membership form on the MCL website. We have two types of membership available – general and organizational. If you have any questions about becoming a member, or renewing your membership, please call the office at 613-563-2464 or email us at [mcl@literacy.ca](mailto:mcl@literacy.ca).

## In the Future



In a future issue of literacy.ca *EXPRESS* we will be looking into the topic of student associations. We will include an interview with Sue Nielsen, Executive Director of the Toronto Adult Student Association (TASA). TASA is a membership based organization that helps adults reach their educational goals by providing referral to Credit, English as another Language (ESL), and literacy programs.

If you know of other examples of student associations (in Canada or abroad) please contact Chris Harwood at [chris@literacy.ca](mailto:chris@literacy.ca). This will be a great opportunity to share information and knowledge with your colleagues across the county!

Also, if you have suggestions for topics and articles, websites or conferences you'd like us to include in the future, please let us know.



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