

## **Key Project Information**

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<b>Reference Number:</b>	500-EO-0809
<b>Project Title:</b>	Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction
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## **Acknowledgements**

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The Tri-County Literacy Network Board of Directors would also like to thank the following advisory committee members as well as the evaluator for the time and effort they contributed to the project.

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Teresa Piruzza	Executive Director - Social Support	Ontario Works
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Madeline Lunney	Evaluator	Lunney Consultants

## **Contents**

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<b>Key Project Information .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Report Contents.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Project Overview .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Specific Outcomes .....	7
Purpose .....	7
Deliverables.....	7
<b>Initial Work .....</b>	<b>9</b>
Formation of the Advisory Committee .....	9
Research.....	9
Provincial Survey .....	9
Analysis of Research and Survey Results.....	10
Stakeholder Interviews .....	10
Summary of Stakeholder Interviews .....	11
Review of Summary of Stakeholder Interviews .....	15
<b>Best Practices One Pager.....</b>	<b>16</b>
Planning.....	16
Product Produced .....	16
<b>Bridges Out of Poverty Training.....</b>	<b>17</b>
Planning.....	17
Bridges Out of Poverty Workshop Feedback .....	17
Information on Respondents.....	17
Pre-Workshop Survey Results .....	18
Post-Workshop Survey Results .....	18
Overall Response Patterns Before and After the Workshop .....	19
Self Assessed Understanding – Before and After the Workshop .....	20
<b>Self Assessment Tools .....</b>	<b>21</b>
Development.....	21
Implementation .....	21

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

Results of the Agency Self Assessment Tool .....	22
Individual Action.....	22
Community Engagement .....	25
Results of the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Agency Self Assessment Tool .....	28
Individual Action .....	28
Program Elements .....	31
Community Engagement .....	34
Analysis of Agency Self Assessment Tool and the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Self Assessment Tool .....	36
<b>Forum and Strategic Plan .....</b>	<b>37</b>
Development of Draft Strategic Plan.....	37
Development of Forum Activities.....	37
Feedback on Draft Strategic Plan.....	38
Common Top Recommendations.....	38
Development of Final Strategic Plan.....	39
<b>Conclusion.....</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>43</b>
Appendix 1: Provincial Survey .....	44
Appendix 2: Provincial Survey - Sectors/Networks/Streams that Responded .....	46
Appendix 3: Provincial Survey Responses (Sectors/Networks/Streams).....	47
Appendix 4: Provincial Survey - Agencies that Responded.....	49
Appendix 5: Provincial Survey Responses (Agencies).....	50
Appendix 6: Best Practices One Pager .....	60
Appendix 7: Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Agency Self Assessment Tool .....	62
Appendix 8: Agency Self Assessment Tool.....	67
Appendix 9: Strategic Plan.....	70
Appendix 10: Forum Activity Synopsis.....	75
Appendix 11: Evaluation Report: Executive Summary and Recommendations .....	81

## **Executive Summary**

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The project was designed to improve the capacity for Windsor-Essex Ontario Works and the Tri-County Literacy Network to work together to more effectively work with people living in poverty. This project was also designed to meet the three Employment Ontario Network Development Fund (EONDF) funding priorities (see page 6)\*.

Specific outcomes were: staffs have developed strategies and sensitivities for working with clients in poverty; identification of systemic changes that are necessary to improve services; and the identification of effective Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) strategies and programs that address poverty.

In order to meet the objectives of the project the following activities occurred:

- Research was completed to locate adult literacy projects related to poverty reduction in order to determine best practices, look for self assessment tools and other information relevant to the project.
- Provincial LBS Networks, Sectors and Streams were asked to identify specific research, resources and/or curriculum materials relevant to poverty and/or poverty reduction that they had found helpful or that might be useful in an LBS classroom.
- LBS agencies were asked to identify specific programs designed to address poverty or poverty reduction, strategies to help learners overcome poverty, barriers to providing programs and services to those identified as living in poverty, community poverty reduction strategies and agency self assessment tools related to servicing learners living in poverty.
- *The Best Practices for Linking Adult Learning/Literacy to Poverty Reduction One Pager* was developed and included a list of resources that would be helpful in the LBS classroom.
- The workshop *Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities* was held for identified staff from the Windsor-Essex area.
- An LBS self assessment tool and an agency self assessment tool were developed for use in determining the extent to which identified best practices were in place.

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

- A strategic plan was developed to outline activity designed to continue the capacity building activities of this project so that Windsor-Essex Ontario Works and the Tri-County Literacy Network would continue to work together to more effectively work with people living in poverty.
- A forum was held to gain feedback and input into the final strategic plan. Members from the Pathway to Potential Roundtable were invited to participate in order to link Pathway to Potential Roundtable activity to this project.
- Evaluation of all project activities was conducted by an independent evaluator.

The project successfully met all established objectives and produced all required deliverables. The response from individuals representing all involved agencies was extremely positive and a new energy has been created. Those involved in the workshop and forum saw value in the activities and look forward to continued collaborative work on this topic. The best practices one pager clearly identifies individual action, program elements and community involvement activities that effectively link adult literacy strategies to poverty reduction. The self assessment tools effectively identify where additional action or assistance is required to ensure identified best practices are in place. The strategic plan has set direction for continued activity.

\*Employment Ontario Network Development Fund's Funding Priorities:

- Provincial and/or regional delivery stakeholder conferences and training and development that measurably improve the management strength and organizational capacity of the service delivery network to achieve Employment Ontario objectives
- The development of resources, tools and best practices that build the capacity to achieve Employment Ontario objectives
- Improving communication and engagement within sectors and between sectors and government to support consistency and continuous improvement in the delivery of Employment Ontario services and programs

## **Project Overview**

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### ***Specific Outcomes***

The project was designed to improve the capacity for Windsor-Essex Ontario Works (OW) and the Tri-County Literacy Network to work together to more effectively work with people living in poverty. The project included a workshop designed to increase staff understanding of poverty, research of local and provincial best practices for programs and collaborative approaches to address the needs of clients in poverty, creation and field testing of an agency self assessment tool, and a forum where research results were presented and a strategic plan for next steps was discussed. Employment Ontario staff (including Literacy and Basic Skills), Ontario Works staff, Pathway to Potential representatives and Ontario Disability Support Program staff were invited to attend the workshop and participate in the forum.

### ***Purpose***

As the Windsor area has had one of the highest unemployment rates in the country and continues to have the highest unemployment rate amongst Ontario's Census Metropolitan Areas, poverty has been an increasingly important issue. Adult learners are not merely learning to read, write and compute. They are learning how to mobilize their collective resources to meet their basic needs for health, safety and human dignity.

This project was designed to meet the three Employment Ontario Network Development Fund (EONDF) funding priorities. Specific outcomes were: staffs have developed strategies and sensitivities for working with clients in poverty; identification of systemic changes that are necessary to improve services; and the identification of effective LBS strategies and programs that address poverty.

### ***Deliverables***

The project included the following deliverables:

- Windsor-Essex professional development activity for EO and OW staff
- results of evaluation forms will be included in the Interim Report
- Best Practices One Pager, including web links, for the forum and for inclusion in the final report

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

- agency self assessment tool and field test results
- Windsor-Essex forum for EO and OW and other invited community groups
- Strategic Plan
- results of evaluation forms will be included in the Final Report
- Interim Report
- Final Report
- Project Summary Report

## **Initial Work**

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### *Formation of the Advisory Committee*

An advisory committee was formed that included the following positions:

- Tri-County Literacy Network Executive Director and Administrative Assistant
- Project Team
- Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities Field Consultant and Employment and Training Consultant
- Ontario Works Executive Director - Social Support, Manager, and Staff Development Coordinator
- Pathway to Potential Co-Chair and Poverty Reduction Coordinator

The purpose of the advisory committee was to guide the project work, provide feedback on the applicability of the work to their respective organizations, encourage full participation of their organizations in the activities of the project and support the development and eventual implementation of the developed strategic plan.

### *Research*

Web-based research occurred on adult literacy projects related to poverty reduction in Australia, Canada, Great Britain and the United States. The focus of the research was to determine best practices, look for self assessment tools and other information relevant to the project.

A comprehensive review of *Bridges Out of Poverty* materials and other work by Ruby Payne was undertaken in search of specific best practices that link adult literacy and poverty reduction.

### *Provincial Survey*

A letter of information regarding the project was sent to the literacy Networks, Sectors and Streams. The letter asked them to identify specific research relevant to poverty and/or poverty reduction that they have found helpful. They were also asked to provide the names of specific resources and/or curriculum materials related to poverty that might be useful in a Literacy and Basic Skills classroom. The specific questions can be found in **Appendix 1: Provincial Survey** .

Information was also requested of the Literacy and Basic Skills agencies. Questions were asked about specific programs designed to address poverty or poverty reduction, strategies to help learners overcome poverty, barriers to providing programs and services to those identified as living in poverty, community poverty reduction strategies and agency self assessment tools related to servicing learners living in poverty. Agencies were also provided with the opportunity to provide additional information on the topic. The specific questions can be found in **Appendix 1: Provincial Survey** .

## ***Analysis of Research and Survey Results***

The analysis of the research and survey results conducted by the working group revealed the following:

- extensive information on poverty reduction strategies within communities
- extensive information on literacy programs for adults
- literacy skills were identified as being essential to individuals moving out of poverty
- the provincial survey identified strategies to address poverty yet strategies to address poverty reduction were lacking

For the working group, what appeared to be lacking was the identification or articulation of any best practices linking adult literacy and poverty reduction. In the opinion of the working group, the *Bridges Out of Poverty* materials were by far the most valuable source of practices that could be useful in linking classroom literacy strategies and poverty reduction.

## ***Stakeholder Interviews***

Key stakeholders representing the Ontario Works program at the City of Windsor/ County of Essex Social Services, and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities were asked to respond to questions developed by the project evaluator, in collaboration with the project's Advisory Committee for the purpose of encouraging feedback that would contribute to the project's approach, deliverables and evaluation.

### *Summary of Stakeholder Interviews*

1. Measures of success of the initiative:
  - better informed staff and better able to respond to clients' needs
  - staff more aware of how increased literacy leads to reduction of poverty and with community partners' increased awareness, clients' issues would be more readily identified
  - increased literacy and improved employability (main reducer of poverty)
  - identification of new strategies to address the cause versus getting stuck on identifying situations of poverty
  - greater understanding among all participating agencies: everyone will have better outcomes related to reducing poverty
  
2. Main challenges facing this initiative:
  - Main target groups are Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) and Employment Services; need to adapt resources and tools for delivery. In the case of the self assessment tool, for example: seems to be more focused on LBS agencies. In the case of Best Practices, the language is around learners; document is targeted to LBS practitioners. Others will need to apply to their programs.
  - keep resources up to date; sustaining momentum of workshop
  - put measures in place to sustain the learning and new approaches
  - help case workers understand the perspective of clients living in poverty to avoid frustration, help clients overcome self-defeating behaviours and meet their goals
  - sector barriers i.e. lack of coordination among organizations resulting in a duplication of services, confusion as to where to refer clients, gaps in services or in timing for clients, services not well-targeted, etc.
  - promote more cooperation among agencies and community players: business, labour, community agencies, literacy and employment programs
  - it's tough for literacy workers to always be considering Ontario Works programming when they work with clients
  - with large organizations, each has its own agenda and delivery system - foster greater understanding of others

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

3. As a result of this initiative, positive results for the relationship between Ontario Works and the Tri-County Literacy Network could be:
  - better client services and linking with the broader community
  - increased coordination, linkages and referrals, understanding of goals and perspectives of partner agencies, a more consistent holistic approach
  - a strong working relationship between literacy organizations and Ontario Works
  
4. As a result of this initiative, the experience of the low-income people served by these two agencies (Ontario Works and Tri-County Literacy Network) would be different:
  - MTCU (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities) is results-driven (i.e. they see the most important indicator of success being employment). However, ideally anyone would have an easier time accessing what s/he needs. This would be more likely if agencies could collaborate more effectively.
  - Currently, with multiple agencies offering programs, one can see why people (for good reason) focus on their own agencies. Meanwhile clients can get stuck in the middle, with duplication of services, gaps in services, and unclear messages about where to go to get support. Sometimes clients “need to jump through hoops”: there are duplicate programs in one area, and they’ve missed the boat in another.
  - Services would focus more on root causes of poverty versus addressing symptoms of poverty.
  - There would be collaboration between agencies to find actual solutions: e.g. food bank is an immediate response, and then you can move beyond emergency needs to help people meet long-term goals. Dealing with housing issues could lead to employment planning, etc.
  - We would have better coordination on individual cases.
  
5. Expectations for the workshop:
  - need to make sure we get the right people there - it’s not just literacy organizations

- should ensure attendance by Ontario Works, Employment Service providers, municipal government
  - essential to get the word out, disseminate the “right” (compelling, relevant) information to get the right people there
  - better understanding of clients and the tools to be able to deal with their needs
  - looking for the “Aha” moment that takes place at Ruby Payne events
  - folks coming from poverty reduction roundtable will add their perspective
  - workshop will give people access to details of what’s happening in Windsor area
6. Expectations for the forum:
- same as question 5, in this case focused on managers, decision-makers - if the right contacts are there, will have broader link to the community as a result
  - increase literacy, decrease poverty
  - overview of the best practices, agency self assessments will add depth to the discussions
  - opportunity to get people to come up with strategic directions
  - hope that strategic plan will be developed; but process is equally important
  - a lot to accomplish in half a day, but it’s a start
  - sustainability: people will be pumped after the workshop
  - literacy service providers already develop an annual work plan- whatever comes out of the forum could become an annual focus e.g. service planning to involve the right stakeholders
  - ideas about future kinds of projects; more understanding of existing initiatives e.g. adult educators were not looking at literacy initiatives until they were informed about these. People will benefit from knowing what others are doing.

7. The workshop has been pre-designed by a third party, but the forum will be shaped by you and your colleagues. What are your thoughts about the forum design at this stage, i.e. before going through the workshop?
  - In answer to this question, several interviewees referred to their earlier responses regarding expectations for the forum.
  - People understand that some attendees will attend both the Workshop and Forum, and that new participants will be added for the Forum. There was agreement that this design will work well.
  - This will be a good opportunity to include smaller group discussions on the issues and strategies and see it as an important networking opportunity.
  - People expect there will be some degree of overlap; “doesn’t hurt to review work done at the Ruby Payne workshop”.
  
8. What are your thoughts about how to prepare the forum given the relatively short amount of time (three weeks) between the workshop and the forum?
  - It’s “REALLY important to deal with the problem rather than the symptom.” (where poverty is a symptom rather than the root problem).
  - Although it’s true that the government actors are currently focused on employment training, of course there are other issues besides employment (e.g. intergenerational poverty). Old paradigm of looking at poverty entailed examining whose role it was to fix what.
  - [Thinking was that] better literacy programs would increase employment prospects and reduce poverty. This is too simplistic.
  - For some people, the key might be dealing with social issues first. This is legitimate, but it’s important not to get bogged down in anti-poverty activism. We need to break the problem down into pieces that can be dealt with. The key is to be able to move into implementation versus continued discussion/debate.
  
9. Additional advice on the project design or implementation:
  - It’s the people on the front lines who will make contributions to the workshop.

- Has a lot of respect for Andrea Dickinson and the Tri-Country Literacy Network and expects the project will be successful.
- Given the short timeframe, the agency self assessments to be presented at the forum will have to be prepared quickly; this will be a challenge.
- The self assessments are a good way to link the workshop and forum.
- Often the NEXT STEP is missing from a training opportunity; you're expected to go back to your workplace and implement the training on your own. Great to have a network of support!

### ***Review of Summary of Stakeholder Interviews***

The project team reviewed the summary of the stakeholder interviews for specific information that was meaningful in planning the workshop and the forum.

Respondents recognized the importance of the initiative, the challenges faced in a project of this dimension and hoped for success.

## **Best Practices One Pager**

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### ***Planning***

The research and provincial survey results were reviewed for the purposes of creating a best practices one pager. Discussion occurred on how to create a best practices document that would be useful and meaningful. Consensus was arrived at the identification of three elements of best practices:

- Individual Action
- Program Elements
- Community Engagement

It was identified that all established practices and outcomes included in the best practices one pager would have to be evaluated and updated on a continual basis.

The initial plan was to only create a best practices one pager, but because of the wealth of information available it was decided to also include a list of resources that would be helpful in the Literacy and Basic Skills classroom.

### ***Product Produced***

The Best Practices for Linking Adult Learning/Literacy to Poverty Reduction One Pager can be found as [Appendix 6](#).

## **Bridges Out of Poverty Training**

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### ***Planning***

The workshop *Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities* was planned as a full day professional development activity for identified staff from the Windsor-Essex area. This workshop is based in part on Dr. Ruby Payne's , *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, and is designed to reach out to service providers whose daily work connects them with the lives of people in poverty. Staffs from Ontario Works, Apprenticeship, Employment Assistance Services, Job Connect, Academic Upgrading and Literacy and Basic Skills programs, Ontario Disability Support Program, MTCU staff and Pathway to Potential representatives were invited. Jodi Pfarr, of Minneapolis, Minnesota, a consultant with **aha!process** since 2001 was contracted as the featured presenter at the workshop.

The goal for this professional development activity was for participants to develop a greater understanding of the challenges people living in poverty face on a daily basis. Strategies effective in assisting people to move out of poverty were to be provided. Participants were also to be presented with identified best practices for linking adult literacy to poverty reduction as a community effort. An expected benefit of this workshop was the improvement of outcomes for people living in poverty as professionals identify barriers and help their clients/learners overcome them.

Windsor Volunteers for Literacy Foundation donated *Bridges Out of Poverty* workbooks for all attendees.

### ***Bridges Out of Poverty Workshop Feedback***

Evaluation of the workshop was conducted and reported by Madeline Lunney, of Lunney Consultants. Ms. Lunney was hired to assist with the development and implementation of the evaluation process.

### **Information on Respondents**

Evaluation responses were received from 106 attendees. Of the 88 respondents who self-identified as frontline staff or manager, 85% were frontline staff and 15% were managers. However, another 18 respondents did not cite either of these work roles.

Almost half (46%) of Literacy and Basic Skills respondents self-identified as managers, as did some 31% of Pathway to Potential respondents and 23% of Employment Services. All other respondents identified themselves as frontline staff.

### **Pre-Workshop Survey Results**

The first question asks each respondent to rate the ability of his or her agency to respond to the needs of people living in poverty. The data shows that a small majority (58%) of respondents believed their respective agencies have a *good* ability. The number of respondents who indicated a *fair* ability (26%) is substantially larger than the number who indicated an *excellent* ability (9%). Furthermore, the number who gave the lowest rating of *poor* ability (7%) approaches the number who gave the highest rating of *excellent* ability (9%). Through these rankings, fully 33% of respondents demonstrated reservations about the ability (*poor* or *fair*) of their respective agencies to respond to the needs of people living in poverty. On the other hand, double that number (67%) demonstrated satisfaction with such ability (*good* or *excellent*) at their respective agencies.

The second question asks each respondent to rate his or her own understanding of the impact of poverty and the links between poverty and literacy. The data shows that a majority (62%) of respondents believed they have a good understanding, while roughly similar numbers believed they have a level of understanding that is less than *good* or greater than *good*: 21% *fair* and 17% *excellent*. No respondents indicated a poor understanding prior to the workshop. A later section of this document tracks changes in respondents' ratings of their understanding of poverty as a result of the workshop.

The third question asks each respondent to rate the importance of building his or her sector's capacity to work with people living in poverty. The vast majority of respondents (95%) assigned high priority to this value, with 50% indicating *very important* and 45% indicating *crucial*.

### **Post-Workshop Survey Results**

The quality and value of workshop presentations were top-rated by an impressive majority (90%) of respondents.

Respondents were somewhat more cautious about the relevance of workshop contents to their own jobs, with 58% indicating *excellent* relevance and 39% indicating *good*

relevance. Assessment of the workshop's contribution to professional capacity is a closely related question that produced very similar results, with 62% indicating an *excellent* contribution and 37% indicating a *good* contribution.

The importance of building the respondent's capacity to work with people living in poverty was rated as *very important* or *crucial* by fully 94% of respondents, with the higher rating predominating. The data indicates that the workshop strongly matched participants' sense of professional priorities.

After the workshop, fully 98% of respondents felt positive about their understanding of poverty: with 52% claiming an *excellent* understanding and another 46% settling for *good*. When data from pre- and post-workshop surveys are compared (two sections below), it is established that many respondents considered their understanding of poverty improved through the workshop.

A great majority of respondents (91%) indicated *good* or *excellent* likelihood that they would work in new ways as a result of attending the workshop. The only non-responses in the post-survey workshop (which numbered two) both relate to this question. The overall response to this question is overwhelmingly positive.

### **Overall Response Patterns Before and After the Workshop**

This comparison demonstrates that, on an overall basis, workshop participants responded substantially MORE POSITIVELY to questions posed AFTER the workshop.

This finding includes the importance assigned to the workshop's purpose, where greater issue importance is taken as congruent with greater positivity in the responses to other questions. One needs to be careful with this distinction. The two comparable questions are very similar but not identical. Both questions establish the importance that respondents' assign to building capacity to work with people living in poverty: with the pre-workshop question focusing on sectoral capacity and the post-workshop question implicitly focusing on the respondent's individual capacity.

The perceived importance of the workshop's purpose INCREASED among respondents in the course of the workshop, though not as dramatically as the positivity of their responses to other questions.

### **Self Assessed Understanding – Before and After the Workshop**

The data shows a dramatic upward shift in responses from just before to just after the workshop and demonstrates this positive shift by tracking individual changes in response. It shows the range of initial responses and demonstrates how they changed.

This data demonstrates over half of all respondents (53%) recorded an improvement in their understanding of poverty (48% by one rank and 5% by two ranks). On the other hand, 42% of all respondents' self assessed understanding of poverty remained unchanged. A more detailed analysis is provided below.

Before the workshop, some 62% of respondents felt they had a *good* understanding of poverty. After the workshop, over half of that group (53%) indicated improved understanding, i.e. from *good* to *excellent*.

Before the workshop, some 21% of all respondents felt they had only a *fair* understanding of poverty. After the workshop, a great majority of that group (96%) indicated improved understanding (most to *good*, and some to *excellent*).

Before the workshop, some 17% of all respondents felt they had an *excellent* understanding of poverty. After the workshop, a large majority of that group (78%) indicated the same level of understanding (*excellent*). The balance of that group (22%) reduced their self assessment, i.e. from *excellent* to *good*. This could be taken to mean that the workshop confused or otherwise shook the confidence of these participants. An alternative interpretation is that they learned enough during the workshop to drop a mistaken idea they had mastered the subject.

## **Self Assessment Tools**

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### ***Development***

When best practices were identified they became the basis for a self assessment tool. Originally a Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) self assessment tool only was to be developed but after further consideration it was decided that an agency self assessment tool would also be developed for Employment Services, Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program to complete.

The LBS self assessment tool was based on:

- Individual Action
- Program Elements
- Community Engagement

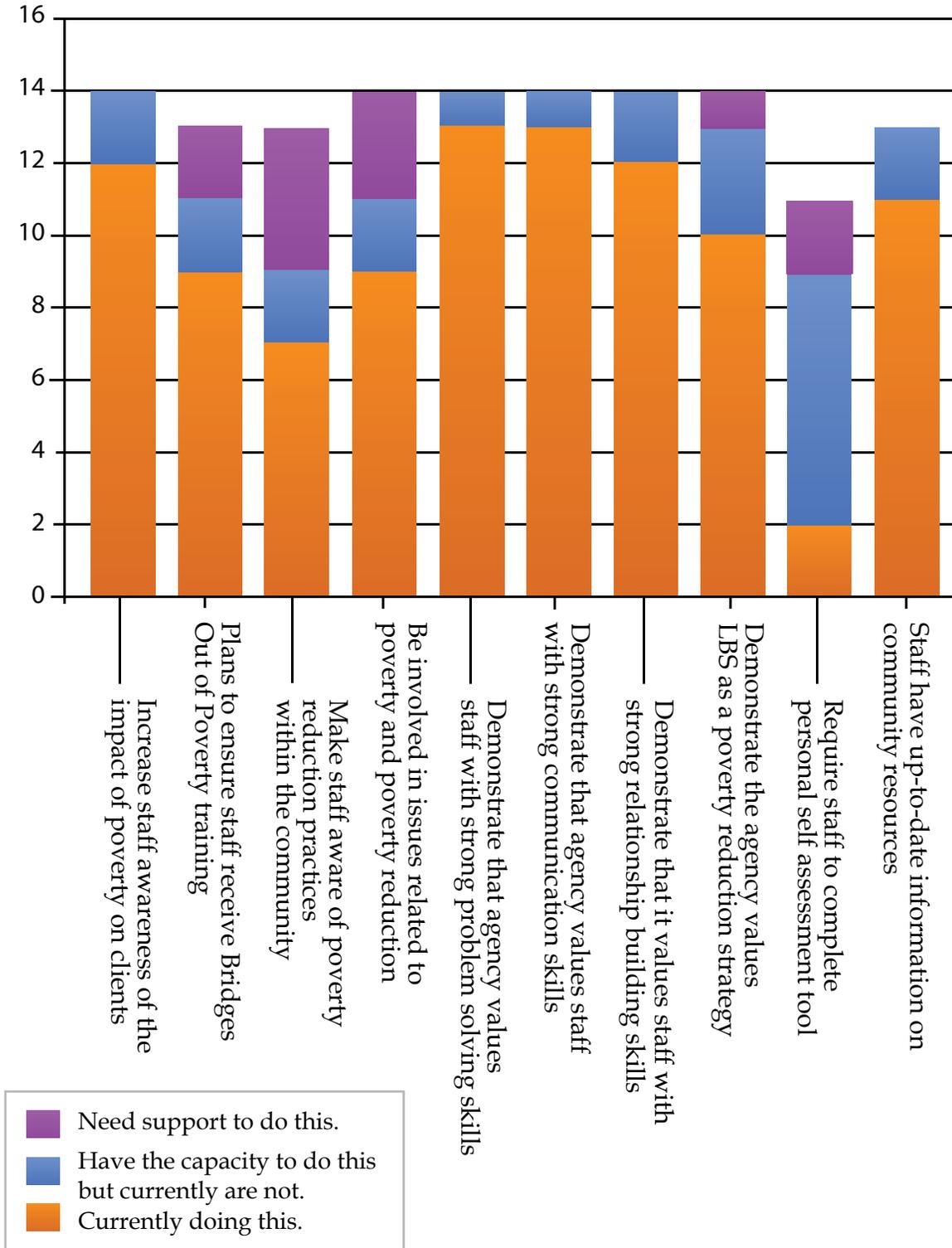
The agency self assessment tool did not include program elements as this section of the LBS self assessment was based on best practices specifically for LBS agencies.

### ***Implementation***

The self assessment tools were sent as online surveys to managers of LBS programs and relevant agencies in Windsor Essex. Responses were received, reviewed and summarized.

*Results of the Agency Self Assessment Tool*

**Individual Action**



As indicated in the bar graph, the managers of responding agencies in Windsor-Essex reported the following:

*Strengths:*

- agencies increase staff awareness of the impact of poverty
- agencies value staff with strong problem solving skills
- agencies value staff with strong communication skills
- agencies value staff with strong relationship building skills
- agencies demonstrate that they value Literacy and Basic Skills as a poverty reduction strategy
- agencies see that staff have up-to-date information on community resources

*Have capacity and need to act or need help:*

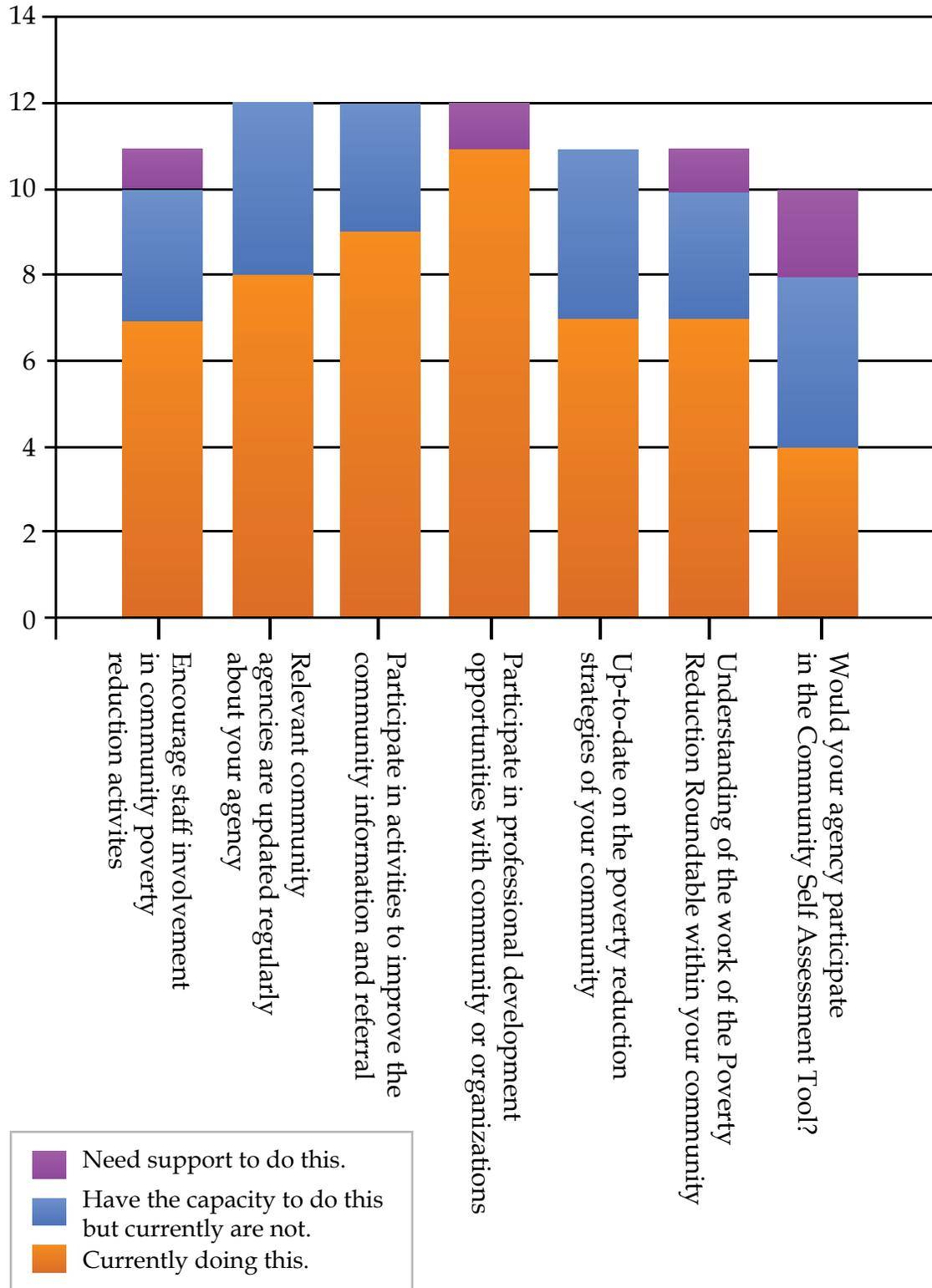
- ensure all staff have Bridges Out of Poverty training
- make staff aware of poverty reduction practices in the community
- have staff complete a personal self assessment tool

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

## *Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

1. *What can your agency do to support the individual action of staff within other agencies to understand and work with poverty and poverty reduction strategies?*
  - my agency is doing enough
  - be viewed as a community partner supporting job search and conduct ongoing networking and skill building
  - MTCU (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities) solely funds our agency to service job ready clients
  - bring in different resources for info session
  - discuss possible partnerships with other organizations to increase opportunities for professional development (PD)
  - make all aware of program and resources available
  
2. *What support does your agency need in order to empower the individual actions of staff within the agency to understand and work with poverty and poverty reduction strategies?*
  - resources
  - web-based list of agencies outlining services available
  - ongoing information and provision of new research
  - training is helpful
  - inform policy makers as they dictate service guidelines and requirements
  - materials/case studies to show how to apply strategies to client action plans
  - other agencies working with us
  - access for PD provided at our location
  
3. *What professional development would be beneficial in order to empower staff within the agency to understand and work with poverty and poverty reduction strategies?*
  - *Bridges Out of Poverty* workshop, other relevant workshops around the effects of poverty and current poverty reduction strategies (3)
  - a web-based forum to present case studies and promote dialogue amongst agencies
  - self-analysis tools, literature, periodic workshops, training on case planning for concrete thinkers
  - PD in the area of strategies for:
    - i. working with hard to serve clients
    - ii. how to avoid counsellor burnout given our current economic situation

Community Engagement



## **Community Engagement**

As indicated in the bar graph, the managers of responding agencies in Windsor-Essex reported the following:

### *Strengths:*

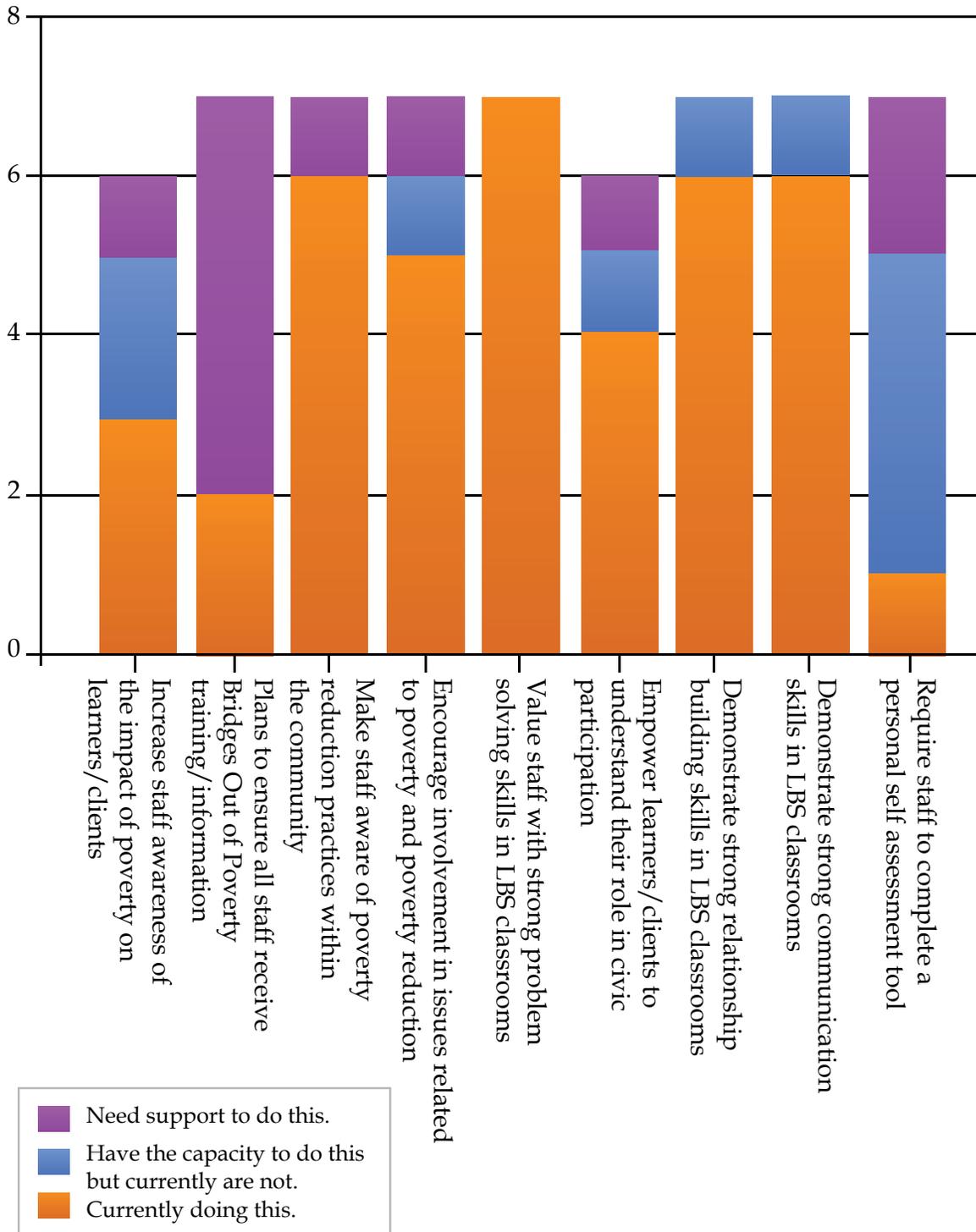
- participate in community professional development opportunities

### *Have capacity and need to act or need help:*

- encourage staff involvement in community poverty reduction activities
- update relevant community agencies regularly about own agency
- participate in activities to improve the community information
- are up-to-date on poverty reduction strategies of community
- understand the work of the community Poverty Reduction Roundtable
- participation in Community Self Assessment Tool

1. What can your agency do to support other agencies in becoming engaged within the community?
  - encourage collaborative efforts; participate on community committees (i.e. Homeless Coalition, Poverty Reduction Strategy)
  - I would support again a platform that is available to other agencies as well as potential clients
  - ongoing relationship building
  - not funded to do so
  - send referrals
  - allow & encourage staff to attend professional development (PD)
  
2. What support does your agency need to increase community engagement?
  - appropriate training and financial resources to create opportunities for community engagement
  - increased staff
  - standardized sharing of information (i.e. intake forms, workshops)
  - communication
  - access to PD – use the PD budget available
  
3. What cross agency professional development would assist in increasing community engagement related to serving learners/clients in poverty or poverty reduction?
  - *Bridges Out of Poverty (2)*
  - web-based portal where clients and agencies can give accurate timely information
  - event that makes us more aware of organizations that address issues related to poverty in Windsor-Essex
  - visits to experience other agencies
  - information sessions with our partners
  - workshops/seminars where all agencies attend

**Results of the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Agency Self Assessment Tool**  
**Individual Action**



# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

As indicated in the bar graph above, the managers of Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs in Windsor-Essex reported the following:

*Strengths:*

- make staff aware of poverty reduction practices in the community
- encourage involvement in issues related to poverty and poverty reduction strategies
- value staff with strong problem solving skills in Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) classrooms
- demonstrate strong relationship building skills in LBS classrooms
- demonstrate strong communication skills in LBS classrooms

*Have capacity and need to act or need help:*

- increase staff awareness of the impact of poverty on learners/clients
- plan to ensure all staff receive Bridges Out of Poverty training/information
- empower learners/clients to understand their role in civic participation
- require staff to complete a personal self assessment tool

1. What can your agency do to support the individual action of staff within programs to understand and work with poverty and poverty reduction strategies?

- we provide our staff with the opportunity to meet at regular intervals to discuss ways in which to support our students and the individual issues our students have
- training opportunities; opportunities to participate in relevant committees within the community
- increase awareness
- professional development
- teach staff to understand poverty and why it exists
- *Bridges Out of Poverty* workshops are resulting in increased sensitization
- meetings where the concepts from the workshops were discussed which would be a more formal way to keep the discussions going

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

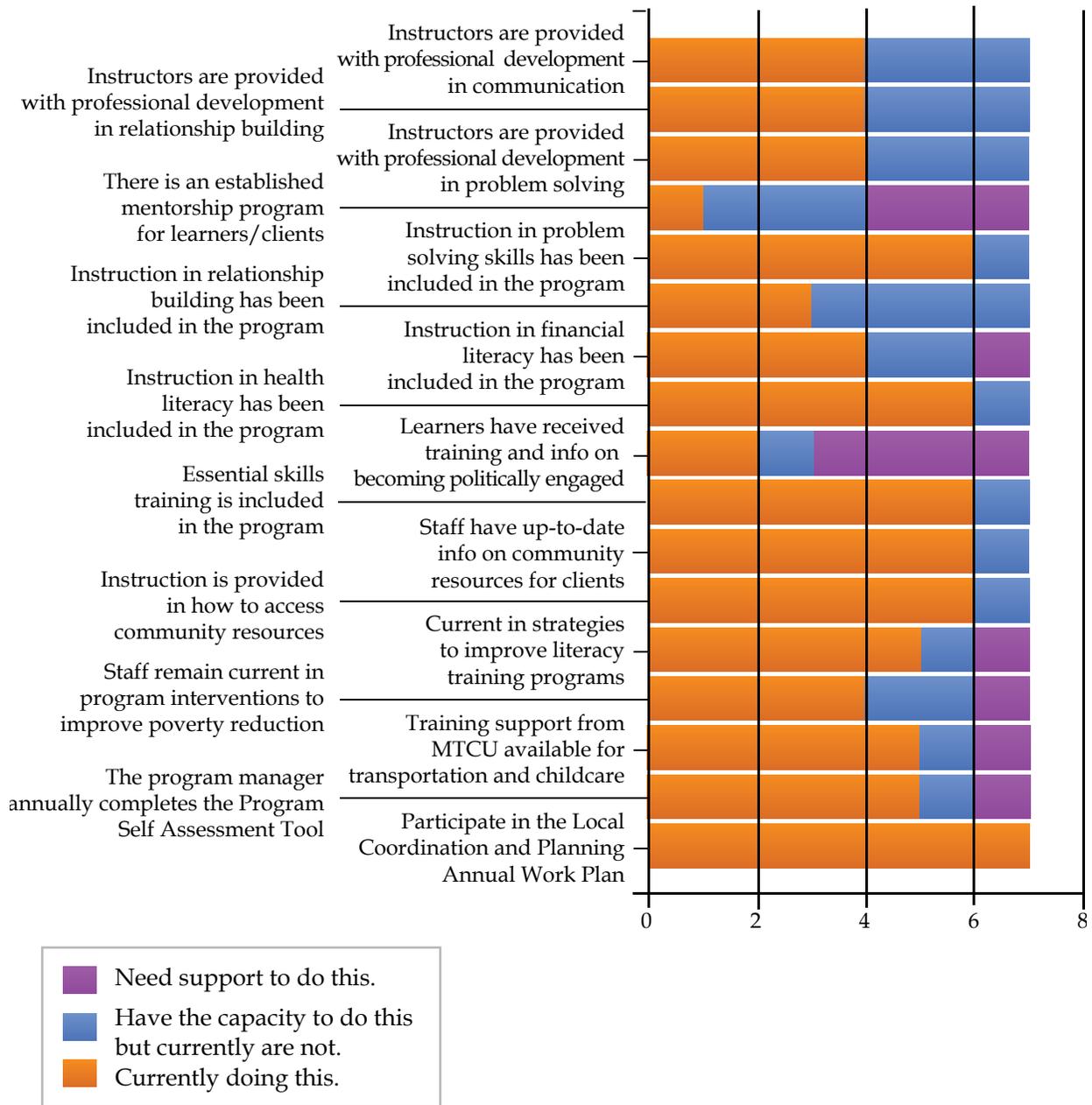
*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

2. What support does your agency need in order to empower the individual actions of staff within the program to work with poverty and poverty reduction strategies?
  - training
  - communication
  - resources (3)
  - funding in order to incorporate more poverty reduction strategies in the classroom
  - the agency needs to understand what a big job this is
  - the most important factor is time - time is always in short supply (2)
  
3. What professional development can be provided to empower staff within the program to understand and work with poverty and poverty reduction strategies?
  - with the workshop materials we would be able to design a mini workshop to provide our staff with base knowledge and the opportunity to discuss strategies as they apply to our programs
  - *Bridges Out of Poverty* (2)
  - free workshop
  - more *Bridges Out of Poverty*, *Circles*, *Pathway to Potential* networking
  - speakers, teachers, community workers who have had a lot of success in working with people in poverty
  - time to learn useful tools that can help us help people in poverty

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

## Program Elements



# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

As indicated in the bar graph, the managers of LBS programs in Windsor-Essex reported the following:

*Strengths:*

- instruction in problem solving has been included in the program
- instruction in health literacy has been included in the program
- essential skills training is included in the program
- staff have up-to-date information on community resources for clients
- instruction is provided on how to access community resources
- current in strategies to improve literacy training programs
- training support from Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities is available for transportation and childcare
- the program manager annually completes the Program Self Assessment Tool
- participate in the Local Coordination and Planning Annual Work Plan

*Have capacity and need to act or need help:*

- instructors are provided with professional development in communication
  - instructors are provided with professional development in relationship building
  - instructors are provided with professional development in problem solving
  - there is an established mentorship program for clients/learners
  - instruction in relationship building has been included in the program
  - instruction in financial literacy has been included in the program
  - learners have received training and information on becoming politically engaged
  - staff remain current in program interventions to improve poverty reduction
1. What can your agency do to support other agencies in including program elements that assist and support learners/clients to move out of poverty?
    - sharing of resources (3)
    - better networking, joint projects (2)
    - Windsor Public Library has 2 trainers that can provide Bridges Out of Poverty training for other agencies

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

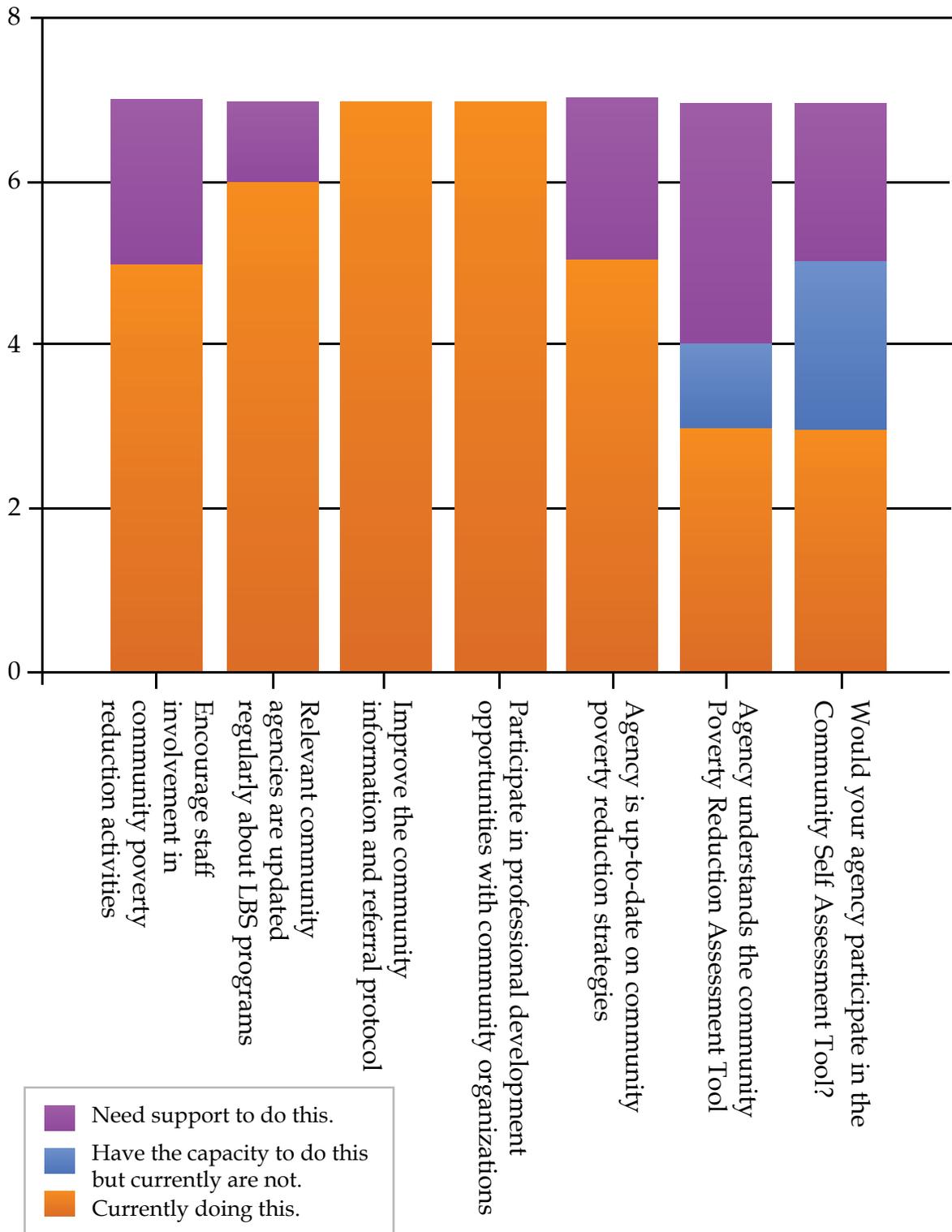
*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

- make other agencies aware of who our clients are and what their needs are
  - improve communication between agencies
  - agencies can share ideas to assist clients in moving out of poverty
2. What support does your agency need in order to include these program elements that assist and support learners/clients to move out of poverty?
- additional funding (3)
  - training
  - update from agencies
  - resources (3)
  - time
  - volunteers
3. What professional development can be provided to support your agency in providing programs that assist and support learners/clients to move out of poverty?
- workshop materials on community resources
  - workshops for agencies
  - 2 day Bridges Out of Poverty training and Circles training
  - help teach staff to teach learners to be more resourceful, change their thinking, be more positive, brainstorm ideas that will get them out of poverty
  - teach, teach, teach

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

## Community Engagement



# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

As indicated in the bar graph, the managers of Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) programs in Windsor-Essex reported the following:

*Strengths:*

- encourage staff involvement in community poverty reduction activities
- update relevant community agencies regularly about LBS programs
- improve the community information and referral protocol
- participate in professional development opportunities with community organizations
- up-to-date on community poverty reduction strategies

*Have capacity and need to act or need help:*

- understand the community Poverty Reduction Assessment Tool
- would participate in the Community Self Assessment Tool

1. What can your agency currently do to support other agencies in becoming engaged within the community?

- share our resources
- encourage collaboration
- more networking (2)
- Windsor Public Library :
  - provide Bridges Out of Poverty training
  - provide Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program resources
  - provide Library resources

2. What support does your agency need to increase engagement in your community?

- additional funding (3)
- training and information sessions
- administration and Board support
- more time to communicate and meet with other agencies, to have a better understanding of what each agency can offer
- client referral update lists for people who need help
- have an updated inventory of everything that goes on within our community so that we can refer learners to the right agency

3. What cross agency professional development would assist in increasing community engagement related to serving learners/clients in poverty or poverty reduction?
- more free workshops for everyone not just LBS
  - offer something that would put all agencies on the same page
  - we would benefit from more low cost workshops that included many community agencies

***Analysis of Agency Self Assessment Tool and the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Self Assessment Tool***

The results of the Agency Self Assessment Tool and the LBS Self Assessment Tool were reviewed carefully by the project team for the purpose of developing the draft strategic plan. Question 1 included check lists where respondents were asked to identify if they were currently doing the activity, had the capacity to do the activity or needed help to do the activity. The responses were reviewed to determine what items would be included in the strategic plan. The responses to questions were reviewed to determine if responses were applicable to the project, outside of the scope of the project, or currently being addressed. Those items that were determined to be applicable to the project were reviewed for inclusion in the strategic plan.

## **Forum and Strategic Plan**

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### ***Development of Draft Strategic Plan***

The provincial survey results, the Agency Self Assessment Tool, the Literacy and Basic Skills Self Assessment Tool and the identified best practices were reviewed for the purposes of creating a strategic plan. The Strategic Plan was formatted in the same manner as the other materials and items were grouped according to individual action, program elements and community engagement. Timelines were suggested by the working group.

### ***Development of Forum Activities***

Discussion occurred throughout the project on what meaningful activities could be conducted at the Forum in order to give participants the opportunity to provide feedback and input into the final product. Members from the Pathway to Potential Roundtable were invited to participate in a panel presentation. The purpose of this was to link Pathway to Potential Roundtable activity to this project. Draft questions were provided to the panel members prior to the Forum.

Presentations were made to the participants as follows:

- keynote speaker on Windsor-Essex County's Poverty Reduction Strategy:
  - Adam Vasey, Pathway to Potential Coordinator
- Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction Project Overview
- introduction to the working session with the following information presented:
  - survey results
  - best practices
  - draft strategic plan

The following questions were developed to guide participants through the discussions in small groups with the specific purpose of identifying common recommendations for the strategic plan.

1. Brainstorming questions on presented strategic plan:
  - a) What works well in the strategic plan?
  - b) What would you add to the strategic plan?

- c) What would you remove from the strategic plan?
  - d) What are the barriers to successful implementation of the strategic plan?
  - e) How would you change the plan to address these barriers?
2. From your brainstorming session, what are your top 5 recommendations from your table with respect to the strategic plan?
  3. What are the common recommendations?

### ***Feedback on Draft Strategic Plan***

Worksheets submitted by participants at the forum were collected and all information was summarized. The information collected was reviewed and the top recommendations were identified. The top recommendations were then reviewed and grouped under the following titles:

- Occurring or Included in Strategic Plan
- Out of the Scope of the Project
- Items to be Addressed by Steering Committee

### **Common Top Recommendations**

1. Occurring or Included in Strategic Plan
  - How to get information out and still do own work (211) work and promote
  - Include Canadian Mental Health Association and addictions, etc.
  - More information to front line staff, how to spot people with literacy issues
  - Bring media to the table (get the word out, educate, de-stigmatize)
  - Include health, financial literacy (more than reading)
  - Bridges Out of Poverty – continue and add to curriculum, keep motivation going
  - Success – train the trainer model
  - Statistics - data driven decision making
  - Listen to and hear people living in poverty
  - Enhanced collaboration and networking (case conferencing)
  - After hour programming
  - Standardize consent form (FIPPA – Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act)
  - Permanent cross sector committee (sustainability)

2. Out of the Scope of the Project

- Tri-County Literacy Network (TCLN) - coordinate, take show on the road (good stuff)
- Take to private sector
- TCLN - take lead on community outreach
- Have Employment Insurance/feds part of strategic plan
- Encourage workers to do on their own time; compensate for compassionate fatigue etc.
- Involve employers and Ministry of Education
- Common assessment tools (serving people quicker)
- Target funders for training
- Lobby for stable funding

3. Items to be Addressed by Steering Committee

- What does annual mean? Etc. (more specific timelines)

***Development of Final Strategic Plan***

The common top recommendations were considered and the draft strategic plan was revised accordingly by the workgroup. It was then presented to the Advisory Committee for their final review. The final strategic plan is Appendix 9 in this document.

## **Conclusion**

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The project was designed to improve the capacity for Windsor-Essex Ontario Works and the Tri-County Literacy Network to work together to more effectively work with people living in poverty. Key deliverables in the project were to: research the topic of adult literacy and poverty reduction, complete a provincial survey of practices, provide a professional development activity for Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS), Employment Ontario (EO) and Ontario Works (OW) staff; develop a one pager of best practices that included web links; develop an LBS self assessment tool for field testing; hold a forum for EO and OW and other invited community groups; and develop a strategic plan. As the project progressed it was decided that the LBS self assessment tool would be adapted to create an agency self assessment tool that would be field tested with community agencies participating in the project. Additionally, it was decided that a list of carefully selected references would be included on the best practices one-pager.

All deliverables as described were successfully met. The response from individuals representing all involved agencies was extremely positive and a new energy has been created. Those involved in the workshop and forum saw value in the activities and look forward to continued collaborative work on this topic. The workshop *Bridges Out of Poverty* presented by Jodi Pfarr had a significant impact on the individuals who attended the workshop. Additional *Bridges* training has been requested by the great majority of attendees.

The concept developed for the best practices one pager turned out to be an effective framework for all project work. The headings of Individual Action, Program Elements and Community Engagement provided direction and became effective focal points for the entire project. The descriptions of each heading provided clear expectations for action. Discussion and suggested action was more meaningful and purposeful when it occurred within an identified heading. Tasks became more manageable and less overwhelming and confusing when broken down into these distinct areas, allowing for a practical strategic plan to be developed.

The work done throughout the term of this project was assessed by an independent evaluator. The success of the project in meeting identified objectives was noted by the evaluator. The executive summary and recommendations from this report are included

in Appendix 11. Key comments from the report are included here as evidence of the success of this project in meeting the identified goals:

- “The project made significant progress on the overarching Tri-County Literacy Network objective of improving the capacity for Windsor-Essex Ontario Works and the Tri-County Literacy Network to work together to more effectively work with people living in poverty.”
- “The project also made progress on its intentions to enhance relationships and increase collaboration.”
- “The project developed a model for building capacity to address the needs of people living in poverty that is transferable to other agencies.”

It was essential that the project met the three main funding priorities of the Employment Ontario Network Development Fund by:

- developing strategies and sensitivities for working with clients in poverty
- identifying systemic changes that are necessary to improve services
- identifying effective Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) strategies and programs that address poverty

The evaluation provided evidence that the funding priorities were met as follows:

- Participant feedback clearly demonstrates success on the first outcome, as evidenced not only by survey feedback on the day of the Bridges Out of Poverty Workshop, but also by specific changes to work and relationships reported in a random sampling of interviews with people across the sector.
- The development and dissemination of the draft strategic plan addresses the second outcome. More can be done to move from identification of these changes to creating the necessary conditions for these changes to take place.
- The project also supports the third outcome. The research and output related to the Agency Self Assessment Tool and compilation of best practices have the potential to be both points of reference and practical tools for a range of LBS programs and other agencies.

The strategic plan provides recommendations for future work and activity that builds on the intent and accomplishments of this project. It provides an opportunity for

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

continued improvement in the ability of Windsor-Essex Ontario Works and the Tri-County Literacy Network to work together to more effectively work with people living in poverty. There is recognition of the importance to the community of the work started by this project and a desire to continue to work towards established goals. The activities that do not require additional funding identified in the strategic plan can and will happen. It is hoped that there will be additional opportunities for funding to ensure the remaining activities occur.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Provincial Survey
- Appendix 2: Provincial Survey - Sectors/  
Networks/Streams that Responded
- Appendix 3: Provincial Survey Responses  
(Sectors/Networks/Streams)
- Appendix 4: Provincial Survey - Agencies that  
Responded
- Appendix 5: Provincial Survey Responses  
(Agencies)
- Appendix 6: Best Practices One Pager
- Appendix 7: Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS)  
Agency Self Assessment Tool
- Appendix 8: Agency Self Assessment Tool
- Appendix 9: Strategic Plan
- Appendix 10: Forum Activity Synopsis
- Appendix 11: Evaluation Report: Executive  
Summary and Recommendations

## **Appendix 1: Provincial Survey**

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### ***Questions for Sectors/Networks/Streams:***

1. Please identify specific research relevant to poverty and/or poverty reduction that you have found helpful.
2. Please provide the names of specific resources and/or curriculum materials related to poverty that you have found that might be useful in an LBS (Literacy and Basic Skills) classroom.
3. Are there practices that you have established with OW (Ontario Works) that have been productive in working with learners in poverty?
4. Is there other information related to delivering programs to learners in poverty that you would like to share?

### ***Questions for Networks to forward to Agencies:***

1. Does your agency have a specific program in place to address poverty and/or poverty reduction? If yes, please provide the name of a contact and contact information, and a brief summary of the program(s).
2. Have you identified strategies that have proven effective in helping learners overcome poverty or the challenges of living in poverty? If yes, please provide the name of a contact and contact information, and a brief summary of the strategies.
3. Has your agency identified barriers to providing programs and services to those identified as living in poverty? If so, please provide the name of a contact and contact information, and identify the barriers and any strategies you have developed for addressing those barriers.
4. Are you aware of any other poverty reduction strategies in your community? If yes, please identify them and provide any contact information you may have.

**TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK**  
*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

5. Does your agency have a self assessment tool related to servicing learners living in poverty? If you are prepared to share this document, please forward to the Tri-County Literacy Network.
6. Are there practices that you have established with OW that have been productive in working with learners in poverty?
7. Is there other information related to delivering programs to learners in poverty that you would like to share?

## **Appendix 2: Provincial Survey - Sectors/Networks/Streams that Responded**

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*Responses were received from:*

- Community Literacy of Ontario
- Fleming College
- College Sector
- Literacy Link Eastern Ontario
- Literacy Link South Central
- The Mid North Network for Adult Learning
- Peel-Halton-Dufferin Adult Learning Network

### **Appendix 3: Provincial Survey Responses (Sectors/ Networks/Streams) - recorded as submitted**

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1. Please identify specific research relevant to poverty and/or poverty reduction that you have found helpful.
  - 1 No response
  - Ontario poverty reduction strategy
  - Local social planning councils
  - Ontario social planning council
  - Canadian Council of Social Development: <http://www.ccsd.ca/>
  - Two Books:
    - 1) The Persistence of Poverty by Charles H. Karelis
    - 2) Bridges out of Poverty by Ruby Payne
  - The work of Campaign 2000; research coming out of Public Health
  - I don't recall any research at this moment
  
2. Please provide the names of specific resources and/or curriculum materials related to poverty that you have found that might be useful in a Literacy and Basic Skills classroom.
  - 4 No responses
  - Budgeting and financial planning resources – both print and online
  - I'm not aware of any related to poverty
  - Knowing your rights – as a tenant, to Employment Insurance (E.I.), to OW, etc.
  
3. Are there practices that you have established with Ontario Works (OW) that have been productive in working with learners in poverty?
  - 5 No responses
  - Other than sharing/splitting costs of transportation and child care, nothing comes to mind
  - We have two programs with Ontario Works in Peel. The first is literacy screening and the second is the provision of Psycho-Educational Assessments for OW learners with suspected learning disabilities.

4. Is there other information related to delivering programs to learners in poverty that you would like to share?
- 4 No responses
  - Social planning council of Toronto: <http://socialplanningtoronto.org>
  - Plain language info on affordable housing, daycare, E.I. rights, OW, food banks, etc.
  - Daily bread food bank – has some good training programs
  - Be aware of other services in your community that can address the non-academic needs of your students. All areas, for instance, have a community legal clinic that can help address many issues of poverty.
  - We find that many of the learners come to programs without having eaten breakfast. This impacts their ability to concentrate. Often agencies will provide snacks when possible.

## **Appendix 4: Provincial Survey - Agencies that Responded**

Responses were received from:

- The Livingstone Center (Literacy Link South Central region)
- The Canadian Hearing Society
- Can Am Indian Friendship Centre
- CSDGR (Centre d'éducation Alternative)
- Durham College
- Formation Plus
- Georgian College
- Gravenhurst Adult Education and Training Centre
- Adult Basic Education Association, Hamilton (answered Agency questions)
- Haliburton Literacy
- King William Learning Centre (Hamilton)
- Hamilton Literacy Council
- Holy Angels L.C.
- Community Learning Centre Napanee
- Board of Directors of Kingston Literacy
- Lactiec
- Lambton Kent District School Board , Chatham
- Lambton Kent District School Board, Wallaceburg
- Northern
- Organization for Literacy in Lambton
- Muskoka Literacy
- Literacy Network Northeast (answered Agency questions)
- North Channel Literacy Council
- Ottawa Community Coalition for Literacy (OCCL) and all Literacy and Basic Skills agencies in the region (answered Agency questions)
- South Essex Community Council
- Literacy Council of South Temiskaming
- Alpha Thunder Bay
- The Literacy Group of Waterloo Region, Cambridge Office
- Unknown

## **Appendix 5: Provincial Survey Responses (Agencies) - recorded as submitted**

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1. Does your agency have a specific program in place to address poverty and/or poverty reduction?
  - 18 No responses
  - Not formally. Staff is aware of service providers and resources that may assist students in cases where poverty is a concern.
  - The NELP (North East Literacy Program) program at The Canadian Hearing Society does not have a specific program in place to address poverty. However, our agency works with other social service organizations and networks on poverty reduction initiatives.
  - O-GI is an employment readiness/preparation program.
  - B.E.S.T teaches those for whom literacy, numeracy, lack of computer skills are an impediment to employment
  - My literacy program does not directly have programs in place that address poverty in our area but I do sit on a committee called the Food Net which is made up of all the local area food banks and other agencies in the County of Haliburton.
  - No, but I belong to a poverty/homeless initiative with other agency community members
  - We are planning on starting an adult breakfast program within a few months. Most of our learners are below the poverty line and have health problems due to a poor diet and stress and often miss class for extended periods.
  - Unfortunately no
  - No. No specific program however it is certainly discussed and problem solved in the lesson plan.
  - We have a referral policy in place whereby we refer people to The Working Centre, Region of Waterloo
  - Literacy and Basic Skills/Academic Upgrading is a poverty-reduction program. All LBS agencies make referrals to community services.

Examples of agency initiative: ALSO cooks; Ottawa Catholic School Board Continuing Education has a food bank; learners at People, Words & Change and ALSO can participate in the Good Food Box offered in their location, Heartwood House and get cheap haircuts there; Assistive Devices Program helps with connections and applications.

2. Have you identified strategies that have proven effective in helping learners overcome poverty or the challenges of living in poverty?
  - 13 No responses
  - Any instruction related to life skills, essential skills or areas of self-esteem and empowerment are indirect strategies to support and facilitate the trek to independence, self-sufficiency (as a means to assist students in overcoming the challenges of poverty.)
  - The NELP program educates learners on numeracy, budgeting and occasionally invites guest speakers to present information on topics, such as credit counseling, financial management, banking. The NELP program works with the General Support Services program at The Canadian Hearing Society to assist learners with specific needs concerning living in poverty. These education sessions are provided in an accessible format for our learners. Information is presented in American Sign Language or Interpreting Services is provided. Our learners have reported that these sessions are helpful.
  - N/A employment -directed learning
  - We offer a workshop on family budgeting, but have we developed strategies – no.
  - Not specifically. Our staff/faculty help learners problem solve around some of the issues created by living in poverty but we haven't organized the strategies into anything formal.
  - As a literacy instructor I network with agencies like the "Social Services" branch of the local Salvation Army Church. I am aware of the services they provide (i.e. they will pay for a room in a local motel for 3 nights for someone seeking emergency shelter). I network with the local food bank to find out their "policies" about their services. I contact the CAS (Children's Aid Society) because they usually have staff who will work with "single moms" after they go home from the hospital. I ask any of my learners who are aware of support in our community to share this information. One of my learners (a single mom) who has 2 special needs children has had a great deal of support from

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

## *Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

different agencies and she shares this information via a presentation to the class about these resources. She also takes this presentation “on the road” because she has an information booth at the local Literacy Open House put on by the learners of the local community-based literacy council. I also encourage the learners to share school supplies with one another...any used binders, etc. are kept in a box in the classroom and people can “help themselves” to whatever they need! Interestingly enough... there’s often a plastic bag of used clothing that sometimes “appears” beside the supplies box and the items are available to anyone who might need them! Another support I offer is to keep in touch with the District Municipality of Community Services for Housing and I will encourage learners to obtain these forms and I assist them to complete them... because there is always a waiting list for Geared to Income Housing.

- I share any information that is provided to me from the Food Net Committee with all learners and also post information outside my door so that it is accessible to everyone who visits this building.
- Strategies are:
  - Advocating for the \$100 per month healthy food supplement per person on OW and ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program).
  - Working on increasing new Social Housing for people with low incomes.
  - Advocacy for changes to E.I. regulations.
- Yes, I collect clothing and created a lunch program to help poor students to have a meal a day and dress appropriate.
- No. We help people create budgets, help them look for affordable homes and network with other agencies, but nothing has been the definitive answer for all
- We have integrated budgeting into both our math and reading work. Learners read texts that deal with budgeting and smart shopping and use math questions that involve budgeting. Part of learners’ monthly practice is to draw up a budget and monitor it.
- We’ve had nutritionists come to address eating healthy on a tight budget when you already have health issues, especially diabetes.
- We have the training support funds for travel (\$0.39/km, bus passes, bus tickets) and partial childcare.
- OW provides transportation from outlying areas to our learners @ no charge- they do not need to be an OW client.

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

- We provide a lunch that costs \$1.00 per day, payable in \$ or exchange of service, like cleaning (our Board of Directors donates the \$ for this program).
  - Improving literacy skills for more employability is our main focus; improving independence with improved reading and writing skills is also a step in helping people function.
  - The strategies discussed with the learners in overcoming poverty are within their goal plan, for example upgrading their skills to obtain better employment. We also discuss ways to save money and learn budgeting concepts to generally manage their money. If we have a learner who is struggling with an excessive debt issue we will refer them to credit counseling.
3. Has your agency identified barriers to providing programs and services to those identified as living in poverty?
- 14 No responses
  - Yes. Absence of funds for day care, transportation costs, and other financial considerations. There are also links between poverty and health; poverty and education.....hence impacting self-esteem and the associated empowerment to overcome poverty issues.
  - The NELP program recognizes the need for accessibility of information and materials for its learners. Sign Language interpretation would make information accessible for greater understanding and create access to support programs and services in the community on poverty.
  - Aboriginal people are reluctant to access government services. They feel judged and misjudged by the workers – we deliver or accompany them on visits to provide a judgment free environment.
  - We have identified some barriers – convenient transportation, reliable childcare, need to be working to provide an income, competing priorities (family, work, legal, health). We don't have formal strategies, other than a transportation and childcare allowance that is available through our program funding. Our staff and faculty help learners to problem-solve as each situation arises.
  - Haliburton County is vast with outlying communities throughout. Child care and transportation can be a factor for anyone wanting to participate therefore we will offer to provide transportation and child care dollars to meet this need.

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

- Yes, we have identified barriers that prevent programs from being successful (poor attendance, distractions, sporadic employment, violent life styles, crime), but I don't understand the part of the question that asks for a name and contact information since this deals with barriers and not programs.
  - One of the strategies we have developed is to provide services in small centers, as many of the learners do not have the means to commute to the larger centres for programming. This has assisted to a certain extent with the transportation barrier.
  - A little: parking fees are paid; transportation from rural areas and child care support allowances are available.
  - Poor nutrition leads to a weak immune system and we are finding that we are losing learners to illness, hence the initiative to start a breakfast program for our learners.
  - No address therefore no social services - lives too far out from the centre (in the bush) to get in, we arrange a pick-up.
  - Lack of resources provided by core funder of LBS, MTCU. Barriers for learners include not having childcare, not having phone service, not having a family doctor, not having family support or any other kind of personal support network.
  - Transportation - Provision of taxi to class (limited dollars)
  - Childcare - Provision of on-site childcare program.
  - Most of our learners are very poor. All we can really do is provide bus tickets and keep a few loaves of bread in the freezer and have peanut butter and jam on hand for the days a learner cannot bring a lunch.
  - Perhaps social housing or waiting list therein. We've not done a lot of advocacy but have made mention at different networking conferences.
  - I cannot say we have seen any real barriers.
4. Are you aware of any other poverty reduction strategies in your community?
- 7 No Responses
  - Most recently there is a community group addressing the homeless issue and likely links to poverty. This is presently an interest of the Job Connect program which is one of a number of programs, under the umbrella of the Multi-Service Centre.

## TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

- No we are not aware of any other poverty reduction strategies within our community.
- Those in poverty receive direct support from Salvation Army, Health Babies, Healthy children and the Aboriginal Children Resource Centre.
- I'm not clear on the definition of 'poverty reduction strategies' – within our community we have breakfast, lunch, and after school programs for children/families affected by poverty, a community garden and cooking tips, health care, dental care, and employment programs to assist families living in poverty.
- Housing for anyone with weak incomes.
- No specific poverty reduction strategies – rather poverty mitigation strategies such as food banks, shelters, employment programs, emergency food and shelter
- Not at the moment.
- Living Rock – outreach to street youth, offer breakfast and lunch before they come to school.
- Food bank run by Salvation Army
- All of the learners know that: the municipality of Sarnia-Lambton (SL) has food basket programs, the Inn of the Good Shepherd has a \$10 food box program, the SL food bank, and the various locations in town that offer free meal programs.
- Prompt – Poverty Reduction of Muskoka Planning Team  
[www.thefamilyhelpnetwork.ca](http://www.thefamilyhelpnetwork.ca)
- There is a Poverty Action Coalition in the Timmins area.
- There are lots of services in Ottawa attempting to reduce poverty. We now have 211 which makes it easier for people to find services to help them with specific needs. Overbrook-Forbes Community Resource Centre is an excellent resource on anti-poverty issues.
- Ontario Works, Merio Centre, The Anchor Club, Club 90
- THRIVE Homelessness program-located within our agency although run by Youth and Family Resource Network of Windsor Essex.
- Our local Social Planning Council City of Cambridge has been very active in this field.
- No. I have never heard of an antipoverty reduction strategy in Temiskaming Shores.

5. Does your agency have a self assessment tool related to servicing learners living in poverty? If you are prepared to share this document, please forward to the Tri-County Literacy Network.
- 21 No responses
  - No formal tools. Familiarity with this specific client group affords the opportunity to identify special needs, based on assessment information.
  - Our agency does not have a self assessment tool related to servicing learners living in poverty.
  - Nothing has been created for that purpose
  - Not specifically for poverty.
  - Not aware of any tools at this time
  - Other than one for finances- training support, no we don't
  - No, we don't have a different assessment doc.
  - No. We do use a document called "Working Together" which is available in English and French at [www.occl.ca](http://www.occl.ca)
6. Are there practices that you have established with Ontario Works (OW) that have been productive in working with learners in poverty?
- 14 No responses
  - No we do not have any practices established with Ontario Works. However our program does contact Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program when assisting our learners with applying for funding Supports.
  - We communicate with Ontario Works and verify with them
  - I network weekly with the case workers from OW and keep them informed of any needs of the learners (either for school supplies) clothing suitable for a "job interview", etc.
  - In Wallaceburg, we do Designing Your Future (DYF) workshops. This reduces the fear factor of coming to a Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program on their own.
  - No specific practices. We are in frequent contact with OW caseworkers regarding their clients and our learners and have good relations with them.
  - Not at this time
  - Sharing the costs of travel and childcare, getting them ready by providing new clothes, haircuts, etc.

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

- Working partnerships between LBS and OW in Ottawa. OCCL does regular outreach with OW staff and participates in information fairs for OW staff, etc. OCCL circulates Employment Development Initiatives from OW to LBS agencies.
  - Algonquin College offers Job Readiness Training and Focus for Change.
  - Ensuring transportation is provided for clients needing it
  - Occasional contact to help someone with really low literacy levels.
  - No specific practices
7. Is there other information related to delivering programs to learners in poverty that you would like to share?
- 12 No responses
  - Yes. In follow-up to our phone conversation, I offer the following information.
    - Poverty impacts different sectors and is quite diversified as found in the “working poor”, unemployed, disadvantaged and homeless groups. Each is specific with multi-needs, within the realm of poverty.
    - Poverty is a complex issue- as per our phone conversation.
    - Hosting literacy programs in soup kitchens and shelters may be a focus.
    - Peer tutoring is a consideration to validate involvement and enhance comfort level.
    - Basic needs (Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs) need to be addressed first, prior to consideration of other needs.
    - Snacks provided to students, or student achievement/recognition identified through food vouchers are practical and well received and appreciated by students in class.
    - Those in poverty often face circumstances /barriers/limits that prevent the “commitment” that is so much required for learning and literacy program involvement. Short term involvement should be a consideration; perhaps in the form of introductory “workshops”.
    - Consideration might be given to hosting a literacy program in a low-income/subsidized housing unit, so it is “on-site” and available for potential learners. The atmosphere should be that of a “drop-in” centre.
    - Literacy programs for those in poverty need to be labeled differently, to

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

attract and secure valid commitment from students. Specific branding is essential in this regard.

- For the purpose of your project you may want to hold a focus group for those that are reflective of your client group (the poor); to see what is valued by them. Provide lunch.
- The Canadian Hearing Society provides a variety of programs on counseling, education, accessibility and hearing health care. These programs and services work collaboratively to best assist our consumers. We often refer learners to one of our other support programs that may be of benefit to them.
- We try not to create a perception of distance between learners and ourselves. We don't out-dress them- we ask them to share lunch with us and talk with them on a one to one basis
- Formal structure around how to help learners living in poverty would be appreciated!
- Have no information for the survey, I don't know of materials, I haven't used research except through immediate on line searches. What I can share with you is that in Hamilton we have the Poverty Roundtable which has been established to alleviate poverty. What is unfortunate is that literacy was not asked to sit at that table.
- I have a wide range of short courses that include; Cooking, and budgeting; are very basic, open to anyone who wishes to participate and totally free.
- Have created a strong network with community agencies and services to link learners based on their individual needs.
- No for now
- I am responding to this email in my role as President of the Board of Directors of Kingston Literacy. The City of Kingston is an active participant in the Community Roundtable on Poverty Reduction and supports the 25 in 5 program initiatives (reduce poverty by 25% in 5 years). Kingston Literacy has been part of the Community Roundtable since its inception 18 months ago. The members of the Roundtable are being consulted on the impact of decisions on the poorest in our community. Kingston Literacy has a representative on the Roundtable.

## TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

- Just that wealth needs to be redistributed so all can live a safe and healthy life.
- I look forward to hearing more about the project.
- Literacy and Basic Skills agencies do a lot of advocacy on behalf of individual learners. Agencies don't emphasize the issue of poverty in the classroom or during tutoring.
- No. This agency has never had a registered learner living in poverty. I will be looking forward to your study's results to be prepared for future reference.
- Our local food bank here in Cambridge is very proactive in assisting those living in poverty; besides providing food it does a number of programs.
- Living in poverty often means that there are other issues affecting the ability to learn. These range from mental health issues, health issues, and often we see a lack of motivation to change a situation.

Appendix 6 Best Practices One Pager

## Best Practices for Linking Adult Learning/ Literacy to Poverty Reduction

<b>Individual Action</b> What you can do.	<p><b>INDIVIDUAL ACTION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become empowered in understanding and working with poverty and poverty reduction strategies</li> <li>• Increase self awareness of the impact of poverty on learners/clients</li> <li>• Increase self awareness of poverty reduction practices within your community and beyond your community</li> <li>• Become involved by collaborating with others on issues related to poverty and poverty reduction at the individual, program, or community level</li> <li>• Demonstrate strong problem solving, relationship building and communication skills in LBS classrooms</li> </ul>
<b>Program Elements</b> What LBS programs can include in program delivery to assist and support learners/clients to move out of poverty.	<p><b>PROGRAM ELEMENTS – INCREASED LITERACY DECREASES POVERTY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide instructors with professional development in communication, relationship building and problem solving skills for personal growth and for classroom instruction</li> <li>• Establish a mentorship/support system program for learners/clients</li> <li>• Include instruction on problem solving skills, communication skills and relationship building</li> <li>• Include instruction on financial literacy</li> <li>• Provide learners with self-advocacy training and information on civic engagement</li> <li>• Include instruction on health literacy</li> <li>• Include instruction on essential skills training and accessing community resources</li> <li>• Include learning activities that strengthen parenting skills</li> <li>• Link to and support family literacy programs (Best Start Committee)</li> <li>• Consider Programmatic Interventions such as those outlined by Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement</li> <li>• Access training support available for transportation and childcare – MTCU</li> <li>• Use a self-sufficiency evaluation matrix to assess learners</li> <li>• Ensure Local Coordination and Planning Annual Work Plans address these program elements</li> <li>• Program Self Assessment Tool – Tri-County Literacy Network</li> </ul>
<b>Community Engagement</b> How your agency can engage with others in the community to increase knowledge of LBS programs and strengthen LBS program support for people's next steps.	<p><b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become involved with community poverty reduction activity (Windsor-Essex Pathway to Potential Project)</li> <li>• Increase community knowledge of LBS programs</li> <li>• Increase coordination between LBS Programs, Tri-County Literacy Network and community organizations in terms of strengthening information &amp; referral protocol</li> <li>• Provide joint professional development opportunities to LBS programs and community organizations (i.e. Getting Connected)</li> <li>• Community Self Assessment Tool – LBS agencies understand the community tool and participate as appropriate</li> </ul>

**All established practices and outcomes must be evaluated and updated on a continual basis.**

## Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction – Select LBS Resources

### INDIVIDUAL ACTION

- [www.ahaprocess.com](http://www.ahaprocess.com) — Includes information on Ruby Payne's Bridges Out of Poverty and Understanding Poverty.
- [www.pathwaytopotential.ca](http://www.pathwaytopotential.ca) — Provides access to the Windsor-Essex Poverty Reduction Strategy that focuses on five key areas: affordable housing, childcare/early learning, income support, health, and education/skills training. Provides links to other local and provincial resources.
- [www.endcanadianpoverty.ca](http://www.endcanadianpoverty.ca) — Provides information on food banks, housing supports and other resources for those living in poverty.
- <http://25in5.ca> — 25-in-5: Network for Poverty Reduction is a multi-sectoral network comprised of more than 100 provincial and Toronto-based organizations and individuals working on eliminating poverty. Their goal is to reduce poverty in Ontario by 25% in 5 years and 50% in 10 years. Of particular interest is the information about people living in poverty (disabled, seniors, children, etc.) and the recommended elements of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Plan.
- [www.gov.mb.ca](http://www.gov.mb.ca) — Outlines the Province of Manitoba's adult learning, literacy and poverty reduction programs.
- [www.cprn.org](http://www.cprn.org) — The Canadian Policy Research Network provides information on social policy
- [www.povertywatchontario.ca](http://www.povertywatchontario.ca) — Poverty Watch Ontario is an initiative of the Social Planning Network of Ontario and serves as an information resource to individuals and groups by maintaining a calendar of local events and meetings on poverty reduction and reporting on as many of these meetings as possible.
- [www.policyalternatives.ca](http://www.policyalternatives.ca) — The CCPA is an independent, non-partisan research institute concerned with issues of social and economic justice.
- [www.npr.org/programs/specialspoll/poverty/poll.html](http://www.npr.org/programs/specialspoll/poverty/poll.html) — Personal Awareness Tool: An American based survey on poverty for individuals to review

### PROGRAM ELEMENTS

- [http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/Poverty\\_Reduction\\_GL\\_042209.pdf](http://tamarackcommunity.ca/downloads/Poverty_Reduction_GL_042209.pdf) — Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement is committed to reducing poverty in communities using a comprehensive approach. Of particular interest are the Programmatic Interventions found in the Compendium of Poverty Reduction Strategies and Frameworks.
- <http://www.ccl-cca.ca/CCL/Reports/HealthLiteracy.htm> and <http://www.cpha.ca/en/programs.aspx> — Provides information/resources on health literacy.
- <http://www.fcac-acfc.gc.ca/eng/default.asp> and <http://www.loeccd.org> — Provides information/resources on financial literacy.
- [www.stephencovey.com](http://www.stephencovey.com) and [www.ahaprocess.com](http://www.ahaprocess.com) — Provides information on relationship building.
- [www.buildingivablecommunities.org](http://www.buildingivablecommunities.org) — Provides access to a self-sufficiency evaluation matrix in the Self-Sufficiency Action Group Final Report.
- Sample Ontario programs that support literacy training and poverty reduction:
  - <http://library.nald.ca/research/browse/series?name=Get+Set+Learn> — The National Adult Literacy Database offers a complete curriculum package, Get Set Learn: Everything You Need to Run a Family Literacy Program (Project Read) for sharing with literacy and community agencies.
  - <http://focus.alc.blogspot.com> — Provides information on F.O.C.U.S. — Finding/Organizing/Challenging/Understanding Self – Owen Sound Adult Learning Centre, Grey-Bruce County. Designed to draw on learners'/clients' resources and knowledge to develop/improve learning attitudes, values and skills for sustainable employment.
  - [www.tredvictor.org/employment\\_training](http://www.tredvictor.org/employment_training) — The Back to Basics program is a drop in literacy program located in a homeless shelter.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- [www.211WindsorEssex.ca](http://www.211WindsorEssex.ca) — A directory of over 3000 community social, health and government services. Provides access to Pathway to Potential
- [Windsor-Essex Poverty Reduction Strategy](http://www.windsor-essex.ca)
- [www.tamarackcommunity.ca](http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca) — Tamarack: An Institute for Community Engagement is committed to reducing poverty in communities using a comprehensive approach. Links to the poverty reduction strategies of 15 communities.
- <http://www.theharwoodinstitute.org/index.php?H=SI/StartTool/ExerciseAction/StartTool/Exercise/Tool> [id112222/project\\_id112219/exercise\\_id113449](http://www.theharwoodinstitute.org/index.php?H=SI/StartTool/ExerciseAction/StartTool/Exercise/Tool) — The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation is an American based non-profit, non-partisan organization that seeks to spark fundamental change and authentic hope in American public life, and provides a U.S. based community assessment. Useful community assessment tools can be found on this website.

**Appendix 7 Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Agency Self Assessment Tool**

<b>Individual Action Within Program</b>	Currently doing this.	Have the capacity to do this but currently are not.	Need support to do this.
Does your agency take action to increase staff awareness of the impact of poverty on learners/ clients?			
Does your agency have plans to ensure all staff receive <i>Bridges Out of Poverty</i> training or information?			
Does your agency take action to make staff aware of poverty reduction practices within the local community and beyond?			
Does your agency encourage individuals to become involved in, and collaborate with others on, issues related to poverty and poverty reduction?			
Does your agency demonstrate that it values staff with strong problem solving skills in LBS classrooms?			
Does your agency assist staff to empower learners/clients to understand their role in society in regards to civic participation?			
Does your agency demonstrate that it values staff who demonstrate strong relationship building skills in LBS classrooms?			
Does your agency demonstrate that it values staff who can demonstrate strong communication skills in LBS classrooms?			
Would you require staff to complete a personal self assessment tool (i.e. <a href="http://www.npr.org/programs/specials/poll/poverty/poll.html">www.npr.org/programs/specials/poll/poverty/poll.html</a> ) to determine their sensitization to poverty?			

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

What can your agency do to support the individual action of staff within programs to understand and work with poverty and poverty reduction strategies?

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What support does your agency need in order to empower the individual actions of staff within the program to understand and work with poverty and poverty reduction strategies?

--

What professional development can be provided to empower staff within the program to understand and work with poverty and poverty reduction strategies?

--

<b>Program Elements</b>	Currently doing this.	Have the capacity to do this but currently are not.	Need support to do this.
Are instructors provided with professional development in communication skills for personal growth and for classroom instruction?			
Are instructors provided with professional development in relationship building for personal growth and for classroom instruction?			
Are instructors provided with professional development in problem solving skills for personal growth and for classroom instruction?			
Is there an established mentorship program for learners/ clients?			

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

Has instruction in problem solving skills been included in the program?			
Has instruction in relationship building been included in the program?			
Has instruction in financial literacy been included in the program?			
Has instruction in health literacy been included in the program?			
Have learners received self-advocacy training and information on how to become politically engaged?			
Is essential skills training included in the program?			
Do all staff have up-to-date information on community resources (food banks, homeless shelters, 211, etc.) for learners/clients?			
Is instruction provided in how to access community resources?			
Do staff remain current in strategies to improve literacy training programs?			
Do staff remain current in program interventions to improve poverty reduction?			
Is Training Support from Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities available within your program for transportation and childcare?			
Does the program manager annually complete the Program Self Assessment Tool?			
Does your agency participate in the Local Coordination and Planning Annual Work Plan process to ensure these program elements are addressed?			

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

What can your agency do to support other agencies in including program elements that assist and support learners/clients to move out of poverty?			
What support does your agency need in order to include these program elements that assist and support learners/clients to move out of poverty?			
What professional development can be provided to support your agency in providing programs that assist and support learners/clients to move out of poverty?			
<b>Community Engagement</b>	<b>Currently doing this.</b>	<b>Have the capacity to do this but currently are not.</b>	<b>Need support to do this.</b>
Does your agency encourage staff to become involved with community poverty reduction activities?			
Are all relevant community agencies updated regularly about your Literacy and Basic Skills programs?			
Does your agency participate in coordinated activities designed to improve the community information and referral protocol?			
Does your agency regularly participate in professional development opportunities that include community organizations?			
Is your agency up to date on the poverty reduction strategies of your community?			

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

Does your agency have an understanding of the Poverty Reduction Assessment Tool used within your community?			
Would your agency participate in the Community Self Assessment Tool when developed and as appropriate?			
What can your agency currently do to support other agencies in becoming engaged within the community?			
What support does your agency need to increase engagement in your community?			
What cross agency professional development would assist in increasing community engagement related to serving learners/clients in poverty or poverty reduction?			

## Appendix 8: Agency Self Assessment Tool

<b>Individual Action Within Agency</b>	Currently doing this.	Have the capacity to do this but currently are not.	Need support to do this.
Does your agency take action to increase staff awareness of the impact of poverty on clients?			
Does your agency have plans to ensure all staff receive <i>Bridges Out of Poverty</i> training or information?			
Does your agency take action to make staff aware of poverty reduction practices within the local community and beyond?			
Does your agency become involved in, and collaborate with others on, issues related to poverty and poverty reduction?			
Does your agency demonstrate that it values staff with strong problem solving skills?			
Does your agency demonstrate it values staff with strong communication skills?			
Does your agency demonstrate it values staff with strong relationship building skills?			
Does your agency demonstrate it values the importance of Literacy and Basic Skills training as an important poverty reduction strategy?			
Would you require staff to complete a personal self assessment tool (i.e. <a href="http://www.npr.org/programs/specials/poll/poverty/poll.html">www.npr.org/programs/specials/poll/poverty/poll.html</a> ) to determine their sensitization to poverty?			
Do all staff have up-to-date information on community resources (food banks, homeless shelters, 211, etc.) for learners/clients?			

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

What can your agency do to support the individual action of staff within other agencies to understand and work with poverty and poverty reduction strategies?

What support does your agency need in order to empower the individual actions of staff within the agency to understand and work with poverty and poverty reduction strategies?

What professional development would be beneficial in order to empower staff within the agency to understand and work with poverty and poverty reduction strategies?

<b>Community Engagement</b>	Currently doing this.	Have the capacity to do this but currently are not.	Need support to do this.
Does your agency encourage staff to become involved with community poverty reduction activities?			
Are relevant community agencies updated regularly about your agency?			
Does your agency participate in coordinated activities designed to improve the community information and referral protocol?			
Does your agency regularly participate in professional development opportunities that include community organizations?			
Is your agency up to date on the poverty reduction strategies of your community?			

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

Does your agency have an understanding of the work of the Poverty Reduction Roundtable within your community?			
Would your agency participate in the Community Self Assessment Tool when developed and as appropriate?			
What can your agency currently do to support other agencies in becoming engaged within the community?			
What support does your agency need to increase community engagement?			
What cross agency professional development would assist in increasing community engagement related to serving learners/clients in poverty or poverty reduction?			

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction

## Appendix 9 Strategic Plan

	Responsibility	Action Item	Timelines	Details
<b>Individual Action</b>	Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Agencies  City of Windsor – Ontario Works (OW)  Local Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU)	Follow up on <i>Bridges Out of Poverty</i> training	Immediate and Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff review information in <i>Bridges Out of Poverty</i> workbooks and the Best Practices handout</li> <li>Opportunities for staff discussion on poverty reduction are provided</li> <li>Offer training programs such as the Ministry of Community &amp; Social Services’ “SAIL” program (Supportive Approaches to Innovative Learning) that discusses ‘Hidden Class Rules’ from the <i>Bridges</i> model when possible (OW)</li> </ul>
		Encourage personal growth of staff	Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff complete a personal self assessment tool</li> <li>Staff develop a personal growth plan</li> <li>Practices such as asking staff to examine their goals &amp; development plans each year as part of their performance appraisal (OW) is encouraged</li> <li>Continue or start to encourage staff to participate in relevant community committees (i.e. Homeless Coalition)</li> </ul>
		Attend <i>Bridges Out of Poverty</i> training	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure all within organization have the opportunity to attend <i>Bridges Out of Poverty</i> training</li> <li>Staff have the opportunity to attend day 2 of the training</li> </ul>

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

<b>Program Elements</b>	Tri-County Literacy Network	Search for funding opportunities and complete funding applications for continued work in the area of adult literacy and poverty reduction	Immediate and Ongoing	Discuss with the Tri-County Literacy Network Board, Project Advisory Committee and Windsor-Essex LBS Local Planning and Coordination (LPC) committee Funds could be used for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development</li> <li>• Curriculum development</li> </ul>
		Schedule professional development activities for LBS instructors - dependent on funding and as discussed at LPC	Ongoing	Professional development for personal growth and classroom instruction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication Skills</li> <li>• Relationship Building</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> <li>• Financial Literacy</li> <li>• Health Literacy</li> <li>• Mental Health Issues</li> <li>• Addiction Information</li> <li>• Mentoring program development</li> <li>• Circles program</li> </ul>
		Research and develop curriculum designed to support instruction on skills required to assist learners in moving out of poverty - dependent on funding and as discussed at LPC	Ongoing	Curriculum to be developed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication Skills</li> <li>• Relationship Building</li> <li>• Problem Solving</li> <li>• Self -advocacy Training</li> <li>• Personal Finances</li> <li>• Healthy Living</li> <li>• Parenting Skills</li> <li>• Accessing Community Supports</li> </ul>
		Encourage inclusion of topics designed to increase poverty reduction in the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum	Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss with MTCU Field Consultant and possible letter from Tri-County Literacy Network if appropriate</li> <li>• Feedback from agencies participating in field testing</li> </ul>
		Complete LBS Agency Self Assessment Tool and include in program evaluation	Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review results at Local Planning and Coordination (LPC) Meetings</li> <li>• Consider information gained in planning annual activities</li> </ul>

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

<b>Community Engagement</b>	Tri-County Literacy Network Ontario Works Local MTCU	Increase communication between agencies	Annual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule meeting on an annual basis with Ontario Works, MTCU, and LBS Agency management staff to review:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Referral protocol</li> <li>- 211 information updates</li> <li>- Identification of literacy issues</li> <li>- Release and sharing of information</li> <li>- Use of consent forms in current use</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Continue regularly scheduled inter-agency meetings that occur</li> </ul>
		Provide joint professional development and networking opportunities	Annual – dependent on funding and other priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schedule professional development and networking opportunities on an annual basis with Ontario Works, Employment Ontario, and LBS Agency staff (i.e. Getting Connected - has been organized by Tri-County Literacy Network since 2006 and Ontario Works invites other agency staff to participate in their training when feasible).</li> <li>- Compassion Fatigue identified as a high priority topic (Consider Jane Bradley ) <a href="http://www.keystocompassionfatigue.com/about.html">http://www.keystocompassionfatigue.com/about.html</a> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider use of a Train the Trainer model</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Send staff to training opportunities offered by other agencies when possible</li> </ul>

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

		Search for funding opportunities	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain funding to plan professional development and networking opportunities</li> </ul>
		Provide job shadowing opportunities and/or visits to other agencies to gain information about programs, referrals etc.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide LBS, OW and MTCU staff with the opportunity to job shadow staff in other agencies and/or visit other agencies to gain information about programs, referrals etc.</li> </ul>
	Tri-County Literacy Network	Gain increased knowledge of local community organizations	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss at LPC meetings and could invite community organizations to LPC meetings               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poverty Reduction Roundtable</li> <li>- Learning Disabilities Association</li> <li>- Homeless Coalition</li> <li>- Local MTCU staff</li> <li>- City of Windsor                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- OW</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Canadian Mental Health Association</li> <li>- Others to be determined</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

	City of Windsor - OW Local MTCU	Gain increased knowledge of adult literacy issues and LBS programs	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite the Tri-County Literacy Network Executive Director or representative to meet with staff</li> <li>• Clarify understanding of time required to advance between LBS levels</li> <li>• Ensure that basic necessities are made available to learners in LBS classes</li> <li>• Reinforce value of Literacy and Basic Skills training with staff</li> </ul>
	Poverty Reduction Roundtable	Incorporate adult literacy into education committee	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include adult literacy issues in local work in reducing poverty</li> <li>• Ensure regular communication to adult literacy providers</li> <li>• Facilitate opportunities for increased cooperation between community organizations involved in increasing community literacy</li> </ul>
		Educate on poverty reduction strategies	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information on poverty reduction strategies that are relevant to adult literacy</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for community engagement activities</li> </ul>
	Local MTCU office	Schedule agency meetings	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information on Employment Ontario activity to LBS, City Of Windsor - OW, and MTCU managers</li> <li>• Build relationships within partner MTCU agencies</li> </ul>

## Appendix 10 Forum Activity Synopsis

### *Table Worksheets – Summary – recorded as submitted*

#### 1. Strengths

- Activities at all levels
  - both personal and collective responsibility
- Timelines are identified – there are next steps
- Agencies communicate regularly to share information
- Identifies community involvement
- Each group has responsibility centres – clearly indicates who’s doing what
- It’s on paper
- Identifies mentoring
- Job shadowing opportunities
- Increased communication/collaboration among agencies
- Attention throughout document paid to personal/professional development and education for staff
  - community involvement
- # of contributors (levels of government)
- Getting Ontario Works (OW) to understand literacy program on a regular basis
- Increase knowledge of community organizations
- Fact that there is communication between agencies
- Good resources – plan on doing
- Inclusion of all levels of government agencies
- Broken down – 3 components - good
- Looks fine, good intentions of communication and meetings

#### 2. Add to Plan

- Enhanced collaboration to effectively utilize available seats (e.g. some have wait lists, others have capacity)
- Location of programming – identify that programs need to be at accessible locations – transportation issues/bus routes – regional transportation between county and city
- County programming

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

- Professional development (PD) in agencies with respect to barriers such as addictions, mental health issues - assessments – how to adjust program to reflect individual needs – training (Canadian Mental Health Association)
- Acknowledgement of agency challenges
- ‘Bridges Out of Poverty’ philosophy incorporated into agency mission statements/mandates
- Who initiates individualized training for agencies?
- Is there a system for ensuring this is sustained?
- Canadian Mental Health Association needs to be included in strategic plan – mental health & addictions issues
- More private sector involvement e.g. Human Resources professionals association
- Direct outreach from TCLN (Tri-County Literacy Network) to employment program and service providers (b/c more experience with situational poverty)
- Add workforce preparation to curriculum to be developed (TCLN)
- Add more labour market information to curriculum to be developed (Tri-County Literacy Network)
- More opportunity for input from people with lived experiences with literacy
- Pathway to Potential could facilitate this process
- Use 211 to coordinate collection of information into comprehensive package/reference guide
- Responsibilities are delegated to specific sectors. Gives deliverables to focus on.
- Would like to see an actual date. A target date for completion.
- Employment Insurance (E.I.) needs to get involved so we can get people in to programs before their funding runs out.
- Change job shadowing to exposure to different agencies
- Change the word ‘personal growth’ to ‘professional growth’
- Encourage staff to participate in relevant community agencies. Reduce some workload to make this possible (compassionate fatigue and vicarious trauma).
- The fact that when we go back to the agencies we go back to the day to day work. The links we have fall away.
- Change Windsor’s image as unemployment capital
- We need a set of specific channels to keep the discussion alive
- Have media come to the table to see what is being done

- Involvement of private sector
  - Other stakeholders
  - Broader than just Ontario Works - e.g. early years, health unit
  - Training volunteers - resources
  - Services for newcomers ex. Translation
  - More capacity for 'mature' clients and disabilities
  - Include people living in poverty in plan
  - More information needs to be available for implementation - outcomes hoped for from action plan
3. Remove From Plan
- It's all good!
  - N-O-T-H-I-N-G
  - job shadowing may not be realistic
  - Hard to say, have not seen it in action
  - Need to implement first before we can see what works and what does not
4. Barriers (resources)
- time (limited for # of activities)
  - funding
  - number of volunteers/people required (e.g. mentorship)
  - workload/burnout
  - staffing
  - everyone wants to make a difference, but get overwhelmed
  - freedom of information – consents to release information required for true collaboration/case conferencing
  - prioritization of items in plan
  - implementing training and execution of what you have learned – not paying 'lip service' to what you have learned
  - \$ funding
  - Finding volunteers that will commit and stay
  - Timeline of implementation, is it 5 yr/10 yr/? Plan
  - Short and long term goals
  - Insufficient funds for Tri-County Literacy Network (TCLN)

5. Plan to Address Barriers

- Realistic expectations
- Prioritize activities
- If you expect to do it all, nothing will get done
- On-going evaluations required
- Use information gathered to advocate for appropriate level of resourcing/\$
- Targeting funders with training in terms they understand, relate it to other areas they fund (health, policing)
- Assessment tool
- Matrix for success
- Train the trainer opportunities
- Need statistics to support your cause (measure outcomes to prove your staff are overworked via percentages)
- Involving people living in poverty to these training sessions, at least one person per table
- Listen to everyone, not just hear
- People on front lines need more resources/ education on how to identify literacy problems
- Staff training on literacy/signs of deficient literacy

6. Top 5 Recommendations

- Enhanced collaboration/networking
- Professional development re: addictions & mental health
- Regional transportation ~ location of programs ~ [community hubs (enhance centres that are in neighbourhood)]
- After hour programming
- Standard consent to release information (FIPPA – Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act)
- 211 semi-annual elect.
  - Mail out re: literacy upgrading, 211 data centre - auto.
  - Delivery of info. Re: literacy e.g. Community resources
- Include representatives from mental health and addictions
- TCLN 'take your show on the road', include employment program service providers

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

- Checklist for frontline staff to identify literacy issues
- Include private sector in recognizing and addressing literacy concerns – WEDC, Chamber, and Manufacturing Association
- Tri-County Literacy Network (TCLN) takes lead on org/delivery of community outreach
- Employment Insurance (E.I.) has to be part of the Strategic Plan
- Bring media to the table to get the word out about the good work being done. Show what the situation actually is. Try to erase stigma.
- The concept of literacy needs to be retooled. We need to develop a comprehensive view of financial, health, and reading competencies. Literacy needs to erase the stigma that it is only for people who cannot read or write.
- We would like to see more specific dates
- To increase participation in relevant community agencies to reduce their workload in order to decrease compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma
- Feedback
- Involve employers/Ministry of Education
- Links the actions to measures that can be evaluated
- Add the Bridges Out of Poverty workshop material to curriculum for all students – community agencies – OW first timers – those in community in poverty and not in poverty
- Common assessment tools
- Permanent committee – strategic planning implementation committee – public sector, Literacy and Basic Skills, provincial government agencies, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, CIC, clients living in poverty, private sector employers
- STABLE funding from different levels of government.
- Continue to make public aware of importance of linking literacy and poverty (public awareness campaign)
- Prioritize into short, medium long term goals/outcomes
- Access to more resources through participation in existing committees e.g. Pathway to Potential, especially education and skills training part
- Targeting funders with training in terms they understand, relate it to other areas they fund (health, policing)
- Assessment tool

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

- Matrix for success
- Train the trainer opportunities
- Need statistics to support your cause (measure outcomes to prove your staff are overworked via percentages)
- Involving people living in poverty to these training sessions, at least one person per table
- Listen to everyone, not just hear

## Appendix 11 Evaluation Report: Executive Summary and Recommendations

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*Lunney Consultants*      23 January 2010

### 1. Executive Summary

This project was conducted in 2009 by the Tri-County Literacy Network (TCLN) and funded by the Employment Ontario Network Development Fund (EONDF). Tri-County Literacy Network is a non-profit organization that promotes literacy as an important part of life-long learning. TCLN provides support to adult literacy programs and develops community partnerships with other promoters of learning in Chatham-Kent, Sarnia-Lambton and Windsor-Essex.

This project was “designed to improve the capacity for Windsor-Essex Ontario Works and the Tri-County Literacy Network to work together to more effectively work with people living in poverty”. The project’s geographic scope was Windsor-Essex County.

The project’s principal activities were:

- (a) a workshop designed to increase staff understanding of poverty (*Bridges Out of Poverty*);
- (b) research into local and provincial best practices for programs and collaborative approaches to addressing the needs of clients in poverty;
- (c) creating and field testing an Agency Self Assessment Tool focused on this issue; and
- (d) a forum where research results were presented and a draft strategic plan for next steps was discussed

The evaluation of this project was conducted by Lunney Consultants and relied on five methods of data collection, with a strong focus on stakeholder input:

- telephone interviews with four employment and training experts, representing two of the project’s key stakeholders: the Ontario Works program at the City of Windsor/County of Essex Social Services, and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities;
- written surveys of participants: before and after the workshop, and after the forum;

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

## *Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

- direct observation of both events by the evaluator;
- semi-structured telephone interviews of randomly selected participants conducted by the evaluator six weeks after the forum's conclusion; and
- unstructured interviews with a few key organizing personnel over the course of the project.

The full Evaluation Report presents the full Evaluation findings, analysis and conclusions.

The quality and value of workshop presentations were top-rated by an impressive majority (90%) of respondents. The importance of building the respondent's capacity to work with people living in poverty was rated as very important or crucial by fully 94% of respondents, with the higher rating predominating. The data indicates that the workshop strongly matched participants' sense of professional priorities.

A great majority of respondents (91%) indicated good or excellent likelihood that they would work in new ways as a result of attending the workshop. The Bridges Out of Poverty workshop succeeded on the stated project objective to increase organizational capacity of Ontario Works, Employment Ontario and Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) staff by increasing their ability to understand the issues of their clients that are related to poverty.

The forum was deemed *good* by a small majority (53%) of respondents and *excellent* by a large minority (37%). These overall measures suggest that the forum was found to be worthwhile and generally successful by the great majority (90%) of respondents. The most highly rated aspects of the Forum were its (a) structure and process, (b) facilitation and (c) extent and quality of participation and exchange.

In follow up interviews participants who had attended the workshop related a number of concrete actions they have already taken to better respond to the needs of low income clients. All of those interviewed felt that their attendance at the workshop and/or forum had been valuable for their work, expanding their understanding of the needs of people living in poverty, providing them with specific strategies to respond to clients and allowing them better insights into, and knowledge of, the work of complementary services.

Particularly after the culminating event of the forum, people were keen to learn about possible next steps. Repeated expressions of interest in continuing to work cross-

sectorally reflect a high level of satisfaction with the project content and approach.

The project was designed to meet the Employment Ontario Network Development Fund's three main funding priorities, with the development of strategies and sensitivities for working with clients in poverty; the identification of systemic changes that are necessary to improve services; and the identification of effective LBS strategies and programs that address poverty.

Participant feedback clearly demonstrates success on the first priority, as evidenced not only by survey feedback on the day of the Bridges Out of Poverty Workshop, but also by specific changes to work and relationships reported in a random sampling of interviews with people across the sector.

The systemic changes necessary to improve services include many of the strategies flagged in the Best Practices One Pager, panel discussion and the project's strategic plan. The development and dissemination of the draft strategic plan addresses the second priority. More can be done to move from identification of these changes to creating the necessary conditions for these changes to take place.

The project also supports the third funding priority. The research and output related to the Agency Self Assessment Tool and compilation of best practices have the potential to be both points of reference and practical tools for a range of LBS and other agencies.

In summary, this evaluation finds that the project made significant progress on the overarching TCLN objective of improving the capacity for Windsor-Essex Ontario Works and the Tri-County Literacy Network to work together to more effectively work with people living in poverty.

## **2. Recommendations**

The following recommendations are generated by participant feedback and are offered as potential ideas for discussion on next steps and future initiatives.

Any future outreach and professional development work should take into consideration the "overload factor" that many informants referred to as a limiting factor in agencies' ability to identify and incorporate better ways of working with people living in poverty. People spoke about being burnt out, and being pressured to put new

# TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

## *Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

strategies, approaches and curriculum in place on a regular basis. Communications with community agencies should stress the time savings and program improvement aspects of new approaches. It might be useful to have staff at agencies that have actually implemented the changes describe this process and their results.

Tri-County Literacy Network and its partners should consider disseminating additional educational materials on the Bridges Out of Poverty model to everyone who attended the workshop and forum. People from various sectors suggested the possibility of sharing information about changes that stakeholders are making in their work as a result of the training. Follow up might also involve building on the work done on the Best Practices One Pager research by circulating reviews of the websites and electronic resources cited, and/or circulating stories on successful action taken at the programmatic or individual level.

The current project continues work on Getting Connected, which Tri-County Literacy Network (TCLN) has organized since 2006, and is part of the organization's ongoing outreach and education efforts. Tri-County Literacy Network should follow up with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) and Ontario Works (OW) to continue work in sharing information and new approaches with reference to this project. This could involve offering training for new MTCU staff, a road show approach or lunch sessions. Similarly, as Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) moves to a team approach emphasizing holistic, more integrated responses to clients' needs (and smaller caseloads), TCLN could collaborate with them on new training for their staff. This might be an ideal time to offer stakeholders in these organizations the opportunity to learn more about what specific Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) agencies are doing in the community, for example.

In response to the repeated expressions of interest in additional professional development opportunities (identified in the agency self assessment tool, evaluation interviews and commentary on the strategic plan) Tri-County Literacy Network and its partners should consider recommendations to potential funders for funding that could include offering follow-up workshops, outreach staff to promote literacy programs and support for ongoing collaboration work organized around some of the activities identified in the strategic plan.

## TRI-COUNTY LITERACY NETWORK

*Linking Adult Literacy to Poverty Reduction*

Potential funders of future initiatives might benefit from understanding more about the outcomes of this project. To fund such an ambitious project, with a stated intention of supporting new approaches to serving clients and encourage cross-sectoral collaboration requires future funding for ongoing work to avoid the frustration for all involved and risks in jeopardizing future collaborative work as people may come to think that no sustained changes are possible.

This project focused on professional development. Based on feedback from the evaluation process, future initiatives could consider recruiting and including more people who are representative of client groups (low income people, youth, people with disabilities, people with mental health issues, new immigrants, etc.) and the people who work with them, as well as more people from employer and private sector groups.

Tri-County Literacy Network should build on the excellent cross-sectoral response to this project by distributing the revised strategic plan with an invitation to stay in touch and stay involved in the work of the organization as well as the work of the partners involved in this project, including Literacy and Basic Skills, Ontario Works, Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Ontario Disability Support Program, Employment Services and the Poverty Reduction Roundtable.