



Literacy Links to Employment

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Out and About

LLSC staff can be found at community events such as:

- NorthEast Community Conversation (March 12)
- Women of the World Focus Group (March 28)
- LMLIP Employment Subcouncil Meeting (March 18, April 15)
- Merrymount Spanish Support Group (April 30, May 1, and May 8)

LMP Project Information

Ontario’s immigrants are one of its greatest untapped resources

There have been many news stories related to the impending skills shortage, but Ontario has an untapped resource at its fingertips: a significant population of immigrants who are unemployed or under-employed.

Strong literacy skills can help immigrants compete equally in the labour market. London’s many adult literacy programs want to reach out to immigrants, to help them gain the skills they need for employment. They also want to know how to best meet the needs

of immigrants when it comes to promoting, developing and delivering adult literacy programming.

To that end, Literacy link South Central has begun a Labour Market Partnership (LMP) project to research the literacy and employment needs of London’s immigrants. This newsletter will help us share updates about the project, and promote both literacy and labour market opportunities.

We welcome your feedback at literacylink@gmail.com

Literacy and... Essential Skills

Literacy is the ability to recognize, gain and apply knowledge. It includes a wide range of skills necessary for improving your quality of life.

Essential Skills are the skills needed for work, learning and life. They provide the foundation for learning all other skills and enable people to evolve with their jobs and adapt to workplace change. Literacy programs help people improve their Essential Skills.

More information about Literacy and Essential Skills can be found at: <http://www.llsc.on.ca/literacy-essential-skills/what-are-essential-skills>



Focus Group Findings

In 2014, Literacy Link South Central (LLSC) held a focus group with representatives from numerous cultural groups across the City of London. The goal of the focus group was to learn what they already knew about adult literacy programming, and to discuss how to better connect to members of their communities.

Thirty two participants attended the session, representing London's African, Hispanic, Middle Eastern and Asian communities. We welcomed community leaders, faith-based leaders, adult learners, stay at home parents, service providers and other professionals.

Participants were clear that there is a need for more information about the support and learning opportunities that literacy programs can offer in their communities.



“Literacy is understanding information, gathering and applying it. It also means knowing how to function in the system”

~ A focus group attendee

LLSC is grateful for the input of those who attended our 2014 multicultural focus group. We will be holding additional focus groups

as part of our LMP project, and look forward to sharing information from those sessions in future issues of this newsletter.

Webinar: “Through the Looking Glass”

To share information from both our 2014 cultural outreach project and our newest LMP project with service providers across Ontario, LLSC hosted 2 free webinars this spring.

Amongst the 75 attendees were representatives from literacy and employment programs throughout Ontario, from right here in London to as far away as Sioux Lookout.

“Through the Looking Glass: Immigrant Perspectives on

Literacy” shared what LLSC had learned about multicultural perceptions of adult literacy programming, ideas for effective relationship-building between immigrants and literacy programs, and how our field can effectively advertise their services to those from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Following the webinar, attendees were asked what they heard about that they were most likely to try in their programs. Comments included:

- “the value in building trusting relationships before information is communicated”
- “Building relationships within the immigrant community through one to one contact”
- “Using word of mouth in cultural communities”

The majority of attendees also indicated that their understanding of how multicultural communities perceive literacy had increased and that they would be likely to implement the strategies discussed in the webinar at their agencies.

A recording of the “Through the Looking Glass” webinar will be posted to the LLSC website in April.

Sharing perspectives and ideas for effective relationship-building between immigrants and literacy programs...

My Story

By Ms. Charity Dominic

There is help out there, don't be embarrassed, just go out and get it. I am pursuing my life goal, and I can already see the endless possibilities!

I worked as a PSW for over 8 years in Egypt, but was unsuccessful passing the exam to receive my PSW Diploma here in Canada. My long term goal is to become a personal support worker and an advocate for trauma victims.

I first heard about literacy programs when someone from Literacy Link South Central came to speak to a group of African

women. I immediately made an appointment to find out more.

The woman from Literacy Link South Central was calm and took time to listen, and she gave me time to respond. She not only asked what was happening right now, but also asked what my experiences were like in school back home, during my younger years. I felt very safe with her.

After our conversation she referred me to an adult literacy program at the YWCA. I am taking computer classes, literacy classes to improve my grammar, essay writing, and budgeting. My comfort in writing has improved, which elevated my confidence. I will be taking the PSW test again and I am confident

this time; I feel I am on the right path and have the right support that will get me there.

I want people to know there is help out there, don't be embarrassed, just go out and get it. If I can do it you can do it. With 7 children and life challenges, I am still pursuing my life goal. I can already see the endless possibilities!



As a matter of fact I have not stopped talking about my experience with literacy and I will never stop!

Achieve your goals!

There are many free literacy programs in our community that can help you achieve your goals, including:

- upgrading your skills for work
- reading to your children and helping them with homework
- earning your General Educational Development (GED) certificate or high school diploma (OSSD)
- preparing for College

All programs can help people upgrade their reading, writing, document use, math, communication and computer skills needed to successfully find and keep a job. Depending on your other goals, there will be a community based, school board based, or college based literacy program that can help you succeed.

To find out what type of program would be best to help you succeed in reaching your goals, please contact Literacy Link South Central at 519-681-7307.

Did you know...?

According to the Canadian Supply Chain Sector Council there are approximately 40,000 unfilled Supply Chain vacancies in Ontario. The following skills are required to work in this industry:

- Numeracy skills
- Job task planning
- Critical thinking
- Reading text, document use and computer literacy
- Communication skills

Career paths in this industry include: Transportation, Logistics, Warehouse and Distribution.

For more information, visit www.worktrends.ca

Highlight: African Canadians in London's Labour Market

The African Canadian Federation of London & Area (ACFOLA) conducted a study in 2014 to gather specific information about African Canadians' labour market experiences in London and area. The objectives of the study were three fold:

1. To identify gaps in employment, education and skills, level of community participation, housing and health;
2. To assess community experiences in accessing social services; and
3. To find barriers and enabling factors for inclusion, engagement and integration.

The study gathered opinions and suggestions from grassroots community associations,

community leaders, professionals and individuals within the African community. A total of 211 respondents originating from the continent of Africa and living in London and area attended focus groups or were interviewed. Discussions were also held with thirteen service providers to assess priority needs of the communities, opportunities, priorities and barriers for engagement, integration and inclusion.

The unemployment rate among the study sample was as high as 35%, roughly four times the overall average rate for the city of London. Seventy percent of participants had some level of post-secondary education.

The majority of respondents indicated a need for career development skills such as leadership, computer skills, PSW/CPR, entrepreneurial and language skills.

As a result of this study, five major priorities were identified for planning in London and area.



1. development of labour skills;
2. recognition of foreign credentials;
3. language training;
4. strengthening of mentoring strategies, and
5. provision of relevant employment services.

For more information on this project, including recommendations for overcoming the challenges identified during ACFOLA's study, please visit: www.acfola.ca/labourmarket

Contact Information

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