



Council of Ministers of Education, Canada  
Conseil des ministres de l'Éducation (Canada)

# The Development and State of the Art of Adult Learning and Education (ALE)

## Report for Canada

October 2008

*Prepared by the  
Council of Ministers of Education, Canada  
in collaboration with the  
Canadian Commission for UNESCO*



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ISBN 978-0-88987-182-3

Ce rapport est également disponible en français sous le titre « Évolution de l'éducation et des apprentissages des adultes : Rapport du Canada »

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## Executive Summary

1. The 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) is a UNESCO led intergovernmental conference for policy dialogue and assessment on adult learning and education, hosted by Brazil in May 2009. The Member States of UNESCO have been requested to prepare reports on the developments in adult learning and education since 1997 (CONFINTEA V), including the current state of the art and future challenges. The focus of the report is on policies, research, and effective practices in literacy, non-formal education, adult, and lifelong learning.
2. UNESCO has provided detailed guidelines for the preparation of this document, with four major themes plus an introductory demographic overview and a final section that looks at expectations for CONFINTEA VI and the future of adult learning and education. The themes are
  - Policy, legislation, and financing
  - Quality of adult learning and education: Provision, participation, and achievement
  - Research, innovation, and good practices
  - Adult literacy
3. In Canada, there is no federal department of education and no integrated national system of education. Within the federal system of shared power, Canada's Constitution Act of 1867 provides that "[I]n and for each province, the legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to Education." In the 13 jurisdictions — 10 provinces and three territories — departments or ministries of education are responsible for the organization, delivery, and assessment of education at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels.
4. **Demographic Overview:** The 2006 census enumerated 31,612,897 people in Canada as of May 16, 2006. Two out of three Canadians live within 100 kilometres of the southern border with the United States and more than 80 per cent live in urban centres, 45 per cent in just six metropolitan areas. The 2006 census included 17,382,100 Canadians between the ages of 25 and 64 years. Of these adults, six out of ten had completed some form of postsecondary education, defined as trade certification or graduation from a college or university program. In terms of English and French, Canada's official languages, over 57 per cent reported having English as their mother tongue, while 21.8 per cent reported French mother tongue, a percentage that has been steadily declining. Canada is a multicultural and multiethnic country where immigration plays a dominant role in demographic growth. The 2006 Census enumerated over six million foreign-born people in Canada — 19.8 per cent of the population. A total of 1,172,790 people identified themselves as a member of at least one of the three Aboriginal groups — North American Indians or First Nations, Métis, and Inuit, representing almost 4 per cent of the population. More than five million people in Canada identified themselves as members of visible minority groups, accounting for 16.2 per cent of the population overall. It is within this context of a pluralistic urban society that Canadian educators, government officials,

nongovernmental organizations, and civil society tackle the ongoing challenges of adult learning and education.

5. **Policy, Legislation, and Finance:** The government department or ministry responsibility for adult learning varies among the jurisdictions. In some cases, it is the department of education; in others, it is the department responsible for advanced learning, for labour, for workforce development; in a few cases, the responsibilities are split according to the clientele served or the structure of the system: for example, literacy may be the responsibility of one department while training may be the responsibility of another. The policy and legislative environments for adult learning and education are reflected in the laws, policies, programs, strategies, action plans, and budget and discussion documents. The policies and action plans highlight the need for collaborative efforts among government departments, with education providers, community-based groups, learners, business, and industry; the partners vary according to the policy direction and the needs of the populations being served. In fiscal year 2005–06, federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments spent \$75.7 billion on all levels of education, which represented 16.1 per cent of total public expenditures. The private sector and households also invested in education. Specific numbers related to spending on adult education are not available.
6. **Providers:** The provision of adult learning and training in Canada is achieved through a wide spectrum of agencies, organizations, and public and private institutions. School boards, colleges, universities, vocational centres, cégeps, adult learning centres; community, non-profit, and volunteer groups; employers, unions, associations, private companies; special groups serving Aboriginal learners, immigrants, women, the disadvantaged, and the unemployed — all provide programs and services. Provincial and territorial governments, at times in cooperation with the federal government, provide much of the program funding. The structures, funding models, providers, and programs vary among the jurisdictions, but each province and territory provides a wide range of learning opportunities for adults.
7. **Participation:** The 2003 International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey showed that 49 per cent of the adult population in Canada were enrolled in organized forms of adult education and training, including programs, courses, workshops, seminars, and other organized educational offerings at some time during the year of the study. In terms of who was participating, those with the lowest literacy levels, lower incomes, and the lowest educational levels were the least likely to participate in adult learning opportunities. The higher the educational level of an individual's parents, the more likely that individual was to participate in adult education and training. Younger respondents participated more frequently in adult education and training. The participation rates by men and women were almost equal — 49 per cent of men and 50 per cent of women. Respondents who were born in Canada were more likely to participate in adult learning and training than immigrants.
8. **Participation in Jurisdictions:** Several of the jurisdictions reported on participation in their adult learning and education programs. The participant numbers and profiles do show some similarities in terms of the gender, age, and motivations of the learners.

However, the programs in which they are participating have different emphases and providers and so the numbers are not directly comparable.

9. **Monitoring and Evaluating:** The monitoring and evaluation of programs and assessment of learner outcomes are approached from many levels. Goals and strategies for monitoring are included in policies and plans for programs; overviews of progress and annual reports discuss specific targets and their achievements; benchmarks and guides for programs provide details on outcomes and skills that need to be reached; and individual programs are tracked and assessed for effectiveness. Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) is a form of learner assessment that is being more widely applied. The section of this report on monitoring and evaluation provides information on each of these methods.
10. **Adult Educators:** The guidelines for the preparation of this report ask for information about the terms of employment conditions, remuneration, numbers of, and required qualifications for adult educators. Given the wide variety of employers, it is not possible to provide information on these factors. Some information is provided in response to the questions on higher education institutions that offer adult education qualifications and the type of continuing training and in-service training available.
11. **Research and Innovation:** Research in adult education and learning comprises a wide spectrum of approaches and topics from the jurisdiction-wide studies for use in long-term planning to more specific projects exploring skills, literacy, access, and other issues. The research studies included in this report were based on the input and participation of the learners, employers, instructors, and teachers — in other words, those most directly involved in the adult learning program design, delivery, success, and impact. Their results and recommendations were directed toward policy development, strategic plans, and action plans, the improvement of accessibility and effectiveness, and the development of collaborative relationships. Innovation is taking place all the time as governments, organizations and agencies, and adult educators seek to improve and expand their adult learning and education services. The examples in this section are focused on innovations supported by government funding that address particular jurisdictional concerns and needs.
12. **Adult Literacy:** Literacy for All is a predominant educational and political priority in Canada. The ministers responsible for education in all 13 provincial and territorial jurisdictions have declared literacy to be one of their top priorities. The literacy needs of Canadians are addressed through various collaborative efforts between the provincial and territorial educational authorities, the federal government, and the vast nongovernmental sector. Policy that has been developed and tested through collaboration places literacy as an educational priority and often frames it within wider social and economic development initiatives.
13. **Challenges for Adult Learning and Education:** The link between adult education and a fully involved citizenry contributing to the social and economic health of the country has clearly been established in Canada. It is also clear that individuals benefit greatly from improved skills and literacy in all aspects of their life. As well, government policies and

documents make reference to these realities, analyze their implications for the residents of their jurisdictions, and articulate action plans, funding initiatives, partnerships, and services to address the needs. Given the immense size of the task, it is recognized that there are no quick fixes for the lack of literacy, basic education, skills, and qualifications. The needs in adult learning and education often outstrip the capacity of governments, industry, educational institutions, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to respond to them financially or through the provision of all the necessary programs. The stakeholders in adult learning and education are committed to ensuring that every Canadian is able to achieve the levels of education and literacy needed to participate fully in society. The progress toward this goal is not always what would be wished for, but progress is being made.

## **Introduction**

### **The Nature of this Report**

14. The 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) is a UNESCO led intergovernmental conference for policy dialogue and assessment on adult learning and education, hosted by Brazil in May 2009. The UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning is coordinating the preparatory process leading to CONFINTEA VI. The aim of CONFINTEA VI is to renew the international momentum for adult learning and education by highlighting the crucial role they play in achieving the goals of Education for All and Millennium Development, and in building knowledge economies and learning societies.
15. The Member States of UNESCO have been requested to prepare reports on the developments in adult learning and education since 1997 (CONFINTEA V), including the current state of the art and future challenges. The reports provide major input for the international conference and for the regional preparatory conferences to be held prior to the May 2009 event. They also serve as the basis of the CONFINTEA VI working document and supply critical data for a *Global Report on Adult Learning and Education*. The focus of the report is on policies, research, and effective practices in literacy, non-formal education, adult and lifelong learning.
16. UNESCO has provided detailed guidelines for the preparation of the document, with four major themes, plus an introductory demographic overview and a final section that looks at expectations for CONFINTEA VI and the future of adult learning and education. The themes are
  - Policy, legislation and financing
  - Quality of adult learning and education: Provision, participation, and achievement
  - Research, innovation and good practices
  - Adult literacy
17. CONFINTEA V, held in Hamburg in 1997, produced two important documents in adult education: *The Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning* and *The Agenda for the Future*, which sets out in detail the commitments made at that event to the development of adult



learning called for by the Hamburg Declaration. The Hamburg documents were the focus of the preparation for the 2003 CONFINTEA V mid-term review of adult education. In the background document for this event, the responses of four provinces to the questionnaire on status and future prospects of adult learning are presented under the ten themes of CONFINTEA V. *The Canadian Report for the CONFINTEA V Mid-Term Review of Adult Education: A Follow-Up to the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education* can be found at [www.cmec.ca](http://www.cmec.ca).

18. Canada has 13 educational jurisdictions, all of which are involved in all aspects of adult learning and education (ALE). Given ALE's broad scope, there is often more than one ministry or department in each jurisdiction involved in its delivery. These may include ministries responsible for education, advanced education, labour, training, competitiveness, and employment. The federal government works with the jurisdictions on a number of programs that provide ALE opportunities in accordance with provincial and territorial responsibility for education. School boards, colleges, universities, nongovernmental organizations, civil society, industry, trade unions, and the voluntary sector also play crucial roles in the development and provision of adult learning. Given this wide range of stakeholders, only a snapshot of the legislation, policies, and programs related to ALE can be included. Selected examples are provided to give an overview of the numerous, varied, and high-quality activities in all parts of Canada; they have been chosen on the basis of geographic representation, providers, client groups, types of initiatives, and to illustrate the multiplicity of responses to the needs of adult learners.
19. Much more can be learned by visiting the Web sites of the provincial and territorial departments and ministries responsible for adult learning and education and of the nongovernmental organizations and federal government departments listed in Appendix A, as well as by consulting the source documents listed there.
20. The definition of adult education used by UNESCO states that adult education includes the entire body of organized educational processes undertaken by adults, whatever the content, level, or method of instruction, whether formal or otherwise, that prolongs or replaces initial education in schools, colleges, universities, and apprenticeship programs. For the purposes of this paper, adult learning and education includes literacy and adult basic education, upgrading and secondary school equivalency programs, workplace education, English and French second language programs, extension and continuing education, and employability programs. As stated above, only very limited examples of the policies and activities in the jurisdictions are presented in this document

### **Responsibility for Education**

21. In Canada, there is no federal department of education and no integrated national system of education. Within the federal system of shared power, Canada's Constitution Act of 1867 provides that "[I]n and for each province, the legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to Education." In the 13 jurisdictions — 10 provinces and three territories — departments or ministries of education are responsible for the organization, delivery, and assessment of education at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels. In some jurisdictions, one department or ministry may be responsible for

elementary-secondary education and another holds the responsibility for postsecondary education and skills training. The institutions in the postsecondary system have varying degrees of autonomy from provincial or territorial government control.

## Demographic Overview

22. The 2006 census enumerated 31,612,897 people in Canada as of May 16, 2006. With a land mass of close to 10 million square kilometres, Canada is the second-largest country in the world, behind Russia. Given its vast size, Canada is sparsely populated with 3.5 people per square kilometre. Moreover, Canada's population is not spread evenly over the whole country because two out of three Canadians live within 100 kilometres of the southern border with the United States. In addition, more than 80 per cent of the population live in urban centres; 45 per cent of the population live in just six metropolitan areas.
23. The 2006 census included 17,382,100 Canadians between the ages of 25 and 64 years. Of these adults, six out of ten had completed some form of postsecondary education, defined as trade certification or graduation from a college or university program. Among the member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Canada has the highest percentage of populations with either a university or a college education. Table 1 presents the number and the percentage of persons in Canada by the highest level of education achieved.

**Table 1: Number and Proportion of Persons Aged 25 to 64 by Highest Level of Education, Canada, 2006**

Level of Educational Attainment	Number of People	Percentage
Less than secondary school	2,683,510	15
Secondary school diploma	4,156,740	24
<i>Postsecondary qualifications</i>	<i>10,541,865</i>	<i>61</i>
Trades certificate	2,156,010	12
College diploma	3,533,375	20
University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	866,735	5
University degree	3,985,745	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,382,115</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006

24. Those without secondary school certification were concentrated in the older age groups; only 11 per cent of 25- to 34-year-olds had not completed secondary school. About 29 per cent of young adults aged 25 to 34 had a university degree and about 23 per cent had a college diploma. Both these percentages are significantly higher than for those aged 55 to 64.

25. Young women led the way in terms of college and university attainment. In 2006, approximately 33 per cent of women aged 25 to 34 had a university degree, compared to 25 per cent of the men in this age group. For those aged 35 to 44 years, the proportions of men and women with a university degree were almost identical, 24 per cent and 25 per cent respectively. This was also true for those aged 45 to 54, at 20 per cent of men and 19 per cent of women. In the group aged 55 to 64, 21 per cent of men had a university degree compared to 16 per cent of women. In 2006, women with a college diploma vastly outnumbered men in all four age categories. The majority of trade certificates were held by men, regardless of age.
26. The 2006 census explored the use of Canada's two languages — English and French. Over 57 per cent of the population reported English as their mother tongue. The percentage of those reporting French as their mother tongue has been declining steadily. In 2006, it was 21.8 per cent, compared with 22.6 per cent in 2001 and 23.3 per cent in 1996. An additional group, about 0.5 per cent, reported having French as a mother tongue along with English or another language. The vast majority of francophones in Canada live in Quebec, where 79 per cent report French as their mother tongue. New Brunswick, the only officially bilingual province in Canada, also has a large portion of francophones — over 32 per cent of the population report French as their mother tongue. Outside of Quebec, francophones live in minority-language situations, which presents particular challenges for the language and the culture.
27. Canada is a multicultural and multiethnic country where immigration plays a dominant role in demographic growth. The 2006 Census enumerated over six million foreign-born people in Canada — 19.8 per cent of the population. Between 2001 and 2006, Canada's foreign-born population increased by 13.6 per cent, four times higher than the growth rate for the Canadian-born population in that same period. Among recent immigrants, those born in Asia (including the Middle East) made up the largest portion (58.3 per cent) of newcomers to Canada; Europe was the source of the second largest group at 16 per cent; Central and South America and the Caribbean accounted for just over 10 per cent; and Africa for the same percentage. A majority of the foreign-born population reported a mother tongue other than French or English. Nearly 70 per cent of immigrants who arrived between 2001 and 2006 settled in three census metropolitan areas — Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal.
28. Canadians reported more than 200 languages in response to the 2006 census question on mother tongue. The list includes languages that have long been associated with immigration to Canada, such as German, Italian, Ukrainian, Dutch, and Polish. However, between 2001 and 2006, language groups from Asia and the Middle East recorded the highest increases, including the Chinese languages, Punjabi, Arabic, Urdu, Tagalog, and Tamil. In 2006, just over 20 per cent of the population were allophones, meaning that they reported mother tongues other than Canada's two official languages of French and English. Just over one-fifth of the population speak French most of the time at home; while two-thirds of the population speak English most often at home.
29. In the 2006 census, a total of 1,172,790 people identified themselves as a member of at least one of the three Aboriginal groups — North American Indians or First Nations,

Métis, and Inuit, representing almost 4 per cent of the population. Of particular significance for education, almost half of the Aboriginal population consists of children and youth aged 24 and under, compared with 31 per cent of the non-Aboriginal population. The census recorded nearly 60 different Aboriginal languages spoken by First Nations peoples in Canada.

30. Each wave of immigration to Canada has increased the ethnocultural diversity of the nation's population. In fact, more than 200 different ethnic origins were reported in the 2006 census. By contrast, in the 1901 census only 25 different ethnic groups were recorded in Canada. Ethnic origin refers to the ethnic or cultural origins of the respondent's ancestors; in 2006, the most frequently reported origins, either alone or with other origins, were Canadian, English, Scottish, Irish, German, Italian, Chinese, North American Indian, and Ukrainian.
31. More than five million people in Canada identified themselves as members of visible minority groups, accounting for 16.2 per cent of the population overall. Visible minorities are defined as persons, other than Aboriginal persons, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour. The visible minority population has grown steadily over the past 25 years — in 1981, there were an estimated 1.1 million visible minorities representing about 4.7 per cent of the population. The growth of the visible minority population was due largely to the increasing number of recent immigrants from non-European countries. The largest visible minority groups were South Asians and Chinese, accounting for about 45 per cent of the visible minority population. The third largest visible minority group was Black, followed by Filipinos, Latin Americans, Arabs, Southeast Asians, West Asians, Koreans, and Japanese.
32. The final element of the demographic profile requested by UNESCO concerns the labour force. Table 2 presents the labour force characteristics by age and sex for March 2008.

**Table 2: Labour Force Characteristics by Age and Sex, March 2008**

<b>Labour Force, March 2008</b>	<b>Both sexes 15 +</b>	<b>Youth 15 to 24</b>	<b>Men 25 +</b>	<b>Women 25+</b>
Population	26,803,400	4,369,800	10,961,500	11,472,100
Labour force	18,216,000	2,943,700	8,149,400	7,122,900
Employment	17,116,800	2,620,700	7,721,800	6,774,300
Full-time	14,008,800	1,443,900	7,227,600	5,337,400
Part-time	3,108,000	1,176,800	494,200	1,437,000
Unemployment	1,099,200	323,000	427,700	348,600
Participation rate	68.0%	67.4%	74.3%	62.1%
Unemployment rate	6.0%	11.0%	5.2%	4.9%
Employment rate	63.9%	60.0%	70.4%	59.1%
Part-time rate	18.2%	44.9%	6.4%	21.2%

Source: Statistics Canada Labour Market Survey, March 2008

33. Among labour market participants over 15 years of age, unemployment was at 6 per cent in March 2008, while the participation rate of adults in the labour force was almost 68 per cent. Unemployment among youth aged 15 to 24 was much higher than for either men or women over 25 years of age.
34. A report, *Looking Ahead: A 10-Year Outlook for the Canadian Labour Market (2006–2015)*, issued by Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC), predicted a slight increase in Canada’s labour force. At the same time, the labour force participation rate is expected to decline slightly as the population ages. Students coming out of education, at all levels, will account for four-fifths of the projected total new annual inflow into the labour force, with immigrants representing a much smaller group. It is projected that labour force participants with a postsecondary education will continue to be the fastest growing component of the labour force, while the percentage with less than secondary school will decline.
35. The HRSDC report shows labour demand growing more or less in lockstep with labour supply over the next 10 years. Retirements are expected to account for two of every three job openings. On the one hand, labour market imbalances will occur in several specific occupations such as some occupations in the health sector. On the other hand, an excess supply situation is projected to persist in some occupations specific to the primary sector and to processing, manufacturing, utilities, sales and service occupations, and among office equipment operators. The simultaneous existence of occupations where there are jobs but no workers and other occupations with workers but no job openings suggests that there is a challenge in matching school leavers and worker skills to the needs of the labour market.

36. It is within this context of a pluralistic, urban society that Canadian educators, government officials, nongovernmental organizations, and civil society tackle the ongoing challenges of adult learning and education.

## **Policy, Legislation, and Financing**

37. The first section of the report looks at the policy and legislation that underlie the organization and management of adult education and learning (ALE), including the priority goals of ALE, the structure and functioning of the government departments that are responsible for adult learning, and the alignment of policies related to adult learning with other government policy initiatives. Public and private investments in adult education and learning are outlined under the heading of Financing Adult Education. Adult education has a different structure and financing model in each jurisdiction: only a few examples are provided.

## **Policy and Legislation**

38. The policy and legislative environments for adult learning and education are reflected in laws, strategies, policies, action plans, and budget and discussion documents.
39. In British Columbia (BC), a variety of legislation supports adult learning and education, including the BC School Act, College and Institute Act, Degree Authorization Act, Private Career Training Institutions Act, Industry Training Authority, University Act, Royal Roads University Act, and Thompson Rivers University Act. The BC School Act gives school districts the discretion to enrol adult students in educational programs. The majority of school districts offer adult educational programs up to secondary school completion. Under the College and Institute Act, colleges and university colleges are mandated to provide comprehensive adult basic education programs.
40. The Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development has responsibility for adult literacy and adult lifelong learning and has developed the *Adult Opportunities Action Plan* to align with other government initiatives, such as the Ministry of Education's ReadNow Provincial Literacy Action Plan, the Welcome BC initiatives that support new immigrants, the WorkBC Action Plan, and the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation's Transformative Change Accord. The government's efforts are supported and realized through service providers, including public postsecondary institutions, school district continuing education centres, and community organizations. Advocacy and coordinating bodies like Literacy BC and Literacy Now are also critical to success.
41. In Quebec, the 1999 consultation with a wide range of partners concerning a policy for adult education resulted in the strong recommendation for the development of a governmental policy that would assure coherence in the delivery of adult education. Emphasis was put on literacy and adult basic education, prior learning assessment, distance education, and the use of technologies for learning. As a consequence of this consultation, the Governmental Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training (Politique gouvernementale d'éducation des adultes et de formation continue) and the 2002–07 action plan were published in 2002. The action plan specified the

focuses for development — basic education, job-related continuing education and training, recognition of prior learning and competencies, and shared responsibility for funding and education.

42. Since mid 2007, the Quebec Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports and the Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity have been working together to implement the government policy and to develop an action plan for the next five years, in collaboration with all the ministries involved in aspects of adult education and other partners. The new plan, to be issued in 2008/09, is structured around four priorities:
  - Increase the level of competencies in literacy and adult basic education
  - Improve accessibility to training programs for both employed and unemployed adults
  - Facilitate the integration of immigrants into Quebec society and workplaces through cultural and language training
  - Recognize the skills and competencies of adults and respond to their needs for qualifications.
43. In conjunction with this work, Quebec embarked on a review of the need for qualified workers, which resulted in the action plan entitled *Employment and Productivity* issued by the Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports. The priorities in this plan include the leading economy sectors for the present and the future, the regional employment situations, adults, immigrants, and those who have little or no work experience.
44. The Government of Quebec issued, in 2007, a publication entitled *A History of Adult Education*. In this document, progress over the last decade is linked to the Delors report, *Education: The Treasure Within*, and the 1997 Hamburg Declaration on Adult Education that resulted from CONFINTEA V.
45. In Nunavut, the *Adult Learning Strategy* is based on the need to improve the literacy levels and the delivery of adult education and training for the social and economic success of the territory. The people of Nunavut need training, education, and skills to take part in the developing economic opportunities and to combat poverty and social exclusion. Adult learning is provided by the Department of Education and Nunavut Arctic College, with participation from other government organizations, communities, non-profit organizations, Inuit organizations, and the private sector. The adult education system is based on Inuit societal values and the principles and concepts of Inuit Quajimajatuqangit. Among these concepts are several that reinforce adult learning:
  - development of skills through practice, effort, and action
  - being resourceful and innovative in seeking solutions
  - continuing learning
  - decision making through discussion and consensus

46. The goals and objectives of the Nunavut *Adult Learning Strategy* include engaging the learner, promoting learner success, increasing accessibility of programs and coordination of learning and support, ensuring quality and appropriate resource allocation, and measuring accountability. An extensive implementation plan details the objectives, recommended actions, the various organizations, departments, and agencies with responsibility, and the time frame for achieving each action.
47. The Ontario Government highlighted the twin needs to ensure that workers with the right skills are available and to train unemployed workers in the skills required — key investments in the 2008 budget documents. The *Skills to Jobs Action Plan* includes funding for new and expanded skills training centres and facilities and a second career strategy to help unemployed workers get long-term training that leads to new employment.
48. In 2007–08, the Nova Scotia government outlined its vision for the future in *The New Nova Scotia: A Path to 2020*. Guided by its long-term economic and social plans, the government listed five priorities for 2008–09, including educating to compete. This vision also builds on the 2002 framework document on skills entitled *Skills Nova Scotia: Strong Workplace, Bright Future*. This presents the province’s challenges and next steps toward a knowledgeable and skilled workforce. The primary goals in the document included the following:
- meet the skills needs of Nova Scotia’s growing labour market
  - provide better labour market access and supports to Nova Scotians
  - strengthen Nova Scotia’s system of lifelong learning opportunities
49. In Prince Edward Island, the 2003–05 strategic plan for human resources in the Department of Education highlighted several strategic initiatives to improve learning outcomes and meet increasing demands for specialized knowledge and skills. Among these were the improvement of literacy and lifelong learning and the meeting of labour market needs. The literacy initiative was premised on the recognition that learning needs are changing as the complexity and diversity of requirements increase in postsecondary and training institutions and in the workplace. A number of challenges led to the focus on labour market needs, among them changing demographics, a decreased supply of tradespeople, the need to help youth make the transition from school to the workforce, a widening gap between those with differing levels of education, and the need for specialized skills and knowledge in the face of global competition and a diversified economy. The Department of Education’s approach is to work collaboratively with education and industry partners.
50. Newfoundland and Labrador’s Division of Adult Learning and Literacy within the provincial Department of Education is mandated to provide for a greater understanding, through research and analysis, of adults’ access to and participation in education, to enhance policies and approaches that will increase the number who undertake learning activities, and to coordinate and integrate literacy efforts. The *Strategic Adult Literacy Plan*, currently being developed by the Department of Education, focuses on adult literacy



while complementing a number of other provincial initiatives, including the *Healthy Aging Framework*, the *Poverty Reduction Strategy*, and the *Immigration Strategy*.

51. A collaborative process is under way for a proposed literacy policy for Alberta. Provincial government representatives from the departments of Education, Advanced Education and Technology, Justice, Human Resources and Employment, and Community Development served as advisors to the project prepared by representatives from literacy groups and programs, colleges, unions, libraries, industry, and community agencies. The policy framework has been developed to support the government's vision and planning documents — *Today's Advantage, Tomorrow's Promise: Alberta's Vision for the Future* and *Today's Opportunities, Tomorrow's Promise: A Strategic Plan for the Government of Alberta* — issued in 2006. The document *Literacy – For a Life of Learning!* was developed for the Government of Alberta and for the community as a reflection of their shared ownership in addressing the challenges of literacy. The framework is built on the following pillars:

- comprehensiveness and inclusion
- awareness of literacy needs, the availability of programs, an environment that supports literacy learners, and a spirit of welcoming all those who want to improve their literacy level
- accessibility through reduction and elimination of barriers
- sustainability through consistent and long-term commitments to develop and sustain a learning culture in Alberta

52. In 2005, a Training System Review Panel researched and submitted a report to the Saskatchewan Government that emphasized the need to adopt a new training model that is flexible and adaptable, responsive to learners' needs and circumstances, and community-based. The report also stated that continuous learning should be supported so that adult learners can advance their skills without having to face major disruption in work and family life. During the review, the panel consulted with over 4,500 people representing training institutions and organizations, employers, industry associations, Aboriginal, municipal, provincial, and federal governments, economic development organizations, and the business sector, as well as holding focus group sessions with students, apprentices, employers, and the general public. Many of the report recommendations were implemented, including the expansion of the capacity of training programs by 30 per cent.

53. In 2002, the Government of Canada discussed learning in Canada in the report *Knowledge Matters: Skills and Learning for Canadians*, prepared by Human Resources Development Canada. The report presented a skills and learning agenda, based in the context of lifelong learning and working with provincial and territorial governments and other partners. The report cited gaps to be addressed in the learning infrastructure as well as the need to recognize the existing knowledge and skills of both Canadians and newcomers as important strategies for labour force development, social inclusion, and community development.

54. More recently, in April 2008, the Government of Canada's Standing Committee on Human Resources, Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities tabled the report *Employability in Canada: Preparing for the Future* in the House of Commons. Framed by the context of skills shortages that are expected to emerge as Canada's labour force ages, the committee embarked on a study covering a wide range of employability issues including investments in human capital, increased labour force participation, the recognition of foreign workers' credentials and competencies, and immigration. The report proposed a number of measures to bolster the participation of under-represented groups in the labour market and to increase investments in education and training, both of which are seen as contributing to improved productivity and economic prosperity.
55. In addition to policies and plans concerning adult education, the UNESCO questionnaire asked about the organization of adult education in government departments. Each jurisdiction has a different structure for adult education and learning that reflects the priorities, learning needs, funding strategies, partnerships, and other realities in the province or territory. In some jurisdictions, adult education is largely the responsibility of the department or ministry of education; in others, the core responsibility rests with the department or ministry of advanced or postsecondary education or is shared among a number of departments. The latter may include labour, employment, social services, community development, family services, trade and competition, human resources, or immigration — the department having the responsibility for the specific aspect of adult learning reflects the population being served. Numerous other partners are also crucial to the design and delivery of adult programs, but this section of the report focuses on government.
56. In Yukon, the Department of Education is responsible for adult education, training, labour force development, student financial assistance, Yukon College, and youth employment training through the Advanced Education Branch. The broad range of their responsibilities, the collaborative nature of their work, and the alignment of their actions with those of other sectors are reflected in their program objectives which include:
- developing and delivering labour force initiatives
  - preparing labour market research, planning, and information
  - promoting partnerships with business, labour organizations, Yukon College, First Nations, equity groups, the federal government, and other jurisdictions in the development and implementation of programs
  - administering apprenticeship, skills training, and interprovincial trades standards
  - promoting literacy initiatives through workplace- and community-based programs
  - facilitating youth transitions to work or postsecondary education
  - providing employment and training programs for youth
  - assisting in the implementation of land claims by ensuring that all programs and services consider Yukon First Nations interests and collaborating with First Nations on capacity building initiatives

57. In Yukon, programs such as Women in Apprenticeship and Trades, First Nations Programs and Partnerships, and the Web site funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada to provide information to new and prospective immigrants indicate how adult education initiatives are tied into the wider social goals of equity and inclusion.
58. In Manitoba, the Department of Advanced Education and Literacy is charged with the responsibility of setting priorities and allocating funds for the government's investment in postsecondary institutions, literacy and adult learning initiatives, and student financial assistance. The Department works in collaboration with school divisions, colleges, a university college, universities, other provincial and territorial governments, the federal government, and other private and public education and training bodies. The Division of Adult Learning and Literacy administers and supports development and delivery of adult-focused programming through adult learning centres and community-based literacy programs.
59. An Adult Learning Centres Act came into effect in Manitoba in 2003, establishing a separate government structure and process for adult learning centres. As well, an Adult Literacy Act was recently passed in the legislature and will come into effect in January 2009. The Act formally establishes the Manitoba Adult Literacy program and includes a requirement to develop and implement a provincial adult literacy strategy.
60. The Manitoba Technical Vocational Initiative involves a very significant revitalization as part of a comprehensive continuum of technical vocational pathways that are accessible and seamless across education at all levels and synchronized with labour market needs. Within the Department of Competitiveness, Training and Trade's Industry and Workforce Development Division, programs for job preparation, skills upgrading, and prior learning assessment are found. The Adult Language Training Branch of the Department of Labour and Immigration provides assessment to newcomers to Canada for placement into an adult English-as-an-additional-language program and provides funding for the second-language programs offered at Adult Learning Centres in the province.
61. In 2006–07, an adult education policy unit was created within the Ontario ministries of Education and of Training, Colleges and Universities to improve the development and delivery of programs and services for adult learners across the province. The unit works closely with partners, including the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration and other key stakeholders, to ensure better coordination of programs and access to adult services. An inter-ministerial committee on adult education was established in 2008 by the ministries of Education, and of Training, Colleges and Universities, and Citizenship and Immigration to provide direction for improved policy alignment and coordination of programs and services for adult learners.
62. The above examples demonstrate how the priorities and policies of adult education are intertwined with other government priorities and programs to provide a more responsive and comprehensive service. Two final examples of this integration of adult education within wider government planning illustrate its role in province-wide visions for poverty reduction.

63. Newfoundland and Labrador issued *Reducing Poverty in Newfoundland and Labrador: Working towards a Solution* in 2005. Its comprehensive approach requires the participation of all orders of government, community-based groups, labour, education, and individuals. The paper underlined the reality that low levels of education are strongly related to low incomes and it outlined both initiatives in place and those to be implemented that would encourage educational success for all. The partner departments and agencies included Human Resources, Labour and Employment, Health and Community Services, Finance, Education, Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, Justice, Labrador and Aboriginal Affairs, the Rural Secretariat, the Women's Policy Office, the Labour Relations Agency, Newfoundland Labrador Housing, and the Volunteer and Non-Profit Secretariat. Among the contributions related to adult education are the provision of greater access to literacy and adult basic education, an increase in women's participation in training areas where they are under-represented, and the development and expansion of employment skills programs for vulnerable groups whose needs are not being met. Progress to date has included the revision of the adult basic education curriculum and delivery methods, the development of preparatory programs for adult learners, and the research undertaken to better understand the challenges they face.
64. Nova Scotia has a Poverty Reduction Working Group that is collecting input on how to tackle poverty in Nova Scotia. Among its guiding principles are inclusion and diversity, collaboration, and sustainable and predictable supports that enable self-determination, independence, and self-sufficiency. To fully address poverty, representatives of governments at all levels are drawn together with those from labour and business organizations, community-based groups, education entities, and individuals living in poverty to work collaboratively so that the responses will alleviate, reduce, and, in the longer term, prevent poverty and its consequences. The Working Group is developing recommendations for poverty reduction and an implementation plan.
65. For more detailed information on the policies and legislation in each province and territory for adult education and learning, one of the most comprehensive sources is the 2005 report from the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada titled *Developing an Adult Education Policy Framework: Terminology, Typology and Best Practices*. It can be accessed at [www.cmec.ca](http://www.cmec.ca).

### **Financing Adult Education**

66. To provide a context for the financing of adult education, the total expenditures on education in Canada are provided. According to the report *Education Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program 2007*, between 1997–98 and 2002–03, total education expenditure rose 12 per cent in constant Canadian 2001 dollars to \$72.3 billion, with 67 per cent of the increase taking place at the postsecondary level. Of this \$72.3 billion, \$5.2 billion was for trades and vocational education, not including private business colleges. Total education spending was 6.4 per cent of the GDP in 2002–03, although this percentage varied considerably among the jurisdictions.

67. In fiscal year 2005–06, federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments spent \$75.7 billion on all levels of education, which represented 16.1 per cent of total public expenditures.
68. In 2002–03, households and other private sources spent \$12.8 billion on education, which represented close to 18 per cent of total expenditure on education. Colleges and universities accounted for 61 per cent of private spending, largely for tuition costs; at the elementary and secondary school level, private spending was 8 per cent of the total spending. In 2004, about 43 per cent of Canadian households incurred education expenses for supplies, textbooks, and tuition.

### ***Public Funding***

69. Due to the multiple government departments in some jurisdictions with responsibility for various aspects of adult education and the many and varied programs sponsored by the Government of Canada, a financial overview of the spending on adult education and learning in Canada is not available. Examples of supports and financial commitments by the provinces and territories as well as the federal government are described to indicate the variety of ways in which adult education receives public funding. Budget numbers provided below cannot be compared on a cross-jurisdictional basis because they relate to different program offerings and the population size and geography of each jurisdiction differ.
70. In all jurisdictions, the provincial and territorial governments provide funds to adult learning, whether through funding of the institutional providers, of the community and voluntary providers, of subsidies directly to the learners themselves, of special project funding, and/or of subsidies to and cost-sharing programs with industry and business.
71. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment in the Northwest Territories (NWT) provides funds for adult literacy and basic education through programs such as the following:
- Adult Literacy and Basic Education Fund — provides base funding to Aurora College for the delivery of adult basic education in communities throughout the NWT
  - Community Literacy Development Fund — funds community education councils, business, town and hamlet councils, First nations Bands, friendship centres, and local women’s groups for a variety of family and adult literacy programs to meet specific community needs
  - Learning Support for People with Disabilities — provides support for persons with disabilities who are experiencing barriers and are unable to reach educational or vocational goals. Support may include assessment and counselling, assistive devices, aids for and access to technology, books, tools and equipment, tutors, tuition, and travel and transportation

72. The budget for 2008–09 in Saskatchewan demonstrates the government’s commitment to adult education through increased support. The budget of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour was increased by 11 per cent, to support such programs as a continued tuition freeze for universities and more funding for university and college programs for health care professionals. Regional colleges received \$4.1 million in funds to support a 200-seat expansion of adult basic education programs on First Nations reserves and for enhanced learner and employer support. Community-based organizations received \$5 million in funding to provide employment training and supports to immigrants. The Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology got \$1 million for adult basic education and skills training. As well, \$2.4 million in funds was designated for providing more training and settlement support for newly-arrived immigrants.
73. Community Training Funds are a key element of the Yukon Training Strategy and are, for the most part, community-based and community-driven. They are designed to put decisions about training in the hands of those best equipped to understand those needs. They also represent a partnership between the Government of Yukon and the private sector as they can help meet the training needs of specific industries. Among the groups with which the Yukon Government has long-term agreements are the cultural, tourism, and mining industries and a number of community training funds. The budget allocation in 2006–07 for these Community Training Funds was \$1.45 million.
74. In the 2006–07 budget for Newfoundland and Labrador, the College of the North Atlantic received \$1.2 million to expand the number of sites where Adult Basic Education (ABE) Level I is offered. Most of the new funding was used to offer full-time ABE Level I programs at nine new locations, with the remainder of the funds applied to supporting part-time ABE programming as needs are identified. This investment significantly increased the college’s overall capacity to offer ABE, and Level I is now offered at 10 sites, with Level II and III continuing to be offered as full-time day programs at 16 of the College’s 17 sites. As well, \$650,000 was provided so that the Comprehensive Arts and Science College Transition Program can be provided at five additional sites. The program enables secondary school and Adult Basic Education graduates who lack academic courses or required grades to meet the college’s admission requirements an opportunity to upgrade and make the transition to college programs.
75. In British Columbia, public postsecondary institutions are provided funding through a block operating grant model. Block funding allows institutions more autonomy in deciding what programs to offer that will best suit the needs of their students and the community and that are within their overall student full-time-equivalent (FTE) target.
76. In BC, a cluster of programs called Developmental Programs are offered by 18 public postsecondary institutions, including adult basic education, adult special education, and English as a second language. Public postsecondary institutions delivering Developmental Programs are funded using this block model, while community-based programs are funded annually through a competitive process. The following table illustrates government funding of adult literacy and postsecondary developmental programs, the adult basic education programs offered by school districts, and English Language Services for Adults across BC.

<b>Ministry</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>
<b>Advanced Education and Labour Market Development (ALMD)</b>	
Developmental Program	\$86.25 million
Community Adult Literacy Program	\$2.4 million
ESL Settlement Program	\$1.0 million
Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program	\$5.7 million
<i>ALMD Total</i>	<i>\$95.35 million</i>
<b>Ministry of Education</b>	\$35 million
<b>Ministry of Attorney General</b>	\$16 million
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$146.35 million</b>

77. Academic Upgrading is one component of the Literacy and Basic Skills Program, a service of Employment Ontario. In 2007–08, funding for academic upgrading increased to \$15 million from \$10 million in 2006–07, and brought academic upgrading services to 7,200 learners. Academic upgrading is designed to improve access to postsecondary education, apprenticeship training, or employment through higher-level upgrading of literacy, numeracy, and essential skills. Delivery modes have been expanded to extend the reach of the programs to new communities and learners, including francophones, Aboriginals, people with disabilities, and those who would be the first in their families to attend postsecondary education.
78. In 2007–08, the Ontario Ministry of Education spent \$63 million on adult and continuing education credit programs. This included \$1.7 million to strengthen the adult education system by recognizing the first language of adult newcomers for secondary school credits, finding better ways to recognize prior skills and knowledge, exploring and documenting effective local partnerships between school boards and community agencies, local organizations, and colleges. The ministry is also developing the capacity of school boards to deliver adult and continuing education and to collect data and report on adult learners' success.
79. In 2007–08, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration spent over \$50 million on adult non-credit training and citizenship programs in both English and French as second languages.
80. In 2007–08, the Quebec Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports invested \$284 million in adult basic education and \$564 million in vocational training.
81. Many jurisdictions provide funding and support for the learners themselves; Alberta, for example, has a program that offers scholarships for apprentices and occupational trainees. The scholarships are designed to recognize the excellence of Alberta trainees in a designated occupation and to encourage the completion of the training programs. They

are cosponsored by the Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board, private industry, and Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. The program provides more than 200 annual scholarships of \$1,000 each.

82. The Government of Manitoba and the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation have piloted a Millennium Adult Learner Bursary which provides non-repayable financial assistance to low-income students who have completed a Mature Adult Diploma from an Adult Learning Centre and are pursuing postsecondary education. The Province of British Columbia provides funding through the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program in the form of a grant available to the adult basic education, adult special education, and English-as-a-second-language students who can demonstrate financial need and are enrolled in programs such as academic upgrading, pre-vocational, English language training, and adult special education.
83. In many cases, the provincial and federal governments work together; one example is the Canada-New Brunswick Agreement on Targeted Initiatives for Older Workers. The activities are aimed at unemployed older workers aged 55 to 64 to allow them to take part in activities such as skills assessment and upgrading, counselling, and work experience. The funding is offered through projects delivered at the community level. Under this agreement, the Government of Canada is providing up to \$2.6 million while the Government of New Brunswick provides up to \$500,130 and will be in charge of the design and delivery of projects funded through this initiative. On a pan-Canadian basis, the Targeted Initiative for Older Workers represents a two-year \$70 million federal commitment to provide programming.
84. The Government of Canada has signed Labour Market Development Agreements for employment benefits and supports on a bilateral basis with each province and territory to invest \$3 billion over six fiscal years to increase the quantity and enhance the quality of Canada's labour force. These resources are awarded to the provinces and territories on an equal, per-capita basis. As the most populous province, Ontario will receive nearly \$1.2 billion over six years to help individuals who are not eligible for training under the Employment Insurance program and those who are often excluded from the work force, including Aboriginal people, immigrants, people with disabilities, youth, women, and older workers, as well as workers who lack literacy and essential skills. Ontario is directing the new funding to the expansion of the number of people receiving skills training, helping immigrants integrate more quickly into the labour force, and the removal of barriers to employment and training services for persons with disabilities.
85. The Workplace Skills Initiative (WSI) is an important part of the Government of Canada's long-term economic plan, *Advantage Canada*. The WSI is a federal contributions program which funds projects that test and evaluate promising, partner-based, outcomes-focused approaches to skills development and human resource practices for employers and employed Canadians. The maximum federal contribution is 75 per cent of the total value of eligible costs. The partners are organizations or individuals who share the costs of the project through cash or in-kind contributions. Examples of existing Workplace Skills Initiative projects include those with the Canadian Society for Training and Development (\$978,966 over three years), Vancouver Coastal Health (\$2,864,481



over three years), the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Newfoundland and Labrador Division (\$2,249,369 over three years), the Restigouche Community Business Development Corporation Inc. (\$4,908, 853 over three years), and the Canadian Federation of Nursing Union (\$1,514,037 over two years).

### ***Private Financing***

86. In 1995, Quebec passed the *Act to Foster the Development of Manpower Training* which required employers with a payroll of over \$1 million to invest one per cent of their payroll in the provision of education and training for their staff. The law was implemented gradually in line with the size of the companies affected. Companies that do not make such investments must pay into a special fund to support training. A recent study on the effect of the law by the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research and Development on Lifelong Learning at Université du Québec à Montréal found that from 1997 to 2002, participation in workplace training in Quebec increased significantly — from 21 per cent to 33 per cent. The law was modified in 2007 and, although the one per cent is still dedicated to training, more of the funds are allocated to providing opportunities and resources for the development of skills in workplaces.
87. The Conference Board of Canada released the report, *Learning and Development Outlook 2007: Are We Learning Enough?* which summarized the results of its ninth biennial survey of Canadian organizations on their approaches to training, learning, and development. The report showed that while Canadian organizations spend an average of \$852 per employee on training, learning, and development, the level of investment has not changed significantly over the past decade. Moreover, when the amount is adjusted for inflation, expenditures are in fact 17 per cent lower than they were a decade ago. Other findings, based on the 258 responses they received include the following:
- Respondents spent 1.8 per cent of their payrolls on training, learning, and development.
  - Employers provided 25 hours of training, learning, and development annually per employee, down 10 per cent from two year ago.
  - Knowledge-based organizations in the not-for-profit sector, professional services, and financial services spent the most for training, learning, and development, while industries such as wholesale/retail, education, health, and construction spent the least.
  - Management personnel received 44 per cent of the training.
  - On-the-job learning is not well tracked or monitored and may be occurring more frequently than reported. Respondents said that 42 per cent of all learning incurs informally.
  - Only 4 per cent of the courses are evaluated using measures that calculate return on investment. In contrast, 14 per cent of organizations do not track the training, learning, and development they provide at all.

In addition to research to determine the amount of money that organizations spend on training and courses, the Conference Board also reported on the economic benefits of recognizing adult learning and credentials in Canada. In its 2001 report entitled *Brain Gain*, it was stated that Canadians would receive an additional \$4.1 to \$5.9 billion in annual income if the learning gap were eliminated.

88. As stated above, overall numbers for spending on adult learning and education are not available. This section has described examples of federal, provincial, and territorial program funding, as well as some numbers on private sector investments in training.

## **Quality of Adult Learning and Education: Provision, Participation, and Achievement**

89. In this section of the report, the focus is on adult education programs — the providers, the participants, the assessments, and the adult educators.

### **Provision of Adult Learning and Education and Institutional Frameworks**

90. In the descriptions of the provision of adult education, UNESCO has asked that information be included on its organization, management, and infrastructure as well as on the programs, the means of learning, the target groups, the funders, the efforts to reach under-represented groups, and the certification available. The vast array of programs in Canada can be represented by the following examples organized in two major categories:

- adult basic education, literacy, and additional language programs
- workplace and employment education and training

These divisions are not absolute as many providers offer programs in both categories. This section of the report concludes with a look at the roles of universities and colleges.

### ***Adult Basic Education, Literacy, and Additional Language Programs***

91. Among the providers of adult basic education and literacy programs are school boards, colleges, cégeps, community-based groups as well as non profit and volunteer groups, special adult learning centres established by the different levels of government, and some private companies. A later section of this report focuses on adult literacy and contains additional information on related policies, programs, and providers.

92. Alberta Advanced Education and Technology works with the province's 83 Community Adult Learning Councils to provide a range of community-based, non-credit learning opportunities in adult literacy, adult English as a second language courses, employability enhancement, addressing community issues, and other lifelong learning opportunities. Programs are also available for secondary school upgrading or completion and career services such as career information, education planning, and employment assistance.

93. Opportunities to improve literacy skills in Alberta are also available through 72 Volunteer Tutor Adult Literacy Programs that match adult learners with volunteer

tutors to assist them in improving their reading, writing, and numeracy skills. The Parent-Child Literacy Strategy was developed to strengthen the adult literacy skills of parents/caregivers, as well as that of pre-school children, and to support and foster the involvement of parents in their children's learning. The Strategy includes initiatives to raise awareness about the importance of family literacy, training in family literacy, and support for family literacy programs in communities across Alberta.

94. The Community Adult Learning Councils and the Volunteer Tutor Adult Literacy Programs are part of the Community Adult Learning Program of Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. According to the ministry business plan for 2006–09, the program has three objectives:
- Develop strategies to increase participation in learning opportunities by Aboriginal, immigrant, and other under-represented groups.
  - Improve learning access for Albertans by enhancing transitions into and within the advanced education system.
  - Provide opportunities in local communities for adults (including Aboriginal, immigrant, and other under-represented groups) to return to learning to meet their personal learning and employment goals.
95. The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL) is part of the Adult Education Division of the Department of Labour and Workforce Development. Established in 2001, NSSAL is part of a major adult learning initiative aimed at creating a more coordinated system for adults seeking to upgrade their numeracy and literacy skills and/or complete their secondary school education. Funding for this initiative is provided by the Department of Labour and Workforce Development, the Department of Community Services, and Human Resources and Social Development Canada. NSSAL provides program funding and works in partnership with program delivery organizations such as community-based learning organizations that provide basic literacy and numeracy programs, the Nova Scotia Community College and Université Ste Anne, both of which provide higher level literacy and numeracy and secondary school credit programs, and adult secondary schools in regional school boards that provide senior secondary school courses. The Office of Immigration Nova Scotia also supports a variety of language training to help newcomers participate in the community and the workforce.
96. Adult Learning and Literacy within the Manitoba Department of Advanced Education and Literacy is dedicated to improving the educational and employment prospects of the province's adults. This is accomplished by working with the 44 registered Adult Learning Centres that provided tuition-free secondary school credit and upgrading courses to 8,300 learners in 2006–07. The funding was over \$14 million; some centres are fully or partially funded by the government, while others are funded entirely from other sources.
97. The Department of Post Secondary Education, Training and Labour in New Brunswick provides the Community Adult Learning Network (CALNet) as a one-stop-shop for adults interested in pursuing education and training. With dedicated funding from the provincial government, CALNet features over 200 Adult Learning Centres located throughout the

province, each of which is managed by a regional committee made up of volunteers from the local area to ensure that community needs are responded to and the local culture is respected. The programs provided include English and French literacy and numeracy, preparation for the General Educational Development (GED) tests through individualized learner-centred support or through an Internet based program and computer training. Throughout New Brunswick, there are 12 Regional Adult Learning Committees that oversee the Community Adult Learning Programs and the E-Learning Centres.

98. Within Saskatchewan, the organizations that provide basic education and career and employment services include the Dumont Technical Institute, the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technology, regional colleges, the Saskatchewan Institution of Applied Science and Technology, Canada-Saskatchewan Career and Employment Services, and an array of community-based organizations. The services, non-credit, and credit programs available through these providers are detailed in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Basic Education and Related Programs in Saskatchewan**

<b>Services</b>	<b>Non-Credit Programs</b>	<b>Credit programs</b>
Intake and assessment	Literacy, family literacy, workplace literacy	Basic Education, levels 1, 2, & 3
Access to Elders for Aboriginal students	English as a second language/ English as a second dialect	Adult 12, secondary school completion
Personal, academic, career counselling	Preparation for postsecondary programs	General Educational Development (GED)
Tutors and/or learning specialists	Career exploration and development	
Cultural programs and services	Work placement	
Inclusion and supports for persons with disabilities	Life skills	
Access to distance education opportunities	Pre-apprenticeship training	
	Employment readiness	

Source:: Saskatchewan Advanced Education, Employment and Labour

99. In the Northwest Territories, Aurora College delivers the majority of the adult programs. The many other agencies involved include private vocational training institutions, professional associations, nongovernmental organizations that are often dependent on federal or territorial government funding, government departments, municipalities, Aboriginal organizations, and school boards.

100. As part of the Government of Canada's immigration programs, two key language training programs are funded — the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada program and the Enhanced Language Training program. Both French and English language instruction are available through these programs, free of charge for eligible adult newcomers. In Nova Scotia, the programs are offered in a variety of settings, formats, and models. The school boards, immigrant centres, libraries, and education centres offer full- and part-time language instruction through classroom instruction, workplace delivery, or one-on-one volunteer tutoring. Training in sector-specific or profession-specific language skills is offered for internationally educated healthcare professionals, engineers, managers, teachers, and pharmacists. Private English-as-a-second-language (ESL) schools also offer programs for a fee.
101. The Government of British Columbia released the *Adult Opportunities Action Plan* in September 2007. The vision stated that British Columbia's adults will attain and maintain the literacy skills necessary to participate fully in the modern society and the global economy. The goals included the following:
- reduced barriers and increased participation through provision of information on program availability, learner supports, and services that are accessible to all
  - improved literacy rates for key populations including Aboriginals, immigrants, workers, and those in prison
  - coordinated, quality programs that produce results
102. British Columbia is committed to providing English-as-a-second-language programs and services that help immigrants and refugees become self-sufficient and take part in the economic and social life of the province. The Adult English-as-a-second-language program is administered by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development. ESL services are offered by a wide variety of service providers with specific areas of expertise, as well as by public postsecondary education institutions. English Language Services for Adults (ELSA) programs and ESL classes at the literacy level offered at public postsecondary institutions are tuition-free. Students who take higher level ESL programs in the public postsecondary system may be eligible for provincial funding assistance. In 2007–08, 35 public colleges, non-profit community organizations, school boards, and private sector schools offered ELSA programming.
103. Adult basic education programs in British Columbia are also delivered through the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development's provision of courses that can lead to completion of secondary school and preparation for postsecondary study. Courses can be taken through local secondary schools or postsecondary institutions. The ministry also provides access to an ABE student assistance program that can help with the direct educational costs of programs such as academic upgrading, pre-vocational training, English language training, and adult special education. A tuition-free Adult Basic Education initiative was established in September 2007 in the public postsecondary system so that all ABE courses are free of charge.

104. A new program introduced in British Columbia in 2007 allows immigrants who settle in small and remote BC communities to receive one-on-one volunteer tutoring to become fluent in English and learn about life in Canada. Colleges, school districts, and community-based organizations currently serve immigrants and refugees by delivering a variety of English-as-a-second-language classes, but some communities have too few immigrants to make classroom-based instruction practical. The one-on-one model that has been piloted and found successful in seven communities received \$1 million in federal funding in 2007-08, when about 450 learners were served by over 200 volunteers in 29 communities around the province.
105. The Ministry of Education in Ontario provides funding to school boards for adult and continuing education credit programs and services to adult learners who want to get an Ontario Secondary School Certificate or an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. School boards may offer classes during the day or at night to make it easier for working adults. Courses are teacher-led and available through distance education. Services for adult credit courses are free to adult learners.
106. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in Ontario offers Employment Ontario, an integrated employment and training network of programs and services to help provide the province with the skilled workforce it needs. One of the programs, Literacy and Basic Skills, includes Academic Upgrading. In 2007–08, this program was offered through 202 transfer payment agencies including colleges of applied arts and technology, school boards, and community based organizations at 285 sites throughout the province.
107. In Quebec, adult education is regulated through the Public Instruction Act. The adult education centres of the school boards offer referral, counselling, and support to adult learners. All 199 of the anglophone and francophone adult education centres are able to offer as many as ten different programs, including literacy, secondary school completion, programs leading to vocational training and postsecondary education, and programs to encourage social and socio-professional integration. In addition, 180 autonomous community action groups focus on literacy, combatting school dropout tendencies, supporting those wanting to return to school, and providing training for these and other groups within the community.
108. Adult basic education and literacy programs are also provided through community groups, associations, literacy volunteer groups, and many other nongovernmental and civil society organizations. Reference to a number of them is made throughout this report. One example of an organization that provides a wide range of services is Pluri-elles in Manitoba, which offers basic literacy for adults, functional literacy, French language refresher programs, family literacy, homework help, and programs for those working toward their secondary school equivalency. All these services are provided for francophones living in minority settings. Pluri-elles is a non-profit organization that approaches adult education in its broadest context, offering services and programs that encompass education, training, the economy, culture, health and social services. They work toward strengthening francophone communities throughout the province, emphasizing that literacy is critical for life not just for jobs and economic development.

## ***Workplace and Employment Education and Training***

109. In looking at workplace and employment education and training, the emphasis is on the multiplicity of providers involved and the programs in which industry and government work together to design, deliver, fund, promote, and assess training.
110. Quebec offers a great diversity of training, both vocational training (offered in dedicated training centres) and technical training (offered in the collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel, cégeps) with more than 300 programs responding to the needs of business, industry, and individuals. All of these programs are developed based on particular skills and competencies, and they are divided into 21 training sectors reflecting the professions that require technical or vocational training. Overall, the number of different programs and the certification offered include the following:
- 142 programs leading to a diplôme d'études professionnelles (DEP), which requires one or two years of study
  - 114 programs leading to a diplôme d'études collégiales (DEC), which requires three years of study
  - 26 programs leading to an attestation de spécialisation professionnelle (ASP), with one year of study

The school boards offer 199 attestations de formation professionnelle (AFP), with one year of study; the cégeps provide 1,400 attestations d'études collégiales (AEC), for which the period of study may range from several months to over a year

111. The network of training opportunities covers the populated areas of Quebec. In vocational training, 70 school boards of which 9 are anglophone provide 174 training centres. In addition, there are 3 government and 30 private training sites. For technical training, 48 cégeps, 4 government institutions and 41 private establishments.
112. To facilitate youth access to skills training, a variety of access routes have been developed over the past few years. It is possible for general studies students in secondary school to explore diverse vocational programs to find which ones might best suit their interests and capabilities. Transition programs continue to be developed to allow easier movement between vocational training and technical training, including between the different levels of certification. Students are also permitted to register in a vocational training program even if they have not yet completed the secondary school prerequisites.
113. The Nova Scotia Workplace Education Initiative provides funding and support to assist business, industry, and labour in providing literacy and essential skills programs. The initiative uses a partnership model linking government, business, and industry, and cultivates a culture of learning within workplaces. To ensure relevancy and responsiveness, needs assessments are conducted in organizations, and the programs are customized accordingly. This flexibility allows the programs to respond to the needs of large and small businesses, of apprentices, of displaced and unemployed workers, and of specific industry sectors.

114. The Workplace Education Manitoba Steering Committee is a business-labour-government partnership that promotes workplace education and training. The committee works with employers to assess the needs for training in essential skills, helps develop and deliver customized workplace training, and offers programming to train the trainers.
115. The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in Ontario has established the Sector Initiatives Fund to help industry sectors and organizations develop training programs, standards, and materials for their workforces. The approach is to encourage the sector-wide research and planning needed to address skills gaps. The ministry, with funding support from Service Canada, has also established local training boards to direct the planning and delivery of federal and provincial training programs to make jobs and skills training more accessible, effective, and responsive to local needs. The boards are independent not-for-profit corporations that are led by business and labour at the local level but also bring in other concerned groups such as educators, trainers, women, francophones, persons with disabilities, visible minorities, youth, Aboriginals, and others involved in the local economies. The primary role of the 21 local boards is to help improve conditions of their local labour markets through such activities as organizing events and undertaking activities that promote the importance of education, training, and skills upgrading to parents, youth, employers, employed and unemployed workers, and the general public. An on-line resource, *Inventory of Programs and Services*, highlights opportunities leading to employment.
116. The Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration provides funding to school boards to offer non-credit English and French second language and citizenship training to help newcomers with community integration and language skills. The language training covers levels from beginning to advanced and may include occupation- and industry-specific content that helps them in gaining and keeping employment. More than 2,300 newcomers will benefit from the program over the two years of funding at \$3.4 million. The workplace-related training responds to the needs of employers in sectors such as accounting, business and finance, information technology, engineering and manufacturing, and health care, home care, and nursing.
117. In Prince Edward Island, Workplace Education PEI was developed to work in partnership with business, unions, and organizations to assess learning needs and recommend a variety of programs to meet the needs of employees. Once the programs are in place, the ongoing partnership monitors and modifies program development to ensure both the individual and the company continue to progress toward their goals. The custom-designed programs may include preparation for certification in the relevant field, preparation for grade 12 equivalency exams, and courses in workplace communications, skills for supervisors, and basic computer skills. Workplace Education PEI helps to find funding to assist with instructional costs. The employer or union contribution may include covering the cost of the instructor, materials, and supplies, providing classroom space, and/or providing release time for employees to attend class.
118. The Targeted Initiative for Older Workers is a federal-provincial/territorial cost-shared initiative providing support to unemployed older workers in communities affected by significant downsizing or closures. In Newfoundland and Labrador, the programming is



aimed at reintegrating older workers into employment, increasing their employability, and ensuring they remain active and productive labour market participants while their communities undergo adjustment. Project funding is awarded to project sponsors which must be community-based organizations with expertise in the delivery of employment programming and addressing the needs of older workers or with the necessary community partnerships to ensure appropriate programming for older worker participants. The projects include employment assistance activities such as résumé writing, interview techniques, and counselling, along with employability improvements programs, such as

- vocational and learning assessments
- mentoring programs
- basic skills upgrading
- specific skills training
- employer-based work experience
- preparation for self-employment
- community-based work experience
- direct marketing to employers and job development
- certification

The participants receive financial support while participating in a project.

119. Newfoundland and Labrador does not have a distinct and separate initiative for workplace literacy. Adult basic education and essential skills training are delivered as an embedded feature, where appropriate, within broader vocational, pre-employment, and employment maintenance programs. The provincial departments of Education and Human Resources, Labour and Employment work together and in partnership with community agencies and educational institutions to deliver these programs. Newfoundland and Labrador is developing a new service centre model called Career Work Centres that act as a one-stop shop for unemployed people to access career counselling, job search skills, and essential skills and workplace training.

120. The Yukon Training Strategy provides the framework for the training and labour force development activities of the government. The Labour Market Programs and Services Unit of Advanced Education in the Department of Education has responsibility for supporting workplace and community-based literacy programs as well as working with labour, women's organizations, youth, the private sector, non-profit organizations, communities, First Nations, and the federal government to develop and implement specific labour force development strategies and policies, including training initiatives. Yukon College plays a major role in the delivery of these programs.

121. In British Columbia, *SkillsPlus*, a Workplace Essential Skills initiative, was launched in March 2008 and encompasses a range of strategies to provide essential skills and literacy training to adults already in the workforce. *Skills Plus* is a business, labour, education and provincial government partnership initiative. The term "essential skills" refers

specifically to the set of nine transferable skills identified and researched by Human Resources and Social Development Canada. Phase I of *Skills Plus* consists of ten sector-based research projects designed to generate a comprehensive picture of essential skills workplace training across British Columbia. Phase II of the initiative builds on the knowledge gained in Phase I by funding essential skills workplace-based training and the creation of essential skills training tools, resources, service delivery, and assessments that are geared to the needs of small and medium businesses and that support sectoral activities.

122. *SkillsPlus* is conceived as a multi-year initiative funded through a combination of base funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development and the federal-provincial Labour Market Agreement (LMA) funds to specifically benefit employed individuals who are low skilled (no high school diploma, no recognized certification) or have low levels of literacy and essential skills. The provincial budget is \$500,000 annually which commenced in 2007–08. The LMA funding commitment is \$27.35 million for a six-year period.
123. A 2007 report from the Labour Education Centre and the Centre for the Study of Education and Work entitled *Integrating Equity, Addressing Barriers* details some of the many training initiatives in Canada's labour movement. Included are projects from workplace-based locals to large pan-Canadian programs. The report highlights programs that develop and deliver anti-racism analysis as part of labour education courses. Some of the unions that have designed and delivered the programs include the Canadian Labour Congress; the Fédération des travailleurs et travailleuses du Québec; the Canadian Union of Postal Employees; the United Steel Workers; the Canadian Auto Workers; the Communications, Energy, and Paperworkers' Union; the Carpenters' Local 27; and the Northwest Territories Federation of Labour.

### ***The Roles of Universities and Colleges***

124. Universities and colleges provide educational opportunities for hundreds of thousands of students but, because they are engaged in their initial stage of education, the majority of these learners are not within the definition of adult education as offered by UNESCO. Adult education and learning focuses on those who are enhancing or replacing that initial stage, especially through non-formal education.
125. According to the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, there are more than 400,000 adults enrolled in the credit and non-credit continuing education courses offered at Canadian universities. Many of the continuing education courses lead to a degree or certificate and are aimed at adults looking to upgrade their education or learn new skills. To better serve the adult learners, universities are offering orientation programs aimed at mature students, access to learning skills centres, and flexible course schedules as well as alternate learning methods, including weekend intensive workshops, workplace employee training programs, and online and other distance programs. Some universities, such as Simon Fraser University in Vancouver and the University of Western Ontario in London, have downtown campuses dedicated almost exclusively to continuing education. Ryerson University in Toronto offers 1,100 courses and 72 career-related certificate programs to

over 65,400 annual enrolments through the G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education. These types of offerings are examples of the wide variety of urban, regional, and rural settings for continuing education as well as the diverse styles of course offerings, which include on-line, distance, and teaching that blends classrooms with technology.

126. The Canadian Association for University Continuing Education has recently published a booklet that presents the voices and experiences of various adult learners. In *Turning Up the Volume on Canada's Learning Continuum: Learner Success Stories from University Continuing Education Providers across the Country*, the students talk about how being adult learners opened up new careers and degree-level studies for them, expanded their opportunities, provided them with essential Canadian knowledge and skills, informed their retirement years, and engaged diverse communities.

127. Colleges and institutes in Canada are found in 900 communities — rural, urban, Aboriginal, disadvantaged, immigrant — all types and locations of communities. Colleges are mandated to be closely tied to their communities and to act quickly to foresee and meet the changing knowledge and skills needs of their regions. Colleges offer numerous programs and services to adult learners:

- Colleges are heavily involved in prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR), essential skills and workplace literacy initiatives, adult basic education, literacy and second-language programs, foreign credential recognition, career-technical programs, and preparatory training for the trades.
- The local college or institute is the source of technical skills training for a community and often is the only mechanism for adult learners and businesses to meet marketplace skills demands. Continuing education courses and programs offered by these institutions provide a broad range of skill development opportunities based on community demand.
- College and institutes are involved in partnerships with labour, unions, government departments, municipalities, business, and industry to develop and deliver customized training solutions to employees. Colleges provide targeted opportunities for disadvantaged adults, youth, Aboriginals, and other special-needs groups to learn and increase their participation in society. They provide access to literacy, language, and skills programs sponsored by the federal and provincial/territorial governments to support disadvantaged adult learners.
- Colleges and institutes work with community organizations, local settlement initiatives, as well as municipal, provincial, and territorial governments to provide language and workplace orientation training for new arrivals in Canada.
- Colleges and institutes, including Aboriginal institutes, work to increase Aboriginal peoples' access to adult learning opportunities through their reach into urban, rural, remote, and Aboriginal communities and their collaborative relations with Aboriginal communities and organizations.

128. Canada also has private colleges, often referred to as career or business colleges or private training institutions and may be licensed or unlicensed by provincial or territorial

governments. These colleges provide professional and vocational training for profit. In some jurisdictions, these private colleges may receive some public funding, but they are funded mainly through tuition fees charged to students. Ontario, the most populous province, has more than 450 registered private career colleges with their main focus on practical skills and programs that prepare students for clearly defined occupations. These colleges play a role in adult education because many of the students are adults who are returning to education a number of years after completing their initial education.

129. The provision of adult learning and training in Canada is achieved through a wide spectrum of agencies, organizations, and institutions. School boards, colleges, universities, cégeps, vocational centres, adult learning centres, community groups, non-profit and volunteer groups, employers, unions, associations, private companies, special groups serving Aboriginal learners, immigrants, women, the disadvantaged, and the unemployed — all provide programs and services. Provincial and territorial governments, often in cooperation with the federal government, provide much of the funding for the programs. The structures, funding models, providers, and programs vary among the jurisdictions, but each provides a wide range of learning opportunities for adults.

## **Participation**

130. The UNESCO guidelines for this section of the report outline key components of participation — the statistical perspective, the motivations of learners, the participation of certain groups, and the non-participants. The section begins with the analysis of adult learning in Canada from the 2003 International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS) and other studies. Information is next provided on participation in adult education and literacy program in some jurisdictions. The focus is then on work-related training, with the results of the 2002 Statistics Canada Adult Education and Training Survey. The section concludes with a look at the attitudes of Canadians to work-related learning.

## ***The International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey***

131. The International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, administered by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Statistics Canada in 2003, had over 23,000 respondents in Canada from all 13 jurisdictions. The study included adults aged from 16 to 65 years, except those studying full-time (unless sponsored by an employer) and those over 20 years of age studying in an elementary or secondary school program.

132. In the resulting report, some forms of formal and non-formal learning are referred to as adult education and training. The IALSS also collected data on informal learning. The survey showed that 49 per cent of the adult population in Canada was enrolled in organized forms of adult education and training (programs, courses, workshops, seminars, and other organized educational offerings) at some time during the year of the study.

133. The survey provided the following key insights about adult learners in Canada:

- **Time:** Each learner devoted about 290 hours to this learning over the year.

- **Financial Support:** Fifty-three per cent of the participants were supported by their employers, while 41 per cent paid for their own education, and 8 per cent had government sponsorship, with more men than women getting access to employer funding for learning.
- **Literacy Levels:** The IALSS survey defined literacy in five levels, level one being the lowest and level five the highest. The report, which linked literacy levels to learners' participation in adult education, revealed that, of those at the lowest literacy level, only 20 per cent participated in adult learning; at level two, 36 per cent participated; at level three, it was 62 per cent; and at levels four and five, participation was at 66 per cent. Although those with the lowest literacy levels had the lowest participation rates in adult education and training, the rates of participation had improved since the previous IALSS survey in 1995.
- **Level of Education:** The same pattern is found when participation in adult learning is matched with the level of education — those with the lowest levels of education are the least likely to participate in adult learning opportunities. Of those with less than upper secondary school education, the participation rate is 26 per cent; of those who had completed secondary school, the rate is 48 per cent. Of those with postsecondary education, the rate of those with non-university credits is 59 per cent, and of those with university education, the rate of participation is 65 per cent.
- **Parents' Level of Education:** The higher the educational level of the participant's parents, the more likely is that individual to participate in adult education and training.
- **Age:** Younger respondents had participated in adult education and training more frequently than the older respondents.
- **Gender:** The participation rates by men and women in Canada are almost equal — 49 per cent of men and 50 per cent of women.
- **Immigration Status:** Of the respondents, those who had been born in Canada were more likely than immigrants to participate in adult education and training.

134. The Survey also looked at adult learning and the world of work, with the following findings:

- **Reasons for Participation:** The choice of job-related reasons for participating in adult education and training at 82 per cent dominated over personal interest reasons at 20 per cent. This remained true even for those with more than 20 years in a job.
- **Labour Force Status:** Fifty-seven per cent of employed individuals participated in adult education and training, compared to 31 per cent of the unemployed and 24 per cent of those not in the labour force.
- **Employer-Sponsored Training:** Participation in employer-sponsored education and training was more likely for those working in firms with over 100 employees, for those in industries such as high technology manufacturing, knowledge-

intensive market services, public administration, defence, education, health, community and social services, and personal services, and for those in supervisory positions.

- **Literacy Use:** Those who were more involved in literacy practices at work were more likely to receive employer-sponsored training than those with low levels of literacy involvement.

135. Beyond the formal education systems, much adult learning takes place in non-structured, informal ways within homes, offices, and communities. Participation in informal learning was also tracked in the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, looking at daily living activities that result in learning, — activities such as visits to museums, using computers, and reading reference materials. Almost all respondents (93 per cent) report having been involved in some form of informal learning over the year covered by the study. The most common response was “learning by self, by trying different ways,” followed by “learning by watching, by getting help from others,” both at about 80 per cent. Just over 60 per cent chose “read manuals, reference or other materials” and “use computers or the Internet to learn.” The increase in the level of participation in all informal learning activities was positively linked to participants’ higher levels of literacy.

136. The International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey will be replaced by the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies. Canada will be taking part in this new OECD study to identify and measure differences between individuals and countries in the competencies believed to underlie both personal and social success, gauge the performance of education and training systems in generating the requisite competencies, and assess the impact of these competencies on social and economic outcomes at individual and aggregate levels.

137. In 2004, a survey on learning and work activities and their interactions was undertaken by the research network centred at the University of Toronto called the Changing Nature of Work and Lifelong Learning (WALL). This survey, The 2004 Canadian Learning and Work Survey, found that participation in informal learning outside of formal educational settings is extensive both in terms of the proportion of respondents who report participating in it and the amount of time they devote to various learning activities related to paid work, housework, volunteer work, and their general interests. The incidence of informal learning was found to be not very closely related to formal educational levels because school dropouts and other marginalized groups were very active informal learners. The survey found that 81 per cent of respondents reported taking part in informal learning, devoting an average of 13 hours a week to this learning.

### ***Adult Learners in the Jurisdictions***

138. Several jurisdictions contributed reports on the levels of participation in their adult education and learning programs.

139. In Alberta, the Community Adult Learning Program provides opportunities in local communities for adults (including Aboriginals, immigrant groups, and other under-represented groups) to return to learning programs in order to meet their personal learning

or employment goals. As part of the program, the Community Adult Learning Councils are voluntary associations responsible for addressing part-time, non-credit adult learning needs in 83 Alberta communities. The 2006 registration statistics are shown in tables 5 and 6 below.

**Table 5: Participation Statistics for Adult Basic Literacy, ESL and FSL Programming, Alberta, 2006**

<b>Program Area</b>	<b># of Courses</b>	<b># of Participants</b>	<b># of Hours</b>
Adult Basic Literacy	295	4,950	7,986
English as a second language	454	5,887	21,239
French as a second language	10	91	190
<b>Total</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>10,928</b>	<b>29,415</b>

Source: Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, *Community Adult Learning Program, 2006 Annual Report*, September 2007

**Table 6: Participation Statistics for Employability Enhancement and Community Issues Programming, Alberta, 2006**

<b>Program Area</b>	<b># of Workshops/Courses</b>	<b># of Participants</b>
Employability Enhancement	1,876	16,866
Community Issues	2,220	38,144
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,096</b>	<b>55,010</b>

Source: Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, *Community Adult Learning Program, 2006 Annual Report*, September 2007

140. General interest courses are also delivered on a cost-recovery basis in such areas as yoga, gardening, social dance, cooking, and photography. There were 12,287 participants in 1,143 general interest courses in 2006.

141. Also in Alberta, the Volunteer Tutor Adult Literacy Services provide basic literacy tutoring to adults who want individual or small group assistance to improve their literacy or numeracy skills. In 2006, 2,023 adults were assisted with their literacy skills by 1,318 volunteer tutors who contributed almost 90,000 hours. These adult learners were categorized as follows:

- **Gender:** 61 per cent were female and 39 per cent were male.
- **Age:** The largest age group, at 41 per cent, was 36 to 55 years of age ; the second largest, at 39 per cent, was from 20 to 35 years of age.

- **Education Levels in Canada:** Of those schooled in Canada, 37 per cent had more than 10 years of schooling, 23 per cent had 7 to 9 years, and 24 per cent had attended special education classes.
- **Education Levels outside Canada:** For those educated outside Canada, 67 per cent had more than ten years of schooling.
- **Population Groups:** Among the 2,023 adult literacy learners, 906 were immigrants, 176 were seniors, and 87 were Aboriginal people. There were also 317 people with developmental, learning, mental health, and/or physical disabilities.

142. The 2008 Quebec *Plan of Action: Education, Employment, Productivity* states that in 2006/07 over 103,500 adults registered in vocational training, of whom 60 per cent were men and 40 per cent were women. In technical training, there were over 97,000 registrants, of whom 38 per cent were men and 59 per cent were women. Adult Basic Education programs register more than 160,000 learners each year. According to the Federation of Quebec Continuing Education University Student Associations (Fédération des associations étudiantes universitaires québécoises en éducation permanente), the majority of university continuing education students in Quebec are registered in part-time programs and studying for professional certification. Among the 65,000 students, women are a very large majority. Research at the Faculty of Continuing Studies at Université de Montréal indicates that more than 50 per cent of their students have an income of less than \$30,000 a year.

143. In 2007–08, the British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development reported the following participation statistics among adult learners. FTE stands for “full-time equivalent” in the number of students.

Ministry	FTE	Head Count
Ministry of Advanced Education		
Adult Basic Education	8,056	
English as a Second Language	3,214	
Adult Special Education	933	
Community Adult Program		7,500
ESL Settlement and Assist Program		450
Ministry of Education		25,333
Ministry of Attorney General		
English Language Services for Adults		15,085
<b>Total</b>	<b>12, 203</b>	<b>48, 368</b>



144. In 2005, the Ministry of Advanced Education in British Columbia surveyed the students at BC colleges and institutes who had completed or left adult basic education courses, whether ABE Fundamental, ABE Advanced, joint College/ABE programs, orientation courses, or Career Access. The results are outlined in the categories below:

- **Gender:** Overall, women were 59 per cent of the student population. In all programs except Career Access, women were the majority of the students.
- **Family Status:** Fifty-six per cent of respondents were single with no children; 10 per cent had children and were part of a couple; and 10 per cent were single parents. Fifty per cent of those who left the ABE Fundamentals program before completion had children.
- **Education Level:** More than 70 per cent had a secondary school diploma before enrolling in the ABE courses.
- **Population Groups:** Twelve per cent identified themselves as Aboriginal. Twelve per cent stated that they had a long-term condition or health problem that limited the kind of activities they could undertake. Twenty-three per cent of the students had learned English as a second language.
- **Reasons for Enrolling:** In listing their reasons when they started the ABE or career preparation courses, 49 per cent said they had wanted to qualify to enter a postsecondary program or institution; 37 per cent wanted to upgrade for further education or training; and 13 per cent wanted to obtain their secondary school graduation. Other reasons included improving basic skills, changing careers, learning job skills, and personal interest.
- **Reasons for Leaving:** Thirty-six per cent of students who left before completion said that they had taken the courses they wanted, completed the credits they needed to graduate, or qualified to switch to another program. As well, 20 per cent left because their job situation changed; 15 per cent left because they had changed their minds. Only five per cent cited finances as a reason for leaving, although 21 per cent stated that they had encountered financial difficulties while studying.

145. Also in British Columbia, an English-as-a-Second-Language Student Outcomes Survey is regularly undertaken to gather information on the success and outcomes of students attending ESL programs in public postsecondary institutions. The survey reports responses in areas such as demographics, learners' assessment of the quality and success of their experiences in their courses, the transition of students into employment or further education, and their social and economic adaptation. Highlights of the survey conducted in 2007 included the following:

- 91 per cent of respondents reported that their English-language training in the public postsecondary institutions helped them achieve their most important goal
- 89 per cent rated the overall quality of instruction as good or very good
- 90 per cent said their ESL classes helped them use English at work
- 76 per cent of the former ESL students were in the labour force

146. In the Northwest Territories, the Adult Literacy and Basic Education program is offered at levels equivalent to grades 1 through 12, with 40 per cent of full-time-equivalent enrolments at Aurora College in 2007–08. Enrolment over the years 2003 to 2008 has been relatively stable, with mathematics and English as the most popular courses.

147. Prince Edward Island (PEI), Canada’s smallest province with a population of just over 130,000, detailed the participation at their adult education and learning programs for 2005–06 in the Department of Education’s Annual Report:

- Two hundred and twenty-four students received their General Educational Development (GED) grade 12 equivalency certificate; twenty adult learners received the PEI High School Graduation Certificate for Mature Students.
- Over 900 students enrolled in the literacy/Adult Basic Education programs where literacy programs, secondary school credits, and GED preparation courses are available free of charge.
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) courses, workshops, and consultations offered by Workplace Education PEI were attended by 197 participants.
- Essential Skills information sessions, assessments, and training delivered by Workplace Education PEI were attended by 197 participants.
- Two training sessions, “How to Help Your Child Learn to Read and Love Reading” and “Homework Help for Kids,” were attended by 240 parents.

148. The *Annual Report* of Manitoba’s Adult Learning Centres (ALCs) provides a number of statistics on the programming in 2006–07:

- Number of learners registered at ALCs: 8,300
- Total number of ALC graduates: 1,260
- Number of Aboriginal graduates: 419
- Number of courses completed for credit: 11,170

149. The report outlines the characteristics of Manitoba ALC students, but because the information is provided on a self-declared basis by the students, the percentages should be viewed as indicators rather than exact measures:

- **Population Groups:** Thirty-seven per cent self-reported as Aboriginal and 20 per cent as speakers of English as an additional language.
- **Labour Force Status:** Forty-four per cent were employed either part- or full-time
- **Financial Support:** Six per cent reported receiving Employment Insurance and 18 per cent Income Assistance.
- **Family Status:** Sixteen per cent reported they were single parents with a child or children under the age of 12.

150. The Community Adult Learning Program to improve literacy in New Brunswick profiled their program attendees in 2007–08:

- **Gender:** Women were 56 per cent and men were 44 per cent of the learners.
- **Language:** Almost 58 per cent of learners receive training in English, 40 per cent in French, and 3 per cent attend classes where training is provided in both official languages.
- **Age:** Seventy-five per cent of learners are between the ages of 18 and 44; 18 per cent are between 45 and 54 years of age
- **Educational Level:** Thirty-one per cent of learners left school before completing grade 9; 65 per cent have completed grade 9 or higher.
- **Program Level:** Forty-one per cent of learners are registered at Level 1 of the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey; 21 per cent are at Level 2; and 38 per cent are registered for GED or secondary school equivalency preparation
- **Reasons for Enrolling:** Eighty-eight per cent of participants attended to improve their employability, attain their GED, or attain the skills needed for further training.
- **Program Awareness:** Forty-one per cent of learners are self-referred; 23 per cent were referred through the Department of Social Development; 24 per cent were referred through the Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour.

151. The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL) coordinates educational programs, policies, and services that enable adults over 19 years of age to acquire the literacy and essential skills, knowledge, and secondary school credentials they require. In 2005–06, NSSAL received survey data from over 3,660 students enrolled in NSSAL programs delivered by a variety of providers across the province.

- **Gender:** Women made up 60 per cent of the student population, with men at 40 per cent.
- **Age:** Sixty-eight per cent were under 40 years of age.
- **Financial Assistance:** Sixty-eight per cent stated they were receiving some form of assistance — thirty-nine per cent receiving Income Assistance and 19 per cent receiving Employment Insurance benefits.
- **Educational Level:** Sixty-eight per cent had grade 10 or less.
- **Reasons for Enrolling:** Forty-four per cent wanted to earn the secondary school equivalency diploma; 30 per cent wanted to attend community college; 29 per cent wanted to enter or re-enter the workforce.
- **Population Groups:** Thirty-six per cent of respondents identified as African-Canadian; 27 per cent as Acadian; 20 per cent as Aboriginal; and 3 per cent as Deaf.

152. The *Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy* provides profiles of adult learners in the territory that include their motivation and needs:

- ***Literacy, life skills, and basic education learners:*** Only 25 per cent of Inuit children graduate from secondary school in Nunavut, and the working-age population of Nunavut has the lowest literacy skill levels of any jurisdiction in Canada. This is by far the largest group of adult learners in Nunavut.
- ***Civic participation learners:*** This large group of learners is looking for training and development opportunities that will allow them to become more active members in their communities.
- ***Traditional activity learners:*** Over 85 per cent of the population of Nunavut is Inuit. Many of them are seeking opportunities that will help them to obtain traditional employment, while others are seeking to retain elements of the traditional Inuit lifestyle and culture and/or participate in the traditional economy.
- ***Trade- and employment-specific learners:*** This group is looking for specific training or education that will lead to long-term employment. Because of their low literacy levels, it may take these learners considerable time to prepare to enter these programs.
- ***Employed learners:*** Among those who are employed, many wish to, or need to increase their skill levels. Some in this group are well-educated, but many lack basic literacy skills.
- ***Professional learners:*** This group includes those who are interested in a postsecondary education in professional areas such as business management, finance, nursing, teacher education, and other programs. Many of them have completed (or almost completed) secondary school.

153. In Ontario, the Literacy and Basic Skills Program, including Academic Upgrading, assisted 51,000 learners in 2007–08, with 70 per cent of learners going on to further education and employment. The non-credit English and French second language training has helped over 100,000 newcomers get the training they need. Based on the information from school boards in 2007–08, the average daily enrolment in adult and continuing education credit programs is 24,000 learners.

154. In the document *Ontario Learns: Strengthening Our Adult Education System*, the broad picture of adult learning populations and their goals is presented:

- Students who want to complete the requirements for a secondary school diploma in order to pursue postsecondary education, an apprenticeship, or training — or to obtain employment.
- Newcomers to Ontario who want to gain the level of language skills they need in order to work in, contribute to, and participate in Canadian society.
- Parents who want to read to their children, talk to their children’s teachers, or understand how to help their children with their learning.

- Aboriginal people seeking to upgrade their skills in culturally appropriate settings that allow them to remain connected to their communities.
- Professionals and tradespeople trained or educated abroad who want to gain the level of language skills they need to obtain Canadian equivalency for their credentials and to work in their profession or trade.
- Employees trying to cope with the reading, writing, and numeracy demands of the workplace.
- People who want to read a ballot in order to vote, and to have their voices heard in the democratic processes.
- Francophones who want to achieve their learning goals through programs in their own language.
- People with disabilities who want the skills to participate more fully in the workplace or in the life of their communities.
- Men and women receiving social assistance who want to move toward self-sufficiency and to participate more fully in the economic life of the community.
- People who want to develop the literacy skills **they** need to participate in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century knowledge economy and society.
- Experienced workers who wish to upgrade their skills or learn new skills and participate in retraining opportunities designed to respond to industrial changes.
- People who want to better understand how to care for their own health and the health of their family members, and how to talk knowledgably to healthcare workers.
- Seniors who want to engage more fully in the life of **their** communities, **and** who want to keep their minds active and their bodies agile by participating in educational opportunities that interest them.

155. The participant numbers and profiles across jurisdictions do show some similarities in terms of the gender, age, and motivations of the learners. However, the programs in which they are participating have different emphases and providers and, consequently, are not directly comparable.

156. The Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes (ICEA) plays a key role in increasing the possibilities for and participation in adult education in Quebec because, for the past 60 years, it has brought together all the stakeholders in education and training for adults in order to promote the right and the opportunities to participate in lifelong learning. The ICEA has three objectives:

- a. Improve access to learning opportunities for all adults.
- b. By involving all possible stakeholders from all aspects of society, create a culture of lifelong learning and a commitment to the establishment of the conditions (whether local, national, or international) that would allow everyone to exercise his or her right to learn.

- c. Promote humanitarian and democratic educational values that support social cohesion, including citizenship education (democracy, environment, health), intercultural education, and education for all (those with less formal education, seniors, physically and mentally handicapped, marginalized and minority groups).

Crucial to their mission, the ICEA works not only *for* but also *with* the adult learners themselves to achieve their goals.

### ***Adult Education and Training Survey***

157. Statistics Canada, in partnership with Human Resources and Social Development Canada, conducted the Adult Education and Training Survey in 2003, to collect data on participation in formal and informal job-related training from more than 25,000 adults aged 25 and over.
158. The Survey showed that one out of every three adult workers (35 per cent) participated in some type of formal job-related training in 2002. This proportion was higher than the 29 per cent of workers who reported having taken formal training in the 1997 Survey. The results show that individual workers themselves were driving this growth, not the employers, and these workers were primarily those with higher levels of formal education.
159. Among the findings of the Survey were factors related to age, gender, education level, hours of training, employer support, informal learning, and the non-participants in training.
  - ***Age:*** Younger workers took more training than older workers; the training rate fell from 42 per cent for workers aged 25 to 34 years of age to 34 per cent for workers aged 35 to 54, and to 23 per cent for workers aged 55 to 64.
  - ***Gender:*** Training rates and time devoted to training varied by gender. Among men, the participation rate increased from 27 per cent in 1997 to 33 per cent in 2002, while the training hours remained the same at 153 hours. For women, the rate of participation in training increased from 31 per cent to 37 per cent between 1997 and 2002, but their hours of training decreased from 160 hours to 147.
  - ***Education Levels:*** In 2002, over half (52%) of the workers who had a university degree participated in formal job-related training, compared to 38 per cent for those with a college or trade certificate or diploma. The lowest rate (18%) occurred among the workers who had secondary school graduation or less.
  - ***Time:*** Participants in formal job-related training in 2002 received an average of 150 hours of training or about 25 days. The youngest workers, those aged 25 to 34, devoted the most time to training — about 250 hours. The workers who reported the fewest hours of training had some secondary school credits or had completed secondary studies; those who had some university education received the highest number of hours; in between were those who had completed university.
  - ***Employer-Sponsored Training:*** Participation in employer-sponsored training increased only slightly, rising from about 22 per cent in 1997 to 25 per cent in

2002. The employer's support could be payment for the training, flexible scheduling to accommodate training, payment for transportation to the training, or other forms of support. Close to 37 per cent of workers with a university degree received employer-supported training, compared with 13 per cent for employees with secondary school graduation. Similarly, employees in professional and managerial occupations had the highest rate of participation in employer-supported job-related training (35%), followed by those in clerical, sales, and service occupations (20%), and blue-collar workers (16%).

- ***Informal Job-Related Learning:*** This is defined as training that involves little or no reliance on pre-determined guidelines for its organization, delivery, or assessment, but is undertaken with the specific intention of developing job-related skills and knowledge. In 2002, 33 per cent of working adults engaged in informal job-related learning activities in the four weeks prior to the survey. Participation was higher among women than men (35% versus 30%) and among younger than older workers. As with formal job-related training, participation rates in informal learning were lowest for workers with the least formal education (16%) and rose with educational levels, reaching 50 per cent for workers with a university degree.
- ***Unmet Needs:*** About 16 per cent of workers had not taken any formal training in 2002 nor during the five-year period between the 1997 and 2002 studies. In addition, they had no expectations of taking any in the three years after the survey. More than one-half of these individuals had no education beyond secondary school and two-thirds were over the age of 45. As well, 28 per cent of respondents stated that there was job-related training they wanted or needed to take in 2002 but did not. Also reporting unmet training needs were those who had participated in job-related training and those with higher levels of education.

160. A 2006 Statistics Canada *Survey of Canadian Attitudes toward Learning* revealed that the vast majority of Canadians (92%) see a strong relationship between education and success in life. A related observation was that adults who had positive academic experiences in elementary and secondary school were far more likely to participate in work-related training.

- ***Reasons for Enrolment:*** More Canadians take work-related training to learn something new (73%) and to perform more effectively in their jobs (69%) than to earn more money (33%), because of employer requirements (31%), or to get a better job (31%). Receiving certification or a licence (31%), completing a degree or diploma (25%), and pursuing an advanced degree (16%) were also among the reasons cited.
- ***Reasons for Not Participating:*** Reasons that prevented participation in job-related training included “lack of need for training at this time” (55%), “too busy with work” (36%, more common for men than women), “too busy with family” (32%, more common for women than men), “course schedules conflict with other commitments” (24%), and courses are too expensive (22%, more common for women than men).

- **Unmet Needs:** For those who wanted job-related training but were unable to participate, the reasons for not participating were “too busy with work” (54%), “too busy with family” (50%), and “courses too expensive” (50%).

161. The patterns in workplace training are consistent across studies — those with higher levels of education, those in professional and managerial positions, and younger workers receive more training.

### **Monitoring and Evaluating Programs and Assessing Learner Outcomes**

162. The monitoring and evaluation of programs and assessment of learner outcomes can be approached from many levels. Goals and strategies for monitoring can be included in policies and plans for programs and in overviews of progress, and annual reports can discuss specific targets and their achievements; benchmarks and guides for programs can provide details on outcomes and skills that need to be reached; and individual programs can be tracked and assessed for effectiveness. Prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) is a form of learner assessment that is being more widely applied. This section of the report provides information on each of these methods.

163. In 2007–08, British Columbia reviewed and articulated learning outcomes and benchmarks between literacy service delivery sectors. Currently, literacy is measured using a range of frameworks and outcomes. A project was initiated to create a “crosswalk” of the different frameworks so that learners and literacy practitioners are able to see how their standing in one framework compares to their standing in another. This alignment of literacy learning outcomes will provide adult learners with the ability to transfer credits between systems. A second project looks at correlating literacy results with demographic variables to project future literacy needs and inform program developers how services can best be targeted to meet the literacy needs of different populations, including Aboriginals, immigrants, and others. British Columbia also entered into a partnership with Human Resources and Social Development Canada to jointly develop and administer the Canadian Literacy Evaluation, which will sample the general BC population, the Aboriginal population, and the immigrant population to determine a benchmark of literacy levels in the province.

164. The New Brunswick policy statement on adult and lifelong learning, *Lifelong Learning: Quality Adult Learning Opportunities*, released in 2005 by the Department of Training and Employment Development (now Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour) included specific 10-year targets:

- Participation rate in adult education and learning will increase by 25 per cent.
- New Brunswick will rank among the top five provinces in the proportion of residents with postsecondary credentials.
- Adult literacy rates will increase to meet the Canadian average.
- Eighty per cent of Community Adult Learning Program participants will participate in a prior learning assessment and recognition process.



- The number of workplace Essential Skills certificates will be comparable to the number of GED certificates issued.

New Brunswick's November 2007 Throne Speech outlined government plans to release a literacy strategy to support the targeted goal of increasing literacy to levels necessary for self-sufficiency.

165. The *Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy* outlined actions to be taken regarding evaluation when initiating new programs, including instituting measures to evaluate the effectiveness of adult education programming and developing evaluative structures to help measure the attainment of program goals, objectives, and standards of quality. More steps are to be taken toward accountability as well, with the development of an evaluation framework that can be adapted for use with formal literacy programs and non-formal programs delivered at the community level. Performance measurement training programs for staff are being developed to ensure that evaluative procedures are followed consistently.
166. In 2005, the Northwest Territories (NWT) published *Towards Excellence: A Report of Postsecondary Education in the NWT*. This is a compendium of statistics on educational attainment levels, funding, enrolment, and completion in NWT postsecondary education. Among the statistics are those on the student in the Adult Literacy and Basic Education, especially at Aurora College. The data include the enrolments over 12 years, courses taken, student performance and completion rates in adult literacy and basic education, and graduate satisfaction with the programs.
167. One of the most used tools for benchmarking, assessment, and design is Essential Skills, identified and validated through extensive research by the Government of Canada and other national and international agencies. The nine Essential Skills are i) reading text, ii) document use, iii) numeracy, iv) writing, v) oral communications, vi) working with others, vii) continuous learning, viii) thinking skills, and ix) computer use. Profiles have been developed to describe how each of the Essential Skills is used by workers in particular occupations; profiles of approximately 250 Essential Skills are available for the occupations in the National Occupational Classification. To date, profiles have been completed for all occupations requiring a secondary school education or less. Research is ongoing to complete the occupations requiring university, college, or apprenticeship training. The profiles can be used to learn about the skills needed in various jobs, to develop workplace training programs or learning plans, and to create educational tools.
168. Linking assessment to the Essential Skills, Bow Valley College in Alberta has developed the Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES) as an effective assessment that uses authentic workplace documents to accurately measure three of the essential skills that are needed for safe and productive employment — reading text, document use, and numeracy. Curriculum and training plans are available to address the gaps in workers' skills.
169. The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) is using the Essential Skills as the basis of a new adult literacy curriculum and associated framework for measuring learners' attainment of skills. The results of the assessments will be expressed as scores on the same scale as those used by Essential Skills and the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey. The data are the basis of the measures of

effectiveness used in the performance management system of Employment Ontario. The Ministry of Education is cooperating on this initiative.

170. The Conference Board of Canada developed *Employability Skills 2000+*, a list of the critical skills needed for the workplace. The skills are presented in three categories: the first category, Fundamental Skills, includes “communicate,” “manage information,” “use numbers,” and “think and solve problems.” The Personal Management Skills are to “demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours,” “be responsible,” “be adaptable,” “learn continuously,” and “work safely.” The final category, Teamwork, includes the skills of “working with others” and “participating in projects and tasks.” To support this, the Conference Board has the *Employability Skills Toolkit for the Self-Managing Learner* designed to help learners identify, reflect on, and develop their skills.
171. The Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks is the centre of expertise established to support the national standards in English and French for describing, measuring, and recognizing the second language proficiency of adult immigrants and prospective immigrants for living and working in Canada. The Centre promotes the use of their benchmarks as practical, fair, reliable national standards of second language proficiency throughout Canada in educational, training, community, and workplace settings.
172. The Saskatchewan Literacy Network and the Department of Advanced Education and Employment, with funding support from Human Resources and Social Development Canada, have been working to develop *Saskatchewan Adult Literacy Benchmarks, Levels 1 and 2*. The Project Advisory Committee includes adult learners, literacy practitioners from public institutions and community-based organizations, administrators, and policymakers; it has a membership that is representative of First Nations and Métis as well as rural, urban, and northern communities. The Benchmarks present learning outcomes for literacy that include communications, numeracy, lifelong learning, and interpersonal skills. The Benchmarks have been established to provide ways to document and recognize learner accomplishment and achievements, to enhance learner transitions between literacy levels and across programs, and to facilitate delivery organizations in the development of programs and the appropriate placement of learners within the programs and courses.
173. Literacy programs are also a focus in Manitoba where a curriculum framework for the *Certificate in Literacy and Learning Stages 1-3* is currently used by learners in all literacy programs. This provides a structured process within which learners complete specific work and demonstrate competencies before progressing to the next level. Upon completion of all required work for each stage, the learner receives a certificate in Literacy and Learning from the Department of Advanced Education and Literacy. This literacy curriculum has been aligned with the provincial curriculum so that learners completing Stage 3 can receive two credits toward the “Mature Student” diploma.
174. Manitoba has developed the *Good Practice Guide Program Analysis for Adult and Family Literacy Programs 2007-2008*. The Program Analysis is a qualitative assessment tool for the evaluation of progress in the literacy program and methods of program improvement. Surveys are provided for literacy group coordinators, instructors,

volunteers, and learners. It is intended to be used by literacy groups for self-analysis. There is also a summary outline for pulling together key issues that arise from the information gathered.

175. The Literacy Initiatives Secretariat of the Department of Education in Prince Edward Island undertakes an annual evaluation of the literacy and adult basic education programs. Quantitative questionnaires are distributed to instructors and to learners in all three levels of the literacy program. In 2002, a researcher went out to the literacy programs and distributed the questionnaires, working with some of the students in the lower levels so that they were better able to respond to the questions. Recommendations arising from the research focused on the learning environments, resources, intake procedures, the number of students enrolled, and the students' level of personal development.
176. In Newfoundland and Labrador, an evaluation of Level 1 of Adult Basic Education was completed in 2004. The pilot project was put in place to test the program delivery model over a two-year period, to collect information on student needs throughout the province, and to identify barriers experienced by students in meeting these needs. The evaluation focused on the appropriateness of the program and learning environments in meeting the needs of the learners, the student/teacher ratio, the effectiveness of the partnership arrangements at the local sites, access and recruitment, and barriers to participation and success. Using the results of the evaluation study, staff made changes to the program, which was then implemented province-wide.
177. In 2005, Newfoundland and Labrador published *Foundations for Success: White Paper on Public Post-Secondary Education*, a report emphasizing a learning culture that values education for all citizens and emphasizes the need for a postsecondary system that addresses lifelong learning and promotes equity. In *All the Skills to Succeed: Report of the Newfoundland and Labrador Skills Task Force*, adult learners are presented as integral to ensuring a sufficiently skilled and competitive workforce. Its recommendations include enhancing access to adult basic education and literacy programs and encouraging greater participation and success in workplace education opportunities. In 2007, Newfoundland and Labrador announced its intention to develop a *Strategic Adult Literacy Plan*.
178. The Adult Learning Program in Nova Scotia is an outcomes-based education program for adults who do not have a secondary school diploma. The Program consists of four levels of courses which range from basic literacy to secondary school completion. Each course document provides instructors and tutors with specific learning outcomes organized into units of study; as well, it provides ideas for teaching, learning, assessment, and resources. In the spring of 2007, an extensive five-year follow-up survey was undertaken in Nova Scotia to gather feedback from adult learners who had completed a Nova Scotia High School Graduate Diploma. The results showed that the overwhelming majority of graduates went on to postsecondary education or to the workplace feeling that they were well prepared for the future.
179. Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a process that helps adults to demonstrate and obtain recognition for learning that they acquired through work and life experiences. Assessment and recognition of prior learning is used in academic and non-

academic settings and involves comparing the adult's learning achievements to standards or requirements set by credentialing bodies. There can also be a self-assessment component to PLAR in which an individual develops a portfolio of work and achievements. PLAR focuses on what adults know and can do, and can be used as a tool to

- help older workers with or without formal credentials identify their prior learning and have it assessed for employability or certification reasons;
- assist immigrants who require recognition of the competencies they acquired in their home countries or outside Canada;
- assist marginalized groups who have not had their learning valued for a number of reasons;
- support human resource managers and career counselling practitioners to support adults who have work and life experience but little confidence in their skills and abilities.

180. In Canada, most public colleges recognize prior learning in at least some of their programs. Some universities also recognize it — often in programs offered through continuing education. British Columbia, Quebec, and Ontario offer PLAR to adults at the secondary school level also, particularly for those who have not yet completed their programs. For example, in Ontario, the Ministry of Education provides funding to school boards to offer prior learning assessment and recognition to adult learners who are working toward a secondary school certificate or diploma. The process has two key components: a) the challenge process refers to the assessment of prior learning for the awarding of credit for a course developed from a provincial curriculum policy document; b) equivalency involves the assessment of credentials from other educational jurisdictions.

181. In 2003, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) funded a report entitled *A Spring 2003 Snapshot of the Current Status of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) in Canada's Public Postsecondary Institutions*. The report was prepared by the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA), a national membership organization providing annual professional development conferences since 1994. CAPLA also has developed a community of practice and a national electronic repository of PLAR resources and research appropriate for both adult learners and practitioners. In 2006, CAPLA initiated an International Prior Learning Assessment Network (IPLAN) to expedite the sharing of resources and best practices on the Web.

182. In November 2007, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada published a series of detailed reports on PLAR as a part of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's activity on the recognition of formal and non-formal learning. As well as a pan-Canadian overview, *OECD Activity – Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (RHFIL): Report on Provincial/Territorial Activities and pan-Canadians Overview*, extensive reports from each of the jurisdictions are provided.

183. A number of jurisdictions have local PLAR networks, such as the Manitoba PLA Network, and there are PLAR policy frameworks in provinces, including Manitoba,

Saskatchewan, and Quebec. For example, in Quebec, PLAR is a priority in the *Governmental Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training (Politique gouvernementale d'éducation des adultes et de formation continue)*. Thousands of adults call on PLAR services every year.

184. The 23 Sector Councils in Canada play an important role in looking at and improving education and training. The Sector Councils represent economic activities within the economy by bringing together corporate executives, owner-operators of smaller firms, employees, union leaders, and government representatives to improve the quality of the labour force and to assist firms in meeting the challenges of change. Among the key issues that the Councils address is that of ensuring that training prepares new employees and existing staff to meet international quality requirements. A number of Canada's Sector Councils have been funded through the Foreign Credential Recognition Program at Human Resources and Social Development Canada to develop PLAR systems as a way of managing the human resource needs in their sectors, especially with regard to the skills and knowledge of the foreign-trained. Some are using PLAR to assess and recognize the competencies of their existing workforces or to assist workers in transition due to downturns in particular sectors of the economy. In some cases, Sector Councils also exist at the provincial level and are active in supporting education, training, and human resource development.
185. The PLA Centre in Nova Scotia has been offering its program to help learners develop their learning portfolios since 1996. A 2002 evaluation of the program stressed the importance of the portfolio development process for adult learners. It was seen that the learning and personal change generated by portfolio development resulted in real progress in career planning, participation in further education and training, and success in getting jobs and in the workplace. The respondents to the survey stated that their lack of self-esteem and weak self-presentation skills were major constraints on their employability and participation in education and training. The portfolio process was an essential support for those facing barriers of poverty, low formal schooling, social isolation, and lack of workplace experience.
186. The Canadian Institute for Recognizing Learning is dedicated to improving the ways in which knowledge and skills are recognized across Canada. It works with educators, workplaces, governments, and occupational groups to implement strategies like PLAR for recognizing learning, to develop standards and processes for quality assurance, and to facilitate the integration of immigrants. In 2006, the Institute released *Principles for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition* as a guide to the development of criteria for PLAR in academic and workplace settings.
187. A final example of assessment for adult learners is Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR), which is the process of verifying that the education and job experience obtained in another country are equal to the standards established for Canadian professionals. Credential recognition for regulated occupations is mainly a provincial and territorial responsibility that has been delegated in legislation to regulatory bodies. The Government of Canada, through the Department of Human Resources and Social Development, plays a facilitative and funding role. The Government is providing \$68 million over six years to

implement the FCR program and to fund initiatives aimed at its improvement. The objectives of the program are to ensure that FCR processes are fair, accessible, coherent, transparent, and rigorous.

### **Status and Training of Adult Educators and Facilitators**

188. The guidelines for the preparation of this report ask for information about the terms of employment, conditions, remuneration, numbers of and required qualifications for adult educators. Given the that there is a wide variation of mandates, structures, funding sources, methods of operation among the extensive range of employers — colleges, school boards, universities, training institutes, community groups, private training companies, business and industry, governments, literacy groups, unions, etc — information on these factors is not available. Adult educators in Canada range from volunteer literacy tutors to heads of departments in universities and corporations. Some information is provided below in response to the questions on higher education institutions with adult education programs and the types of continuing and in-service training offered.

189. In terms of higher education institutions, a search of the program database of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada reveals that degree, diploma, and certificate programs in adult education are available in 22 universities and university colleges in Canada. Among the programs offered are 13 certificates, 7 diplomas, 11 bachelor degrees, 18 master's degrees, and 4 doctorates. A number of universities and university colleges also offer programs for instructors in Aboriginal adult education and literacy. The Association of Canadian Community Colleges database lists 11 colleges, institutes, and university colleges that provide adult education degrees, diplomas, and certificates.

190. Ongoing professional development and in-service training for those who teach and facilitate in adult education and literacy programs are often provided by the employers. Provincial and territorial governments provide funding for the training of instructors in community-based and literacy programs. Colleges, school boards, private training companies, and others may provide in-service training for their adult education staff that responds to the needs of the organizations. Literacy organizations provide much of the professional development for literacy workers and volunteers in each jurisdiction.

191. In Manitoba, the Department of Advanced Education and Literacy provides in-service workshops for adult literacy and adult learning centre tutors and teachers, volunteers, members of Literacy Working Groups, program managers, and, where appropriate, teachers in schools and English-as-a-Second-Language instructors. Some of these workshops are courses that provide a credit, such as the Literacy Practitioner and Tutor Professional Development Certificate Program. The Department also provides access to other training events, practitioner training materials, and distance education materials.

192. Community Literacy of Ontario and the Ontario Association of Adult and Continuing Education School Board Administrators (CESBA) offer a range of resources and Web-based training modules to provide support and training for new and experienced literacy

instructors; they have special units for family and workplace literacy and for administrators of adult and continuing education programs. In 2007-08, the Ministry of Education funded CESBA to provide training to adult educators to support the implementation of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition for Mature Students services. CESBA also offers biannual conferences that include pre-conference workshops for the administrators and practitioners in the school board's adult and continuing education programs.

193. In Alberta, the Department of Advanced Education and Technology funds professional development for staff and volunteers of community-based agencies through the Centre for Family Literacy, the Community Learning Network, and Literacy Alberta. Professional development topics include learner outcomes, facilitation skills, stress management, goal setting, Internet safety, funding sources, embedding literacy, learners facing barriers, board development, marketing, essential skills, lesson planning, and building working partnerships. Adult learning organizations also receive coaching on strategic and long-term planning, board and staff retention and teamwork, bylaw and policy review and revision, needs assessment, staff performance evaluation, and financial management.
194. The Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports in Quebec offers information sessions to school board personnel on new study programs in basic education, program evaluation, and the implementation of new services for adult learners.
195. One of the objectives in the Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy is to provide ongoing professional development for existing adult educators and instructors, including programs for Inuit educators and teachers interested in teaching adults. The actions toward this goal include completing assessments of the skills and teaching abilities of current adult educators and instructors (including PLAR), as well as developing certification standards and a program to ensure certification and continued career progress. The anticipated result would be that adult educators would be required to become certified, with the government supporting the process by delivering professional development opportunities.
196. The Adult Education Division of the Department of Labour and Workplace Development in Nova Scotia partners with Literacy NS to provide a comprehensive program of professional development for practitioners. The curriculum development unit is also responsible for workshops and in-service opportunities in the areas of learning disabilities, numeracy, language arts, and communication. There is a 30-hour tutor-training program which leads to certification so that the recipients may tutor adults.
197. In 2000, the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment created benchmarks for PLAR Practitioners and, more recently, developed competency profiles with the help of member organizations. The PLA Centre in Nova Scotia offers training to portfolio facilitators and those who advocate and advise adults and assess adult learning. Some community colleges have been or are developing training for PLAR practitioners.
198. These are only a few examples of the myriad of programs available to adult educators. In some cases, the training is optional; in others, adult educators must achieve a specific qualification. Due to the widespread nature of adult education and learning and the lack

of research on the working conditions and status of adult educators, specific information on their status and training cannot be provided.

## **Research, Innovation, and Good Practice**

### **Research Studies**

199. Research in adult education and learning comprises a wide spectrum of approaches and topics, from the jurisdiction-wide studies for long-term planning to the more specific projects exploring skills, literacy, access, and other issues. The preceding sections have referenced a number of substantive reports undertaken in the last few years. A few further examples are provided in this section to highlight the role of research, especially that involving community consultation, in planning and delivering adult education.

200. In Ontario, the Adult Education Review was launched in 2004 at the request of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities. The goal of the review was to propose a policy framework for adult education and recommend actions that would support and improve adult learning in Ontario. The focus was on the specific programs that help adults to gain access to further education and training, gain or keep employment, or participate more fully in the life of their communities. A discussion paper was posted on the Web that asked the following questions:

- Is there a need to have an Ontario definition for adult education? What would such a definition include?
- How are adult education, training, and upgrading opportunities addressing current and anticipated economic and social challenges?
- What can be done within existing budgets to enhance learning opportunities?
- If an opportunity to reallocate resources arises, what are the leading priorities for reinvestment?
- Do you agree with the elements for a framework that are described in this discussion paper? What would you change or add?
- How can we improve the results and outcomes for adult learners in Ontario?

Stakeholders shared their opinions through 20 meetings and numerous written submissions. In the final report, *Ontario Learns: Strengthening Our Adult Education System*, the respondents' input was organized into sections on adult education as a key component of Ontario's education system, learner pathways, integration of programs, partnerships, accountability, outcomes, funding, access to adult education, information and communications technology in adult education, and innovation and excellence in teaching and learning.



201. The Saskatchewan Department of Advanced Education and Employment (now Advanced Education, Employment, and Labour) completed the *Post-Secondary Education Accessibility and Affordability Review Final Report* in October 2007. This research included training and adult basic education, especially in terms of access to adequate financial supports, providing culturally relevant supports for Aboriginal learners, early intervention initiatives, extension of learning opportunities, seamless credit transfers, student support and information, and recognition of prior learning.

202. Quebec's support of research in the area of academic achievement is evident in the Program of Research on Scholastic Perseverance and Achievement. Priorities in terms of adult education have been articulated, and a committee is charged with calling for and receiving research proposals, analyzing the submissions, and choosing those to be funded. Procedures for follow-up and transfer of knowledge have also been put in place to ensure that the findings are widely distributed.

203. The Government of Manitoba is concerned about the literacy challenge in the province. In order to stimulate renewed action, a minister responsible for literacy has been identified, and legislation in the form of *The Adult Literacy Act* has been passed (effective January 1, 2009); it requires the development of an adult literacy strategy to address the needs of its citizens. The act also established the Manitoba Adult Literacy Program as a component of the strategy in order to commit to ongoing support for agencies that offer literacy programs for adults. *Adult Literacy in Manitoba: A Discussion Paper* was issued in April 2008 as part of the process of developing this strategy. Some of the questions that stakeholders were asked to consider are

- What literacy-related competencies are necessary for an individual's meaningful participation in Manitoba in the year 2016?
- What are the best ways to raise the literacy levels of all Manitobans?
- What are the best ways to raise the literacy levels of those with the greatest needs?
- What should be the key goals and components of an adult literacy strategy?
- In a literacy strategy, what are the key roles for governments, industry, individuals and community?
- What would be an ideal literacy promotion campaign?
- Should literacy be a high public policy priority?
- How should we measure progress of the literacy strategy?

204. The Premier of New Brunswick established the Premier's Community Non-Profit Task Force, because it was evident that the community non-profit sector needed revitalization after years of neglect and instability. The government sector, the private sector, and the community non-profit sector are described as intertwined and equally necessary. The role of the Task Force was to recommend to the government how it could develop a partnership with the non-profit sector that would strengthen the ability of the sector to function effectively as the third pillar of socioeconomic development. Adult education

and learning are implicated through the community groups who provide adult basic education, literacy, second language, and skills training. The report, *Blueprint for Action: Building a Foundation for Self-Sufficiency*, brought forward a series of observations that relate to adult learning community groups as well as those with other functions. The observations are presented under the general heading of Change Needed:

- An attitude shift and an investment strategy
- A regional, lateral, integrated approach to community-based services
- The stability to allow non-profits to work at the level of root causes rather than symptoms
- A transformation from “civil service” to “public service”
- Investment in community-based economic development
- Recognition of the value of volunteering as a means of engagement, and a strategy to encourage it

The key recommendations of the task force involved stabilization of funding, respect and recognition, a culture of volunteering, and revitalization of the partnership with government.

205. Yukon College is currently undergoing a strategic planning process that includes its delivery of adult learning and literacy programming. A *Strategic Planning Workbook* has been prepared, which is based on the *Report on Stakeholder Consultation* and meetings of the Board. The workbook offers suggested vision statements, goals, values, and strategic directions, framed by what had been heard at the consultations and providing ample room for comments, suggestions, and recommended objectives and actions.

206. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador established a Skills Task Force in March 2006 in light of changing demands, needs, and opportunities within the skilled labour market of the province. Members were appointed to the Task Force from government, academic and training institutions, business and industry, labour unions, industry associations, development groups and other agencies. The work of the Task Force involved research and consultation to identify and develop strategies to ensure an appropriate and responsive training, education, and support system to meet demands and to ensure that graduates were prepared to participate fully in emerging opportunities. The 2007 report, *All the Skills to Succeed*, presented the themes that emerged and formed the basis of the action plan:

- Changing attitudes toward skilled work and encouraging greater participation
- Improving access, performance and outcomes
- Improving apprenticeship programs and opportunities for journeypersons
- Supporting access for under-represented groups
- Retaining and recruiting skilled workers
- Assessing and responding to industry needs

- Ensuring strong partnerships
- Priorities set to address concerns over shortage in specific areas

207. The Northern Workplace/Workforce Literacy Partnership is a group of educators, employers, and government officials from Nunavut and the Northwest Territories with a strong interest in workplace and workforce literacy development in the north. In November 2007, the Partnership, the Nunavut Literacy Council, and the NWT Literacy Council, with the support of Human Resources and Social Development Canada, published *Improving Essential Skills for Work and Community: Workplace and Workforce Literacy*. The purpose of the paper was to provide information and analysis and to make recommendations about how to improve workplace and workforce literacy in Nunavut and NWT. The points that the research addresses include

- Why we should care about workplace and workforce literacy
- Workforce and workplace literacy participation
- Nunavut and NWT stakeholders for workplace and workforce literacy
- Nunavut and NWT economic, social, and cultural context for workplace and workforce literacy
- Elements of best practice for effective workplace and workforce literacy in Nunavut and NWT

The appendices provide a list of basic tools and resources for workplace and workforce literacy and the summary of eight collaborative models. The recommendations, directed to all stakeholders and to the federal, territorial, and Aboriginal governments, include the forming of a collaborative relationship, developing an essential skills strategy, offering incentives for employers to provide a literacy program, and deciding on actions, timetables, funding, and responsibilities in order to move forward on an extensive list of possible action areas.

208. The Francophone Coalition for Literacy and Basic Skills Training in Ontario (Coalition francophone pour l'alphabétisation et la formation de base en Ontario) is a non-profit organization promoting literacy and basic skills and offering support to Francophone service providers across Ontario. The Coalition was established in 1999 and works with community groups and colleges in 29 communities in Ontario. The key activities include research, analysis, and training, including current studies looking at issues of family literacy, literacy and families living in minority situations, motivations of learners, obstacles encountered, best practices, and the impact of literacy. In addition, resources are being developed for language learning and improved integration for immigrants and for literacy program managers.

209. Family literacy is particularly important in the lives of francophones living in minority situations. In March 2008, the Canadian Federation for Literacy in French (Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français, FCAF) hosted a conference on family literacy that explored issues including health and literacy, the role of parents, and the promotion of reading in a family context. As well as a declaration, the conference

resulted in the establishment of an FCAF network of experts dedicated to family literacy. The FCAF publishes an annual review of literacy in Canada and elsewhere, entitled *À Lire*, and a semi-annual journal for francophone literacy learners, *Bulletin Mosaïque*. Under the auspices of the FCAF, a network of researchers who focus on literacy in French in Canada has been set up.

210. In May 2008, the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC) released the report *Opportunities for Everyone: Programs and services for disadvantaged and low-skilled learners offered at colleges and institutes*. The focus was on learners who may be marginalized, unemployed, or employed in low-wage jobs, lacking secondary school completion, or under-prepared for postsecondary level programs at colleges and institutes. The study included a review of existing research and resources as well as interviews and survey responses from 52 colleges and institutes across Canada. The report presents a process model for effective programs and service delivery for disadvantaged and low-skilled learners, listing the full range of support services offered to students in colleges. Not every college offers all of these services; each institute provides the services best suited to its learners and within the possibilities of its funding:

- academic, personal, financial, and diversity and anti-discrimination counselling
- tutoring and/or peer tutoring
- Aboriginal-specific services (gathering places, Elders)
- mature student services and associations
- daycare
- financial assistance information
- emergency financial assistance
- student mentorship
- health and mental health services
- career and employment counselling
- work placements and internships
- case manager services for personal contact and regular support
- immigrant-specific services
- social worker services
- leaves of absence for health and family reasons
- English- and French-second-language services
- job search support
- job coaches and mentors
- transportation support
- support to find housing

- stress management skills
- learning skills development
- accommodation for physical and learning disabilities
- proactive orientation approaches, including with spouse or parents

211. The ACCC report also provides extensive information on the promising practices and lessons learned among colleges and institutes, including issues of recruitment and promotion, the barriers faced by disadvantaged learners, the variety of assessment services, support services, education and training programs (including literacy and basic skills, adult upgrading and adult basic education, college preparatory courses, programs specifically for learners with disabilities or special needs, English and French second language programs, career and employment preparation), funding sources and funding challenges for the institutions and the learners, and institutional policies and structures. The main lessons learned included

- More individualized services must be provided that account for learners' life experiences and the barriers they face that make participation in education programs and retraining difficult
- The success of programs for this client group depends on a strong long-term commitment to providing the mix of support services and tailored programs that best address the needs of particular groups of disadvantaged learners.
- The expected increase in demand for this type of programming means the colleges and institutes will have to develop more programs that combine literacy, adult upgrading, and postsecondary courses, and that tie in employment-readiness training and the required support services.
- The delivery of support services must be more proactive to engage the learners at the beginning of their programs and to follow through to facilitate their transition to the world of work.
- The necessity of continuing to work with community partners such as literacy organizations, community service agencies, nongovernmental organizations, agencies serving immigrants, First Nations Bands and Aboriginal organizations, school boards, business and industry, provincial and territorial programs, community-based learning and literacy councils, and the Chambers of Commerce.

212. The Canadian Policy Research Networks (CPRN) undertook a study to document the availability of learning opportunities for adults, to identify factors that influence the participation of less-educated/less-skilled adults, and to assess the effectiveness of adult learning systems in Canada. The resulting report, *Too Many Left Behind: Canada's Adult Education and Training Systems*, found that access to learning opportunities — whether second chances in the formal education system, through government-funded programs in the community, or through employer-sponsored training — is generally poor for less-educated adults in Canada. The CPRN report, published in June 2006, puts forward a set of principles for reform and recommends some steps toward more coherent, navigable, and effective adult learning systems.

213. The Canadian Council on Social Development's (CCSD) project, *Literacy Programs in the Workplace: How to Increase Employer Support*, followed up on the results of the international literacy surveys and other reports documenting low literacy levels among many Canadian workers. (For more information on these results, see the section of this report on Literacy.) The goals of the CCSD project were to help identify the types of approaches to workplace literacy training — internationally and across Canada — that might appeal to employers. Interviews were held with select employers across Canada to determine whether there was an agreement on the types of approaches, incentives, and literacy programs that worked best in a range of employment environments. As part of this project, research was conducted for three working papers:

- *Canadian Literature Review and Bibliography* examines various perspectives and approaches to workplace literacy taken by different stakeholders and discusses current research on the benefits of workplace literacy programs for both employers and workers.
- *Overview of Selected International Programs* examines the conditions for adult education and training, including literacy in eight OECD countries.
- *Overview of Provincial and Territorial Policies* examines the current policies and programs for adult education and workplace literacy across Canada.

In addition, case studies on workplace literacy were conducted in three provinces, Nova Scotia, Ontario, and Quebec.

214. The report, *A Review of the State of the Field of Workplace Learning: What We Know and What We Need to Know about Competencies, Diversity, E-Learning, and Human Performance Improvement*, was prepared by the Canadian Society for Training and Development. The purpose of the field review was to provide a summary of current research on workplace learning and performance, as well as provide recommendations for further research.

215. The Foreign Credential Recognition Program of Human Resources and Social Development Canada funded a study in which the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition looked at best practices in the recognition and assessment of immigrant learning. The 2006 publication, *Recognizing the Prior Learning of Immigrants to Canada: Moving towards Consistency and Excellence*, looked at seven principles upon which exemplary recognition of prior learning system for foreign-trained individuals could be based.

216. The Centre for the Study of Work and Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto hosts the Work and Lifelong Learning (WALL) project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. WALL is a network that includes investigators from universities, community groups, and professional institutions working to identify gaps in workplace training and education in Canada and bring visibility to current learning and work issues and trends. The research generated by the network provides a better understanding of current learning practices, processes, and environments; as well, it contributes to the production of valuable resources for instructor training, workplace innovation, and government initiatives. The

work of the WALL Network is led by David Livingstone who is Director of the Centre for the Study of Work and Education.

217. Also at the University of Toronto, the Research Network on New Approaches to Lifelong Learning was composed of more than 50 researchers and collaborators looking at relations between informal learning and formal/non-formal education and the major social barriers to integrating informal learning with formal/non-formal programs and certification. The Network functioned from 1996 to 2002, when it was expanded into the WALL Network described above. In 2006, a publication, *NALL Working Papers: Annotated Bibliography of Studies based on Data from the Research Network on New Approaches to Lifelong Learning*, was produced to gather together the extensive research on lifelong learning.
218. In 2007, a report entitled *ALFICan: Adult Learner Friendly Institutions Canada* was released. The major goal of the initiative, funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada, was to improve education and training opportunities for adult learners by developing a comprehensive set of principles for use by a variety of institutions and community-based organizations to assess their services to adult learners. Fifteen project partners from across Canada assessed their services using a self-evaluation scale. The partners included not only educational institutions but also an employment counselling agency, a municipal human resources department, a labour union, and four government-funded adult learning centres. This reflects Canada's inclusive approach to the provision of adult learning services. The principles for the assessment included outreach, life and career planning, financing, assessment of learning outcomes, the teaching-learning process, student support systems, technology, and strategic partnerships.
219. Canada has a number of inclusive databases for literacy and other adult learning resources and research. The National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) is an information network that provides access to literacy resources, newsletters, experts, organization associations, Internet resources, and full-text documents and books in French and in English. It is a free service available to learners, practitioners, and others with an interest in literacy, with a constantly updated calendar that advertises literacy events and activities across the country. In 2006–07, NALD registered over nine million users on its Web site who accessed over 28 million pages.
220. Two significant on-line directories feature Canadian literacy research, including research in progress — the *Directory of Canadian Adult Literacy Research in English* and *Le Répertoire canadien des recherches en alphabétisation des adultes en français* (RÉCRAF), which became as of April 2008 *COMPAS* in a move to include research on adult education and training in general. Some documents are found in both guides but most of the materials are unique to each directory. The English-language directory was developed by the Canadian Centre for Research on Literacy in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta.
221. *COMPAS* is the research directory produced and kept current by the *Centre de documentation sur l'éducation des adultes et la condition féminine* (CDÉACF) (Research Centre on Adult Education and the Status of Women), with assistance from an advisory committee of 14 researchers and practitioners from across Canada. It is an

exhaustive list of reports and research in the areas of education, training, and literacy in francophone Canada and is published on the Internet. The goal of COMPAS is to promote research and knowledge exchange among researchers and practitioners. The Web site of COMPAS provides access to current research, activities, up-to-date information, events, links to documents and specialized journals, organizations, institutes and research centres at the national and international levels. It also gives access to a forum for virtual exchanges about issues in the field. CDEACF publishes 4 monthly newsletters: COMPAS INFO, *Pour voir plus loin*, *Bulletin Éducation et formation des adultes*, and *Horizon Alpha*.

In partnership with the *Fédération canadienne de l'alphabétisation en français* (Canadian Federation for Literacy in French) CDEACF established a Canadian network for research in French.

CDEACF is a not-for-profit organization and a national documentation and specialized information service. It offers consultation, reference, information, training, and facilitation services to francophone communities in Canada. Its catalogue of over 25,000 titles, of which 20% are of the complete texts, is accessible on the Web. This substantive virtual collection allows the downloading of more than 12,000,000 pages yearly.

222. Key professional associations are integral to research and knowledge exchange concerning adult learning and education in Canada. The Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE) promotes the study of adult education through research, communication, collaboration, and knowledge exchange. CASAE publishes a refereed journal, *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, in addition to newsletters, directories, and conference proceedings, and hosts an annual conference. The Canadian Association for University Continuing Education works to enlarge the scope and quality of educational opportunities for adults at the university level by enhancing the stature and expertise of those institutions and individuals devoted to providing those opportunities. The Association's journal, *The Canadian Journal of University Continuing Education*, publishes research relevant to all those working in continuing education and encourages dialogue about the key issues and challenges.
223. In 2000, a conference organized by three key francophone organizations, the FCAF, and la Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada brought together educators, researchers, government officials, learners, and others concerned with literacy in French. The conference, Towards a Fully Literate Society (Pour une société pleinement alphabétisé), produced a detailed report that looked at the realities, challenges, possibilities, experiences, best practices, lessons learned, and the future needs. It was clearly stated that the literacy needs of francophones are greater than those of anglophones and that the resources allocated to programs and services for francophones in minority settings are seriously inadequate.
224. Adult education research in Canada is also represented in books that explore many of the issues raised in this document as well as other themes brought forward at CONFINTEA V and in its resulting publications. Only a very few of the most recent publications can be noted:



- English, Leona. *International Encyclopaedia of Adult Education*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan 2005. The book contains more than 170 articles written by international contributors and detailing the research and practice in adult education from its emergence as a separate discipline to the present day.
- Fenwick, Tara, Tom Nesbit, and Bruce Spencer. *Contexts of adult education: Canadian perspectives*. Toronto, Thompson Educational Publishing, 2006. A series of essays explore the historical, philosophical, socioeconomic, community, and practice contexts to provide an overview of adult education in Canada.
- Gaskell, Jane and Kjell Rubenson. *Educational outcomes for the Canadian workplace: New frameworks for policy and research*. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2004. The changes in educational programs, the skills that matter in the new economy, and the policy responses to the educational and economic pressures of the 1990s are addressed in this volume.
- Spencer, Bruce. *The purposes of adult education: A short introduction*. Toronto, Thompson Educational Publishing, 2006. This book focuses on three key dimensions of adult education — education for the economy, education for social change, and education for diversity, with attention to historical roots, best practice, distance education, and computer-mediated instruction.

225. Many of these examples of research relied on the input and participation of the learners, employers, instructors, and teachers — in other words, those most directly involved in the design, delivery, success, and impact of the adult learning program. Consequently, their results and recommendations were directed toward policy development, strategic and action plans, the improvement of accessibility and effectiveness, and the development of collaborative relationships.

## **Innovation and Best Practice**

226. Throughout this report, many examples of innovation and best practice have been provided — whether concerned with policy, financing, provision, measurement, or research. In this section, only a few further examples are described, highlighting initiatives and activities introduced in 2008 as new or enhanced responses to the needs of adult learners.

227. The Innovation Fund in Alberta, which is part of the Access to the Future Fund, seeks to increase access, affordability, and the quality of the postsecondary system, as well as the community education and literacy programs. The Access to the Future Fund receives income from an endowment that currently stands at \$1 billion. This year (2008) is the first year that Innovation Fund Grants are being awarded. Fifteen leading-edge projects that promote innovation, collaboration, and participation received \$7.9 million from the Innovation Fund in January. Examples of the funded projects are:

- Best practices for attracting and retaining learners from under-represented populations
- Child-care training for low literacy immigrant women

- An Alberta non-profit/voluntary sector community capacity innovation project that aims to give 169 organizations access to the SuperNet and videoconferencing technology to increase access to learning opportunities
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition at Yellowhead Tribal College to assess the knowledge and skills of Aboriginal people

228. According to the latest predictions, Quebec will have 700,000 jobs to fill by 2011. In the 2008–09 Budget Speech, the government affirmed that education is the key to the province’s success and the first step to reducing poverty. The Government responded to these dual pressures by increasing investments in postsecondary education and announcing the implementation of the Employment Pact. This Pact will offer a variety of training to workers who wish to enhance their qualifications and to have their skills recognized under Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition programs, support unemployed people in acquiring new skills, support social assistance recipients who wish to go back to work, and remove obstacles to hiring newcomers to Quebec. By 2011, the government aims to reach more than 250,000 workers and to support 4,800 businesses in the training of their workers and the implementation of PLAR.

229. The recent business plan for the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Workforce Development presented new directions for the Skills Nova Scotia Framework. The framework was launched in 2002 in response to demographic and social trends and the resulting skill needs: it is the guide to developing and implementing provincial programs, services, and initiatives for building a skilled and adaptable workforce. A review of the framework was conducted in 2006–07 and the recommendations for enhancement are now being implemented. The central change is the comprehensive 4R strategy — retain, retrain, repatriate, recruit — to be embedded in the renewed Skills Nova Scotia Framework. This four-pronged strategy will provide the focus and support necessary for overcoming pressure on the workforce, such as the growth in global competition, the falling birthrate, the impending retirement of the baby-boom generation, the continuing out-migration, and rapid changes in technology. The Department will also further engage industry, labour, and business in the skills and learning agenda of the province to identify current and emerging issues facing the labour market. This will include the revitalization of a partners’ advisory forum and a focus on establishing more opportunities for joint labour market participation and partnerships.

230. In February 2008, the Government of Prince Edward Island launched a new workplace learning campaign for employees who want to become better readers, to attain their GED, or to increase their learning skills. Staff from Workplace Learning PEI will work with interested employees to help them find the learning program that is best for them. Funding will be provided by the provincial government to cover the cost of the program and the time for employees to participate. Learning opportunities are available for employees who are permanent, temporary, or seasonal.

231. As announced in March 2008, under the Northern Career Quest Partnership, the Government of Saskatchewan, the Government of Canada, and other stakeholders including Aboriginal and industry partners are providing \$33.1 million to help

approximately 1,500 Aboriginal people gain the skills and experience they need for long-term jobs in the resource sector in northern Saskatchewan, including mining, oil sands recovery, mineral exploration, and oil and gas exploration. This initiative is part of the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Partnership, a nationally managed program that provides Aboriginal people with the skills they need to take part in economic opportunities. In 2007, the Government of Canada committed \$105 million on a pan-Canadian basis, an investment that will result in training for more than 16,000 Aboriginal people and 10,000 new jobs in and around their communities.

232. The province of British Columbia announced in February 2008 that it would be providing more than \$1.6 million to fund regional literacy coordinators (RLCs) at 16 public postsecondary institutions to enhance the coordination and delivery of adult literacy programs. Currently, part-time RLCs coordinate and support the Community Adult Literacy Program funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development. RLCs also provide professional development, build partnerships to create capacity for program delivery and support, and develop public awareness about literacy. The new and expanded positions will enhance the degree of coordination within each region, support curriculum development, learner assessment, and performance monitoring, and begin the implementation of workplace literacy and essential skills programs. Because colleges play an important role linking the world of work to the world of learning, the new regional literacy coordinators can build on the college connections to communities, school districts, and workplaces.
233. In December 2007, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration launched an online search tool on [ontarioimmigration.ca](http://ontarioimmigration.ca). The search engine is designed to assist newcomers to find the language training classes in their areas at a variety of language proficiency levels.
234. The International Adult Learners' Week (IALW) is no longer strictly an innovation, as it has been celebrated in Canada for a number of years. However, it remains an important event for adult learning across the country. The Canadian Commission for UNESCO takes the lead role in organizing the event each year — in 2008, it was held from March 3 to 9 with the support of Human Resources and Social Development Canada. IALW 2008 highlighted the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. The Commission works with a growing number of organizations, individuals, and groups across the country, including provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, the education community, literacy and human rights organizations, multicultural and Aboriginal groups, unions, professional associations, social and environmental organizations, and individuals committed to lifelong learning in creating events in communities across Canada. Among the partners in 2008 were the Canadian Library Association, the Movement for Canadian Literacy and its Coalitions, the Association canadienne d'éducation des adultes des universitaires de langue française, Frontier College, the Canadian Network for Democratic Learning, the Toronto Adult Student Association, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Centrale des syndicats du Québec, and the Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français

235. In Quebec, Adult Learners' Week is organized by the Institut du coopération pour l'éducation des adultes (ICEA), an organization that brings together the key partners in adult education and training in Quebec. Funding is provided by the Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports, the Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity, and the Commission of Labour Market Partners.

236. Innovation is taking place all the time as governments, organizations and agencies, and adult educators seek to improve and expand their adult learning and education services. This small selection is focused on innovations supported by government funding that address particular concerns and needs in the jurisdictions.

## **Adult Literacy**

237. This section deals with the changes and developments in literacy, one of the central areas of adult learning and education. As the prerequisite for all other types of learning, literacy is indispensable to participation in the social and economic life of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

238. In December 2001, the United Nations General Assembly launched the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) focusing on the needs of non-literate youth and adults. The Decade is based on a broad notion of literacy as the foundation of lifelong learning. In April 2008, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, Human Resources and Social Development Canada, and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO released the document *United Nations Literacy Decade 2003-2012: Progress Report for Canada 2004-2006*. The Progress Report looks at policy, programs, capacity building, research, community participation, and monitoring and evaluation of all levels of literacy, including family and adult literacy. It is available at [www.cmec.ca](http://www.cmec.ca).

239. The United Nations describes literacy in the context of the Literacy Decade as encompassing the literacy needs of individuals of all ages and of families as well as the multiple forms of literacy necessary in the contexts of language, culture, concern for gender equity and equality, and the goals of economic, social, and cultural development of all people. It is within this broad understanding of literacy that the ministers responsible for education in all provincial and territorial jurisdictions in Canada have declared literacy to be one of their priorities. The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of literacy in supporting a skilled, educated, and adaptable workforce. The nongovernmental community across Canada actively promotes literacy and adult learning and is committed to giving a voice to adult learners.

240. The guidelines for the preparation of this section of the report ask for information on new policies and practices, the building of literacy environments, and a special focus on gender. Developments in literacy have already been highlighted in previous sections. As elsewhere in this report, only a few examples are provided to illustrate the changes and developments in literacy since CONFINTEA V. The Progress Report mentioned above provides a much more detailed picture.

## Literacy Levels and Participation

241. An overview of literacy levels and participation in literacy programs provides a useful context for looking at developments and changes.
242. The 2003 *International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey* (IALSS) by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Statistics Canada, mentioned earlier, showed that 42 per cent of Canadians aged 16 to 65 did not possess the literacy skills needed to succeed in the knowledge-based economy of today and of the future. The Survey tested more than 23,000 Canadians on their skills proficiency in four scales: prose, document, numeracy, and problem solving. Skills were rated on the basis of levels one to five, that is, from lowest level to highest. In Canada, about 58 per cent of adults aged 16 to 65 possessed skills in the top three literacy levels on the prose scale, indicating that they could meet most everyday reading requirements. About 15 per cent scored at level one, the lowest performance level, and 27 per cent at level two, indicating that both groups would have trouble with printed materials. The Government of Canada was the main financial contributor to this study; the provinces and territories also contributed financially so that the populations in each region could be oversampled in order to indicate performance levels in each jurisdiction. The study had also been administered in 1994 — the results of the 2003 study showed little overall change in literacy levels.
243. The IALSS showed that young people and the educated have higher literacy levels of performance, while in New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba, francophones have lower average literacy scores in prose than anglophones. Among special population groups, the study found that the literacy performance of the urban Aboriginal population was lower than that of the total Canadian population. This difference in performance was partly a reflection of differing levels of formal education and use of a mother tongue other than English or French. Immigrants with mother tongues other than English or French tended to score lower than other immigrants.
244. In other IALSS findings, respondents reporting poor health scored lower on the document literacy scale compared with those reporting fair, good, or excellent health. The average proficiency scores of those employed were higher than the scores of those who were either unemployed or not in the workforce.
245. The Government of Canada also sponsored participation in the International Survey of Reading Skills (ISRS) to provide information on the social characteristics and linguistic skills of those who tested at levels one and two, the lowest levels, in the *International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey*. The ISRS administered reading tests to identify particular strengths and weaknesses in respondents' skills. The report of this study, *Learning Literacy in Canada: Evidence from the International Survey of Reading Skills*, was published by Statistics Canada in April 2008.
246. The report includes a presentation of the characteristics of the adults who achieved only levels one and two on the IALSS scales for prose proficiency.
- **Age:** At level one, 49 per cent were adults over 45 years of age, with those aged between 56 and 65 years of age accounting for 26 per cent of the population at

this level, while those aged 46–55 accounted for 23 per cent. Respondents aged 36 to 45 accounted for 25 per cent. At level two, the age groups were more equal, with those aged 36 to 45 forming the largest group (24 per cent) at this level and those aged 56 to 65 forming the smallest group at 16 per cent, while the group aged 16 to 25 accounted for 20 per cent.

- **Educational Attainment:** Fifty per cent of the individuals with scores at level one had not finished secondary school, while 30 per cent had secondary school as their highest level of educational achievement. At level two, 27 per cent had not completed secondary school, 37 per cent had secondary school as their highest educational level, and 14 per cent had completed university degrees. At both levels one and two, a significant number of those with university education were immigrants whose mother tongue was neither French nor English.
- **Gender:** The findings from IALSS suggest that differences in average prose literacy scores between men and women are slightly in favour of women, consistent with earlier findings.
- **Immigrants:** Sixty per cent of immigrants performed at levels one and two, compared to 37 per cent of their Canadian-born counterparts. Immigrants were more likely to reside in the lowest literacy proficiency level (32 per cent versus 10 per cent for Canadian-born). Closely linked to these numbers on immigrants, the results also showed that among those at level one, 43 per cent had a mother tongue other than English or French, while 34 per cent and 23 per cent reported speaking English and French respectively as their mother language.
- **Frequency of Reading Books:** At level one, 65 per cent reported that they never or rarely read books, compared to 49 per cent at level two, and 27 per cent at the higher literacy levels.
- **Labour Market Status:** Nearly 57 per cent of Canadians between the ages of 16 and 65 whose proficiency was level one on the prose literacy scale were employed, compared to 70 per cent of those at level two, and 77 per cent of those at levels 3, 4, and 5.
- **Literacy and Income:** Sixty-five per cent of those at level one had incomes in the two lower quartiles compared to 53 per cent at level two and 40 per cent in the higher literacy levels.

These results demonstrated that the immigrant population, especially those with mother tongues other than English or French, is over-represented in the lower literacy levels, and that lower literacy levels are more common for older Canadians. Less educated individuals accounted for a higher proportion of those with low literacy — and literacy has an impact on labour market status and income level. The remainder of the ISRS Report focused on the special learning needs and challenges of Canadians with low literacy levels.

247. In the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, the French mother tongue populations of Ontario, New Brunswick, and Manitoba were oversampled so that a special analysis of the literacy levels could be undertaken. In all three provinces, francophones

are a minority. Nationally, 58 per cent of the population scored at or above level 3 in prose literacy — which is the level seen as necessary for coping with the increasing skill demands of a knowledge society. Sixty-one per cent of anglophones scored at or above level 3, but among francophones outside Quebec, only 44 per cent were at this level. Fifty-six per cent of the adult population with French mother tongue in those three provinces were at levels 1 and 2 — meaning they would have difficulty reading or understanding difficult texts.

248. This Statistics Canada study also found that the lower results among francophones relative to anglophones in 2003 were largely the result of socio-historical and cultural factors. Most of the gap in the literacy levels of the two language groups was due to a gap in levels of schooling, especially among older individuals. There were fewer differences among individuals aged 16 to 24 in both language groups, but there were still significant problems. The survey results indicate a challenge in literacy for francophone minorities outside Quebec, especially as large groups in each province chose to take the test in English, even though they claimed to have good reading and speaking levels in French. This trend was especially evident in Manitoba and Ontario.

249. The Canadian Federation for Literacy in French (Fédération pour l'alphabétisation en français, FCAF) is a pan-Canadian non-profit organization that brings together over 400 literacy groups and associations who offer literacy services in French. The FCAF works to create the necessary conditions for a fully literate society. As outlined in the 2006–07 annual report, *C'est le temps d'agir* (It's Time for Action), the FCAF and its partners have created an action plan to address the needs of the francophones living in minority situations. The success of the plan is linked to setting up partnerships with educational institutions, employers, and unions, and with efforts that extend to the maintenance of literacy capacities through lifelong learning. The priorities and expected results include the following:

- In three years, the organizations for literacy in French will have the capacity to offer stable and diversified services in literacy to a steadily increasing number of adults. During this time period, the provincial and territorial literacy organizations will establish strategic partnerships to reach out to those who most need improvement in literacy and basic skills.
- In seven years, the literacy organizations will have established partnerships to enable the offerings of literacy training to those with and without employment. The organizations will coordinate French-language literacy activities with the collaboration of the provincial or territorial, the federal, and the municipal governments.
- In ten years, francophone adults will have access to a comprehensive and progressive system of high quality literacy and basic skills training in French in each province and territory.

Currently, the members of FCAF provide services to about 5,000 adults in the provinces outside Quebec. To reach the goals established by FCAF, it will be necessary to provide training to over 58,000 learners over 10 years at an estimated cost of \$450 million.

## Adult Literacy Policies and Practices

250. Reference has already been made to a number of key initiatives, such as the new Manitoba *Adult Literacy Act* and subsequent development of a literacy strategy; the British Columbia *Adult Opportunities Action Plan*; the Nunavut *Adult Learning Strategy*; the *Collaborative Process Toward a Proposed Literacy Policy for All Albertans*; the Quebec *Policy on Adult Learning and Continuing Education and Training*; the report and activity around *Ontario Learns: Strengthening Our Adult Education System*; and numerous other programs, policies, and studies that are focused on literacy. Examples are offered below from some jurisdictions to indicate the pan-Canadian nature of the efforts to improve literacy levels.

251. A recent event underlines the importance of literacy to Canada's education ministers: the Pan-Canadian Literacy Forum was held in nine locations across the country, using webcasting and real-time streaming video to connect 3,500 learners, literacy experts, and representatives from the education, non-profit, business, and labour sectors. Each site had its own theme covering all aspects of literacy and related to the overall theme of the Forum "Literacy: More Than Words". The Forum was organized through the intergovernmental body of the ministers of education, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), to launch CMEC's new literacy action plan, which aims to raise awareness about literacy issues and increase literacy rates from coast to coast to coast. The plan includes the following goals:

- sharing literacy policies among provincial and territorial governments
- creating networks of organizations and individuals to gather and share teaching resources for learners of all ages
- encouraging additional literacy research, statistics, sharing, and the effective use of data

The commitment to literacy is part of a more extensive CMEC vision for learning in Canada, *Learn Canada 2020*, issued at the Literacy Forum.

252. At the conclusion of the Literacy Forum event held in New Brunswick, the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training announced their intention to develop a regional action plan to improve literacy skills. The ministers from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island committed themselves to leadership on the improvement of the region's literacy rates in recognition of the direct link between a highly literate society and economic and social prosperity.

253. The Province of Quebec has revised its adult basic education program, including literacy, so that it now reflects the following principles:

- respect for the needs and the demands of the social roles of adults and for the values of democratic society in Quebec
- training and education focused on acquiring basic knowledge and developing basic skills



- emphasis on the integration of knowledge and the development of skills in personal, professional, and social situations
- assessment and accountability to support the success of the adult learners
- training that makes the best use of information and communication technologies
- interaction between the teachers and the adult learners
- motivation of learners by using a variety of teaching methods and resources

The revised adult basic education program is divided into two levels — the first level provides the standard base for all learners, that is, the knowledge and capacities usually conveyed in the first eight years of schooling; the second level provides the adults with the opportunity to earn a first diploma, called the *diplôme d'études secondaire*.

254. For Quebec community action groups, the content of the teaching is also based on the realities and needs of the adults. The Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports supports programs to encourage reading and writing activities and educational achievement in disadvantaged families, schools and communities. The Ministry also provides funding for two annual campaigns that promote *Info-Alpha*, a free and confidential province-wide service that offers help and information to people with low literacy skills and to all those wanting to access to basic education in reading and writing. The service refers the callers to appropriate literacy resources and providers in each region of Québec. It aims to encourage people with low literacy skills to come out of the shadows and enrol in a program adapted to their realities and specific needs. *Info Apprendre* is a similar service designed for learners wishing to return to school for training or to complete a postsecondary program

255. The Department of Education, Culture and Employment in the Northwest Territories developed its ten-year strategic plan, *Building on Our Success: Strategic Plan 2005–2015*, based on continued public input through surveys, focus groups, public meetings, and individual correspondence over a period of many years. The discussions highlighted what was working and what was not, as well as the perception of strengths and weaknesses in the department's educational programs and services, and came with a clear message that people wanted a continued focus on lifelong learning, strengthening languages and cultures, and supporting communities and individuals to make the decisions that affect their own families and the area where they live.

256. The resulting NWT strategic plan blends together the five goals — pride in the culture of the NWT, education of children, education of adults, a skilled and productive workforce, and people participating fully in society. Literacy underlies all of these goals with attention to Aboriginal languages (there are eight official languages in the NWT, in addition to French and English), providing children with strong foundations for learning, developing an integrated adult learning network, training a skilled workforce, and providing program, financial, and income supports to make continuing education a possibility.

257. In addition, in 2008, the Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment published *Towards Literacy: A Strategic Framework – 2008-2018*, a policy framework for all literacy initiatives. The NWT Literacy Strategy includes adult literacy and objectives to support Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE) learners and instructors, as well as objectives pertaining to ABLE curriculum and accreditation and Workplace Essential Skills.
258. Policy in adult education often addresses the multiple learning environments and needs that exist in each jurisdiction. For example, in December 2005, the New Brunswick Department of Training and Employment Development (now Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour) announced the government's policy statement on adult and lifelong learning called *Lifelong Learning: Quality Adult Learning Opportunities*. Regional adult learning centres, pilot-tested in 2005, were expanded throughout the province in 2006 so that effective community partnerships could address local literacy needs. In addition, the New Brunswick government has enhanced its focus on the role of public libraries in literacy and lifelong learning. Along with improvement to facilities and staffing, the libraries are developing literacy information programs, undertaking community analysis to guide local program development, and working with community organizations to increase access to and use of the library and its on-site and on-line information services. The lifelong learning policy statement set some specific ten-year targets, including higher adult literacy rates and a 25 per cent increase in participation in adult education and learning.
259. Nova Scotia community literacy organizations were involved in a consultation process, led by the Department of Education, which resulted in the establishment of work groups to address issues related to learner progress, the policies and guidelines of funding programs, accountability reporting, and data definitions. Two pilot projects looked at how community literacy organizations could work together to streamline administrative functions, and how to better coordinate tutor recruitment and training. In addition, the Adult Learning Program Level III curriculum, which includes communications, mathematics, science, and social studies, was completely rewritten and then pilot tested in 2005. It has now been extended throughout the province. Professional development workshops on the new curriculum were provided to college and community organizations that deliver the program.
260. The Yukon Government Literacy Strategy Review began in January 2006 to give literacy stakeholders an opportunity to provide input into current and future government literacy programs and services. The Literacy Strategy Review team visited all Yukon communities to find out what people needed in order to increase literacy in their communities. Yukoners scored very high on the *International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey* but the government wanted to ensure that they continue to provide the skills that everyone needs to participate fully in their communities and the labour force — and to improve the quality of living for all Yukoners.
261. The Yukon Literacy Coalition (YLC) is a Yukon-wide organization that is community governed and committed to supporting and encouraging literacy in all the languages of Yukon. In 2004, the YLC developed the Community Capacity Building project. The

Community Capacity Building project is based on a very successful initiative by the Northwest Territories Literacy Council called *Tools for Community Building*. The project helps to build the capacity of communities to develop and maintain their own literacy projects, through workshops that focus on project planning, proposal writing skills, fundraising, and an introduction to literacy programming. Communities throughout Yukon are working with YLC on their own projects.

262. Two final examples are provided to demonstrate how jurisdictions organize their provision and support of literacy services by drawing on the expertise of the volunteer, community, and non-profit sectors. In Prince Edward Island, the Literacy Initiatives Secretariat in the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is responsible for all literacy projects including the Literacy/Adult Basic Education Initiative, Family Literacy, the management of the Workplace Education PEI Literacy Initiative, the development of policy and standards for adult literacy, the certification process for adult educators, and the Provincial Literacy Initiatives Committee. Through the Provincial Literacy Initiatives Committee, an adjudication process is conducted resulting in recommendations for funding grants for literacy projects. The Committee members are representatives from Laubach Literacy of Canada-PEI, Human Resources and Social Development Canada, the francophone community, the Faculty of Education at the University of Prince Edward Island, the Family Literacy Advisory Committee, and the Department of Education.

263. The Saskatchewan Literacy Office has been established to develop and coordinate a new literacy strategy. The goals of the office are

- to focus the learning sector on the critical importance of literacy and other essential skills
- to build the literacy levels of Saskatchewan citizens
- to coordinate the human and financial resources dedicated to literacy into a provincial plan that provides synergy across educational, economic, and community sectors.
- to increase literacy levels in English, mathematics, science, and technology

Liaison with numerous groups is essential to the success of the Office's work; these groups include Saskatchewan Literacy Network, educational institutions, First Nations and Métis peoples, libraries, business and industry, community-based organizations, volunteer organizations, and the research community.

264. In April 2007, the Government of Canada created the Office of Literacy and Essential Skills (OLES) with the mission to become an acknowledged "centre of expertise" to improve literacy and essential skills of adult Canadians. OLES' mandate is to play an indirect role to influence the policies and activities of other organizations, and leverage funding to improve opportunities for adults. OLES' activities focus on improving literacy and essential skills for the workplace, and for communities and families:

- To help adults to enter the workforce;

- To help those already in the labour market retain their jobs or transition to new jobs; and,
- To help them contribute to their families and communities.

With a budget of \$46M in 2008-09, OLES works along three business lines:

- knowledge generation: understanding what works;
- Tool development: developing practical tools and support for trainers; and,
- Partnership development: ensuring employers, trainers and learners have the tools and support they need.

To achieve its mandate, OLES works in partnership with other federal departments, provinces and territories, national organizations, provincial/territorial coalitions, the industry and community groups.

265. Key components of the pan-Canadian literacy capacity are the seven national literacy organizations operating in Canada, some of which have been mentioned already in this report:

- the National Adult Literacy Database, a comprehensive database of adult literacy programs, resources, services, and activities
- ABC Canada, a national charity and a partnership of business, labour, educators, and government that focuses on public awareness and research
- the Movement for Canadian Literacy, a non-profit organization representing literacy coalitions, organizations, and individuals in every province and territory operating as a national voice for literacy for every Canadian
- la Fédération canadienne d'alphabétisation en français, an organization representing the francophone groups and associations that provide literacy training in French
- the National Indigenous Literacy Association, a national organization established in 2004 to facilitate a strong network to address gaps and issues in strategy, service provision, and research and development for Aboriginal literacy, grounded in a traditional Aboriginal culture
- Laubach Literacy of Canada, which focuses on training volunteer literacy tutors and operating a national bookstore that provides literacy resources to tutors and learners
- Frontier College, which annually provides training to more than 4,000 community leaders, educators and parents on how to start and maintain high quality literacy programs as well as workshops, volunteer training, conferences, and volunteer placement in high-needs areas

266. Literacy is a predominant educational and political priority in Canada. The ministers responsible for education in all 13 provincial and territorial jurisdictions have declared literacy to be one of their top priorities. The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of literacy so that Canadians can actively participate in the workforce and their communities, earn a better living, and build a strong future for their children.

Nongovernmental national, regional, and local literacy organizations have consistently been the voice of literacy in Canada, in addition to providing much of the programming and resources outside of the formal education system.

267. The literacy needs of Canadians are addressed through various collaborative efforts between the thirteen provincial and territorial educational authorities, the federal government, and the vast nongovernmental sector. This multi-group approach ensures that programs are designed for Canadians of all ages and all groups in society. Policy has acknowledged literacy as an educational priority and often frames it within wider social and economic development initiatives.

268. Much attention has been given in recent years to the links of literacy and the economy, jobs, and prosperity issues. While these remain important for learners, providers, and governments alike, there are also concerns that the broader, more social, cultural, and personal goals of literacy are receiving less consideration in policy, funding, and programming. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, literacy as a tool of personal growth and social and cultural change is also a pre-requisite for all.

269. Canada has much reason for pride in the quality and quantity of literacy programs available across the country. However, there is also an ongoing challenge in addressing the large percentage of the population still needing better literacy skills for their everyday lives.

## **Challenges for Adult Learning and Education and Expectations for CONFINTEA VI**

### **Issues in Adult Learning and Education**

270. The UNESCO guidelines for this final section of the report request information on the future perspectives for the development of policies and practices in adult education and adult learning and the main issues that adult education will have to address.

271. The link between adult education and a fully involved citizenry contributing to the social and economic health of the country has clearly been established in the many research reports cited here. As well, government policies and documents make reference to this reality, analyze its implications for the residents of their jurisdictions, and articulate actions plans, funding initiatives, partnerships, and services to address the needs. The enormous challenges are also recognized as there are no quick fixes for the lack of literacy, basic education, knowledge, skills, and qualifications.

272. Since CONFINTEA V in 1997, a number of documents have looked at adult education in Canada in an international context — and they have outlined some of the key challenges that educators, governments, non-governmental organizations, learners, and education providers face. Two of these documents are related to the Thematic Review on Adult Learning undertaken by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in 2002. The first is the *Thematic Review on Adult Learning: Canada: Country Note* prepared by the OECD Review Team. The second is the *Thematic Review on Adult*

*Learning: Canada: Background Report* prepared by a Canadian research team for the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, the Province of Saskatchewan, and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. A third critical document is the *Report of the Canadian delegation on the Mid-Term Review of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V)*. Some of the conclusions and recommendations of these reports are reflected in the challenges cited below and the outline of the expectations for CONFINTEA VI.

273. The recent *Learn Canada 2020* document from the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada provides a framework that the provincial and territorial governments will use to enhance Canada's educational systems, learning opportunities, and overall educational outcomes. The vision of *Learn Canada 2020* is the provision of quality lifelong learning opportunities for all Canadians. One of the four pillars of lifelong learning is adult learning and skills development (along with early childhood learning and development, elementary to secondary school systems, and postsecondary education). The goal for adult learning is that Canada must develop an accessible, diversified, and integrated system of adult learning and skills development that delivers training when Canadians need it. Literacy is highlighted as one of the key activity areas. This commitment demonstrates the emphasis put on adult learning, and it signals the concerted effort that will be dedicated to the policies and practices to create this adult learning system.
274. As a further demonstration of this commitment, recent adult education and literacy strategies and reforms in many jurisdictions have been highlighted in this report. The results of the *International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey* had a profound effect on educators and governments in Canada — and continuing efforts will be made to address the challenges revealed in that study.
275. Among the ongoing challenges and issues for adult learning and education in Canada are the following:
- Reaching those most in need of educational opportunities but who remain under-represented in the programs offered, and consequently in the workforce and in society. This includes Aboriginals, immigrants, older workers, lower income adults, the handicapped, and those with low levels of education attainment.
  - Recognizing the vast extent of the needs for adult education and training and the necessity of long-term, stable funding.
  - Understanding how adult education and learning are inter-related to the three other pillars of education — early childhood learning, elementary and secondary schools, and postsecondary education.
  - Serving those with lower levels of literacy and providing the funding, program consistency, continuity, and intensity that allow them to lift themselves to literacy levels more appropriate to full participation in both social and economic spheres.
  - Ensuring adult learning opportunities for members of French and English language minority groups, especially francophones living outside Quebec.

- Provision of the extensive language training and the services for new immigrants that are necessary for credential assessment and recognition of competency so that they can take their place in society and the workplace.
- Addressing the barriers that face many of those who could benefit most from adult learning opportunities, whether the barriers are financial, social, geographic, personal, or other.
- Responding to the difficulties in balancing work, family, and training through the development and funding of truly inclusive programs.
- The declining population growth, aging population, changing technologies, and rising educational and skill requirements that are putting pressure on business and industry as well as governmental and educational institutions, and other providers of adult learning and education.
- The creation of seamless educational and training systems in which adult learners can move freely between levels of study with greater articulation, credit transfer, and recognition of prior learning.
- Equity of education that applies to all those suffering from economic and social exclusion or who face barriers to complete participation.
- Increased opportunities for adults to participate in training and education that enhances their social inclusion and their community involvement, and that responds to their personal needs and interests.
- Expansion of training in and for the workplace to fill the current need for skilled workers, the evolving needs for new and modified skills, and the increasing levels of skill and literacy required throughout all spheres of the workplace.
- Enhancement of incentives for employers to offer training, support for workers to take part in workplace training, and a wider reach of workplace opportunities so that those most in need are better serviced.
- Increased awareness of the depth and breadth of informal adult learning and effective prior learning assessment and recognition processes and practices that respect adult learners and what they have achieved and mastered.
- Development of more opportunities for assessment of the informal knowledge, skills, and competencies of adults, especially newcomers to Canada and increase research on these topics.
- Recognition and strengthening of the essential roles of the NGO and community-based sectors in the provision of adult learning opportunities, including the development of effective mechanisms that enable NGOs to make a more coordinated contribution to the design, delivery, and assessment of adult education, learning policies, and program initiatives.
- Ensuring that the guiding principles of adult learning and education include such values as being community focussed and driven, founded on strong partnerships, providing extensive learner support, program flexibility, quality programming,

encompassing recognition of prior learning, and supported by a strong infrastructure including technologies

- Collecting data on adult learners that expand our current knowledge of who the adult learners are: their characteristics, their goals, what they would like to learn, what they need to learn, what they are achieving, and how their participation can be motivated and maintained.
- The improvement, collection, and sharing of data on program effectiveness and outcomes that encompass the goals of learners, providers, and funding bodies.
- Respond to the need for an education in the service of democracy and greater participation in civil society.
- Growth in and need for access to information and communications technologies and their influence on the provision of adult education.
- Establish links between adult education and other issues that concern Canadians, such as the environment, sustainable development, health, poverty, and homelessness.
- Ensuring an appropriate balance and recognition of the economic and non-economic benefits of adult learning
- Ensuring that all programs serving adult learners reflect the principles of adult learning and are offered at adult-learner-friendly institutions

276. The reality is that the needs in adult learning and education often outstrip the capacity of governments, industry, educational institutions, and NGOs to respond to them financially and/or through the provision of all the necessary programs. The stakeholders in adult learning and education are committed to ensuring that every Canadian is able to achieve the levels of education and literacy that they need in order to participate fully in society. The progress toward this goal is not always what would be wished for, but progress is being made.

### **Expectations for CONFINTEA VI**

277. As stated in the *Report of the Canadian Delegation on the Mid-Term Review of CONFINTEA V*: “Canada’s historic as well as contemporary engagement in the field of adult education and learning provides it with significant stature and credibility in the international community. Canada’s efforts to share experiences and work collaboratively with other nations in addressing the challenges of the knowledge society afford it a unique leadership opportunity.” Within this context of international engagement and the extensive pan-Canadian experience and investment outlined in this paper, the following expectations for CONFINTEA VI are built around increasing profile and awareness, sharing knowledge and understanding, and commitment to adult learning and education.

278. CONFINTEA VI can contribute to the enhancement of adult learning through engaging the key ministers, government officials, funders, educators, intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, and other key stakeholders in an event that compellingly



reinforces the importance, the centrality, the essential nature of adult learning and education in its broadest definition.

279. The interconnectedness of adult learning with the current major focuses of UNESCO — such as the Literacy Decade, Education for Sustainable Development, Education for All — needs to be underlined so that the needs of adults and the contributions that a more literate and skilled adult population are not diminished within the wider context of other educational needs.
280. CONFINTEA VI could create a picture of the development on the issues brought forward by the member countries of UNESCO in the document entitled *Agenda for the Future*:
- Accessibility and new forms of financing
  - The implications of the involvement of private enterprise in lifelong learning
  - Literacy, health, and the aging of the population as issues for the years to come
  - New approaches to program promotion based on statements of demand for training
  - The linking of the school, the family, and the community in the fight against low levels of literacy so as to break the vicious cycle of generational recurrence
  - The development of new and accessible locations that stimulate and support reading.
281. CONFINTEA VI could work toward having adult education and learning recognized as a key component of every education system — in the same way that the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada has recently positioned adult learning and skills development in its recent *Learn Canada 2020* document.
282. Renewed commitment to many of the goals of CONFINTEA V, updated to reflect progress made and the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, would provide a substantive basis for moving forward from CONFINTEA VI. Central to these is the more systematic integration of adult education into educational plans, funding structures, and the agendas of governments, as well as positioning adult education and learning as crucial not only to economic prosperity and work but also to social cohesion, democracy, sustainable development, community life, and the personal and social goals of individuals. Some benchmarking of progress toward these goals could be an enlightening and useful component of reports for CONFINTEA VII.
283. Beyond raising the profile and awareness of adult education, CONFINTEA also provides an opportunity to learn from each other about the work that has been accomplished in placing adult education and adult learners at the core of education. Experiences and strategies — whether successful or not — placed in their political, financial, demographic, and geographic contexts can enlighten and inform, can inspire and guide other delegates and other jurisdictions.

284. CONFINTEA VI can provide an opportunity to share resources, policies, and programs in special areas such as Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition. Canada can contribute by highlighting its ongoing work to integrate PLAR into all levels of education and its efforts in initiating an International PLA Network so that the recognition of prior learning achievements becomes one of the building blocks for ongoing education and training.

285. CONFINTEA VI can also achieve a new level of commitment through the development of a statement, a declaration that places adult learning and education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and acknowledges the challenges, opportunities, needs, and possibilities that have arisen since CONFINTEA V. Governments, key organizations, nongovernmental and civil society organizations, decision makers and policy makers, and the funding bodies should find themselves part of an international voice that reaffirms and elaborates on the importance of adult learning and the necessity of providing all adult learners with opportunities for success in their own learning and in their integration into society and the economy.

## **Appendix A – Sources used for the Preparation of the CONFINTEA VI Report for Canada**

### **Provincial and Territorial Education and Training Department and Ministry Web Sites**

Alberta Advanced Education and Technology

<http://www.advancededucation.gov.ab.ca/>

Alberta Education

<http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/>

British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development

<http://www.gov.bc.ca/aved/>

British Columbia Ministry of Education

<http://www.gov.bc.ca/bced/>

Manitoba Department of Advanced Education and Literacy

<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/acl/>

Manitoba Department of Competitiveness, Training and Trade

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/ctt/>

Manitoba Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth

<http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/ecy/>

New Brunswick Department of Education

<http://www.gnb.ca/0000/index-e.asp>

New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour  
<http://www.gnb.ca/0105/index-e.asp>

Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education  
<http://www.gov.nl.ca/edu/>

Northwest Territories Department of Education, Culture and Employment  
<http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca>

Nova Scotia Department of Education  
<http://www.ednet.ns.ca/>

Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Workforce Development  
[www.gov.ns.ca/lwd](http://www.gov.ns.ca/lwd)

Nunavut Department of Education  
<http://www.gov.nu.ca/education/eng/>

Ontario Ministry of Education  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/>

Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities  
<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/>

Prince Edward Island Department of Education and Early Childhood Development  
<http://www.gov.pe.ca/education/>

Prince Edward Island Department of Innovation and Advanced Learning  
<http://www.gov.pe.ca/ial/index/php3>

Quebec Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports  
<http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/>

Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour  
<http://www.aeel.gov.sk.ca>

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education  
<http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/>

Yukon Department of Education  
<http://www.education.gov.yk.ca/>

### **Pan-Canadian Links**

Canadian Information Centre for International Credentials  
[www.cicic.ca](http://www.cicic.ca)

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada  
[www.cmec.ca](http://www.cmec.ca)

Canadian Commission for UNESCO  
[www.unesco.ca](http://www.unesco.ca)

National Adult Literacy Database  
<http://www.nald.ca/index.htm>

### **Departments of the Government of Canada**

Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada  
[www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca)

Department of Human Resources and Social Development Canada  
[www.hrsdc.gc.ca](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca)

### **Nongovernmental and Private Organizations**

Association of Canadian Community Colleges  
[www.accc.ca](http://www.accc.ca)

Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada  
[www.aucc.ca](http://www.aucc.ca)

Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment  
[www.capla.ca](http://www.capla.ca)

Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Learning  
[www.oise.utoronto.ca/CASAE/](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/CASAE/)

Canadian Association for University Continuing Education  
[www.cauce-aepuc.ca](http://www.cauce-aepuc.ca)

Canadian Institute for Recognizing Learning  
[www.cirl.org](http://www.cirl.org)

Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks  
[www.language.ca](http://www.language.ca)

Centre de documentation sur l'éducation des adultes et la condition féminine  
[www.cdeacf.ca](http://www.cdeacf.ca)

Conference Board of Canada  
[www.conferenceboard.ca/education](http://www.conferenceboard.ca/education)

Fédération des associations étudiantes universitaires québécoises en éducation permanente  
[www.faeuqep.qc.ca](http://www.faeuqep.qc.ca)

Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français  
[www.fcaf.net](http://www.fcaf.net)

Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes  
[www.icea.qc.ca](http://www.icea.qc.ca)

National Adult Literacy Database (NALD)  
<http://www.nald.ca/index.htm>

The Work and Lifelong Learning Research Network, Centre for the Study of Education and Work, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto  
[www.wallnetwork.ca](http://www.wallnetwork.ca)

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Alberta. (2006). *Literacy – For a life of learning: A collaborative process toward a proposed literacy policy for all Albertans*. Retrieved April 12, 2008, from [www.literacyalberta.ca](http://www.literacyalberta.ca)

Association of Canadian Community Colleges. (2008). *Opportunities for everyone; Programs and services for disadvantaged and low skilled learners offered at colleges and institutes. Final report, May 2008*. Retrieved June 12, 2008, from [www.accc.ca](http://www.accc.ca)

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## Appendix B – Education in Canada

Canada is the second largest country in the world — almost 10 million square kilometres (3.8 million square miles) — with a population of 33.1 million as of October 2007, a population density of 3.5 people per square kilometre, and a median income in 2005 of C\$41,401. However, Canada's population is not spread evenly over the territory as two out of three Canadians live within 100 kilometres of the southern border with the United States. In addition, more than 80 per cent of the population lives in urban centres; 45 per cent of the population lives in just six metropolitan areas.

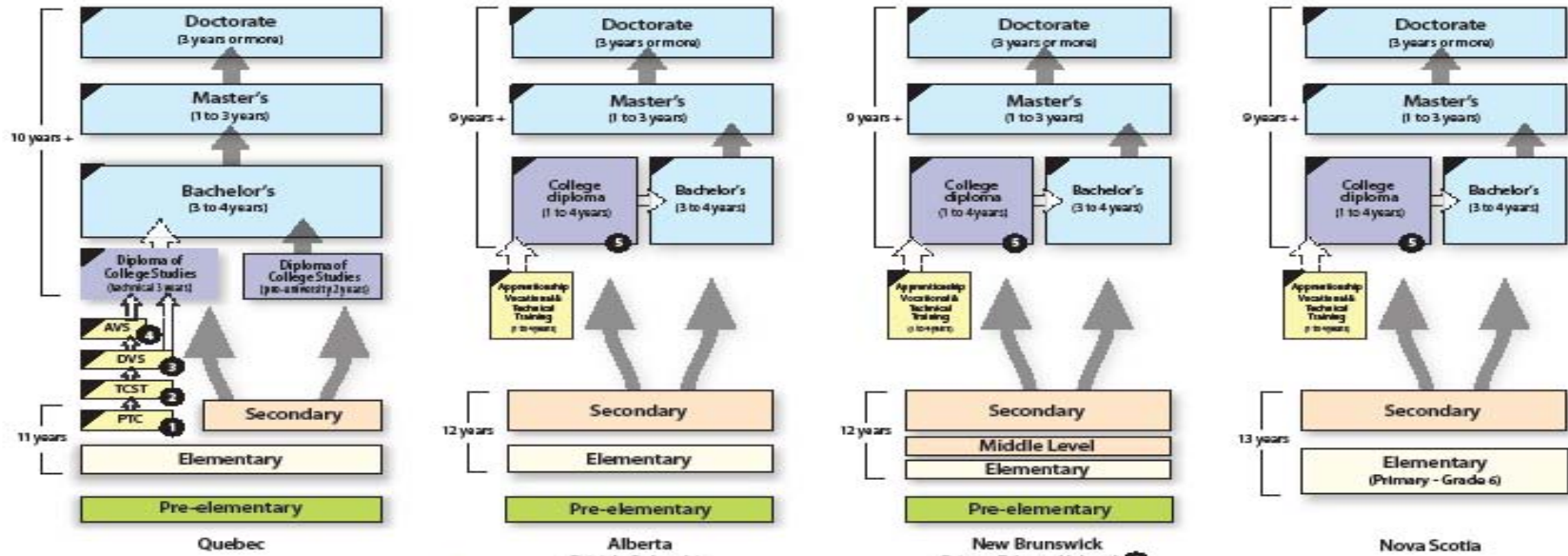
### Responsibility for Education

**Responsibility:** In Canada, there is no federal department of education and no integrated national system of education. Within the federal system of shared powers, Canada's Constitution Act of 1867 provides that "[I]n and for each province, the legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to Education." In the 13 jurisdictions — 10 provinces and 3 territories, departments or ministries of education are responsible for the organization, delivery, and assessment of education at the elementary and secondary levels, for technical and vocational education, and for postsecondary education. Some jurisdictions have two separate departments or ministries, one having responsibility for elementary-secondary education and the other for postsecondary education and skills training.

**Regional Differences:** While there are a great many similarities in the provincial and territorial education systems across Canada, there are significant differences in curriculum, assessment, and accountability policies among the jurisdictions that express the geography, history, language, culture, and corresponding specialized needs of the populations served. The comprehensive, diversified, and widely accessible nature of the education systems in Canada reflects the societal belief in the importance of education. Figure 1, Canada's Education Systems, illustrates the organization of the pre-elementary, elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education systems in each jurisdiction in Canada.

**Educational Funding:** In 2005-06, provincial, territorial, federal, and local governments spent \$75.7 billion on all levels of education, which represented 16.1 per cent of total public expenditures. (All dollar figures are taken from *Education Indicators in Canada: Report of the Pan-Canadian Education Indicators Program 2007* and are in 2001 constant Canadian dollars to allow for comparison across time periods.) Of this total, \$40.4 billion was for elementary and secondary education, \$30.6 billion for postsecondary education, and \$4.6 billion for other types of education such as special retraining and language training for newcomers. In 2002-03, combined public and private expenditure on education was \$72.3 billion, with \$42.7 billion on elementary and secondary education, \$5.2 billion on trade and vocational education, \$5.6 billion on colleges, and \$18.8 billion on universities. Public expenditure was 82.3 per cent of the total, with private spending at 17.7 per cent.

# Canada's Education Systems



- 1 PTC - Pre-work Training Certificate (2 years after Secondary 8)
- 2 TCST - Training Certificate for a Semi-skilled Trade (1 year after Secondary 8)
- 3 DVS - Diploma of Vocational Studies (800 to 1800 hrs), depending on the program
- 4 AVS - Attestation of Vocational Specialization (200 to 1185 hrs), depending on the program
- 5 Selected institutions in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Prince Edward Island offer applied degrees.
- 6 In Prince Edward Island, secondary education is divided into junior high (3 years) and senior high (3 years).
- 7 The territories have no degree-granting institutions. Some degrees are available through partnerships. Students may also access degrees directly from institutions outside the territories.



**Notes:**  
 All colleges and universities offer certificate programs of variable length.  
 Continuing and adult education programs, while not shown on this chart, may be offered at all levels of instruction.

**Legend:**  
 [Light Blue Box] College Education  
 [Light Blue Box] University Education  
 [Yellow Box] Apprenticeship - Vocational & Technical Training  
 [Grey Arrow] To the job market  
 [Black Arrow] Typical pathway  
 [Dashed Arrow] Alternate pathway

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## Elementary and Secondary Education

**Government Role:** Public education is provided free to all Canadians who meet various age and residence requirements. Each province and territory has one or two departments/ministries responsible for education, headed by a minister who is almost always an elected member of the legislature and appointed to the position by the government leader of the jurisdiction. Deputy ministers, who belong to the civil service, are responsible for the operation of the departments. The ministries and departments provide educational, administrative, and financial management and school support functions, and they define both the educational services to be provided and the policy and legislative frameworks.

**Local Governance:** Local governance of education is usually entrusted to school boards, school districts, school divisions, or district education councils. Their members are elected by public ballot. The power delegated to the local authorities is at the discretion of the provincial and territorial governments and generally consists of the operation and administration (including financial) of the group of schools within their board or division, curriculum implementation, responsibility for personnel, enrolment of students, and initiation of proposals for new construction or other major capital expenditures. According to Statistics Canada data, there are approximately 15,500 schools in Canada — 10,100 elementary, 3,400 secondary, and 2,000 mixed elementary and secondary — with an overall average of 350 students per school. In 2004–05, provinces and territories reported that there were 5.3 million students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools.

**Minority-Language Education:** Canada is a bilingual country, and the constitution recognizes French and English as its two official languages. According to the 2006 Census, more than 85 per cent of French-mother tongue Canadians live in the province of Quebec: the minority language rights of French-speaking students living outside the province of Quebec and English-speaking students living in the province of Quebec are protected in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. The Charter defines the conditions under which Canadians have the right to access publicly funded education in either minority language. Each province and territory has established French-language school boards to manage the network of French-first-language schools. In the province of Quebec, the same structure applies to education in English-first-language schools.

**Funding Sources:** Public funding for education comes either directly from the provincial or territorial government or through a mix of provincial transfers and local taxes collected either by the local government or by the boards with taxing powers. Provincial and territorial regulations, revised yearly, provide the grant structure that sets the level of funding for each school board based on factors such as the number of students, special needs, and location.

**Teachers:** In 2004-05, Canada's elementary and secondary school systems employed close to 310,000 educators, most of whom had four or five years of postsecondary study. These educators are primarily teachers but principals, vice-principals, and professional non-teaching staff such as consultants and counsellors are also included. They are licensed by the provincial and territorial

departments or ministries of education. Most secondary school teachers have a subject specialization in the courses they teach.

***Pre-Elementary Education:*** All jurisdictions have some form of pre-elementary (kindergarten) education, operated by the local education authorities and offering one year of pre-grade 1, non-compulsory education for five-year-olds. Depending on the jurisdiction, kindergarten may be compulsory or pre-school classes may be available from age four or even earlier. At a pan-Canadian level, 95 per cent of five-year-olds attend pre-elementary or elementary school, and over 40 per cent of four-year-olds are enrolled in junior kindergarten, with significant variations among the jurisdictions. In 2005–06, about 130,000 children were attending junior kindergarten, with more than 312,000 in kindergarten. The intensity of the programs varies, with full-day and half-day programs, depending on the school board.

***Elementary Education:*** The ages for compulsory schooling vary from one jurisdiction to another, but most require attendance in school from age 6 to age 16. In some cases, compulsory schooling starts at 5, and in others it extends to age 18 or graduation from secondary school. In most jurisdictions, elementary schools cover six to eight years of schooling. The elementary school curriculum emphasizes the basic subjects of language, mathematics, social studies, science, health and physical education, and introductory arts; some jurisdictions include second-language learning. In many provinces and territories, increased attention is being paid to literacy, especially in the case of boys, as test results have shown that their performance is falling behind that of girls in language. Almost 98 per cent of elementary students go on to the secondary level.

***Secondary Education:*** Secondary school covers the final four to six years of compulsory education. In the first years, students take mostly compulsory courses, with some options. The proportion of options increases in the later years so that students may take specialized courses to prepare for the job market or to meet the differing entrance requirements of postsecondary institutions. Secondary school diplomas are awarded to students who complete the requisite number of compulsory and optional courses. In most cases, vocational and academic programs are offered within the same secondary schools; in others, technical and vocational programs are offered in separate, dedicated vocational training centres. For students with an interest in a specific trade, programs varying in length from less than one year to three years are offered, many of them leading to diplomas and certificates. The secondary school graduation rate in 2003 was 74 per cent, with 78 per cent of girls and 70 per cent of boys graduating. The overall graduation rate has remained relatively stable while the longer-term dropout rate has declined as older students complete their secondary education. In 2004–05, the dropout rate (defined as 20- to 24-year-olds without a secondary school diploma and not in school) had fallen to 10 per cent.

***Separate and Private Schools:*** The legislation and practices concerning the establishment of separate educational systems and private educational institutions vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Three jurisdictions provide for tax-supported separate school systems that include both elementary and secondary education. These separate school systems allow religious minorities to receive education in accordance with the tenets of their faiths, especially Roman Catholics and Protestants, some of whom have constitutionally

protected rights in this area. Public and separate school systems that are publicly funded serve about 93 per cent of all students in Canada. Six jurisdictions provide partial funding for private schools if certain criteria, which vary among jurisdictions, are met. No funding for private schools is provided in the other jurisdictions, although they still may be regulated.

## **Postsecondary Education**

**Range of Institutions:** Postsecondary education is available in both government-supported and private institutions, which offer degrees, diplomas, certificates, and attestations depending on the nature of the institution and the length of the program. The postsecondary environment has evolved during the past few years, as universities are no longer the only degree-granting institutions in some jurisdictions. A recognized postsecondary institution is a private or public institution that has been given full authority to grant degrees, diplomas, and other credentials by a public or private act of the provincial or territorial legislature or through a government-mandated quality assurance mechanism. Canada has 163 recognized public and private universities (including theological schools) and 183 recognized public colleges and institutes, including those granting applied and bachelor's degrees. In addition to the recognized institutions, there are 68 university-level institutions and 51 college-level ones operating as authorized institutions, at which only selected programs are approved under provincially established quality assurance programs.

**Governance:** Publicly funded universities are largely autonomous; they set their own admissions standards and degree requirements and have considerable flexibility in the management of their financial affairs and program offerings. Government intervention is generally limited to funding, fee structures, and the introduction of new programs. Most Canadian universities have a two-tiered system of governance that includes a board of governors and a senate. Boards are generally charged with overall financial and policy concerns. Academic senates are responsible for programs, courses, admission requirements, qualifications for degrees, and academic planning. Their decisions are subject to board approval. Students are often represented on both bodies, as are alumni and representatives from the community at large. In colleges, government involvement can extend to admissions policies, program approval, curricula, institutional planning, and working conditions. Most colleges have boards of governors appointed by the provincial or territorial government, with representation from the public, students, and instructors. Program planning incorporates input from business, industry, and labour representatives on college advisory committees.

**Funding:** Statistics Canada has reported that public expenditure on postsecondary education in 2005–06 was \$30.6 billion (in 2001 constant dollars). In 2004–05, federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal government funding, including funding for research, accounted for 54.2 per cent of the revenue, although this ranged from 38.4 per cent in Nova Scotia to 68.1 per cent in Quebec. Student fees accounted for over 20 per cent of the total, with bequests, donations, nongovernmental grants, sales of products and services, and investments bringing in another 25 per cent. Tuition costs at universities averaged \$4,524 in 2007–08, with international student fees for an undergraduate program averaging about \$14,000 annually. At colleges (in the nine provinces outside Quebec), the average tuition was about \$2,400 (Quebec residents do not pay

college tuition). Education is also funded through the money that governments transfer to individual students through loans, grants, and education tax credits.

**Attendance and Graduation:** According to the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, in 2005, there were 806,000 full-time university students (an increase of nearly 150,000 in the previous four years), as well as 273,000 part-time students. In 2005, Canadian universities awarded an estimated 175,700 bachelor's degrees, 33,000 master's degrees, and 4,200 doctoral degrees. The Association of Canadian Community Colleges has reported that, in 2004–05, full-time public college and institute enrolment was almost 515,000 students in credit programs. Including both full- and part-time students, there were about one million students in credit programs and about 500,000 in non-credit programs. Just over 173,000 students graduated from public colleges and institutes in 2004–05. Participation in postsecondary education has grown significantly in the past few years, whether measured by numbers of enrolments or by the proportion of the population in any given age group who are attending college or university. While women continue to make up the majority of students on both university and college campuses, they are still in the minority in the skilled trades.

**University Activities:** Degree-granting institutions in Canada focus on teaching and research. In 2004–05, Canadian universities performed \$8.9 billion worth of research and development, close to 35 per cent of the national total. Teaching is the other key function, whether at the small liberal arts universities that grant only undergraduate degrees or at the large, comprehensive institutions. Registration varies from about 2,000 students at some institutions to a full-time enrolment of over 62,000 at the University of Toronto, Canada's largest university. There are more than 10,000 undergraduate and graduate degree programs offered in Canadian universities, as well as professional degree programs and certificates. Most institutions provide instruction in either English or French; others offer instruction in both official languages. In 2005, Canadian universities employed close to 40,000 full-time faculty members.

**University Degrees:** Universities and university colleges focus on degree programs but may also offer some diplomas and certificates, often in professional designations. University degrees are offered at three consecutive levels. Students enter at the bachelor's level after having successfully completed secondary school or the two-year cégep program in Quebec. Most universities also have special entrance requirements and paths for mature students. Bachelor's degrees normally require three or four years of full-time study, depending on the province and whether the program is general or specialized. A master's degree typically requires two years of study after the bachelor's degree. For a doctoral degree, three to five years of additional study and research plus a dissertation are the normal requirements. The *Canadian Degree Qualifications Framework* outlines the degree levels in more detail. In regulated professions, such as medicine, law, education, and social work, an internship is generally required in order to obtain a licence to practise.

**College Activities:** There are thousands of non-degree-granting institutions in Canada. Of these, over 150 are recognized public colleges and institutes. Whether they are called public colleges, specialized institutes, community colleges, institutes of technology, colleges of applied arts and technology, or cégeps, they offer a range of vocation-oriented programs in a wide variety of professional and technical fields, including business, health, applied arts, technology, and social

services. Some of the institutions are specialized and provide training in a single field such as fisheries, arts, paramedical technology, and agriculture. Colleges also provide literacy and academic upgrading programs, pre-employment and pre-apprenticeship programs, and the in-class portions of registered apprenticeship programs. As well, a wide variety of workshops, short programs, and upgrades for skilled workers and professionals are made available. At the college level, the focus is on teaching, but applied research is taking on greater importance.

***College Recognition and Cooperation:*** Diplomas are generally awarded for successful completion of two- and three-year college and institute programs, while certificate programs usually take up to one year. University degrees and applied degrees are offered in some colleges and institutes, and others provide university transfer programs. Les collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel (cégeps) in Quebec offer a choice of two-year academic programs that are prerequisite for university study or three-year technical programs that prepare students for the labour market or for further postsecondary study. Colleges work very closely with business, industry, labour, and the public service sectors to provide professional development services and specialized programs and, on a wider basis, with their communities to design programs reflecting local needs.

***Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition:*** About 80 per cent of colleges also recognize prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) in at least some of their programs. Some universities also recognize it, and a growing number of provinces offer PLAR to adults at the secondary school level. PLAR is a process that helps adults demonstrate and gain recognition for learning they have acquired outside of formal education settings.

## **Vocational Education and Training**

***Providers and Participation:*** Vocational education refers to a multi-year program or a series of courses providing specialized instruction in a skill or a trade intending to lead the student directly into a career or program based on that skill or trade. It is offered in secondary schools and at the postsecondary level in public colleges and institutes, private for-profit colleges, and in the workplace, through apprenticeship programs. At the secondary level, vocational programs may be offered at separate, specialized schools or as optional programs in schools offering both academic and vocational streams. The secondary school programs prepare the student for the workforce, a postsecondary program, or an apprenticeship. The role of public colleges has been described above. Private colleges may be licensed by provincial governments or may operate as unlicensed entities. They may receive some public funding but are largely funded through tuition fees and offer programs in such areas as business, health sciences, human services, applied arts, information technology, electronics, services, and trades. Programs usually require one or two years of study, although some private career colleges offer programs of shorter duration. Apprenticeship programs in Canada have been generally geared toward adults, with youth becoming increasingly involved in some jurisdictions. The related industry is responsible for the practical training, delivered in the workplace, and the educational institution provides the theoretical components. Apprenticeship registrations have shown a steady increase, reaching almost 300,000 in 2005. The largest increases have been in the building construction trades.



## **Adult Education**

**Participation:** The 2003 International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey shows that almost half of the adult population in Canada (aged 16 to 65, not including full-time students) were enrolled in organized forms of adult education and training, including programs, courses, workshops, seminars, and other organized educational offerings at some time during the year of the study. Each learner devoted about 290 hours to this learning over the year. Fifty-three per cent of participants were supported by their employers, while 41 per cent paid for their own education, and 8 per cent had government sponsorship, with more men than women getting access to employer funding for learning. Compared to the general population, participants in adult education tend to be younger, to be native-born rather than immigrants, to have higher literacy, education, and income levels, and to be in the labour force. Fifty-seven per cent of those in the labour force participated in adult education and training, compared to 31 per cent of the unemployed and 24 per cent of those not in the labour force. For all participants, the overwhelming reason for participation was job-related at 82 per cent; personal interest was the motivation for about 20 per cent. Participation in informal learning was also tracked in the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, looking at activities related to daily living that result in learning, such as visits to museums, use of computers, and reading reference materials. Almost all Canadians (93 per cent) report having been involved in some form of informal learning over the year covered by the study.

**Literacy:** The 2003 International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, mentioned above, revealed that 58 per cent of adults in Canada possess literacy skills that indicate they could meet most everyday reading requirements. This leaves 42 per cent of adults with low levels of literacy skills. Those with lower levels of literacy also were shown to have lower levels of employment and lower earnings. The results varied among the provinces and territories across the country, but even in the top performing jurisdictions, at least three out of ten adults aged 16 and over performed at the lower levels in literacy. The literacy needs of Canadians are addressed through various collaborative efforts between the provincial and territorial educational authorities, the federal government, and the vast nongovernmental sector. This multi-group approach ensures that programs are designed for Canadians of all ages and all groups in society. Literacy is an educational priority, often framed within wider social and economic development initiatives.

**Providers:** Many institutions, governments, and groups are involved in the delivery of adult education programs, with the providers varying by jurisdiction. Colleges offer adult education and training for the labour force; government departments responsible for literacy, skills training, second-language learning, and other adult programs may provide programs themselves or fund both formal and non-formal educational bodies to develop and deliver the programs. Some jurisdictions have established dedicated adult learning centres. Community-based, not-for-profit, and voluntary organizations, school boards, and some private companies, largely funded by the provincial, territorial, or federal governments, address literacy and other learning needs for all adults, with some of them focusing on specific groups such as rural populations, the Aboriginal communities, immigrants, displaced workers, and those with low levels of literacy or education. The federal government works with the provincial and territorial governments to fund many of the skills training and English and French second-language programs.

## **Technology in Education**

**Schools:** In 2006, virtually all schools in Canada had computers, providing one computer for five students. Ninety-eight per cent of schools had an Internet connection. The computers were used for word processing, research, and individualized and on-line learning. Some provincial services and several school boards offer the provincial curriculum on-line for distance learning and for course enhancement in small and rural schools. In the 2006 Programme for International Student Assessment, 94 per cent of the 15-year-olds surveyed in Canada reported using a computer every day or often during the week at home, while 47 per cent reported the same amount of usage at school. A broad range of technology — television, print, teleconferencing and on-line — is used in classrooms and distance learning throughout Canada.

**Postsecondary Education:** Postsecondary students in all jurisdictions have access to technological resources for learning, both on campus and through distributed learning. Three provinces have open universities, and all have colleges and universities that offer distance courses. Consortia at the provincial and pan-Canadian levels also provide access to university and college programs.

**Home Access:** During 2005, about 26 per cent of adult Canadians went on-line for education, training, or school work. These education users reported going on-line on a daily basis and spending more than five hours a week on-line. Of this group, two-thirds used the Internet to research information for project assignments, and 26 per cent did so for distance education, self-directed learning, or correspondence courses. Nearly 80 per cent of full- and part-time students used the Internet for educational purposes.

## **Activities of the Government of Canada**

**The Federal Contribution:** The federal government of Canada provides financial support for postsecondary education and the teaching of the two official languages. In addition, the federal government is responsible for the education of Registered Indian people on reserve, personnel in the armed forces and the coast guard, and inmates in federal correctional facilities.

**Aboriginal Education:** The federal government shares responsibility with First Nations for the provision of education to children ordinarily resident on reserve and attending provincial, federal, or band-operated schools. In 2006-07, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada supported the education of 120,000 First Nations K–12 students living on reserves across Canada. Band-operated schools located on reserves educate approximately 60 per cent of the students living on reserves, while 40 per cent go off reserve to schools under provincial authority, usually for secondary school (First Nations children living off reserve are educated in the public elementary and secondary schools in their cities, towns, and communities, with the provinces and territories providing the majority of educational services for Aboriginal students.) Funding is also provided for postsecondary assistance and programs for Status Indian students residing on or off reserve, as Indian and Northern Affairs Canada supports approximately 23,000 students annually for tuition, books, and living allowances. The department also provides support to some postsecondary institutions for the development and delivery of college- and university-level courses designed to enhance the postsecondary educational achievement of Status Indians and Inuit students.

**Postsecondary Education:** In addition to providing revenue for universities and colleges through transfer payments, the federal government offers direct student support. Every year, the Canada Student Loans Program and related provincial and territorial programs provide loans, grants, and interest forgiveness to over 350,000 postsecondary students. The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation awards \$350 million in bursaries and scholarships each year to about 100,000 students throughout Canada. In 2009-10, the Canada Student Grant Program will replace the foundation, providing income-based grants to postsecondary students. For parents, the Canada Education Savings Grant program supplements their savings for postsecondary education. These programs, and many similar ones offered by the provinces and territories, are designed to make postsecondary education more widely accessible and to reduce student debt.

**Language Education:** Reflecting its history and culture, Canada adopted the Official Languages Act (first passed in 1969 and revised in 1988), which established both French and English as the official languages of Canada and provided for the support of English and French minority populations. According to the 2006 Census, 67.6 per cent of the population speak English only, 13.3 per cent speak French only, and 17.4 per cent speak both French and English. The French-speaking population is concentrated in Quebec, while each of the other provinces and territories has a French-speaking minority population; Quebec has an English-speaking minority population. The federal government's official-language policy and funding programs include making contributions to two education-related components — minority-language education and second-language education. Through the Official Languages in Education Program, the federal government transfers funding for these activities to the provinces and territories based on bilateral and general agreements that respect areas of responsibility and the unique needs of each jurisdiction. The bilateral agreements related to these contributions are negotiated under a protocol worked out through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). Two national federally funded programs, coordinated by CMEC, provide youth with opportunities for exchange and summer study to enhance their second-language skills.

### **The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada**

**Role of CMEC:** The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) was formed in 1967 by the provincial and territorial ministers responsible for education to provide a forum in which they could discuss matters of mutual interest, undertake educational initiatives cooperatively, and represent the interests of the provinces and territories with national educational organizations, the federal government, foreign governments, and international organizations. CMEC is the national voice for education in Canada and, through CMEC, the provinces and territories work collectively on common objectives in a broad range of activities at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels.

### **Ministerial Priorities**

A bold new vision for learning in Canada was released in April 2008 by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), to address the education needs and aspirations of Canadians. *Learn Canada 2020* is the framework that the provincial and territorial ministers of education, through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, will use to enhance Canada's education

systems, learning opportunities, and overall educational outcomes. The vision of *Learn Canada 2020* is the provision of quality lifelong learning opportunities for all Canadians.

*Learn Canada 2020* recognizes the direct links between a well-educated population and a vibrant knowledge-based economy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a socially progressive, sustainable society, and enhanced personal growth opportunities for all Canadians.

*Learn Canada 2020* encompasses four pillars of lifelong learning from early childhood to adulthood and addresses the most pressing education and learning issues facing Canadians today. The ministers of education, in conjunction with their Cabinet colleagues as appropriate, will pursue ambitious goals for each pillar as follows:

- **Early Childhood Learning and Development:** All children should have access to high quality early childhood education that ensures they arrive at school ready to learn.
- **Elementary to High School Systems:** All children in our elementary to high school systems deserve teaching and learning opportunities that are inclusive and that provide them with world-class skills in literacy, numeracy, and science.
- **Postsecondary Education:** Canada must increase the number of students pursuing postsecondary education by increasing the quality and accessibility of postsecondary education.
- **Adult Learning and Skills Development:** Canada must develop an accessible, diversified, and integrated system of adult learning and skills development that delivers training when Canadians need it.

Within the four pillars of lifelong learning, ministers have identified eight specific activity areas and accompanying objectives:

- **Literacy:** Raise the literacy levels of Canadians.
- **Aboriginal Education:** Eliminate the gap in academic achievement and graduation rates between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.
- **Postsecondary Capacity:** Enhance and stabilize the long-term capacity of postsecondary systems to meet the training and learning needs of all Canadians seeking higher education learning opportunities.
- **Education for Sustainable Development:** Raise students' awareness and encourage them to become actively engaged in working for a sustainable society.
- **International and National Representation:** Speak effectively and consistently for education and learning in Canada in both pan-Canadian and international settings.
- **Official Languages:** Promote and implement support programs for minority-language education and second-language programs that are among the most comprehensive in the world.
- **Learning Assessment Programs and Performance Indicators:** Support the implementation of national and international learning assessment programs and performance indicators for education systems.
- **Education Data and Research Strategy:** Create comprehensive, long-term strategies to collect, analyze, and disseminate nationally and internationally comparable data and research.

*Learn Canada 2020* reflects the educational priorities of Canadians. Ministers will engage key partners and stakeholders in reaching the stated goals and objectives. Education in Canada is under the exclusive jurisdiction of provinces and territories. Ministers recognize the national interest in ensuring a healthy economy and the importance of education for economic development. To this end, Canada's education ministers will engage all those who can and must participate in meeting these goals — parents, educators, key stakeholders, and other orders of government. They will encourage the federal government to meet its constitutional obligation and work with provinces and territories to provide equality of opportunity for Aboriginal peoples. Ministers plan to keep Canadians informed of their collective and individual progress on *Learn Canada 2020* on an annual basis.

Ministers will pursue the goals of *Learn Canada 2020* through their Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). CMEC is the intergovernmental body composed of the ministers responsible for elementary-secondary and advanced education from the provinces and territories. Through CMEC, ministers share information and undertake projects in areas of mutual interest and concern.

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