

Community Learning Initiative
Adult Learner Profile
1997-1998

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Community Learning Initiative

Adult Learner Profile

1997-1998

Introduction

The Nova Scotia Community Learning Initiative (CLI) is a province-wide program which provides funding, practitioner training, and supports to 27 community-based Learning Networks. In turn, these Networks offer a wide variety of literacy and upgrading opportunities which target every segment of our society. Adult learners from rural and urban communities, from the Acadian Community, the African-Canadian Community, the Mi'kmaq Community, the Deaf Community, the ESL Community, single mothers on social assistance--from Digby Neck to Terence Bay to Isle Madame--people with literacy issues can seek accessible programming through this Initiative.

The focus of the CLI is on adult learners who are at Levels 1, 2 or 3 of the Nova Scotia Academic Upgrading Curriculum. This corresponds to a basic literacy level up to a grade 10 level. The programs are the result of community needs assessments and are run on either part-time or full-time schedules depending on the needs expressed.

Two distinct program models are used under the CLI. One model employs a tutor coordinator who matches volunteers with adult learners. The tutor coordinator supports, liaises and does ongoing assessments with the matched pairs and targets 15-30 matches. The second model employs a qualified instructor who conducts regular small group or classroom-based sessions. A small group targets between 10-15 adult learners.

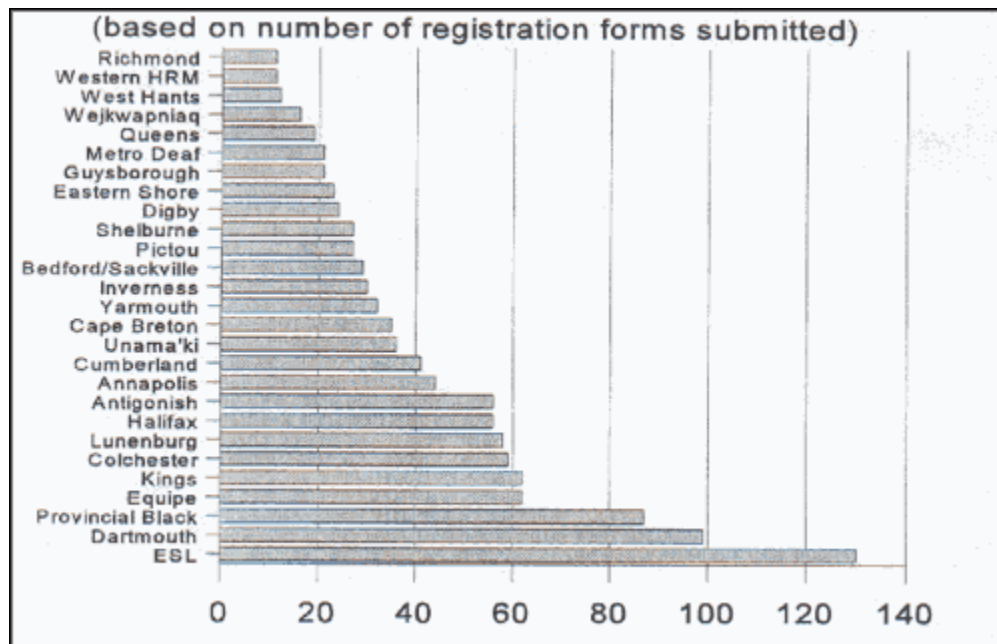
In 1997-1998, Participant Registration Forms were distributed to the Learning Networks so that a profile of those who are enrolling in these programs could be compiled. 1,128 registration forms were completed from a total of 104 programs.

The data collected reflects the uniqueness of each Network. The province-wide statistics also serve to provide a profile of the adult learners who choose to upgrade their literacy and numeracy levels through the Community Learning Initiative.

Provincial Distribution of CLI learners

The following graph indicates the number of Registration Forms which were received from each of the 27 Learning Networks. Since 1997-1998 was the first year that these forms were made mandatory, the participation in this process may not have been complete.

Provincial Distribution of CLI Learners

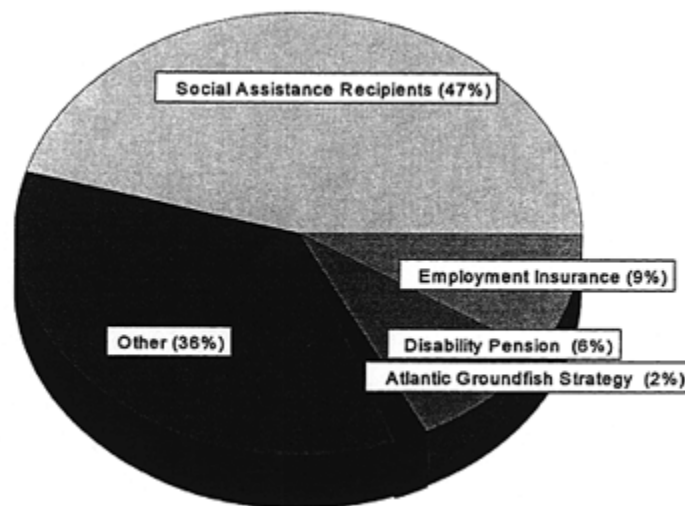


Income Source

The following graph depicts the spread of income between the respondents to the question of "Source of income". A significant number of individuals wrote in *no income source* in response to this question. As a result, 'No income' will be given as a category in the Participant Registration Form in the future. Another frequent write-in referred to part-time or full-time employment. These will also be added to the Form.

Provincially, 47 percent of adult learners who responded to the given categories are on Social Assistance; 9 percent are on Employment Insurance, and 6 percent on Disability Pension. There was a wide variation of income sources from Network to Network. In the Literacy Network Unama'ki, 92 percent of participants noted Social Assistance as their income source while in the *Équipede travail en alphabétisation*, only 10 percent of respondents indicated that they were in receipt of these benefits. Very few participants (2 percent) indicated that their income source was The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS), with the Yarmouth County Learning Network indicating the highest level at 9 percent. At 48 percent, the Guysborough County Adult Learning Initiative had the highest percentage of Employment Insurance Benefits recipients.

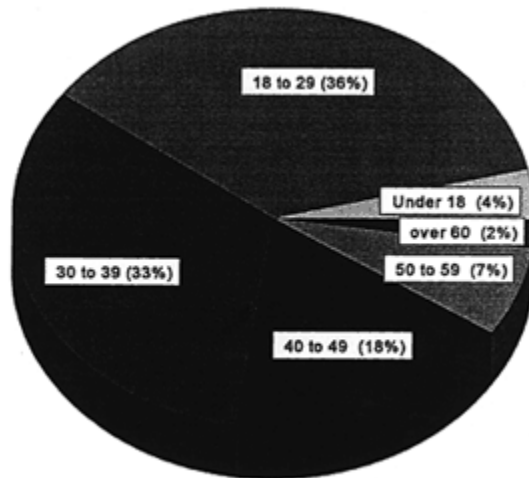
Source of Income



Age of Participants

The age breakdown in the Community Learning Initiative was much more consistent from Network to Network. While the majority of those served are between 18 and 39 years of age, the largest single group is youth between the ages of 18 and 29. *Équipe de travail en alphabétisation* is the notable exception with the majority of their learners over 40 years of age, and almost a quarter over 60 years of age.

Age of Program Participants



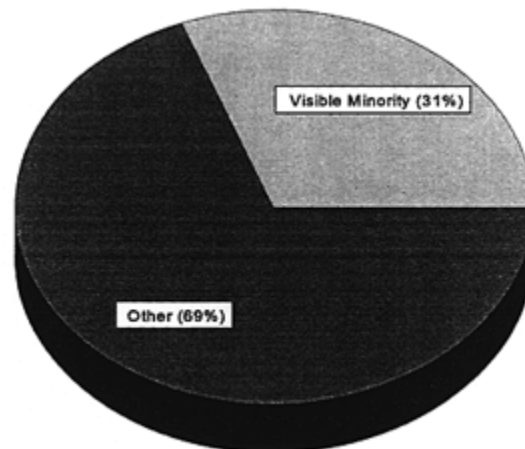
Targeted Populations

Visible Minorities

Through the Provincial Black Literacy Network, Literacy Network Unama'ki and the Wejkwapniaq Learning Network, the CLI serves the ADican-Canadian and the Mi'kmaq communities, The Provincial Black Literacy Network client profile includes 68 percent involvement of visible minorities, while Unama'ki includes 100 percent involvement, and Wejkwapniaq includes 94 percent involvement,

All CLI Networks have a mandate of inclusiveness and this is evidenced in the Network profiles this year, Examples of this mandate at work across the province can be seen through the Halifax Community Learning Network in which 46 percent of the adult learners identified themselves as being members of a visible minority, the Yarmouth County Learning Network in which 38 percent identified themselves as being members of a visible minority and in the Cape Breton Literacy Network where 29 percent identified themselves as such, In all, 31 percent of the adult learners in the CLI identified themselves as being members of a visible minority.

Visible Minority Population

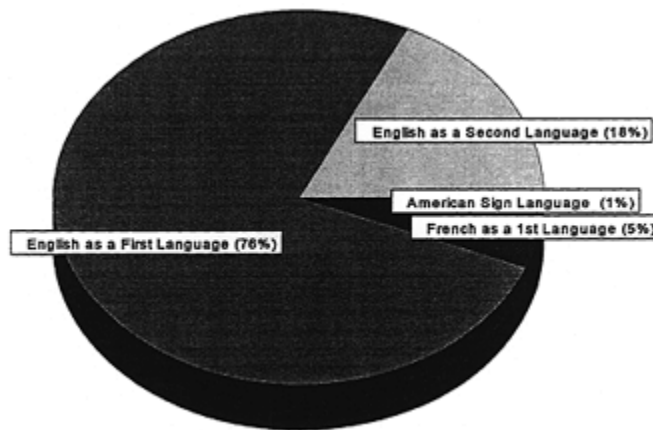


Language Needs

The Nova Scotia ESL Network provides literacy and upgrading programs for those with English as a second language requirements. However, other Networks also contributed to this effort. For example, the Halifax Community Learning Network assisted 23 percent of its participants with this requirement and the Guysborough County Adult Learning Network, 19 percent. Eighty-nine percent of the Literacy Network Unama'ki learners identified themselves as speaking English as a second language, as did 19 percent of the learners enrolled in the Wejkwapniaq Learning Network. On a provincial scale, 18 percent of those enrolled in CLI programs identified themselves as having English as their second language.

In addition to English, two other languages are used as languages of instruction within the CLI. One percent of CLI learners are receiving instruction through American Sign Language and 5 percent are receiving French first language instruction.

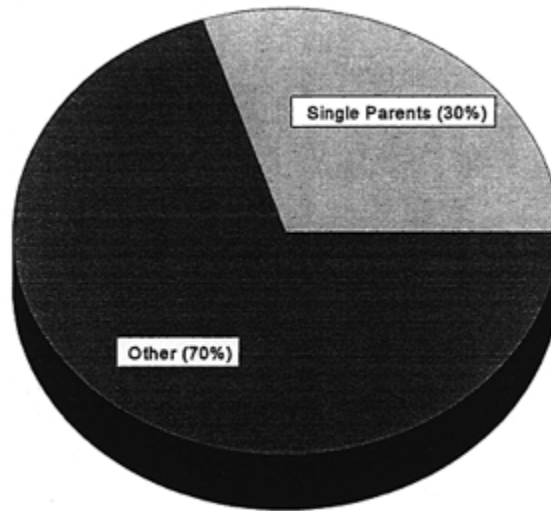
Language Needs



Single Parents

Because literacy impacts on the lives of single parents and their children, the CLI targets this group in its profiling. By providing parents with opportunities to improve their skills, they in turn can improve the lives of their families. Single parents make up 30 percent of the learners under the CLI. Individual Networks, such as Colchester Adult Learning Network registering 51 percent single parents and Digby County Literacy Network registering 63 percent, exceeded the provincial average.

Single Parents



Male/Female Ratio

With the exception of four Networks (Eastern Shore and Musquodoboit Valley Learning Network, the Guysborough County Adult Learning Network, the Queens County Learning Network, and the West Hants Learning Network) female participation rates outnumbered male participation rates in CLI programming. Provincially, 60.9 percent of those who participated in CLI programming were women.

There are a number of factors which can account for this imbalance. No matter what their educational level, women earn less than men,, but the gap becomes greater at the lower educational levels. According to HRDC statistics, men with less than a grade nine education earn \$20,068 a year. Women with the same educational level earn \$9,250 a year. Given the fact that female, single parents make up the third most prevalent family type in Nova Scotia, it can be concluded that women are under greater pressure to upgrade their skills and to gain a better quality of life for their families.

Male to Female Ratio

