

**National Summit on Libraries and Literacy: Moving
Forward**

Canadian Library Association

Report on Summit Proceedings

**June 14, 2006
Chateau Laurier
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Greg Kelner for the Steering Committee of the National Summit on Libraries and Literacy – Moving Forward.

Steering Committee

- Greg Kelner, Toronto Public Library; Co-convenor Action for Literacy Interest Group
- Thomas Quigley, Vancouver Public Library, Co-convenor Action for Literacy Interest Group
- Brenda Livingston, Toronto Public Library
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Executive Summary

Background and Introduction

On June 14, 2006, 109 delegates representing libraries, literacy organizations, adult learners, government and others came from across Canada to the National Summit on Libraries and Literacy. The goals of the 2006 Summit were to:

- develop strategies to increase information sharing among libraries and between libraries and literacy organizations;
- plan initiatives to increase collaboration;
- inform delegates about existing library and literacy initiatives locally and internationally;
- create concrete tasks that will enable participants to move forward with a national vision for library/literacy initiatives and collaborations.

Genevieve Clarke, National Coordinator for the Vital Link libraries and adult literacy programme of the National Reading Agency, Great Britain, was the keynote speaker and set the tone for the Summit. A combination of plenary sessions and small group workshops on theme areas based on the Vital Link were used to stimulate participation and discussion. The theme areas were:

- connecting libraries and basic skills agencies
- books for adult learners
- promoting reading
- family literacy initiatives
- staff training for skills development
- libraries and governmental/NGO relations

Participants discussed opportunities and challenges related to each theme in the morning. In the afternoon they identified project priorities and developed thirteen project plans. Many of the project plans require funding for implementation.

Project Plans

Theme	Project	Description of Project
1. Connecting libraries and basic skills agencies	Community Assessment Tool	Based on the Working Together Project, this project would entail reviewing library policies and procedures, and getting library management and staff out to communities and learners. The project would address the overall attitudes of libraries. For example, there could be a greeter at the door and a formal orientation for literacy groups as to what the library can offer. The first step is to identify barriers through a consultation with the community that includes learners, tutors and front-line library staff.
	Promoting literacy and libraries	This project would create opportunities for literacy organizations and libraries to promote literacy and libraries.
	Libraries as Community or Civic Centres	The goal of this project is to make the library a place that is accessible and well used. The project would involve a needs assessment in the community to determine who the target audience is and how to reach this audience. The project would also examine other neighbourhood models. It would look at signage, see how staff interact with emergent readers, and challenge the institutional nature of libraries. This initiative needs administrative support to succeed.
2. Books for adult learners	Library Literacy Audit	This project would create a national campaign for Canadian writers with Canadian content for people with literacy challenges similar to the Quick Reads project in the UK.
	On-line Database	This project would develop an on-line library/literacy portal with information, resources, web sites and links.

Theme	Project	Description of Project
3. Promoting reading	National Promotional Campaign	This project would develop and implement a long-term national promotional campaign for reading (maybe three years). Using a multitude of mediums, it would provide an opportunity to mobilize people and resources.
4. Family literacy initiatives	Books for Babies	Although there are various provincial and local programs already, this program would be national in scope and based on the belief that every child deserves to be a reader.
	Services for Families Outside our Doors	This project would involve training staff to communicate with the community.
	Reaching Rural Aboriginal Groups	This project would focus on research on available literacy/library services in northern Aboriginal communities. The objective is equal access.
	Advocacy	This project would inform library staff and boards about literacy and get their support for literacy.
5. Staff training	Literacy Audit	This project entails doing a literacy audit of the entire library, including friendliness, policies, materials, customer service and accessibility.
	National Standards	This project would develop national standards for literacy as part of library training.
6. Libraries and governmental/NGO relations	National Literacy Strategy	The group concluded that a Pan-Canadian literacy strategy was the priority. Libraries must work with a coalition of national organizations to develop and refine a national advocacy plan and bring a document forward.

Action Ideas from Adult Learners

Topic Areas	Action Ideas
Family literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make sure parents can read the books used in family literacy programs such as Books for Babies. - Include parents in homework clubs and story times.
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold community literacy classes in the library or have libraries visit literacy classes with follow-up visits to the library by the classes. - Make libraries friendlier with better signage, greeters, and attractive displays. - Welcome children. - Get input from adult learners across the country to improve accessibility. - Create a tool kit for accessibility. - Develop an orientation to the library to introduce adult learners to library services. - Put pamphlets for learning all together in one place. - Do a literacy audit. - Promote literacy and connect people to literacy and learning opportunities
Collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Build bigger and better collections for adult literacy. - Develop a collection similar to Quick Reads

I. Introduction

The introduction outlines the purpose of this report and important contextual or background information on how the Summit came about, its objectives, the planning process, format, and who attended.

A. Purpose of the Report

This report summarizes the proceedings of the *National Summit on Libraries and Literacy – Moving Forward*, an event hosted by the Canadian Library Association's (CLA) Action for Literacy Interest Group (AFLIG). The companion document to this report is *Libraries and Literacy: A Decade in Review*, a background paper prepared for the Summit. The companion report can be accessed at www.librariesandliteracy.ca.

B. Background Information on the Summit

i. Motivation for the Summit

The motivation for the Summit was to provide an opportunity to update what had taken place with respect to libraries and literacy since the 1995 Calgary Summit: *Public Libraries and Literacy: Toward a National Frontline Strategy*. In 1995, approximately thirty delegates from public libraries and literacy organizations at the national and provincial/territorial levels came together to document library-literacy initiatives, develop a national long-term strategy for literacy services in libraries and dialogue with literacy groups. The 2006 Summit presented an occasion to build upon current library/literacy initiatives to advance new approaches.

ii. Goals

The goals of the 2006 Summit were to:

- develop strategies to increase information sharing among libraries and between libraries and literacy organizations;
- plan initiatives to increase collaboration;
- inform about existing library and literacy initiatives locally and internationally;
- create concrete tasks that will enable participants to move forward with a national vision for library/literacy initiatives and collaborations.

iii. Format

The Summit combined a mixture of plenary and keynote sessions with small group, participatory working sessions. The intention of this combination was to create a vision and inspiration for national work along with practical planning for follow-up action. The Summit Steering Committee invited Genevieve Clarke, National Coordinator for the Vital Link libraries and adult literacy programme of the National Reading Agency, Great Britain, to be the keynote speaker and set the tone for the Summit. Other plenary speakers included Charles Ramsey from NALD and an introductory panel with federal government and learner representatives. Plenary sessions were in both official languages.

Six small group working sessions were organized for the morning. The library and literacy themes for these groups were organized according to six areas of interest to Canada that corresponded to the work of Vital Links. These themes were:

- connecting libraries and basic skills agencies
- books for adult learners
- promoting reading
- family literacy initiatives
- staff training for skills development
- libraries and governmental/NGO relations

Working groups ran twice with different delegates each time. All delegates signed up to attend two of the six areas of interest before the Summit. The goal of the morning working group sessions was to come up with a list of project ideas, based upon a discussion of the opportunities and challenges in each theme area.

There were seven working group sessions in the afternoon. In addition to the themes noted above, there was a specific working group for adult learners attending the Summit. Delegates signed up for a theme area of their choice during the lunch break. The goal of the afternoon sessions was to review and prioritize project and action ideas from the morning sessions. Then participants in each group sketched out these priorities according to a short description of the idea, scope, partners, outcomes, resources needed, sponsors, time line, and project leads.

iv. Delegates

The Summit was advertised widely in literacy and library communities across Canada. One official delegate from each province and territory from both literacy agencies and libraries had expenses paid

to attend the conference. The Summit took place just prior to the CLA 2006 National Conference as a strategy to attract more library delegates to the Summit.

The Steering Committee was aiming for a maximum of a hundred delegates. One hundred and nine people registered for the Summit. 49 % of delegates were from library organizations, 28% from literacy organizations, 9 % were literacy learners and 14% were students or from other organizations including two representatives from the National Literacy Secretariat.

Delegates hailed from across Canada including two territories.

II. Morning Plenary Sessions

A. Welcome and Introductions

Greg Kelner, Co-convenor of the Action for Literacy Interest Group of the Canadian Library Association welcomed delegates to the National Summit on Libraries and Literacy. He then introduced Donna Kirby, Acting Director General, Adult Learning and Literacy Directorate, Human Resources and Social Development.

Donna Kirby brought greetings from the National Literacy Secretariat. She drew delegates' attention to low literacy levels through the results of the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALLS) and emphasized the positive economic and social benefits of improving literacy. She underscored the important role of libraries in addressing literacy in Canada. Ms. Kirby commended the literacy and library organizations that are working together to promote and address literacy along with the work that delegates would be undertaking at the Summit. She concluded by wishing delegates every success.

Mr. Kelner then introduced the steering committee for the Summit as well as the sponsoring organizations and others who had worked to plan and support the Summit. He followed by introducing Diane Smith, P.E.I. learner representative, Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL).

Dianne Smith spoke about her history of getting her GED on her 50th birthday, moving on to start her own business in community care, and growing the business to fifteen employees. She spoke as a learner representative on behalf of MCL's Learner Advisory Committee. She explained that the learner group attending the Summit had worked hard to prepare for the Summit. They had all visited their own libraries, some for the first time. Ms. Smith stressed that the learners attending had ideas and experience to contribute to the Summit. She asked, "What do libraries have to offer people with literacy challenges?" and "How do you keep people coming back?" She said that libraries should be the first place that people with literacy challenges turn to.

Mr. Kelner then spoke about the preparation for the Summit and explained that community development should not be a separate issue but integrated into all the working group sessions. He also outlined the format of the day and some logistical issues. He then introduced Genevieve Clarke, keynote speaker.

Genevieve Clarke has been working for The Reading Agency in the United Kingdom since November 2003. She is National Coordinator for The Vital Link libraries and adult literacy programme and has also been working closely with the BBC and major UK publishers on related initiatives. The Vital Link is a national programme that is working to build the capacity of libraries to support adults with low literacy levels through reader development. Her coordinator's role follows four years as Manager of the National Reading Campaign at the National Literacy Trust. Ms. Clarke previously worked in magazine and book publishing and as an adult literacy tutor in college and community settings.

The Reading Agency is the UK agency for libraries and reader development. It was founded in 2002 on the principles that reading has infinite potential for making life richer, and that libraries are the most democratic medium for bringing reading to people. The agency works with libraries to research and plan programmes, provide resources and training and build links with new partners. Please see their website www.readingagency.org.uk for more information and www.librariesandliteracy.ca for Genevieve Clarke's PowerPoint presentation.

B. Summary of Keynote Address

Ms. Clarke began her presentation by noting that there were remarkably similar opportunities and challenges between Canada and the UK with respect to work with libraries and literacy. The presentation focused on two main themes: 1) what has been achieved through The Vital Link, and 2) what are the remaining challenges.

Introduction

The Vital Link is a library-led program in England run by The Reading Agency in partnership with the National Literacy Trust and is currently funded by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. It focuses on:

- getting attractive books into the hands of learners
- encouraging partnerships between libraries and literacy providers
- reading for pleasure
- creating confident new readers
- getting new readers into libraries

Vital Link is a central resource for libraries throughout the country. Like Canada, the United Kingdom has serious challenges with low literacy. In England, these are being addressed by the government's Skills for Life strategy which was launched in 2001. The strategy includes a focus on more rigorous requirements for teachers, curricula for delivery and national tests to measure learner achievement. The government has made an investment of some 3.7 billion pounds in the Skills for Life strategy since its inception.

The Vital Link started as a pilot project in 2001. Libraries were always involved with literacy but in mostly traditional ways. One goal was to move adult learners, who might not have the confidence, into reading for pleasure in a more proactive way. This approach included reader development, helping people use libraries for what they want to do, materials for emergent readers, and more linkages between libraries and basic skills agencies.

Achievements

The Vital Link brought libraries and literacy providers together and showed that they have complementary skills. This work started with nine library authorities. Some literacy providers had to be brought up to date on how libraries had changed. The program looked at models of partnerships that focused on working with existing learners and potential new learners. For example, library tours for learners were encouraged after the library was closed. Reading for pleasure was encouraged in a way that fit with the curriculum that learners were involved in.

The Vital Link developed a set of criteria for selecting existing mainstream fiction and non-fiction for adult learners – particularly those who have improved their skills but have yet to develop a taste or the stamina for reading for pleasure. Criteria included readability, design, length of text, interest level, and structure. It also came up with two book collections – *First Choice* and *Got kids? Get reading!* - and lobbied publishers to have books written by well-known authors especially for this audience.

In late 2003, the Vital Link went from a pilot project to becoming part of the Government's ten-year Framework for the Future strategy for public libraries in England. The goal was to build library capacity to offer services to adult learners, influence policy makers, build awareness with literacy agencies, identify more books for adult learners, and research the impact. A three-tiered improvement framework (standard, medium and advanced) was endorsed by library bodies. The Vital Link consulted and works with libraries in four main areas:

- making libraries more inviting and accessible to adult learners
- offering support to adults who are learning
- offering appropriate books to adult learners
- offering creative activities to adult learners

The Vital Link also developed a tool kit with case studies available on its website at www.vitallink.org.uk. Libraries use the kit to improve in these four areas, partnership training, and for access to an on-line database of 400 titles for emergent readers.

Impact research with nine focus groups with adult learners showed important results for policy makers:

- more than 75% of respondents showed that they have developed the joy of reading and that there was a crossover to improved literacy skills
- over 50% have developed more positive attitudes about reading and libraries

Recently, the Vital Link has been spurred on by the launch of related national initiatives. In 2005, the library sector throughout the UK partnered with the BBC on a three-year promotional campaign to improve the reading and writing of one million adults. In 2006, World Book Day marked the launch of Quick Reads, a major new initiative from leading publishers, booksellers and writers. Some of the biggest names in fiction and non-fiction, supported by a Government-funded promotional campaign, produced 24 short, fast-paced new books designed to encourage adult reluctant readers to get hooked on books. The Vital Link was also funded to get the message about reading for pleasure and links with libraries out to literacy practitioners.

Challenges Ahead

The biggest challenge is that funding for The Vital Link is being reduced as other change programs for libraries take priority. The other challenges ahead are to embed this work into libraries so that it becomes part of everyday practice. Libraries can do more organizationally to build literacy into library and educational plans. Advocacy needs to be done with literacy providers and policy makers. Research on reading must be encouraged to provide evidence of the impact of reading for pleasure on improving literacy skills among adults.

A period for questions from delegates followed the presentation. Please see Appendix 3 for delegate's questions and Ms. Clarke's responses.

III. Working Group Sessions: Opportunities, Challenges and Future Directions

This section presents a summary of both the morning and afternoon sessions with respect to each theme area. It includes opportunities, challenges, priorities for project ideas and project plans. Often, there is overlap in issues, opportunities and project ideas across groups.

A. Connecting libraries and basic skills agencies

Facilitator: Maria Moriarty, AlphaPlus Centre

Morning sessions

Opportunities:

General

In general, participants saw numerous opportunities within this theme area. Opportunities like the Summit to come together were important as was sharing information, knowledge and expertise between literacy agencies and libraries. Other opportunities included identifying and removing barriers for non-users of libraries, offering space for literacy programs in libraries, promoting libraries within literacy programs and expanding literacy program guidelines. The importance of promoting positive aspects of literacy, matching the needs of learners to the right programs, integrating literacy into health and justice, and avoiding “re-inventing the wheel” were highlighted. The local media can play a role in promoting literacy and libraries.

Collection Development

Literacy agencies and libraries should consult each other in order to improve collections. To maximize resources, agencies and libraries should concentrate on specific collection development (e.g., learner versus practitioner resources). Organizations like Ontario’s AlphaPlus are in a position to help libraries with their literacy collections.

Access

Even with good collections, access can be an issue. Ideally, literacy collections should be placed near magazines and newspapers to make these collections appear more accessible. Arranging materials in a logical progression will encourage learners to continue to improve their literacy levels. Print-based materials should only be one of several types of materials available to learners.

Opportunities to work on reader development in libraries include developing guides and “how to” materials.

Community

There is a huge partnership potential for literacy agencies and libraries and the public and private sectors. Corporations can promote literacy within their own organizations. Libraries should also promote activities that will bring adult learners to the library. Community consultations with questions, and not just answers, for the community is important. There should be an overall promotion in communities to enhance awareness of the services and collections available in libraries and literacy organizations. Outreach librarians can promote community development by working with the community. There is a partnership potential to make libraries the centre of communities and develop mobile libraries. Government agencies such as Library and Archives Canada also have a role to play in community partnerships.

Challenges:

Overall, there is not enough importance placed on literacy by libraries, government, and the population in general. There are a number of challenges specific to connecting libraries and literacy agencies. The first is that there are not enough connections between the two. Promoting library services in literacy organizations is a challenge; at the same time, libraries need to understand community needs better.

Within the library system, there are several challenges relating to literacy:

- finding literacy champions in libraries
- revising library policies which might create barriers
- reducing barriers so people will not be intimidated to use the library
- improving collections by gathering materials for different levels of readers
- addressing stereotypes about libraries and literacy such as “only the people who read go to libraries”

Libraries can begin to meet these challenges by having friendly staff at their circulation desks, choosing print-based materials that are relevant and appealing, and offering services or accommodation for people with visual impairments.

Short-term, project funding is an issue for program sustainability as are federal/provincial jurisdictional issues in terms of who does what and who pays for what. Also, there is a need for

literacy programs to focus on reading for pleasure, not only literacy for employment purposes as is sometimes determined by funders. There is a need to avoid duplication among agencies.

Distance and transportation also pose challenges for libraries in offering literacy services. Rural areas have to deal with distance and access to limited materials. Lack of transportation and affordable childcare are also access barriers. Budgets and resources are limited, providing strain on what can be provided.

Afternoon session

Project/action ideas in order of priority:

1. Scan library policies and procedures in order to remove barriers.
2. Create opportunities for literacy organizations to share knowledge and expertise.
3. Develop the library as a community centre.
4. Do a needs assessment in the community.
5. Combine fundraising efforts.
6. Explore the role of the national library.
7. Develop media/ promotion awareness.
8. Make “vetted” resources available to literacy organizations.
9. Do reader development work in libraries including guides and “how to” materials.
10. Develop programs for emergent readers like the summer readers program.
11. Develop a bookmobile.

Please see next page for Project Plans

Project Plans for Connecting Libraries and Basic Skills Agencies

Project	Description	Outcomes	Potential Partners	Funding / Funder	Other
1. Community Assessment Tool	Based on the Working Together Project, this project would entail reviewing library policies and procedures, and getting library management and staff out to communities and learners. The project would address the overall attitudes of library staff. For example, there could be a greeter at the door and formal orientation for literacy groups as to what the library can offer. The first step is to identify barriers through a consultation with the community that includes learners, tutors and front-line library staff				
2. Promoting Literacy and Libraries	This project would create opportunities for literacy organizations and libraries to promote literacy and libraries.	Provincial organizations share the good work	Provincial library associations and provincial literacy organizations	Minimal human resources funding	
3. Libraries as Community or Civic Centres	The goal of this project is to make the library accessible and well used. First, a needs assessment in the community would determine who the target audience is and how to reach this audience. The project would also examine other neighbourhood models. It would look at signage, see how staff interact with emergent readers, and challenge the institutional nature of libraries.		Literacy agencies, libraries, neighbourhood agencies and local government		Needs administrative support to succeed. <u>Audience:</u> determined by needs assessment

B. Books for adult learners

Facilitator: Pat Campbell, Grass Roots Press

Morning sessions

Opportunities:

General

One opportunity identified was the creation of an on-line database with NALD as a partner. It could include a list of resources and publishers, reviews, the first ten pages of a book, support material and a list serve. Other ideas identified were a national campaign, an audit of library services by literacy agencies, and books written by learners. These initiatives would create opportunities for libraries to create a new image and customer service model.

Reading for Pleasure

Ideas include selecting books that interest all readers, involving students in the selection of books, making books more appealing (covers and size), and using reading clubs to vote on books.

Education

Reading books for pleasure could be introduced into the school curriculum and policies. Supplemental activity sheets for books could be collected for literacy practitioners. Libraries can make presentations to tutors to promote their services and offer tours during off-peak hours to teach learners how to access books. The library tour could then be tailored to a course assignment.

Promotion

Opportunities abound for promoting books to adult learners stressing the enjoyment of reading with a positive image of a literacy learner. Canadian authors, publishers, media (radio, television), and popular culture figures could all be partners in a national campaign. Consider promotional strategies used by the Vital Link, the BBC and CBC book programs. The Golden Oak Book Award with its book clubs is a successful model. Other ideas for promotion are: using more signage and pictures of books in libraries, creating a social space by using software and including what people read, taking books from the library to literacy programs to promote them with students, inviting classes into the library when it is closed, sending new books to literacy coalitions and holding book fairs.

Partnerships

Partnerships need to be developed across all jurisdictions. One approach is to build partnerships through provincial library associations. NALD can provide information to librarians about literacy books. CBC's *Canada Reads* could have a literacy theme. Libraries could build their collections through partnerships with literacy organizations.

Collections

There should be representative collections pertaining to specific cultures, Canadian content, recreation, hobbies, "how to" books, community (brochures and posters), and employment, etc. The collections should be in one section of the library with books facing front. One person in the library should be in charge of purchasing books for adult learners. The GST should be removed from books.

Challenges:

One challenge is that there aren't enough Canadian books and suitable materials for different reading levels. Often, books are outdated, too skill specific or may appear difficult to read. There is also a lack of funding for resources.

Other challenges relate to the location of the collection, its organization, the name of the collection, and the library itself. Books need to be more visible with appealing covers, and yet should not appear childish. Often, literacy sections are not in a convenient location in the library, or there are limited resources. Also the classification system may be confusing for students. One question centred around whether or not to separate ESL and adult learning books. There is high demand from the ESL population for literacy materials. Adult learning and ESL collections are used for both reading for pleasure and skills development.

Adult learners tend not to use libraries because of some of the barriers they face. Signage, registration in libraries, finding books intimidating and assigning levels to books can make students feel self-conscious. Learners or their tutors may not know what is available. Or, practitioners may choose the books without input from the learners. Also, some learners do not have time to read for pleasure or reading for pleasure may not be part of the outcomes for their programs. Even books like those chosen for the Golden Oaks specifically for adult learners are not being read as widely as they could be.

Afternoon session

Project/action ideas in order of priority:

1. Replicate Vital Links linking libraries and literacy agencies.
2. Create a national campaign for Canadian writers to develop books like the British Quick Reads.
3. Perform a literacy audit in libraries.
4. Create an online database of resources using NALD.
5. Make adult literacy collections more visible (logos, images, footprints)
6. Involve learners in building collections.
7. Respect the diversity of learners.
8. Tailor library tours to adult learners.
9. Promote adult literacy through community outreach.
10. Publish a collection of learners' stories online and in print.
11. Acknowledge people with literacy challenges when providing library services.
12. Create partnerships with literacy-specific publishers.
13. Remove GST from books.
14. Promote partnerships across jurisdictions
15. Promote reading through the media.

Please see next page for Project Plans

Project Plans for Books for Adult Learners

Project	Description	Potential Partners	Outcomes	Funding / Funder	Other
1. Library Literacy Audit	This project would create a national campaign for Canadian writers with Canadian content for people with literacy challenges similar to the Quick Reads project in the UK.	Literacy champions, media partners, Canadian Council for the Arts, MCL, ABC CANADA, CLA, booksellers, corporate sponsors	Increased confidence for learners; More high quality literature available; New markets for publishers		<u>Audience:</u> Adult literacy learners; young readers; ESL readers; mainstream readers
2. On-line Database	This project would develop an on-line library/literacy portal with information, resources, web sites and links.	NALD, libraries, literacy organizations; <i>Sponsors: NALD and CLS steering committee</i>	Accessible, shared resources and expertise, national resources	Needs federal funding	<u>Audience:</u> Libraries, literacy, ESL <u>Timeline:</u> short & long term; needs a pilot phase and then ongoing development

C. Promoting reading

Facilitator: Thomas Quigley, Vancouver Public Library and AFLIG Steering Committee

Morning Sessions

Opportunities:

Publishers

One opportunity is to partner with publishers to produce appropriate materials for adult learners. However, Canada's publishing industry needs to ensure a market for their products and libraries need to guarantee purchase of end products. Tax incentives may encourage publishers to participate.

Authors and book clubs

Authors could interact with readers in literacy programs and share their experiences and background information on writing a book. Book clubs are also a way to promote reading and provide opportunities for adult learners to give opinions or reviews on what they have read.

Research

Make use of available research on choice of books and what books might interest a particular audience.

Community

Involve parents in literacy programs. Have them take over from librarians in children's programs as they progress. Family literacy is an important way to link literacy to adults and to also focus on the benefits to their children. Also, convince the larger community of the economic benefits of investing in literacy programs for underserved members of the community; for example, using correctional facilities as a way to promote literacy for men.

Conduct focus groups with learners to find out their library needs and new ways of addressing those needs. Involve learners in library service planning such as in a literacy advisory group. It is also important to offer services where people are—e.g. their apartment buildings. Share learner success stories, post them, use them for advocacy with funders. Hold parties to celebrate successes.

Challenges:

Challenges focused on funding, materials, gender, access, on-line services and promotion. The lack of stable funding means successful projects must start from scratch because the funding runs out.

Another challenge is that there are not enough appropriate materials for adults and children that are easy to understand and that include a range of topics that both adults and children are interested in. For example, one adult learner from the North wanted easy-to-read materials on trapping but none exist. Children may want to read books like *Captain Underpants* rather than “good literature” but can’t get these materials in the library. Some series like *Lone Pine* that are not specifically for adult learners but are popular with this group are not marketed to them. In addition, readers are not always involved in the selection criteria. As well, the quality of materials may not be good if they are photo-copied or plastic-coil bound. Learners’ stories may be high quality but cannot be published because they won’t sell. Funding priorities create a tension between reading for pleasure and functional reading. Promoting reading needs to go beyond the library.

The lack of boys and men in literacy programs and reading clubs and the scarcity of male role models in running programs need to be addressed. Athletes, local hockey teams and others can promote reading with children and youth.

Libraries themselves have barriers including fines, modes and times of operation, and the perception of libraries as unfriendly. Computer literacy can be a tool to promote literacy. At the same time, computers can cause barriers; for example, people have difficulty accessing on-line government services in the library and too often require assistance.

The disappearance of school libraries poses another challenge, a new generation of children who are not accustomed to using libraries.

Biases and assumptions about reading also represent a challenge. A Learner Advisory Council would help debunk assumptions about skimming books and finishing or returning books without having read them.

Librarians need to go to communities, engage with people and get people into libraries. Libraries should be working with people with literacy challenges in correctional facilities.

Project/action ideas in order of priority:

1. Develop a national promotional campaign that uses role models, especially male ones, to address the stigma of literacy and shows reading as a magical experience.
2. Involve learners in service development.
3. Promote reading through clubs and a poster campaign—champions and ordinary people share what to read and encourage reading for fun.
4. Work with publishers to get out books for adult learners that meet their interests on a variety of topics and are easy to read.
5. Have a Learner Advisory Council that promotes ideas and debunks myths about how to read (Readers' Bill of Rights).
6. PLA: Every Child Ready to Read. Adults work with their families on reading. Adults and children work together, separately, and then back together.
7. Devise ways to celebrate learner success and use learner stories to advocate for funding.
8. Develop an advocacy plan using the school library models.
9. Address barriers to access by partnering, for example, with correctional facilities.

Please see next page for Project Plans

Project Plans for Promoting Reading

Project	Description	Potential Partners	Outcomes	Funding / Funder	Other
1.National Promotional Campaign	This project would develop and implement a long-term national promotional campaign for reading (maybe three years). Using a multitude of mediums, it would provide an opportunity to mobilize people and resources.	Many potential partners; Role models such as hockey players, learners, neighbours; Also national organizations	More adult learners reading for pleasure; Heightened awareness of literacy; High quality books are available that meet the needs of all literacy levels; Social activities, clubs, author visits promote reading		<u>Sponsoring Organizations</u> Carefully consider opportunities for partners, sponsors, or a national organization to mobilize resources.

D. Family literacy initiatives

Facilitator: Dawna Rowlson, Toronto Public Library and AFLIG Steering Committee

Morning sessions:

Opportunities:

Family literacy is a way to connect with hard-to-reach populations (level 1 on the IALS) through their children. There are opportunities for many different kinds of community partnerships (e.g. food banks and religious institutions) and for partnerships with private donors (both local and national) to increase funding and share knowledge across institutions. Local community leaders are another ideal partner because helping children reflects well on them. Introduce library services to parents through parenting and employment classes. With family literacy, libraries can go where the people are.

Challenges:

Challenges centre on definitions of family literacy, who is being served, lack of materials, access issues, and funding.

One challenge is around definitions. Some library systems program around a four-component model (direct parent, direct child, child-parent, and parent education). Others are challenged by the phrase “family literacy”. Does the phrase itself alienate those who need the service?

Another challenge is that family literacy focuses too much on Level 2¹ and not enough on Level 1 readers.

Lack of sustainable funding is a challenge. There are provincial disparities. Also, there are turf wars with different organizations fighting for limited dollars.

Access issues include whether or not to charge for programs. Fees can exclude the most needy members of the community. Other access issues include the need to make libraries family friendly, safe and trustworthy, and serviceable to those at Level 1. Promotion needs to be done through auditory and visual means but this is expensive. How do you adequately serve all the different

¹ The 1995 International Adult Literacy Survey (OECD, 1995) represents the notion of literacy as a skill continuum divided into five levels. At Level 1 individuals have great difficulty reading; they are generally aware that they have a problem. At Level 2 individuals can read, but not well. They can only deal with material that is simple and clearly laid out. They often do not recognize their limitations.

cultures in a community and the needs of remote isolated communities? Libraries need to go out into these communities. Transportation is another access issue especially for the newcomer population. This population may not be literate in their first language.

Lack of parental involvement is another issue.

There is a need for a national strategy.

Project/action ideas in order of priority:

1. Take the library programs out of the library and into the community.
2. Provide kits in hospitals within 24 hours of a birth with information about libraries and their programs with Public Health as a partner.
3. Develop an advocacy strategy to show library boards the importance of libraries and literacy.
4. Develop strategies to reach rural areas and Aboriginal groups.
5. Spread the word at a national level using TV spots and other media.
6. Include literacy in Public Library Week.
7. Invite parents into the library to read with their children (Come Read a Book with Your Child). Find ways to entice them to come back, such as offering a free book on their third visit.
8. One Book One Community—promote to different ages during Family Literacy Day programming. Use Family Literacy Day as a way to host speakers and workshops, plan activities, as a springboard into other programs, and to attract funding.
9. Develop local, provincial, national partnerships to fund food, taxis, and childcare.

Please see next page for Project Plans

Project Plans for Family Literacy

Project	Description	Potential Partners	Outcomes	Funding / Funder	Other
1. Books for Babies	<p>Although there are various provincial and local programs already, this program would be national in scope and based on the belief that every child deserves to be a reader.</p> <p>Six people made a commitment to work on the project.</p>	CLA partnering with service groups, Health Canada, ABC CANADA	A plan for a standard kit that can be distributed across Canada		<p><u>Sponsoring Organization</u> - CLA</p> <p><u>Timeline:</u> launch on Family Literacy Day, 2008 preceded by a pilot project</p>
2. Services for Families outside our Doors	This project would involve training staff to communicate with the community.	Local library system and the community	All staff in all programs address family literacy and know what community wants; Community sees library as welcoming; Family literacy integrated into library systems		<u>Audience:</u> Library staff, boards, administration
3. Reaching Rural Aboriginal Groups	This project would focus on research on available literacy/library services in northern Aboriginal communities. The objective is equal access.	All levels of government; libraries, literacy organizations; educational and corporate partners	A road map for implementation based on the research	HRSDC; CLA does grant process	<u>Timeline:</u> completed in 3 years using survey input from communities

Project	Description	Potential Partners	Outcomes	Funding / Funder	Other
4. Advocacy	This project would inform library staff and boards about literacy and get their support for literacy.	Libraries, literacy experts, learners with experience in your library	Better understanding for everyone involved; More respect and accessibility in libraries for people with literacy challenges; Staff development; Libraries fund literacy as part of their work	Libraries fund it; no additional funding necessary	<u>Sponsor:</u> Libraries <u>Project Lead:</u> Anyone in library with an interest in literacy <u>Timeline:</u> 1 year to mount a good program

E. Staff training for skills development

Facilitator: Tracey Jones, Halifax Public Libraries

Morning sessions

Opportunities:

Participants saw opportunities in the areas of staff training models and packages, partnerships, collection development, and library and community planning.

Staff training

A model for staff training in literacy needs to be developed at a national level. There should be a training package for libraries that includes the choosing of appropriate book and techniques for exposing users to the library prior to a visit. Models of professional development including those used in the community should be reviewed. Some library models that are currently available should be shared. The whole library, not just specific areas or specific staff members, needs to be a focus. Similarly, all library staff as well as library students need training on literacy and libraries. Training needs to be relevant, practical, empowering and build on the staff's expertise. Professional development should consider the needs of various learners and how the reference interview might differ. Part of the training should focus on how staff can interact with learners and users from various communities. Staff training needs to be continuous and reflective, not just a one time event. Libraries can partner with literacy and other community organizations to offer staff training. Adult learners should also be part of the staff training.

Partnerships

Libraries need to develop partnerships with literacy organizations and disability associations. Literacy staff can volunteer at the library. Representatives from community groups can provide training for staff about their community's needs.

Community consultation and development

The community, including adult learners, needs to be involved in planning for policy and service development through a consultation process. Staff needs to be aware of the community services available and the needs of specific communities and cultural groups such as First Nations communities.

Library planning

Funding needs to be redirected for literacy. Distinct collections need to be developed for different user groups. Libraries need to promote their programs and the positive work they are doing. Libraries should focus on changing and customizing their services to reduce and eliminate barriers, thus showing that libraries are more than just book collections. Signage and displays should be improved and family literacy initiatives developed. Learners should have access to clear choices and guidelines for accessing resources in the library. Advocating for literacy with library boards is important.

Issues:

Libraries have limited resources, both money and staff. Staff lacks time and there are competing interests for training. There is also a lack of coordinated provincial and national approaches. Different cultural communities have different perceptions of reading. There are different needs—literacy, ESL and academic levels. How do you serve these different needs?

Another issue is that library staff are more focused on information than education. Considering the different staff structures in libraries, there is a need to identify what staff should know regarding literacy. Libraries are set up for librarians, not consumers. Consumers have a variety of needs.

Project/action ideas in order of priority:

1. Develop national standards for library training.
2. Train present library staff, future library staff and literacy organizations.
3. Include learners in the partnership. Make it practical. Focus on removing barriers.
4. Audit libraries by doing a literacy review.
5. Audit materials for clear language.

Please see next page for Project Plans

Project Plans for Staff Training for Skills Development

Project	Description	Potential Partners	Outcomes	Funding / Funder	Other
1. Literacy Audit	<p>This project entails doing a literacy audit of the entire library including friendliness, policies, materials, customer service and accessibility.</p> <p><u>Audience:</u> Library, community, literacy org., learners and other organizations</p>	CLA with local partners	A more user-friendly library	Libraries fund it.	<p><u>Sponsors:</u> CLA is project lead and Establishes new interest group – Libraries in Community</p>
2. National Standards	This project would develop national standards for literacy in library training.	Libraries, literacy organizations, learners	<p>Literature review that identifies models;</p> <p>Literacy and libraries are on each other's boards;</p> <p>Literacy is a core service in every library.</p>	National Literacy Secretariat	<u>Sponsor:</u> CLA and project lead

F. Libraries and governmental/NGO relations

Facilitators: Scott Thurlow, Impact Public Affairs, for the morning sessions and Greg Kelner, Toronto Public Library and AFLIG Steering Committee for the afternoon session

Opportunities:

Opportunities focused on champions, buying into a national vision, potential federal level actors, and potential NGO partners.

Champions

It's important to find a champion and success stories. Champions need to be high profile people with credibility and celebrities such as Jacque Demers, Ken Dryden, Roch Carrier or politicians or media figures who will promote the cause.

National vision

There needs to be a powerful national vision for literacy that includes a national coalition of organizations including libraries. Groups need to be convinced that this is an important issue. The message needs to be tailored to different audiences.

Potential federal actors

All ministers should be concerned especially HRSD, Health, Justice, Heritage and Industry. The Prime Minister and Finance Minister are particularly important.

NGOs

NGOs are also important partners in the national coalition: unions, chambers of commerce, poverty groups, service clubs, Aboriginal communities, etc.

Challenges:

The main challenge is to develop and mainstream a message to make literacy a priority so that decisions are based on evidence. There needs to be a champion and a long-term vision along with the mapping of assets. Make understood the long-term implications of the problem, speak government language and connect the issue to evidence. The challenge is to show the role of libraries in literacy

when libraries are not invited to the table. Other challenges are identifying funding sources, raising more awareness of the issue generally and making it a priority.

Immediate “To do” list:

1. Create an Action Plan.
2. Identify a champion.
3. Create a clear, concise message.
4. Build and support a national coalition.
5. Create a “big ask”: ask for so many millions for literacy for a particular number of people to be literate by such and such a date.
6. Develop best practices.
7. Find literacy funding.

Project ideas/actions:

1. Develop a national coalition of literacy organizations, libraries and other NGOs.
2. Stage high profile events and invite politicians, the champion and the media.
3. Lobby top down at all levels of government and bottom up (grassroots) to generate the most interest.
4. Allow for hands-on participation by high profile people; e.g., politician reading to school children.
5. Create both long-term and short-term goals.
6. Organize an official CLA lobby (letter) campaign with a clear message across the board. Tie literacy into issues that are important to the group you are lobbying. In letters, make a point (literacy is important), present an argument, and use evidence, especially economic evidence.
7. Promote and create partnerships with NGOs and speak at their events.
8. Develop a literacy action tool kit.
9. Promote literacy through radio and television ads.

Please see next page for Project Plans

Project Plans for Libraries and Government Relations

Project	Description	Potential Partners	Outcomes	Funding / Funder	Other
1. National Literacy Strategy	The group concluded that a Pan-Canadian literacy strategy was the priority. Libraries must work with a coalition of national organizations to develop and refine a national advocacy plan and bring a document forward.				

G. Adult learner group

The adult learner group participated in sessions for all the six theme areas during the morning sessions. In the afternoon, they worked as a group to develop action ideas.

Facilitator: Brenda Livingston, Toronto Public Library and AFLIG Steering Committee

Action Ideas from Adult Learners

Topic Areas	Action Ideas
Family literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Make sure parents can read the books used in family literacy programs such as Books for Babies.- Include parents in homework clubs and story times.
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Hold community literacy classes in the library; or, have libraries visit literacy classes with follow-up visits to the library by the classes.- Make libraries more friendly with better signage, greeters, attractive displays- Welcome children.- Get input from adult learners across the country to improve accessibility.- Create a tool kit for accessibility.- Develop an orientation to the library to introduce adult learners to library services.- Put pamphlets for learning all together in one place.- Do a literacy audit.- Promote literacy and connect people to literacy and learning opportunities
Collections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Build bigger and better collections for adult literary.- Develop a collection similar to Quick Reads

IV. Afternoon Plenary Sessions

A. Speaker: Genevieve Clarke, The Vital Link BBC RaW

Ms Clarke explained that the BBC's RaW is a three-year campaign, launched in October 2005, aimed at encouraging people to 'read more and write better'. The BBC has previously run literacy campaigns, most notably On the Move in the 1970s which saw the start of the adult literacy movement in the UK. The current campaign is entertainment-led and targeted at around 12 million people of working age in the UK who are 'intermediate readers', a similar audience to that addressed by the Vital Link program in libraries. It marked its launch with some celebrity quizzes and has used 'trails' between programs on TV and radio and storylines in soap operas to raise awareness and encourage people to use the RaW website at www.bbc.co.uk/raw But its main focus is on 'on the ground' activity in local communities.

Public libraries across the UK are involved as part of a three-year strategic partnership between the library sector and the BBC led by The Reading Agency. Together with a whole range of other RaW Centres – community centres, sports clubs, prisons, colleges and adult learning centres – they are encouraging people to engage in fun activities to savour the enjoyment of reading and writing. This includes RaW Reads groups using the new Quick Reads titles published in spring 2006 and RaW Stories activities focused on football and other passions.

Libraries can commit to the campaign at one of three levels: 'minimum' requiring a visibility for RaW, 'medium' involving events such as RaW quizzes and reading activities, and 'enhanced' taking a more pro-active approach to engaging new audiences. They have been able to demonstrate the scale of their support for RaW with figures in football, take-up of events and book issues. Both the BBC and the library sector value a partnership which reflects their shared commitment to making a difference in people's lives.

B. Speaker: Charles Ramsey, National Adult Literacy Database

Charles Ramsey began by providing an overview of NALD, its mandate and its work. Mr. Ramsey explained how this group might utilize NALD's resources and services.

NALD's mandate is to provide resources via the Internet. Mr. Ramsey emphasized what NALD can do such as building community for visibility, highlighting active programs as champions and role models, strategizing for long-term impact, and partnering with local literacy organizations. Furthermore, NALD can share resources across the Internet, stream library documents to a site for this group, set up Pan-Canadian communication links, and provide NALD's technical support.

C. Speaker: Lynne Yelich, MP (Blackstrap), Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development

Thomas Quigley, co-convenor of the Summit introduced Ms. Lynne Yelich, Member of Parliament for Blackstrap, Saskatchewan for a third term in the House of Commons. Ms. Yelich is Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources and Social Development, the Honourable Diane Finley.

Ms. Yelich emphasized the excellent work of libraries and congratulated the CLA on its 60th anniversary. She noted that libraries are an essential partner in developing literacy skills. They provide a wealth of knowledge and are the centre of communities. Literacy is the foundation for all life-long learning. She emphasized the importance of literacy for people of all ages.

D. Concluding Remarks

Thomas Quigley concluded the Summit. He first paid recognition to the people in the room who attended the original National Summit in 1995. There were a number of people who rose to be recognized.

He then asked Sue Folinsbee, one of the project researcher/evaluators, to go over next steps.

Sue Folinsbee thanked delegates for their input into the background paper on behalf of herself and Mary Ellen Belfiore. She explained that there would be a report on the Summit that would be available on NALD. She told delegates that she and Mary Ellen would be

following up with 20% of the delegates in September as part of the evaluation process for the Summit.

Mr. Quigley noted that it had been a good day for libraries and literacy. Both official languages had been spoken but also a third language, the language of literacy. He noted that it had been an exciting day as promised and that the accomplishments and excitement of the day would not dissipate. He emphasized that the CLA's Action for Literacy Interest Group will become the stewards of the Summit's work, and that this work will touch everyone at the provincial and local levels. This work will help us to develop people's sense of literacy.

In conclusion, he thanked everyone for their hard work, helping us to move forward, and for strengthening the bond between libraries and literacy. On behalf of the CLA, he wished delegates all the best for the remainder of their time in Ottawa.

Appendix 1: Summit Program Agenda

Program

- 8:00 am - 8:45 am:** Coffee and Registration
- 8:45 am - 10:15 am:** Introductions
Genevieve Clarke
National Coordinator, *The Vital Link*
- 10:30 am - 11:30 am:** Working Group sessions
11:30 am - 12:30 pm: Working Group sessions
- Connecting libraries & basic skills agencies
 - Books for Adult Learners
 - Promoting Reading
 - Family Literacy Initiatives
 - Staff Training for Skills Development
 - Libraries and government/NGO relations
- 1:30 pm - 1:45 pm:** Genevieve Clarke
- 1:45 pm - 2:15 pm:** Charles Ramsey
Executive Director
National Adult Literacy Database
- 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm:** Working Group sessions
- 3:30 pm – 5:00 pm:** Report back

Appendix 2: List of Summit Delegates

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**Appendix 3: Presentation on Vital Links: Questions
and Answers**

Presentation on Vital Links

Question and Answer

Delegate #1: What about the challenge of erosion in school libraries?

Ms. Clarke: It's probably the same problem in the UK. Library authorities can opt out. We try to make the links between school libraries and public libraries.

Delegate #2: Is learning encouraged in the workplace?

Ms. Clarke: The government places a lot of emphasis on it, working with employers and trade unions. Trade unions have learning representatives.

Delegate #3: What is the age when youth can leave school?

Ms. Clarke: Now it is 16.

Delegate #4: Do learners plan services and activities?

Ms. Clarke: Not enough. They start with their Individual Learning Plan. They need to have input into the whole program.

Delegate #5: Sweden's focus is on those with the greatest need. What is the library's role with this group?

Ms. Clarke: We need to concentrate on this group but we need space and time. We need more materials for this group. We need to encourage publishers to write more for this group, publish students' own writing, and entice people through Internet technology.

Delegate #6: I am interested in the Quick Reads—the publisher buy-in and the low cost. Were there displays all over the country?

Ms. Clarke: The publishers didn't make money but they were hoping to build a new market. It is quite difficult to ensure that this happens. Libraries were involved and bought 5000 sets of books. An important part of the equation was that supermarkets were part of this too.

Delegate #7: A key issue is sustainability—program-based funding rather than project funding. Organizations are getting project funding.

Ms. Clarke: Funding needs to be written into plans at the policy level with senior backing for it. We have the Improvement Framework for libraries in which the work has to be self-sustaining. We need to build consistency—this is part of the business of library service.

Delegate #8: What about publishing learners' works?

Ms. Clarke: In the 70's and 80's there was a collaborative movement for publishing student writings. This drifted because of rigorous targets and a focus on accredited learning. Now people are coming back to it. Now creativity is more accepted especially in primary and secondary schools.

Delegate #9: What work has been done around the Learning City?

Ms. Clarke: We have some examples. Audits are done across a city and the results fed back. However, often things are piecemeal and funding gets wasted.