



# The role of national non-profit organizations in community capacity building



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# What we'll cover today

- Introduction to ABC Life Literacy Canada
- What is community capacity building?
- Types of community capacity building
- Challenges to community capacity building
- The role of national non-profits
- ABC resources to share
- Q&A

# ABC Life Literacy Canada

## Vision:

We envision a Canada where everyone has the tools and opportunities they need to improve their literacy and essential skills.

ABC Life Literacy Canada is here to support Canadian literacy practitioners

ABC Life Literacy Canada strengthens organizations that promote adult learning by developing and supporting the use of high-quality introductory learning materials and resources written in clear language.

# What is Community Capacity Building (CCB)?

“Community capacity building (CCB) focuses on enabling all members of the community...to develop skills and competencies so as to take greater control of their own lives and also contributes to inclusive local development”

- OECD 2009

Supporting CCB results in:

- More connected communities
- More resilient communities

National non-profits work with practitioners to build community capacity

# Community Capacity Building examples

Example 1: Frontier College's National Forum on Literacy

Example 2: Community Adult Learning Program (CALP)

Example 3: Decoda Literacy Conference



# Discussion for the audience

What are some examples of community capacity building activities/projects that you've seen or participated in?



# Capacity building for organizational effectiveness

## Leadership Capacity

Leadership capacity is the ability of all organizational leaders to create and sustain the vision, inspire, model, prioritize, make decisions, provide direction, and innovate, all in an effort to achieve the organizational mission (York, 2005).

# Capacity building for organizational effectiveness

## **Management capacity**

Management capacity is the ability of an organization to ensure the effective and efficient use of organizational resources.



# Capacity building for organizational effectiveness

## **Technical capacity**

This refers to whether the organization has the skills, tools, and facilities to deliver its programs and manage its operations.

# Capacity building for organizational effectiveness

## **Adaptive capacity**

This refers to the ability of an organization to monitor, assess, respond to and create internal and external changes. A “learning organization”

# Success factors for effective CCB

To be effective, community capacity building need to be:

- Timely
- Peer-connected
- Assessment-based
- Customized
- Comprehensive
- Competence-Based

# Challenges to CCB

- Lack of clear widely adopted models of community capacity building
- Community capacity building offerings may not be appropriate
- Difficult to measure impact

## Supporting connectivity: regional vs. national networks

- Regional networks can be found all across Canada
  - Examples include:
    - Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations (ECVO)
    - Ontario Nonprofit Network (ONN)
    - Community Adult Learning Program (CALP)
- National non-profits help bring together organizations that are facing larger scale challenges as well as reinforce the wins in our sector
- National non-profits act as an “anchor” for community networks and can even facilitate regional network communication
  - ABC’s regional roundtables

# Supporting CCB through local practitioners

“No one understands the community better than people in the community” – Karen Kirkwood-Whyte, Executive Director of United Way Chatham-Kent

- National non-profits help support CCB through community practitioners
- Best practice: create flexible resources that can be adapted by practitioners

# ABC's approach to supporting connectivity

ABC shares resources, best practices, community needs, and professional development opportunities through:

- Programs and Research Committee (PARC)
- Literacy Innovation Award Discussion
- Train-the-trainer webinars
- ABC's literacy programs
- LEARN Database

# Programs and Research Committee (PARC)

- Began in 2017
- Members are comprised of experienced literacy practitioners serving a wide range of communities
- Knowledge transfer hub
- Venue for the sharing of resources, best practices, challenges, and current research
- Helps ABC to understand where additional support is needed



# PARC forum

- Held in June 2021
- Emerged from the growing interest for literacy practitioners to access more research to support and guide their programs
- Main goals of the forum:
  1. Make connections
  2. Inform
  3. Learn
- Next PARC forum on “critical thinking and critical literacy instruction with adult learners”
  - **Date:** June 14th 2022 from 12:00pm – 3:15pm ET

# Canada Life Literacy Innovation Award (LIA)

- Award dedicated to innovative and unique adult literacy of adult-integrated family literacy programs
- The winning programs could serve as a model for other organizations to adopt
- Winners are invited to an award ceremony where they share best practices from their program



# ABC's train-the-trainer webinars

- Professional development opportunities through train-the-trainer webinars, including:
  - “*HSBC Family Literacy First: Ways to encourage family literacy in your community*” (December 2021)
  - “Who are we missing?” (April 2022)
  - “Preparations and planning for post-covid programming” (June 2022)
  - “Measuring program impact: how do we define success” (September 2022)
  - “Taking flight with your pilot project: best practices for supporting innovation and experimentation” (October 2022)

# ABC's literacy programs

- The development and distribution of resources supportive of adult learning
- Creation of resources based on community needs
- Facilitator training included



# LEARN database

- Established in 1994
- Connects adult learners with literacy programs
- Learners can find programs specific to their needs and interests
- Practitioners can connect with new learners
- Especially helpful since the transition to online/remote learning



# Conclusion

- Summary:
  - Strategies for CCB
  - Organizations can rely on national non-profits to help support capacity building within their organizations
- Call to action:
  - Join the conversation
  - Utilize existing resources



Thank you!

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