



Displaced Workers Project Cover Report

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Introduction

Decoda Literacy Solutions is BC's literacy organization, supporting community-based literacy programs and initiatives in over 400 communities across BC by providing resources, training and funds. Decoda's work supports children and families, youth, adults, Indigenous and immigrant communities to help build strong individuals, strong families and strong communities.

Working with a network of 100 Literacy Outreach Coordinators (LOCs), we bring together community leaders from education, health, business and government to identify and address local literacy priorities. The Decoda network of LOCs and stakeholders reflect local knowledge and experience.

In February of 2019, Decoda Literacy Solutions entered into a contract with the Government of Canada to deliver a three-year research project studying the gaps and needs of Canadian workers displaced from their jobs.

These workers had been displaced from their jobs through planned or unplanned circumstances such as mill closures, industry slow-downs, tourism decline or natural disasters. Their lives and those of their families were often thrown into crisis when their jobs disappeared. Finding new employment could seem like an impossible task.

The [Enhancing Displaced Workers' Literacy and Essential Skills Project](#) was designed to research and evaluate existing literacy and essential skills (LES) programs, increase knowledge of gaps in LES supports and training, and identify and test promising practices to fill those gaps. The project emphasized workers who are hard to reach or reluctant to access skills training or employment services.

The research was conducted with partners [Social Research and Demonstration Corporation](#) (SRDC) and [Learning Metrix](#).

This initial phase of the Project, now referred to as DW1, included interviews, focus groups, surveys, case studies, curriculum development, and development and delivery of beta-tests of 11 promising practices in four provinces. The results are outlined in these two reports:

[DWLES Final Report June 2022](#)

[DWLES Cover Report July 2022](#)

As DW1 was coming to a close, Decoda was granted an extension of the Project to do more in-depth Pilot Projects of a subset of the beta-test projects, testing for scalability and transferability. This second phase of the project, DW2, concluded December 31, 2023.

This overview of the entire five-year project is supported by numerous documents which contain details of each stage of the project. They can all be accessed through Decoda's [Displaced Workers site](#).

DW1 Review – data collection, case studies, curriculum development and beta-testing

Setting the stage

The first job was identifying teams of experts and BC project delivery sites.

A questionnaire was sent out to the Literacy Outreach Coordinator (LOC) network asking if people had observed job loss in their community and were aware of workers who had been displaced and may have literacy challenges. “Literacy” can refer to traditional reading and writing skills as well as digital and other [Skills for Success](#).

Following the questionnaire, a BC Team of 10 LOCs were chosen to participate in DW1. They covered a diversity of community types, sizes and locations around BC. At that time a Canadian Network Advisory Committee (CNAC) was also formed. CNAC included provincial literacy organization executive directors, Canadian literacy experts, and academics. CNAC’s leadership offered guidance on the project, helped to gather Canada-wide information, and helped to choose testing sites.

Gathering information

SRDC developed a [Project Evaluation Framework](#) for each of the project sites to use in gathering information.

Tools used to collect data included interviews, focus groups, and surveys. Each BC Team member formed local task groups made of local stakeholders. These task groups helped to identify interview subjects, research participants, and focus groups members. [Interview and Focus Group Annual Report](#).

During this phase of the project, the project team delivered webinars for the BC Outreach Team, ensuring a common understanding of the work required to gather useful research data.

In November 2019, Decoda held the biennial Decoda Literacy Conference in Vancouver. The Displaced Workers Project teams (BC Outreach Team, CNAC and project staff teams) met for the first time and spent a full day discussing project goals and methodology and sharing preliminary observations. It was an intense and informative day.

In March 2020 the first DW1 [Annual Report](#) reviewed accomplishments and information gathered to date.

A visual representation of the BC [Displaced Workers Survey Data](#) was created by SRDC.

A literature review was conducted by SRDC, and the resulting report was published in French and English:

[Literature Review \(FR\)](#)

[Literature Review \(ENG\)](#)

COVID-19 impacts

Just as the BC focus groups were completed, COVID-19 hit. Resulting public health measures radically changed the project methods and outcomes. The first Cover Report reviews the significant impacts of COVID-19.

Case studies

In 2020, BC Team members were given the option of writing a case study of their personal observations of the impact of job loss on individuals, their families, and their communities. These compelling Case Studies are published on the Decoda website and have been very well received by funders, CNAC and others.

Beta-testing and curriculum development

The [Second Annual Report](#) (June 2021) included preliminary findings based on surveys and interviews, setting the stage for beta testing.

As the BC Team continued to collect information, the project pivoted to beta-testing promising practices. This allowed the project to identify programs that had the potential to become transferrable and scalable practices that could be used across Canada.

Throughout 2021, 11 beta-tests in four provinces were designed and delivered. They incorporated a wide variety of training programs. Some were very successful, reaching learners and resulting in increased employment opportunities, and some faced significant challenges from COVID-19 resurgences or other external factors.

All 11 projects offered a wealth of learning opportunities. The projects are described on the [Beta-Test Projects](#) page on the Decoda website. Six sites developed new curricula, reflecting the diversity of training that was provided by these projects. These [Beta-Test Curricula](#) were developed in BC, Alberta and Ontario.

DW1 findings

Highlights of the DW1 findings include:

- Local place-based approaches are key.
- Programs should take a holistic approach to supporting clients.
- Individually tailored and flexible programs work best – meet learners where they are.
- Programs must have clearly defined and concrete objectives.
- Learners want digital and financial skills.
- Partnerships between different organizations in communities, particularly between literacy organizations and employment and training organizations, increase success rates.
- “Success” may look different for each learner.
- Small-scale beta-test projects enabled the organizations to try new and innovative programming.
- Despite limited numbers of participants, there was a high level of diversity among learners, adding value to the project.
- Beta-test organizations showed tremendous resilience, adapting and finding solutions to carry on through a very challenging time.
- Learners demonstrated increased participation and communication skills.
- Social supports were critical for building learners’ self-confidence and fostering their sense of belonging.

DW1 recommendations

Resulting recommendations include:

- Focus on place-based learning.
- Meet learners where they are – physically, mentally and socially. Design flexible and responsive programs.
- Be innovative – traditional approaches may not be appropriate or effective. Partner with other organizations.
- Reduce barriers, such as access to technology, especially in rural and remote communities.
- Provide supports, such as gas money and childcare, especially in rural and remote communities.
- The perceived future of a new, full-time job may not exist. Learners may well find themselves in a position where their “side-hustle” becomes their main source of income.
- More women engaged in the training than expected. Childcare and other support systems make it more likely that women will participate.
- Rural and remote communities have a variety of challenges that current programming and funding do not reflect.

DW2 Pilot Projects

The second phase of the Displaced Worker Project, DW2, was launched in July of 2022. Five of the 11 beta-test projects were selected for further exploration. The transition from beta-test to pilot project meant that each project had to show that it was scalable and transferable. Each project showed these qualities in different ways.

While all five projects had developed curricula in DW1, not all of them used the same curricula for their pilot projects. In one case, the curriculum was incorporated into a larger training program developed for Indigenous learners

The five sites were:

- North Vancouver Island, BC (Connect4Work), where new sites and new partners were developed and the program was expanded, upgraded and improved based on beta-test results.
- North Vancouver, BC (Gathering Together) where the program was delivered in a new location and with new Indigenous partners.
- Quesnel, BC (Skills Discovery), where the lessons learned in the beta-test were transferred to a new project with new partners.
- Lethbridge, AB (Moving Forward), where the curriculum was adapted and incorporated into a larger training program offered by an Indigenous learning centre.
- Belleville, ON (Next Steps), where the beta-test program was expanded into a number of local communities, each with their own needs and opportunities.

The research result and their analysis are in this report from SRDC:

https://decoda.ca/wp-content/uploads/SRDC_finalReport_2023-12_ENG.pdf

DW2 Government Outreach

In addition to the five pilot projects, DW2 added a component of government outreach. This was added to raise the profile of literacy needs and approaches across Canada, with the ultimate goal of ensuring appropriate support for locally delivered literacy programs.

There were two primary approaches to government outreach.

First, raise awareness of the impacts of literacy programs in local communities, with an emphasis on the relative ease and cost-effectiveness of literacy programs in the context of community health, poverty reduction, mitigation and prevention, local economic development, and social connectivity. This was achieved through a letter writing campaign and direct contact via phone or other personal contact. DW1 and DW2 participating organizations and practitioners were provided with template emails to adapt and send to local, provincial and federal elected officials in each community. Decoda also did this within their extended networks.

This is an example of one of the template emails:

TEMPLATE EMAIL FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Dear _____,

Thank you for your public service. Your dedication to our community (**Province, Country**) is appreciated.

I'd like to introduce you to an important project happening in (**insert community name**).

(Insert organization name) is working with Decoda Literacy Solutions, BC's literacy organization, to deliver a research project examining the literacy needs of workers who have lost their jobs (<https://decoda.ca/our-work/displaced-workers-landing>). This 5-year project is funded by the Government of Canada. After a year of background research and information gathering in BC, eleven communities in four provinces were chosen to beta-test a variety of training programs to help people improve their earning ability. From those eleven projects, five were chosen to continue on to a full pilot program. We are running one of those projects, **(insert project name)**, here in **(insert community name)**. The curriculum we developed for the beta-testing phase of the project can be found here: <https://decoda.ca/our-work/displaced-workers-landing/beta-test-curricula/>

<insert a short paragraph describing your project>

It is well documented that literacy, including digital literacy, is a key determinant of earning ability, and therefore an important part of any poverty prevention and reduction plan. By targeting projects that are proven to be effective, programs like ours can improve the lives of individuals, and the health of families and communities.

We would love to hear your thoughts and keep you up to date with the project. This project has implications for communities well beyond our own, and we want to ensure that members of **(insert name of body this person belongs to – eg in BC, UBCM, FCM, and/or a committee name)** are aware of this work as you advocate for policies and resources for programs that support our communities. It is our hope that we can work with you to provide effective advocacy efforts that support literacy programs delivered at the local level.

(For specific committees like the FCM Standing Committee on Social Economic Development, I would add a comment like: If your committee would like more information on the benefits of investing resources into literacy programs, please let us know. We feel that we can offer a very effective way to address issues that you discuss, such as poverty reduction. We would love to see literacy included in the advocacy work that FCM does so well.)

Improving literacy is one of the most accessible and effective ways of addressing poverty and supporting community development. We look forward to a productive partnership with our local government. We would welcome the opportunity to have a short meeting with you to discuss the important work being done here in **(insert community name)**.

Yours,

The Decoda Literacy Matters Fact Sheet was also attached to these emails.

Positive responses were received in several locations, with some organizations getting requests for visits and others having elected officials sign up for newsletters.

Separate from this project but related to it, Decoda expanded government outreach efforts to have literacy referenced in the BC 2023 Budget Consultation Report and an announcement of additional funding for literacy via Decoda's LOC network being made at the 2023 Union of BC Municipalities AGM in September of 2023.

The second prong of government outreach was a campaign undertaken by Decoda to ask the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to add literacy to its advocacy work. FCM is a membership-based organization which advocates initiatives supported by local governments across Canada to the Government of Canada. FCM's 2100+ member communities represent over 90% of the population of Canada, from rural communities to major cities.

Municipal leaders from across Canada assemble each year to set FCM policy on key issues. They then advocate to be sure their citizens' needs are reflected in federal policies and programs. Their advocacy is reflected in initiatives such as the Gas Tax (returning funds to local governments), the Infrastructure Program, and numerous Government of Canada budgets and policies.

Through a combination of knowledge of how FCM works and personal connections with FCM staff and Board members, Decoda was able to directly ask for literacy to be included in FCM's Social Economic Development Committee's advocacy work regarding "Inclusive Communities". This was achieved through a vote of the Board in September of 2023. This is a major achievement because FCM has a big voice in Ottawa.

The vote also included a request that FCM advocate for literacy to be referenced in Government of Canada policies such as Poverty Reduction, and that adequate and sustainable funding be provided to implement these policies.

The briefing note that was sent to FCM staff and Board members is attached as Appendix 1. A Decoda related press release is attached as Appendix 2.

DW2 Pilot Project Research Findings

The pilot phase validated the following findings from the beta-test phase:

- Learners who engaged in the project were diverse. Equity-deserving groups were well represented in the pilot projects, particularly learners who identified as Indigenous.
- Social supports and relationships with learners and facilitators were critical for building learners' self-confidence, fostering their sense of belonging, and contributing to other aspects of their well-being including hope for the future and self-esteem.
- Learners from the pilot projects were positive about their experiences and the support that they received.
- Pilot sites developed new or strengthened partnerships with organizations in their communities.
- Learner-centered and place-based approaches to program development and implementation were critical for engaging learners.

In addition, the following results were observed:

- Learners experienced increased clarity and confidence for moving forward on their employment and life journeys as they learned a broad range of employment skills that will be useful for their life in general.
- increased their knowledge of and connection to community resources and services.
- continue to take training/education after participating in the pilot projects.
- noted improvement in their confidence, hope for the future, and self-esteem.
- developed interest in the training, actively participated, and requested and received support from program staff when needed.
- felt the training met their needs and they were satisfied with the training.
- Facilitators reported that most learners made either moderate or significant skills improvement.
- Pilot sites scaled their project in diverse ways to be place-based.
- Although digital badges were designed and made available, they were not requested. There were, however, requests for certificates of completion. People were proud of their accomplishments but saw no value in a badge with uncertain value or transferability.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Setting the stage

The Displaced Worker Project (DW1 and DW2) has been a unique 5-year opportunity to explore and test the needs of Canadian workers seeking new employment. Hundreds of people across the country were touched by this project. The research findings are outlined in these two reports and are described above:

[DWLES Final Report](#)

[SRDC Final Report 2023](#)

In reviewing the five pilot projects in the context of the information-gathering and beta-testing that preceded them, several themes emerged.

It is no small feat to engage people on the path to improved literacy. Social stigma, uncertainty and lack of self-esteem, lack of awareness of programs, barriers such as travel and childcare are but a few of the things that stop people from deciding to sign up for a program.

Literacy programming is a gateway to the full suite of Skills for Success. Learners may join a program prepared to improve their employability through literacy, including digital literacy, but they very often leave the program with a much broader list of accomplishments. This is a list of descriptors learners shared in several responses in follow-up discussions about the program impact on their lives:

- Motivation to continue to learn and grow
- Connection to and with organizations and services in their communities
- Confidence to identify their own skills and achieve their goals in work and life
- Connecting with and working with peers
- Trust in themselves, their local organizations, and each other

Literacy and Skills for Success programs are best delivered in a community-driven, place-based manner. The people who do make their way into programs, despite all the barriers to doing so, will have very different needs and preferences. If their needs are not being met or they don't feel well served, there is a low chance that they will complete a program.

In this project, the following traits of programs were observed to have a higher chance of success:

- Local service program providers design better programs – they know their learners.
- Learners give input at all stages of the project – they know what works best for them.
- Programs are place-based, flexible, and innovative. Prescribed or fixed programs will have less buy-in, and therefore, less success.
- Training is offered in manageable steps and has flexible options for entering or exiting a program based on levels of learning and learners' desired outcomes. In the pilot projects, there was a repeated request for iterative training with some advanced and/or longer programs offered.
- Training includes skills to be successful entrepreneurs. This came up multiple times, especially in rural and remote communities.
- Extra supports are offered, including childcare, transportation aid and food.
- Practitioners are prepared to navigate a lack of digital connectivity and lack of digital devices or data plans needed to connect.
- Models of delivery are different and may include stand-alone classes, on-line training, one-on-one training, or incorporating training into other programs.
- Train-the-trainer opportunities are included locally, when appropriate.
- Participants are invited to become peers to future learners.
- "Soft skills", which can be the hardest ones to learn, are integrated with technical skill training.
- Creativity is used to scale projects (up and out) and transfer them to new audiences. There were many different models in this project.
- Storytelling is a strong asset.
- Track results to speak to models for success.

There are lessons to be learned regarding funding of future projects. These are the lessons described after the beta-testing phase of the project:

- Rural and remote communities will not produce the metrics that funding opportunities often require.
- The return-to-work meme is rapidly becoming a myth in many parts of the country. No one is opening a new mill in many remote locations.
- Entrepreneurial training is increasingly important as people diversify their earning opportunities.
- Access to strong digital resources in remote locations is key to healthy economies and healthy communities.
- Training must address the needs of families and communities to be successful. Place-based and flexible programs are the most effective mode of delivery in smaller communities.
- Partnerships are crucial, especially in small communities.

These lessons were only strengthened through DW2.

DW2 recommendations

The following **recommendations** for funders emerged throughout the DW project:

1. Use flexible and non-traditional metrics to choose or review projects. The numbers of learners needed for data collection are difficult to find due to multiple barriers in finding people willing and able to join a program. Some of the people who need the most assistance can be difficult to reach and need specialized programs. This is especially true in rural and remote communities. As one participant said, [our towns]don't privilege large-scale projects.
2. Add projects focused on entrepreneurial efforts as people turn more and more to their "side hustle". There may be opportunities for local incubators in non-traditional businesses.
3. Support innovation, creativity, and flexibility. Reduce prescriptive approaches.
4. Work with technology providers and other sponsors to provide connectivity, devices, data plans, and spaces and training to take advantage of these tools. They are often in very short supply.
5. Recognize that non-profit service providers do the work of public services with underpaid employees and volunteers. Value their time when designing grant applications and reporting requirements.

It is well documented that literacy is linked to poverty prevention and reduction. As Canada looks to build new economies, literacy training programs will become even more important. Literacy is also tied to healthy relationships, healthy communities, healthy economies and healthy democracies. It is not only a gateway skill, but also a very efficient use of resources to improve people's lives and build resilient communities.

The findings point to a key question, a question for all of us: What would happen if all non-profit literacy organizations were given \$10,000-\$20,000 a year of undesignated funding? (Annual reporting and appropriate key performance indicators would be mandatory to receive the funds to continue the next year)...The answer is compelling.

Decoda Literacy Solutions is deeply grateful to the Government of Canada for the funding to complete this work. We look forward to the next stage of the project and to future projects. Together we can help people and communities thrive throughout Canada.

Appendix 1 – FCM Briefing Note

May 23, 2023

Briefing note

Case for FCM advocacy to increase Government of Canada support for literacy programs

Introduction

Literacy (which includes digital and financial literacy) is widely recognized as a keystone factor in people's ability to earn a living and to be an active member of their community. It also adds to people's ability to access government resources, health care, political involvement, and the education and training that they may need to gain employment.

There are surprisingly low levels of literacy in many of Canada's populations. Literacy is closely linked to poverty.

(see references below)

Current supports

There are currently several Government of Canada policies which reference literacy or overlap with the goal of increasing literacy. They include:

- **Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy and Act**

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/canada/employment-social-development/programs/poverty-reduction/reports/poverty-reduction-strategy-report-EN.pdf>

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/p-16.81/page-1.html>

The Poverty Reduction Act brings together new investments of \$22 billion that the Government has made since 2015 to support the social and economic well-being of all Canadians. These actions will help lift about 650,000 Canadians out of poverty by 2019, with more expected as the impacts of these investments are realized in the years to come.

- **Skills for Success and the work of the Future Skills Centre**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/jobs/training/initiatives/skills-success.html>

<https://fsc-ccf.ca/>

In Budget 2017, the Government invested \$225 million over four years, starting in 2018–19, and \$75 million per year thereafter, to establish a new organization to support skills development and measurement in Canada.

- **Universal Broadband Fund (2020-2022)**

<https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/high-speed-internet-canada/en/universal-broadband-fund>

The \$3.225 billion Universal Broadband Fund supports high-speed Internet projects across the country. These projects will bring Internet at speeds of 50/10 Megabits per second (Mbps) to rural and remote communities. These are infrastructure projects. There is not a correlating program to teach people digital literacy as they gain access to high-speed internet.

- **Digital Literacy Exchange Program**

<https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/digital-literacy-exchange-program/en>

The Digital Literacy Exchange Program (DLEP) will invest \$17.6 million to support initiatives aimed at teaching digital literacy skills to Canadians who face barriers to participating in the digital economy. The program aims to equip Canadians with the necessary skills to use computers, mobile devices, and the Internet safely, securely, and effectively.

- In addition, FCM lists Inclusive Communities as a key focus area, stating that "Canada works better when everyone can achieve their potential. We help build inclusive communities that ease the economic and social barriers people face in their everyday lives." **Literacy is a prominent indicator of inclusive communities.**

<https://fcm.ca/en/focus-areas/inclusive-communities>

Gaps

So, what is missing? There have been several funding tranches which can include literacy work, especially in the Skills for Success program, and yet literacy levels continue to be low – or at least that is what is observed in the field. Many poverty reduction partners are government agencies with core funding and reliable operating budgets. The non-profits that do literacy work across the country don't enjoy that stability. The Broadband project – a long-term ask from FCM! – does not tie new broadband access to training in how to use it, including basic digital literacy - its funding is for infrastructure.

- Literacy data is out-of-date. Most information is at least a decade old.
- Several of the funding sources have closed.
- The 2022 call for proposals from Skills for Success was supposed to provide funding in the fall of 2022, to be spent by March 31, 2024. That money has not yet been dispersed – applicants are still waiting to be informed of the status of their proposals. We have been told to expect an announcement this summer, leaving successful applicants 6-8 months to set up and complete their projects.
- There is a lack of a distinct link between digital infrastructure building and related capacity building.
- Literacy non-profits lack core funding and dependable operating funds. Work is done project-by-project with enormous competition between organizations for funding. There can be a lack of continuity as staff are let go at the end of project funding.

What we heard

Decoda reached out to other provincial literacy organizations and experts to ask what they would like to see from the Government of Canada. Here are some of the comments we received.

- Literacy is a determinant of health. Government can't talk about the health crisis and investing in fixing it without investing in literacy.
- Literate people vote.
- There is no obvious place for literacy to sit within the Federal Government. I think Imagine Canada is finding this to be a similar challenge as it tries to find a 'home' for the voluntary, charitable, and not for profit sector. Programs are often rolled into an employment focused package.
- There's no mention of literacy or essential skills or Skills for Success in the 2022 update of the Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- Education and Literacy is included on the list of determinants of health here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/health-promotion/population-health/what-determines-health.html>
Although literacy is specifically listed in the list as #3, it is also linked to 1. Income and social status, 2. Employment and working conditions, 4. Childhood experiences, 6. Social supports and coping skills, 7. Healthy behaviours, 8. Access to health services.

The ask(s)

We request that FCM add literacy to their "Inclusive Communities" advocacy work.

We ask that the Government of Canada: (these asks are evolving and will shift over time)

- Add explicit references to literacy to policies including Poverty Reduction, Health, Connecting Remote Communities, and others, and fund it accordingly.
- Support literacy non-profits with core funding.
- Doesn't require that literacy funding be tied to employment. Personal well-being, family health, and community development clearly benefit from a literate population. Many learners don't have the confidence to even walk in the door of an employment centre.
- Recognize and fund digital literacy programs at the introductory level in communities gaining broadband access.

Conclusion

Literacy is a basic building block of personal, family and community well-being. Current Government of Canada funding is very much appreciated, and funded research has exposed gaps which make this very accessible solution harder to deliver, especially in rural and remote communities. The network of community-based literacy organizations across Canada has the tools and knowledge to deliver successful programs IF they have sustainable support.

References

Facts and Stats:

- <https://decoda.ca/resource/literacy-matters-fact-sheet/>
- <https://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/adlit-lowlit-asp/#:~:text=Overall%2C%20Canada%20earns%20a%20%E2%80%9CC.increase%20from%20a%20decade%20ago>
- https://policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/BC%20Office/2011/07/CCPA_BC_cost_of_poverty_full_report.pdf
- <https://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/adlit-lowlit-asp/#:~:text=Overall%2C%20Canada%20earns%20a%20%E2%80%9CC.increase%20from%20a%20decade%20ago>
- <https://ablifeliteracy.ca/literacy-at-a-glance/>
 - 48% of adult Canadians have literacy skills that fall below a high school level, which negatively affects their ability to function at work and in their personal lives.
 - 17% function at the lowest level, where they may, for example, be unable to read the dosage instructions on a medicine bottle (OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, 2013).
 - Over half (54.7%) of adult Canadians score in the two lowest skill levels in numeracy, up from 49.8% in 2003.
 - People with lower literacy skills are more likely to be unemployed than those who scored higher (Skills in Canada: First Results from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) – Statistics Canada, 2013).
 - Canada ranked 11th out of the 23 OECD countries evaluated by the PIAAC (The Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) on the percentage of adults with suitable literacy skills.
 - The assessment found that the percentage of adults with suitable literacy skills (48%) has increased notably over the past 10 years (OECD Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies, 2013).
 - Literacy had the most notable effect when measured against other factors that affect differences in pay, followed by education (Literacy in the Information Age: Final Report of the International Adult Literacy Survey)

Policies

- **Canada's First Poverty Reduction Plan (2019)**
<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/canada/employment-social-development/programs/poverty-reduction/reports/poverty-reduction-strategy-report-EN.pdf>

- **Future Skills/Skills for Success**
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/literacy-essential-skills.html>
<https://fsc-ccf.ca/impact-report/>

In Budget 2017, the Government invested \$225 million over four years, starting in 2018–19, and \$75 million per year thereafter, to establish a new organization to support skills development and measurement in Canada. In Budget 2018, the Government announced it will work with provinces and territories, the private sector, educational institutions, and not-for-profit organizations to launch the new organization entitled Future Skills in 2018. Future Skills will bring together expertise from all sectors and leverage experience from partners across the country. It will include an independent Council to advise on emerging skills and workforce trends, and a research lab focused on developing, testing and rigorously measuring new approaches to skills assessment and development.

- **Digital Literacy Exchange**

<https://fsc-ccf.ca/impact-report/>

Budget 2017 invested \$29.5 million over five years, beginning in 2017–18, for a new Digital Literacy Exchange program. The program supports non-profit organizations to implement initiatives that teach basic digital skills, including how to use the Internet safely and effectively, at pre-existing facilities such as public libraries, refugee housing complexes and seniors' homes; The program will focus on vulnerable groups such as low-income individuals and families, and seniors.

- **Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy**

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/social-innovation-social-finance.html>

The Government is working with stakeholders to develop a Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy to provide better support and partnership opportunities for community organizations working to address persistent social and environmental challenges using innovative approaches, including social finance and social enterprise.

- **Universal Broadband Fund (2020-2022)**

<https://ised-isde.canada.ca/site/high-speed-internet-canada/en/universal-broadband-fund>

The \$3.225 billion Universal Broadband Fund supports high-speed Internet projects across the country. These projects will bring Internet at speeds of 50/10 Megabits per second (Mbps) to rural and remote communities. These are infrastructure projects. There is not a correlating program to teach people digital literacy as they gain access to high-speed internet.

Appendix 2 – FCM Press Release

For immediate release

Decoda
Literacy Solutions

Literacy champions: Federation of Canadian Municipalities backs advocacy efforts

FCM asks Government of Canada to add literacy to policies



September 18, 2023 – VANCOUVER – At its September Board meeting, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) passed a motion to advocate for literacy initiatives across Canada.

“Having the powerhouse of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities behind advocacy for literacy programs is a huge boost,” said Sandra Lee, Executive Director of Decoda Literacy Solutions, BC’s provincial literacy organization. “This is an important recognition of how literacy can help address a wide range of issues.”

Decoda worked with Vancouver City Council on the motion, which asked FCM to add literacy to its “Inclusive Communities” advocacy work of the FCM’s Social Economic Development Committee. It calls on the Government of Canada to add explicit references to literacy in policies such as poverty

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