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

United Nations Literacy Decade
2003–2012

Progress Report for Canada
2004–2006

November 2007

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada

Human Resources and Social Development Canada

Canadian Commission for UNESCO

Human Resources and
Social Development Canada

Ressources humaines et
Développement social Canada

CANADIAN COMMISSION FOR UNESCO
COMMISSION CANADIENNE POUR L'UNESCO

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Part I: Introduction

1.	UNESCO, which was named by the United Nations as the lead agency on literacy, has asked member states to report on the progress achieved in implementing their programs and plans of action for the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003–2012). UNESCO has requested progress reports on a biennial basis, with the current report focused on the period from February 2004 to March 2006.

2.	The International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade prepared by UNESCO provides a vision of literacy as central to all levels of education and essential to all human beings in all contexts and all settings. The UN Literacy Decade and Literacy for All are integral components of the goals of Education for All. The United Nations describes literacy in the context of the Decade as encompassing the literacy needs of individuals of all ages and of families as well as the multiple forms of literacy necessary in the workplace, community, society, and the nation. These literacy needs must be addressed in the contexts of language, culture, concern for gender equity and equality, and the goals of economic, social, and cultural development of all people.

3.	It is within this broad understanding of literacy that the ministers responsible for education in all provincial and territorial jurisdictions in Canada have declared literacy as one of their priorities. The Government of Canada also recognizes the importance of literacy through its support for a skilled, educated, and adaptable workforce so that Canadians can actively participate both in the workforce and in their communities, earn a better living, and build a strong future for their children. The nongovernmental community across Canada actively promotes literacy and adult learning and is committed to giving a voice to adult learners.

4.	This report looks at the literacy activities of the provincial, territorial, and federal governments and of civil society under the six themes outlined by UNESCO for this review: policy; flexible programs; capacity building of educators, stakeholders, and partners; research; community participation; and monitoring and evaluation.

Responsibility for Education and Literacy

5.	In Canada, there is no federal department of education and no integrated national system of education. Within the federal system of shared powers, Canada's Constitution Act of 1867 provides that "[I]n and for each province, the legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to Education." In the 13 jurisdictions — 10 provinces and 3 territories — departments or ministries of education are responsible for the organization, delivery, and assessment of education at the elementary and secondary levels within their boundaries. The institutions in the postsecondary system have varying degrees of autonomy from direct provincial government control. In some jurisdictions, separate departments or ministries are responsible for elementary-secondary education, for postsecondary education, and

for skills training. More extensive information on the structure, funding, and functioning of education in Canada is available in the Appendix.

6. The United Nations Literacy Decade includes learners of all ages and all forms of delivery, whether through formal education, community-based learning, or family reading. In some provinces and territories in Canada, literacy for learners of all ages is addressed through the ministry or department of education. In others, the departments of education provide literacy for school-aged children, while adult literacy is provided through departments with responsibility for portfolios such as training, advanced education, colleges and universities, skills, employment, or human resources. Partnerships among governments, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and local communities have been important to the delivery of literacy programs across Canada.

Role of the Government of Canada

7. The Government of Canada (also referred to as the federal government) plays an important role in promoting and supporting literacy development in Canada. The National Literacy Program (NLP)[1] has been a focal point for the government's overall literacy interests and has functioned as a primary mechanism for implementing the lead role of the federal department of Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC)[2] for supporting literacy development. Since its inception in 1988, the NLP has funded over 7,000 innovative projects in support of partnership development and liaison, project development and consultation, grants and contributions administration, support of promotion and awareness materials and events, research, policy analysis, and symposia and consultative meetings.

8. HRSDC's National Literacy Program has used a partnership model in setting up strategic relationships to fill identified gaps and find effective ways of improving the literacy skills of Canadians of all ages.

9. The National Literacy Program has been focused on five areas of activity — coordination and information sharing; outreach and access; public awareness; development of learning materials including practitioner training; and research that included piloting of innovative approaches for literacy programming.

10. Additional federal involvement in literacy includes direct literacy training for those incarcerated in federal correctional institutions through Correctional Service

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[1] The activities in this report cover the period from February 2004 to March 2006 when the National Literacy Program was in place. Effective April 1, 2006, the National Literacy Program, the Office of Learning Technologies, and the Learning Initiatives Program were integrated into the Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program. However, for simplicity, the National Literacy Program (NLP) is used throughout this Progress Report.
[2] For most of the period of the activities covered by this report (February 2004 to March 2006), the department was known as Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. On February 1, 2006, the department was re-named Human Resources and Social Development Canada. The current name of the department is used throughout this report.

Canada, quantitative survey development and analysis by Statistics Canada, indirect literacy support for Aboriginal Canadians through the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, as well as support for people with disabilities through HRSDC. Some of the initiatives have literacy as their primary focus, while others address literacy in the context of a wider program or policy direction.

Collaboration on Literacy for All

11.	Working in collaboration, the federal government, the provincial and territorial governments, municipal governments, libraries, business, labour, community groups, literacy organizations, other nongovernmental organizations, and the learners themselves are able to provide literacy programs and services that reach most segments of society. Literacy learners include the employed, underemployed, and unemployed, those in prisons and penitentiaries, Aboriginal populations, recent immigrants, second-language learners, persons with disabilities, children and young people, rural and urban populations, women and families with their children — in short, all those who find that they do not have the literacy skills they need.

Literacy Levels and Enrolments

12.	International, national, regional, and local instruments are all used to track literacy levels of the various populations and to provide long-term data so that both improvements and continuing challenges can be assessed. The 2003 international comparative survey, the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL), revealed that 58 per cent of adults in Canada aged between 16 and 65 possess literacy skills that indicate they could meet most everyday reading requirements. Therefore, 42 per cent of adults have low levels of literacy skills; those with the lower levels of literacy also have lower levels of employment and lower earnings. The results varied among the provinces and territories across the country, but even in the top jurisdictions, at least 3 out of 10 adults aged 16 and over performed at the lower levels in prose and document literacy.

13.	In a study of the youth population, Canadian results on the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), administered by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to 15-year-olds in 2003, were among the highest in the world in the literacy domains of reading, science, problem solving, and mathematics. PISA also revealed that Canada has one of the highest levels of equity in achievement. However, PISA did show that there are differing literacy levels across the country that can be attributed, in part, to socioeconomic status, gender, and language.

14.	The provinces and territories use a variety of approaches and mechanisms to collect their own numbers on enrolments in their community-based, workplace, and other literacy programs. Given UNESCO's emphasis on gender equality and equity, one particularly interesting finding in many of their studies is that women are the majority of learners in every jurisdiction providing this statistic. Women represented 56 to 65 per cent of those registered in the various classes reported

and, on average, 80 per cent or more of the learners were between 20 and 50 years of age. Access to further education and training was the main reason given for attending adult literacy classes.

Pan-Canadian Progress Report (February 2004–March 2006)

15.   There are clear literacy success stories and challenges at all levels of education in Canada. This report provides examples of literacy activities for adults, young people, and children outside of the school system as well as in-school activities, especially those reaching such populations needing special attention as boys and Aboriginal students. With 13 educational jurisdictions, the federal government, and multiple voluntary and nongovernmental organizations committed to literacy improvement, only a limited number of their literacy-related policies, programs, and other activities can be included in this Progress Report.

16.   In this context, it is important to note that this report is not intended to be inclusive or provide a comprehensive overview of literacy in Canada — it is instead a selection of policies, programs, capacity building, research, partnerships, and evaluative activities taking place from 2004 to 2006. Many exemplary projects have not been included as they fall outside the February 2004 to March 2006 timeframe set by UNESCO. The examples are provided to give an overview of literacy activity in all parts of Canada related to the key themes and their descriptions outlined in the Report of the Secretary-General for UNESCO in his July 2002 document addressing the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade. The UNESCO themes to be reflected in six sections of each of the biennial reports for the decade are policy; flexible programs; capacity building of educators, stakeholders, and partners; research; community participation; and monitoring and evaluation. The examples in this progress report for Canada for the 2004–06 biennial have been chosen on the basis of geographic representation, client groups, and type of initiative as well as to illustrate the partnerships among the provincial, territorial, and federal governments, the nongovernmental organizations, and the voluntary sector.

17.   Much more can be learned about literacy in Canada by visiting the Web sites of the provincial and territorial departments and ministries responsible for education, the federal government, and the national nongovernmental literacy organizations, as well as consulting the source documents listed in "Sources Used for the Preparation of the Progress Report" following Part VIII.

Part II: Policy

"Policy" is the first theme that UNESCO presents for the biennial review of progress in the United Nations Literacy Decade.

The ministers responsible for education in the provinces and territories as well as the provincial premiers and government leaders of the territories have all made literacy a priority. The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of literacy in supporting a skilled, educated, and adaptable workforce so that Canadians can actively participate in both the workforce and their communities, earn a better living, and build a strong future for their children

The 13 educational jurisdictions have varying literacy strategies that outline their visions, programming directions, funding commitments, and expected results, especially for the formal programs. The policies in adult literacy build on past experiences and current program offerings to extend the services to new groups, communities, and to reposition adult literacy and basic education within wider policy frameworks for labour force and community development. Children's literacy policies are structured to improve literacy rates for preschoolers and early grades so that the foundations of literacy and learning skills are well established.

Literacy policies and strategies are developed with significant community input through review teams and consultative processes that include all the key players in literacy, from the funders to the learners. In all aspects of literacy, from policy through assessment, the essential component is the collaborative involvement of ministries of education, the federal government, and the large and active nongovernmental sector of literacy organizations, coalitions, and volunteer groups.

Examples of policy directions and developments from 2004 to 2006 are outlined below.

18.   Most of the provinces and territories have developed either a literacy strategy or a policy framework or both to outline their priorities, financial commitments, and objectives. Although some jurisdictions have had their policies in place for a number of years, other jurisdictions are currently developing or updating theirs. The policies and strategies concerning literacy are often part of wider documents that address issues of skills training, employment, and Aboriginal education.

Policy Directions in Adult Literacy

19.   Policy in adult education often addresses the multiple learning environments and needs that exist in each jurisdiction. For example, in December 2005, the New Brunswick Department of Training and Employment Development (now Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour) announced the government's policy statement on adult and lifelong learning called "Lifelong Learning: Quality Adult

Learning Opportunities." Regional adult learning centres, pilot-tested in 2005, are to be expanded throughout the province in 2006 so that effective community partnerships can address local literacy needs. A new workplace essential skills certificate will be developed to provide assessment, training, and certificate recognition of workplace skills.

20. In addition, the New Brunswick government has enhanced its focus on the role of public libraries in literacy and lifelong learning. Along with improvement to facilities and staffing, the libraries are to develop information literacy programs, undertake community analysis to guide local program development, and work with community organizations to increase access to and use of the library and its on-site and on-line information services. The lifelong learning policy statement set some specific ten-year targets, including higher adult literacy rates and a 25 per cent increase in participation in adult education and learning.

21. An increased emphasis on literacy challenges at the national, provincial, and international levels led the Saskatchewan government to set up the Saskatchewan Literacy Commission in 2005. The role of the Commission is

- to focus social, economic, and educational policies, programs, services, and initiatives regarding literacy

- to develop and implement policies and programs to enhance literacy, including work-based literacy, early literacy, and family literacy

- to identify and work to remove obstacles to literacy

- to assess government policies and make recommendations to modify those policies as they affect literacy

- to promote understanding of literacy and its importance

- to work together with educational institutions and other governments and organizations to achieve these goals.

The new Literacy Advisory Board includes the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, educational institutions, First Nations and Métis peoples, libraries, KidsFirst, business and industry, adult basic education, community-based and volunteer organizations, and the research community

22. Among the priorities for the Alberta government in 2005 and 2006 are two corporate-wide policies that are important for adult literacy. The Aboriginal Policy Initiative (API) provides a mechanism for Alberta ministries to work together to address issues facing Aboriginal communities and people. A key objective of API is to support lifelong learning opportunities for Aboriginal people and promote appreciation of Aboriginal cultures. The following are two specific strategies:

- Work with Aboriginal and other learning stakeholders to implement the First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework and approved

recommendations from Alberta's Commission on Learning to improve outcomes for Aboriginal learners.

- Support initiatives to promote increased appreciation of Aboriginal cultures and the infusion of Aboriginal content into provincial programming.

23. The Leading in Learning and Skilled Workforce Initiative (LLSWI) is a collaborative partnership among Alberta ministries to ensure that an excellent learning system is available to meet the varying needs of Alberta learners of all ages. Two objectives of the LLSWI are to provide high quality, accessible, and affordable learning opportunities to ensure that all can learn, adapt, and develop new knowledge and new skills, and to assist Albertans in achieving their full potential and fostering a superior quality of life.

24. ReadNow BC, the British Columbia literacy action plan, includes an Adult Opportunities strategy. It is designed to increase access to literacy services for adult learners with particular emphases on workplace literacy, Aboriginal learning, and English as a second language.

25. The Government of Canada, with HRSDC as the lead federal department on literacy matters, also has a strong policy interest in this area because it recognizes the importance of literacy in supporting a skilled, educated, and adaptable workforce. With a focus on improving opportunities for Canadians, the federal government provides support to those individuals who face barriers in improving their learning and literacy skills, including Aboriginal people and newcomers to Canada.

Policy Directions in Literacy for Children

26. Education officials across the country are addressing the need for early and solid literacy learning for children through policies to ensure that all students get the attention and the resources they need to succeed. In 2004, the Ontario government announced a new vision for excellence in public education that emphasizes that every student should come to school ready to learn and that, by the age of 12, he or she should be able to read, write, do mathematics, and comprehend at a level high enough to provide a solid foundation for later educational and social choices. This vision included the following:

- Reduce class sizes from junior kindergarten to grade 3.

- Amend the curriculum to put a clear focus on reading, writing, and doing math at a high level of comprehension.

- Send "turnaround teams" of experts into struggling schools.

- Provide every elementary school, for the first time, with a lead teacher in literacy and numeracy who is equipped to share best practices and techniques.

- Create a new Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat to ensure schools, teachers, and students are getting the supports they need.

- Provide parents with additional resources to encourage and support reading at home.

- Create an atmosphere of peace and stability within public education, and safety and security within schools.

27.   All the components of the Ontario vision were tied to measurable objectives to improve the literacy and numeracy capacities of every child. A progress report issued in 2005 highlighted the achievements to date. Class sizes for the early grades have been reduced in thousands of schools and should reach the goal of 20 students per class by 2007–08. Twenty-five per cent of elementary schools have introduced early screening of kindergarten and grade 1 students to identify students with potential learning problems so that they can get help before they fall too far behind. More than 16,000 elementary teachers have been trained in literacy and numeracy so that they can share their expertise with their colleagues, and 600 specialist teachers were in classrooms in the 2005–06 school year. Test scores have shown that students improved in mathematics and reading, with an average of 62 per cent of students performing at or above the provincial standard. The goal is 75 per cent of grade 6 students. The "turnaround teams" are now in 100 schools, and student results on the grade 3 reading test improved by an average of 33 per cent.

28.   In Nunavut, an ambitious plan for establishing a bilingual education system was introduced in 2004. The Bilingual Education Strategy for Nunavut: 2004–2008 was created to help students develop their abilities in their first language of Inuinnaqtun or Inuktitut while providing more opportunities to learn English as a second language. Over 80 per cent of the population of Nunavut is Inuit and so the strategy stresses literacy in their first language. Curriculum development has involved hundreds of people beyond the Department of Education. Staff members have worked with Elders when researching curriculum content and skills to ensure that the values intrinsic to Inuit culture are fully addressed. Nunavut teachers are also developing and field-testing the new resources.

29.   British Columbia's literacy action plan places its emphasis on ensuring that students in elementary and secondary school improve their reading and literacy skills. Although British Columbia students achieve relatively high graduation rates as well as high scores in international literacy tests, the government has put in place a number of programs aimed at improving literacy, including Literacy Innovation Grants, Aboriginal Enhancement Agreements, and a new language arts curriculum for kindergarten through grade 7 students.

Community Input to Policy

30.   Literacy and adult learning are often based in the community, and those closest to the delivery, as well as the learners themselves, have invaluable input regarding current and future programs. For these reasons, jurisdictions in Canada involve the communities during the development of new directions and policies.

31.   The Yukon Government Literacy Strategy Review began in January 2006 to give literacy stakeholders an opportunity to input into current and future government literacy programs and services. The Literacy Strategy Review team plans to visit all Yukon communities to find out what people need in order to increase literacy in their community. Yukoners scored very high on the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, but the government wants to ensure that they are providing the skills that everyone needs to participate fully in their community and the labour force — and to improve the quality of living for all Yukoners.

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

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

34.   The foundation of British Columbia's literacy action plan, ReadNow BC, is communities. There is recognition that communities provide the context for learners to live, play, and work. As such, communities are in the best position to identify gaps and work together to provide opportunities for learners to be successful. Boards of Education have recently been given responsibility, through legislation, to bring together all literacy stakeholders including libraries, colleges, schools, and community agencies to develop and implement district literacy plans. All of this work builds on the work initiated and supported through Literacy Now, a key provincial literacy initiative.

Literacy as Political Priority

35.   The International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade stresses the importance of having literacy on the political agenda and as part of forums. In late 2004, education ministers from the 13 jurisdictions across Canada identified literacy as a priority in recognition of the key role it plays in the well-being of Canadians. Under the auspices of the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada

(CMEC), the ministers proposed to organize two forums to bring together literacy experts and education partners to share best practices and the latest research on literacy.

36. The Council and the Ontario Ministry of Education's Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat organized the first of these forums, Unlocking Our Children's Potential: Literacy and Numeracy as a Foundation, in November 2005. The workshops and displays featured strategies for selected student populations including boys, Aboriginal students, students with special needs, and francophone students, as well such topics as capacity building, shared leadership, and creating centres of excellence in student achievement. The second forum to be held in British Columbia in 2006 concentrates on adult literacy.

37. The Council outlined a pan-Canadian literacy action plan focusing on four key elements:

- the creation by each jurisdiction of formal policy frameworks on literacy for both school-age and adult learners

- the sharing of ideas about the most promising literacy practices through the creation of networks in elementary and secondary education and adult learning

- the development of a coherent strategy for research and data gathering in the area of literacy

- the creation of a pan-Canadian communications plan

In support of these elements, a pan-Canadian literacy forum, with simultaneous webcasting of keynote speakers, will take place in 2008.

38. The Council of the Federation (COF), an organization established in December 2003 by the provincial premiers and government leaders of the territories, has also identified literacy as one of its priority areas. In recognition that the provinces and territories are repositories of innovative policies, practices, and programs, COF released a study entitled *Government Initiatives Promoting Literacy Best Practices* in 2004. The Council reported that most provinces and territories have a long-term literacy strategy or plan that seeks to assess needs, fill gaps, and build partnerships to ensure that all residents are successful in their community, work, and home lives. These strategies are informed through the collaborative work of teachers, researchers, learners, community groups, business, and government. Many are tied to labour market strategies but also focus on helping learners carry out their family and social roles.

39. The COF created a literacy award to be given in each jurisdiction annually to a literacy instructor, volunteer, community organization, project, business, or learner. In August 2005, the recipients of the first annual Council of the Federation Literacy Award were announced, including awards that recognized valuable contributions in family, Aboriginal, health, workplace, and community literacy.

40.   Canada Post also presents literacy awards in the four categories of individuals, educators, community leadership, and business leadership. The awards are given annually to Canadians who have made a difference in improving the literacy levels in communities across the country.

Part III: Programs

The International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade clearly states that to be effective literacy programs must cover the whole life cycle, serve age groups from preschool to adults and use a variety of settings and delivery methods. Across Canada a wide range of literacy programs are offered, reaching all possible populations with specific courses, content, and program design to fit their needs and abilities.

Children's literacy programs are targeted to reach those at particular risk of not developing the early skills that form the basis of all future learning, as well as to develop in all children a love of reading for both fun and information. Programs for young people reach those who are not succeeding in the traditional education system; family literacy links child and adult reading for the benefit of all.

Adult literacy programs are as varied as the populations they serve, using high-quality information services, technology, and a multitude of specially designed programs so that each adult can find the program that fits his or her needs. Many adults are also reached through workplace literacy programs that tie literacy and work skills together.

The following is a small sample, stressing the changes, developments, and achievements of the period from February 2004 to March 2006.

Children's Literacy

41.   Preparing children to learn, to read, and to participate fully in the classroom has been shown to be one of the most successful literacy strategies. Resources that match the children's heritage and initiatives that encourage reading in the more reluctant groups can also bring gratifying results.

42.   After a successful pilot test in 2004, the Yukon Department of Education is expanding its full-day kindergarten program to more schools. The children in the pilot test showed a marked improvement in their learning and literacy skills and had more successful transitions to elementary school. The focus of the full-day kindergarten program is on learning how to learn, pre-literacy skills, language development, and group learning skills. The students have a balance of teaching instruction and child-focused activities. Both parents and children have been enthusiastic about the extended program.

43.   Also in Yukon, the Department of Education, in cooperation with Elders, students, First Nations, principals, curriculum staff, and publishers, has been producing curriculum materials that focus on Aboriginal culture. The new resources have included early-reading books, materials for a curriculum unit dealing with the subject of land claims, and a Yukon First Nations history text.

44. Nunavut has also been producing schoolbooks for children from kindergarten through grade 12 as additions to the made-in-Nunavut curriculum. There is a workbook for younger grades to help them learn syllabics, the Inuit writing system, as well as books with stories that feature polar bears, famous hunters, and legends that are part of the Inuit tradition.

45. The Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education created a Division on Early Childhood Learning to provide strategic direction for provincial early childhood learning programs and services. The Division seeks to ensure that resources are being used effectively to meet the needs of young children, and to ensure that children who could benefit most from early childhood education have appropriate learning opportunities.

46. A 2005 meeting of educators organized by the Ontario Ministry of Education tackled the challenge of reducing the number of boys struggling with literacy. Boys are approximately 25 per cent behind their female classmates in grade 3 and grade 6 reading and writing levels. Three-quarters of the children identified for intensive special education programs are boys, and 15 per cent fewer men are now attending university compared to women. For elementary students, the literacy plan for boys has three parts:

   - Recognition and motivation — Community role models from sports, video games, and other sectors that appeal to boys have been enlisted to help reach boys who are becoming discouraged about reading

   - Resources for teachers and schools — Thousands of copies of a special booklet of strategies to reach boys with reading challenges have been distributed. The booklet, *Me Read? No Way! A Practical Guide to Improving Boys' Literacy Skills*, is based on national and international research

   - Coordinated action —An innovative Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat has been established with responsibility for developing detailed strategies for funding and coordinating actions across 72 school boards. Attendees of the symposium, which included five representatives of each school board, subsequently shared information with their boards in the province-wide push to reach boys who are struggling.

47. The Government of Canada also supports a number of activities aimed at the improvement of literacy among young Canadians. For example, Library and Archives Canada, in cooperation with one of the major Canadian banks, launched the *TD Summer Reading Club*. This program provides public libraries with tools to enhance services related to literacy and essential skills — primarily through reading. Activity booklets for children and a manual for library staff are vital parts of the summer reading clubs organized in thousands of public libraries across Canada. Eight provinces and all three territories participate in the program in remote, rural, and urban communities. The program provides stimulating and structured activities for children up to the age of 12, helping them to maintain

their reading skills over the summer months and encouraging them to develop a love for reading.

48.   The *Read Up On It* publication of Library and Archives Canada is designed to improve the essential learning skills of children, mainly through reading books about Canadian culture and literature. It is distributed to numerous institutions, including public libraries, schools and their libraries, daycare centres, and community centres, as well as education and information science faculties in universities. Intended for teachers, caregivers, and librarians, this publication serves as a reference tool to encourage children to read.

49.   In an effort to promote reading and letter-writing skills, as well as an understanding of the postal system among children and teens, Canada Post created *Postal Planet* — a one-stop resource for activities, games, and all things postal. The Web site provides a frequently updated source of free and teacher-approved lesson guides, activities, and games for use in the classroom and at home.

50.   Finally, the *Santa Letter-Writing Program* has brought joy — and literacy learning — to millions of children across Canada. Each year, more than one million children have what may be their first letter-writing experience as they write to Santa at "North Pole HOH OHO" and, through the involvement of Canada Post employees and retirees, get a personal reply from Santa. Letters are responded to in the language in which they are written, as well as in Braille. Many children now send their letters electronically through the Canada Post Web site.

Serving Young People

51.   Convincing some teenagers to continue their schooling is a challenge that every jurisdiction faces. In 2005, Literacy BC and a British Columbia School District published a summary report on a demonstration classroom that had been in operation for three years, serving at-risk young people aged 15 and 16 with significant literacy difficulties. Support for the program came from the National Literacy Program and the Department of Justice. The young people had either dropped out of school or were likely to do so because of their low attendance, behavioural issues, and failure to complete previous grades. The program has been remarkably successful in accomplishing its goals. Students have stayed in school, developed necessary skills, and moved back into traditional or alternative secondary school classes with a high likelihood of graduating. The research and development model that evolved to reach these students is called *New School Canada*.

52.   In 2005, Newfoundland and Labrador placed an increased emphasis on developing health literacy among secondary school students, with the introduction of new courses, healthy living strategies, and the provision of new physical education equipment. These initiatives provide support for students to acquire literacy skills by encouraging healthy lifestyles that, in turn, sustain the process of active learning.

53.   The Government of Canada's *Youth Employment Strategy* helps young Canadians aged 15 to 30 to find career information, develop skills, find good jobs, and either keep those jobs or return to school for further education and training. Thirteen federal government departments and agencies work with the governments of the provinces and territories, businesses, and communities to deliver a wide range of initiatives. One of these initiatives, *Skills Link,* supports young people who face barriers to employment; this group includes those with low literacy and numeracy skills, early school leavers, single parents, Aboriginal young people, young people with physical and mental disabilities, rural young people, and recent immigrants. They are offered group employability workshops to acquire life and employment skills.

54.   Low literacy has been identified as one of the risk factors resulting in homelessness. Through its six federally-funded programs, the National Homelessness Initiative works in partnership with community organizations, the private and voluntary sectors, and other levels of government to develop local solutions to the challenges of homelessness and assist homeless or at-risk individuals and families to move toward stability and independence. Communities have been supported in their efforts to identify priorities, and develop and plan appropriate solutions. Plans in some communities have identified specific literacy initiatives aimed at young people; also the need for literacy programs in drop-in centres, addiction treatment centres, and residential facilities has been identified.

Family Literacy

55.   Among the key determinants of children's literacy are their parents' reading habits — but many parents are not readers even when they would like to be. Literacy programs that reach both parents and children at the same time help bridge this gap.

56.   A new family literacy project was launched in Prince Edward Island during Canadian Library Week in 2005 to help children become good readers. The new *PEI Reads* project has five parts. Parents of all children in grades 1 to 3 receive a parent guide to help their children learn to read; each child is presented with a new library key card; a new Web site provides information for people with various reading interests and abilities; Family Story Nights are held at schools; and a public education campaign promotes family literacy across the province. The booklet, *How to Help Your Child Learn to Read and Love Reading*, contains information on how children learn to read, how to encourage reading at home, recommended reading for children in grades 1 to 3, and helpful information for parents who want to improve their own reading levels. The library key card can be attached to key chains and backpacks for easy access and use. At the Story Nights, the children are treated to a story while their parents are coached on fun and easy ways to help their children read.

57.   In 2004, the Alberta government introduced an Aboriginal component to their Parent-Child Literacy Strategy. This initiative began with the formation of an advisory committee composed of representation from Alberta government ministries, the Public Health Agency of Canada, an Aboriginal Elder, and members of the public who are knowledgeable about working with Aboriginal families. A consultant held meetings with Aboriginal families and organizations and surveyed other jurisdictions and the literature to complete a report, *Promising Practices and Opportunities for Investment*. Based on this report and the direction of the advisory committee, a manager was hired to work with Aboriginal organizations to develop and provide family literacy programming to Aboriginal families with preschool-aged children. In 2005–06, eight Aboriginal organizations received support, including two northern Métis settlements.

58.   Manitoba has worked on keeping literacy learners engaged throughout the summer with the Summer Learning Calendar Project sponsored by Healthy Child Manitoba and Manitoba Education. Parents of young learners are provided with suggestions and support for participating in such literacy programs as Think Up, Imagine, Explore, Discover and Communicate to sustain literacy learning outside the classroom.

59.   Two new literacy programs in British Columbia are showing particular promise. PALS, Parents as Literacy Supporters, is a short-term, intensive approach in working with young children and their parents or caregivers that can be adapted to the cultural and linguistic background of families. The other program is Strong Start; over 80 centres aimed at three-year-olds and their families have been opened in schools. Children are helped to acquire pre-literacy skills so that they may be more successful in their school years.

60.   The Government of Canada, through the National Literacy Program, is investing $7 million over a five-year period from 2003 to 2008 to support family literacy in official-language minority communities in all provinces and territories (except Nunavut). Because Canada has two official languages, English and French, funding is provided to support literacy in both French-speaking communities outside Quebec and English-speaking communities within Quebec. Nongovernmental literacy coalitions have received this funding to develop and implement strategic plans to serve these special literacy needs.

Adult Literacy

61.   Each adult learner has different literacy needs. The multiplicity of literacy programs available across Canada is a response to the recognition that the closer the program is to the adult's needs and life situation, the more likely it is to be successful.

62.   The Quebec service *Info-Alpha* line is a free and confidential province-wide service that offers help and information to people with low literacy skills and to all those wanting to access to basic education in reading and writing. The service,

an initiative of the Literacy Foundation (Fondation pour l'alphabétisation), refers the callers to appropriate literacy resources and providers in each region of Québec. It aims at encouraging people with low literacy skills to come out of the shadows and enrol in a program adapted to their realities and specific needs. The Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports, Employment Québec, and Hydro Québec are all partners in this initiative.

63.   As a part of the "limousine" service of *Info-Alpha*, the telephone counsellor remains on the line with the caller throughout the conversation with the organization to which they have been referred, to ensure that that caller is satisfied with and clear about the information provided. Over 2,000 people were helped through *Info-Alpha* in 2004–05, with almost 69 per cent of the callers being women who were requesting information for themselves and for others. About 30 per cent of the calls concerned literacy and another 30 per cent were about basic education, certification, and technology training. The reference service provided for employers describes the importance of literacy for productivity and the programs they might offer their employees or those in which they might enrol.

64.   In September 2005, the Quebec Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports launched a new service, entitled *Info Apprendre*, which the Literacy Foundation is also running. The service is similar to *Info-Alpha*, but it is designed for learners wishing to return to school for training or to complete a postsecondary program.

65.   Extra investment in literacy by the Government of the Northwest Territories through the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has resulted in the introduction of a number of programs to fill the gaps in existing services for identified target groups in the adult population. The community-based Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE) programming through the community college was expanded to allow delivery in every community in the NWT. The Correctional Centre Literacy Program through the Department of Justice has enhanced ALBE programs and career services to inmates of three correctional centres and three young offender facilities. A seniors' literacy program has been administered through a partnership with Literacy Support for Seniors.

66.   Learning support for people with disabilities has also been enhanced in the NWT to provide assistive devices, tuition, tutorial, and other services to individuals and organizations, and to provide training for practitioners to enhance their ability to work with disabled learners. Support for Official Languages Literacy has increased Aboriginal language retention, enhancement, and promotion activities in addition to French language projects. Workplace education has been expanded through needs assessments and wage subsidies to support work release programs to which employers contribute wages and employees contribute time outside of work.

67.   The focus of the New Brunswick government has been on improving existing training to provide better quality results-based services at the community level.

For example, in 2005, Adult Literacy Services, a branch of the Department of Training and Employment Development, partnered with Literacy New Brunswick Inc. and a Literacy Ontario organization to test *AlphaRoute*, an on-line literacy tool, in both French and English language Community Academic Services Programs. *AlphaRoute* offers individualized training plans, individualized portfolios, a communication system, audio and visual supports for English, French, the Deaf community, and Aboriginal literacy programs, and learning activities. It fits a blended learning framework and provides an on-line tool to complement existing resources; it can also be used for distance delivery with supplemental materials that are appropriate to the learner's training plan.

68. In the New Brunswick trial, the partnership was extended to develop further French learning materials for *AlphaRoute* and to translate mathematics materials. The literacy curriculum was also aligned with public school grade levels and the levels tested in the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey. This has been of great value in improving the accuracy and reliability of data that are collected on learner progress in training programs and for monitoring and managing the community-based literacy initiative.

69. Education programs and services provided by Correctional Service Canada include literacy, adult basic education, English as a second language, French as a second language, vocational education, and employability skills training for federal inmates. This complement of programs and services is offered in full or in part in all Canadian federal penitentiaries and is targeted toward the entire prison population based on areas of need as identified during intake assessments. Education programming for offenders builds their capacity for making lasting personal change, reduces the risk of their re-offending, and increases their potential for successful reintegration into society.

70. Through their participation in education programs, offenders are taught how to learn so that they can become effective and efficient lifelong learners and can hope to master curriculum content. The program objectives include employment planning for long-term success, skills training to ensure employment potential on release, and helping offenders obtain their secondary school diploma or make as much progress as possible, given the length of their sentences. Community employment centres have been made available to newly released offenders to aid in their successful transition into the Canadian workforce; last year they helped 1,610 offenders find employment upon release.

71. The publication, *Prison Voices*, a book authored by inmates and designed to encourage reading and writing in prisons, was released in 2005. The project was a collaborative effort between Correctional Service Canada and the John Howard Society and was funded through a grant from the National Literacy Program.

72. A federal government partnership with the Conference Board of Canada resulted in the development of a National Employability Skills course, which focuses on

building competency and excellence in 12 employability skills. This program is certified by the Conference Board of Canada and ensures successful participants enter the community workforce with an Essential Skills certification, a tool to facilitate integration into the labour market.

73.   The Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program of Citizenship and Immigration Canada provides adult immigrants with language instruction in English or French as soon as possible upon their arrival. The language courses are provided through school boards, colleges, and community organizations. They may be offered on a full-time or part-time basis during the day, in the evenings or on weekends and may be held at the workplace or in the community. The LINC program also uses alternative instruction methods, such as home study. Transportation and child-minding services may be provided when necessary. The language needs of literacy learners (those who are not literate in their first language or who are not literate in the Roman alphabet) are assessed, and the test determines the first-language literacy skills that are transferable to the acquisition of the second language. Learners with literacy needs are then placed in literacy classes (funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada) when available.

Workplace Literacy

74.   The Province of Newfoundland and Labrador experienced a significant loss of employment when the shutdown of the fisheries made such a huge impact on rural communities. In 2004, a pilot project initiated by the Random North Development Association with funding support from the Department of Human Resources, Labour and Employment and federal partners applied the model, *Bridging the Gap: From Education to Employment*, to six private business partners in three geographic areas of the province. The Department of Education and other stakeholders were also represented on the project's steering committee. The following are some of the key characteristics of the model:

- The program assists private businesses that are expanding or newly established.

- It is a client-centred approach to education and training that integrates the realities of employees/employers in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

- It incorporates academic upgrading and enhancement of an individual's practical skills set through an accredited postsecondary institution, and enables eligible clients to learn new, transferable skills.

- The client group is made up of the adults who did not complete either secondary school, an adult basic education program, or a secondary school equivalency exam.

- All academic and practical skills are tailored to meet the needs of the business partner.

- Participants develop their own Prior Learning Assessment Portfolio based on their previous skill sets, and they link these acquired skills to the needs of the private business partner.

- The program assists in building the capacity of rural communities by having community stakeholders such as the private, public, and volunteer sectors as well as educational providers take the lead role in the implementation stage.

With the completion of the pilot test stages, Random North Development Association worked with the partners and government agencies to implement the model more widely.

75. International research has linked labour market success to a set of teachable, transferable, and measurable skills. The Government of Canada contributed to this research by identifying and validating nine essential skills that are used in virtually all Canadian occupations and through daily life in different forms and at different levels of complexity. The nine essential skills are reading text, document use, numeracy, writing, oral communications, working with others, thinking skills, computer use, and continuous learning.

76. The Essential Skills and Workplace Literacy Initiative, delivered jointly by the National Literacy Program and Workplace Innovation Division of Human Resources and Social Development Canada, helps to ensure that Canadians have the right skills for changing work and life demands. Its goal is to enhance the skills level of those already in or entering the workforce through

- increasing awareness and understanding of essential skills and literacy
- supporting the development of tools and applications
- building on the research base
- working with other federal government departments to incorporate essential skills into the services and programming that they offer their client groups

77. Support under the Essential Skills and Workplace Literacy Initiative includes funding in the form of a grant and/or a contribution to proposals that are solicited through an advertised call for proposals. The provinces and territories, employers, labour, workplace trainers, and education systems are using products developed under the Essential Skills and Workplace Literacy Initiative as foundations for their labour market training programs and curriculum development. These projects have led to the upgrading of literacy and essential skills through a variety of adult education practices.

78. Between 2003–04 and 2005–06, the *Test of Workplace Essential Skills (TOWES)* was piloted with a sample of Ontario employers with support from the National Literacy Program. TOWES is an assessment that uses authentic workplace documents to measure three essential skills needed for safe and productive employment — reading text, document use, and numeracy. The pilot involved raising awareness of essential skills among the employers and demonstrating the effectiveness of TOWES as a tool for assessing these skills.

79. The National Literacy Program has also provided funding to the Canadian Labour Congress to help maximize the skills of their membership by focusing on building workers' capacity and that of the members of their affiliated organizations in the areas of literacy and clear language. The NLP also provided financial support to the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators, which has worked across the country to show municipal governments the benefits of embracing workplace literacy and education to better serve citizens in their communities.

Part IV: Capacity Building

The third theme for the review of progress is Capacity Building.

The provision of literacy resources and training is always a collaborative venture, involving governments, educational institutions, nongovernmental organizations, communities, business, volunteers, and many other stakeholders. It is essential that those who deliver the various literacy programs have the requisite capacities for offering their programs in a sustained and effective manner. Their essential efforts are supported through training, the provision of curriculum and resources, assistance with planning and management, and funding from governments and many other sources.

Governments have supported capacity building among their partners. National nongovernmental literacy organizations provide their profile as experts, lobbying, training, workshops, public awareness, research and development, databases, networking, and resources. Literacy coalitions and councils in each jurisdiction bring together the practitioners, providers, and learners for support and development. Public libraries are playing a growing role in literacy, both through resources and programming.

Capacity building requires training, curriculum models, resources, partnership development, and planning and management tools.

Training and Curriculum

80.   In Nova Scotia, many of the capacity-building activities in 2004 and 2005 focused on training and the development and testing of curriculum resources. The Department of Education, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Partners for Workplace Education, developed a train-the-trainer program to enable workplace instructors to perform organizational and individual educational needs assessments. The Department of Education also collaborated with the Department of Health on a health literacy awareness initiative to raise awareness among health practitioners of the impacts of literacy on a person's ability to access and understand health-care information.

81.   Nova Scotia community literacy organizations were involved in a consultation process, led by the Department of Education, which resulted in the establishment of work groups to address issues related to learner progress, the policies and guidelines of funding programs, accountability reporting, and data definitions. Two pilot projects are looking at how community literacy organizations can work together to streamline administrative functions, and how to better coordinate tutor recruitment and training. In addition, the Adult Learning Program Level III curriculum, which includes communications, mathematics, science, and social studies, was completely rewritten and then pilot tested in 2005. Professional

development workshops on the new curriculum were provided to college and community organizations that deliver the program.

82. The Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports in Quebec has offered a variety of literacy-related training in the last couple of years. Literacy workers from school boards, independent community action groups, and local employment centres attended sessions that deal with how to work with people who have limited formal education, including recognizing their characteristics, behaviours, and attitudes. Other sessions were held for literacy workers who deal with adult students who are at the upper elementary and secondary levels to help the instructors recognize and respond to learning problems. The resources were based on the 2004 ministry publication *Coffret de matériel andragogique pour la formation des personnes ayant des problèmes d'apprentissage — Alphabétisation, présecondaire, secondaire* (*Tool Kit of Adult Learning Resources for People with Learning Difficulties — Literacy, Pre-Secondary and Secondary Levels*).

83. In a further example of training the trainer, the *Mijote-moi une histoire…*(Tell Me a Story…) materials were presented to trainers in all Quebec regions. The program was designed by three school boards and targets the development of parental capacity to enhance both their own literacy and the emerging literacy of their young children. The training covered the theoretical framework of the program, information on how to conduct the workshops, links between the program tools and those of local organizations, and cooperative strategies on implementing the materials.

84. Also in Quebec, an action research project on distance literacy training was carried out to enhance and validate the reference framework previously developed, to identify and document conditions for organizing distance literacy training activities, to evaluate the impact of the activities, and to outline areas of development.

85. The Workplace Education Manitoba Steering Committee (WEMSC) is a tripartite committee of union, business, and government that assists, guides, and makes recommendations with regard to developing appropriate workplace literacy projects for the province of Manitoba. Their role includes sensitizing industry, both management and labour, to issues of workplace literacy and skills, assisting in needs identification, aiding in the development of innovative delivery models, evaluation methods and curricula, as well as research dissemination and practitioner development. Professional development activities in 2004 and 2005 were related to workplace literacy and essential skills for practitioners in workplace learning and their education, business, and labour partners. WEMSC is coordinated by Industry Training Partnerships in the Manitoba Department of Advanced Education and Training (now Advanced Education and Literacy).

86. For classroom teachers, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth supports educators in developing their formative assessment skills with such publications

as *Rethinking Classroom Assessment with Purpose in Mind* (2006) and *Reading and Writing in Action* (2006). The summer institute, Literacy across the Curriculum, has been serving educators from around the province for more than five years. Adolescent literacy is central to the three-day institute, which provides a hands-on opportunity for teachers and literacy leaders to explore and practise strategies for improving literacy learning outcomes in Manitoba classrooms in grades 6 to 9.

87. In Alberta, a number of professional development activities are supported in the area of family literacy. These include an annual five-day Family Literacy Training Institute in which over 100 practitioners are required to complete the mandatory Introduction to Family Literacy program, followed by training in a specific family literacy model. To increase accessibility to this program, five trainers participated in a train-the-trainer workshop in 2005. An on-line Foundational Training in Family Literacy was launched in 2004. Over a seven-month period, the on-line course provides practitioners with theory and application of theory to the planning, delivery, and evaluation of family literacy programs. Specific topics include working with communities, best practices in family literacy, and family literacy through the eyes of Aboriginal participants.

88. Also in Alberta, the need to increase the capacity of rural communities to provide adult learning and literacy programs for English language learners led to the introduction of the Rural Routes initiative. This project has resulted in the development of the *English as a Second language (ESL) Resource Package for Rural Communities*. This publication assists rural adult educators by providing information on what is necessary in ESL classrooms and programs, learner assessment, teaching choices, lesson planning, and finding appropriate resources. The resource package was accompanied by workshops and coaching for effective instruction. The program continues to offer additional language tools and resources, workshops, and coaching to assist volunteer tutors and classroom-based programs in rural Alberta.

Resources

89. Libraries, present and active in most communities, are becoming integral to literacy delivery and support. And where libraries are lacking, extensions are underway. The literacy priorities of the Department of Education, Culture and Employment in the Northwest Territories (NWT) are designed to affect the maximum number of low literacy NWT residents in the community, in the classroom, and in the workplace. In 2005 and 2006, one of the key strategies for achieving this has been the extension of the public library system. Twenty-five of the 33 communities in the NWT did not have public libraries, and it was in these communities that literacy levels were lowest and where most residents did not have sufficient income to buy books nor did they have access to bookstores.

90. The need for community libraries in the NWT had become particularly acute, as literacy awareness programming had resulted in attitudinal shifts in many

communities. People have begun to realize the importance of literacy for themselves and their children, but they need access to books to implement these new values.   Decisions about where to establish the libraries were based on sustainability criteria, such as community support and existing capacity. Communities considered for the new public libraries had been trying to offer some form of library service and literacy programming without financial resources.

91.   The Community Library Project is a partnership between the Northwest Territories Library Services and the College Services. The new libraries are funded from the Literacy Strategy so that they are also becoming community literacy outreach centres. All of the new libraries are housed in existing school libraries, but they have been expanded and opened to the public on evenings and weekends.

92.   The Northwest Territories Literacy Council offers a literacy outreach-training workshop for all NWT librarians, and NWT Library Services provides training and support for library operations. Extensive planning has gone into ensuring the sustainability of the libraries so that the community library initiative with its strong literacy emphasis reaches people of all ages in communities with literacy needs.

93.   One integral aspect of *Cultural Connections: The Strategic Cultural Plan of Newfoundland and Labrador*, which promotes the province's rich cultural identity and history, is the identification and distribution of resources for elementary and secondary schools. These resources reflect the province's culture, its arts, and its heritage. By providing a wide variety of quality print and non-print resources for students and teachers, it is anticipated that literacy interest in local texts will grow as school libraries increase their holdings.

94.   In British Columbia, the primary goal of the government is to make BC the best-educated, most literate jurisdiction on the continent. A comprehensive literacy framework is being developed to ensure a seamless array of lifelong literacy services for everyone from preschoolers to grandparents in every community. To facilitate a coordinated approach to improving literacy levels, the Ministry of Education has been given new responsibilities for libraries, early learning, and literacy.

95.   On International Literacy Day in 2005, new funding was announced in British Columbia to support library services and increase child and adult literacy. Half of the funding for the libraries supported literacy programs, such as training staff to deliver early literacy, helping libraries purchase special collections in multiple languages, and supporting libraries in collaborating with other local literacy services. The rest of the funding was for technology to help libraries participate in electronic opportunities in the future. The province has been making a substantial investment over three years to implement the library strategic plan,

Libraries Without Walls, to bring broadband Internet into every branch, provide a 24-hour virtual reference desk, and set up a one-card system to give every BC resident access to books from any library in the province.

96.   In Ontario, the Literacy and Basic Skills Program is managed by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities as a support for literacy agencies that help people improve their literacy skills. Support is provided for program delivery at more than 300 sites throughout Ontario, through contracted school boards, colleges, and community agencies. More than 46,000 adults are receiving literacy training in programs for anglophone, francophone, the Deaf community, and Aboriginal populations. Both service delivery and service development are funded, as well as research and development initiatives. The program focuses on people who are unemployed, out of school, and in need of literacy skills to find and keep a job or for everyday needs.

Planning and Management

97.   Literacy community groups are often quite small with volunteer staff who can benefit from the expertise of more experienced groups on how to construct, maintain, and fund literacy programs. The Yukon Literacy Coalition (YLC) is a Yukon-wide organization that is community-governed and committed to supporting and encouraging literacy in all the languages of the Yukon. In 2004, the YLC developed the Community Capacity Building project and continues to offer it. This project is based on a very successful initiative by the Northwest Territories Literacy Council called *Tools for Community Building*. The project helps to build the capacity of communities to develop and maintain their own literacy projects through workshops that focus on project planning, proposal writing, skills, fundraising, and an introduction to literacy programming. Communities throughout Yukon are working with YLC on their own projects.

98.   In June 2005, the Yukon Literacy Coalition also organized the first annual Yukon Literacy Summit. Literacy community workers, supporters, and stakeholders from across the territory came together to share ideas, resources, and experiences. Activities included a literacy trade show, community consultations, a youth literacy workshop, and an all-day Aboriginal literacy workshop.

Pan-Canadian Nongovernmental Literacy Coalitions

99.   Cooperation, establishing a public profile, information, and literacy program expertise are essential to building community literacy capacity. As key components of pan-Canadian literacy capacity building, there are seven national literacy organizations operating in Canada:

- the National Adult Literacy Database, a comprehensive database of adult literacy programs, resources, services, and activities

- ABC Canada, a national charity and a partnership of business, labour, educators, and government that focuses on public awareness and research

- the Movement for Canadian Literacy, a non-profit organization representing literacy coalitions, organizations, and individuals in every province and territory operating as a national voice for literacy for every Canadian

- la Fédération canadienne d'alphabétisation en français, an organization representing the francophone groups and associations that provide literacy training in French

- the National Indigenous Literacy Association, a national organization established in 2004 to facilitate a strong network to address gaps and issues in strategy, service provision, and research and development for Aboriginal literacy, grounded in a traditional Aboriginal culture

- Laubach Literacy of Canada, which focuses on training volunteer literacy tutors and operating a national bookstore that provides literacy resources to tutors and learners

- Frontier College, which annually provides training to more than 4,000 community leaders, educators and parents on how to start and maintain high quality literacy programs as well as workshops, volunteer training, conferences, and volunteer placement in high-needs areas

Nongovernmental Literacy Coalitions in the Provinces and Territories

100.   Literacy coalitions have been established in every province and territory to serve as the voice of literacy in their region, to support literacy providers, and to develop resources, services, and practices. Their essential roles and activities are highlighted throughout this report. All provincial and territorial literacy coalitions are members of the national Movement for Canadian Literacy. A complete list of the coalitions with their Web site addresses can be found in the list of sources following Part VIII Conclusion.

101.   As an example of a provincial coalition, the Saskatchewan Literacy Network (SLN), made up of literacy service-providers, practitioners, and learners, assists in the implementation of provincial literacy initiatives. In 2005 and 2006, SLN in collaboration with its partners continued to promote family literacy, develop literacy benchmarks, provide professional development for literacy workers, and conduct research in practice.

102.   In 1994, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador passed legislation to establish the Literacy Development Council of Newfoundland and Labrador (LDC). The mandate of the LDC was to assess and respond to the literacy needs of the people of the province and to ensure that quality programming and services were provided. An external evaluation of the LDC recommended it be replaced with a provincial coalition with a strong advisory/advocacy mandate, as in other jurisdictions in Canada. The LDC ceased operations in December 2004 and its legislation was repealed. In 2006, a new grassroots provincial literacy coalition, Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador, was formed.

103.   The national and provincial/territorial organizations receive funding from multiple sources, including the provincial and territorial governments, fundraising, and membership fees.

Part V: Research

> Work on an international, national and jurisdictional basis in the fourth UNESCO theme, Research has illustrated the need for literacy improvements in Canadian children, young people, and adults. Although the majority have strong literacy skills, significant portions of the population need support to reach their potential. By analyzing entire systems of education or by assessing the effectiveness of specific programs, research studies reveal areas for improvement and the modifications necessary to better achieve the goals of the learners, the providers, and the funders. The research should also include all the partners involved in program delivery.
>
> Databases of resources and research serve to expand the usefulness of all the work done across the country by extending its availability — so that all can learn from research into best practices, innovations, and evaluation projects.
>
> The examples below highlight the research results from the past two years.

104.   Literacy research is conducted to obtain a better understanding of the needs and skills of the learners, to develop and improve resources, to facilitate the introduction and improvement of programs, and to track their impact on literacy and the effect of higher levels of literacy on individuals and communities.

Baseline Studies

105.   For the purposes of policy formulation, baseline studies provide fundamental understanding of the current realities. For example, the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey (ALL) conducted in 2003 by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Statistics Canada, showed that 42 per cent of Canadians aged between 16 and 65 did not possess the literacy skills needed to succeed in the knowledge-based economy of today and of the future. The survey tested more than 23,000 Canadians on their skills proficiency in four "scales" of literacy: prose, documents, numeracy, and problem solving. Skills were rated from Level 1 to Level 5, that is, from lowest to highest. In Canada, about 58 per cent of adults aged between 16 and 65 possessed literacy skills in the top three levels on the prose scale, indicating that they could meet most everyday reading requirements. About 15 per cent scored at Level 1, the lowest performance level, and 27 per cent at Level 2, indicating that both groups would have trouble with printed materials. The Government of Canada was the main financial contributor to this survey; the provinces and territories also contributed financially so that the populations in each region could be oversampled in order to provide usable performance levels for their jurisdictions. The first international survey had been administered in 1994, and this 2003 survey showed little overall change in literacy rates.

106.   The results of the survey showed that young people in the education system and educated older people have higher levels of performance; they also showed that francophones in New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, and Manitoba have lower average literacy scores in the prose scale than anglophones. Among special population groups, the study found that the literacy performance of the Aboriginal population was lower than that of the total Canadian population. This difference in performance was partly a reflection of differing levels of formal education and the use of a mother tongue other than English or French. Immigrants whose mother tongue is other than English or French tended to score lower than those immigrants who speak one or both official languages.

107.   In other findings, respondents who self-identified as having poor health scored lower on the document literacy scale compared with those who reported fair, good, or excellent health; the average proficiency scores of those who were employed were higher than those who were either unemployed or not in the workforce.

108.   The Government of Canada is also sponsoring participation in the International Survey of Reading Skills (ISRS) to provide information on the social characteristics and linguistic skills of those who tested at Levels 1 and 2, the lowest levels, in the Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey. The ISRS administered reading tests to identify particular strengths and weaknesses in respondents' reading skills.

109.   Of the longitudinal studies that involve young people, the *Youth in Transition Survey* looks at school-to-work transitions and the factors that influence the pathways young people choose among education, training, and work. YITS has tracked attitudes and behaviour regarding education, paying special attention to early school leavers. The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) measures the capacities of 15-year-old students in reading, mathematics, and science. Although the scores of Canadian students on this assessment in 2003 were very high, the differences in score levels related, in part, to socioeconomic status, gender, and language. The pan-Canadian assessment in writing of the School Achievement Indicators Program (SAIP), administered in 2004 by the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada on behalf of the provinces and territories, showed that girls at the ages of 13 and 16 consistently performed better than boys.

System-wide Research

110.   Looking at how a particular system of education is functioning can provide valuable best practices and guidelines for current practice and improvement. In 2005, Alberta Education released *Aboriginal Education: A Research Brief for Practitioners*, a literature synopsis that highlighted effective practices for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit (FNMI) learner programs. Aboriginal students face a number of cultural differences and challenges that make it difficult for many of them to be successful in school. Research conducted throughout the world

suggests that Aboriginal peoples — perhaps because of their reliance on an oral culture and an oral literacy — tend to value human systems of curriculum delivery and relational pedagogical structures. A guiding principle for educational delivery stresses that education and learning must increase awareness and appreciation of Aboriginal cultures in non-Aboriginal settings.

111.　The *Research Brief* is designed to help educators in Alberta by providing detailed suggestions for teachers on teaching and learning processes, on reflecting knowledge of FNMI world views, on creating appropriate learning environments, on building trusting relationships with students and parents, and on setting up professional development programs that reflect FNMI education goals.

112.　The Ontario Literacy and Basic Skills Unit of the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities supported a review of adult education that resulted in the 2005 report, *Ontario Learns — Strengthening Our Adult Education System*.   Through a series of consultations, meetings, and reviews, the recommendations that follow were brought forward for recognizing adult education as a key component of Ontario's education system and for linking different programs to better meet labour market challenges and social goals:

- Create an entity within government to coordinate the further development and implementation of the proposed adult education policy framework and definitions.

- Support and facilitate partnerships and coordination of programming among deliverers through information sharing and incentives.

- Work with agencies and institutions delivering adult education programming to devise clear pathways for learners to achieve their learning goals.

- Examine program funding models to link to government priorities and program goals and results, to maximize funding use, to provide consistency, and to measure return on investment.

- Implement appropriate accountability measures that include economic, social, and personal development measures.

- Conduct outreach to persons with special needs and provide culturally specific programming for varied communities — francophones, Aboriginal people, the Deaf, the hard-of-hearing, and the deaf-blind communities.

- Explore the potential of information and communications technology.

- Foster and encourage innovation and local creativity.

- Foster a culture of excellence in the delivery of adult education.

Program Research

113.　To guide planners and educators in making choices based on research, resources and program delivery models are assessed and revised in every jurisdiction.

114. For example, through a partnership with the National Literacy Program, the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education implemented an Adult Basic Education (ABE) Level 1 Pilot Project in nine sites throughout the province over a two-year period. The registered learners were aged from 20 to over 50 years, and 67 per cent of them were female. An external evaluation of the ABE project was conducted in late 2004.

115. Based on the recommendations of this evaluation, more stringent accountability guidelines have been put in place, including a higher student/instructor ratio, regular reporting periods, and standards for instructor qualifications and student assessment. Groups offering the ABE Level 1 training who have agreed to meet the new terms have signed contracts with the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education to deliver the program as specified. The Department is also undertaking research on the feasibility of offering ABE Level 1 through a combination of classroom instruction and Web-based Internet delivery.

116. The Nova Scotia Department of Education, through its Workplace Education Initiative, provides funding and support to assist business, industry, and labour on the establishment of customized essential skills programs. To ensure relevancy and responsiveness, organizational needs assessments are conducted and programs are then customized to meet the needs of both the participants and the workplace or industry sector. The flexibility of the model allows it to respond to the needs of small to large businesses, apprentices, displaced and unemployed workers, and specific industry sectors.

117. A comprehensive evaluation of the Nova Scotia Workplace Education Initiative was conducted in 2004, using focus groups, surveys, and a literature review. The results showed strong support for the initiative because it had a positive impact on not only the working lives of participants but also their family and personal lives. Their training brought about greater productivity, promotions at work, a greater interest in their children's education, and a greater sense of self-confidence. The research showed that the training provided a considerable return on investment.

118. The Quebec program, Families, Schools and Children Succeeding Together, is administered by the Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports. It is a noteworthy example of intra-governmental cooperation, as it is delivered in cooperation with five other ministries and an outside agency.

119. The program is designed for families with children aged between 2 and 12 years, with the goal of helping parents improve their skills so that they can help their children be ready to start school and improve their performance in school. The intervention program is aimed at testing a model of community mobilization to promote school success for elementary school students from disadvantaged areas. Following on this research, a process is to be designed for implementation and, with the publication of the results within the school system and with stakeholders, integration of the models into various programs would be supported. The

program was tested in 2004 and 2005. It is based on the action plan in the Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training and the National Strategy to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion.

120.   In the last couple of years, the Ministry of Education, Recreation and Sports in Quebec has had an extensive inventory of research underway to improve literacy training:

- Preparing a statistical profile of people enrolled in literacy services with the school boards' adult education services and the independent community action groups that provide literacy training

- Providing support for action research on literacy training recruitment, for research to evaluate programs aimed at developing parental competencies, and research to better understand ways to maintain adult learners' reading skills

- Conducting research projects on awareness-raising and enrolment activities implemented in Quebec, on the organization of training services, and on the issue of perseverance in literacy training

121.   The private sector has also undertaken some research on workplace literacy programs. The Conference Board of Canada has issued *Profiting from Literacy: Creating a Sustainable Workplace Literacy Program*, which is the final report of the Conference Board's two-year research project, *Securing Literacy's Potential*. The document outlines 12 success factors for workplace literacy programs, under the headings of preconditions to learning, program strategy, program operation, program marketing, and program evaluation. Ten case studies of small, medium, and large businesses from across Canada highlight their effective literacy programs. The Conference Board sees workplace literacy programs as key approaches to enhancing employees' abilities, offering them more options, and helping them support the global competitiveness of their employees.

Research in Practice

122.   Since the late 1990s, Canadian literacy educators have become increasingly involved in adult literacy research in practice, and have been engaging in projects that show how research and practice are essentially connected. Literacy programs need to be able to demonstrate their success in terms of the changes they bring about in participants' lives at home, at work, and in the broader community. In literacy, research-in-practice or action research is often particularly insightful as it extracts lessons from daily experience and reflection.

123.   A research project involving Research in Practice in Adult Literacy British Columbia (RiPAL-BC), Literacy BC, the Ministry of Advanced Education, practitioners, learners, and other partners is based in daily practice. The three-year project, begun in 2005, employs a research-in-practice approach to facilitate

- dialogues among stakeholders about definitions of literacy and desired program outcomes

- a review of evaluation tools and processes used in literacy and related fields

- development of an array of outcome-oriented evaluation processes and tools through pilot projects

- broad-based testing and revision of tools

- the production of an evaluation tool kit so that program developers can choose whatever best fits their needs

Information and Communications Technologies

124. Many literacy planners and practitioners are looking at the potential of information and communications technologies to expand access and provide new resources and materials. They need to be informed about the availability and impact of the new learning tools.

125. In October 2005, ABC Canada released a document that provides an inventory of e-learning tools in adult literacy, *Linking Adult Literacy and e-Learning*. With financial support from the National Literacy Program, this document reports on the use of these tools and their effectiveness, and contains a considerable focus on the return on investment models. The e-learning tools run the gamut from basic literacy and computer skills activities to programs involving tutors and mentors, interactive software, on-line or e-Portfolios, and Web logging.

Research Databases and Networks

126. Canada has a number of inclusive databases for literacy resources and research. The National Adult Literacy Database (NALD) is an information network that provides access to literacy resources, newsletters, experts, organization associations, Internet resources, and full-text documents and books in French and in English. It is a free service available to learners, practitioners, and others with an interest in literacy. It has a constantly updated calendar that advertises literacy events and activities across the country. In 2005, there were almost six million uses of the database.

127. Two significant on-line directories feature Canadian literacy research, including research in progress — the *Directory of Canadian Adult Literacy Research in English* and *Le Répertoire canadien des recherches en alphabétisation des adultes en français* (RÉCRAF). Some documents are found in both guides but most of the materials are unique to each directory. The English-language directory was developed by the Canadian Centre for Research on Literacy in the Faculty of Education at the University of Alberta. RÉCRAF is maintained by the Document Centre on Adult Education and the Status of Women (Centre de documentation sur l'éducation des adultes et la condition féminine) in Quebec. Both directories receive funding from the National Literacy Program.

128. Headquartered at the University of Western Ontario, the Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network is a non-profit organization that focuses on early childhood language and literacy development. Research takes place in 33

institutions across the country with more than 120 partner institutions from the public, private, and voluntary sectors.

129. The Canadian Council on Learning (CCL) is an independent, non-profit corporation, established in 2003, that promotes and supports research to improve all aspects of learning across the country and in all walks of life. Having entered into a five-year funding agreement with Human Resources and Social Development Canada in March 2004, CCL has a mission to provide high quality research and information to improve lifelong learning across Canada by

- informing Canadians about the progress of learning in Canada

- promoting a Canada-wide learning culture with their partners

- promoting and facilitating the exchange of knowledge and information to ensure that success stories are shared and repeated

CCL has set up one of five knowledge centres in five cities across Canada to address the key issues of Aboriginal learning, adult learning, early childhood learning, health and learning, and work and learning. Central to the work of each knowledge centre are the crosscutting themes — culture, e-learning, gender, literacy, and learning in French minority language settings.

130. CCL has published reports addressing adult literacy levels in Canada; the Adult Learning Knowledge Centre's first annual symposium in June 2006 included literacy on its agenda as well as issues of access, gender, and research alliances. The final session of the symposium was given over to the consideration of priorities for research and action in adult learning.

Part VI: Community Participation

As UNESCO states, the success of the Literacy for All program depends on the extent of the involvement of the local communities and their willingness to take ownership. In Canada, communities are deeply involved in literacy in substantial and sustained ways. These include broad responsibilities for literacy, for program delivery and assessment, and input into research and planning.

Whether the community is a geographic location, a workplace, or a group with common interests and needs, it has a role in the design, delivery, planning, and assessment of literacy programs. In each province and territory, a literacy council brings together the broad community for concerted action.

Governments also consult with community groups, employers, literacy volunteers, and learners when they want to assess a program, its delivery, its administration, and its impacts. In many jurisdictions, consideration of children's literacy entails consultations with parents, teachers, and others with a contribution to make. Aboriginal literacy always involves the community in order to respect and include the culture and traditions of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit. Literacy is a very inclusive activity, relying on collaborative capacities and contributions.

Literacy Coalitions

131.   Literacy coalitions have already been mentioned in this report, as they are critical to literacy and are active across the country. To provide an example of their structure, functioning, and goals, the Nunavut Literacy Council is described in some detail. The councils in the other provinces and territories are not identical to the Nunavut example, but have many similar features. More information on the literacy councils can be found on the National Adult Literacy Database Web site and through the Web site of the literacy coalition for each jurisdiction listed in "Sources" following Part VIII.

132.   All government programs in Nunavut, including education, are built around Inuit *Qaujimajatuqangit*, which encompasses all aspects of traditional Inuit culture including values, world view, language, social organization, knowledge, life skills, perceptions, and expectations. The Nunavut Literacy Council (NLC) is a non-profit organization with a volunteer board and members including adult educators, early childhood education providers, Government of Nunavut departments, non-profit organizations, schools, libraries, and individuals. The NLC promotes literacy and supports literacy development and capacity building initiatives in the four official languages of Nunavut in the following ways:

- producing and distributing a bilingual quarterly newsletter

- maintaining a bilingual (English and Inuktitut) Web site that includes on-line resources

- development of resources for family literacy and literacy instruction techniques, as well as culturally appropriate, bilingual resources

- training workshops on community and family literacy, tutor training, instructional techniques, curriculum support, plain language writing, program planning, proposal writing, and evaluation

- supporting communities in creating, managing, and delivering literacy programs and initiatives by providing workshops

- promoting literacy through events and Literacy days

133.   In 2005 and 2006, the Nunavut Literacy Council focused on the improvement of workplace and workforce literacy through consultation and collaboration with government, industry, business, labour, Inuit and Aboriginal organizations, the colleges, literacy stakeholders, and the Literacy Council in the Northwest Territories.

Community Involvement in Program Delivery

134.   In most jurisdictions, the delivery of literacy programs implicates a variety of players — the educational institutions, non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, and the volunteer sector. In Saskatchewan, nine public training institutions and four community-based organizations receive provincial funding through Saskatchewan Learning to coordinate and deliver regional adult literacy programs and services. Provincial funding supports the ongoing delivery of literacy programs and services that respond to regional needs and may also include literacy volunteer tutor-learner coordination, learning centre access, facilitator support, classroom instruction, and community outreach.

135.   The Department also funds two provincial organizations to provide literacy programming for adults. The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour WEST program provides workplace literacy education programs for workers in unionized workplaces, and the Services Fransaskois de formation aux adultes coordinates and responds to francophone literacy programming needs in communities with French-speaking populations.

136.   The Adult Learning and Literacy Branch of the Manitoba Department of Advanced Education and Training (now Advanced Education and Literacy) funds and coordinates the development and delivery of community-based adult and family literacy programs in cooperation with community groups, organizations, and institutions providing literacy programming in Northern, urban, rural, Aboriginal, francophone, and multicultural settings. In 2004–05, there were 34 separate community-based programs, of which 13 also provided family literacy. The Branch supports the programs through professional development training for

literacy practitioners, including a literary practitioner/tutor certificate program, and assistance in the development and acquisition of appropriate learning resources.

137. Community Advisory Groups, often known as Literacy Working Groups (LWG), manage these Manitoba literacy programs. This includes program promotion, community outreach, recruitment of volunteers, identification of learners, and hiring and paying the instructors. The LWGs have considerable autonomy so that the local group assumes responsibility and ownership of the literacy program, including understanding and meeting local needs.

138. Storysacks Canada is a literacy support project that was first introduced from Britain by the New Brunswick Literacy Coalition and then, through collaboration with the National Literacy Program and the National Adult Literacy Database, Storysacks was expanded into a national, bilingual program.   A Storysack is a big cloth bag that contains a good children's book and a related non-fiction book supported by props, scenery, characters, games, an audiotape, reading tips, and activities to bring the reading of the book to life. Storysacks cannot be bought in stores; they are made by the community through sewing, knitting, drawing, painting, and woodworking.

139. In Prince Edward Island, a unique community is involved in their development, with positive results. Through a partnership among the Literacy Initiatives Secretariat, the Provincial Correctional Centre and the Provincial Library Service, the inmates of the Correctional Centre produce the Storysacks, which are then given to the Provincial Library Service. The voluntary participation of the inmates in the Storysacks projects has resulted in a number of requests by the inmates for literacy assistance and for courses to prepare to take the secondary school equivalency test. Storysacks are used in homes, libraries, schools, daycares, family resource centres, literacy programs, hospitals, prisons, churches or volunteer organizations — anywhere children and adults are together across Canada.

140. As an important support to the involvement of communities in the delivery of literacy programming, Frontier College conducted 25 *Connecting Communities* conferences in 2005 for community groups interested in starting literacy programs. The conferences are held across the country and reflect the particular literacy needs and issues of the locality. For example, sessions are held on prior learning assessment, literacy and health, learning disabilities, supporting refugees, at-risk young people and art, Aboriginal culture programming, and working with immigrants and with young children.

Consulting the Community

141. The community can also be one of the best sources of analysis, of ideas, and of expertise — a fact that a number of jurisdictions have recognized in bringing the community into their deliberations. For example, Alberta Education launched a

consultation on literacy and numeracy for students in kindergarten to grade 3. Finding that a significant number of students were not experiencing success, despite the quality of the education system, the Department consulted parents and other stakeholders, as well as posting the following questions on their Web site for individual and group response:

- In your view and experience, how do young children learn?

- What do you think are the most effective ways to ensure children are developing literacy and numeracy skills in their early years at school?

- Describe what method you would use in order to know that what you are doing with a child is working. What would you be looking for? Once a child's learning has been assessed in some way, what can be done to help the child excel?

- What more do you think the school, school jurisdiction, and the government could do to assist all children's learning? How could you help the school?

- Of all the things that have been considered, what do you feel is the most important? What are the key ideas?

The results of these consultations are the basis for a 2006 report and recommendations to determine how best to support Alberta's children in literacy and numeracy development in primary school.

142.   The objective of the New Brunswick Community Academic Services Program (CASP) is to improve literacy levels in the province by bringing programs to learners in their own communities. The Department of Training and Employment Development accomplishes this in cooperation with Literacy New Brunswick Inc. and the volunteer and private sector in communities around the province. The 2005 results showed 183 programs in 140 communities, offering programs in French and English free of charge to adult learners.

143.   A significant concern with CASP has been the increasing administrative burden on the local committees. To address this, regional committees are being piloted in two areas of New Brunswick. The regional structure is proposed to take some of the pressure off the local communities while still responding to their needs, and even facilitating greater and more meaningful local input and decision-making, resource sharing, and economy of scale. The communities themselves asked for the changes and are now testing their practicality.

144.   In Prince Edward Island, the Task Force on Student Achievement released its report, Excellence in Education: A Challenge for Prince Edward Island: Final Report of the Task Force on Student Achievement. Based on a review of current research and interviews with over 600 individuals and groups, the Task Force made 20 recommendations in areas such as curriculum, student assessment, and early interventions. In early 2006, the government responded to this extensive community input by announcing that the Department of Education and school

board officials would develop a multi-year implementation plan, beginning with the following literacy-related tasks:

- Identify the resources required to ensure that children have the supports they need to read at a grade 3 level by the end of grade 3.

- Recommend a strategy to enrich school library resources and to increase library use, especially at the elementary level.

- Identify opportunities for students to achieve literacy and numeracy proficiencies required by trade and technical programs.

- Identify differentiated learning strategies for boys in grade 7 to grade 9 to increase their interest in learning.

- Engage the PEI Home and School Federation to work with school councils and la Fédération des parents to recommend a provincial strategy to further engage parents in their children's learning.

145. The Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes in Quebec organized a meeting on Perspectives on the Education and Training of Adults, with a special focus on the obstacles to participation. The session, held in October 2005, brought together over 300 participants from literacy, worker training, postsecondary education, information and communication technologies, media, culture, and informal education. The final declaration recommended the development of a province-wide strategy to reinforce the mutual respect and recognition of the practitioners and the learners in adult education and training. This would encompass the right of all to literacy and basic education, strategies to support the adult learners before, during, and after their training, an integrated system of recognition for the acquired knowledge and abilities, and the valuing of all types of training.

The Private Sector and the Communities

146. The private sector is taking on a stronger role in literacy and often links its efforts with those of the community in which it operates. An example of this comes from Canada's North. At the beginning of the 21st century, the Northwest Territories (NWT) is in a time of thriving change, driven by an economic boom and Aboriginal self-government agreements. Four Aboriginal land claims and one self-government agreement have been ratified and many more are in negotiation. The increasing influence of industry and Aboriginal self-government is changing the literacy landscape as more privately funded Adult Literacy and Basic Education (ALBE) programs emerge. Diamond mines, oil and gas, and the industries that support the mines and oil companies are very active in NWT. The two operational diamond mines have successful industry-funded ALBE programs at their worksites. Very recently, an Aboriginal organization and one of the mines teamed up to offer an ALBE program for the housekeeping staff at the mine, using the curriculum from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment.

147.   Because most low literacy adults in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut are in the work force, it is crucial to develop a consolidated framework for the delivery of workplace literacy programs. The two territories are collaborating to develop a comprehensive workplace literacy consortium, which includes governments, colleges, industries, Aboriginal governments, and the multiple community and other stakeholders in the literacy councils.

International Adult Learners' Week

148.   International Adult Learners' Week (IALW) was celebrated for the third time in Canada from September 8 to 14, 2005, with the date of the launch coinciding with International Literacy Day. The focus of the Week was to increase recognition of the importance and benefits of learning throughout life. The Week highlighted the United Nations Literacy Decade and the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development through its theme, Building Sustainable Communities. Federal, provincial, and municipal governments, as well as nongovernmental organizations, collaborated with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO to promote IALW. The National Literacy Program supplied major funding.

149.   Building on the success of the two previous celebrations, IALW 2005 was focused on strengthening and expanding partnerships among governments, agencies, nongovernmental and professional organizations, and community groups across the country that are engaged in and committed to adult learning. The key objectives for the Week reflected many of the principles and priorities outlined in the International Plan of Action for the United Nations Literacy Decade:

- Increase the visibility of adult learning and promote learning throughout life, both among the public and in various learning environments.

- Give a voice to learners, promote learning, and stress its potential for transformation and development in every sphere of personal, professional, political, economic, social, and cultural life.

- Reach out to adults, potential learners, and marginalized groups to promote learning throughout life.

- Increase the number of adults involved in training activities and encourage adults to express their learning needs.

- Develop cooperation among partners in all learning environments at both governmental and nongovernmental levels.

- Demonstrate the linkages between adult learning and building sustainable communities that value diversity and human rights.

- Generate awareness and recognition of the importance of the experience, skills, knowledge, and competencies acquired outside of the formal classroom.

150.   Forty partners were actively involved with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO for IALW 2005. Representatives of the departments and ministries responsible for education in every province and territory were consulted through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, as were representatives of every national nongovernmental adult literacy organization. Other partners were from workplace training, continuing education, the study of adult education and, in conjunction with the theme, education for sustainable development and education for human rights.

151.   The IALW 2005 strategy had four key components: a widely distributed Information Kit; a pan-Canadian communications plan; an IALW Web page on the Canadian Commission for UNESCO site; and local events by the partner organizations. The materials were in both official languages.   The information sheets in the Kit were built around the four pillars of learning from the Delors Report on Learning for the 21st Century — learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together.   Using input from the partners, cameo stories were integrated for each topic demonstrating hands-on examples of adult learning and learners' struggles and accomplishments. The Information Kits also had room for materials from the partners. Twenty-five thousand copies of the Kit were distributed. Over 100 local events in celebration of IALW and Literacy Day were held across the country, including literacy lunches, workshops, award presentations, and open houses.

152.   In Quebec, Adult Learners' Week, held in April in 2005, is coordinated by the Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes (ICÉA). More than 150 organizations were involved in organizing more than 300 activities, involving formal education, workplace training and literacy, and community action groups. A symposium of adults involved in learning was the location for the founding of the Quebec Movement of Adult Learners. Thousands of kits, posters, postcards, stickers, and bookmarks were distributed to support and promote the week of activities. Adult Learners' Week is celebrated annually in Quebec.

Part VII: Monitoring and Evaluation

Effective monitoring systems are essential to literacy progress so that reliable and meaningful information is available on the literacy levels, the uses and impact of literacy, and the performance of literacy systems and programs. International and pan-Canadian studies provide high-level indications of the current situation, progress, and challenges. Literacy providers and funders also use a variety of their own measures of effectiveness and impact that focus at regional or local levels on school-based, family, and adult literacy programs.

All of those involved in literacy want to be sure that their programs, resources, and services are making a difference in the literacy levels and the lives of the learners. Assessments in the schools look at reading capacity in young children and track progress towards provincial standards. Family literacy programs collect data, not only on the numbers reached but also on the impact of specific programs on both children and parents. Community programs are monitored quantitatively, through benchmarks, and by assessments of programs to guide the design services for the next decade.

The examples below describe some of the latest innovations in monitoring practices developed and implemented between 2004 and 2006.

School Literacy

153. The Elementary Literacy Assessment in Nova Scotia is part of the province's Learning for Life plan to help student succeed. Its purpose is to identify students who are struggling with reading and writing so they can be given more support, as well as provide additional information that students, parents, teachers, principals, communities, school boards, and the Department of Education can use to make good decisions about improving the school system.

154. All grade 6 students in Nova Scotia public school classes, with the exception of those already diagnosed with reading difficulties, write the assessments over four days. The students read a variety of materials — including a short story, information texts, poems, and visual media texts such as an advertisement — and answer written questions; they also write a letter and a story. In March 2006, the results were sent to the schools and to the parents. The assessments are meant to pinpoint and respond to problems in reading, not to determine if the child is promoted to the next grade.

155. In Manitoba, two classroom-based assessment policies have been developed to collect literacy information from students in grade 3 (about 8–9 years old) and grade 8 (about 13–14 years old). The information collected is based on formative assessment in authentic literacy-rich contexts, focusing on critical competencies.

The grade 3 Reading Comprehension Assessment targets three competencies — reflection, oral reading skills and strategies and reading comprehension. The grade 8 competencies are reading comprehension and expository writing. These assessments reveal trends at both the local and provincial levels, highlighting strengths and areas of necessary improvement.

156. British Columbia school districts have a focus on literacy; they also work to improve Aboriginal student achievement and narrow the gap in performance between boys and girls. Each year the school districts submit achievement contracts to the Ministry of Education that demonstrate how their programs and practices are improving student performance. The achievement contracts are supported by school plans, Aboriginal enhancement agreements, and district reviews, which involve external teams of educators, ministry staff, and parents who visit school districts to review school and district strategies for improving achievement. In the reports covering the school year from September 2004 to June 2005, many school district contracts reported improvements in student achievement:

    - The Peace River South District works to improve all students' literacy skills and wants 90 per cent of all primary students to be meeting expectations in reading by 2009. Promising practices include a guided reading program and regional and district-wide literacy networks. The district is tracking the progress of cohort groups. In 2000–01, 59 per cent of students in the grade 1 cohort were reading at or above grade level. By grade 5 in 2004–05, 79 per cent of those students were reading at or above grade level.

    - The North Okanagan-Shuswap District is focusing on improving the achievement of its Aboriginal students. Strategies for success include an Aboriginal Trade Fair, a mentoring program, and career counselling with First Nations teachers and support workers. The district reports 81.4 per cent of its Aboriginal grade 12 students made the transition to postsecondary education, an upgrading program, or the work force. The district exceeded its target transition rate by 6.4 per cent.

    - The Alberni School District is helping boys in grades 3 to 5 with their reading skills. According to district data, the percentage of boys reading at grade level has increased to 81 per cent in 2004–05 from 72 per cent in 2002–03. The district has launched intervention programs to provide boys with even more support.

Family Literacy

157. In 2000, the Alberta government launched the Parent-Child Literacy Strategy to focus on intergenerational educational approaches that integrate adult literacy instruction and early oral language development for children from birth to age six for economically and socially disadvantaged families. In addition to improving the language, literacy, and social interaction skills of children, the basic literacy skills of parents, and the level of parental involvement in their children's

education, the program worked to enhance community-based partnerships that support literary skills.

158. A cross-ministry team led by Alberta Learning (now Alberta Education and Alberta Advanced Education and Technology) with representatives from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, Children's Services, Health and Wellness, Human Resources and Employment, Solicitor General, and the federal government department of Health Canada ensured that the Strategy was coordinated with other early childhood development and adult learning initiatives in Alberta. Each year, the program is evaluated to track participation, training, tools, promotion and funding. The progress report for 2003–04 showed that over 14,000 parents and children participated in the parent-child literacy programs in 124 communities around Alberta. Specific evaluation tools have also been developed for the two most popular programs, Books for Babies and Rhymes That Bind/Parent-Child Mother Goose, to ensure linkage with the goals and outcomes of the Parent-Child Literacy Strategy.

Adult Literacy

159. The Manitoba Department of Advanced Education and Training (now Advanced Learning and Literacy) collects detailed information on adult and family literacy programs, data that are essential to the development, promotion, and provision of adult literacy services. The 2004–2005 form included questions on:

- new and returning student numbers
- learner goals, including numbers who made progress, minimal progress or achieved their goals
- learner reasons for leaving programs before reaching goals
- learner levels at program entry, progress, and achievement of their Literacy Stage
- numbers who achieved employment or advanced in their jobs as a result of attending the adult or family literacy programs
- numbers accepted into further training/education
- number who applied for further training or employment but were not successful
- operating periods for the programs and hours per week of instruction
- instructional and other staff positions
- numbers of volunteers and volunteer hours
- learner profiles that include gender, age, Aboriginal status, English and French as a second language status, employment, and social conditions such as single parent, learning disability, mental disorder, or receiving income assistance

160. Saskatchewan Learning, in partnership with the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, is undertaking a Literacy Benchmarks Project as part of the Provincial Literacy

Strategy. The benchmarks are to identify the skills that adult learners need to live meaningfully as parents, family members, workers, community members, and citizens. The work has been taking place since October 2004, with implementation targeted for mid 2006.

161.   Monitoring and evaluation can also be achieved through community consultation, such as was undertaken in Nova Scotia to look at their community-based literacy programs after ten years of operation. The Community Learning Initiative has provided funding, resources, and supports to thirty community based networks and other learning organizations for delivery of literacy programs. The Department of Education considered the tenth anniversary of this program in 2004 to be an opportune time for the government and the literacy groups to work together to lay the foundation for a program delivery system that is effective, efficient, inclusive, and sustainable for the decade ahead.

162.   The three main themes of the Nova Scotia consultation were board governance, learner progress, and policies and guidelines, with funding as an ongoing issue. The challenges of community board composition, recruitment, development, and expertise sharing were raised. In looking at learners, the participants discussed the changing profile of the learners, with areas of concern such as lower levels of literacy and numeracy, young ages and hence less maturity, higher frequency of learning disabilities, mental health issues, behavioural issues, lack of motivation, and increased family responsibilities. New measures of outcomes are needed beyond the traditional quantitative measures. The Community Literacy Initiative has successfully served learners for ten years, leading to improvements in academic skills, self-confidence, employability, and personal growth. The consultations outlined components of the program that need to be addressed for continued success.

163.   Finally, the manner in which the federal government manages programs has changed over the years. The emergence of an interdependent, globalized, knowledge-based society is creating new challenges for public, private, and non-profit players involved in literacy. In this context, and for the time period that is covered in this document, the federal government further increased its emphasis on public accountability by requesting that organizations that distribute public funds continually review and assess their performance to ensure the relevance, probity, and effectiveness. The Government of Canada increased its focus on sound management practices, effective decision making, and demonstrating results from public expenditures.

Part VIII: Conclusion

164. In declaring the Literacy Decade from 2003 to 2012, the United Nations has brought attention to the critical nature of the action required to address one of the greatest educational challenges of today and for the future. Although Canada has a highly educated population, research has shown that one in four Canadians has trouble with the literacy skills required for everyday transactions.

165. As part of the United Nations Literacy Decade, UNESCO, the lead agency, has asked each member country to prepare a Progress Report that details the developments, achievements, and challenges in literacy for each two-year period of the Decade. This Progress Report covers the period from February 2004 through March 2006. The themes for this Report are policy, programs, capacity building, research, community participation, and monitoring and evaluation.

166. Literacy for All is a predominant educational and political priority in Canada. The ministers responsible for education in all 13 provincial and territorial jurisdictions have declared literacy to be one of their top priorities. The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of literacy in supporting a skilled, educated, and adaptable workforce so that Canadians can actively participate in the workforce and their communities, earn a better living, and build a strong future for their children. Nongovernmental national, regional, and local literacy organizations have consistently been the voice of literacy in Canada, in addition to providing much of the programming and resources outside of the formal education system.

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

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

169. Between 2004 and 2006, progress has been made in each of the theme areas outlined by UNESCO as demonstrated by the multiple examples cited in this report. The focus has been on innovation and improvement, using research, experience, and best practices to guide revisions, restructuring, funding, and extensions of proven models.

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

Alberta Education
http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/

British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education
http://www.gov.bc.ca/aved/

British Columbia Ministry of Education
http://www.gov.bc.ca/bced/

Manitoba Department of Advanced Education and Literacy
http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/

Manitoba Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth
http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/

New Brunswick Department of Education
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New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour
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http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/

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http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/

Saskatchewan Advanced Education, Employment and Labour
http://www.aee.gov.sk.ca

Saskatchewan Learning
http://www.sasked.gov.sk.ca/ http://www.learning.gov.sk.ca/

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

Pan-Canadian and international links

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
www.cmec.ca

Canadian Commission for UNESCO
www.unesco.ca

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www.unesco.ca/en/activity/education/AdultLearners.aspx

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ABC Canada
www.abc-canada.org

Movement for Canadian Literacy
www.literacy.ca

La Fédération canadienne d'alphabétisation en français

www.fcaf.net

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www.nila.ca

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www.laubach.ca

Frontier College
www.frontiercollege.ca

Provincial and Territorial Literacy Coalitions

Literacy Alberta
www.literacy-alberta.ca

Literacy BC
www.literacy.bc.ca

Literacy Partners of Manitoba
www.mb.literacy.ca

Literacy Coalition of New Brunswick
www.nb.literacy.ca

Literacy Newfoundland and Labrador
http://www.literacynl.com/

Northwest Territories Literacy Council
www.nwt.literacy.ca

Literacy Nova Scotia
www.ns.literacy.ca

Nunavut Literacy Council
www.nunavutliteracy.ca

Ontario Literacy Coalition
www.on.literacy.ca

PEI Literacy Alliance (Prince Edward Island)
www.pei.literacy.ca

Quebec English Literacy Alliance
www.qela.qc.ca

Saskatchewan Literacy Network
www.sk.literacy.ca

Yukon Literacy Coalition
http://www.yukonliteracy.ca/

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Appendix

Education in Canada

Canada is the second largest country in the world — almost 10 million square kilometres (3.8 million square miles) — with a population density of 3.3 people per square kilometre, one of the lowest in the world, and a per capita GDP in 2003 of C$38,495. A very large portion of the population of 32.1 million lives in four major urban centres, and within 300 kilometres of the southern border with the United States. One of the major challenges to the provision of quality educational opportunities for all Canadians is meeting the needs of urban students and those in small remote communities as well as those in Aboriginal communities.

Responsibility for Education

Responsibility: In Canada, there is no federal department of education and no integrated national system of education. Within the federal system of shared powers, Canada's Constitution Act of 1867 provides that "[I]n and for each province, the legislature may exclusively make Laws in relation to Education." In the 13 jurisdictions — 10 provinces and 3 territories, departments or ministries of education are responsible for the organization, delivery, and assessment of education at the elementary and secondary levels within their boundaries. In some jurisdictions, separate departments or ministries are responsible for elementary-secondary education and for postsecondary education and skills training. The institutions in the postsecondary system have varying degrees of autonomy from direct provincial government control.

Regional Differences: While there are a great many similarities in the provincial and territorial education systems across Canada, there are important differences that reflect the geography, history, culture, and corresponding specialized needs of the populations served. The comprehensive, diversified, and widely accessible nature of the education systems in Canada reflect the societal belief in the importance of education.

Elementary and Secondary Education

Government Role: Public education is provided free to all Canadians who meet various age and residence requirements. Each province and territory has one or two departments/ministries of education, headed by a minister who is an elected member of the legislature and appointed to the position by the government leader of the jurisdiction. Deputy ministers, who belong to the civil service, are responsible for the operation of the departments. The ministries and departments provide educational, administrative, and financial management and school support functions, and they define both the educational services to be provided and the policy and legislative framework. Their responsibilities include curriculum development, assessment, teachers' working conditions, funding formulas, equity, and technological innovation.

Local Governance: Local governance of education is usually entrusted to school boards, school districts, school divisions, or district education councils. Their members are elected by public ballot. The power delegated to the local authorities is at the discretion of the provincial and territorial governments and generally consists of the operation and administration (including financial) of the group of schools within their board or division, curriculum implementation, responsibility for personnel, enrolment of students, and initiation of proposals for new construction or other major capital expenditures. There are approximately 15,500 schools in Canada — 10,100 elementary, 3,400 secondary, and 2,000 mixed elementary and secondary — with an overall average of 351 students per school. In 2002–03, provinces and territories reported that there were five million students attending public elementary and secondary schools. Because Canada is a bilingual (French-English) country, each province and territory (except Quebec) has established French-language school boards to manage the network of French-language schools within their jurisdiction that serve the French-speaking minority populations. In Quebec, the same structure applies to education in English-first-language schools.

Funding: Public funding for education comes either directly from the provincial or territorial government or through a mix of provincial transfers and local taxes collected either by the local government or by the boards with taxing powers. Provincial and territorial regulations, revised yearly, provide the grant structure that sets the level of funding for each school board in their jurisdiction, based on factors such as the number of students, special needs, and location. In 2002–03, almost $40 billion was spent on public elementary and secondary education in Canada, breaking down to an expenditure of about $7,950 per student. Expenditures on public elementary and secondary schools were 13.4 per cent of the total combined expenditures by provincial, territorial, and local governments in 2002–03, representing 3.3 per cent of GDP.

Teachers: In 2000–01, Canada's elementary and secondary school systems employed close to 310,000 educators, most of whom had four or five years of postsecondary study. This total for educators is primarily teachers, but includes principals, vice-principals, consultants, and counsellors. They are licensed by the provincial and territorial departments or ministries of education. Most secondary school teachers have a subject speciality in the courses they teach. Some school boards and districts are encountering shortages of secondary teachers specialized in such areas as technology and mathematics.

Pre-elementary Education: Most provinces and territories provide kindergartens, operated by the local education authorities and offering one year of pre-first-grade, non-compulsory education for five-year-olds. In one province, kindergarten is compulsory; in others, preschool classes are available from age four or even earlier. At a pan-Canadian level, 95 per cent of five-year-olds attend pre-elementary or elementary school, and over 40 per cent of four-year-olds are enrolled in junior kindergarten, with large variations among the jurisdictions. The intensity of the programs also varies, with full-day and half-day programs, depending on the school board.

Elementary Education: The ages for compulsory schooling vary from one jurisdiction to another, but most require attendance in school from age 6 to age 16. In some cases,

compulsory schooling starts at 5, and in others it extends to age 18 or graduation from secondary school. In most jurisdictions, elementary schools cover six to eight years of schooling, which can be followed by a middle school or junior high before moving on to secondary school (see Figure 1). The elementary school curriculum emphasizes the basic subjects of language, mathematics, social studies, science, and introductory arts, while some jurisdictions include second-language learning. In many provinces and territories, increased attention is being paid to literacy, especially in the case of boys whose test results have shown that their performance is falling behind that of girls in language. Almost 98 per cent of elementary students go on to the secondary level.

Secondary Education: Secondary school covers the final four to six years of compulsory education. In the first years, students take mostly compulsory courses, with some options. The proportion of options increases in the later years so that students may take specialized courses to prepare for the job market or to meet the differing entrance requirements of postsecondary institutions. Secondary school diplomas are awarded to students who complete the requisite number of compulsory and optional courses. In most cases, vocational and academic programs are offered within the same secondary schools, with some shorter non-diploma programs for students interested in specific trades. Enrolment at age 16, the final year of compulsory schooling in many jurisdictions, was above 90 per cent in the 1999–2000 school year. The secondary school completion rate in 2003 was 75.6 per cent, with 81 per cent of girls and 70 per cent of boys graduating. (Because of a change in the structure of senior secondary school in Ontario, a double group of students graduated in 2003, and these graduates are not reflected in the above numbers. Graduates from Ontario generally represent about 37 per cent of all graduates in Canada.) The overall graduation rate has remained relatively stable during the past five years.

Private/Independent Schools: Private or independent schools provide an alternative to publicly funded schools in many provinces and territories; some of these schools meet the general standards prescribed by the ministry or department of education. They usually charge tuition fees and have a great variety of options based on interest, religion, language, or academic status. While the public system is coeducational, several of the private schools offer education for boys or girls only. In some cases, these schools receive partial funding from the province or territory.

Figure 1: Organization and Structure of Elementary and Secondary Schools

Levels within elementary-secondary schools, by jurisdiction

Jurisdiction				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Newfoundland and Labrador			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Prince Edward Island			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Nova Scotia			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
New Brunswick – English			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
New Brunswick – French			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Quebec – General		P	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		
Quebec – Vocational													10	11	12	13
Ontario		P	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Manitoba		P	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Saskatchewan	P	P	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Alberta	P	P	P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
British Columbia			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Yukon			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Northwest Territories			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
Nunavut			P	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	

Legend:
- P — Pre-elementary, not universally available
- P — Pre-elementary, universally available
- Elementary/Primary
- Junior high/Middle
- Senior high
- Secondary

Postsecondary Education

Range of Institutions: Postsecondary education is available in both government-supported and private institutions, which offer degrees, diplomas, certificates, and attestations depending on the nature of the institution and the length of the program. Universities and university colleges focus on degree programs but also offer diplomas and certificates, often in professional designations. The non-degree-granting institutions, such as colleges, community colleges, and technical and vocational institutions, offer diplomas, certificates, and, in some cases, two years of academic credit that can be transferred to the university level. Les collèges d'enseignement général et professionnel (cégeps) in Quebec offer a choice of two-year academic programs that are prerequisite for university study or three-year vocational and professional programs that prepare students for the labour market. All "recognized" postsecondary institutions in Canada have been given the authority to grant academic credentials by their provincial or territorial government through their charters or legislation that ensure mechanisms for assessing the

quality of the institution and its programs. Distance education, which provides extensive on-line, media, and print-based programs, is available from traditional institutions, universities dedicated to distance learning, and college networks.

Governance: Universities are largely autonomous; they set their own admissions standards and degree requirements and have considerable flexibility in the management of their financial affairs and program offerings. Government intervention is generally limited to funding, fee structures, and the introduction of new programs.

In colleges, however, government involvement can extend to admissions policies, program approval, curricula, institutional planning, and working conditions. Most colleges have boards of governors appointed by the provincial or territorial government, with representation from the public, students, and instructors. Program planning incorporates input from business, industry, and labour representatives on college advisory committees.

Funding: Revenue for Canada's universities and colleges in 2004–05 was $27.7 billion. Federal, provincial, and municipal government funding, including funding for research, accounted for 55.6 per cent of the revenue, although this ranged from 43.6 per cent in Nova Scotia to 70.5 per cent in Quebec. Student fees accounted for over 20 per cent of the total, with bequests, donations, nongovernmental grants, and sales of products and services bringing in another 24.2 per cent. University and college expenditures in 2004–05 were more than $27.9 billion. Canada has 157 public universities and degree-granting institutions and over 175 recognized public colleges and institutions. Tuition costs at universities averaged $4,172 in 2004–05, with international student fees for an undergraduate program averaging about $12,000 annually. At colleges (outside Quebec), the average tuition was $2,133 (Quebec residents do not pay college tuition). Education is also funded through the money that governments transfer to individual students through loans, grants, and education tax credits. In 2003, federal and provincial government spending on all forms of student assistance was about $4.4 billion.

Attendance and Graduation: In 2004–05, there were 785,000 full-time university students (an increase of nearly 130,000 in the previous three years), as well as 270,000 part-time students. In 2004, Canadian universities awarded an estimated 135,000 bachelor's degrees, 26,000 master's degrees, and 4,000 doctoral degrees. In 2003, Canadian colleges had over 736,000 full- and part-time students enrolled. Participation in postsecondary education has grown significantly in the past few years, whether measured by numbers of enrolments or by the proportion of the population in any given age group who are attending college or university. While women continue to make up the majority of students on both university and college campuses, they are still in the minority in the skilled trades.

University Activities: Degree-granting institutions in Canada focus on teaching and research. In 2004–05, Canadian universities performed $9.3 billion worth of research and development, 35 per cent of the national total. Teaching is the key function, whether at the small liberal arts colleges that grant only undergraduate degrees or at the large,

comprehensive institutions. Registration varies from about 2,000 students at some institutions to a full-time enrolment of almost 60,000 at the University of Toronto, Canada's largest university. There are more than 10,000 undergraduate and graduate degree programs offered in Canadian universities, as well as professional degree programs and certificates. Most institutions provide instruction in either English or French; others offer instruction in both official languages. In 2003–04, Canadian universities employed 37,000 full-time faculty members.

University Degrees: University degrees are offered at three consecutive levels. Students enter at the bachelor's level after having successfully completed secondary school or the two-year cégep program in Quebec. Most universities also have special entrance requirements and paths for mature students. Bachelor's degrees normally require three or four years of full-time study, depending on the province and whether the program is general or specialized. An honours bachelor's degree involves an additional year of study. A master's degree typically requires two years of study after the bachelor's or honours degree. For a doctoral degree, three to five years of additional study and research plus a dissertation are the normal requirements. In regulated professions, such as medicine, law, education, and social work, an internship is generally required in order to obtain a licence to practise. University colleges provide three- and four-year bachelor's degrees.

College Activities: At the college level, the focus is on teaching, but applied research is taking on greater importance. Public colleges, specialized institutes, community colleges, institutes of technology, and cégeps offer a range of vocation-oriented programs in a wide variety of professional and technical fields, which may include business, health, applied arts, technology, and social services. These programs range from six months to three years in duration, with some institutes offering postgraduate diplomas as well. Some of the institutions are specialized and provide training in a single field such as fisheries, arts, paramedical technology, and agriculture. Colleges also provide the majority of the literacy and academic upgrading programs, pre-employment and pre-apprenticeship programs, and the in-class portions of registered apprenticeship programs. As well, a wide variety of workshops, short programs, and upgrades for skilled workers and professionals are made available.

College Recognition and Cooperation: Diplomas are generally awarded for successful completion of two- and three-year college programs, while certificate programs usually take up to one year. In Quebec, attestations d'études collégiales (AEC) are awarded as the equivalent of certificates. University degrees and applied degrees are offered in some colleges and institutes, and others provide university transfer programs. Colleges work very closely with business, industry, labour, and the public service sectors to provide professional development services and specialized programs and, on a wider basis, with their communities to design programs reflecting local needs. Most colleges in Canada also recognize Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) in at least some of their programs. Some universities also recognize it, and a growing number of provinces offer PLAR to adults at the secondary school level. PLAR is a process that helps adults

demonstrate and gain recognition for learning they have acquired outside of formal education settings.

Adult Education

Participation: One out of every three adult workers, 35 per cent, participated in some type of formal, job-related training in 2002, accessing opportunities to continue learning and to upgrade their skills. The participants received an average of 150 hours of training. Twenty-five per cent of adult workers reported taking employer-supported training programs, support that might include payment for training, flexible hours, or transportation to training. Participants are more likely to be in management and professional occupations than in blue collar or clerical occupations. Utilities, educational services, and public administration are the industries with the highest rates of participation. Those with higher levels of literacy and education are also more likely to participate in adult education. Self-directed learning, in which workers learn on their own through observation, study, and learning from other workers, was almost as common as formal training. When asked by researchers, 33 per cent of working adults stated that they had engaged in some sort of self-directed, informal learning related to their jobs during the preceding four-week period.

Providers: Colleges are the primary vehicle for adult education and training for the labour force; universities supply a smaller portion. Community-based groups, largely funded by the provincial, territorial, or federal governments, address special needs such as literacy and serve groups such as the rural poor, the Aboriginal communities, immigrants, displaced workers, and those with low levels of literacy or education. Apprenticeship is an industry-based learning system that combines on-the-job experience with technical training and leads to certification in a skilled trade. Provincial and territorial governments are responsible for apprenticeship training, and much of the classroom learning is done in the college system. Apprenticeship in Canada is largely an adult program. Registration in apprenticeship training programs reached almost 250,000 in 2003, an increase of 39.8 percent from 1998 and 45.9 per cent from 1993. Gains occurred in every major trade group, especially the building construction trades.

Activities of the Government of Canada

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

Aboriginal Education: The federal government shares responsibility with First Nations for the provision of education to children ordinarily resident on reserve and attending provincial, federal, or band-operated schools. In 2004–05, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada supported the education of 120,000 First Nations K–12 students living on reserve across Canada. Band-operated schools located on reserve educate approximately 60 per cent of these students.

The three northern territories, Yukon, Nunavut, and the Northwest Territories, provide education services for their Registered Indian and/or Inuit populations. First Nations children living off reserve are educated in the public elementary and secondary schools in their cities, towns, and communities, with the provinces and territories providing the majority of educational services for Aboriginal students.

Funding is also provided for postsecondary assistance and programs for Registered Indian students residing on or off reserve. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada supports approximately 23,000 students annually for tuition, books, living allowances, etc., for First Nations and Inuit postsecondary education. The Department also provides support for the development and delivery of college- and university-level courses designed to enhance the postsecondary educational achievement of First Nations and Inuit students.

Postsecondary Education: In addition to providing revenue for universities and colleges through transfer payments, the federal government offers direct student support. Every year, the Canada Student Loans Program and related provincial and territorial programs provide loans and interest forgiveness to over 350,000 postsecondary students. The Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation awards $285 million in bursaries and scholarships each year to about 100,000 students throughout Canada. For parents, the Canada Education Savings Grant program supplements their savings for postsecondary education. These programs are designed to make postsecondary education more widely accessible and to reduce student debt.

Language Education: Reflecting its history and culture, Canada adopted the Official Languages Act (first passed in 1969 and revised in 1988), which established both French and English as the official languages of Canada and provided for the support of English and French minority populations. According to the 2001 Census, 67 per cent of the population speak English only, 13 per cent speak French only, and 18 per cent speak both French and English. The French-speaking population is concentrated in Quebec, while each of the other provinces and territories has a French-speaking minority population; Quebec has an English-speaking minority population. The federal government's official-language policy and funding programs include making contributions to two education-related components — minority-language education and second-language education. Through the Official Languages in Education Program, the federal government transfers funding for these activities to the provinces and territories based on bilateral and general agreements that respect areas of responsibility and the unique needs of each jurisdiction. The bilateral agreements related to these contributions are negotiated under a protocol worked out through the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). Two national federally funded programs, coordinated by CMEC, provide youth with opportunities for exchange and summer study to enhance their second-language skills.

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada

Role of CMEC: The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) was formed in 1967 by the provincial and territorial ministers responsible for education to provide a forum in which they could discuss matters of mutual interest, undertake educational initiatives cooperatively, and represent the interests of the provinces and territories with

national educational organizations, the federal government, foreign governments, and international organizations. CMEC is the national voice for education in Canada and, through CMEC, the provinces and territories work collectively on common objectives in a broad range of activities at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels.

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