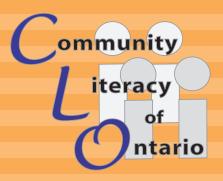
Literacy NALUE ADDED

A PUBLICATION FROM



Community Literacy of Ontario

Literacy Volunteers VALUE ADDED

Research Report

Literacy Volunteers: Value Added Research Report

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Community Literacy of Ontario would like to thank the many wonderful people who contributed their time, energy and talent to developing this report. It was extremely important to CLO that this report highlighted not only the economic value of literacy volunteers, but also the significant social impact of literacy volunteers in Ontario's community literacy agencies.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

The Literacy Volunteers: Value Added Research Report represents the results of six months of research conducted in 2005 by Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) with literacy agencies and volunteers to better understand the economic and social value that volunteers bring to Anglophone community-based literacy programs throughout the province of Ontario.

Community Literacy of Ontario is a provincial literacy network of 105 Anglophone community-based literacy agencies. Based in Barrie, CLO has been supporting its agencies throughout the province since 1994.

Purpose of the Research

Volunteers are an extremely important component of literacy programming in community literacy agencies. They bring a vast array of skills and knowledge, in addition to their overwhelming desire to make a difference in their communities. As such, it is imperative to explore the social and economic impact of literacy volunteering on volunteers, students, agencies, and the community at large.

The research was also designed to update and build upon the work CLO had completed through its 1998 report, "The Economic Value of Volunteers in Community Literacy Agencies in Ontario." As part of the research design, CLO determined it would be useful to identify and measure:

- ► the roles and key characteristics of literacy volunteers (profile)
- ▶ key issues for agencies and volunteers related to volunteerism in the 21st century, including recruitment and retention issues (broader context in voluntary action)

- ► motivational factors, goals, and needs of literacy volunteers (psychodemographics), and
- ▶ issues related to the management and support of literacy volunteers (domain or sub-sector context).

Methodology Overview

The methodology employed for gathering and analyzing data in this study consisted of eight main components:

- 1 Two different surveys were developed and circulated to Ontario's 105 Anglophone community literacy agencies, one for the literacy agency staff to complete, and one for volunteers to complete. A total of 53 agency survey returns and 204 volunteer survey returns, representing all geographic and urban/rural regions were analyzed. In both cases, the samples were considered statistically representative of their respective populations.
- An extensive review of literature, targeting volunteer management research in literacy and the Canadian voluntary sector in general was conducted. The review of literature enabled us to better understand CLO's findings by placing them within the larger context of the voluntary sector.
- **3** Five focus groups were held with volunteers in Toronto, Hamilton, Sharbot Lake, Sudbury and Barrie between January and March 2005. One on-line focus group was held with agency staff in March 2005. The focus groups were designed to provide insight into the results and enhance our understanding of the motivations and psychodemographics of literacy volunteers.
- 4 To analyze the survey data, two Microsoft Access database programs were created to accommodate the volunteer and agency surveys. The answers were entered manually into the databases. Analysis consisted of nominal and percentage calculations for the various questions, as well as verbatim reports of the answers to the open-ended questions.

- **5** The results from the volunteer focus groups were analyzed using an inductive logic method and within the context of the key themes associated with the volunteer management cycle, including motivations/barriers, recruitment and retention. A similar analytical process was employed for the practitioner focus group.
- **6** Calculations for the economic value of volunteers were conducted using the Specialist Approach to Replacement Costs model outlined in the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy's "How to Assign a Monetary Value to Volunteer Contributions."
- 7 Carleton University's Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development provided validation during the design and development of the survey questions and of the questions for the focus groups. The Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development also validated the calculations used to determine the economic value of literacy volunteers and reviewed and validated the final Research Report.
- **8** An additional survey was sent out in February 2005 to identify the programming composition of Anglophone community literacy agencies in the province. Seventy-two agencies responded to the survey.

Conclusions: Key Issues and Trends

Based on CLO's research findings and the review of literature, the following key issues and trends have been identified:

Fewer Literacy Volunteers are Doing More

A comparison of CLO's current findings with those from the 1998 study strongly supports the claim made by agency representatives that the number of people volunteering in Ontario's community literacy agencies is declining. This finding, which is consistent with other research in the voluntary sector, is very significant. If the number of volunteers continues to drop, those who are currently volunteering will be expected to do more, while the

agencies themselves will be required to expend even more time and resources than they currently do on volunteer recruitment.

Literacy Volunteers are Worth Millions

Although the number of literacy volunteers in Ontario's community literacy agencies has declined, the economic value they bring to community literacy agencies is staggering. An estimated 5,985 volunteers contribute 66,517 hours monthly to Anglophone community-based literacy programs throughout the province. The economic value of their time is worth \$12,505,290 annually.

Volunteer Planning is Critical

Ontario's community literacy agencies are aware of the changes in the voluntary sector, including the declining numbers of volunteers. To address these changes, 47% of agencies have altered their planning. However, with additional time and resources, more agencies would likely enhance their volunteer planning to further meet the changes they are experiencing.

Motivated by Compassion, Limited by Time

Ontario's community literacy volunteers are motivated to donate their time for many reasons, but the two main reasons are to make a difference in the life of someone else and to increase the literacy skills in their communities. Despite these noble motivators, volunteers and prospective volunteers are limited in what they can offer by time constraints. Additionally, because time and flexibility of scheduling are such critical barriers to volunteering, incorporating solutions to these limitations in recruitment messages should be an important consideration for the recruitment plan.



Word of Mouth and Newspapers are Valuable Recruitment Methods

The research results from this study and other national surveys clearly indicate that the two most effective methods for recruiting volunteers are word of mouth and the local media, particularly newspapers.

Younger Volunteers are Waiting to be Asked

Younger Canadians are much more likely to volunteer if they are asked. They are also more likely to be interested in opportunities that will strengthen their skills and their resumes. For literacy agencies, this presents a significant pool of potential volunteers that are currently significantly underrepresented in the volunteer composition of community literacy agencies.

Training and Skills Development - More Important than First Thought

Although volunteers reported that acquiring new skills was not a primary motivator for them to volunteer, when asked directly how important learning new skills was, 90% said it was very important, quite important or somewhat important. Volunteers overwhelmingly reported that they are satisfied with the training they have received, but 40% said they would welcome additional training.

Retention = Support + Rewarding Experiences

Ontario's community literacy agencies clearly understand that volunteers want and need agency support. For volunteers, staff support is the number one extrinsic reason for continuing with their volunteer work, and agency staff reported that ongoing support is the number one method they use to keep volunteers motivated and feeling valued. Volunteers also reported their volunteer work to be rewarding. Ninety-six percent of volunteers said they were very satisfied, mostly satisfied or satisfied with their experiences, and 89% said their agencies were making the most of the skills they as volunteers have to offer.

Want Them to Do More? Ask Them

Ninety percent of volunteers said they were planning to volunteer as much or more time in the upcoming year. Additionally, 42% said they would be willing to assume new or additional roles if they were asked. Some of the areas of particular interest reported include additional training, administrative support, working at events, board/committee work and fundraising.

Informal Recognition is Most Valued

Ontario's community literacy agencies are doing an excellent job of recognizing their volunteers. Ninety-five percent of volunteers reported receiving some kind of recognition, and, more importantly, they are very satisfied with the recognition they receive. A significant majority are not interested in receiving public recognition, and most prefer more informal gestures of recognition, including personal thank you's from staff, cards and notes and, for tutors, recognition from their students.

Introduction

This report represents the results of six months of research conducted in 2005 by Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) with literacy agencies and volunteers to better understand the economic and social value that volunteers bring to Anglophone community-based literacy programs throughout the province of Ontario.

About Community Literacy of Ontario

Community Literacy of Ontario (CLO) is a provincial literacy network of 105 Anglophone community-based literacy agencies. Based in Barrie, CLO has been supporting its agencies throughout the province since 1994.

A twelve-member board of directors governs CLO. These skilled and committed volunteers represent literacy agencies from every region in Ontario and ensure that CLO remains steadfast in its understanding of the needs and priorities of community literacy agencies. Currently, CLO has three dedicated core staff and two amazing project staff. CLO also has the additional support of a wonderful group of volunteers who generously support CLO through donated time, energy and talents.

Community Literacy of Ontario's mission is "to support, promote and provide a united voice for Anglophone community-based literacy programs in Ontario." CLO is a strong and dynamic organization that meets its mission by providing many services to the community based literacy sector: sharing information, producing exemplary resources, hosting two websites, providing online training and whenever possible, hosting a conference that addresses key needs of the literacy field. CLO also supports its members by providing strong representation of the sector to funders and the literacy community on an ongoing basis.

Community Literacy of Ontario receives funding from the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the National Literacy Secretariat and member programs. Additional information about CLO, its products and resources is available at http://www.nald.ca/clo.htm.

Purpose of the Research

Volunteers are an extremely important component of literacy programming in community literacy agencies. They bring a vast array of skills and knowledge, in addition to their overwhelming desire to make a difference in their communities. As such, it is imperative to explore the social and economic impact of literacy volunteering on volunteers, students, agencies, and the community at large.

The research would also update and build upon the work Community Literacy of Ontario had completed through its 1998 report, "The Economic Value of Volunteers in Community Literacy Agencies in Ontario." As part of the research design, CLO ascertained that it would be useful to determine:

- ► the roles and key characteristics of literacy volunteers (profile)
- ▶ key issues for agencies and volunteers related to volunteerism in the 21st century, including recruitment and retention issues (broader context in voluntary action)
- ▶ motivational factors, goals, and needs of literacy volunteers (psychodemographics), and
- ▶ issues related to the management and support of literacy volunteers (domain or sub-sector context).

Methodology Overview

The methodology employed for gathering and analyzing data in this study consisted of eight main components:



- Two different surveys were developed and circulated to Ontario's 105 community literacy agencies, one for the literacy agency staff to complete, and one for volunteers to complete. The surveys were distributed in early December 2004, and collected until early February 2005. A total of 53 agency survey returns and 204 volunteer survey returns, representing all geographic and urban/rural regions were analyzed. In both cases, the samples were considered statistically representative of their respective populations. (Please see surveys in the Appendix.) The purpose of these surveys was to gain a better understanding of the profile of current literacy volunteers and to get a snapshot of the domain-specific issues of literacy agencies in Ontario.
- **2** An extensive review of literature, targeting volunteer management research in literacy and the Canadian voluntary sector in general was conducted. The review of literature enabled us to better understand CLO's findings by placing them within the larger context of the voluntary sector. (Please refer to the bibliography in the Appendix for a listing of sources consulted.)
- **3** Five focus groups were held with volunteers in Toronto, Hamilton, Sharbot Lake, Sudbury and Barrie between January and March 2005. One on-line focus group was held with agency staff in March 2005. The questions for these sessions were designed to complement and build upon the results of the survey returns. The focus groups were designed to provide insight into the results and enhance our understanding of the motivations and psychodemographics of literacy volunteers.
- **4** To analyze the survey data, two Microsoft Access database programs were created to accommodate the volunteer and agency surveys. The answers were entered manually into the databases. Analysis consisted of nominal and percentage calculations for the various questions, as well as verbatim reports of the answers to the open-ended questions.

- 5 The results from the volunteer focus groups were analyzed using an inductive logic method and within the context of the key themes associated with the volunteer management cycle, including motivations/barriers, recruitment and retention. A similar analytical process was employed for the practitioner focus group.
- Calculations for the economic value of volunteers were conducted using the Specialist Approach to Replacement Costs model outlined in the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy's "How to Assign a Monetary Value to Volunteer Contributions." CLO used volunteer position titles (e.g. tutors, board members, administrative support) and then turned to Human Resources and Skills Development's Labour Market Information website (http://lmi-imt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/) to assign a current market rate for using a comparable National Occupation Classification (NOC) category.
- 7 Carleton University's Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development provided validation during the design and development of the survey questions and of the questions for the focus groups. The Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development also validated the calculations used to determine the economic value of literacy volunteers and reviewed and validated the final Research Report.
- **8** An additional survey was sent out in February 2005 to identify the programming composition of Anglophone community literacy agencies in the province. Seventy-two agencies responded to the survey.

Organization of the Report

Community Literacy of Ontario has organized the report into two main sections. The first chapter considers the economic and social value of literacy volunteers, using results from the agency and survey returns. The second section, which is comprised of Chapters II through VI, addresses the research findings as they relate to volunteer management planning.

Ontario's Literacy Volunteers—A Profile

For more than 100 years, volunteers have been an important component of community-based literacy agencies in Ontario. Beginning with Frontier College in 1899, volunteers have been helping adults improve their literacy skills in rural and urban communities throughout the province.

The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities has collected statistics through its Information Management System (IMS) that show that in 2004/05 there was an annual average of 4,547 literacy volunteers in Ontario (all sectors and streams).

CLO's research focused on volunteers in Ontario's community literacy agencies and found that, presently on average, there are 3.4 paid staff and 57 volunteers in each community literacy agency. As there are currently 105 community literacy agencies in Ontario, the total number of volunteers is a staggering 5,985! (It is important to note that MTCU also collects data from its Information Management System (IMS) regarding the contribution of volunteers in Ontario's community literacy agencies. Their data reflects a total of 4,139 volunteers. The reason for the variation in the number of volunteers is that information on the number of volunteers is not mandatory in the IMS system and is collected as a monthly average. In comparison, CLO's survey required the number of volunteers from each agency in order for the survey to be considered in the research. Additionally, CLO's research was based on a total average of volunteers, while MTCU's data is a monthly average.

Using the results of the 204 volunteer survey returns, CLO has been able to create a profile of the people who currently volunteer their time with community-based Anglophone literacy programs in Ontario.

Literacy volunteers are older - 58% of volunteers in Ontario's community literacy agencies are over the age of 50 and only 2% of literacy volunteers are under the age of 21. The 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP)¹ found significant differences in the age profiles of Canadian volunteers, particularly for younger volunteers who are underrepresented as literacy volunteers. The breakdowns for CLO's and NSGVP's data are presented below:

CLO's Findings		NSGVP's findings	
Age	Percent of total	Age	Percent of total
Under 21	2%	15 – 24	18%
21 – 30	7%	25 – 34	16%
31 – 40	13%	35 – 44	24%
41 – 50	19%	45 – 54	20%
51 – 60	29%	55 – 64	12%
61 – 70	20%	65 and over	10%
Over 70	9%		
Total	99.00%*	Total	100%

More women than men volunteer—78% of literacy volunteers are women, and 22% are men. The 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating found that almost equal percentages of Canadian women and men volunteer (54% and 46% respectively).

They are well-educated—65% of volunteers in Ontario's community literacy agencies have at least a college or university degree, compared with 53% of volunteers in Canada generally.

^{1.} To make comparisons with data from the NSGVP, we used the "Volunteers, by personal and economic characteristics" table found on Statistics Canada's website at http://www40.statcan.ca/l01/cst01/famil103.htm

^{*} Percentages do not total 100 because of rounding.

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Literacy volunteers are loyal and dedicated—On average, they have been volunteering for almost four years and provide 11 hours per month to their literacy agencies.

- ► Tutors contribute approximately 16 hours a month tutoring and preparing for their students.
- ► Volunteers who are board members offer three hours per month in that capacity.
- ➤ Volunteers involved in fundraising donate four hours monthly.
- ➤ Office support volunteers average 14 hours per month assisting staff.

They are committed to making a difference in their communities—Volunteers' main reasons for becoming and staying involved with literacy are to help make a difference in the life of another person and to improve literacy in their communities. According to the NSGVP 2000 results, the number one motivator was belief in the cause the organization was seeking to address.

Literacy volunteers fulfill a variety of roles — Most literacy volunteers spend their time tutoring in one-to-one or small group settings to help students improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills. CLO's survey results showed that literacy volunteers help in many different capacities:

- ► Tutoring
- ▶ Board governance
- ► Committee work
- ► Office work
- ► Fundraising
- ► Special events
- ► Computer support

They are happy with their volunteer experiences—96% said they were satisfied with their volunteer experiences. Literacy volunteers also feel recognized for their efforts and feel program staff offer support and make the most of their time and skills. Although they do not much care for public recognition, most volunteers like to be thanked informally, either through a card or a simple thank you at the end of their work. Open communication with agency staff and training are key areas of support that volunteers receive from their agencies. And, although they are happy with the training they have received, many volunteers feel they could benefit from more, especially to help with student-specific or topic-specific issues.

Ontario's Anglophone Community Literacy Agencies—A Profile

Within the province, there are 85 Anglophone community literacy agencies plus 20 additional sites for a total of 105 agencies providing instruction in reading, writing and numeracy to adults. These literacy agencies are funded by Ontario's Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

In February 2005, CLO surveyed the Anglophone community literacy field to develop an up-to-date profile of programming in community literacy agencies. A total of 72 agencies responded and provided the following information:

- ▶ 92% of Ontario's community literacy agencies offer both small group and one-to-one programming;
- ▶ Adult learners are exactly divided between participating in 1-1 and small groups. In the average year, in Ontario's community literacy agencies 50% of learners participate in 1-1 programming and 50% participate in small group programming.
- ▶ When asked "Does your program model of 1-1 and small group delivery meet the needs of learners in your program?", 55% of agencies said *yes*, 42% of agencies said *mostly*, and 3% of agencies said *no*. Interestingly, both agencies that responded no (3%) indicated that they were not unhappy with the delivery method, they merely wanted to increase both 1-1 and small group programming.

Respondents were also asked to identify the benefits and challenges associated with both one-to-one and small group programming. The following table highlights some of the most commonly identified benefits and challenges for both types of programming.

Programming	Benefits	Challenges
One-to-one	Has the ability to meet individual learner needs	Volunteer recruitment
	Provides a highly supportive, safe, private, non-threatening environment for students	Limited hours of instruction
	Convenient for learners (flexible times and locations)	Volunteer coordination
	Provides effective support to lower level students	Volunteer retention
	Offers individualized attention and support	Provides less contact hours
	Allows students to move at their own pace	Time needed for follow-up and monitoring
	Builds self-esteem and confidence	Tutor training
	Is highly learner-centred	Funding
Small group	Group support, encouragement and assistance	Meeting multi-level needs and goals
	Peer group interaction increases a wide variety of skills	Time needed for preparation and follow-up
	Peer learning and exposure to varied ideas and opinions	Paid instructors are usually required
	Can serve more learners	Lack of space
	Helpful for transitioning students to future goals	Group dynamics (personality conflicts, disruptive students)
	Provides more contact hours	Some students cannot keep up or work in group setting
	Group dynamics give energy, confidence and motivation	Less individualized support
	Students can attend for more hours	Funding
	Can develop programming targeted to group needs	
	Provides networking opportunities for students	



The Value of Literacy Volunteers

The Economic Value of Volunteers

This chapter of the report estimates the economic value that volunteers bring to community-based literacy programs in Ontario. These estimates have been calculated for the Anglophone literacy stream, which is comprised of 85 community literacy agencies and 20 satellite sites funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.²

By using results from the agency and volunteer surveys, we have been able to generate estimates for the following:

- ➤ The average number of literacy volunteers in community-based agencies Ontario per year
- ► The average total hours volunteers donate monthly and annually
- ► The average number of hours volunteers donate monthly and annually according to different task areas
- ► The main out-of-pocket expense areas reported by volunteers

Community Literacy of Ontario conducted an extensive literature review on the assessment techniques for determining the economic value. Consultations with the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and Carleton University's Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development were also conducted to identify best methods and resources to help facilitate this economic assessment.

^{2.} In Ontario, literacy is delivered by four streams: Anglophone, Native, Deaf and Francophone.

Using data from the surveys, CLO was able to calculate various economic value indicators by relying on the Specialist Approach to Replacement Costs model outlined in the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy's "How to Assign a Monetary Value to Volunteer Contributions."

In calculating the economic value of literacy volunteers, CLO has arranged the various volunteer tasks into five main categories: (1) tutoring and preparation; (2) board work; (3) office support; (4) communications and special events; and (5) computer support. Following the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy model, we then turned to Human Resources and Skills Development's Labour Market Information website (http://lmi-imt.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/) to assign a current market rate for each category using a comparable National Occupation Classification (NOC) category.

Table 1 — Volunteer Categories and Estimated Time as Reported by Agencies

Task Category	Average hours/ month/agency N=53	Average hourly wage
Tutoring and preparation (NOC 4216)	354.8	\$14.34
Board (NOC 0014)	29.5	\$25.86
Office support (NOC 1441)	111.4	\$14.87
Communications and Special Events (NOC 5124)	107.5	\$21.85
Computer support (NOC 2282)	30.3	\$17.05
Total	633.5	\$18.80

^{3.} This manual was written by Laurie Mook and Jack Quarter from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto and published by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy.

The average number of literacy volunteers in Ontario per year

Based on the agency survey returns, CLO has calculated that community-based literacy agencies have an average of 57 volunteers per year. Since there are 105 Anglophone community literacy agencies, this indicates that there are currently a total of 5,985 volunteers in Ontario's community based literacy agencies.

The average total hours donated to agencies monthly

The survey results from the agencies indicate that volunteers contribute an average of 633.5 hours per month per agency. Multiplying that by 105 agencies gives us a total monthly volunteer contribution of 66,517 hours to community-based literacy agencies in the province of Ontario. This breaks down to 11 hours per month per volunteer in Ontario's community literacy agencies or 110 hours per year.

For comparison purposes, it is interesting to note that the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating found that in Ontario, the average volunteer contributed 165 hours per year and the average Canadian contributed 162 hours per year.⁴

The estimated yearly economic contribution of volunteers per agency

Based on surveying Ontario's community literacy agencies, CLO knows that volunteers contribute an average of 10 months of work to their literacy agencies per year.⁵ Taking the figure of 633.5 hours/month/agency and multiplying it by 10 months gives us a total estimated yearly contribution of 6,335 hours per year per agency. At an average hourly rate of \$18.80, we get a total estimated contribution of \$119,098 per agency or \$12,505,290 for all 105 agencies. Rounded off, this means that volunteers in community

^{4.} Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, Statistics Canada. 2001. http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/pdf/n-2000-hr-ca.pdf

^{5.} In May 2005, literacy agencies that had responded to the Economic Value of Literacy Volunteers Survey were asked to indicate the average number of months the majority of volunteers contribute in a 12-month period. A total of 35 responses were tabulated, with the average number of months being 10.

literacy agencies contribute a whopping \$12.5 million dollars in time annually to the Ontario training system.

It is important to note that MTCU also collects data from its Information Management System (IMS) regarding the contribution of volunteers in Ontario's community literacy agencies. Their data reflects a total of 4,139 volunteers. The reason for the variation in the number of volunteers is that information on the number of volunteers is not mandatory in the IMS system and is collected as a monthly average. In comparison, CLO's survey required the number of volunteers from each agency in order for the survey to be considered in the research. Additionally, CLO's research was based on a total average of volunteers, while MTCU's data is a monthly average.

The shift in the yearly economic contribution of volunteers from 1998 to 2004

According to Community Literacy of Ontario's 1998 research report, "The Economic Value of Volunteers," the total number of volunteers as recorded by the Ministry of Education and Training (MET) in 1995-96 was 9,578, for an average of almost 86 volunteers for each of the 112 community-based agencies. The total amount of time committed by all the volunteers was 514,544 hours per year, or 5.3 hours per volunteer per month.

CLO's current data suggests a significant decline in the number of volunteers (an average of 86 volunteers in 1995/1996 versus 57 volunteers per agency in 2004/2005) and an equally significant increase in the number of hours each volunteer is contributing (an average of 11.1 hours per month in 2004/2005 versus 5.3 hours per month in 1995/1996). The decline in the overall number of volunteers coupled with an increase in the number of hours contributed by volunteers, mirrors nation-wide volunteer trends from the National Survey of Volunteers, Giving and Participating.⁶

Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and
Participating Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, Statistics Canada. 2001. http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca/pdf/n-2000-hr-ca.pdf

Table 2 -	-Time and	Franchic	Differences:	1998 to	2004
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	Total Number of Volunteer Hours	Estimated Hourly Rate	Estimated Economic Value
Agency Survey (2005)	665,175	18.80	\$12,505,290
MET data (1995-96)	514,544	17.34	\$8,922,192

The total economic contribution of literacy volunteers to all literacy agencies in Ontario

The results from CLO's research can also be incorporated with data collected by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. According to CLO's data, a total estimated number of 5,985 volunteers (averaged out over the year) donated their time to community literacy agencies in Ontario between April 1, 2004, and March 31, 2005. For the same period, according to MTCU's IMS data, an average of 164 people volunteered their time to native literacy programs; 65 volunteered for deaf literacy programs; 229 volunteered for Francophone programs; 397 volunteered for school board programs; and 11 volunteered in college programs.

The Ontario government funds the following literacy delivery organizations across the province: 105 Anglophone community literacy agencies; 28 agencies in the Native stream; 42 in the Francophone stream; and 14 in the Deaf stream. In addition, there are 62 school board programs and 65 college programs.

However, of all the different types of delivery organizations, it is Anglophone community literacy agencies who overwhelmingly use the services of volunteers the most. Eighty-six percent of literacy volunteers volunteer in Anglophone community literacy agencies.

Table 3 — Total Hours Donated by Literacy Volunteers in Ontario: April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005

(Source: *CLO's 2005 survey of the Anglophone Community-based sector and the IMS for the remaining sectors and streams)

Stream/Sector	Total hours reported	Average number of volunteers
*Anglophone Community-based	665,175	5,985
Native	12,841	164
Deaf	4,466	65
Francophone	19,871	229
School board	29,779	397
College	3,329	11
Total	735,461	6,851

By referring to CLO's data for the Anglophone community-based sector and the IMS data for the remaining sectors and streams and applying the average hourly rate of \$18.80, it is possible to calculate the total estimated value of the time literacy volunteers contribute in the different streams and sectors throughout the province.

It is clear from the table on the following page that volunteers in literacy delivery agencies funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities donate a total of almost \$14 million in time annually.

Table 4 — Estimated Economic Value Donated by Literacy Volunteers in Ontario: April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2005

(Source: *CLO's 2005 survey for the Anglophone Community-based sector and the IMS for the remaining sectors and streams)

Stream/Sector	Total hours reported	Estimated Economic Value
*Anglophone Community-based	665,175	\$12,505,290
Native	12,841	\$241,411
Deaf	4,466	\$83,961
Francophone	19,871	\$373,575
School board	29,779	\$559,845
College	3,329	\$62,585
Total	735,461	\$13,826,667

Out-of-pocket expenses

CLO's survey also asked community literacy volunteers to report the out-of-pocket expenses associated with their volunteer work. Forty-six percent reported they did incur out-of-pocket expenses, while 51% said they did not (the remaining 3% were either not sure or did not answer). Table 5 highlights the findings.

Table 5 — Out-of-Pocket Expenses as Reported by Volunteers

Expense	Percent of total (N=204) who incur expense	Percent not reimbursed
Car/mileage/gas	38%	88%
Resource materials/supplies	14%	83%
Office materials	13%	85%
Meals/food/coffee	10%	95%
Photocopying/printing	8%	88%
Parking	7%	86%
Student supplies	6%	58%
Phone/long distance	6%	92%
Bus fare	6%	92%
Books	5%	90%
Special activities	4%	100%
Childcare	3%	100%
Other	2%	100%

From our sample, it appears there has been a decline in the percentage of volunteers who incur out-of-pocket expenses since 1998. Whereas this study found only 46% of volunteers reporting out-of-pocket expenses, CLO's 1998 report found that 74% of the volunteers reported direct or indirect expenditures associated with the volunteer work.

The Social Value of Volunteers

In addition to the economic estimates, CLO wanted to better understand the social or added value that literacy volunteers bring to community literacy agencies. Although a profile of the economic value of literacy volunteers is important, it is only part of the picture. Equally or even more important is the social value that volunteers bring to literacy programs, a more difficult concept to measure. In a recent article, Martha Parker, former Executive Director



of Volunteer Calgary, cautions against focusing too much on the economic value of volunteers. She argues that many of the benefits of volunteer work are not measured and are at risk of being overlooked in favour of more monetary measures. According to Parker, volunteering is important because it helps create the following:

- ► a stable and cohesive society
- ▶ bonds of trust and cooperation
- ► an increase in social harmony
- ► a politically literate public
- ▶ a voice for those who frequently are not heard
- ▶ good health and emotional well being

The author concludes by asking, "Can we not find ways of addressing—perhaps even demonstrating—a new appreciation for added values?" To facilitate this in CLO's research, both agency and volunteer survey respondents were asked to identify what value volunteers bring to literacy agencies.

The Volunteers' Responses

As part of their survey, respondents were asked, "What special value do you feel you bring to your literacy agency?" The number and diversity of responses was significant; however, we are able to arrange many of them into six main categories. It is apparent that volunteers place a great deal of value on both the empathetic contributions (sensitivity, patience and understanding—22%) they provide, as well as the more practical knowledge and experiences (teaching experience—18%; writing/communication skills—15%). Fourteen percent also identified commitment and dependability as important contributions to their programs.

Table 6 – Value to Literacy Programs as Reported by Volunteers

Value Category	Frequency of response
Sensitivity/patience/understanding	22%
Teaching experience	18%
Writing/communication skills	15%
Commitment/dependability	14%
Experience (not defined)	14%
Enthusiasm	11%

Focus group participants were also asked to identify what value they brought to their literacy agencies. The following are some of the responses offered:

- ► A range of backgrounds and experiences, and different skills.
- ▶ We bring energy to the organizations.
- ▶ I think I bring a fresh outlook.
- ▶ Personal contact one-to-one tutoring is invaluable.
- ► We're contributing to the community by raising literacy values.
- ► I feel like I am empowering people to help themselves and helping them increase self-esteem.
- ➤ You can't run a literacy project without volunteers. We are an absolute necessity.
- ► The government couldn't afford to pay the number of volunteers needed for this one-to-one tutoring.
- ► How do you place a value on something that I feel obligated to do?
- ▶ I think I bring a positive influence, and I bring nurturing.

The Agencies' Responses

Agency representatives were also asked to report what value volunteers bring to their programming. It is clear from Table 7 that agencies place a high value on the range of skills, personal and community attributes that volunteers bring to literacy programs.

Table 7 – Value to Literacy Programs as Reported by Agencies

Value	Frequency of responses
Diversity of skills and knowledge	98%
Dedication/loyalty	89%
Bonding/relationship with students	89%
Increased agency profile in the community	87%
Enthusiasm	85%
A personal approach	85%
Diversity of opinions and views	83%
Community ownership and involvement	83%
Shared workload	79%
Community linkages and support	79%
Community credibility and trust	70%
Wider access to resources	62%
Other	9%

Conclusions

The results of the economic assessment reveal the vast economic value volunteers bring to community literacy agencies in Ontario. It is apparent that an estimated 5,985 volunteers contribute 665,175 hours or the equivalent of \$12,505,290 in work time annually to Anglophone community literacy agencies throughout Ontario. The economic value of all literacy volunteers to all sectors and streams in Ontario is estimated at an incredible \$13,826,667.

It is difficult to compare CLO's economic assessment with other research because there appears to be a shortage of information in this area. A 2003 study found that just 37% of not-for-profit and voluntary organizations recorded their volunteers' contributions, and only 7% estimated

the financial value of volunteers to their organizations.⁷ However, the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating did identify that 6.5 million Canadians donated 1.05 billion hours, the equivalent of 549,000 full-time jobs. Additionally, Statistic Canada's report, "Satellite Account of Nonprofit Institutions and Volunteering," estimates that, in 1997, volunteer labour contributed \$14.1 billion to Canada's total economy and accounted for approximately "one-third of the total value of labour services provided to the nonprofit sector." ⁸

In addition to the economic value, both agencies and the volunteers themselves identified many diverse contributions that they bring to the literacy agencies, from the very practical knowledge and experience to understanding, patience and compassion.

Finally, as encouraging as these findings are, literacy agencies need to be aware of the trend CLO has found. By comparing the results from this study with those from our 1998 Economic Value of Volunteers research, it appears there are fewer literacy volunteers than there were seven years ago. Moreover, these volunteers appear to be contributing significantly more hours now than they were in 1998. This conclusion is consistent with findings from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, which has found that fewer Canadians are volunteering and a small committed cohort of volunteers are donating most of the hours. The risk for literacy agencies is that there is an increasingly smaller pool of volunteer resources to draw from, and those currently volunteering will be expected to do more, both of which could contribute to volunteer burnout and attrition.

^{7.} Laurie Mook and Jack Quarter, Reporting the Value of Volunteer Contributions: Current Practices and Challenges Fact Sheet, Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2004.

^{8.} Malika Hamdad, Sophie Joyal, Catherine Van Rompaey, "Satellite Account of Nonprofit Institutions and Volunteering," Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2004.



Planning and Motivation

Introduction

The economic and social value of literacy volunteers is unmistakable. Without them, many community-based literacy agencies could not service the needs of their learners. Volunteers are both a resource and a gift. Understanding them, and incorporating their needs and expectations into an organization's strategic and operational planning is a critical part of any volunteer-based program.

To help agencies, and the literacy field in general, better understand and plan for their volunteers, the remainder of this report presents CLO's research findings, which are logically organized according to the *volunteer management cycle*. In the next four chapters, we present and discuss the results from the volunteer and agency surveys and focus groups as they relate to planning and motivations, recruitment, screening and training, recognition and retention and managing volunteers.

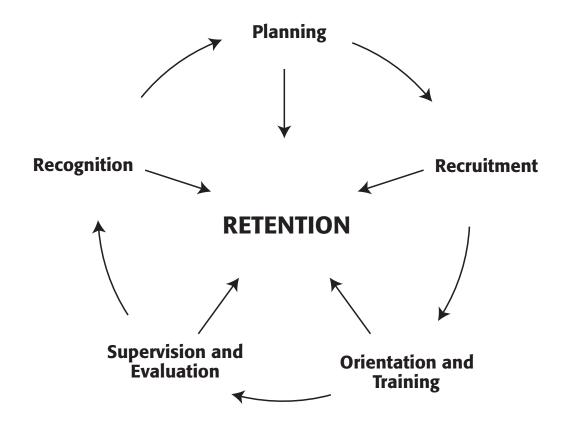
Within each chapter, we report the findings from CLO's research, followed by a review of the trends and issues in literacy and the voluntary sector in general. At the end of each chapter, CLO presents its research conclusions.

The Volunteer Management Cycle

According to Volunteer Canada, the volunteer management cycle is at the heart of volunteer management theory and an important concept for managers to understand and

apply in their work with volunteers. Volunteer Canada begins with Planning, and then proceeds to Recruitment, Orientation and Training, Supervision and Evaluation and Recognition. This model considers the importance of reviewing the strategic need for volunteers and designing volunteer position descriptions that can then help with the other stages in the volunteer management cycle.

Volunteer Canada's Volunteer Management Cycle



^{9.} See http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/iwork/vol-managment.php?display=3 for an overview of Volunteer Canada's volunteer management cycle.

^{10.} Volunteer Canada, http://www.volunteer.ca/volcan/eng/iwork/vol-managment.php?display=3.

Planning – The First Phase of the Volunteer Management Cycle

In CLO's **Beyond Recruitment** document, the authors state, "The volunteer environment is changing. Organizations must adapt to this new reality in order to survive and benefit." This claim is strongly supported by numerous recent studies of the not-for-profit sector in Canada, which have identified issues related to volunteer recruitment and retention, financial stability and staff burnout. 12

To better understand the planning needs and priorities of community-based literacy agencies in Ontario, CLO asked agency respondents to indicate whether they had witnessed a change in the volunteer commitment over the past five years. Seventy-two percent reported they had seen a change. Of those reporting a change, 66% said their agencies have fewer volunteers than they did five years ago. Additionally, agency representatives were asked whether their agencies had completed any planning around the changed volunteer environment. Only 47% percent reported they had conducted some planning. In the focus group with practitioners, participants were asked to discuss why more agencies have not conducted planning, given the changes. Participants spoke of the lack of time and financial resources required to effectively plan as being key limitations.¹³

Community Literacy of Ontario's agency survey found that 92% of community literacy agencies are now offering both small group and one-to-one programming to meet the needs of adult learners. This observation is supported by a separate study, completed in February 2005, where CLO found a "dramatic shift towards incorporating small group programming" with the more traditional one-to-one programming.¹⁴

^{11.} http://www.nald.ca/Fulltext/Clo/page3.htm

^{12.} See for example, Statistic Canada's Cornerstones of Community: Highlights of the National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations, 2004. http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/61-533-XIE/61-533-XIE/2004001.htm

^{13.} Interestingly, CLO has recently conducted two online courses on volunteer management for literacy agencies (March and May 2005). Each course was full (20 participants), and each had a waiting list.

^{14.} See Community Literacy of Ontario, Our Voice, March 2005: p.1.

One-to-one programming is traditionally offered with one volunteer tutor working with one adult learner. Small group programming usually requires fewer volunteers as typically paid staff, or sometimes a volunteer, leads a small group of learners. Volunteers often support the small group, but overall fewer volunteers are required for this model of delivery.

The researchers also asked respondents to identify key benefits and challenges associated with both types of programming. Some of the most commonly identified challenges in the one-to-one programming model include:

- ► Volunteer recruitment
- ▶ Volunteer coordination
- ► Volunteer retention
- ► Tutor training
- ► Funding

Commonly identified challenges for small group programming include:

- ► Time needed for preparation and follow-up
- ► The need for paid instructors (versus volunteers)
- ► Less individualized support for learners
- ► Funding

Volunteer Motivations and Barriers

Introduction

This chapter of the report also examines the motivations and barriers that literacy volunteers might face when considering whether to volunteer their time. Understanding why some people volunteer and why others choose not to is critical to the organization's overall volunteer management plan. This understanding enables agencies to develop targeted recruitment strategies with messages that will resonate with prospective volunteers by addressing their motivations and/or barriers. Moreover, by understanding what is important to prospective volunteers, agencies

are able to identify what is of value to the volunteers, information that can be used for recruitment, training, retention and recognition.

In this chapter, CLO examines the results of the volunteer and agency surveys and the five focus groups with volunteers and then compare the results with previous research. CLO concludes this chapter with several recommendations. To begin, however, we provide working definitions for motivations and barriers.

Motivations

Volunteer Surveys

In the volunteer survey, respondents were asked to report what opportunities encouraged them to volunteer. Table 8 illustrates the importance of various reported opportunities. Clearly, the top motivator was the opportunity to make a difference in the life of an individual within their communities. Of the 204 volunteers who responded, 91% said they were looking for an opportunity to make a difference in the life of another person. Additionally, 72% reported that they wanted the opportunity to increase literacy skills in their communities.

Table 8 – Volunteer Motivations as Reported by Literacy Volunteers

Motivations	Frequency of response (%)
An opportunity to make a difference in the life of another person	91%
An opportunity to increase literacy skills in my community	72%
A warm and encouraging atmosphere	64%
An opportunity to meet new people/ social interaction	57%
Flexible hours	54%
An opportunity to learn new skills	51%
Training	44%
The opportunity to build my job skills and bolster my resume	23%
Other	14%

For some, it appears that social interaction and a positive environment are also important. Sixty-four percent said they were looking for a warm and encouraging atmosphere, while 57% reported wanting the opportunity to meet new people.

Fifty-four percent of respondents also reported the importance of flexible hours, and 51% said having an opportunity to learn new skills was important. Fewer than one quarter (23%) said they were looking for opportunities to build their job skills and bolster their resumes.

In addition to the opportunities listed, 14% of respondents reported other reasons, including the desire to try teaching or continue teaching after retirement. For example, one respondent wrote, "Teaching has been something I've always wanted to do—volunteering at the literacy agency satisfies this desire." Some people reported the desire to apply some of the skills they had to a voluntary capacity, including one who wrote, "I have many senior management skills to offer as I am retired—also many technical skills."

The results from the focus groups are consistent with those from the survey returns. When asked why they decided to volunteer with a literacy organization and what they expected to derive from their volunteer experience, participants identified a variety of reasons; however, the majority indicated the desire to assist others and to improve literacy in their communities.

- ▶ I started out with [another program in the community], and I wanted to do more. It was suggested that I come to the Literacy Council. Volunteers make society better...[they] help people stand on their own feet.
- ▶ I found out that 20 to 30% of the adult population had literacy issues in [my community].

- ► I finally had the time to spare, and I knew literacy was a problem.
- ▶ I was fulfilling something that needs to be done.
- ▶ I wanted to make a difference in someone's life.

Other participants reported the importance of the social interaction:

- ► I wanted to become part of the community more.
- ► I was looking for something social.
- ▶ I was looking for a tool to meet people in our area.
- ► I wanted to get to know the community better and meet new people.

The findings from both the survey returns and focus groups indicate that the majority of volunteers currently involved with literacy agencies are overwhelmingly motivated by the desire to make a difference in their communities and the lives of individuals within those communities.

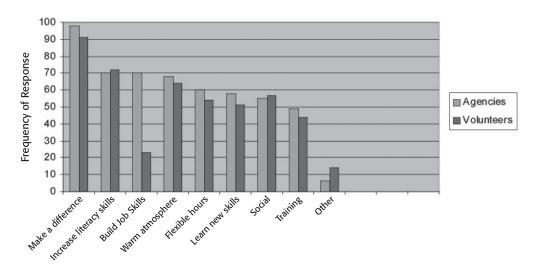
Agency Surveys

Agency representatives were also asked to indicate what they thought motivated the volunteers in their agencies. All 53 respondents reported that they knew what motivated their volunteers. Table 9 and Figure 1 highlight the results. Ninety-eight percent of the agency respondents indicated that volunteers were motivated by the opportunity to make a difference in the life of another person. Seventy percent said volunteers were interested in increasing literacy skills in the community. Seventy percent reported that volunteers were also looking for an opportunity to build job skills and bolster their resumes, and 68% thought volunteers were motivated by the warm and encouraging atmosphere in the agency.

Table 9. Volunteer Motivations as Identified by Agencies

Motivations	Frequency of response (%)
The opportunity to make a difference in the life of another person	98%
The opportunity to increase literacy skills in their community	70%
The opportunity to build their job skills and bolster their resume	70%
The warm and encouraging atmosphere in your agency	68%
Flexible hours	60%
The opportunity to learn new skills	58%
The opportunity to meet new people/social interaction	55%
Training	49%
Other	6%

Figure 1. Volunteer Motivations as Identified by Agencies and Volunteers



These results suggest that agency representatives have a clear and consistent understanding of the volunteers' top motivations. Ninety-eight percent of agency respondents thought volunteers were most interested in making a difference in the life of another person, which is consistent with 91% of volunteers who reported this

as an opportunity they were seeking. Additionally, 72% of volunteers said that increasing literacy skills in the community was an opportunity they were seeking from their experience, while 70% of agency representatives reported this to be a motivator for their volunteers. Similarly, 68% of agency representatives identified the importance of a warm and encouraging atmosphere for volunteers. This is consistent with the 64% of volunteers who reported its importance.

The most significant discrepancy between motivators reported by volunteers and those perceived to be important by agency staff was the opportunity to build job skills and bolster a resume. Whereas only 23% of volunteers identified this as an important opportunity, 70% of agency representatives thought this was an important motivator for the volunteers. Although it is possible that some volunteer respondents were reluctant to report this more ego-centric motivator, it is probable that this career-related factor is not important to the majority of literacy volunteers, whom we know to be over the age of 50.

Interestingly, it was reported in the practitioner focus group that tutors are not typically motivated by the opportunity to build job skills. However, some volunteers involved with administrative and office support may be more motivated in this way.

Barriers

While it is important to understand what motivates an individual to volunteer, it is equally—and arguably even more—important to understand the barriers that might inhibit the individual from becoming involved as a volunteer. With this in mind, focus group participants were asked to identify what, if any, barriers made it difficult for them to volunteer once they had decided they wanted to volunteer.

In CLO's focus group consultations with volunteers, the most often cited barrier when first considering whether

to volunteer was the lack of time. Younger participants also reported that a year-long commitment was difficult, particularly for college and university students.

A number of different perceived barriers were identified, but the number one barrier reported in all five focus groups was the lack of time. For example, one participant said, "They ask you to do approximately four hours per week (but actually this is half of what is required with lesson plans, etc). Time was a big factor." Other reported barriers include:

- ► Access and scheduling
- ▶ Personal investment—working with an individual and establishing a relationship is a big commitment. You don't want to let them down.
- ► Safety concerns with going into a person's home
- ► In a small town, it is always the same people volunteering on the different boards. This can lead to burnout.
- ▶ Most barriers are self- imposed. If doing 20 hours, you wish you could do 30.
- ► I didn't realize how important planning a tutoring session is. Direction, plan of attack, takes more time than expected.
- ► A one-year commitment is sometimes difficult because of other responsibilities. College and university students have a hard time with this commitment.
- ► Age-specific life circumstances. Four hours per week can be too much at some times in your life.
- ► Initially, the organization didn't respond to volunteer needs. This obstacle was corrected with a reorganization of the literacy organization.
- ► Time was initially a problem; however because this is part of my education program, it is easier.

In the volunteer survey, respondents were asked if they would be willing to take on new or additional roles, and if not why. Only 42% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to take on new or additional roles. The number one reason reported for not taking on new or additional roles was lack of time. Moreover, respondents were asked to indicate if they would volunteer more if the supports they requested were provided. Of the 131 who responded, 46% said they would not volunteer more time, and only 15% said they would volunteer more, while 40% were not sure.

Trends and Issues in Literacy and the Voluntary Sector

Literacy

Community Literacy of Ontario's 1998 study, "The Economic Value of Volunteers in Community Literacy Agencies in Ontario", explored the topic of motivation and found similar results to this study. According to the authors, some volunteers were attracted to volunteerism because of "a specific desire to help impart literacy skills." Literacy volunteers reported that "they liked to read and wanted to help others to improve their abilities."15 This desire, along with discretionary time and the search for new challenges, were instrumental motivators. The researchers found that "some homemakers felt it was a healthy, rewarding way of adding diversity to their lives, while others had sought out volunteer activities to make contacts." Some sought the opportunity as a break from their careers, while others were prompted "because of political and social concerns."16

The study from 1998 also found that 61% of literacy volunteers said learning new skills was very important. This motivator was even stronger in CLO's current survey: 90% reported that learning new skills was very important.

Voluntary Sector

The 2000 National Survey on Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP)¹⁷ asked Canadians about the

^{15.} Community Literacy of Ontario, "The Economic Value of Volunteers in Community Literacy Agencies in Ontario." Barrie, ON: Community Literacy of Ontario, 1998. p. 29.

^{16.} Ibid.

^{17.} Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, National Survey of Giving, "Volunteering and Participating: Motivations and Barriers for Volunteering" factsheet. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2004.

influence of eight potential factors in motivating them to volunteer. Ninety-five percent reported the top motivator to be belief in the cause. This is consistent with CLO's finding that 91% of volunteers reported wanting to make a difference in the life of another individual. Other important factors in the NSGVP survey include:

- 1. the opportunity to use their skills and experiences (81%)
- 2. being personally affected by the cause (69%)
- 3. to explore one's own strengths (57%)
- 4. because of friends volunteering (30%)
- 5. to fulfill religious obligations or beliefs (29%)
- 6. to improve job opportunities (23%)¹⁸

In the study "Motivations for Volunteering with Youth-Oriented Programs," Riemer et al.¹⁹ found the top three motivators were (in sequence):

- 1. Helping the community
- 2. Social interactions
- 3. Helping others

Although the sequencing differs from CLO's findings (helping others, helping the community, social interactions), there is consistency between the top three motivators in both studies.

In another report for the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, David Lasby found that 81% of the NSGVP respondents said they were motivated by the opportunity to use their skills or experiences. Although CLO's survey did not list this particular motivator, a small percentage of respondents self-identified this as one of the opportunities they were seeking. For example, one person wrote the opportunity provided him or her with "the chance to

^{18.} Michael Hall, Larry McKeown, Karen Roberts, "Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating," Ottawa: Minister of the Industry, 2001.

^{19.} Harold Riemer, Kim D. Dorsch, Larena Hoebner, David M. Paskevich, and Packianathan Chelladurai. Motivations for Volunteering with Youth-Oriented Programs. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2004.

^{20.} David Lasby. The Volunteer Spirit in Canada: Motivations and Barriers. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2004. This particular finding from the NSGVP study suggests a strong connection between the skills and experience base of individuals and their motivation for volunteering. In the recruitment chapter of this report, we explore this connection in greater detail.

apply the skills I have." Similarly, a number of volunteers in both the surveys and focus groups indicated they were retired teachers and were motivated by the opportunity to continue teaching and apply the skills they already had.

The NSGVP results also indicate that 69% of volunteers became involved because they or someone they knew was affected by weak literacy skills. Again, the CLO survey did not list this as a specific motivator; however, we did include it as a possible reason why people continue to volunteer. Forty-two percent indicated that they knew someone affected by weak literacy skills.

In examining the reasons for volunteering, Lasby argues that it is important to link the motivations of volunteers with demographic characteristics, including age, education and household income.²¹ In CLO's study, only 23% of the literacy volunteers indicated they were motivated by the opportunity to improve their job opportunities. However, Lasby notes that, for those between the ages of 15 and 24, 55% of respondents to the NSGVP said they volunteered to improve job opportunities, and 71% were motivated to explore their own strengths.²² Similarly, another report for the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy found that 62% of NSGVP respondents believed volunteering would increase their chances of finding employment. For unemployed youth, this rate jumped to 78%. Additionally, 49% of youth reported that volunteering gave them new skills that could be directly applied to the workplace.²³

The NSGVP found that only 26% of volunteers said they volunteered to fulfill religious obligations or beliefs, but 50% of volunteers over the age of 65 reported this as a motivator.²⁴ It also appears that the influence of friends as a motivator varies according to age and education. For

^{21.} Ibid.

^{22.} Ibid.

^{23.} Norah McClintock. Understanding Canadian Volunteers: Using the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating to Build Your Volunteer Program. Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2004.

^{24.} Ibid., Lasby, 2004.

example, both the youngest and oldest age groups were more likely to volunteer because their friends volunteered than the age groups between the extremes. Additionally, the author found that volunteers with less than a high school diploma were much more likely to volunteer because their friends did (44% compared with 30% for the national average).

Research into the barriers affecting the willingness of Canadians and Ontarians to volunteer clearly identifies that the number one barrier is the lack of time. Sixty-nine percent of non-volunteers reported that having no extra time was their greatest barrier, followed by the unwillingness to provide a year-round commitment (46%), they give money instead (38%), not being personally asked (37%) and no interest (25%).²⁵ This overwhelming concern with time is consistent with the results from CLO's research.

Further analysis of the barriers reveals that younger Canadians are the most likely to report they do not have time. Younger Canadians are also more likely to report they have not been personally asked. Additionally, Statistics Canada's 1998 General Social Survey found that one third of Canadians between the ages of 25 and 44 consider themselves workaholics. The same survey found that married mothers who worked full-time reported the highest levels of stress. ²⁶ These findings from other studies may be important for literacy agencies in Ontario. For example, if recruiters are targeting younger adults, they should be aware of the perceived time barriers and the need to be personally asked.

Older adults are more likely to report health and mobility problems as barriers, and they are more likely to say that they have already made their contributions to volunteering and do not want to volunteer more. Men, more than women are more likely to say they don't volunteer because they have no interest.²⁷

^{25.} McClintock, 2004; Lasby, 2004.

^{26.} Ibid.

^{27.} Ibid.

Conclusions

It is clear from CLO's quantitative and qualitative research that the top two reasons why literacy volunteers become involved are: (1) to make a difference in the life of someone else, and (2) to increase literacy skills in their communities. When designing recruitment strategies targeting the traditional volunteer, both the messaging and the channels used to reach prospective volunteers should reflect these key motivators. For example, an agency might create an advertisement, brochure or poster that asks prospective volunteers, "Do you like to read? Want to help others who have difficulty reading and writing? Want to make a difference in your community?"

The discrepancy between the stated importance of job skills development on the part of volunteers and the perception of its importance by agency staff is significant. If, for example, agencies are designing recruitment messages around this perception, the message is not as likely to resonate with prospective volunteers as if the message focuses on "making a difference in the life of another person in your community."

It is important to recognize, however, that, currently, older Ontarians are significantly more represented as literacy volunteers than younger Ontarians. Therefore, it is not surprising that an opportunity for developing job skills would not be as important to them as it might be for younger volunteers. The findings from the NSGVP suggest that, for the general Canadian volunteer population and for younger adults in particular, the opportunity for skills development is very important. As well, the overwhelming motivator for most literacy volunteers of wanting to make a difference negates the employment-related motivator in many ways.

The findings also indicate that the greatest barrier for literacy volunteers is insufficient time, a finding that is consistent with the NSGVP results. For agencies, addressing this barrier at all levels is essential, beginning with the design of specific volunteer job descriptions. For example, agencies may want to consider more episodic volunteer commitments, more flexible scheduling and the use of Internet technology to help address this barrier.

Moreover, for those agencies targeting younger volunteers, addressing this barrier and the related concern about a year-long commitment will need to be key elements of the message delivered to this particular target audience. For example, a message that says "10 hours that will change your life" could capture their attention and help assuage their fears.



Recruitment

Introduction

As part of our research, CLO was interested in obtaining a better understanding of how literacy volunteers are currently recruited. In this chapter, CLO examines the current recruitment practices reported by literacy agencies and the volunteers. We also consider the recruitment methods thought to be most effective, as identified by both agencies and volunteers. Finally, CLO compares our findings with results from other research.

Agency Surveys

It is apparent from the survey returns that (1) word of mouth, (2) posters and brochures, (3) advertising and write-ups in local newspapers, and (4) community events are the most often-used methods used for recruiting volunteers. Of the 53 respondents, 89% reported relying on word of mouth from current or past students, volunteers or staff. Eighty-three percent of respondents equally reported using posters/brochures in public places and local newspaper advertisements/articles. Eighty-one percent reported using community activities as a way of recruiting.

Table 10 – Agency Recruitment Methods

Recruitment Method	Frequency of response (%)
Word of mouth from current or past students, volunteers or staff	89%
Posters / brochures in public places	83%
Local newspaper advertisements/articles	83%
Community activities	81%
Ask them directly	70%
Fundraising events	64%
Television public service announcements	34%
Local mall promotions	32%
Radio public service announcements	28%
Other	38%

Thirty-eight percent of the sample indicated they used methods other than those listed in the survey. Use of the Internet, either through their own websites, the local volunteer centre site, a library site or Charity Village, was a common method reported. Additional methods reported include:

- ► Ads at the volunteer centres in the community and university
- ► Presentations to service clubs, rotary clubs, Chambers of Commerce, Retired Teachers' Associations
- ► Ontario Works community placement referrals
- ► Interagency luncheon
- ► Doctors' and lawyers' offices

Agency respondents were also asked an open question about recruiting: "What do you feel is the most effective way to recruit volunteers?" The results are consistent with those from the previous question. Almost half of the

respondents to this question (49%) identified word of mouth or asking them directly as one of, if not, the most effective ways. Additionally, 28% reported that newspaper articles and/or advertising was the most effective. Interestingly, although 83% reported using posters or brochures, only 6% referenced print materials to be the most effective.

Other preferred methods include the Internet, various community events and fundraisers. Additionally, several people reported that the most effective way to recruit volunteers involves using a variety of materials and media.

Volunteer Surveys

In the volunteer survey, respondents were asked, "Where did you find out about the opportunity to volunteer with your agency?" Table 11 highlights the distribution of answers from the 204 respondents. Local newspapers were cited most often (28%), followed by current or past volunteers (18%), being asked by someone from the agency (17%), a poster/brochure in a public place (11%) and friend or family (10%). Interestingly, 30% of the respondents reported "other" sources for finding out about the opportunity. Of the "other" sources, there were two interesting trends that were self-identified: learning about the opportunity to volunteer through the Internet or their local library. Given that these two methods were rarely mentioned by literacy staff, agencies may be missing out on two valuable recruitment opportunities.

It is apparent that newspapers and word-of-mouth requests are working well for agencies in attracting volunteers. Conversely, it appears that other methods, including radio and television public service announcements (PSAs), mall promotions and fundraising events are not as effective according to the responses from volunteers. However, because of costs, it may also be that these methods simply are not used as frequently as the others.

Table 11 – Recruitment Methods Reported by Volunteers

Recruitment Method	Frequency of response (%)
Other	30%
Local newspaper	28%
Current or past volunteer	18%
Asked by someone from agency	17%
Poster/brochure in public place	11%
Friend or family member	10%
Television PSA	3%
Community centre	3%
Radio PSA	3%
Local mall promotion	2%
Service club	2%
Current or past student	2%
Fundraising event	1%
Church or religious group	1%

In a subsequent question, volunteers were asked to identify ways their literacy agencies could recruit volunteers more effectively. The most often-cited suggestion was the use of the paid advertising and interest stories through the media outlets, including local newspapers, radio and television. Other frequently cited suggestions included print materials (e.g., brochures, posters, flyers, bulletin boards and displays); schools (high schools, college and universities); community presentations and partnerships (e.g. stronger links with community groups, interagency meetings and presentations to service organizations); word of mouth; retired workers and corporate recruiting.

Focus Groups

In all five focus groups, participants were asked how they learned of the opportunity to volunteer with literacy agencies, and they were also asked for recommendations on how agencies could improve their recruiting efforts. Additionally, participants were asked to discuss what they liked about their volunteer experiences to get a better understanding of what might be of value to prospective volunteers.

The responses provided by the participants support the survey research. Participants reported learning of the voluntary opportunities in their communities primarily through word of mouth, advertising and newspaper articles. An interesting difference between the responses in Sharbot Lake and the other areas concerns the effectiveness of using the media. As one participant in Sharbot Lake reported, "Word of mouth seems to work best here. Advertising through the media is not very effective." Conversely, participants in Hamilton, Sudbury and Barrie reported learning of the opportunities through newspaper articles or advertisements.

Similar results were found when participants were asked to recommend ways their agencies could improve the recruiting. The following is a list of some of the responses provided:

- ► Increase awareness about literacy issues
- ► Make people aware of what literacy is. Not just people who can't read or write.
- ▶ Open house—recruitment fair—get the word out
- ► Mall displays, kiosks
- ► Local libraries need to provide information
- ► More direct, in your face approach to connect with people
- ► Students at teachers college would get valuable teaching experience. Also actively recruit retired teachers.
- ► Word of mouth

- ► Get the message out to high school students. Try to recruit volunteers for their community service hours.
- ► More money for advertising
- ► Use service groups to promote
- ► Company meetings to promote literacy council
- ▶ Utilize retirees. Have information sessions at legions, etc.

Agencies' Focus Group

As part of the on-line focus group with literacy agency representatives, participants were asked if they used different recruitment strategies for different types of volunteers. The following are some of the strategies identified by participants:

- ▶ word-of-mouth recruiting for board members
- ► PSAs, volunteer fairs and job fairs for recruiting tutors
- ► Altruvest (an online volunteer matching service)
- posters in libraries
- ▶ offering job search resources
- offering skill-building and training opportunities as an incentive
- ► advertising in various locations.

Volunteer Recruitment Tracking

Agencies were also asked whether they tracked their recruiting efforts. Sixty-six percent reported that they did track their recruiting efforts. In the focus group with agency representatives, participants reported using a combination of formal and informal methods. Informal methods reported include discussions in staff meetings, a period review with staff of recruitment efforts and general inquiries with current or new volunteers of how or why they came to volunteer with the agency. Other, more formal methods reported include questions on volunteer application and screening forms; questions during the

screening sessions; and tracking mechanisms during recruiting blitzes. When asked what would assist them with their tracking, participants reported checklists, additional on-line resources and reminders in CLO's newsletters of the importance of tracking recruitment in general. However, a lack of time for formal tracking was identified as a significant limitation.

Trends and Issues in Literacy and the Voluntary Sector

The review of literature found a considerable number of practical resources on recruiting literacy volunteers.²⁸ However, as reported by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy in 2001, there appears to be a shortage of primary research in this area of volunteer management.²⁹

For 66% of Ontario's literacy agencies, it appears the number of volunteers has declined over the past five years, a finding consistent with the most recent National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating (NSGVP) survey, which found that volunteerism in Canada fell from 7.5 million in 1997 to 6.5 million in 2000³⁰. This reality presents both a significant challenge and opportunity for agencies trying to recruit. On the one hand, the marked decline of over 13% in the number of volunteers suggests that fewer Canadians are interested in volunteering. On the other hand, however, the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy suggests "there is great potential to spread the volunteerism message..., especially [to] the 73% who did not volunteer at all."³¹

^{28.} See for example, Community Literacy of Ontario's "Beyond Recruitment: An Online Workshop About Recruiting & Maintaining Volunteers in the New Environment." Barrie, ON: Community Literacy of Ontario, April/May 2000; Susan J. Ellis, "The Volunteer Recruitment Book", Philadelphia: ENERGIZE, Inc., 1994; Julea Boswell and Cindy Lyon, "Building Volunteer Value: A Marketing Based Workbook for Recruitment and Retention." Toronto: Capacity Builders at OCSA, 2002.

^{29.} Michael Hall, A-J McKechnie, Katie Davidman, Fleur Leslie. "An Environmental Scan on Volunteering and Improving Volunteering." Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, June, 2001. The authors found that voluntary organizations "were poorly informed about what initially brings a person to volunteer in a particular place."

^{30.} Michael Hall, Larry McKeown, Karen Roberts. "Caring Canadians, Involved Canadians: Highlights from the 2000 National Survey, of Giving, Volunteering and Participating." Ottawa: Minister of Industry, 2001.

^{31.} McClintock, 2004; p. 2.

Analysis of the NSGVP data reveals a number of trends important to not-for-profit organizations, including literacy agencies, wanting to recruit:

- 1 The majority of volunteer work comes from a small minority of volunteers—25% of volunteers contributed 73% of the total volunteer hours, while 25% of volunteers contributed less than 1% of the total hours.
- 2 Religiously motivated volunteerism has declined but is still very important—from 1997 to 2000, there was a decline in religiously-affiliated volunteerism from 46% to 41%. However, this segment of the population is still much more likely to volunteer than those Canadians who do not attend weekly religious services.
- **Time has become an even greater barrier to volunteering**—volunteers cited the lack of time as the
 number one reason for not volunteering more, while nonvolunteers said it was their top barrier. Additionally, the
 unwillingness to make a year-long commitment was cited
 by both volunteers and non-volunteers as the second major
 barrier.
- 4 Obtaining job skills is becoming more important—62% of all unemployed volunteers thought volunteering would improve their job prospects (up from 54% in 1997), and an amazing 78% of unemployed youth felt this way (up from 65% in 1997).
- **5** A slight increase in employer support—47% of volunteers reported receiving support from their employers, an increase of 3% from 1997.

The findings from the 2000 and 1997 NSGVP studies indicate that most people who become involved as volunteers do so because they were personally asked by someone associated with the organization. The 2000 survey found that 30% of volunteers first became involved because someone from the organization had asked them. Additionally, 15% became involved because a member of the organization had asked, 12% became involved because

a child or spouse was involved, and 9% were asked by a friend or relative.³²

Perhaps an even more important finding from the NSGVP concerns one of the key reasons non-volunteers reported for not becoming involved. In 2000, 38% of Canadians reported they did not volunteer because they were not asked. For younger Canadians, the rate is even higher. Almost one half (49%) of Canadians between the ages of 15 and 24 reported they did not volunteer because they were not asked. Similarly, 43% of those between the ages of 25 and 34 reported this as a barrier to involvement (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2003).

In interviews held by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy with 111 volunteers from social service organizations and community associations, Phillips et al. examined volunteers' perceptions of ways to improve volunteer recruitment. The authors categorized the recommendations into four stages of recruitment: (1) selling the organization, cause or need; (2) making contact; (3) making a good first impression; and (4) matching and screening.³³

The results from their research suggest there remains the need for informing the public "why volunteers are needed, why the cause is worthwhile, why volunteering is beneficial and why the organization is a good choice." Additionally, the volunteers reported to the authors the most effective ways of recruiting volunteers were through word-of-mouth and invitations to friends or neighbours. Advertising in newspapers and the Internet and community events were also identified as good ways of making initial contact. The volunteers also reported the importance of clearly identifying and communicating organizational expectations of the volunteers, what they will be doing, the amount of time required and their volunteer schedule.³⁴

^{32.} Hall, et al., 2001.

^{33.} Susan Phillips, Brian R. Little, Laura Goodine. "Recruiting, Retaining and Rewarding Volunteers: What Volunteers Have to Say." Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2002.

^{34.} Ibid.

Conclusions

The results of the research from both literacy agencies and volunteers suggest the two most effective methods for recruiting volunteers are word of mouth and the local media, especially newspapers. These findings are consistent with what other research has found, suggesting that literacy agencies both understand and are implementing effective recruitment methods.

Research conducted by the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy and the results of the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating strongly identify the importance and effectiveness of using word-of-mouth marketing to recruit volunteers. Relying on brochures and posters simply is not enough; people are much more likely to volunteer if they are asked by someone within or associated with the organization. This is particularly important when recruiting younger volunteers.

Both literacy volunteers and the agencies have identified the importance and value of the local newspapers as part of the recruitment strategy. Again, this finding is supported by Canadian Centre for Philanthropy research, which suggests that the value of using the media is likely related to increasing awareness about the importance of literacy as a community issue. However, there may be a discrepancy between the effectiveness of the local media in urban versus rural communities. Many focus group participants in the urban areas reported learning of the volunteer opportunities through their local media; however, in the rural focus group, participants reported the ineffectiveness of this method for recruitment.

According to the volunteers themselves, some of the traditional forms of recruitment, including posters and brochures, mall promotions and television/radio PSAs are still effective, just less so than word of mouth. Therefore, agencies are encouraged to closely examine the cost-effectiveness of these methods prior to implementation and then evaluate their success after recruitment has been completed.

Finally, because lack of time and flexibility of scheduling have been identified as key barriers to volunteering, agencies need to incorporate these messages into their recruitment planning. For example, advertising that a program "offers a variety of volunteer opportunities, some with flexible scheduling and minimal time investment," might be enough to reduce the importance of the perceived time barrier and encourage the individual to investigate further. The research indicates this is particularly important for recruiting younger volunteers, who regularly report that they do not volunteer because of insufficient time.



Screening and Training

Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the surveys and focus groups pertaining to the topics of screening and training are examined. Community Literacy of Ontario's goal with this part of the research was to better understand how many literacy agencies employ a screening process, how many offer training to their volunteers and what kinds of training they offer. CLO was interested in learning more about the importance of training and skills development from the volunteer's perspective, and comparing those findings with research conducted in other studies.

Screening Practices

Agencies were asked to indicate whether they used a screening process and, if so, to indicate from a list of six choices what specific methods they used. They were also provided with the opportunity to identify "other" methods not in the list.

Virtually every agency reported having some form of screening process (98%). Table 12 highlights the methods used. Fifty-two of the 53 respondents reported using a screening process, 96% said they used volunteer interviews. Almost as many (94%) reported using volunteer applications, while 79% said they used clear job descriptions. Sixty-three percent reported using reference checks, and 37% said they relied on police record checks.

Table 12 – Volunteer Screening Methods used by Literacy Agencies

Screening Method	Frequency of response (%)
Volunteer interviews	96%
Volunteer application forms	94%
Clear job descriptions for volunteers	79%
Reference checks	63%
Police record checks	37%
Other	19%

Nineteen percent reported using additional methods for screening, including the following:

- ► Basic tutor training course
- ► Placement students are screened by college and interviewed by the ED/Lead facilitator
- ► Phone and/or e-mail screening before interview
- ► On-line orientation
- ► A signed term and adherence to policy commitment form—a confidentiality commitment form
- ► Risk assessment.

Training

Agency Surveys

Agencies were asked to identify if they offered training to their tutors, as well as to volunteers other than tutors. All but one agency reported offering training to their tutors. Additionally, 58% reported that they offered training opportunities to volunteers who are not tutors. Other positions available in literacy agencies include board and committee work, fundraising, special events, record keeping and report writing. Respondents were also asked to indicate if they provide volunteers with opportunities for trying

different tasks. Eighty-nine percent indicated that they do provide additional opportunities.³⁵

In the focus group with agency representatives, participants were asked how they currently provide ongoing training opportunities to volunteers. Additionally, they were asked what resources might help them with their volunteer training needs. The following are some of the answers provided to these two questions:

Currently providing ongoing training opportunities

- ► We provide training manuals. We recently changed it to make it more module-based. That way, if they miss the face-to-face, they can still review the information.
- ► We accompany new tutors to training opportunities at the Volunteer Coordinators' Association meetings and conferences.
- ► Conferences and workshops are offered openly to volunteers as much as staff. We also inform volunteers of community board training.
- ▶ We hold regular meetings to openly discuss issues that arise.
- ► We [go through] a questionnaire with tutors annually, [asking them] 'what would you like information on?" There is usually a diversity of responses—not usually common issues.

Several participants also identified a number of challenges they face with volunteer training. For example, one participant said, "Unfortunately, there is not a lot of community training available or cost-effective training available for the rural communities." Another reported a similar concern: "Regional boundaries have changed. There are few opportunities for regional volunteer training."

Suggestions for additional resources

Agency focus group participants identified a number of additional resources that could be of benefit to them, including:

58

^{35.} Prior to this study, CLO conducted in-depth research into tutor training methods and needs in Ontario. Please view the Skills for the Future (Phases 1, 2 and 3) research online at http://www.nald.ca/PROVINCE/ONT/CLO/pratrain/pt.htm

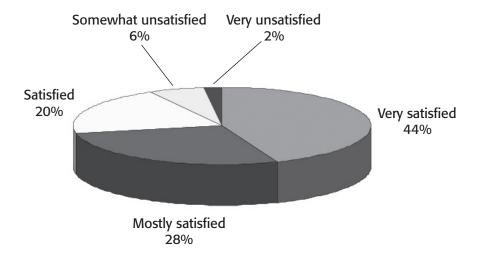


- ► Any kind of training that is online
- ► More conferences in the literacy field that are available to volunteers
- ➤ Specific training related to the learners they are working with, including those with learning disabilities
- ► Training manuals
- ► More print and/or web-based materials
- ► Additional financial resources to offer training
- ► Resources and opportunities for training for administrative volunteers (not just literacy tutoring)

Volunteer Surveys

In the volunteer survey, respondents were asked a number of questions associated with training. Eighty-two percent indicated that they had received training to assist them with their volunteer responsibilities. Moreover, of the 168 respondents who said they did receive training, 99% reported their level of satisfaction with the training. Forty-four percent indicated they were very satisfied, 28% said they were mostly satisfied, and 20% reported being satisfied. Six percent indicated they were somewhat satisfied, and 2% reported being very unsatisfied.

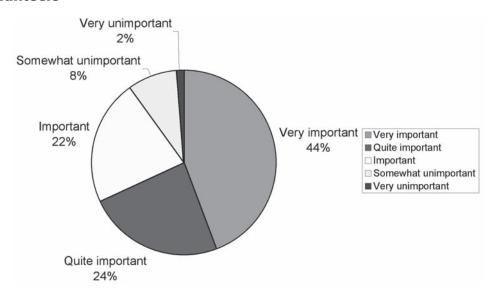
Figure 2 — Levels of Satisfaction with Training as Reported by Volunteers



Volunteers were also asked what supports they have received to help them do their volunteer work. Seventy-six percent said they received training, making it the second most often cited support, following *open communication with staff*. Volunteers were then asked to identify any additional supports they would like to receive. Forty percent of the respondents to this question reported they would like to receive training or more training than they currently receive. This finding further supports the value and importance volunteers place on training to help them complete their volunteer work.

Volunteers were also asked to indicate how important learning new skills was to them. The responses to this question clearly show the significance of learning new skills once people become literacy volunteers. In total, 90% of respondents said learning new skills was either very important, quite important or somewhat important. This is significant for literacy practitioners to consider when developing strategies to recruit and retain volunteers. Interestingly, while not identified as a top motivator for becoming or staying a literacy volunteer, when asked separately, volunteers reported that training is, indeed, an important facet of their volunteer experience.

Figure 3 — The Importance of Learning New Skills as Reported by Volunteers



The volunteers were also asked to report whether they had acquired any new skills and knowledge through their volunteering. Eighty-three percent of respondents reported they had acquired new skills and knowledge. The top four reported skills acquired are *teaching and instructional strategies* (79%), *listening skills* (67%), *communication skills* (60%), and *planning/problem solving skills* (50%).

When asked what else literacy organizations could do to make the volunteers' experiences more rewarding, participants from several of the focus groups identified the need for additional training. Participant comments included, "Training is important and should be ongoing" and "Training can be too little too late. [They] need to offer it more often." Volunteers also indicated there should be more opportunities for sharing of ideas and knowledge. Comments included, "We need more workshops and discussion groups for sharing best practices."

Trends and Issues in Literacy and the Voluntary Sector

Community Literacy of Ontario has been a leader in volunteer training research and development in Ontario.³⁶ The 1998 Economic Value of Volunteers report found that 89% of literacy volunteers reported that new skill acquisition was *very important* or *somewhat important*. This figure is very similar to the results from CLO's current study, which found that 90% of volunteers said learning new skills was *very important*, *quite important* or *important*.³⁷ Interestingly, whereas 68% of volunteers from the 1998 study reported acquiring new skills, 83% of respondents in the current study reported acquiring new skills and knowledge.

From the review of literature, there appears to be little research outside the literacy field examining the volunteer

^{36.} See, for example, Community Literacy of Ontario, "The Economic Value of Volunteers in Community Literacy Agencies in Ontario." Barrie, ON: Community Literacy of Ontario, April 1998; and Community Literacy of Ontario, Skills for the Future: Practitioner Training Strategy—Project Report." Barrie, ON: Community Literacy of Ontario, October 2000.

^{37.} It is important to note that the two studies employed different scales for this question.

training needs and evaluating the success of training,³⁸ despite the fact that Canadians have strongly indicated that learning new skills as a strong volunteer motivator. The 1997 and 2000 NSGVP studies identify the importance of skills development as an accrued benefit of volunteering. Key areas of skills development reported by volunteers include *interpersonal skills*, *communication skills*, *organization and managerial skills*, *fundraising skills* and *technical or office skills*.³⁹ In **More than Willing Hands**, the Canadian Museums Association argues for the increased importance of entry-level training of replacement volunteers. The authors also state, "Beyond providing basic training, it is increasingly important to invest in continuing programs aimed at updating and enhancing skills among volunteers employed in key positions."⁴⁰

Conclusions

It is clear that volunteer screening is an important part of the volunteer management cycle for literacy agencies. Ninety-eight percent of Ontario's community literacy agencies are using one or more methods to ensure volunteers are properly screened, and the two most common methods are volunteer interviews and the volunteer application forms.

Similarly, literacy agencies recognize the importance of providing training to their volunteers. Almost every agency offers training of some kind, and 58% reported that they provide training to volunteers other than tutors. Complementing the training opportunities they provide, 89% of literacy agencies provide opportunities for volunteers to try different tasks.

^{38.} See, for example, A-J McKechnie, Monique Newton, Michael H. Hall. "An Assessment of the State of Voluntary Sector Research and Current Research Needs." Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, August 2000; Warren Dow. "Content and Gap Analysis of Recent (Post-2000) Cross-Cutting Canadian Voluntary Sector Research." For the Moving Forward: Linking Practice and Research with the Voluntary Sector National Symposium, January 24-25, 2003.

^{39.} Hall et al., 2001.

^{40.} Canadian Museums Association, "More Than Willing Hands: A Report on Voluntarism at Museums." Ottawa: Canadian Museums Association, 2001. p.10.

It also clear that volunteers value the training they receive. An incredible 92% of volunteers reported being very satisfied, mostly satisfied or satisfied with the training they are receiving. Additionally, 83% of volunteers said they had acquired new skills and knowledge through their volunteer experiences. Considering the importance placed upon both new skill development and training as original motivators (51% and 44%, respectively), having both valuable and meaningful training and the opportunity to learn new skills is critical for meeting volunteers' intrinsic needs.

Although volunteers have been satisfied with the training they have received, it is important for agencies to recognize that 40% of volunteers indicated that they would like to receive additional training. Moreover, literacy volunteers place a very high value on learning new skills. Ninety percent said skills acquisition was very important, quite important or important.



Retention and Recognition

Introduction

For many organizations, one of the more difficult stages of the voluntary management cycle is the retention of volunteers. Increasingly, not-for-profit organizations have also become concerned with evaluating the performance and experiences of volunteers, for the benefit of the organization as well as for the individual volunteer. In this chapter, CLO examines the retention, recognition and performance evaluation practices of community literacy agencies, using results from the surveys and focus groups.

Retention

As part of their questionnaire, agencies were provided with a list of possible retention methods and asked to indicate which ones they used with their volunteers.

Table 13 highlights the various methods agencies use. It is clear the top methods employed by literacy agencies relate to providing agency support, social interactions with other volunteers and training and skills development opportunities. Seemingly less important but still used by approximately half of the agencies surveyed are growth opportunities, employment experiences, needs surveys and performance reviews.

Table 13 – Volunteer Retention Methods

Method	Frequency of response (%)
Offer ongoing support from agency staff	92%
Provide opportunities to meet with other volunteers	81%
Offer training to strengthen skills	79%
Hold regular meetings in person/over the phone	74%
Provide opportunities to learn new skills	68%
Offer new opportunities/tasks to challenge and encourage growth	53%
Provide employment experience	49%
Survey their needs	49%
Assess and review their performance with them	42%
Other	13%

During the agency focus group and in the agency survey, participants were asked to discuss their greatest challenges in retaining volunteers. Responses from the participants include the following:

- ► Issues associated with paperwork
- ► Tutors becoming frustrated when learners consistently do not come for sessions
- ➤ Difficulties retaining office volunteers because most are seeking employment
- ▶ Replacing aging board members who want to retire
- ► Lack of financial resources to provide more volunteer management supports

As a potential retention issue, agency representatives were also asked to report whether they assess the performance of their volunteers. Fifty-eight percent reported that they do conduct performance assessments. Although no second level questions were posed in the survey, agency focus group participants reported that lack of time and resources limited their ability to conduct performance evaluations.

Volunteer Surveys

We have already noted that the average length of volunteer service is 3.5 years. Literacy volunteers are also clearly satisfied with their volunteer experiences. When asked to indicate their level of satisfaction, 54% reported they were very satisfied, while 33% reported being mostly satisfied, and 9% reported being satisfied. Only 3% reported being somewhat satisfied, and only one reported being very unsatisfied. Moreover, of the 204 respondents, 73% reported that in the future they planned to volunteer the same amount of time as they are currently give. An additional 17% indicated they planned to volunteer more, while only 3% said they were planning to volunteer less. These findings suggest that literacy agencies are meeting the needs and expectations of their volunteers very well, while the volunteers themselves continue to be very loyal to their programs.

Additionally, volunteers were asked to identify the different reasons why they continue to volunteer with their literacy agencies. Table 14 reveals that volunteers are motivated to continue for a variety of reasons. At the top are the same two motivators that inspired them to volunteer in the first place: the desire to make a difference in someone's life and to improve the literacy skills within their communities. It is also clear that volunteers feel well supported by the program staff, are stimulated by their work and derive enjoyment from the social aspects of their volunteer experience.

Table 14 – Motivations for Continuing to Volunteer

Motivations	Frequency of response (%)
I feel that I am making a difference in another person's life	84%
I feel that I am contributing to increasing literacy skills in my community	79%
I feel supported by program staff	72%
I enjoy the challenge offered by my volunteer work	68%
I enjoy the warm and encouraging atmosphere	66%
I enjoy the social interaction	64%
I am growing personally	55%
I enjoy the flexible hours	54%
I am learning new skills	42%
I know someone affected by literacy challenges	42%
I enjoy the training I receive	33%
I am learning job-related skills	18%
Other	8%
I am mandated to do community service	3%

By comparing the original motivations for becoming literacy volunteers with their motivations for continuing, we see several interesting changes. First, while 91% of respondents indicated they originally volunteered to make a difference in someone's life, only 84% said this is why they continue to volunteer. Interestingly, the 7% drop in the first motivator is offset by an increase of 7% in the second motivator: contributing to increasing literacy skills in their communities.

Additionally, while only 57% of volunteers identified social interaction as an original motivator, 64% of them indicated that it was a reason for continuing to volunteer. Finally, both learning new skills and training do not appear to be as important motivators for continuing as they did for originally pursuing the volunteer opportunity.

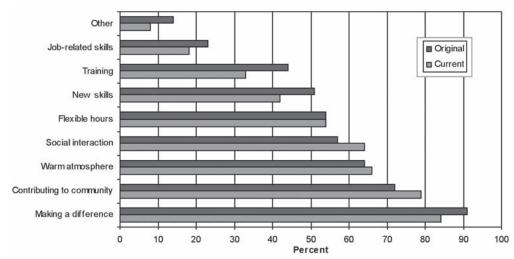


Figure 4 — Current Versus Original Motivations for Volunteering as Repor

As a partial indicator of their satisfaction, volunteers were also asked to identify if they would be willing to assume new or additional roles in their agencies. Forty-two percent reported that they would be willing. When asked what roles they might be interested in, a number of different categories emerged and are presented below.

Table 15 – Areas of Additional Volunteer Role Involvement

Category	Number of times cited (N=86)
Additional tutoring/instruction	32
Office/administration	16
Events	14
Board or Committee work	12
Fundraising	12
Computer teaching	11
Anything	10
Other/not clear	6
Communications/PR	5
Report writing	3
Other student activities	3
Tutor training/workshops	3

For those volunteers who indicated they would not be willing to assume new or additional roles, the explanations were numerous, but clearly the number one reason is associated with not having enough time.

Table 16 – Reasons for Not Volunteering More

Category	Number of times cited (N=112)
No more time	45
Satisfied with current commitment	20
Work-related constraints	15
Other volunteer commitments	15
Family	11
Other/not specified	10
Health	7
Transportation	5
Other commitments	5
School	3

Volunteers were also asked to indicate whether they felt their literacy agencies were making the most of their time and skills. Eighty-nine percent thought their time and skills were being used well. Of the respondents who said "no," several spoke of the importance of additional training to help them with their students, while several others identified specific skills (e.g., human resources and teaching) that they thought could be better used.

Volunteer Focus Groups

In the focus groups with volunteers, participants were asked to discuss ways agencies could make literacy volunteers' experiences more rewarding. Participants in several focus groups identified increased and ongoing training as an important reward. This finding is consistent with the importance volunteers place on the value of training and

new skills development. Other suggestions identified during the focus groups include the following:

- ► Good communication and support from the staff
- ► Sharing of resources and knowledge among volunteers
- ► Involvement of volunteers in organizational decision making
- ▶ Better use of volunteers' professional skills.

Recognition

Both volunteers and agencies were asked to report on their respective agencies' recognition efforts. Community Literacy of Ontario's survey clearly found that all literacy agencies recognize their volunteers. It is also clear that agencies use both informal and formal methods as part of their recognition efforts. Eighty-three percent reported using informal methods, including notes and phone calls. Additionally, 75% reported hosting luncheons or public recognition events, 62% said they offer rewards or incentives, and 47% said they promote their volunteers' achievements through the local media.

Based on the survey returns and the results from the focus group with agency representatives, specific ways literacy volunteers are recognized include:

- ► Ministry of Citizenship recognition
- ► Newsletter—public thanks
- ► Volunteer gift during Volunteer Appreciation Week
- ► Nominate volunteer(s) for special community recognition
- ► Literacy class does volunteer recognition projects
- Agency promotes volunteer achievements/recognition on our web site
- ► Fruit baskets at Christmas for long-term volunteers
- ► Perennial garden in honour of long-term (5+ years) volunteers



- ► Invite them to special events at school
- ► Letters of reference
- Reports to teacher education institutions upon request
- ► Volunteers are recognized at AGM
- ► Volunteer of the month—pictures up at all centres
- ► Special volunteer-only speaker events
- ► Send cards if ill or death in family
- ▶ Put their names forward for provincial and other recognition pins
- Volunteer recognition in annual report
- ► Include in staff activities and meetings
- ► Luncheons
- ► Birthday cards
- Certificates for Tim Hortons
- ► Specially prepared letters and cards from their own learners saying why they appreciate the volunteers. It's good practice for learners in editing and writing, and it's great recognition for volunteers.
- ▶ Name inscribed on a plaque in the community garden
- ► An anthology honouring volunteers, and all the learners and tutors wrote about their experiences

Volunteers

Volunteers were asked several questions about the recognition they receive from their agencies. First, they were asked, simply, if they received any recognition for their services. Ninety-five percent indicated they did. Of the many ways they reported being recognized (respondents were asked to identify three), the following list highlights the major informal and formal methods that emerged from their responses.

Informal Recognition

- ► Verbal thank you
- ► Cards and notes
- ► Thanks from students
- ► Support by agency
- ► Social activities

Formal Recognition

- ► Certificates
- ► Volunteer appreciation events/ ceremonies
- ► Recognition at AGM
- **►** Gifts
- ► Awards
- ▶ Dinners/lunches
- ► Government recognition
- ► Volunteer pin
- ► Through local media
- ► Newsletter
- ► At meetings
- ▶ Training

Volunteers were also asked to identify whether the recognition they received was adequate. Ninety-four percent reported they thought the recognition they were receiving was adequate, suggesting an overwhelming degree of satisfaction with the recognition they receive.

Finally, volunteers were asked to identify the ways in which they would like to be recognized. It is clear from their responses that informal recognition is the most preferred method. Fifty-eight percent of volunteers indicated that they would like to be recognized this way (e.g., thank-you cards, phone calls, etc.). Twenty-four percent said they would like to attend recognition events (e.g., such as teas or luncheons). Additionally, 22% said they would like to receive occasional rewards or incentives, and only 7% reported that they would like to be publicly recognized (through community events, newspaper articles, etc.).

Ten percent identified other ways they would like to be recognized. Additionally, focus group participants were



asked to indicate how they would like to be recognized. The following is a list of some of the answers from both the surveys and the focus groups:

- ► Letters of reference for employment purposes
- ► Opportunities for training/learning
- ▶ Being asked to participate. Doing this survey is good.
- ► Recognition publicly and formally is not what I am about
- ► Letters, placement evaluation to facilitators
- ► The person I tutor thanks me after every session, and that is all I need
- ► A thank-you card from my student is nice
- ▶ I enjoyed the annual Christmas party, which gave the volunteers and students a chance to socialize outside the classroom
- ► It's important to get recognition from outside the [literacy] council, from employers, etc.
- ► Tutor of the year awards
- ► Small gifts—handmade by students or board members

After looking at the responses from volunteers, it is important that community literacy agencies note that the vast majority of volunteers prefer to be recognized in an informal manner.

Trends and Issues in Literacy and the Voluntary Sector

The review of literature found numerous resources available on volunteer retention and recognition, and some on evaluation; however, it appears CLO is one of the few literacy organizations to have conducted primary research into these areas. For example, the 1998 Economic Value of Volunteers research found that 68% of literacy volunteers felt volunteers received adequate recognition. Although the wording of the questions makes it difficult to accurately compare, our current research suggests that literacy volunteers are at least as satisfied with the level

of recognition they receive now, with 94% reporting the recognition they receive is adequate.⁴¹

Our research outside the literacy field indicates that there is a rapidly growing body of literature related to volunteer management issues, including retention and recognition. For example, a 2004 study of almost 3000 charitable organizations in the United States identified that charities hosting recognition activities for their volunteers have a higher volunteer retention rate than organizations that do not offer recognition activities. Similarly, a 2002 study of the Calgary Children's Initiative found that recognition of volunteers is important for "making volunteers feel that their efforts matter." Included in the list of recognition activities are personal thank-you notes, small gifts and events to celebrate volunteers.

In the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy's study of 111 Canadian social service organizations and community associations, Phillips et al. asked volunteers for recommendations for improving retention. The authors categorized the responses into three key areas: (1) showing appreciation and respect for volunteers; (2) providing meaningful and varied volunteer experiences; and (3) communicating with and being responsive to volunteers. The authors identified a fourth key factor specifically for retirees: providing staff and social support and social experiences. The volunteers indicated that demonstrations of appreciation need not be onerous. "Organizations do not have to hold an elaborate annual awards dinner. Rather, a

^{41.} Additionally, CLO has developed numerous learning and management resources for the literacy field, including:

[•] Celebrate Literacy Volunteers: A Toolkit (2001)

Beyond Recruitment: An Online Workshop About Recruitment & Maintaining Volunteers in the New Environment (April/May 2000)

[•] Together We Can Do It!: The Role of Volunteers in the Assessment Process (December 2001)

[•] Literacy Basics (www.nald.ca/literacybasics) is a free, self-directed online training website for Ontario literacy practitioners. This innovative training website was developed and designed by Community Literacy of Ontario.

^{42.} See for example, Dow, 2003; Mark A. Hager and Jeffrey L. Brudney, "Volunteer Management Practices and Retention of Volunteers," The Urban Institute, 2004.

^{43.} Hager and Brudney, 2004.

^{44.} Dawne Clark and Rena Shimoni, "Recruiting, Retaining, Supporting Volunteers for Long-term Social Change," Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2002

genuine thank-you or a comment on a job well done at the end of the day is rewarding enough for most."45

Information on performance evaluations is considerably less. In their report for the Voluntary Sector Evaluation Research Project, Hall et al. found that evaluations and performance assessments are common in the voluntary sector, and because of funder expectations, they are becoming increasingly important. The authors found that 77% of the 1,965 organizations surveyed had conducted some type of evaluation over the previous year; however, only 40% reported evaluating their volunteers' experiences. 46

Conclusions

To address their retention needs, literacy agencies employ a variety of methods to help keep volunteers motivated and valued. According to agency representatives, providing ongoing support is the number one method. And it appears to be working. Volunteers identified staff support as the number one extrinsic reason for continuing with their volunteer work.

It appears that literacy volunteers find their volunteer work rewarding. Ninety-six percent of the volunteers said they were very satisfied, mostly satisfied or satisfied with their experiences. Similarly, 89% said they thought their agencies were making the most of the time and skills they have to offer. Almost three-quarters said they planned to volunteer the same amount, and nearly one fifth said they were planning to volunteer more with their agencies. Additionally, 42% of volunteers said they would be willing to assume new or additional roles in their agency if they were asked. Key areas of interest are additional tutoring/instruction, office/administration work, working at events,

^{45.} Philips et al., 2002. See also Kim D. Dorsch, et al., "What Determines a Volunteer's Effort?" Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2002; and Kim D. Dorsch et al., "What Affects a Volunteer's Commitment?" Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, 2002.

^{46.} Hall et al., 2003.

board or committee work and fundraising. For the 58% who said they would not be willing to take on new or additional roles, insufficient time is the number one reason.

In examining their motivations for continuing to volunteer, it appears the same top original reasons that attracted them are what continue to motivate: to make a difference in another person's life, and to increase literacy skills in their communities. While there are slight changes in the strength of these motivations, they are still the driving forces behind motivating the current volunteers. Therefore it is extremely important to reinforce to the volunteers that they are definitely making a difference in students' lives and that their volunteer efforts are contributing to an increase of literacy skills in their communities.

It is also clear from the research that literacy agencies spend considerable time and resources recognizing their volunteers, both formally and informally. Virtually every agency said they had recognized their volunteers. Top among the ways volunteers said they had been recognized were verbal thank you's, volunteer appreciation events, certificates, cards and notes and recognition from students. Moreover, volunteers are clearly satisfied with the recognition they receive, and they prefer to be recognized in more informal rather than formal ways. It appears that less than one in ten literacy volunteers wants to be recognized publicly.

Finally, 58% of literacy agencies assess the performance of their volunteers. Compared with other organizations in the voluntary sector, it appears that literacy agencies are more likely to evaluate their volunteers.



Managing Volunteers

Introduction

In this chapter, CLO was interested in examining the volunteer management experiences of literacy agencies to identify key areas of challenge and opportunity.

Agency representatives were asked several questions about their volunteer management practices and experiences. First, they were asked to identify the different costs associated with managing volunteers. Table 17 highlights the responses to this question. It is clear there is a wide range of volunteer management areas that cost agencies money. Ninety-four percent indicated that ongoing support from agency staff was an expenditure. Additionally, agencies identified training (85%), recognition events and items (83%), administrative costs (83%), management time (83%) and office supplies (77%) as key volunteer management expenditures. It is very important to remember that volunteers are not "free." There are a wide variety of costs involved with supporting and managing literacy volunteers.

Agency representatives were also asked to report whether they or staff within their organizations had taken any volunteer management courses. Sixty-eight percent reported they had. Of the 17 respondents who said no, 76% said they would be interested in taking training if it were offered.⁴⁷

^{47.} CLO has recently run two online courses on volunteer management for literacy agencies (March and May 2005). Each course was completely full, and each had a waiting list. This speaks to the great demand for additional volunteer management training.

Table 17 – Financial Costs Associated with Volunteer Management

Area of Financial Cost	Frequency of response (%)
Ongoing support from agency staff	94%
Training	85%
Recognition events/items	83%
Administrative costs (postage, envelopes, etc.)	83%
Management time	83%
Office supplies	77%
Recruitment costs	70%
Tracking of volunteers	66%
Screening	60%
Professional development to learn volunteer management skills	58%
Evaluation	45%
Additional resources	32%
Volunteer travel	23%
Other	6%

Trends and Issues in Literacy and the Voluntary Sector

Volunteer management issues in Ontario's community literacy agencies tend to reflect those found in the greater provincial and national voluntary sector. For example, Community Literacy of Ontario reports the following changes in community literacy agencies:

- ► Increased volunteer burn-out and time pressures
- ► Increased difficulty attracting volunteers
- ► Increased liability and risk management issues
- ► Increased competition among community volunteer programs for the limited number of volunteers
- ► Increased use of technology.⁴⁸

^{48.} Community Literacy of Ontario, Literacy Basics www.nald.ca/literacybasics

The not-for-profit sector in general is facing a challenging time, and the management of volunteers represents one of those challenges. Cornerstones of Community: Highlights of the National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations, the exhaustive study of the voluntary sector in Canada, found that the majority of organizations are "having problems fulfilling their missions and achieving their organizational objectives," due in part to challenges associated with the capacity to recruit and retain volunteers and board members. ⁴⁹ The authors report that the decline of one million Canadian volunteers between 1997 and 2000 may be indicative that volunteers are "becoming stretched to the limit." ⁵⁰

Environics Research Group found similar results with their survey of 1,203 managers of volunteer resources from across Canada. The authors found the number one challenge for volunteer managers to be recruitment, followed by time management and time constraints. Other challenges reported include retention, orientation and training. The authors found these issues to be characteristic of many organizations, regardless of their size or the nature of their work.⁵¹

Conclusions

Amidst the changing landscape of the voluntary sector in Ontario and Canada, managing volunteers has become more important and more difficult. Literacy agencies appear to face many of the same difficulties that other organizations in the sector face, including a strain on their human and financial resources to recruit, support, train and recognize volunteers.

^{49.} Statistics Canada, 2004.

^{50.} Ibid., p.55.

^{51.} Environics Research Group, "Survey of Managers of Volunteer Resources," Toronto: Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, June 2003.



Conclusions: Key Issues and Trends

Based on CLO's research findings and the review of literature, the following key issues and trends have been identified:

Fewer Literacy Volunteers are Doing More

A comparison of CLO's current findings with those from the 1998 study strongly supports the claim made by agency representatives that the number of people volunteering in community literacy agencies is declining. This finding, which is consistent with other research in the voluntary sector, is very significant. If the number of volunteers continues to drop, those who are currently volunteering will be expected to do more, while the agencies themselves will be required to expend even more time and resources than they currently do on volunteer recruitment.

Literacy Volunteers are Worth Millions

Although the number of literacy volunteers has declined, the economic value they bring to community literacy agencies is staggering. An estimated 6,851 volunteers contribute 735,461 hours to programs throughout the province. The economic value of their time is \$13,826,667 annually.

Volunteer Planning is Critical

Literacy agencies are aware of the changes in the voluntary sector, including the declining numbers of volunteers. To address these changes, 47% of agencies have altered their planning. However, with additional time and resources, more agencies would likely enhance their volunteer planning to further meet the changes they are experiencing.

Motivated by Compassion, Limited by Time

Literacy volunteers are motivated to donate their time for many reasons, but the two main reasons are to make a difference in the life of someone else and to increase the literacy skills in their communities. Despite these noble motivators, volunteers and prospective volunteers are limited in what they can offer by time constraints. Additionally, because time and flexibility of scheduling are such critical barriers to volunteering, incorporating solutions to these limitations in recruitment messages should be an important consideration for the recruitment plan.

For example, advertising that a program "offers a variety of volunteer opportunities, some with flexible scheduling and minimal time investment", might be enough to reduce the importance of the perceived time barrier and encourage the individual to investigate further.

Word of Mouth and Newspapers are Valuable Recruitment Methods

The research results from this study and other national surveys clearly indicate that the two most effective methods for recruiting volunteers are word of mouth and the local media, particularly newspapers.

Younger Volunteers are Waiting to be Asked

Younger Canadians are much more likely to volunteer if they are asked. They are also more likely to be interested in opportunities that will strengthen their skills and their resumes. For literacy agencies, this presents a significant pool of potential volunteers that are currently significantly underrepresented in the volunteer composition of community literacy agencies.

Training and Skills Development - More Important than First Thought

Although volunteers reported that acquiring new skills was not a primary motivator for them to volunteer, when asked directly how important learning new skills was, 90% said it was very important, quite important or somewhat

important. Volunteers overwhelmingly reported that they are satisfied with the training they have received, but 40% said they would like to receive additional training.

Retention = Support + Rewarding Experiences

Literacy agencies clearly understand that volunteers want and need agency support. For volunteers, staff support is the number one extrinsic reason for continuing with their volunteer work, and agency staff reported that ongoing support is the number one method they use to keep volunteers motivated and feeling valued. Volunteers also reported their volunteer work to be rewarding. Ninety-six percent of volunteers said they were very satisfied, mostly satisfied or satisfied with their experiences, and 89% said their agencies were making the most of the skills they as volunteers have to offer.

Want Them to Do More? Ask Them

Ninety percent of volunteers said they were planning to volunteer as much or more time in the upcoming year. Additionally, 42% said they would be willing to assume new or additional roles if they were asked. Some of the areas of particular interest reported include additional training, administrative support, working at events, board/committee work and fundraising.

Informal Recognition is Most Valued

Literacy agencies are doing an excellent job of recognizing their volunteers. Virtually every agency reported giving some kind of recognition, and, more importantly, literacy volunteers are very satisfied with the recognition they receive. A significant majority are not interested in receiving public recognition, and most prefer more informal gestures of recognition, including personal thank you's from staff, cards and notes and, for tutors, recognition from their students.

Appendix

The following pages show the results of questionnaires that were distributed to agencies and volunteers through the mail and electronically in early December 2004. Any anecdotal responses can be obtained by contacting Community Literacy of Ontario.

Follow-up phone calls with agencies were conducted in January to help increase the response rate. As both sets of surveys were returned (electronically, by fax and by mail), the results were entered into a customized database, created in Microsoft Access. A total of 53 agencies and 204 volunteers responded to the surveys. The surveys were also representative of all geographic and urban/rural regions.

Literacy Volunteers: Value Added - Agency Survey

QUESTION	Responses	
1. Please tell us the name of your agency:	53 Agencies	
2. In what city or town is your agency located?	Responses were received from across Ontario	
3. Please tell us how many full-time equivalent staff are in your agency.	Average 3.42	
4. How many volunteers are in your agency over the course of a year?	Average 57.02	
5. Do you have a screening process in place for volunteers in	No	Yes
your agency?	1	52
► Clear job descriptions for volunteers	50	
➤ Volunteer application forms	49	
➤ Volunteer interviews	41	
► Reference checks	33	
► Police records check	19	
▶ Other (A detailed list is available from CLO.)	10	

6. We want to learn more about how volunteers are utilized in your agency. Using the following list of tasks, please estimate the total amount of time volunteers in your agency would spend doing each task on a monthly basis. Please add any additional tasks in the *Other* category.

Task:	Estimated total volunte	er time per month (hours)
Tutoring	51 responses	288 hours
Board Member	45 responses	29.5 hours
Committee Member	31 responses	22.2 hours
Office work	26 responses	42.8 hours
Fundraising	25 responses	27 hours
Special events	24 responses	15.3 hours
Preparation time	28 responses	66.8 hours
Record keeping	19 responses	31.4 hours
Report writing	10 responses	32.7 hours
Communications	6 responses	32.5 hours
Computer support to learners	24 responses	23.2 hours
Technical support to agency	14 responses	7.14 hours

5 responses

Other (Details available from CLO)

15 hours



QUESTION	Responses	
7. Does your agency offer only one-to-one programming?	No	Yes
	50	3
If yes, who delivers this programming?	Staff - 0 Volunteers - 2 Both - 1	
8. Does your agency offer only small group programming?	No	Yes
	52	1
If yes, who delivers this programming?	Staff - 0 Volunteers - 0 Both - 1	
9. Does your agency offer a combination of one-to-one	No	Yes
programming and small group programming?	4	49
If yes, who delivers this programming?	Staff - 1 Volunteers - 1 Both - 47	
10. Do you offer training to volunteer tutors in your agency?	No	Yes
	1	52
11. Do you offer training to volunteers other than tutors in	No	Yes
your agency?	22	31
12. Do you provide volunteers in your agency with	No	Yes
opportunities to try different tasks?	6	47
 How do you recruit volunteers? Please mark all that apply (☑). Local newspaper advertisements/articles Community activities Local mall promotions Fundraising events You ask them directly You rely on word of mouth from current or past students, volunteers or staff Radio public service announcements Television public service announcements Posters / brochures in public places Other (List included websites, placements, mobile sign, presentations. A detailed list is available from CLO.) 	44 responses 43 responses 17 responses 34 responses 37 responses 47 responses 15 responses 18 responses 44 responses 20 responses	

QU	ESTION	Responses	
14. What do you feel is the most effective way to recruit volunteers? List included posters, websites, word of mouth, direct asks, articles and advertise Full details available from CLO.			
		rtisements.	
15.	Do you track your recruiting efforts to determine what method is working the best for you?	No	Yes
		18	35
16.	Have you seen a change in volunteer numbers and hours	No	Yes
	of commitment over the past five years?	15	38
	If you answered yes, please tell us more		
	Five years ago, our agency had: More volunteers than we have now Fewer volunteers than we have now About the same number of volunteers that we have now	25 responses 9 responses 4 responses	
	Five years ago, volunteers in our agency contributed More hours per person/per month than they do now Fewer hours per person/per month than they do now The same number of hours per person/per month as they do now	17 responses 8 responses 12 responses	
17.	Do you informally or formally recognize the volunteers in your agency?	No	Yes
		0	53
	If yes, tell us how you recognize the volunteers in your agency. Please mark all that apply (\mathbf{Z}) .		
	► Host events to recognize their contribution (lunches, teas, dinners)	40 responses	
	 Recognize their commitment in informal ways (notes, phone calls) 	44 responses	
	➤ Offer occasional rewards or incentives (plaques, pins, certificates, movie tickets, vouchers from local merchants)	33 responses	
	► Promote volunteer achievements to the local community (newspaper articles, posters, banners)	25 responses	
	► Other (Answers included mention of volunteers in newsletter, planting a perennial garden, reference letters, inclusion in meetings/events. A detailed list is available from CLO.)	15 responses	



QU	QUESTION Responses		
18.	8. We want to learn more about the methods you use to retain volunteers. Please mark that apply (✓) and add any that we might have missed.		ase mark all
	► Offer training to strengthen volunteer skills	42 responses	
	► Survey their needs	26 responses	
	► Hold regular meetings in person /over the telephone	39 responses	
	► Assess and review their performance with them	22 responses	
	► Offer new opportunities / tasks to challenge and encourage growth	28 responses	
	► Provide opportunities to learn new skills	36 responses	
	➤ Provide employment experience	26 responses	
	► Offer ongoing support from agency staff	49 responses	
	► Provide opportunities to meet with other volunteers	43 responses	
	► Other (Answers included: free materials, potlucks,		
	inclusion in meetings, and recognition.		
	A detailed list is available from CLO.)	7 responses	
19.	The nature of volunteering has changed dramatically in	No	Yes
1	recent years. Has your agency done any planning around the changed volunteer environment?	28	25
20.	Do you know what motivates the volunteers in your	No	Yes
	agency to volunteer?	0	53
If yes, tell us the top motivators that volunteers in your agency have relayed to you. Please mark all that apply (☑). ► The opportunity to make a difference in the life of			
	another person	52 responses	
	► The opportunity to increase literacy skills in their community	37 responses	
	► Flexible hours	32 responses	
	► Training	26 responses	
	► The opportunity to learn new skills	31 responses	
	▶ The opportunity to build their job skills and bolster their resume	37 responses	
	► The warm and encouraging atmosphere in your agency	36 responses	
	► The opportunity to meet new people/ social interaction	29 responses	
	➤ Other (Answers included: sharing specific expertise, rewarding experience, and a love of reading.)	3 responses	
21.	Do you assess the performance of volunteers in your	No	Yes
	agency?	22	31

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QUI	ESTION	Responses	
22.	We want to learn more about the financial costs of volunteer Using the following list, please identify the costs that your ag volunteers. Please mark all that apply (1).	he costs that your agency incurs in managing	
	 Training Ongoing support from agency staff Management time Professional development to learn volunteer management skills Office supplies Screening Evaluation Tracking of volunteers Administrative costs (postage, envelopes, etc.) Volunteer travel Recruitment costs (advertising, holding promotional events, refreshments at events) Recognition events/items Additional resources Other (Answers included: food for meetings, professional development for volunteers, and gifts at Christmas.) 	45 responses 50 responses 44 responses 41 responses 41 responses 32 responses 24 responses 44 responses 12 responses 12 responses 17 responses 17 responses 17 responses	
23.	Have you or staff in your agency taken any volunteer management courses/training?	No 17	Yes 36
	If no, would you or staff in your agency take volunteer management training if it were made available to you?	No	Yes
24.	What value do volunteers bring to your programming? Please add additional values that are not on the list.		
	 Increased profile in the community Community credibility and trust Community ownership and involvement Community linkages and support Diversity of skills and knowledge Diversity of opinions and views A personal approach Wider access to resources Bonding / relationship with students Shared workload Enthusiasm Dedication / loyalty Other (Answers included: mentoring role, racial and ethnic diversity, current knowledge of workforce skills, different views of literacy concerns, and inability to run program without them.) 	46 responses 37 responses 44 responses 42 responses 44 responses 52 responses 45 responses 47 responses 47 responses 47 responses 47 responses 47 responses 45 responses 5 responses	

QUESTION	Responses	
25. Do you wish to increase volunteer participation in your	No	Yes
agency?	12	41

If yes, what barriers prevent increased participation? Please list:

Answers included: job responsibilities, commuting time, cost of screening, time commitment from volunteers and staff, lack of public awareness, etc. A detailed list is available from CLO.

Literacy Volunteers: Value Added - Volunteer Survey 204 responses

QUESTION	Response
1. How many hours per month do you currently volunteer within your literacy agency? The average number of hours per month:	17.554
2. In thinking about the amount of time you plan to volunteer with your literacy agency during the next 12 months, please indicate whether you are planning to volunteer: Please mark only one.	More 34 The same 148 Less 7 Not at all 0 Not sure 15

3. From the following list of tasks, please indicate for each task that applies to you, how much time you would spend doing this task on a monthly basis.

Task:	Estimated time per month (hours)
Tutoring	153 responses 12 hours
Board member	54 responses 3.3 hours
Committee member	33 responses 3.2 hours
Office work	27 responses 14 hours
Fundraising	24 responses 3.7 hours
Special events	26 responses 2.8 hours
Preparation time	96 responses 4.3 hours
Record keeping	30 responses 3.1 hours
Report writing	26 responses 2.9 hours
Communications	19 responses 3.6 hours
Computer support to learners	19 responses 5.8 hours
Technical support to agency	4 responses 7 hours
Other (Answers included: correcting homework, transportir students, maintenance, etc. A detailed list is available from	•

4. If you indicated that tutoring was one of your volunteer tasks, please mark all that apply on the following list (**☑**).

I tutor:

	One-to-one	115 responses
\triangleright	In small groups	9 responses
\triangleright	Both one-to-one and in small groups	31 responses
\blacktriangleright	Did not answer	49 non-responses



QUESTION	Response	
5. (a) Would you be willing to take on new or additional roles	No	Yes
in your agency?	118	86

(b) If you answered yes, what roles would you be interested in taking on? (Please list.)

Answers included: small group work, office work, committee work, events coordination, fundraising, maintenance, computer support, etc. A detailed list is available from CLO.

(c) If you answered no, please list reasons why taking on new roles would not be an option for you.

Answers included: time constraints, family commitments, health, etc. A detailed list is available from CLO.

6. Does your volunteer work with your literacy agency involve any out-of-pocket expenses to you, including items that you are reimbursed for and other costs required in order to complete your volunteer commitment?

No	104
Not sure	5
Yes	94
No answer	1

If you answered yes, please complete the following chart by doing the following:

- (a) Indicate if an item is an expense (please mark all that apply).
- (b) For each of your expenses, indicate whether you are reimbursed.
- (c) Add to the list any additional expenses that you incur and indicate whether you are reimbursed.

EXPENSE	Yes, this is an out-of-pocket expense during an average month	Yes, I am reimbursed for this expense	
	# of responses	# of responses	
➤ Car / mileage/ gas	77	9	
➤ Bus fare	12	1	
➤ Parking	14	2	
► Childcare	5	0	
➤ Meals / food / coffee	20	1	
➤ Phone / long distance	12	1	
Resource materials/supplies	29	5	
► Photocopying / computer printing	16	2	
► Student supplies — bus tokens, pap	per, pens, etc. 12	5	
➤ Special activities	8	0	
► Books	10	1	
➤ Office materials – supplies, pens, p	encils, paper, etc. 26	4	
► Other (A detailed list is available fr	om CLO.) 3	_	

QUESTION	Response
7. Where did you find out about the opportunity to volunteer with that apply (☑).	h your agency? Please mark all
 Local newspaper advertisement/article 	58 responses
Community centre	7 responses
► Local mall promotion	4 responses
► Fundraising event	2 responses
Asked by someone from the agency	34 responses
 Heard about it from a current or past student 	4 responses
 Heard about it from a current or past volunteer 	37 responses
Heard about it from a friend or family member	21 responses
Heard about it from a church / religious group	1 responses
 Heard about it from a service club 	4 responses
 Radio public service announcement 	5 responses
 Television public service announcement 	7 responses
Poster / brochure in a public place	22 responses
 Other (Answers included: internet, websites, library, mail, etc. A detailed list is available from CLO.) 	62 responses
8. We want to know what opportunities the literacy agency offered volunteer. Please mark all that apply (✓) and add any that are	
► An opportunity to make a difference in the life of another person	185 responses
► An opportunity to increase literacy skills in my community	146 responses
► Flexible hours	110 responses
► Training	89 responses
► An opportunity to learn new skills	104 responses
► The opportunity to build my job skills and bolster my resume	46 responses
A warm and encouraging atmosphere	131 responses
An opportunity to meet new people/ social interaction	116 responses
 Other (Answers included: strengthening partnerships, opportunity to use different skills, personally rewarding, etc. 	
A detailed list is available from CLO.)	29 responses
9. Using the space below, please tell us how you think your litera	ncy agency could recruit

9. Using the space below, please tell us how you think your literacy agency could recruit volunteers more effectively. (For example, what would appeal to you? Where/how should this information be available?)

Answers included: more public relations, church bulletins, more partnering with community agencies, ads in local colleges and universities, more articles in media, more promotion to community, etc. A detailed list is available from CLO.



QUESTION	Response
10. Why do you continue to volunteer with your agency? Please	mark all that apply (🗹).
 I feel that I am making a difference in another person's life I feel that I am contributing to increasing literacy skills in 	172 responses
my community	162 responses
I enjoy the flexible hours—it is convenient to my schedule	111 responses
I enjoy the training that I receive	67 responses
▶ I am learning new skills	86 responses
I am learning job related skills	36 responses
I enjoy the warm and encouraging atmosphere	135 responses
I enjoy the social interaction	130 responses
I enjoy the challenge offered by my volunteer work	138 responses
I am growing personally	113 responses
I know someone affected by literacy challenges, and I like	
knowing that I am helping in this cause	85 responses
I feel supported by program staff	146 responses
I am mandated to do community service	7 responses
 Other (Answers included: having fun, keeping skills current, personally fulfilling, etc. A detailed list is available from CLO.) 	16 responses
 apply (☑) and add any that are not on this list. ▶ Orientation ▶ Training ▶ Clear policies / job description ▶ Transportation allowance ▶ Open communication with agency staff ▶ Office supplies / materials ▶ Performance evaluation ▶ Regular meetings ▶ Staff supervision and support ▶ Contact with other volunteers ▶ Information / tools of the trade / resources ▶ Other (Answers included: internet access, contact with other literacy bodies, neutral place to meet with students, 	142 responses 154 responses 111 responses 15 responses 171 responses 111 responses 28 responses 68 responses 137 responses 98 responses 129 responses
etc. A detailed list is available from CLO.)	6 responses
12. Thinking about your role as a volunteer, what additional supp	orts would you like to receive?

Answers included: improved orientation for board members, training, transportation allowance, networking opportunities, ongoing evaluation, computer training, more materials, etc. A detailed list is available from CLO.



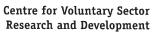
	Response	
Total for the second of the se	Yes 19 No 60 Not sure 52 No Answer 73	
14. Have you received training to assist you in performing your	No	Yes
volunteer responsibilities?	36	168
If you answered yes, please indicate how satisfied you are wit you have received. Please circle only one. Very satisfied Mostly satisfied Satisfied Somewhat 73 responses 47 responses 33 responses 10 responses	satisfied Ver	of training that y unsatisfied responses
15. Have you acquired any new skills and knowledge as result	No	Yes
of your volunteer experience in your literacy agency?	34	170
 Planning / problem-solving skills Communication skills Listening skills Conflict resolution skills Counselling strategies Computer skills 	135 responses 85 responses 102 responses 114 responses 40 responses 37 responses 34 responses 24 responses 27 responses	



ΩH	ESTION	Response	
		-	
17.	Do you feel that your literacy agency is making the most of the time and skills that you have to offer?	No 22	Yes 182
	If you answered no, how could your time and skills be better		102
	Answers included: having more meaningful and attainable learner's needs, more orientation/training, use more of my in list is available from CLO.	e tasks, more tra	· .
18.	a) Do you receive recognition for your services?	Yes	11 192 1
	b) If yes, how are you recognized?		
	Answers included: verbally, at Annual General Meetings notes, potluck dinner, verbal encouragement and validation etc. A detailed list is available from CLO.		
	c) Do you personally feel this is adequate recognition?	Yes	4 181 7
19.	How would you like to be recognized for your services? Plea and add any that are not on this list.	se mark all that	apply (₫)
	 Informally (e.g., thank you cards, phone calls, etc.) Recognition events (e.g., teas, luncheons, dinners, etc.) 	119 responses 48 responses	
	Occasional rewards or incentives (e.g., plaques, pins, certificates, movie tickets, vouchers from local merchants, etc.)	•	
	 Publicly (e.g., community events, newspaper articles, etc.) Other (Answers included: letter of reference, training opportunities, don't need recognition, food, etc. 	15 responses	
	A detailed list is available from CLO.)	21 responses	
20.	Using the following scale, please indicate your level of satisfa experience in literacy.	action with your	volunteer
	Very satisfiedMostly satisfiedSatisfiedSomewhat satisfied110 responses68 responses18 responses6 responses	Very unsatisfied 1 responses	No answer 1 non-responses
21.	As a literacy volunteer, what special value do you feel you br	ing to your litera	acy agency?
	Answers included: sensitivity to learners, management sup dependability, leadership, understanding, counseling skills, pateaching skills, etc. A detailed list is available from CLO.	•	
22.	Please tell us the name of your agency: Responses were received from across Ontario. A detailed list	ic available from	m CI O

QU	ESTION	Response		
23.	Responses were received from across Ontario. A detailed list is available from CLO.			
24.	Please indicate your age range by placing an X in the appropriate box below. Under 21 years 21 – 30 31 – 40 41 – 50 51 – 60 61 – 70 Over 70 years No answer 4 responses 14 responses 27 responses 39 responses 59 responses 41 responses 19 responses 1 non-response			
25.	Please indicate if you are:	Female	Male	
		159	45	
26.	6. How many years have you been a literacy volunteer? Average of 3.48 years			
27.	7. Please indicate the level of education you have completed to date by placing an X in the appropriate box below: Some High School High School Some University or College University or College Post Graduate Studies/Degree			
	8 responses 17 responses 45 responses 97 respon		responses	
28.	Are you involved in ongoing professional development?	No	Yes	
		96	108	
	If you answered yes, please mark all that apply $(\mathbf{\mathscr{\underline{d}}})$.			
	► Workshops	71 responses 29 responses		
	Upgrading at high school/college/universityBook club			
	► Online training	17 responses 26 responses		
	► Interest courses / hobbies	57 responses		
	Other (Answers included: professional association,			
	self-learning, new computer programs, etc. A detailed list is available from CLO.)	24 responses		
29.	Do you volunteer with other organizations?	No	Yes	
		89	115	

Letter of Validity from Carleton University





Centre de recherche et de développement sur le secteur bénévole et communautaire

September 27, 2005

Jette Cosburn
Co-Executive Director
Community Literacy of Ontario
80 Bradford Street, Suite 508
Barrie, Ontario
L4N 6S7

Dear Jette,

The Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development was pleased to have the opportunity to review the research methodology and final report, <u>Literacy Volunteers: Value Added</u>. We found this study to very well done in terms of the methodology, response rate, and the level of analysis.

The data gathered for the profiles of Anglophone literacy volunteers in Ontario was found to be particularly valuable in terms of the implications for recruiting and retaining volunteers in community-based programs. Because there were distinct differences in the ages, levels of education, sources of motivation, as well as average numbers of hours contributed annually from those reported in the National Survey of Volunteering Giving and Participating (2001), the need for customized volunteer resources management strategies is underscored.

Calculating the economic value of volunteer time is controversial. Can we ever really put a dollar value on passion, commitment, and sense of community? Yet, there are still times when it is important to be able to establish the cost benefits of our programs in order to justify the financial investments of funders, sponsors, donors, and volunteers themselves.

These results are not only interesting from a research point of view but will be very useful for the literacy community and the voluntary sector at large.

Congratulations!

Paula Speevak Sladowski Managing Director

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Methodology

Introduction

Given that the purpose of the research was to examine both the economic and social value of literacy volunteers, we decided to employ a combination of both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Methodology Overview

Community Literacy of Ontario began in November 2004 with an initial review of the literature to help inform the questionnaires for both the agencies and the volunteers. Using the results from this review, the research team designed draft questionnaires and had them verified by Paula Speevak-Sladowski from the Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development at Carleton University and field tested for clarity with three literacy agencies.

The review of literature continued through December, January and February, targeting volunteer management research in literacy and the Canadian voluntary sector in general. The literature review was comprised of a review of CLO resources and detailed searches, using the AlphaPlus and NALD catalogues, as well as the Imagine Canada's John Hodgson Library online catalogue and Volunteer Canada's web-based resources. Additionally, Internet searches were conducted using the Coppernic search tool. For the economic value assessment, primary sources consulted were referred by Kim Turner, from the John Hodgson Library at Imagine Canada. Community Literacy of Ontario decided to rely on the tools developed by Jack Quarter, Laurie Mook and B.J. Richmond. (Please refer to the bibliography for a complete listing of resources consulted during the research.)

The questionnaires were distributed to agencies and volunteers through the mail and electronically in early December 2004. Follow-up phone calls with agencies were conducted in January to help increase the response rate. As both sets of surveys were returned (electronically, by fax



and by mail), the results were entered into a customized database, created in Microsoft Access. A total of 53 agencies responded to the survey, representing a 51% response rate. The surveys were also representative of all geographic and urban/rural regions. The results were tabulated using nominal and percentage calculations by the database program.

Beginning in late January and continuing through to the end of March, five focus groups with literacy volunteers were coordinated in the following communities: Toronto, Hamilton, Sharbot Lake, Sudbury and Barrie. Participant numbers ranged from 5 to 9 for the various sessions. The questions for these sessions were designed to complement and build upon the results of the survey returns. The question set was also reviewed by Paula Speevak-Sladowski prior to the first session. All five sessions were videorecorded with the participants' permission, and then transcribed from the video tapes.

In February 2005, an additional survey was sent out to identify the programming composition of Anglophone community literacy agencies in the province. Seventy-two agencies responded to the survey.

An online focus group with six agency staff, representing various geographic and rural versus urban regions was facilitated at the end of March 2005 using Centra, an online training and facilitation platform.

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