

Building Financial Education



IMPACT AND INSIGHTS
FROM THE TD FINANCIAL
LITERACY GRANT FUND

Funded by



Acknowledgements

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Prosper Canada administered the Fund with the assistance of a volunteer Grant Review Committee. Our sincere thanks go to members of the committee, whose insights and advice were invaluable in the allocation of the Fund: Marc Chalifoux, Casey Cosgrove, Amy Hanen, James Hughes, Valérie Picher, David Ross and Terri Williams.

We would also like to extend our appreciation to all of the grantees who generously shared information and learning from their projects with us. Their insights form the basis of this report.

Finally, thank you to the Prosper Canada team who helped to prepare this report: Rachel Slade, May Wong, Wilma Ngan, Ayesha Umme-Jihad, Dorna Mossallanejad, Michael Scott, and Julie McFayden.

**Prosper Canada Centre for
Financial Literacy
November 2015**

On the cover:

Photo courtesy of YWCA Metro Vancouver featuring mother and daughter from YWCA Crabtree Corner.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The TD Financial Literacy Grant Fund was the first significant granting program in Canada to support the development and delivery of community financial literacy education tailored to the distinct needs of people with low incomes. As such, it has helped to seed and grow a national, community-based, financial education field.

Over a five-year period, the Fund awarded \$10.4 million in grants to 139 projects delivered by 128 community organizations across Canada.

In addition to enabling non-profit organizations to deliver important financial literacy supports to vulnerable Canadians, the Fund supported foundational research and the development of innovative, financial education delivery models for diverse groups. It also helped to build a cadre of skilled and passionate community financial educators across Canada and a wide range of financial education curricula, tools and resources that continue to be shared and used today.

This report describes the reach and impact of the Fund and the nature and diversity of the community financial literacy field in Canada today. It also distills the rich learning and insights of grantees with respect to the financial literacy needs of the Canadians they serve, the challenges they experience in meeting those needs, and the solutions they found. Finally, Prosper Canada has added its own reflections from its vantage point as administrator of the Fund, a role that has enabled us to see patterns and commonalities across all of the projects.

We hope this report provides useful information and insights to our financial literacy stakeholders. To this end, we will be engaging our stakeholders in an ongoing dialogue on how, together, we can advance quality financial literacy education that effectively meets the needs of Canada's low-income and vulnerable populations.

With the launch of Canada's *National Financial Literacy Strategy – Count me in, Canada*,¹ in 2015, this question has never been more timely. We hope this report will prove a useful contribution to a critical national conversation and the many new financial literacy initiatives it will bring to life.

“

In one successful case, a 77-year old client had not filed her income tax for 10 years (2004-2013) and was not receiving her Guaranteed Income Supplement. Her FAPS (Financial Advocacy and Problem Solving) worker explained why tax filing was important and helped her to file her back taxes. Through this intervention, this client received a cheque for \$7,000 covering her Guaranteed Income Supplement benefit entitlements and another cheque for \$5,381 for her GST and Ontario Trillium benefits.

Agincourt Community Services Association

”

2. ABOUT THE TD FINANCIAL LITERACY GRANT FUND

Creation of the Fund

The TD Financial Literacy Grant Fund (the Fund) was co-founded in 2009 by Prosper Canada and TD Bank Group (TD) with an investment of \$11.1 million in *cy pres* monies by TD. As co-founder and administrator of the Fund, Prosper Canada established guidelines for the Fund and administered nine open calls for applications from 2010 through 2014. As the Fund was established with a one-time investment, it is scheduled to sunset on December 31, 2015.

Purpose of the Fund

The Fund was established to break down financial literacy barriers that pose a particular hardship for people with low incomes.

For these Canadians, even small financial mistakes can impinge on their ability to meet their basic needs and those of their families. Many people with low incomes also struggle to access public benefits to which they are entitled and to overcome additional barriers to their full financial inclusion. In this context, financial literacy is not a panacea, but one important means of empowering people with low incomes with knowledge, skills and confidence they can use to access the financial resources available to them and

make the most effective use of these resources to achieve their life goals.

To this end, the key objectives of the Fund were to increase access to financial literacy supports for low-income and economically disadvantaged people and groups and to foster the growth and development of a community financial education field in Canada.

Selection of projects

The Fund invited Canadian charities and not-for-profit organizations with proven experience delivering social and community services to vulnerable populations to apply for grants of up to \$100,000 lasting one to two years.

To be eligible, projects had to focus on financial literacy supports for low-income and economically disadvantaged people or groups and address one or more of the following priorities: research and development, innovation, or strategic program development.

The Fund targeted resources to projects that:

- developed and delivered new financial literacy initiatives to fill an identified need;
- sustained existing, successful methods of delivering financial literacy supports;
- developed innovative new financial literacy delivery approaches; or
- generated new knowledge on the financial literacy needs of specific groups and how to meet these needs effectively.



Community Sector Council
St. John's, NL

IMPACT AND REACH OF THE TD FINANCIAL LITERACY GRANT FUND

Applications

959

Unique organizations
that applied

661

Applications
accepted

14%

Unique organizations
funded

128

Total number of projects
funded across Canada

139

Total amount requested

\$71,505,628

Total amount granted

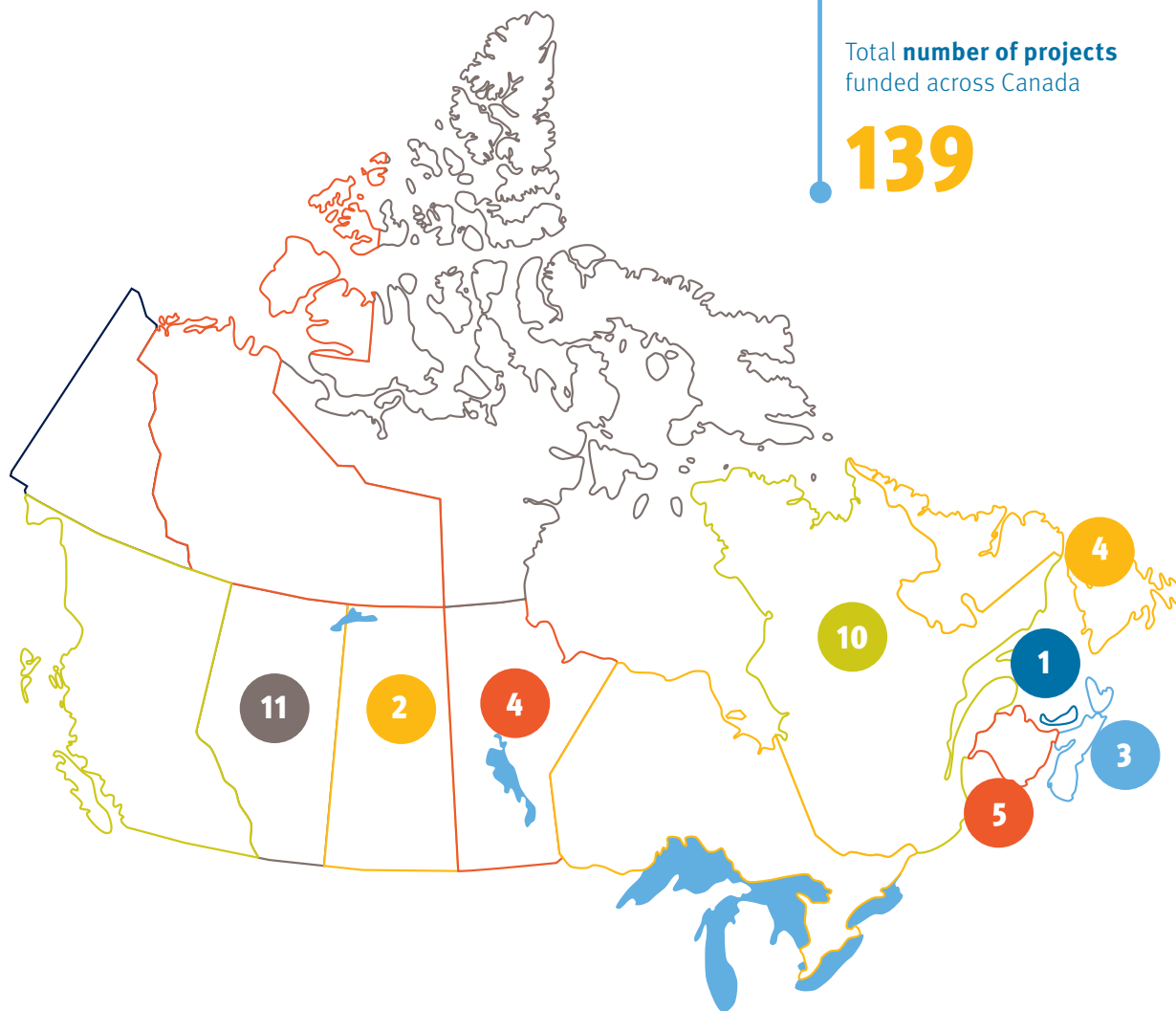
\$10,367,271

Median grant size

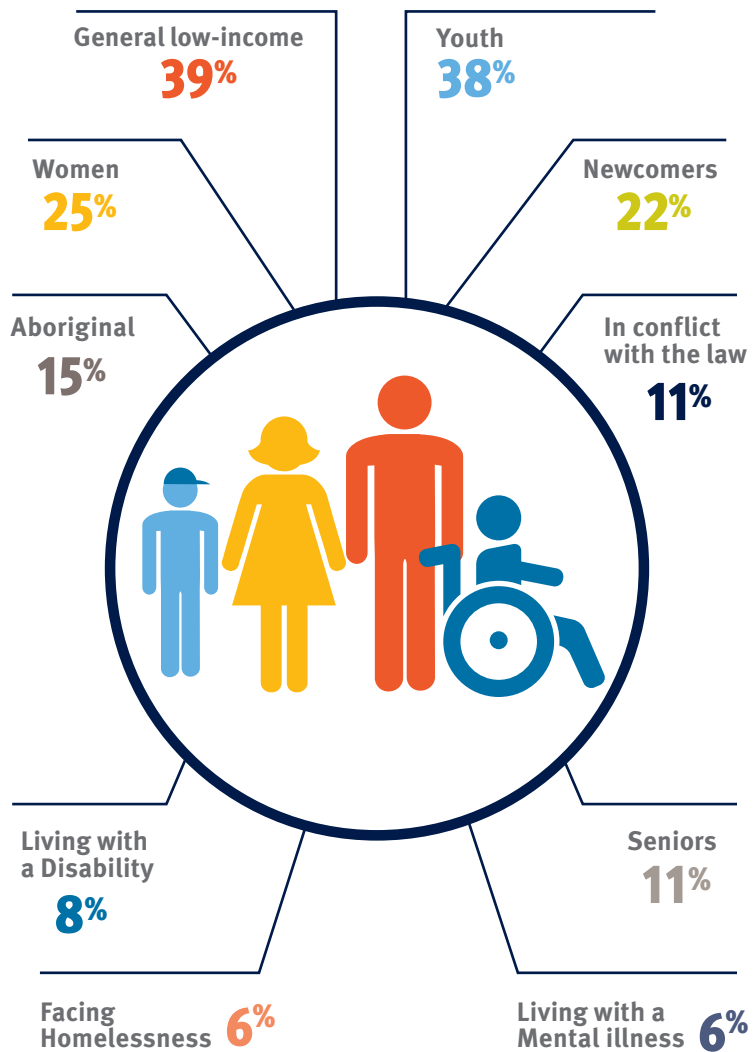
\$80,000

Range in grant size

\$8,683 – \$100,000



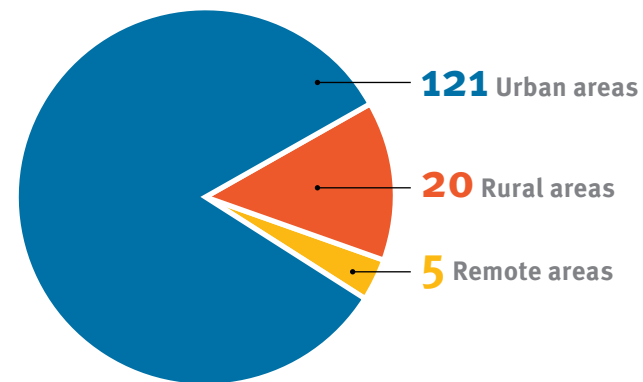
Project focus by target group



Top 5 financial literacy resources created by projects



Types of communities served



75,460



People reached directly with financial literacy education

3. RESEARCH CONDUCTED FOR THIS REPORT

Findings in this report were drawn from review and analysis of information submitted to the Fund by 130 of the 139 funded projects, supplemented by insights drawn from various consultations with frontline practitioners over the life of the Fund.

Nine of the 139 projects had not yet submitted their final report when we conducted our review. Consequently, information from these projects was not included, except the number of people who received financial literacy education or training through their efforts. This information was available from 137 projects.

The research team reviewed project reports for quantitative and qualitative data with respect to the reach and impact of the Fund: the number of people reached with direct financial literacy education or training, the characteristics of organizations providing this education or training, and the primary delivery methods used. The geographic distribution of funded projects was analysed, as well as legacy effects of the

Fund arising from the creation, sharing, and ongoing use of financial literacy resources that it generated.

Project applications, evaluations and final reports were also reviewed to obtain information on the specific financial literacy needs of diverse client groups, challenges and innovations with respect to meeting these needs, and the more general challenges of grantee organizations with respect to program development, implementation, capacity and sustainability.

Prosper Canada did not undertake any independent evaluative analysis of the projects supported by the Fund. All of our findings are based solely on self-reported data from grantee organizations, but we believe they provide an accurate representation of the Fund's impact and reach, and a useful snapshot of the state of the field during the life of the Fund. Findings also offer rich insights into the diverse financial literacy needs of economically disadvantaged groups in Canada and the many innovative ways in which these needs are being met.

“

I am an immigrant working full time and a mom of three children. [...] Before the training, I had a hard time with my personal budgeting. After the training, this was all changed. Not only did I learn how to manage [money] according to priorities, I also found some unnecessary expenses I incurred before that were easy to avoid. This gave me the financial freedom that I was looking for. I found this training program so useful and helpful [for] my saving, financial planning, and budgeting. Now I am thinking about my own little business and writing my own business plan. These are the special skills that I acquired as a bonus from this training.

Warden Woods Church and Community Centre

”

4. REFLECTIONS ON THE IMPACT AND REACH OF THE FUND

There is a large unmet demand for community financial literacy funding

Over its five years, the Fund received 959 applications from 661 nonprofit organizations, seeking over \$71.5 million for financial literacy education for economically disadvantaged Canadians. Fourteen per cent of these requests received grants totaling \$10,367,271. This demand underscores the extent to which community financial literacy education is an important unmet need of vulnerable groups across Canada.

The Fund reached 75,460 Canadians with financial literacy education

Grantee organizations reported that 75,460 Canadians received financial literacy education or training thanks to support provided by the Fund. Five projects also conducted research to inform the development and delivery of new financial literacy programs, but did not deliver financial education or training directly.

Project clients were living on low incomes or members of financially vulnerable groups, such as Aboriginal peoples and newcomers, but were otherwise highly diverse. While some projects focused on tailoring financial literacy education to the specific needs of one client group, others worked with multiple groups. For a graphic breakdown of the project clients served, please see page 3.

People reached directly with financial literacy education: 75,460

FINANCIAL EDUCATION/ TRAINING FOCUS	# OF PROJECTS (N=137)
Financial literacy education for clients	115
Financial literacy educator training for staff/volunteers	115
Both clients and staff/volunteers received financial literacy education or training	105

People across Canada benefited from the Fund

The Fund awarded grants to projects in every province and the Northwest Territories. Please see *Appendix 1* for a list of funded organizations.

While we encouraged applications from all parts of the country and sought to avoid the concentration of grant recipients in a limited number of

geographic areas, the ultimate distribution was heavily influenced by demand from regions. In particular, despite targeted outreach efforts, demand from Quebec was proportionally lower than other provinces over the life of the Fund, while demand from Ontario was significantly higher. This resulted in allocations that were lower in Quebec and higher in Ontario, relative to their population share.

Grant distribution by province

PROVINCE	# OF GRANTS	TOTAL AMOUNT GRANTED
Northwest Territories	1	\$100,000
British Columbia	18	\$1,495,383
Alberta	11	\$801,516
Saskatchewan	2	\$154,770
Manitoba	4	\$274,240
Ontario	80	\$5,914,144
Quebec	10	\$686,714
New Brunswick	5	\$284,174
Nova Scotia	3	\$171,910
Prince Edward island	1	\$150,000
Newfoundland	4	\$334,420
Total	139	\$10,367,271

The majority of grants ranged in size from \$25,000 to \$100,000 with the exception of five grants ranging from \$8,638 to \$23,856. Four joint projects were funded up to a maximum amount of \$300,000, with no more than \$100,000 granted per partner organization.

Projects met the needs of rural and remote, as well as urban communities

While many projects reached Canadians in urban centres (93 per cent), 19 per cent addressed the needs of rural and/or remote communities.² Some projects served a mix of urban and rural and/or remote communities. Four out of the five projects working in remote communities served Aboriginal peoples.

Many types of community organizations delivered financial literacy

Funded organizations varied greatly in their primary service focus, underscoring the extent to which diverse community organizations see financial literacy as an important component of services that support vulnerable individuals and groups.

Grantee organizations also varied widely by size, with 60 per cent having annual

revenues between \$0.5 million and \$3 million, and 31 per cent having revenues over \$5 million. Only nine per cent of organizations had annual revenues under \$0.5 million, as the Fund's guidelines were amended mid-way to require annual revenues at, or above, this threshold. This

was because organizations with revenues under this amount proved vulnerable to significant project delays and, in some cases, delivery failures.

Organizations by focus		
ORGANIZATION SERVICE FOCUS	# OF PROJECTS	% OF PROJECTS
Multi-service agency	41	29%
Economic and financial empowerment	20	14%
Youth programming	12	9%
Women	14	10%
Employment supports	10	7%
Literacy	10	7%
Aboriginal peoples	9	6%
People in conflict with the law	7	5%
Housing/homelessness	5	4%
Disability services	3	2%
Mental health	3	2%
Health	3	2%
Seniors	1	1%
Social policy research	1	1%
Total	139	99%*

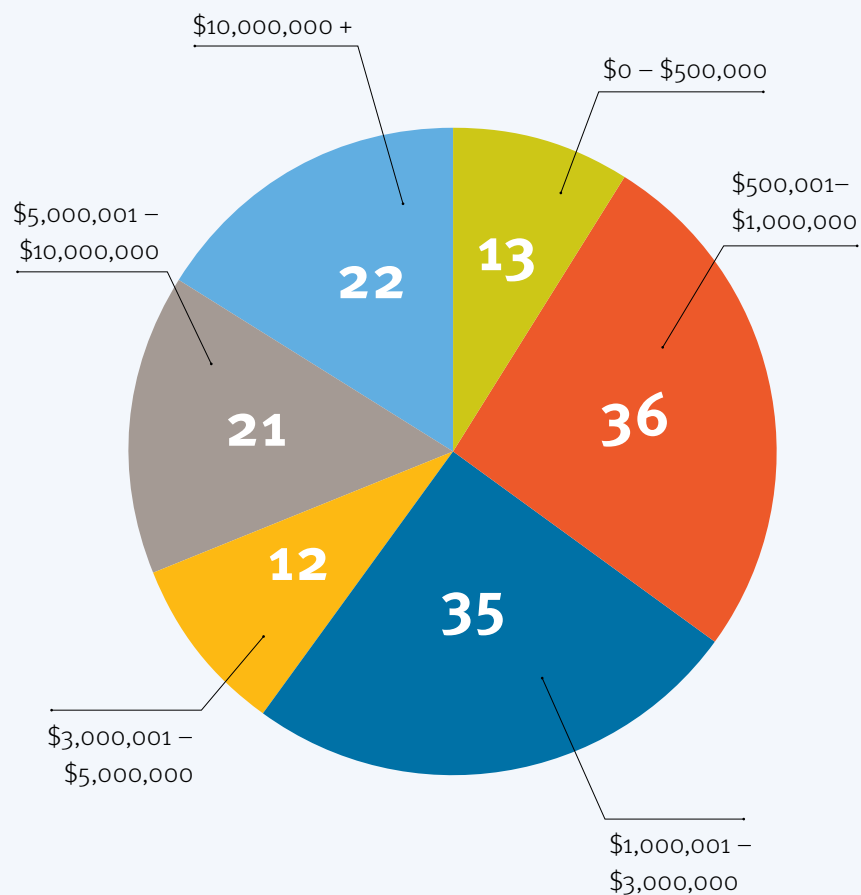
* Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

School Cents

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada and the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation

In a unique collaboration, Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada (BGCC) and the Social Research and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC) joined forces to help youth from low-income families to financially plan for their post-secondary education. Together the two organizations researched, designed and developed *School Cents I and II*, online financial literacy modules that help young people make effective choices about their ongoing education. (Youth from families with low incomes and/or low educational attainment are less likely than other youth to invest in post-secondary education). The *School Cents* modules help youth assess the costs and benefits of post-secondary education, identify financial assistance sources available to them (grants and loans), and then apply to schools and for financial help. The *School Cents* modules are engaging, interactive tools that will be rolled out nationally in fall 2015 on BGCC's *Rogers Raising the Grade* website, so that youth in every Boys and Girls Club in Canada (99 programs in 500 communities) will be able to access the financial information and support they need to pursue post-secondary education and a brighter future.

Organization revenue by number of projects



Projects delivered financial education and training in a variety of ways

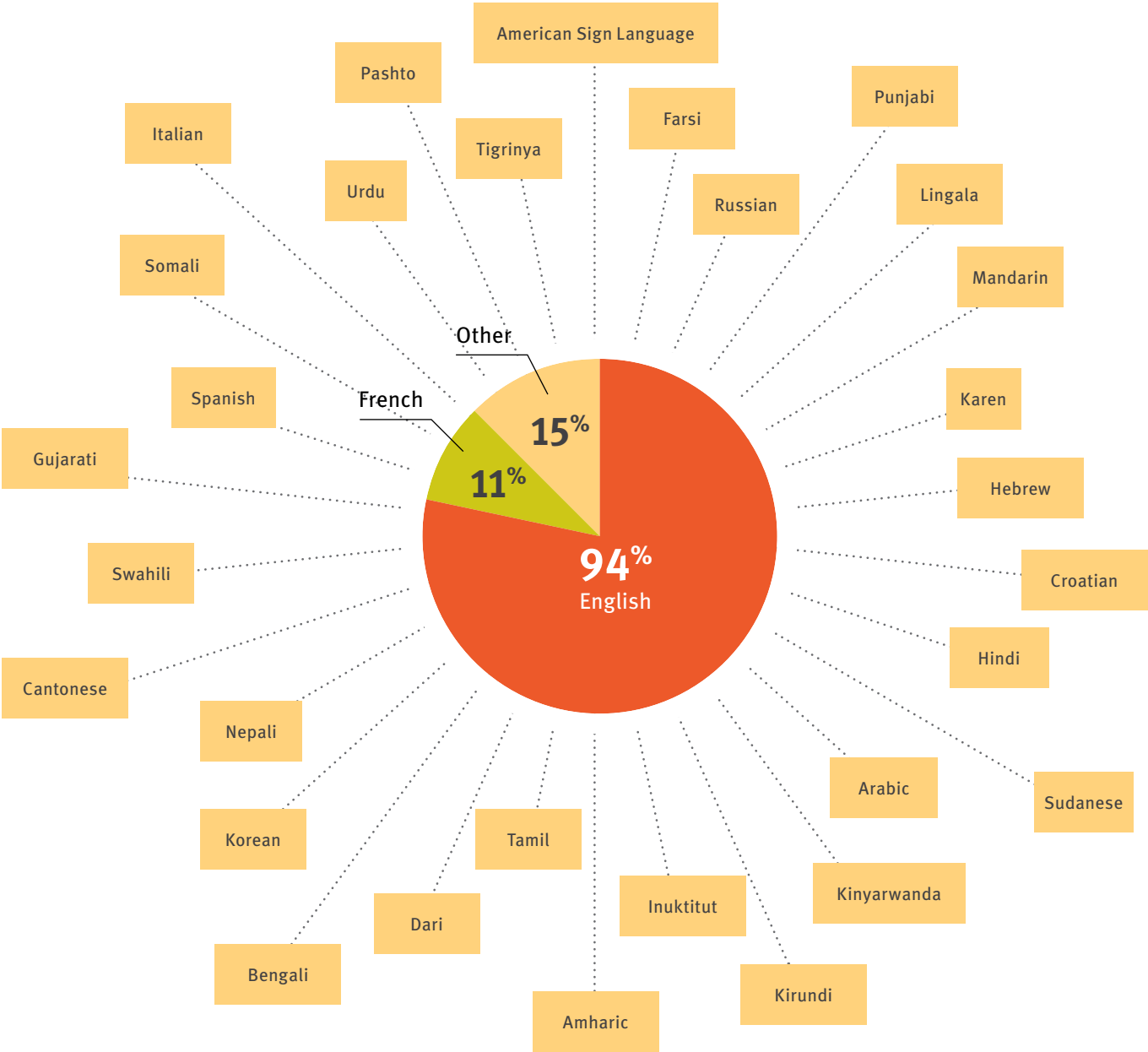
Among projects that offered financial literacy education or training, most (65 per cent) delivered financial literacy workshops, but many also used other innovative formats to reach clients, staff and volunteers. Some projects used more than one format, such as workshops followed by one-on-one support to help clients apply their new knowledge to initiate change in their financial lives.

Financial literacy delivery project by format

FINANCIAL LITERACY DELIVERY FORMAT	# OF PROJECTS	% OF PROJECTS
Workshop series	85	65%
One-on-one support by trained staff/volunteer	43	33%
Community educator training	30	23%
Single financial literacy workshop	24	18%
Online education (e.g. website or webinar)	9	7%
One-on-one support by peer educator	3	2%
Field trip to bank or library	3	2%
Financial literacy comic book	1	1%
Financial literacy board game	1	1%
Video contest on financial experience	1	1%

Most projects were delivered in English but often with other languages

Projects utilized 32 languages, in addition to English and French, to communicate effectively with clients. Some projects created resources in other languages, while others called on staff or volunteers to provide interpretation and help to communicate financial literacy content to clients in their own language.



LEGEND:

- English
- French
- Other Languages

Funded projects generated important legacy effects

Many projects generated valuable legacies, including financial literacy resources used by organizations after projects were completed and/or that were shared with other organizations in the field.

Over the course of the Fund, 93 projects (72 per cent) created one or more financial literacy resources, 48 of these projects planned to keep using one or more of these resources after their project ended,

and 77 shared one or more resources beyond their organization.

Overall, grantees created 142 new financial literacy resources. These include 52 curricula that were newly developed or adapted to the needs of a specific client group, and 23 additional resources developed to train frontline staff and/or volunteers to deliver financial literacy education to clients.

A few projects also explored innovative financial literacy education delivery

formats, such as a culturally appropriate comic book integrating fundamental financial skills for Aboriginal youth, a financial literacy board game for use in schools, and a game app developed to enhance the financial knowledge, skills and confidence of youth in low-income communities.

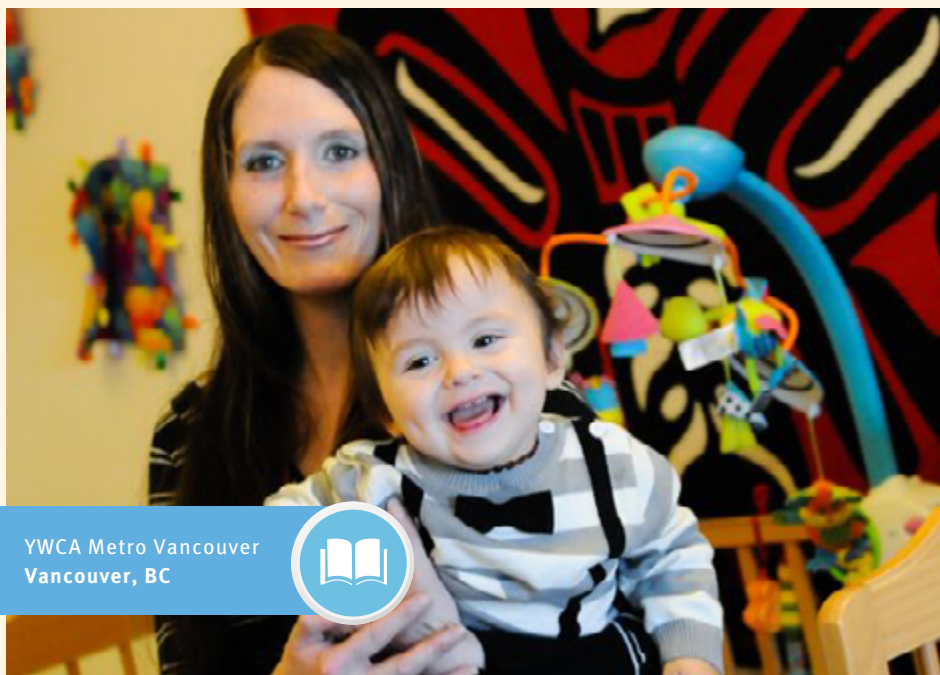
Insightful research was also produced, including an international scan and literature review on best practice with respect to Indigenous financial literacy

education, a report on engaging marginalized youth in financial literacy programs, and a best practice guide on promoting the financial health of seniors.

Legacy financial literacy resources

FINANCIAL LITERACY RESOURCE	# PROJECTS THAT CREATED	# RESOURCES CREATED	% RESOURCES USED BY ORG. POST-PROJECT	% RESOURCES SHARED WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS
Curriculum	52	52	58%	75%
Training resource	22	23	52%	83%
Client handbook	20	21	38%	86%
Client workbook	12	12	17%	50%
Research product	11	11	73%	82%
Supplementary educational/ training resource	5	10	50%	80%
Video	4	5	40%	80%
Game	2	2	50%	50%
Comic book	1	1	0%	100%
Website	4	4	75%	75%
Blog	1	1	0%	0%

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES



YWCA Metro Vancouver
Vancouver, BC



According to research undertaken by AFOA Canada with support from the TD Financial Literacy Grant Fund, financial wellness is understood by many Aboriginal people as a continuous process that spans from childhood to senior years, and encompasses the balancing of income, savings, investments, and spending to meet one's life goals. Financial wellness is shaped by institutional and societal policies and practices, cultural beliefs and values, and personal financial literacy and behaviour.³

This section summarizes key insights on the financial literacy context and needs of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. These insights have been drawn from research conducted by the Task Force on Financial Literacy and AFOA Canada, as well as feedback that grantee organizations have shared with Prosper Canada through their reports and participation in other consultation processes.

Financial literacy is an important way to help individuals and families to

effectively manage day-to-day financial issues, improve their financial wellness, and make progress toward their life goals. However, financial literacy education should be understood as only one part of a broader spectrum of efforts needed to support the financial wellness of Aboriginal peoples.

As a result of historical experiences, Aboriginal peoples face multiple barriers to financial inclusion in the Canadian economy and to financial wellness more broadly. Some barriers are similar to those experienced by other financially vulnerable Canadians, such as having a low income, challenges finding and maintaining employment, and lower educational attainment. Others are unique, such as the legacy of residential schools and their profound impact on Aboriginal individuals, families and communities.

Cultural attributes can also affect financial literacy. These include language and traditional values with respect to financial matters, such as the use of non-cash transactions (often termed the 'gift economy'). These values reflect conceptions of trust, sharing, family care, and relationship-building that differ from the values associated with a market economy.⁴

Some Aboriginal communities have access to adequate or abundant resources, while others experience many

challenges including remoteness, high costs for basic goods and services, and lack of capital for social and economic development. Many remote communities also lack direct access to financial services. Aboriginal people in urban centres, as well as rural and remote communities, can also feel unwelcome in mainstream financial institutions, increasing their reliance on high-cost fringe financial services, such as cheque cashers and payday lenders.

Feedback from grantee organizations has consistently emphasized that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to building Aboriginal financial literacy. Instead, the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and communities requires tailored financial literacy approaches that highlight the distinct cultures of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples and reflect their diverse geography, demographics, and socio-economic contexts.

Cross-sectoral partnerships that include Aboriginal-led organizations can support the emergence of programs that recognize and successfully address the diverse circumstances of Aboriginal peoples. Incorporating teaching elements like adult learning principles, Aboriginal elders, and role models who can speak to how Aboriginal culture and values can guide financial decisions and actions today, can also be highly effective.

Financial literacy efforts must be culturally appropriate and provide relevant, timely information and resources that reflect the life stage, and worldview (values, customs, traditions, and realities) of Aboriginal individuals and their communities.

In recent years, there has been a considerable increase in educational attainment and entrepreneurship among Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal women with a Bachelor's degree now have higher median incomes than non-Aboriginal

women with equivalent degrees.⁵ Entrepreneurship also increased 38 per cent from 2001 to 2006, an increase over five times greater than Canadians generally.⁶

These trends represent expanded opportunities for Canada's young and growing Aboriginal population. Financial literacy programs for youth are particularly important, helping to prepare them for key milestones like summer or part-time employment, managing their first earnings, choosing an affordable

phone plan, and planning to finance post-secondary education or training.

Financial literacy can also support Aboriginal individuals to manage their financial affairs across the life cycle and during various life circumstances, by:

- Assisting residential school survivors to plan for and protect settlement payments they receive under the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement
- Helping under- or unemployed Aboriginal people living in poverty to access relevant financial supports to boost their income
- Supporting the emerging middle class to make effective financial choices and plan for their future.

With support from the TD Financial Literacy Grant Fund, Aboriginal organizations have developed a national Aboriginal Financial Literacy Framework and culturally relevant curricula, tools and resources that provide a foundation for continued progress in meeting the financial literacy needs of Aboriginal peoples.

Aboriginal Financial Literacy

AFOA Canada

Thanks to AFOA Canada (formerly the Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada), Canada's diverse Aboriginal communities will soon have an evidence-based, shared Aboriginal Financial Literacy Framework to guide and animate their efforts to build financial literacy in their communities. AFOA is a national non-profit that helps Aboriginal people better manage and govern their communities and organizations by building their financial and management knowledge, skills and practices. With its initial grant from the TD Financial Literacy Grant Fund, AFOA Canada conducted a comprehensive scan and literature review examining Aboriginal financial literacy programs and best practices in four countries: Canada, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. With a second grant, AFOA used this knowledge to conduct a financial literacy needs assessment, taking into account the life cycle and key life events of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. This information is informing the development of an Aboriginal Financial Literacy Framework to assist Aboriginal peoples, communities, and organizations to build financial literacy knowledge and skills that support their culture and their long-term financial wellness.

“Clyde received a settlement in compensation for mistreatment at a residential school. Receiving what he considered a large sum of money, Clyde was very worried that he would be exploited by others in the neighbourhood and succumb to his drug addiction. Instead, Pigeon Park Savings worked with credit unions in northern and interior BC to help Clyde reconnect with his family and he transferred funds that he decided would be best spent purchasing vehicles to help his loved ones.

PHS Community Services Society



5. MEETING THE FINANCIAL LITERACY NEEDS OF CANADIANS WITH LOW INCOMES

This section summarizes what we learned from grantee organizations about meeting the financial literacy needs of people with low incomes and other financially vulnerable groups in Canada.

Grantees told us about the benefits of financial literacy education for people with low incomes and their priority financial literacy needs. They also shared lessons learned and advice on how to ensure program design and delivery effectively address these needs.

As we did not attempt to evaluate the validity of the insights grantees shared, this information should be viewed as informed guidance from experienced practitioners, rather than a definitive statement of best practice.

For the purposes of this report, we have highlighted learning with respect to people with low-incomes generally, but have also highlighted some key learning with respect to the needs of Aboriginal peoples and newcomers to Canada. Together with people with low-incomes, these have been identified as priority groups in Canada's *National Financial Literacy Strategy – Count me In, Canada*.

Benefits of financial literacy education for people living on low incomes

Grantees found that people with low incomes have few or no financial assets and typically have difficulty accessing financial information, products, services and advice that are relevant to their life contexts and effectively meet their financial needs. They may also lack the financial literacy knowledge, skills or confidence needed to access all of the financial resources available to them and to make the most effective use of their resources to advance their financial wellbeing and life goals.

Although Canada's mainstream financial institutions offer free and low-cost basic banking products for specific low-income groups, most financial products and services are designed to meet the needs of middle- and higher-income people, not those with low incomes. As well, grantees reported that people with low incomes frequently experience personal, institutional and systemic barriers to participating in the financial mainstream, at a significant personal and financial cost to themselves and their families.

While not a panacea, financial literacy education tailored to meet the needs of people with low incomes can help them begin to overcome these barriers by:

- Building their financial knowledge, skills and confidence
- Helping them to set and pursue financial goals
- Facilitating their access to tax credits and other income-boosting benefits
- Connecting them to community supports and resources that foster social and economic inclusion
- Reducing the stress, fear and stigma that often accompany poverty and financial problems.

Pigeon Park Savings Credit Union

PHS Community Services Society, Vancouver

Pigeon Park Savings (PPS) is a community bank operated by PHS Community Services Society and Vancity. It combats the financial exclusion of low-income and marginalized people in downtown Vancouver by offering affordable bank accounts and financial services, coupled with financial counselling. PPS members have low-incomes and typically struggle with daily challenges arising from addictions (to alcohol, gambling, and drugs), poor housing conditions, predatory fringe financial services, bureaucratic barriers to accessing government services, temporary employment companies, and breakdowns in personal and family relationships. With a grant from the TD Financial Literacy Grant Fund, PPS was able to offer non-judgmental and supportive one-on-one financial counselling, providing its members with safe and stable banking services, and significantly reducing their reliance on high-cost, high-risk, fringe financial services.

Priority financial literacy needs of people with low incomes



When we first arrived, the money that was given to us seemed like ‘a boom’ [a large sum]. However, before a month was over, we had spent everything. SEED Winnipeg



Consumer education and protection

- Recognizing the influence of marketing and sales techniques on consumer behaviour
- Learning to comparison shop to avoid unnecessary costs
- Understanding and analyzing bank statements and bills
- Understanding financial language and terminology used in contracts/agreements
- Learning about consumer rights and how to address a consumer problem
- Recognizing and avoiding common scams, financial fraud and financial abuse
- Reporting financial fraud or abuse

Income, taxes and Benefits

Income

- Reading a pay stub and identifying common deductions
- Exploring options to generate self-employment income

Taxes and benefits

- Accessing information on income tax filing — myths and realities
- Knowing where to get help with tax filing
- Identifying tax credits and income benefits one is eligible for but not receiving
- Knowing where to get help accessing benefit programs
- Understanding benefit program rules related to income and assets (e.g. social assistance, disability support)

Accessing safe and affordable financial services

Banking

- Learning about financial institutions
- Overcoming barriers to obtaining basic banking services (i.e. documentation, negative prior experiences)
- Comparing and selecting safe and affordable banking products and services
- Understanding common banking terminology and account statements
- Self-advocating with financial institutions
- Accessing financial services in rural/remote areas and in some low-income neighbourhoods

Alternative financial services

- Assessing true costs and risks/benefits of using alternative financial services (e.g. cheque cashers, payday loans, pawn shops, rent/lease-to-own)
- Accessing information on safer and more affordable alternatives

Money management

Relationship with money

- Understanding one's relationship with money (i.e. influences that have shaped financial views and attitudes)

Financial literacy self-assessment

- Assessing one's current level of financial knowledge, skills, and confidence

Budgeting

- Differentiating “wants” from “needs”
- Tracking and analyzing spending
- Creating and maintaining a personal budget
- Finding savings through changes in spending habits

Goal setting and financial planning

- Setting realistic financial goals
- Developing a financial action plan and updating it periodically to address life changes
- Knowing where to go for relevant and accurate financial information and advice
- Keeping and managing financial records
- Learning about different kinds of insurance and why it is important
- Understanding powers of attorney
- Creating a will and keeping it up to date
- Managing an inheritance or a trust

Saving and investing

- Establishing and following a savings plan
- Learning about the importance of building emergency savings and other assets
- Understanding compound interest
- Exploring longer term saving options and supports (e.g. Registered Education Savings Plans, Registered Disability Savings Plans, Tax Free Savings Accounts)
- Learning about investment options and how to compare interest rates, fees and risk

- Understanding the uses, risks and benefits of different types of debt
- Managing debt effectively
- Putting in place a debt management/reduction plan
- Knowing your rights and responsibilities when dealing with creditors and collections agencies
- Understanding bankruptcy
- Addressing anxiety-driven behaviour caused by high debt

Credit

- Understanding credit, credit products, and interest
- Understanding benefits, risks and responsibilities associated with credit card use
- Establishing a good credit history
- Accessing a credit score and report
- Managing and repairing credit
- Knowing where to access emergency loans for housing or utilities (e.g. Rent Bank Loans)
- Knowing where to access low/no interest small loans as an alternative to high-cost lenders (e.g. loan sharks, pawnshops, and payday lenders)
- Understanding mortgages and the process and costs involved in buying and maintaining a home

Access to other community services

- Obtaining information on and referrals to relevant social supports (e.g. social, health and employment services, childcare, shelters)
- Accessing additional financial supports through other social support services

“

This program helped clear up incorrect information about credit reporting. Some of the things I thought were true before coming here turned out to be inaccurate. I now manage all aspects of my life better. Money, time, emotions, etc. I find strength in the stories and experiences of other women here at Elizabeth Fry. [Attending the financial literacy program] was the best thing I have done financially for myself and my son.

Elizabeth Fry Society
of Edmonton

”

Outreach and engagement strategies

Outreach and engagement of prospective financial literacy program participants can be challenging. Grantees reported that limited access to the internet, low literacy and numeracy skills, language barriers, transient life circumstances (e.g. homeless clients), and the cost of travel in rural/remote communities can all be barriers to participation for people with low-incomes. Some people may also be reluctant to participate because of anxiety arising from their financial situation and fear of shame or stigma if they disclose their financial problems. Organizational challenges, such as staff turnover or limited resources for outreach, can also be an issue.

One effective outreach strategy is to work with service providers that have already established a relationship of trust with clients. These providers can help promote financial literacy programs to their clients or even integrate some program activities into their own services (e.g. promoting financial literacy workshops through employment programs or using Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes to deliver financial literacy education).

Coordinating cross-promotion efforts ahead of time with potential partners is important as it helps to provide the time needed to fully engage them, demonstrate the benefits of financial literacy for their clients, and enable them to plan effectively for required resources and staff time. Organizations may

not always have the capacity to pursue partnerships if their resources and staff are overstretched, so initial partnership requests should be modest in scope.

When targeting participants from distinct ethno-cultural communities, it is useful to connect with formal and informal community leaders to enlist their help in promoting programs. Endorsement from trusted community members and word-of-mouth can help boost program take-up.

When it is time to market programs, choose program names and messaging carefully to resonate with target participants. Testing names and messaging with a handful of people beforehand can help avoid inadvertent mistakes.

Begin advertising and outreach well in advance of program start dates. Also, consider extended hours for outreach workers to enable them to engage more participants.

Use multiple marketing channels to maximize outreach. Email, websites, public service announcements through local media, in-person outreach, and help from other community organizations in connecting to their clients are all useful approaches, but even more powerful when combined. Over time, by asking participants how they learned about a program, organizations can identify the channels that are most effective for reaching specific groups.

Making programs accessible

Many people with low-incomes face multiple barriers to participating in financial literacy programs and community support services more generally. Some of the most common barriers are lack of transportation and childcare, hunger, low literacy and/or numeracy, language, and lack of stable housing.

Helping program participants with food, childcare, and/or transportation can help ensure that programs are well attended. Organizations can provide transit tokens, transportation, food and childcare onsite, or provide honoraria to participants that enable them to purchase these resources for themselves.

Delivering financial literacy education in plain language, and at a level appropriate to each audience, is equally important. Educators should avoid jargon and explain all financial terms to make information more accessible. This is particularly important for individuals with low literacy levels and those whose first language is not English. Some audiences will require more simplified financial information than others. It may be helpful to work with a language-level expert to ensure that all resource materials and tools are written at an appropriate level for program users.

Offering financial literacy education in more than one language can further improve accessibility, particularly for newcomers. Organizations can invite multi-lingual staff/volunteers to act as interpreters during

programs and translate handouts into the preferred languages of participants.

Organizations may also want to tailor delivery formats to the needs of different groups. For example, avoiding extensive use of written materials and exercises for clients with low literacy or English language skills and making greater use of group activities and discussion.

Sensitivity to the cultural diversity of participants can positively affect how participants interact with educators, program content, and each other. Understanding the cultural norms and values of participants — particularly, but

not only, as these relate to money — can create a more comfortable learning environment and improve program effectiveness. Organizations will also want to identify and accommodate any participant dietary restrictions and preferences.

Locations should be physically accessible for seniors and people with disabilities and minimize the need for participant travel. Locating programs where target participants already gather (e.g. a seniors' residence, local drop-in, or community centre) is ideal, as participants are more likely to feel



Agincourt Community
Services Association
Scarborough, ON

Your New Financial Reality

Community Financial Counselling Services

As a population, Canadians living with a disability are particularly at risk of poverty and financial hardship. With support from the TD Financial Literacy Grant Fund, Community Financial Counselling Services Inc. (CFCS), collaborated with members of the disability community to develop financial literacy resources that help people with disabilities and severe illness, their families, and their caregivers to address commonly encountered financial issues. Using knowledge gleaned from a comprehensive literature review and the lived experiences of people with disabilities, CFCS developed a website, the *Your New Financial Reality; A Planning Guide*, and an accompanying Discussion Guide that provide information, resources and exercises to help users assess their needs, manage their financial resources and plan more confidently for their financial future. These resources have been shared with 300 local service organizations and other financial literacy organizations, enabling them to provide high quality financial literacy supports tailored to the unique needs of people with a disability or severe illness.

comfortable taking part. Therefore, organizations should be open to offering programs at multiple locations.

In rural and remote communities, transportation and access are constant barriers. In these cases, programs should expect fewer participants, but opportunities to have greater impact. Smaller groups are conducive to greater participant comfort and engagement, more group interaction, etc. Serving rural/remote communities can also benefit particularly hard-to-reach individuals who do not enjoy the same access to banking, community and government services as urban dwellers.

E-counselling, e-learning, and videoconferencing are also effective ways to deliver financial education in rural and remote communities. These approaches are more effective than simply directing people to websites, as they are interactive and give people opportunities to ask questions and engage in dialogue that promotes learning and facilitates behaviour change.

Where possible, avoid setting program eligibility requirements that are too rigid as these can automatically exclude people who are financially vulnerable, motivated, and would otherwise benefit from programs. For example, using household income below Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cut-Off (LICO) as an eligibility criteria, could exclude women who are wholly financially

dependent on abusive partners and, therefore, extremely vulnerable financially and otherwise.

Creating a safe and secure environment

Finances are a sensitive topic and many individuals feel shame or stigma in connection with their financial problems. This can make participants hesitant to open up about this aspect of their lives in financial literacy programs.

Organizations need to establish relationships of trust with participants and a safe, supportive, and non-judgmental environment. This takes time to develop and requires financial literacy educators to be open, honest, and transparent with participants.

Educators also need to acknowledge that financial literacy is one of many barriers to social and economic inclusion that people with low incomes face and, therefore, should not be tackled in isolation. Financial literacy programs should ideally be integrated with other complementary supports (e.g. employment, housing, health, mental health, and other support services) to enable participants to achieve tangible improvements in their financial behaviour and outcomes.

Engaging participant knowledge and experience

Programs that incorporate adult learning principles are more likely to be effective. This means taking participants' existing knowledge as a starting point and drawing further on their experiences and ideas to develop their financial literacy knowledge and skills. Participants benefit from opportunities to interact with educators and other participants facing similar issues, and to learn in an atmosphere of mutual support.

Leveraging participant knowledge in groups highlights the financial skills participants already have and allows them to share these with others. Knowledge sharing can also serve to acknowledge the hardships many participants face and to foster mutual support.

Peer-to-peer education can be an important means of empowering participants, as it helps them form meaningful connections, provide mutual support, and access relatable role models that enable them to see the potential in their own lives.

Building active participant feedback loops into programs helps drive continuous improvement. Participants become more engaged in the learning process when they have regular opportunities to give feedback on what works, what needs improvement, what they want to learn and how. Feedback



Actions interculturelles de
développement et d'éducation
Sherbrooke, QC



also helps educators to understand participant goals and challenges, enabling them to tailor programs to better meet participants' needs. Similarly, periodically measuring participant progress provides educators with important information about the effectiveness of their program and how they can improve it.

Tailoring programs to meet diverse needs

Clients attending financial literacy education are often at different stages of readiness to apply new knowledge and make changes in their financial lives. While some clients may be in financial crisis and focused on urgent needs, others may be financially stable enough to begin planning and making changes to achieve longer-term goals. Programs that

recognize the different stages of client readiness, and provide timely and relevant information and support, are more likely to be effective.

It is important to adapt to clients' different learning styles, needs and contexts. Some approaches include:

- Breaking curriculum material into smaller segments that clients can absorb more easily.
- Adopting an appropriate instructional pace that does not attempt to cover too much, too soon.
- Presenting educational content in different ways to accommodate different learning styles and help participants build and reinforce new skills
- Tailoring program design to meet the needs of different participant groups — e.g. offering a workshop, one-on-one

coaching, a combination of the two, or online learning.

Financial literacy content and delivery should ideally be tailored to different participant groups, based on their demographic (e.g. gender, culture, education level, income, family status, etc.), life stage, and practical needs. This helps to ensure content is relevant to participants and increases their likelihood of applying what they have learned.

It is also useful to tailor financial literacy content to specific lifecycle events relevant to program participants. These include, transitioning to independent living, moving back into full-time employment, professional and trade re-accreditation for skilled newcomers, saving for post-secondary education or children's education, planning for retirement, etc. Participants are more likely to act on knowledge that relates to actual life decisions they are making.

Programs should also be responsive to and try to address key participant group challenges, as well as leverage opportunities. For example, participants with addictions may need to request that an organization "hold" a portion of their funds to help them avoid spending all their money at once. For parents of school-age children, financial literacy resources they can use to teach their children can help increase their own comfort level with the material.

Where possible, organizations should adapt and supplement existing financial literacy resources, rather than creating brand new resources. A wide range of materials and resources are now available for diverse target audiences through the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada's online Canadian Financial Literacy Database.⁷

Financial literacy materials require regular updating as financial information changes constantly (e.g. government programs, tax credits and benefit programs, resource links). Regular, systematic updating can help ensure materials are as accurate as possible.

Finally, it is important to avoid content that is irrelevant, inappropriate or inaccurate for particular client groups. Topics, examples and information developed for middle- and higher-income Canadians are often irrelevant for people with low-incomes and can compound feelings of stigma and exclusion by ignoring the context of their lives and reinforcing that they are not part of the "mainstream." Key messages that are appropriate for middle-income Canadians — such as encouraging the use of RRSPs for retirement saving — can be wrong for some people with low-incomes and harm them financially.



My [financial literacy] counsellor is my saviour. She and I put together a plan, through which I was able to deal with my addiction issues, [attend trauma counselling], learn skills to become financially independent, and stand up for myself. [...] I have enrolled to complete my GED by January 2016 and am hoping to continue higher education and start my own home business to keep me grounded until I reach my goals. I will not let anyone down - I am half way there and will succeed. **The Elizabeth Fry Society of Toronto**



The value of goal setting

Financial goal setting can be used to introduce clients to key financial literacy concepts and to motivate behaviour change. Goal setting makes financial concepts real, relevant, and readily applicable to individuals' lives. Achieving financial goals can also have a positive effect in other areas of clients' lives. For example, a client who achieves budgeting goals is less likely to fall behind on their rent.

Once participants have identified a financial goal, it is important to continue supporting them to achieve it. Few participants will proceed in a straight line to achieve their goal. Most will experience

obstacles and setbacks. Allocating time to work with participants on strategies to overcome setbacks, and to reflect on financial choices that may be impeding their progress, can be very helpful.

Additional goal setting considerations:

- Participants will have widely varying goals reflecting their individual life context, life stage and priorities.
- Participants need varying amounts of time and support to achieve their goals. Some clients will achieve a goal relatively quickly and others will require more time and extensive individual support.

- Participants are more motivated to achieve financial goals when they can “reward themselves” for positive financial behaviour, as opposed to simply knowing they have accumulated money in the bank. For example, a participant will work harder to eliminate loans, knowing they will soon be able to treat their family to a night at the movies.

Choosing a program format

Financial literacy programs that engage clients over longer time periods are more likely to result in behaviour change than stand-alone sessions. A workshop series can help build relationships between educators and participants and provide opportunities to connect participants to resources, such as outside financial experts and tax clinics.

Accompanying and supporting participants to open bank accounts, file their taxes and access government benefits can have a significant positive impact and help them build the knowledge and confidence to self-advocate in the future. As part of this process, it is important to help participants assemble all the identification and documentation they will need beforehand.

For participants who are ready, more sustained one-on-one financial coaching/counselling can enable them to make real

progress on financial problems and build their skills and confidence in the process. One-on-one support is also useful for participants experiencing significant financial stress and anxiety who need additional support to begin addressing their financial challenges.

Incentivized savings programs also encourage behaviour change by providing participants with ongoing support to build savings habits over time to meet a personal financial goal. While participants are often attracted initially by the savings incentive, they typically find the greatest value lies in the new financial knowledge, skills and confidence they gain and a newfound sense of control over their financial lives, as evidenced by successful saving.

Integrating financial literacy education fully into other community and government programs can make financial education more sustainable, scalable and effective by leveraging staff and infrastructure, improving outcomes for host programs, and building financial knowledge and skills that are directly connected to other life goals participants are pursuing (e.g. employment, housing, settlement, parenting).

Scheduling programs

Flexibility in program scheduling and the number and mix of topics covered can make financial literacy programs more engaging and accessible. For example, some client groups may want longer sessions with a broader range of topics, whereas others may prefer shorter sessions delivered over a longer span of time. Offering program sessions at different times – during the day, in the evening, and on weekends helps to ensure that prospective participants are not excluded for scheduling reasons.

Leveraging key dates and events can also help to maximize program attendance. For example, workshop dates can be organized around tax filing deadlines.

Collaboration and integration with other organizations and services

Collaboration with other local community service providers can help ensure successful delivery of financial literacy programs. Healthcare centres, addiction centres, community housing corporations, employment centres, financial institutions, and other local services can all play a role in referring clients to financial education programs. These providers can also help to deliver financial education themselves, and accept referrals from financial literacy

programs for participants who need their services.

Financial literacy educators should be knowledgeable about other community resources and develop a referral network they can use to connect participants to other supports. Referral networks can also enable other community service providers to refer clients to an organization's financial literacy program.

Integrating financial literacy education into other existing programs can help ensure robust attendance and, in some cases, improve outcomes for the host program. Suitable programs include, but are not limited to, ESL and LINC classes, employment workshops, social assistance support, and housing support.

Participants can also benefit from learning financial literacy skills in conjunction with other skills. This can be achieved by having service providers collaborate to develop a curriculum that covers both financial literacy concepts and concepts related to other core themes, such as employment.

Participation in financial literacy networks enables organizations to exchange ideas and best practices, share information on changing needs, and keep abreast of policy, regulatory and market changes. Financial literacy networks can play a role in communicating valuable insights from the frontline to policy makers and financial institutions interested in reducing barriers to financial



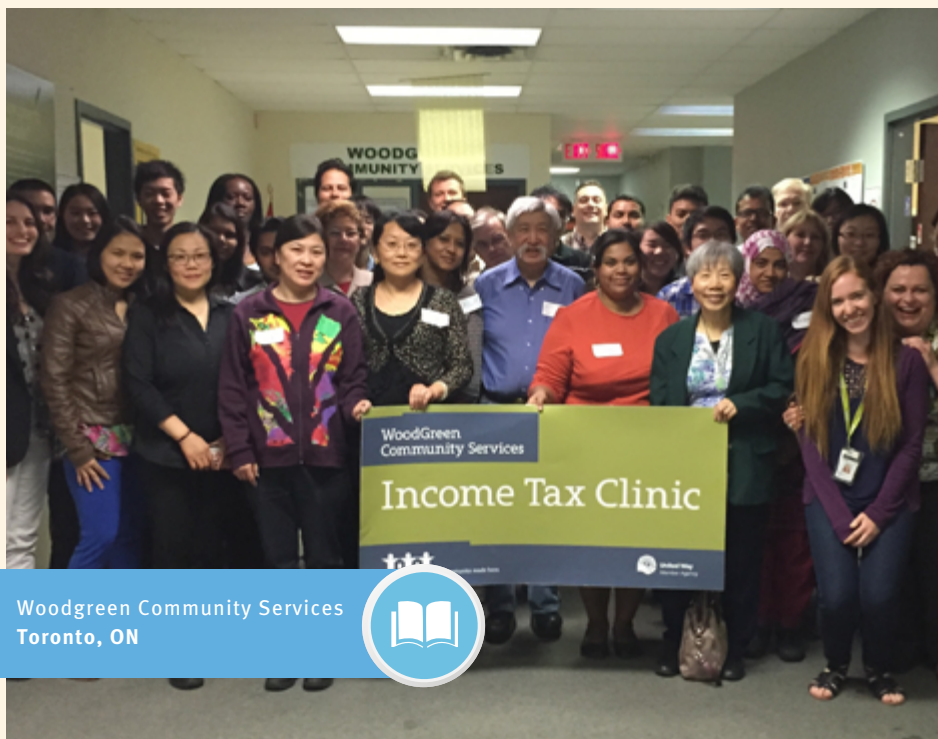
inclusion. Grantee organizations identified nine networks that currently exist in Canada – five local and four provincial in scope.

Collaboration with other institutions and services can be challenging, however, if they do not appreciate the value of financial literacy education or see how it relates to their own objectives. Organizations may also have workload and resourcing issues that make it difficult for them to accommodate additional demands.

One way to interest and engage other service providers is to give them examples of the positive impact of financial literacy education on participants similar to their clients and share success stories that link to the outcomes they are trying to achieve through their services.

Initial outreach needs to be followed-up by a significant commitment of time and resources to develop the new relationship, agree on shared objectives, and coordinate program delivery. This includes training and capacity building for the new partner. By allocating resources in program budgets to support capacity building and other partner activities, organizations can increase their chances of building an effective and lasting partnership.

NEWCOMERS TO CANADA



Woodgreen Community Services
Toronto, ON



Newcomers to Canada are extremely diverse with respect to ethno-cultural background, languages spoken, income levels, and family structures. While newcomers' financial literacy knowledge and skills are equally varied, at some point most newcomers have questions about Canada's financial and taxation systems during the settlement process and their longer term integration into Canadian society.

This section summarizes key insights from TD Financial Literacy Grant Fund grantee organizations on the financial literacy context and needs of newcomers to Canada. These insights were shared with Prosper Canada through grantee reports and participation in Prosper Canada consultation processes.

Currently, many newcomers experience barriers accessing relevant, safe and

affordable financial information, products and services. Lack of basic knowledge about financial institutions, products and services in Canada is an important hurdle for many newcomers – even those who were sophisticated financial consumers in their country of origin. Financial terminology can also be challenging for newcomers with limited English/French proficiency or low literacy and numeracy skills. Diverse cultural and religious beliefs related to money, such as the Muslim prohibition against receiving or paying interest, make it challenging for some groups to obtain financial products and services that meet their needs. Additionally, many newcomers have difficulty accessing credit in the first few years in Canada, because their credit history is not recognized here. These newcomers are more likely to rely on fringe financial services, making it more costly and difficult to plan and manage their financial lives.

Past experiences can also affect some newcomers' access to financial products and services, particularly if they did not trust financial institutions in their home country or felt excluded from financial services. These experiences can cause apprehension about the safety and reliability of mainstream financial institutions, products and services in Canada.

Financial Literacy Program

Calgary Immigrant Educational Society

The Calgary Immigration Educational Society (CIES) has been serving new immigrants, refugees, and refugee claimants through language, training, and settlement programs for over 25 years. Newcomers to Canada often have limited knowledge of Canadian financial systems and services. With added language, culture, and employment barriers, they often find it difficult to break out of poverty. With help from the TD Financial Literacy Grant Fund, CIES developed the *Money Smart* program for newcomers. Delivered by a cross-section of local immigrant service organizations over a two-year period, *Money Smart* provided basic financial literacy workshops, workbooks, field trips, one-on-one financial coaching, and employment skills training to over 4,300 newcomers, significantly improving their settlement experience and helping them to build a sound financial foundation for their new life in Canada.

Within newcomer communities, there is the further risk of financial misinformation making individuals more vulnerable to financial mistakes, fraud or abuse. Some perpetrators deliberately target newcomers, knowing that they may not be fully informed. In other cases, newcomers may rely on family and friends for guidance, who have imperfect information themselves.

While Canada's newcomer population is more highly educated and skilled than ever before, newcomers are taking longer to achieve earnings comparable to other Canadians with the same skills and education. This is due, in part, to barriers preventing many skilled newcomers from securing employment in their fields.⁸ Labour market barriers such as failure to recognize foreign credentials or lack of Canadian work experience can severely limit suitable employment opportunities and increase financial vulnerability. High urban housing costs can also make it hard for newcomers to save and avoid debt.

As a result, an increasing number of newcomers are encountering financial hardship during settlement. Research has shown that 34 to 46 per cent of newcomers experience financial vulnerability (depending on their immigration category), with higher rates among more recent cohorts. Other research has found that, within the first ten years of settlement and integration in

Canada, around 65 per cent of newcomers experience periods of low-income.⁹

The diversity of Canada's newcomer population requires that financial literacy supports respond to a spectrum of needs across the settlement and integration process and the life course of newcomers. For example, while refugees may prioritize repayment of immigration loans for transportation or housing, other newcomers may need to meet remittance obligations to family members back home. Meanwhile, more established immigrants may be assuming financial responsibility for sponsored family members.¹⁰

Financial planning supports for successful settlement and integration, as well as key life events, are important, as is helping newcomers access tailored financial literacy resources and advisory services. Effective programs and services are sensitive to diverse newcomer experiences and challenges, and use key touch points as an opportunity to help newcomers access relevant and safe financial literacy education and supports.

It is important to establish a relationship of trust with newcomers before discussing money, as some cultures consider talking openly about one's finances to be inappropriate. Some newcomers may also be reluctant to



[Financial literacy training] made me more confident as a service provider and in my personal life too. I can trust the basic things that I learned, especially bank[ing] and credit card [information, which] I explain to every client I see. And in my personal life too, I've learned so much and have relayed that to my husband [...]. And then I really used all the concepts in the intake process with my clients, especially if they have questions on finance and RESP.

SEED Winnipeg



disclose problems or seek help due to the stigma linked to having a low income or financial difficulties.

Some newcomer women may face additional barriers arising from their combined culture, ethnicity, and gender. These can include lower rates of employment and income, higher risk of precarious employment, and discrimination based on their gender, ethnicity, and social class.

Newcomer youth often play an important intermediary role for their families because they are able to learn English or French more quickly and adapt more

rapidly to Canadian norms. In families with significant language barriers, youth are critical channels for sharing important financial information and education with other family members.

With support from the TD Financial Literacy Grant Fund and other funders, community partners from all sectors have begun delivering tailored financial information, education and guidance to newcomers. As a result, more newcomers are learning to successfully navigate Canada's financial system and to build a foundation for their long-term financial wellbeing.

6. COMMON FRONTLINE CHALLENGES

Grantee organizations were invited to share information on key challenges they faced in developing, delivering and sustaining their programs.

Many of these challenges are referenced in earlier sections of this report, often with information on innovative ways they can be addressed. However, a number of challenges stood out as sector-wide issues that frontline organizations alone are likely unable to address. We have outlined these below to draw them to the attention of policy makers, funders, and other stakeholders in the hope that, through collaboration, systemic solutions can be developed that will build greater capacity and sustainability for Canada's community financial education field.

Ensuring community educators are well trained and equipped

Effective financial literacy educators have extensive knowledge of financial literacy concepts, information, and resources and are generally enthusiastic, flexible, and non-judgmental. They present information in a clear and relevant way, and are able to adapt curriculum and its delivery to meet the needs of diverse participants.

Grantee organizations shared a number of challenges they experienced building and sustaining this kind of financial education capacity:

- Difficulty finding people to hire with financial literacy education skills
- Trained staff who did not yet feel adequately prepared to teach participants
- Staff turnover

Organizations used various strategies to resolve these issues. In some cases, they used project resources to train and deploy existing staff, rather than hiring new people, and then integrated financial literacy into their other programs (e.g. employment programs, settlement, homeless and housing support) rather than delivering it as a standalone program.

In other cases, organizations turned to skilled volunteers to help fill the gap (e.g., lawyers, accountants, financial planners, etc.). In these cases, organizations provided volunteers with relevant training, supervision, and clearly defined goals to guide their work. Organizations using volunteers noted the need to set aside resources to train, manage, support, and recognize volunteers, as well as reimburse them for out-of-pocket expenses (e.g. transportation).

Where financial literacy educators felt they lacked experience, despite their training, some began by offering the program to small groups as a way to build their own skills and confidence before tackling larger, more challenging

groups or offering one-on-one support to participants.

“Train-the-trainer” approaches were seen as useful, but organizations need more training opportunities to better prepare new frontline educators and to help all educators deepen and expand their knowledge and skills over time.

Educators themselves also noted the need to keep up-to-date with changing financial information and would welcome readily available “off the shelf” resource materials that are easy to use and relevant to their clients. New online tools and resources, tailored for different target groups and kept up to date centrally, can potentially begin to fill this gap.

Evaluating program impact

Program evaluation capacity is a fundamental challenge in the non-profit sector generally for a number of reasons:

- challenges finding the resources and affording the technical expertise to conduct effective evaluation;
- the technical difficulty of isolating the impact of programs from the many other factors that can influence participant outcomes; and
- a lack of shared, evidence-based, outcome indicators in many service sectors.

All of these challenges are issues for the community financial education field as



AFOA Canada
Ottawa, ON



You would never put your money in a bank [where we come from]! What for? You just bury it and go and get some when you need it. [...] But Canada is very different. We didn't know what to do. **SEED Winnipeg**



well, although large organizations are typically able to afford more in-house or contracted evaluation expertise than smaller organizations.

Grantee organizations highlighted a number of specific challenges they experienced in trying to evaluate their financial literacy programs:

- Short program timeframes (many projects only ran for one year) made it difficult to assess whether programs led to positive behaviour change in the longer term;
- Staff turnover prevented some organizations from completing evaluation activities, leading to changes to evaluation measures and design mid-project;
- Difficulty collecting baseline data from participants at program outset (this can be difficult where there are literacy and language barriers or participants are reluctant to take a “test”);
- Low participant response rates to evaluation surveys (particularly for clients with language and literacy barriers);

- Follow-up challenges for organizations working with adults/youths in drop-in programs and participants with no fixed address or phone number, or wishing to remain anonymous;
- Survey respondents were not representative of the overall group of participants (women and satisfied participants proved more likely to complete surveys than other participants);
- Technology challenges made it difficult to collect, share and analyse data when working across organizations ; and
- Difficulty working with external, contracted evaluators (these may not be sensitive to the vulnerabilities and wishes of participants or the limited capacity of frontline staff to take on additional evaluation tasks and activities).

Meeting high demand for programs

Quite a few grantee organizations noted that demand for their programs significantly exceeded their capacity. This

was particularly true in rural and remote communities where there are very few programs relative to both needs in these communities and the number of programs in urban areas.

Organizations with over-subscribed programs used multiple strategies to manage demand, including establishing eligibility and location criteria and waitlists, and referring clients to partner agencies with more capacity and resources.

A number of grantees used videoconferencing and online technologies to reach more people in rural and remote communities. This can be very effective for participants who have access to and are comfortable with technology, but less effective with those who lack access to a computer or the technology skills to pursue online learning.

Some organizations integrated financial literacy permanently into their other programs to address high demand – i.e. training staff in other programs to deliver financial education and weaving this into other program activities.

Many sought additional funding to maintain their financial literacy programs.

Others recommended establishing partnerships with governments, financial institutions, employers, consumer associations, and other organizations to

leverage additional resources and extend their reach.

Many grantees favoured more systemic, upstream approaches to building Canadians' financial literacy, including:

- Building financial literacy into elementary and secondary education for all children
- Making financial education a mandatory element of key social services — e.g. social assistance, employment programs, newcomer settlement, social housing, student financial aid, etc. In these cases, financial education should include information on relevant government benefits and services and how to access these.

Sustaining community financial education programs

We asked all grantees whether they are still delivering their financial literacy education programs today. Thirty-seven of 128 grantee organizations responded to the survey.

Twenty-eight respondents (76 per cent) indicated that they have continued to deliver their programs in some form since the conclusion of their TD Financial Literacy Grant. Some secured resources to deliver their program in the same format. Some integrated financial literacy more permanently into their other programs. Others made changes to their



After being a boarder for years, Jean wanted to be able to afford the freedom of his own apartment. With full-time employment at minimum wage, he quit excess spending, paid his bills on time, steadily paid down credit card debt, and successfully planned ahead for the variable income of two weeks' vacation. With a history of mental illness and criminal involvement, as well as an ongoing physical disability, he is proud that he is now managing his money to live an adult life and is feeling much less financial stress.

John Howard Society of Ottawa



program to meet participant needs better or to accommodate funding limitations. In the latter case, changes included:

- Scaling down delivery (e.g. fewer or less frequent sessions)
- Narrowing the curriculum to core financial literacy topics only
- Using trained volunteers.

Seven survey respondents (19 per cent) indicated they were no longer delivering their programs, most citing lack of funding as the reason, although two grantees indicated they had either fulfilled their program objective or discontinued their program for other reasons.

Vulnerable groups typically require more extensive and costly supports, so programs that serve these populations can be particularly difficult to sustain. Vulnerable groups typically require more one-on-one support, longer term and more flexible program formats. Supports like food, transportation, and childcare are also often essential to program participation, but not typically covered by funders.

Developing tailored financial education resources and materials for different participant groups also imposes significant costs. While essential to program effectiveness, this work can be very time consuming and tax the capacity of frontline organizations that are not specialists in financial education.

Through its consultations with grantee organizations and other community financial education providers across Canada, Prosper Canada has established that program sustainability remains a challenge for many organizations. Despite continued demand for their programs, organizations find it challenging to obtain adequate and long-term funding, as there are few established funding streams that support community financial education work.

As many organizations have found, building financial literacy education into other established, stably funded social services is likely the most sustainable way to deliver financial literacy education to vulnerable groups. Eligible social services include newcomer settlement programs, shelter services, employment programs, social assistance, disability supports, housing support, and many more.

This approach offers the following benefits:

- It eliminates the need to resource stand-alone financial literacy programs for which there are few funding sources;
- Organizational financial literacy capacity is likely to broaden and deepen over time, rather than reside only with one to two short-term employees;
- Clients are likely to prefer discussing sensitive financial matters with staff they already know and trust;
- Financial education relevant to life goals participants are already working on is more likely to result in positive behaviour change (e.g. employment, housing, settlement); and
- Tailored financial literacy materials and resources can potentially be developed and maintained centrally for different service systems, alleviating the need for individual frontline organizations to take on this costly and demanding task.

7. BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FIELD FOR THE FUTURE

The TD Financial Literacy Grant Fund has played a pivotal role in engaging and supporting a diverse array of organizations across Canada to address the financial literacy needs of the most vulnerable people and groups in Canada.

Through the Fund, grantee organizations were able to deliver financial literacy education and supports to over 75,000 Canadians, train a cadre of skilled community financial literacy educators, and develop a variety of programs, curricula, tools, and resources tailored to meet the needs of people with low-incomes and other vulnerable groups. Many of these programs and resources are still in use today.

The Fund also has supported important learning about the financial literacy needs of Canadians with low incomes and other financially vulnerable groups and how best to meet them. Equally importantly, it has shone a light on some critical systemic weaknesses in how we address these needs and ways in which we can do better.

It is our hope that the momentum generated by the Fund will continue and that stakeholders from all sectors who wish to see Canada's dynamic, but fledgling, community financial education field grow in impact and sustainability, will take advantage of new opportunities to join together to make this happen.

The *National Strategy for Financial Literacy - Count me In, Canada* is an important call to action that is catalysing important new collaborations and initiatives in support of financial literacy for Canadians generally and for three key priority groups: people with low incomes, Aboriginal peoples and newcomers to Canada. For more information on initiatives, programs, and resources, please visit the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada [website](#).¹¹

Stakeholders from all sectors are also encouraged to get involved in the ABLE financial empowerment network, Canada's national community of practice for governments, businesses, community organizations, researchers and funders working to improve the financial inclusion and wellbeing of Canadians living in poverty. Through ABLE, stakeholders can collaborate to:

- Identify and advance research, policy and regulatory priorities
- Develop and share new program knowledge, tools and resources
- Expand funding for community financial literacy education
- Build evaluation capacity and common evaluation metrics.

For more information on ABLE, please contact Prosper Canada.

Prosper Canada is proud to be an active participant in moving Canada's national

financial literacy strategy forward and, through the ABLE network, to collaborate with partners from every sector in building a vibrant, innovative and sustainable community financial education field.

To this end, we will continue to draw on the invaluable feedback and insights grantee organizations have shared to develop knowledge resources on meeting the financial literacy needs of other vulnerable populations. These resources will be available through our network and website at www.prospercanada.org.¹²

We would like to once again recognize and thank our TD Financial Literacy Grant Fund partners – TD Bank Group and the 128 grantee organizations that have helped over 75,000 Canadians to build their financial literacy and wellbeing. We are also grateful to all the grantee organizations that generously shared their insights and experience with us.

While the TD Financial Literacy Grant Fund is ending, we look forward to continuing to collaborate with TD and support grantee organizations in other ways as we build Canada's community financial literacy field together.

FIRST (Financial Independence Readiness Training)

Elizabeth Fry Toronto

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Toronto (EFS Toronto) supports women who are or have been in conflict with the law with wrap-around social services that address the complex needs of criminalized women in a comprehensive and non-judgmental way. EFS Toronto's clients face unique financial literacy barriers arising from their criminalization, as well as gender inequities that exists in most systems and society more broadly. With funding from the TD Financial Literacy Grant Fund, EFS Toronto was able to hire a part-time financial literacy educator and develop its FIRST (Financial Independence Readiness Training) materials and workshops, tailored to the needs of the women it serves. After successfully piloting FIRST, EFS obtained a second grant to add more workshops, one-on-one financial counselling, and interactive online financial tools to meet the specific needs of criminalized women. As a result, EFS clients are building the financial literacy knowledge and skills they need to build a more stable life and reintegrate more successfully into society.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Available at: <http://www.fcac-acfc.gc.ca/eng/financialliteracy/financialliteracycanada/strategy/pages/home-accueil.aspx>
- 2 For a definition of 'rural area', see Statistics Canada, Census Dictionary (2011). For a definition of 'remote' community, see The Rural and Northern Health Care Panel, Rural and Northern Health Care Report (2011), p.8.
- 3 S. Brascoupé, M. Weatherdon, and P.Tremblay. (2013). *Literature Review of Indigenous Financial Literacy In Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States*.
- 4 Dominique Collin, *Aboriginal Financial Literacy in Canada: Issues and Directions*. Research paper prepared for the Task Force on Financial Literacy, 2011.
- 5 Brascoupé et al., 2013.
- 6 Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. (2011). Promise and Prosperity: The Aboriginal Business Survey, <https://www.ccab.com/uploads/File/Promise-and-Prosperity--The-Aboriginal-Business-Survey.pdf>
- 7 Available at: <http://www.fcac-acfc.gc.ca/Eng/resources/Pages/FLRDSAT-OAEBDRLF.aspx>
- 8 The Honourable Kelvin K. Ogilvie, Chair, and The Honourable Art Eggleton, P.C., Deputy Chair. (2013). In the Margin, Part II: Reducing Barriers to Social Inclusion and Social Cohesion. Report of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, <http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/SEN/Committee/411/soci/rep/rep26jun13-e.pdf>
- 9 SEDI. (2008). Financial literacy: Resources for Newcomers to Canada, <http://www.sedi.org/DataRegV2-unified/sedi-Reports/FINAL%20newcomers%20English.pdf>
- 10 Citizenship and Immigration Canada provides loans to refugees and protected persons to help with the costs of coming to Canada, including transportation, medical examinations, and travel documents. The Immigration Loans Program can be accessed based on demonstrated financial need and the ability to repay the loan. Service Canada. (2011). Immigration Loans Program, http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/goc/immigration_loan.shtml
- 11 Available at: <http://www.fcac-acfc.gc.ca/eng/financialliteracy/financialliteracycanada/strategy/pages/home-accueil.aspx>
- 12 Available at: <http://prospercanada.org/>

APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF GRANTEES

Aboriginal Centre for Leadership and Innovation	Calgary Immigrant Women's Association	Community Futures Manitoba Inc.	Focus for Ethnic Women Waterloo Region Inc.
Aboriginal Financial Officers Association of Canada	Canadian Association of Family Resource Programs	Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador	Further Education Society of Alberta
Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services	Canadian Foundation for Economic Education	Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria	Girls Incorporated of Limestone, Algonquin and Lakeshore
Action Jeunesse St-Pie X de Longueuil inc.	Canadian Literacy and Learning Network	Community Support & Research Unit at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)	Girls Incorporated® of Durham
Actions interculturelles de développement et d'éducation (AIDE) inc.	Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa Branch	Community Training & Development Centre for Innovation and Improvement	Goodwill Industries - Essex Kent Lambton Inc.
Adsum Association for Women & Children	Cariboo Chilcotin Partners for Literacy Society	Community YWCA of Muskoka	Hanna and District Association for Lifelong Learning - The Hanna Learning Centre
Afghan Women's Counselling and Integration Community Support Organization	Carrefour Jeunesse-Emploi de Côte-des-Neiges	Credit Counselling Service of Sault Ste. Marie and District	Healthy Aboriginal Network
Agincourt Community Services Association	Catholic Crosscultural Services	Credit Counselling Services of Newfoundland & Labrador Inc.	Houselink Community Homes
Antigonish Women's Resource Centre & Sexual Assault Services Association	Catholic Family Services of Hamilton	DAREarts Foundation Inc.	Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba (IRCOM) Inc.
Association coopérative d'économie familiale du Centre de Montréal	Causeway Work Centre	Edmonton John Howard Society	Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre
BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres	Central Valley Adult Learning Association Inc.	Elizabeth Fry Society of Edmonton	Jewish Family Services
BC Centre for Elder Advocacy and Support	Centre de services éducatifs populaires du Haut-Saint-François	Elizabeth Fry Society of Greater Vancouver	Jewish Vocational Service of Metropolitan Toronto
Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada	Centre for Entrepreneurship Education & Development Inc. (CEED)	Elizabeth Fry Society of Ottawa	John Howard Society of Fredericton Inc.
British Columbia Council for Families	Centre for Equality Rights in Accommodation	Elizabeth Fry Society, Toronto Branch	John Howard Society of Ottawa
Burnside Gorge Community Association	Chilliwack Community Services Society	Entraide budgétaire Ottawa	Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre
BWSS Battered Women's Support Services Association	Coalition des associations de consommateurs du Québec	Eva's Initiatives for Homeless Youth	KW Counselling Services
Calgary Immigrant Educational Society	Common Ground Co-operative Inc.	Family & Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County	K-W Working Centre for the Unemployed
	Community Financial Counselling Services Inc.	Family Enrichment & Counselling Services Fredericton Inc.	La Passerelle Intégration et Développement Économiques
		Flemingdon Health Centre	Learning Disabilities Association of Peterborough

Momentum Community Economic Development Society	Saskatchewan Literacy Network Inc.	Warden Woods Church and Community Centre
Neighbour to Neighbour Centre (Hamilton)	Secwepemc Cultural Education Society	Welcome Inn Community Centre
North York Community House	Silent Voice Canada Inc.	Windsor Women Working With Immigrant Women
NWT Literacy Council	Social Research and Demonstration Corporation	Womanspace Resource Centre Society
Ontario Association of Youth Employment Centres	St. Christopher House	Women's Centre of York Region
Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres	St. Joseph's Immigrant Women's Centre	Women's Enterprise Skills Training of Windsor Inc.
Operation Come Home	St. Michael's Hospital Academic Family Health Team	WoodGreen Community Services
Operation Springboard	Stella Burry Community Services	WOTCH Community Mental Health Services - My Sisters' Place
Ottawa Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Association	Supporting Employment and Economic Development Winnipeg Inc.	YES Employment Services (Thunder Bay)
PARO Centre for Women's Enterprise	The Adventure Group & Women's Network Inc.	Young Women's Christian Association of Hamilton
Pathways to Education Canada	The Young Women's Christian Association of Moncton	Young Women's Christian Association of Vancouver, BC
PEACH - Promoting Education and Community Health	TI'azt'en Nation	Young Women's Christian Association of St. Thomas
PHS Community Services Society	Toronto Centre for Community Learning & Development	Youth Employment Assistance Headquarters Inc
Prince George Aboriginal Business Development Association	Toronto Foundation for Student Success	Youth Employment Services YES
Prince George Native Friendship Centre Society	Union des consommateurs	YWCA of St. Catharines
Project Hostel	Union Mission for Men	
READ Saskatoon Inc.	United Way of Bruce Grey	
Red Deer Family Services Bureau	University Settlement	
Relais-femmes	Vecova Centre for Disability Services and Research	
Saint John Community Loan Fund Inc.	Victoria Native Friendship Centre	

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