



A Navigation Tool

Working with this kit

This information kit is your guide to UNESCO's International Adult Learners' Week (IALW), which will be marked in Canada from September 7 to 13, 2003. This year, the event will be celebrated in conjunction with International Literacy Day (September 8) and will launch the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003 – 2012) in Canada.

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCU) is publishing this information kit for the second year running, in cooperation with its government and non-governmental partners. Through this kit, the CCU hopes to promote awareness of International Adult Learners' Week among a broad array of networks and agencies, and to encourage support for learning throughout life, with a particular focus on adult learners.

We hope this kit will be used by the many groups and organizations that are committed to promoting and improving adult learning. In particular, these include our government partners (federal, provincial and territorial ministries and parliamentarians) and the education community (learning institutions, libraries and documentation centres, adult education and literacy organizations). We also invite other groups who are committed to learning throughout life to make use of the information in this kit to promote lifelong learning – women's groups, aboriginal groups, cultural communities, grassroots organizations, municipalities and the world of work (businesses, workers' unions, and professional associations).

In addition to this introductory page, the kit contains information sheets that can be copied and distributed. Feel free to insert additional information and promotional materials on your own events. Organizations may also want to include their own statements of support for International Adult Learners' Week and the movement for adult learning throughout life.

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Acknowledgements

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO wishes to thank the members of the Partners' Committee for International Adult Learners' Week as well as Serge Wagner, Chair of the Committee, and Arpi Hamalian, Chair of the Sectoral Commission on Education, for their efforts to promote observance of the event in Canada.

We also extend our appreciation to the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, (CMEC); the provincial and territorial ministries of education of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Québec, Saskatchewan, and Yukon; Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC); and non-governmental organizations, particularly the *Association canadienne d'éducation des adultes des universités de langue française* (ACDEAULF), the Canadian Network for Democratic Learning (CANDLE), the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE), the *Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français* (FCAF), the *Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes* (ICEA), and the Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL). The Commission is particularly grateful to the many people who cooperated in preparing and producing this information kit.

A World of Possibilities Through Learning is a publication of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO and does not necessarily represent the views of its members and partners. It is available in English and in French. An electronic version can be obtained at the following address: <http://www.adultlearning.unesco.ca>.

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2003 Canadian Commission for UNESCO
ISBN 0 9688906-5-2



1 > The Great Adventure

Canada and the international movement for adult learning throughout life

International Adult Learners' Week will be celebrated for the second time in Canada from September 7 to 13, 2003. Once again, governments (federal, provincial and territorial) and non-governmental organizations, in partnership with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, will join this great adventure in promoting lifelong learning. In doing so, Canada joins an international movement of over 50 countries in celebrating UNESCO's International Adult Learners' Week.

A common purpose

International Adult Learners' Week in Canada serves to create and sustain a concerted effort to promote adult learning throughout life among the general public and various learning environments. It provides an opportunity to:

- Give a voice to adult learners and highlight the importance of learning by recognizing its potential for fostering change and development in all spheres of personal, professional, political, economic, social and cultural life.
- Reach out to potential learners and underprivileged groups everywhere.
- Increase the number of adults engaged in learning activities and encourage adults to express their learning needs.
- Promote cooperation among governments, non-governmental and private sector partners serving the adult population.

A year-long journey

International Adult Learners' Week marks the kick-off to a year-long exploration in adult learning. Through its decentralized structure for the event, the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCU) and its government and non-governmental partners invite organizations at all levels to promote adult learning throughout life in conjunction

with their activities at different times during the year. As well, organizations are invited to share their innovative practices and experiences in adult learning within their community and across Canada throughout the year.

Momentum is building!

Last year, over 450 events were organized throughout Canada to mark International Adult Learners' Week. Celebrations ranged from the unveiling of posters, open houses and literacy awards to the raising of a literacy flag and a travelling play staged by adult learners.* Through such initiatives, International Adult Learners' Week serves to **mobilize** a broad network of organizations and to **promote** adult learning. The promotional campaign aims to promote the joy of learning and raise awareness about the wide array of learning opportunities available to Canadian adults. The mobilization campaign relies on networking to reach adults and to encourage them to participate in many types of learning activities, wherever possible, in all spheres of life.

**More information on IALW celebrations in Canada can be found on Sheet 5*



A community of fellow travellers

Adult learning involves a wide variety of players, some of whom are already identified with adult education. Women's groups, grassroots and literacy organizations, work-related and educational institutions are already explicitly committed to adult education. The adult education connection may be less obvious in the fields of culture, health, environment, leisure, the media and new technologies, human rights and international cooperation, or with groups and organizations working with seniors, school dropouts, the disadvantaged, indigenous people, immigrants, persons with disabilities, prison inmates, refugees and the homeless. Yet these organizations also promote adult learning and are encouraged to join the movement for adult learning throughout life.

A truly Canadian adventure

Under the leadership of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCU), partners from the provincial and territorial education ministries, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), federal departments and agencies, and non-governmental organizations, have been pooling their efforts in preparation for the celebration of International Adult Learners' Week in September 2003.

Last year, all provincial and territorial ministers of education, as well as the Minister for Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), issued messages or press releases in support of International Adult

Learners' Week, and several provinces staged special events to celebrate IALW in their region. This year, the CMEC has renewed its support for International Adult Learners' Week, and will be working with the CCU and with the provincial authorities in planning activities during the Week. As well, the Québec government has committed \$1 million every year for five years (from 2002 to 2007) for celebrating its Adult Learners' Week, under the continuing leadership of the *Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes* (ICEA). On the federal front, HRDC has renewed its commitment to the Week by providing financial assistance for IALW celebrations in Canada and by initiating its own projects.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are central to the mobilization campaign to celebrate International Adult Learners' Week at the grassroots level. Last year, the ICEA and the Canadian Network for Democratic Learning (CANDLE), with the support of other participating NGOs, provided leadership in mobilizing French and English adult learning communities across Canada. ICEA staged a successful first "Québec Adult Learners' Week" (October 27 to November 1, 2002), which resulted in over 300 events held across the province. For its part, CANDLE reached over 5,000 organizations and individuals, including adult learners, inviting them to celebrate International Adult Learners' Week. CANDLE, ICEA, and other NGOs working in partnership with the CCU, have agreed to renew their efforts in promoting adult learning in 2003.



2 > At the Helm

UNESCO: Lead Sponsor for International Adult Learners' Week

International Adult Learners' Week (IALW) received its official international launch in Hanover, Germany, on September 8, 2000, during the World Exposition. This event was the result of years of effort by non-governmental organizations and gave immediacy to the commitments made by the international community on behalf of adult learning throughout life at the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (Hamburg, 1997) and at the 30th UNESCO General Conference in 1999.

The decision to proclaim International Adult Learners' Week was adopted by the 186 Member States of UNESCO, including Canada, at the 30th General Conference in 1999. The resolution was presented by a coalition of Member States that were already celebrating such a week (United Kingdom, Jamaica, Australia and South Africa), and invited Member States to undertake activities in favour of learning throughout life, including giving their support to International Adult Learners' Week.

Destination Bangkok

2003 marks the Mid-term Follow-up to the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education

This year, UNESCO will be holding an international meeting for the Mid-term Review to the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education. This mid-term review meeting, also known as CONFINTEA + 6, will be held in Bangkok (Thailand), from September 6 to 11, 2003. The conference, which will regroup all major stakeholders in adult education, aims to review progress in adult education six years after the Fifth Conference and to assess the implementation of the *Hamburg Declaration* and the *Agenda for the Future* across nations.

To find out more about CONFINTEA + 6 and the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education consult UNESCO's Web site at:

www.unesco.org/education/uie/International/confintea.

Also see Sheet 4 and the discussion kit *Renewing our Vision of Adult Education*, produced by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO at: www.unesco.ca/english/Education/main.htm

The Week is held in conjunction with International Literacy Day and is meant to strengthen ties with the broader adult education movement.

The proclamation came as a follow-up to the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education, sponsored by UNESCO, at which 130 Member States, including Canada, adopted the *Hamburg Declaration* and the *Agenda for the Future* in which they committed themselves "to promoting the culture of learning through... the development of a United Nations Week of Adult Learning." (Art. 26, Hamburg Declaration, 1997).

The UNESCO Institute for Education has taken the lead in this initiative and maintains a worldwide web site on International Adult Learners' Week at: www.unesco.org/education/uie/InternationalALW.

Covering New Ground

World Summit on the Information Society

In December 2003, UNESCO and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), in cooperation with other UN agencies, will hold the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva (Switzerland). The Summit is expected to define a vision and an action strategy to meet the challenges posed by the information and knowledge society. Among other topics, it will examine the issues of computer and media literacy, as well as the basic competencies needed to participate in the knowledge society. For more information on WSIS, see: www.unesco.org.



Around the World

How four countries celebrate International Adult Learners' Week

Adult Learners' Weeks around the world celebrate the joy of learning in all its forms and in all settings. The events promote the idea of learning throughout life and give special emphasis to adults so that they can express their learning needs, explore the many learning possibilities available to them, and experience the discovery and excitement that comes with learning. Activities are not limited to government initiatives, and many are being organized in partnership with civil society and the private sector.

Scotland

Scotland celebrated International Adult Learners' Week 2003 as part of the UK-wide annual festival of learning, which ran from May 10 through 16. The event was coordinated across Scotland to "Beat the Drums" for adult learning. Guided by the Scottish Adult Learning Partnership (SALP), national events included a Culture and Heritage Day, a "Breaking the Barriers" concert and an award ceremony for learners. SALP used the occasion to organize a Learners' National Day of Action to prepare a national learners' forum in Scotland and to link up with Welsh, Irish and English learners' forums. Adult learners from all over the country were invited to discuss and to be motivated by the experiences shared by the Spanish Learners' Organization and the Canadian Toronto Adult Student Association. www.alws.org.uk/alw2002.htm#

Bosnia and Herzegovina

The first Festival of Learning in Bosnia and Herzegovina took place in Tuzla on September 8, 2000. The celebration gathered 42 organizations, institutions and individuals involved in education to promote alternative and creative approaches to learning. That day-long event has since expanded to the 2003 Learning Festival, which will run from October 1 through 5 in different parts of the country. Under the guidance of Amica EDUCA, together with a team of government agencies, NGOs, the media and other partners, the Festival of Learning aims to develop awareness of the need for lifelong learning, and to promote learning opportunities. This year's activities will concentrate on the democratization of society with special emphasis on promoting learning possibilities for the parts of society at risk of marginalization, including the unemployed, the illiterate, the Roma, and people returning to their home countries in the Balkans after the civil war. www.bhfestival.org

Cyprus

Cyprus joined the International Adult Learners' Week movement and celebrated its first learning festival over a three-week period in April 2002. A wide range of activities took place in communities all over the country, including open days in learning centres, exhibitions, dance and theatre performances and the presentation of awards to learners and tutors. The celebration actively involved learners, who helped plan events through "members' committees". The official opening ceremony in Nicosia drew almost 2,000 people. Adult Learners' Week 2003 opened on Wednesday, April 16. Organized by the Cyprus Adult Education Association and the Adult Education Unit at the Ministry of Education and Culture, the event featured an exhibition of International Adult Learners' Week promotional materials from across Europe. A much larger celebration is planned for 2004, as Cyprus prepares to join the European Union.

Brazil

Brazil will celebrate its fourth Literacy Week with an opening ceremony in São Paulo on September 8, 2003. Organized by Alfabetização Solidária (Solidarity in Literacy), the central theme of the celebration will be "Diversity in Literacy". Events will include lectures, seminars and workshops which will focus on reading, writing and mathematics skills, teacher training, and international experiences in combating illiteracy. Once again, an international congress on literacy on September 11 and 12 will be an important part of the week. During Literacy Week 2002, the UNESCO Office in Brasília partnered with Alfabetização Solidária to bring members of the International Adult Learners' Week network to take part in the events of the festival. Participants got a first-hand look at one of Alfabetização's literacy classes in greater São Paulo and also made a visit to the Paulo Freire Institute. www.alfabetizacao.org.br



3 > Passport to the Future United Nations Literacy Decade (2003 – 2012)



Literacy is the passport for full participation in society. Adults who cannot read or write face difficult challenges in finding work, managing their health, raising children, and coping with simple, every-day tasks such as shopping and paying bills. Illiterate adults are often excluded from political and social processes and debates, and as such, are denied the chance to exercise their rights and fulfill their responsibilities as citizens.

Yet, today, nearly one seventh of the world's population is illiterate. Worldwide figures released by UNESCO in September 2002 indicate that 862 million adults over the age of 15 cannot read or write. Even more alarming is that over two thirds of these adults are women. Available data suggests that as many as one quarter of the citizens in some of the world's most affluent countries, including Canada, are functionally illiterate. As such, raising literacy levels remains a major global challenge for the 21st century.

The **United Nations Literacy Decade*** is one of many ways to meet this challenge head-on. An initiative unanimously adopted by the United Nations in 2001, the Literacy Decade was officially launched on February 13, 2003, in New York. At the request of the UN General Assembly, UNESCO has taken on a coordinating and monitoring role, in order to set standards and bring together partners from all levels of society for joint action in fighting illiteracy worldwide. As part of this effort, learners are expected to play a major role in the design of literacy strategies for their own situations.

Improving literacy rates is key to the commitment to **Education for All,**** a set of six basic education goals adopted by UNESCO Member States at the World Education Forum in Dakar (Senegal), in 2000. As part of these goals, governments from all over the world undertook to halve adult illiteracy rates by 2015. Yet, at the current rate, it is estimated that 79 countries will not be able to meet the target. Meeting the literacy goal of Dakar thus requires creative, flexible and comprehensive actions by governments, communities, NGOs, educational institutions, the private sector, and learners themselves.

Are we on course?

In 1980 the world numbered approximately 870 illiterates. Today, the rate hovers at around 862 million. At this pace, the figure for 2015 would be around 800 million, far from the 50% reduction target.¹

- Over one third of the illiterate people in the world live in India.¹
- China, Pakistan, and Bangladesh combined account for a further 27%, which means that 61% of people who lack literacy live in four of the world's high-population countries.¹
- In Canada, in 2000, 42% of adults did not have the necessary literacy skills to function as workers, citizens and family members in a modern economy.²

1. EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002, *Education for all: Is the world on track?* UNESCO, 2002.

2. *Literacy in the Information Age: Final Report of the International Literacy Survey*, OECD and Statistics Canada reach adults and to encourage them to participate in many types of learning activities, wherever possible, in all spheres of life.

* To learn more about the United Nations Literacy Decade, visit: www.unesco.org/education/litdecade

** To learn more about Education for All, visit: www.unesco.org/education/efaa



Literacy As Freedom

Literacy is about more than reading and writing - it is about how we communicate and participate in society. It is also about social practices and relationships, about knowledge, language, and culture. It is a plural concept which increasingly will include the use of electronic media and information technologies for accessing and benefiting from the vast store of knowledge available today. That is why we no longer speak of “literacy” but of “literacies” - basic literacy, media literacy, and computer literacy are all essential for the citizen of today’s knowledge society.

Many of us take literacy for granted. Yet, those of us who lack literacy skills are excluded from many facets of society. That is why Literacy spells *Freedom* – freedom to be independent, to participate, to contribute, and to make informed choices.

Literacy and the World Wide Web

Individual access to the Internet is on the rise across the world. However, access differs widely when comparing developing countries with Europe and North America. Limited access to the Internet and to information technologies inevitably leads to lower computer literacy levels, which in turn results in restricted access to knowledge and means of communication.

| Personal computers | 1999 | 2001 |
|--------------------|--------|--------|
| Argentina | 5.92% | 8.01% |
| Canada | 37.58% | 47.32% |
| China | 1.22% | 1.90% |
| France | 26.75% | 32.86% |
| Nigeria | 0.64% | 0.68% |

| Internet Users | 1999 | 2002 |
|----------------|--------|--------|
| Argentina | 3.38% | 11.20% |
| Canada | 37.24% | 48.39% |
| China | 0.70% | 4.60% |
| France | 9.16% | 31.38% |
| Nigeria | 0.05% | 0.17% |

(United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Statistics Division)

Surfing over 60

Despite a high percentage of Internet usage in this country, Canadians over 60 may be left behind as the Internet gains increasing importance as a method of communication and source of knowledge.

- According to statistics for 2000, only 13% of seniors had used the Internet during the previous year.
- Twice as many senior men (17%) as women (9%) were online.
- Only 28% of the elderly in Canada felt that Internet access for all was important as compared with 52% of those under 60.
- Only 8% of non-users 60 years and older were interested in becoming Internet users.
- Among those interested in going on-line, 30% cited lack of access to a computer as a barrier; 26% cited the cost; 15% blamed lack of time; and 14% specified lack of skills or training.

The Daily, Friday, August 24, 2001. Statistics Canada.



4 > Voyage of Discovery

Learning throughout life

Learning throughout life can be a journey of self-discovery which takes many forms and many directions. It can involve equipping oneself with the means to participate in a swiftly changing world, developing and improving one's skills, keeping abreast of scientific and technological discoveries and learning how to use them. It can also involve understanding one's past and its influence on the present and future, discovering the wealth of other cultures, coming to terms with problems in everyday life, or simply exploring personal interests. At the collective level, learning throughout life leads to a stronger community and a more equitable society.

The importance of learning throughout life was strongly highlighted at the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education, which was held in Hamburg in 1997. The Fifth Conference was a milestone for the development of a vision of adult education that recognizes the crucial role of lifelong learning. It positioned adult education as not only a right, but as the key to the 21st century. In this context, adult learning can shape individuals' identity and give meaning to their lives, as well as ensure active citizenship and full participation in society for all adults. Learning throughout life thus becomes a joy, a tool, a right, and a shared responsibility.

Worth the trip

Learning throughout life offers adults the chance to make new connections, to contribute to community life and to further their personal development. Recreational learning can also provide a contrast to the relentless demands of day to day living. Whether they seek to learn for the sake of learning, or to achieve professional advancement, all adults should have the chance to expand their knowledge horizons.

Many adult learners often feel cast adrift in their quest for lifelong learning. Lack of time and money, prior learning that is inadequate, scheduling problems or problems with childcare and transportation are often barriers. In addition, insufficient information about opportunities to learn, plus low self-confidence on the part of the would-be learner also contribute to a reduced motivation to seek out learning opportunities.

The Right to Learn

The 4th International Conference on Adult Education (1985) had already defined the right to learn as:

- The right to read and write
- The right to question and analyze
- The right to imagine and create
- The right to read one's own world and write history
- The right to have access to educational resources
- The right to develop individual and collective skills

To find out more about the Fifth International Conference in Adult Education, consult UNESCO's Web site at: <http://www.unesco.org/education/uie/confintea>.

Also see the discussion kit *Renewing our Vision of Adult Education*, produced by the Canadian Commission for UNESCO at: www.unesco.ca/english/Education/main.htm.



Cross Country Profiles of Success

Several programs across Canada aim to facilitate adult participation in lifelong learning. The three profiles that follow illustrate how practical, creative and inclusive approaches to adult learning can immeasurably enrich the quality of life for adult learners.

Meeting Challenges

Offering encouragement and support to the mentally challenged

Leona Gadsby, Regional Literacy Coordinator for the College of the Rockies in Columbia Valley, British Columbia, doesn't hesitate when asked about success stories. The college's literacy program for people with cognitive disabilities comes quickly to mind. "They are the most wonderful students," she says. "They love everything that we do. Every fall they stop me on the street and ask when school is starting."

Located on the Invermere Campus of the college, and operating as an autonomous program since 1993, Meeting Challenges developed out of Project Read, a tutor-based program for people with low literacy skills. "We were having problems finding enough tutors to continue on a one-to-one relationship with our students over long periods," explained Leona. "This program allows us to work with small groups, ensure continuity, and develop programs and activities that have relevance for our students."

Many of the learners are in their sixties and seventies. Some of the students have been in the program for eight or more years. They meet once a week to read, tell stories, carry out science experiments and work with computers. A favorite subject is science. "It's the novelty," explains Leona. "It's like anyone looking at something for the first time with new eyes – it's exciting."

A number of learners live with family, while others reside in group homes. A few are able to be on their own with help from a support worker who takes them banking and grocery shopping. Volunteer work and the occasional part-time jobs round out the days. Some of the women help out in the community schools and daycare centre. A few of the men are employed by the town to clean up litter. For all of these learners, their time in school is the high point of their week.

While many of the learners will probably never be able to function independently in society, participants have the chance to build on their life skills – learning to relate well with others, to follow directions, develop fine motor skills and recognize signage. According to Leona, often just sharing experiences and stories becomes the most important learning experience. "They can't work at full-time jobs, but they can come here and feel like they are part of the adult world."

Time to Explore

Many adults explore opportunities to learn without ever taking an organized course. As well, interest in informal learning in one sphere seems to stimulate interest in informal learning in other areas. For instance:

- Employed people spend about twice as much time on informal related learning compared to course-based studies.¹
- While close to 30% of employed adults took a job-related course or workshop, over 70% pursued job-related informal learning activities.
- In keeping with the increasing complexities of the knowledge society:
 - 63% were involved in informal learning activities related to problem solving and communications skills
 - 61% were involved in job-related informal learning related to computers
 - 52% were engaged in informal learning activities related to other new technologies¹

1. *Informal Learning Survey*, New Approaches to Lifelong Learning (NALL), 1998



According to Us

Empowerment, creativity and advocacy

According to Us is a group of diverse women who use photography as a tool for social change. Based out of Central Neighborhood House in downtown Toronto, the group began as a skills-based program five years ago. It has become one of the great success stories of the community centre which serves a high proportion of low income families, homeless people and a very distinct ethno-cultural community.

The women wanted to use photography to explore issues like poverty and violence and to tell their own stories about life in their community. Not far into the process they realized that they lacked the necessary skills to advance. That's when artist-educator Jennifer LaFontaine came in. Under her guidance the women have mastered the art of photography from the click of the shutter, through the darkroom process to mounting an exhibition. They learn at their own speed at a level where they feel comfortable. "To me, there are so many barriers to women's learning, especially if they are part of a group that is marginalized," explains Jennifer. "If we can increase their self-esteem they develop the self-confidence to try other things. Photography becomes the tool. It's a non-traditional education format."

In fact, the women have learned a lot more than f-stops and shutter speeds. They have gained much from working with each other and have also learned more about the lives of the women they catch on film. There is a community economic development component to that learning curve as well. As entrepreneurs they have learned to place a monetary value on the work they produce. Learners in the program can now offer photographic services and often receive requests to take on photography projects, like a recent commission to produce a 'photo quilt'. This year, Jennifer trained four of her students to teach two new groups. "This is exciting because they are learning on new levels," she says. "So, they are learning peer facilitation, and how to teach, but they also learn a lot about themselves and what they can do."

With all of this comes a sense of empowerment. Their collective photo exhibit, entitled "Portraits of Resistance: Celebrating Women's Lives", was displayed at the March of Women showcase at

the Canadian National Exhibition and they have also created a calendar using images from the International Women's Marches in Ottawa and New York. The photos were chosen collectively, which was a powerful learning experience in itself, as described by one of the women: "(she) chose a certain photograph and I thought, that is the last one I would choose, so I asked her 'why did you choose that one?' She said, 'do you see all those women walking with their heads down? I've walked all my life with my head down.' Without her I would have gone right by that picture and never understood what it was really about."¹

1. *CASAE-ACÉÉAA National Conference 2001 – Twentieth Anniversary Proceedings, Feminist Artist-Educators and Community Revitalization: Case Studies from Toronto*, Darlene E. Clover, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto

Roadblocks

- Close to 60% of adults who want to take a course, but are unable to do so, cite lack of time due to a busy work schedule as the most important barrier.¹
- 26% of women versus 15% of men cited family responsibilities as an impediment to engaging in learning activities. High costs and lack of financial resources are also major barriers for 40% of those who wish to take a course. Women, in particular, receive less employer support for training than men, and consequently have to rely more on self-financing.²
- Canadian adults with disabilities are only two thirds as likely to have a post-secondary education as adults without disabilities.³
- Aboriginals also face particular obstacles to engaging in adult learning including lack of access to specialized programs and low secondary education rates.⁴

1. *Informal Learning Survey*, New Approaches to Lifelong Learning (NALL), 1998.

2. *A Report on Adult Education and Training in Canada: Learning a Living*, Statistics Canada, 2001.

3. *Advancing the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities*, Executive Summary, A Government of Canada Report, December 2002.

4. *Thematic Review of Adult Learning, Canada, Country Note*, OECD, March 2002.



On the Home Front

Distance learning project builds literacy skills and confidence

Deer Lake, Newfoundland is surrounded by some of the most breathtaking natural and cultural surroundings in the world. Only a short drive from the spectacular and historic Northern Peninsula, it sits at the gateway to Gros Morne National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The town is also the location for a unique distance learning program that brought basic literacy skills and technology training into the homes of twelve lucky adult learners.

Operated by the Deer Lake Community Learning Centre, the project is an impressive example of partnership on many levels. It was one of four AlphaRoute pilot programs created to offer literacy learning at home. “The pilot was initially designed to service people unable to go into learning centres”, said Tanya Goosney, Coordinator at the Centre. “In the end, Deer Lake was the only program of the four where learners could actually stay at home.”

AlphaRoute is managed by Centre AlphaPlus Centre, based in Toronto, and operates with the support of the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, Literacy and Basic Skills Section and the National Literacy Secretariat. It is a learning environment that offers literacy agencies an on-line tool to complement their existing resources.

The design was ideal for the Deer Lake Community Learning Centre which had recently conducted a literacy needs survey for the area. “The survey found that there were a lot of people out there who needed help,” commented Tanya. “There was a strong feeling that something had to be done.”

But there were barriers. Work demands, childcare responsibilities or just pure anxiety prevented people who wanted to improve their literacy skills from getting to the Centre. “Some individuals were just too self-conscious about being seen coming into the building,” the Coordinator explained.

The first step was to get computers into the homes of the learners. East Coast telecom firm Aliant came to the rescue, donating and installing the computers through its NewTel Pioneers community outreach program. Funding for internet access came from the Grand Lake Centre for Economic Development, through a grant from the federal Community Access Program (CAP).

The initiative started in October, 2002 and was completed in April, 2003. Concerns about the cost of technical support had caused organizers to shorten the program, but thanks to assistance from the College of the North Atlantic, any technical problems that came up were quickly solved. One of the largest post-secondary educational and skills training centres in Atlantic Canada, the College operates throughout the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The on-line course brought learners up to Newfoundland’s Adult Basic Education Level 1, which is equivalent to a junior high or early high school level. Learners were given individualized training and audio and visual supports were available. The students completed their work on-line and saved it in an individual portfolio. A trained Learning Centre Mentor would open the portfolio, give feedback when needed, and mark any work which was not corrected in the program. Once Level I was successfully completed, learners could move on to work on Levels 2 and 3 at the College of the North Atlantic.

“It’s almost impossible to explain how much they learned,” said Tanya. “Some of these people had never even touched a keyboard or a mouse before. They were able to transfer so many of the skills they gained to other areas.”

Edward Pinksen, one of the program participants, agrees. “It was awesome. I learned so much. I can get on the computer now and e-mail my daughter who is in university in New Brunswick.” Ongoing support was also important to Edward. “There was always someone to lean on and you had a lot of privacy because it was in your own home.”

The project is now set to run again, but this time the focus will be wider. The Centre wants to expand the program outside Deer Lake to areas that have no learning centres. Tanya believes that Phase Two will build on the success of the pilot. “We really met all of our objectives with this program. Our students couldn’t say enough about it. The amount of self-confidence they gained was immeasurable.”

Share your success stories. Register your best practices on our Web site at: www.adultlearning.unesco.ca. Watch for information on how to register your report online.



5 > Welcome Aboard

Join the movement for learning throughout life

International Adult Learners' Week (IALW) came into existence when adult education workers across the world decided to mark a trail, exploring strategies to expand lifelong learning opportunities. Non-governmental organizations, ministries, communities, private corporations, educational institutions and the media joined forces to celebrate and underscore the need and the right of people everywhere to discover, to experience and to learn.

The ways to celebrate IALW are limited only by your imagination. Here's just a sample of the kinds of celebrations that took place in Canada last year.

Wordstruck in New Brunswick

As part of International Adult Learners' Week, New Brunswickers marked International Literacy Day 2002 with the sixth annual Read Across New Brunswick Challenge. A total of 60,665 citizens across the province registered their 20 minutes of reading and helped to raise the participation by 25 per cent over the previous year. Doaktown was the winner out of the 135 communities that took part. Belva Brown, manager of the Doaktown Public Library attributed the success to the total community effort. "We announced the Reading Challenge in our newsletter, spread the word, called businesses the day of the challenge, and we had anyone who came into the library on Monday sit down, read and register," she said. Government departments also rose to the challenge with appropriately, the Department of Education being victorious in this category.

Aller Savoir!

As part of Quebec Adult Learners' Week 2002, Théâtre Parminou presented an interactive performance entitled *Aller savoir!* The production explored the everyday realities in the lives of four adult learners. Along the way, the play underscored a few realities of modern life: the world is changing and men and women today must keep up-to-date, upgrade their skills and keep pace with globalisation and technological change. The journey of the characters was filled with pitfalls as well as victories big and small. The play was produced in collaboration with the *Institut canadien d'éducation des adultes* (ICEA) and the participation of close to 20 adult learners who took part in documentation workshops.

Thinking Visually

The Banff Centre marked International Adult Learners' Week with lifelong learning and career development programs and opportunities. These included Quintessence, a summit on the science and art of visualization and Leading for Creativity, a thought forum on creativity and innovation. Quintessence brought together research scientists, mathematicians, designers and artists to explore the ways that design skills can make scientific knowledge more accessible to a larger community. Leading for Creativity and Innovation brought together business leaders and master artists to explore new concepts, examine possibilities, and create new perspectives beyond current business innovation.

TV Topics

International Adult Learners' Week 2002 hit the airwaves in London Ontario. With support from the Ontario Government, Literacy Link South Central Network and Fanshawe College of Applied Arts & Technology in London worked with the local television station, the New PL, to produce a series of programs to celebrate the Week. Guests on the first show included adult learners, college personnel and literacy network personnel. Demonstrations included adaptive technologies used to support learning, and a tour of a community resource centre. The series also featured an interview with a woman who had begun studying for a French language degree at the age of 76.



Chart Your Course! Organize an IALW Event

Why not jump on board and plan your own event for International Adult Learners' Week? You can set a course that best reflects the challenges and opportunities in your community. You may want to inform the public about existing programs in learning, or build on literacy programs and lifelong learning strategies already in operation. Your goal may be to encourage participation and stimulate new partnerships. Whatever direction you choose you'll need a good action plan.

Explore the Possibilities

Try to select an event that will produce direct benefits and garner the best support from the public, local businesses, government, and the media. Choose a project in line with the resources you have available. Often the simplest ideas are the most successful.

- What kind of event will be successful and interesting?
- How large should the event be?
- When and where do we hold the event?
- What are the costs involved?

Define Your Message

Have a clear idea of what message you want to convey. Decide on the main points and stick to them ensuring a coordinated approach to the topic.

- Who is the target audience?
- What is the best plan of action for reaching that audience?

Recruit Volunteers

As many event organizers have learned, involvement is as important as information. Inviting participation is the best way to develop a sense of ownership.

- Talk to friends and colleagues.
- Gather advice and support.
- Hold regular meetings and always have an agenda.

Planning is Everything!

It's important to create a specific plan. Think about how you are going to achieve your goals. Once your plan is set you need to move on to the detail work. Anticipate what needs to get done between now and the day of your event.

- Coordinate roles.
- Check your budget. Do existing funds enable you to accomplish everything that you want?
- Create a timeline.
- Set up a weekly schedule and determine the dates by counting backwards from the date of the event.
- Discuss fundraising and sponsorship.

Mid-way

Start promoting!

- Make sure you have a list of important media contacts.
- Prepare your public service announcements and send them out.
- Use the internet to research organizations. Often you can e-mail directly to the key person or department you need to reach. Many municipalities host on-line calendars of events and will be glad to add your event to the list.
- Make sure your promotional materials are printed and distributed.
- If you have the time and the resources you can send invitations.
- Recruit a photographer or two.



Help Along the Way

It may be a good idea to organize your event with the aid of partners. Involve them right from the beginning. Partnerships can engage a wider range of involvement, offer a larger choice of events and create a pool of experience. Partners can also be sponsors or public figures who act as spokespeople on behalf of the event. Partnerships can be formed with a variety of groups in a number of ways including:

- private and public sectors
- community based organizations
- clubs, associations and church groups
- galleries, museums and libraries
- advocacy groups
- educational institutions
- volunteer groups and NGOs
- funding agencies outside government

Final Phase

It's time to get all those last minute details in place.

- Reconfirm all donations and plans for entertainment, catering, special guests, speakers and photographers.
- Issue a press release to print and broadcast media and to your community contacts. Follow up with a friendly reminder call a day before the event.
- Get a final confirmation from your key planners of what they need on event day.

Looking Back

After your event, it's a good idea to meet, summarize and evaluate all aspects of the project. Things to look at:

- All the steps to preparation
- All expenses
- Sources of support
- Names of all individuals and organizations involved
- The successes, challenges and failures
- Recommendations for the future

Our Log Book

Last year, groups and organizations across the country took the time to register their IALW event on our web site. You too can add your event to our IALW itinerary. Post your celebration on our web site and make sure your event is part of our cross-country schedule this year. To register, log on at www.adultlearning.unesco.ca, click on Calendar and fill out the form online. If your event includes more than one activity, feel free to add all of them. You can also mail your information to the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. Be sure to include:

- The name of your event
- The location
- The beginning and closing dates
- The name of your organization and a contact name with coordinates
- A brief description of the activity
- Names of any partners associated with the event

Share your experiences and help us evaluate the impact of IALW. After your event, fill out the form on our Web site at: www.adultlearning.unesco.ca or mail us a short report.



Mileposts

Celebrate Adult Learning All Year Long!

Use this calendar of International Days and Decades to organize meaningful learning activities throughout the year and to promote learning throughout life.

Days

21 February > International Mother Language Day

8 March > International Women's Day

21 March > International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

21 March > World Poetry Day

7 April > World Health Day

3 May > World Press Freedom Day

15 May > International Day of Families

21 May > World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

25 May > Africa Day

5 June > World Environment Day

20 June > World Refugee Day

11 July > World Population Day

9 August > International Day of Indigenous People

12 August > International Youth Day

8 September > International Literacy Day

21 September > International Day of Peace

1 October > International Day of Older Persons

5 October > International Teachers' Day

16 October > World Food Day (Food and Agriculture Organization)

17 October > International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

10 November > World Science Day for Peace and Development

16 November > International Day for Tolerance

20 November > Universal Children's Day

25 November > International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

1 December > World AIDS Day

3 December > International Day of Disabled Persons

5 December > International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development

10 December > Human Rights Day

18 December > International Migrants Day

Decades

2001-2010 > International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World

2003-2012 > United Nations Literacy Decade

2005-2015 > United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development