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Reports and Articles

Workplace and Workforce Literacy and Essential Skills

ABC Literacy. (2012). *Workplace Literacy Study*.

<http://abclifeliteracy.ca/files/Workplace%20skills%20research%20May%202012.pdf>

A March 2012 poll of sixty-nine Canadian senior corporate executives by Rogers Connect Market Research Group for ABC Life Literacy Canada finds that 76% agree that literacy is a major workplace issue, and 25% agree that “(a) significant proportion of my employees have low levels of literacy”, although only 1% “strongly agreed”. They were almost evenly divided on whether businesses had a responsibility to invest in upgrading employees’ literacy, while just over 60% agreed that more government funding is needed for essential skills training. The margin of error was about 10%, eighteen times out of twenty.

Keywords: Canada; Employers; Surveys; Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

CONNECT Strategic Alliances (2011). *The CONNECT Supporting the Canadian Advancement of Literacy and Essential Skills (SCALES) – Phase One: Research Results*. Retrieved May 23, 2012, from

http://www.nald.ca/library/research/scales/research_results/research_results.pdf

This report comes out of a three-year (2010-2013) initiative run by CONNECT Strategic Alliance, which represents Ontario’s twenty-four publicly funded colleges. The goal of the Supporting the Canadian Advancement of Literacy and Essential Skills (SCALES) project was to develop a series of tools and best practices to integrate Literacy and Essential Skills (LES) into the work of practitioners with unemployed and low-skilled workers. Researchers surveyed practitioners to find out what resources they needed. From this environmental scan, researchers concluded that they had been trying to reach too many practitioners at once and that the wide range of client needs and practices made it hard to interpret the results. With input from the Social Demonstration and Research Corporation (SRDC), they devised a more focused research strategy to address three key areas: what is and isn’t known about how active employment service provision approaches LES; the needs of career development practitioners; and the opportunities available to develop and test tools. Organizational Needs Assessments (ONAs)

were conducted in twenty-seven organizations: six from British Columbia, thirteen from Ontario, and eight from Nova Scotia. Practitioners with varying roles and degrees of experience were asked open-ended questions about the demographics of their clientele and their current practices and tools. They were invited to provide feedback on five existing tools. A key finding was that many respondents did not see how using LES tools would improve client outcomes. They identified time constraints as a barrier to LES tool use, and the need for occupation-specific tools. The information collected has been used by the SCALES project team to develop tools that will be tested through pilot projects.

Keywords: British Columbia; Canada; CONNECT Strategic Alliances; LES Needs Assessment; Nova Scotia; Ontario; Social Demonstration and Research Corporation (SRDC); Supporting the Canadian Advancement of Literacy and Essential Skills (SCALES); Tools; Workforce Literacy; Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

United States Government Accountability Office (GAO). (2012). *Workforce Investment Act: Innovative Collaborations between Workforce Boards and Employers Helped Meet Local Needs*
<http://www.gao.gov/assets/590/587809.pdf>

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) sought to strengthen the connection between workforce programs and employers. The US Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently examined fourteen local initiatives identified by experts as among the most promising or innovative efforts in which local workforce boards collaborated effectively with employers and other partners to achieve positive results; they interviewed representatives of the initiatives as well as officials from five federal agencies. GAO also reviewed initiative reports, relevant federal laws, regulations, and other documents. The factors identified as facilitators of collaboration were: a focus on urgent needs, leadership, leveraging of resources, employer-responsive services, minimizing the administrative burden and demonstrating results. GAO recommends that the Department of Labor compile information on workforce boards that effectively leverage WIA funds with other funding sources and disseminate this information in an easily accessible manner.

Keywords: United States; United States Government Accountability Office (GAO); Workforce Literacy; Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

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Social Innovation & Social Finance

Goldenberg, M., et al. (2009). *Social Innovation in Canada: An Update: CPRN Research Report*. Canadian Policy Research Networks. http://www.cprn.org/documents/51684_EN.pdf

An update of Goldenberg's 2004 report *Social Innovation in Canada – How the Non-Profit Sector Serves Canadians...and how it can serve them better*, this report identified recent trends in social innovation by reviewing the international literature and analyzing the definitions and constructs used to describe social innovation. It included excerpts from interviews with the leaders of Canadian social innovation initiatives. The report expressed concern that Canada was falling behind other nations in social innovation.

Social Innovation - The report noted that there was “no consensus” on a universal definition of social innovation. However, it is generally taken to mean new and innovative ways of addressing social problems and needs, often with the involvement of the for-profit sector.

Keywords: Canada; Canadian Policy Research Networks; Funding policy; Literature Reviews; Non-profit organizations; Social Finance; Social Innovation

Social Finance (2010). *Towards a new social economy: Blended value creation through Social Impact Bonds*. London: Social Finance, 2010

<http://www.socialfinance.org.uk/resources/social-finance/towards-new-social-economy-blended-value-creation-through-social-impact-bonds>

This paper draws on British organization Social Finance's work developing Social Impact Bond (SIB) pilots to explore practical considerations around their use and application. A Social Impact Bond is a tool to engage private investors in funding initiatives to improve social outcomes. If an initiative achieves the outcomes, the government pays for the program and investors are rewarded based on the extent to which improved social outcomes reduce the cost of a social problem (e.g. such as crime or homelessness) to the government. The paper suggests that SIBs are feasible where: 1) They address a social problem that has high costs for the government and can be measured; 2) Interventions that would deliver improved social outcomes are known; 3) Those benefitting from the interventions can be clearly identified; and 4) The interventions cost less than the public sector savings that would result from improved social outcomes. As of May 2012, the only SIB in operation was a pilot project at Peterborough Prison in the UK ([see overview in PDF](#)), so there is little information on how well SIBs work in practice. The paper expresses the hope that when the economic situation improves in the UK, the government will become interested in using SIB's to address issues where positive outcomes would not necessarily generate easily identifiable cost savings to the public sector.

Keywords: Funding policy; Pay-for-Performance; Social Finance; Social Impact Bonds (SIB's); Social Innovation; United Kingdom

Canadian Task Force on Social Finance. (2010). *Mobilizing Private Capital for Public Good*.

<http://socialfinance.ca/taskforce/report>

This report argues that the traditional “binary” distinction between social activities undertaken by government and community organizations and for-profit business activities funded by private capital is outmoded in the context of current constraints on public finance and non-profit funding and the potential to mobilize private capital for social good. Drawing on experiences from across Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, the report outlines seven actions that Canada could undertake to mobilize new sources of capital, create an enabling tax and regulatory environment, and build a pipeline of investment-ready social enterprises.

Keywords: Canada; Canadian Task Force on Social Finance; Funding policy; Non-profit organizations; Social Finance; Social Innovation

Canadian Task Force on Social Finance. (2011). *Mobilizing Private Capital for Public Good: Measuring Progress During Year One*.

http://socialfinance.ca/uploads/documents/TFSF_ProgressReport_YearOne.pdf

This progress report on the seven recommendations made in the Task Force’s 2010 report *Mobilizing Private Capital for Public Good* describes new and ongoing initiatives by governments, foundations and non-profits and makes recommendations for building on this progress.

Keywords: Canada; Canadian Task Force on Social Finance; Funding policy; Non-profit organizations; Social Finance; Social Innovation

Social Innovation Europe. (2011). *Financing Social Innovation: Funding social innovation in Europe – mapping the way forward*

http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newsroom/cf/_getdocument.cfm?doc_id=7048

The report is based on consultations and conversations with members of the social innovation community across Europe. They include workshops at the Social Innovation Europe Launch event in Brussels in March 2011 and the TelePresence discussion on funding and finance for social innovation of June 2011. It highlights the importance of fostering social innovation in Europe for economic growth, improving public service productivity and achieving greater success in handling societal challenges such as ageing and reducing carbon emissions. The report recommends that new funding tools be developed to finance Pan-European social innovation projects, starting with issues that neither markets nor governments have successfully addressed. It suggests that these funding tools should facilitate collaboration across sector boundaries (e.g. allowing the public, private and non-profit sectors to work together).

Keywords: European Commission; European Union; Social Finance; Social Innovation

BC Social Innovation Council. (2012). *Action Plan Recommendations to Maximize Social Innovation in British Columbia*. <http://www.aletmanski.com/al-etmanski/2012/04/the-bc-social-innovation-council-released-its-final-report-action-plan-recommendations-to-maximize-social-innovation-in-brit.html>

The BC Innovation Council, representing government, community and business agencies with an interest in social entrepreneurship, had a mandate to make recommendations to the British Columbia (BC) government on how to maximize social innovation in BC. This report presents eleven recommendations to enhance the work of social innovators and entrepreneurs. The recommendations were finalized after online consultations with stakeholders conducted through the <http://socialinnovationbc.ca> website.

Keywords: BC Social Innovation Council; British Columbia; Canada; Funding policy; Non-profit organizations; Social Innovation

McKinsey & Co. (2012). *From Potential to Action: Bringing Social Impact Bonds to the U.S.* http://mckinseysociety.com/downloads/reports/Social-Innovation/McKinsey_Social_Impact_Bonds_Report.pdf

This report explains how Social Impact Bonds (SIBs) are structured and assesses their potential use in the areas of homelessness and criminal justice. These two areas were chosen because they both involve considerable government spending on remedial programs, which suggests that effective preventive interventions could potentially generate considerable cost savings.

Keywords: Funding policy; Pay-for-Performance; Social Finance; Social Impact Bonds (SIBs); Social Innovation; United Kingdom; United States

Shergold, P., Kernot, C., & Hems, L. (2012). *Report on the NSW Social Impact Bonds Pilot*. The Centre for Social Impact. http://www.csi.edu.au/assets/assetdoc/0b6ef737d2bd75b9/Report_on_the_NSW_Social_Impact_Bond_Pilot.pdf

This study examines whether the Social Impact bond (SIB) concept is feasible in the Australian state of New South Wales (NSW), i.e. does NSW have the right market conditions, NGO capacity, social investment interest and government preparedness for this new approach to funding? After discussions with non-profits, social investors/philanthropists and government agencies, the Centre for Social Impact concluded that the concept is feasible in NSW, although there is much work to be done to deliver a SIB pilot.

Keywords: Australia; Funding policy; Pay-for-Performance; Social Finance; Social Impact Bonds (SIB's); Social Innovation; United Kingdom

Thompson, M. & Emmanuel, J. (2012). *Assembling Understandings: Findings from the Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships, 2005-2011*.
http://dspace.library.uvic.ca:8080/bitstream/handle/1828/3879/au_book_final_April122012.pdf?sequence=15

This report provides an overview of the [Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships \(CSERP\)](#) research findings under the following themes: Mapping, Social Enterprise, Co-operatives, Indigenous Peoples, Organizational Governance & Capacity, Social Finance, and Public Policy. Chapter Six: Financing the Social Economy, refers to the development of new financial tools and strategies called “social finance”: “a burgeoning area for financiers of all stripes in Canada and [...] integral to the advancement of the social economy.” Over thirty CSERP projects explored social finance between 2005 and 2011. Most focused on various ways of funding the social economy, while some highlighted types of financial institutions in the social economy and the ways in which social economy organizations manage their finances. Different mechanisms of social finance are listed in each Canadian province.

Keywords: Canada; Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP); Non-profit organizations; Pilot projects; Social economy; Social finance

Keywords

Employers
Funding policy
LES Needs Assessment
Literature Reviews
Non-profit organizations
Pay-for-Performance
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Social Impact Bonds (SIB's)
Social Innovation
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Workplace Literacy and Essential Skills (WLES)

Name keywords

Australia
BC Social Innovation Council
British Columbia
Canada
Canadian Policy Research Network
Canadian Social Economy Research Partnerships (CSERP)
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CONNECT Strategic Alliances
European Commission
European Union
Nova Scotia
Ontario
Social Demonstration and Research Corporation (SRDC)
Social Innovation Canada
Supporting the Canadian Advancement of Literacy and Essential Skills (SCALES)
United Kingdom
United States
United States Government Accountability Office (GAO)