



SKILLSFORSUCCESS INITIATIVES SERVICE DELIVERY PILOTS 2023/24

CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

From 2022 to 2024, Ontario’s Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) program received federal funding to undertake projects in support of Canada’s Skills for Success (SFS) framework.

Resource development and/or service delivery pilots were funded under five initiatives:

- **Supporting Underrepresented Groups;**
- **Supporting Apprenticeship Integration;**
- **Supporting Better Jobs Ontario Integration;**
- **Workplace Literacy;** and
- **Expanding and Enhancing Digital Delivery.**

Projects were designed in accordance with the Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum Framework (OALCF).

The goals of SFS initiatives are:

- to support ongoing LBS program development objectives by building capacity across cultural streams and delivery sectors;
- to strengthen LBS employment and apprenticeship outcomes;
- to integrate LBS services into the broader workforce development system; and
- to enhance and expand blended and fully distance learning opportunities.



CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

PROGRAM: EMERGENCY EDUCATION ASSISTANT PROGRAM PILOT

SECTOR: SCHOOL BOARD CULTURAL STREAM: ANGLOPHONE

INITIATIVE: UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

GOALS

To help fill Education Assistant vacancies. This is a significant challenge in many school boards across Ontario. We wanted to develop a program that would provide some training to help fill that gap.

To provide a **stepping-stone for Newcomer Women to Upskill and the opportunity to obtain some work experience in Canada.**

Our program could open doors for Newcomer Women. It can help these women network through placement in one of our schools. This will teach them how to navigate the system, which will help when looking for employment.

LESSONS LEARNED

Pilot projects provide learning opportunities for growth, finding new ways to engage with our community partners in ways that benefit them, our students and our organization.

Connecting with the employer and employment services helps us to know what is important when developing programs. This will help our graduates to be employment ready because they will have the skills that employers need.

OUTCOMES

The students feel like they have benefited from our program. It has helped them to learn how our school system works in Ontario, the pedagogy that we use in our schools and the steps required to apply for employment in the education system once they have completed our program.



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SNAPSHOT

Emergency Education Assistant program

On-site at 440 Albert Education Centre, Ottawa

Seven participants (start off small but see potential for this to grow as the program becomes known within our community)

Target: Newcomer Women with prior education and work experience in Education (Teachers and Teaching Assistants)

One intake

Delivery is still in progress

REASON FOR PROJECT

As part of discussions with our school board, there was a need to fill Education Assistant vacancies. This is a significant challenge that many school boards across Ontario are facing on a daily basis. We wanted to develop a program that would provide some training to help fill that gap within our own school board.

Within our newcomer population there is an untapped resource. We have students who have prior education and work experience in Education. By developing a program, we could provide some training along with a paid work placement within our school board. This would help connect Newcomer women with relevant prior education and experience from their home countries to elementary or secondary schools in need of Education Assistants.

PROJECT IMPACT

This pilot project has provided a positive learning opportunity for us in developing materials along with working closely with Learning Support Services within our board. We've learned a lot about the different protocols within the board when putting together a Letter of Intent that went out to Principals in order to find work placements for our students.

Our school board was able to learn more about our pilot project and offer some helpful suggestions that we were able to implement. We have a supportive school board behind this project.

The students feel like they have benefited from our program as well. Our program has helped them to learn how our school system works in Ontario, the pedagogy (philosophy in how we teach and interact with students) that we use in our schools and steps needed to apply for employment once they have completed our program.

We've learned that pilot projects provide learning opportunities for growth, finding new ways to engage with our community partners in ways that benefit them, our students and our organization.

Connecting with the employer and employment services helps us to know what is important when developing programs like this one. This will help our graduates to be employment ready because they will have the skills that employers need.

Employment services provides employment supports that help bridge the gap between the student finishing the program to obtaining employment.

BEST PRACTICES

Community partners are essential as it takes a village to help a project run smoothly. Examples of community partners that were a part of this project were:

Employment Services (YMCA Employment Services) - provides employment support for up to year after graduation.

Placement can be used as a COOP credit that will provide students with the opportunity to obtain a Prior Learning Assessment (PLAR). If they wish to eventually move onto higher education to obtain their Developmental Service Worker (DSW), they would need to complete their high school diploma which would help them to qualify for the DSW programs.

Employer Partnerships: In our case, it was our own school board. At the Elementary and Secondary (Kindergarten to Grade 12). Having the opportunity to complete their placement in one of our Elementary or Secondary Schools provides an opportunity for students to get a taste of what the job entails.

FUTURE IMPACT POTENTIAL

Being able to provide some training for those interested in working in schools helping children that need extra support is needed in our school community. The shortage is something that we would like to help address. This would provide some support for our students in our school community.

This program would also provide a stepping stone for newcomer women to upskill and the opportunity to obtain some work experience in Canada. These women would have some transferable skills that our school board may consider when looking to hire them as Education Assistants.

Our program could open doors for newcomer women. Networking is key and our program will help these women be able to do that by means of placement in one of our schools. This teaches them how to navigate the system which helps them when it comes to looking for employment.

In our current cohort, we have newcomer women who have prior work experience working in the education system as teachers and education assistants in their home country. This seems more common than one would think. We have seen this trend in other workplace programs that we offer in LBS.

RESOURCES & SUPPORTS

We have community partners that we've had partnerships over the years such as Ontario Works, Settlement Agencies for Newcomers to Canada and World Skills.

In our school, we have a significant population of Newcomers. Newcomer women are interested in our programs because they are interested in working in our schools and childcare centers.

Our own school board was another source of information. Some of these women are currently working as lunch monitors (underemployed) and would like to work as Education Assistants to be with the students during other times of the school day. This would increase their chances of obtaining more work hours during the school day.

1. Adapting/editing the CESBA Child Development Practitioner Curriculum for the Prep for EA class.
2. Virtual Lab School - Child Development, Brain Development, Professionalism, Positive Guidance
3. Various relevant material/handouts from the Childcare Assistant Class
4. Ontario Education Documents - Learning for All, Special Education in Ontario, Guiding Principles for Special Education in Ontario, How Does Learning Happen? Categories of Exceptionalities as defined in the Education Act,
5. Center for Disease Control Developmental Milestone checklists (infants to 12 years) and Training Modules -Watch Me! Child Development Milestones and Sharing Concerns Modules
6. Behaviour Management Systems Training (BMS) - Off site practical training provided by our School Board
7. Emergency First Aid Training Level C/CPR plus AED (Action First Aid)
8. Soft Skills Solutions Training throughout the course
9. Skills for Success Resources and printable materials from the Government website and UPSkills for Work Website
10. A variety of relevant videos to supplement handouts on a variety of topics to support and reinforce student learning.

Also, the school board in Simcoe-Muskoka that offers an apprenticeship Education Assistant program sent us what they had developed.

In discussions with our school board, we all agreed that it was important for us to make the distinction between a Casual Educational Assistant and an Emergency Educational Assistant.

Casual Education Assistant - requires a Developmental Service Worker Diploma (college) or equivalent. (The school board would decide whether or not the new graduate had the equivalent or not.)

Emergency Education Assistant - in partnership with our school board's Human Resources, Learning Support Services, and our Principal, we can provide the necessary training. This in turn would be a good stepping stone to the student obtaining an equivalency upon completion based on past education/work experience. Upon completion of our program, if the student needed further training, they would still be able to obtain employment as an Emergency Education Assistant. Once this was sorted out, our school board was willing to support our pilot project by providing work placements for our students. They are behind this initiative and schools have welcomed our students into their classrooms.

BENEFIT TO PARTICIPANTS / EMPLOYERS

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PARTICIPANT: **KHANH**

EMERGENCY EDUCATION ASSISTANT PROGRAM PILOT

KHANH was referred to the class by a friend who received a program flyer at Pinecrest Queensway Employment Center.

Her friend thought that this program would be good for her because she worked at a school for a long time before coming to Canada from Vietnam.

Khanh's goal is to return to work in a school, supporting students in their studies. She hopes to equip herself with the knowledge she needs about the school environment in Canada, children's behaviours and difficulties, so she can do the best job she can as an EA.

Even though she was a teacher for more than 10 years in Vietnam, she feels that she is learning many new things. There are a lot of differences between the education systems in Canada and Vietnam such as the difference between teachers and EA's, the school climate and education mindset, so she feels like the program has been very beneficial, and she feels more confident with her employment goals now.

Teacher's comments:

Throughout the last few months from the assessment until now, Khanh has exhibited a real thirst for knowledge and a commitment to learning.

She has always completed what has been asked of her in a short time frame such as completing training modules, sending in required documents, completing homework, self directed work, and even doing extra research on certain topics that are of interest to her.

She shares this information with the class, and contributes many personal examples as well.

KHANH SAYS...

"There is always something special about children's smiling faces that keeps me wanting to go to work every day."