

Aboriginal Literacy and Essential Skills (ALES) Pilot Project

Essential Skill Program or Initiative Elements		Description
1. Title of Initiative	Aboriginal Literacy and Essential Skills (ALES) Pilot Project	
2. Delivery Organization (Name)	Established in 1988 as a not-for-profit society, Literacy Victoria has expanded to foster a diverse community for learners who are 19 years of age and older. Specifically, Literacy Victoria offers learner-centered literacy and essential skills services and programming for adults on southern Vancouver Island free of charge.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not for Profit <input type="checkbox"/> First Nations, Métis, Inuit <input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) 		
3. Contact Details	Ruth Derrick, Executive Director Literacy Victoria 930A Yates Street Victoria, British Columbia V8V-4Z3 Tel/Fax: 250.381.3755 Email: ruth@literacyvictoria.ca	
4. Website or Other Information Source	www.literacyvictoria.ca	
5. Funder(s)	Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of funding 	Not disclosed	
6. Other Partners involved		
	Partner name	Role
	Canadian Council on Learning	In-kind partner
	Coast Salish Employment Skills and Training Society	In-kind partner
	WILNEW Committee and its communities (10 South Island First Nations communities)	In-kind advisor and partners in First Nations adult literacy and learning initiatives
	First Nations Technology Council	In-kind communications
	NIL/TU,O Child and Family Services	In-kind partner
	Saanich Adult Education Centre	In-kind peer reviewer
	Saskatchewan Literacy Network	In-kind partner
		Utilizing its <i>First Nations holistic lifelong learning model</i>
		Sharing and exchanging knowledge between its HRSDC-funded Essential Skills toolkit initiative and Literacy Victoria's ALES Pilot Project
		Providing advisory support and guidance to the ALES Pilot Project Team In particular, the Esquimalt Nation, Pauquachin First Nation, Songhees Nation, Tsawout First Nation and Tseycum First Nation involved Literacy Victoria in their learning plan processes
		Sharing, posting and circulating ALES Pilot Project final report on its First Nations BC Portal for broad distribution
		Providing community coaching and guidance on family/household-specific literacy, learning and Essential Skills needs and interests in First Nations communities on southern Vancouver Island
		Professional peer review of the ALES Pilot Project adapted benchmark framework, tutor guide and curriculum
		Sharing of its <i>Circle of learning, Saskatchewan adult literacy benchmarks, levels 1 and 2</i>

Essential Skill Program or Initiative Elements		Description
7. Third Party Contractors involved		
Name	Role	Responsibilities
Project Administrator	Administrator for the ALES Pilot Project	Overseeing the daily operations and project deliverables for the ALES Pilot Project
Benchmark Consultant	Adult literacy benchmark subject matter expert	Adapting culturally-relevant benchmarks and corresponding tutor guide for First Nations communities on southern Vancouver Island
Graphic Facilitator	Community facilitation artist and graphic designer	Designing a visual/art-based version of the Pauquachin First Nation inaugural community learning plan
Action Research Assistant	Research assistant specializing in First Nations-specific adult Literacy and Essential Skills	Collecting and analyzing data (primarily qualitative research data) on adult Literacy and Essential Skills in First Nations communities on southern Vancouver Island—includes preparing and posting articles on the ALES Pilot Project Blog; and co-facilitating community learning plan workshops
Framework Consultant	Adult literacy, learning and Essential Skills evaluation subject matter expert	Providing a comprehensive evaluation and overview of the ALES Pilot Project and its accomplishments of core deliverables
Literacy Curriculum Developer	Adult literacy, learning and Essential Skills curriculum development subject matter expert	Adapting a curriculum on food safety and indigenous meal preparation for First Nations communities on Vancouver Island
First Nations Literacy Curriculum Developer	First Nations-specific adult literacy, learning and Essential Skills curriculum development subject matter expert	Providing guidance and working with the Literacy Curriculum Developer in adapting a curriculum on food safety and indigenous meal preparation for First Nations communities on Vancouver Island
Community coaches	Community liaisons for the ALES Pilot Project	Providing guidance, support and related troubleshooting pertaining to relationship building and understanding local protocols in individual First Nations communities on southern Vancouver Island
Community Learning Plan Consultant	Community learning plan facilitator	Serving as lead facilitator in the design of First Nations community learning plans
Web designer	Web design for the ALES Pilot Project	Designing and maintaining the ALES Pilot Project portal—includes e-resources, Blog and related online Project updates
Strategic communications consulting team	Graphic design, editorial and writing service providers	Designing, editing and producing the ALES Pilot Project final report and related resources for circulation in print and electronic formats

Essential Skill Program or Initiative Elements	Description
8. Location (Name of city, community, etc.)	Literacy Victoria is located in Victoria, BC; however, the scope of the ALES Pilot Project extended to First Nations communities on southern Vancouver Island (10 First Nations communities—in total)
9. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location Type 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Urban <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural <input type="checkbox"/> Fly-in (accessible only by air) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> First Nations, Métis, Inuit community <input type="checkbox"/> Prison <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scope of Program 	<input type="checkbox"/> National <input type="checkbox"/> Provincial/territorial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local – southern Vancouver Island in British Columbia <input type="checkbox"/> Special interest group (in-house program)
10. Target Audience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age 	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth (15-25) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adult (18 years of age and older) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (specify): families (e.g., Youth, Elders) of adult learners were involved in the community learning plan process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Male <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> First Nations – on-reserve communities <input type="checkbox"/> Inuit <input type="checkbox"/> Métis
11. Participant Eligibility Criteria:	None—N/A
12. Year Program/Initiative Started	2010
13. Year Program/Initiative Ended <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did the program end? 	2013 This was the agreed upon end date for this HRSDC-funded Pilot Project.
14. Description of Initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview 	<p>For the three year community-based Aboriginal Literacy and Essential Skills (ALES) Pilot Project, Literacy Victoria assisted First Nations communities on southern Vancouver Island (BC, Canada) and their citizens in developing a learning vision and set of pathways that are culturally relevant and reflective of customized Literacy and Essential Skills needs, interests and priorities. Specifically, Literacy Victoria worked with five southern Vancouver Island First Nations communities as pilot sites (representative of urban and remote First Nations communities) that utilized the Canadian Council on Learning’s <i>First Nations holistic lifelong learning model</i> and sought advisory support and guidance from the WILNEW (Victoria region) Committee and other First Nations community learning champions.</p> <p>The ALES Pilot Project is recognized as the first comprehensive First Nations Literacy and Essential Skills planning process on southern Vancouver Island.</p>

Essential Skill Program or Initiative Elements	Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics covered 	<p>As part of the ALES Pilot Project, the project team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developed a regional First Nations adult literacy and essential skills framework, • facilitated and developed individual and community learning plans, • adapted culturally relevant learning and assessment benchmarks for First Nations learners, • designed culturally relevant curriculum that utilized a “pathways” approach, and • designed a sustainability plan to advance First Nations adult literacy and essential skills program/service delivery post February 2013 (the conclusion of the HRSDC-funded ALES Pilot Project).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duration of program (# of sessions) 	2010—2013
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • length of each session 	On-going throughout the entire duration of the three year initiative.
15. Number of times offered per year	On-going over the three years
16. Number of participants per intake	Adult learners, their families/households, community learning champions, Band Administration staff members, Chiefs and Councils, and Elders were all welcome to join the ALES Pilot Project throughout the duration of the three year initiative.
17. Completion rate (%)	N/A
18. Which Essential Skills are covered (check all that are covered)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reading Text <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Document Use <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Numeracy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Writing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Oral Communication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Working with Others <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thinking Skills <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Computer Use <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuous Learning
19. Main Objectives	Assisting First Nations communities on southern Vancouver Island (BC, Canada) and their citizens in developing a learning vision and set of pathways that are culturally relevant and reflective of customized community Literacy and Essential Skills needs, interests and priorities.
20. Does the program include special emphasis on: (check all that apply)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Culture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Language <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tradition <p>The ALES Pilot Project had four main organizing principles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First Nations communities are culturally diverse and have varied learning needs and approaches to learning; 2. Aboriginal literacy-based curricula, assessments, learning plans, programs and services need to be designed for different

Essential Skill Program or Initiative Elements	Description
	<p>skill levels;</p> <p>3. The creation of culturally relevant First Nations literacy curricula needs to be both clear and transparent and carried out in collaboration with our First Nations partners; and</p> <p>4. Culturally relevant individual and community-based First Nations learning plans are needed to foster individual and community ownership regarding literacy skill development.</p>
21. Type of Intervention: (Check more than one if applicable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Awareness Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Assessment of skills <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Development of Learning Plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Training or Skill Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tool Development <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
22. Type of delivery approach: (check all that apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Lecture <input type="checkbox"/> Seminar, discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Personal reflection-awareness training <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project/Theme Based <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Skill practice by participants in sessions <input type="checkbox"/> Skill practice by participants in work place <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interview/consultation with stakeholders <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
23. Staff/Practitioner Training and Background	Advanced knowledge, skills and expertise in project management, group dynamics/team building, First Nations governance/relations, adult literacy benchmarking, adult literacy curriculum design, community development, facilitation and planning, adult literacy summative evaluation, intergovernmental relations, Aboriginal cultural awareness, and strategic communications.
24. Tools and Resources Used to Implement program (e.g., assessment tools, video tapes of practice, etc.)	Smart Board (for utilization by First Nations communities), adapted adult literacy benchmarks for First Nations learners, adapted food safety and indigenous meal preparation curriculum for First Nations learners, ALES Pilot Project-designed tutor guide, ALES Pilot Project Portal and Blog, Canadian Council on Learning's <i>First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model</i> , CAMERA assessment, and SOAR strategic planning methodology.
25. Difficulties or Barriers encountered	<p>1. The impact of historical trauma on learning was a reality that the ALES Pilot Project team faced daily. Therefore, it is important to understand these impacts and possible solutions to assist First Nations learners in identifying culturally relevant supports and resources.</p> <p>2. For some members of the ALES Pilot Project, team and individual dialogue sessions were held to</p>

Essential Skill Program or Initiative Elements	Description
	<p>unlearn and deconstruct their understanding of change at the community level and to utilizing an asset-based approach to working with others on the team and ultimately with participating First Nations communities. The ALES Pilot Project Team determined that (i) an attitude of openness to dialogue, (ii) collaboration and (iii) flexibility were essential for dealing with changes and unanticipated activities in participating First Nations communities and overall with the Project's implementation.</p> <p>3. A gradual, sometimes lengthy, project development process was initiated to increase community involvement and ownership of both the learning plan development process and the products of their communal enterprise. Several factors led to slower progress than initially anticipated, including both the need to build trust in each community before gaining wider participation and the reality of low literacy levels among some participating community members. The use of community meetings in several First Nations was aimed at gaining community participation and involvement in the ALES Pilot Project.</p> <p>4. It was important for the ALES Pilot Project team to gain awareness and subsequent understanding of processes and protocols for working with participating First Nations communities—a cultural protocol in one community may differ from another even if the communities are in close geographical proximity. Moreover, many of the individuals in the project were unfamiliar with collaborative processes.</p>
<p>26. Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms. Please provide details on how you assess the following:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving general program goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review and tracking of HRSDC contract deliverables via team meetings • interviews with community learning plan participants for feedback on the ALES Pilot Project and its activities • peer review of benchmark and curriculum resources • framework summary/analysis (of the ALES Pilot Project) prepared by adult literacy evaluation subject matter expert • quarterly reports to HRSDC on project activities and finances (includes on-site audits) • monthly reports to Literacy Victoria Board of Directors on project activities • annual report to Literacy Victoria membership on

Essential Skill Program or Initiative Elements	Description
	project activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> final report to HRSDC and Literacy Victoria partners on Pilot Project accomplishments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracking program adherence by participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feedback from community learning champions and community coaches who reside and/or work in local First Nations communities on southern Vancouver Island
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracking program adherence by Staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> team and one-to-one meetings—reviewing project activities/deliverables and finances/budgetary requirements monthly reports to Literacy Victoria Board of Directors on project activities annual report to Literacy Victoria membership on project activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing participant skill attainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learning plan development at the individual and community levels initial implementation of community learning plans interviews with community learning plan participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing participant knowledge acquisition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learning plan development at the individual and community levels initial implementation of community learning plans interviews with community learning plan participants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessing changes in participant attitudes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> interviews with community learning plan participants informal conversations/dialogue with participating First Nations communities, community learning champions and community coaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program Impact including key results or outcomes 	Through the advancement of the ALES Pilot Project, the Project team achieved the following outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wider access to Literacy and Essential Skills curriculum and resources relevant to the social, economic and cultural context of First Nations communities for First Nations adult learners and practitioners; Strengthened sense of learner and community engagement and ownership over Literacy and Essential Skills development and interventions; Coordinated approach to Literacy and Essential Skills intervention in southern Vancouver Island’s First Nations communities; and Strengthened capacity of southern Vancouver Island First Nations communities, facilitating future engagement and collaboration around Aboriginal Literacy and Essential Skills.
27. Lesson Learned	The ALES Pilot Project advanced a grassroots adult Literacy and Essential Skills development process in a

Essential Skill Program or Initiative Elements	Description
	<p>sustainable manner for First Nations adult learners (living on reserve), their families (households) and communities on southern Vancouver Island.</p> <p>Communities “set the pace” and grew their respective “learning tree” from within their Nations, identifying adult literacy, learning and Essential Skills needs, interests and priorities.</p> <p>The ALES Pilot Project endeavoured to ensure that First Nations communities and their citizens on southern Vancouver Island achieve a level of literacy to allow for full participation in life.</p> <p>The Pilot Project’s results and its resources are accessible to a diverse range of communities and organizations in both digital and print formats.</p>
28. Reporting (what and to whom)	<p>Quarterly project activity and financial updates reported to HRSDC</p> <p>Monthly project activity updates to the Literacy Victoria Board of Directors</p> <p>Weekly project activity and financial updates to the Literacy Victoria Executive Director</p> <p>Annual project activity update to the Literacy Victoria membership</p> <p>Final reporting to HRSDC (as funder), Aboriginal communities and organizations, literacy organizations, Government of British Columbia, Government of Canada, and academia.</p>