

Skill Builders for Young Parents Program (2013-2015)

Final Evaluation Report

Prepared for the NWT Literacy Council



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1. Introduction



My family and I enjoyed coming out to the [cooking] program. We as a family enjoyed learning with other families. It met all our needs and we enjoyed taking home books and experiences.

--Program participant

A. Purpose of report

The purpose of the final evaluation report is to document the results of project *Skill Builders for Young Parents Program* funded by the GNWT Department of Education, Culture and Employment. The report looks in detail at Year 2 and also examines how well the project met its goal, objectives, outcomes, and outputs. This report builds on the interim evaluation report submitted in April 2014. The interim evaluation report covered Year 1.

This *Skill Builders for Young Parents Program* intended to 1) attract young parents back into learning that will benefit them and their families; 2) re-engage them actively in learning; and 3) improve foundational skills like literacy, numeracy, oral communication, working with others, digital literacy and problem-solving. This was to be achieved through innovative

community-based programs that are accessible to them, that respond appropriately to their needs and that provide meaningful opportunities to build their skills.¹

B. Background information on the project

This section outlines the project goals, objectives and outcomes.²

Program goal

Young parents' increased knowledge and skills will enable them to support their families in positive ways, in areas such as family wellbeing and support, healthy eating and literacy development.

Program objectives

The project has three key objectives:

- develop two short community-based programs (one for males and one for females) that embed literacy and essential skills and re-engage young parents, who are out of school and currently unemployed, in learning that supports their families in positive ways
- build capacity in communities to develop and deliver these programs
- provide support to communities to implement the programs to ensure intended outcomes

Program outcomes

The overall intended outcomes for the project are three-fold: increased capacity at the community level to deliver embedded literacy programs; increased engagement of young parents in learning; and, increased knowledge and skills among young parents to support families. Specific outcomes include:

- Communities have the tools and resources they need to offer embedded youth literacy and essential skills programs.
- Communities have increased capacity to offer meaningful youth literacy programs.

¹Rationale: Skill Builders for Young Parents Program Proposal 2013-2015 by the NWT Literacy Council

² Taken from the NWT Literacy Council project proposal to ECE.

- Young parents are actively engaged in learning and use what they learn to support their families in positive ways.
- Young parents have more knowledge and skills to better support their families in specific areas (e.g. to plan and prepare healthy food for their families), and use the new knowledge and skills in their everyday lives.
- Young parents have more confidence, skills and tools to support their children's literacy development and are involved in daily family literacy activities.

Program outputs

The major expected outputs of the project were:

- a cooking program developed with a facilitator manual, program materials, literacy and essential skills check list and skill builder activities
- an evaluation framework
- interim and final evaluation reports
- information from four focus groups with young men analyzed
- people selected for training and three-day training delivered
- applications are developed
- programs are running
- proposals are developed for ongoing funding

2. Evaluation goals, objectives and methodology

This section outlines how the overall evaluation will be carried out. The evaluation for *Skill Builders for Young Parents Program* is both formative and summative in nature. It will examine the project process as well as review outcomes, outputs and how well the project met its objectives as stated in the proposal.

A. Evaluation goals

1. Document the progress of the project including accomplishments, challenges, changes and “aha” moments throughout the project from 2013-2015.
2. Identify how well the project met its goal, objectives, outputs and outcomes at its competition.

B. Evaluation objectives

Formative evaluation questions:

1. How was the three-day training on embedding essential skills into skill building programs for young parents received by participants who attended? How was it adjusted in Year 2?
2. In what ways are communities building their capacity to offer skill building programs to young parents?
3. What resources have been developed and how are they being used?
4. Who is attending the programs and from which communities?
5. How well are the programs responding to the needs of those parents participating? How are they being received by participants?
6. What are the differences between the programs offered to young mothers and young fathers?
7. What are participants learning from the programs? How are they using what they have learned? What is the effect on their families?
8. How well are the supports provided to participants and communities working?
9. How well did the focus groups process work with young men? What did the focus groups reveal?
10. What lessons are being learned along the way by all involved?
11. What are the greatest challenges on the project? How are they being overcome?
12. What major changes have taken place on the project? What are the reasons for these changes?

Summative Evaluation Questions

1. How many communities and community members were involved in programming throughout the two-year project?
2. How well did the criteria work to select communities to participate?
3. How many participants attended from each community? Men? Women?
4. How well have the training, resources and supports worked to build community capacity in each community?
5. What were the outcomes for facilitators from each community?
6. What were the outcomes (knowledge, skills and tools) for the young dads and mothers and their families who attended programs over the two years?
7. What tools were produced and identified through the project?
8. How well did the different components of the programs contribute to outcomes for young parents (skill building, essential skills and family literacy)?
9. In what ways are communities preparing to continue these programs?
10. In what ways have participants made positive changes in their families in areas such as family wellbeing and support, healthy eating and literacy development?
11. Overall, how well did the project accomplish what it set out to do?

C. Evaluation methodology³

For this final report, the following data collection methods were used:

- check-ins with NWT Literacy Council project staff (2 meetings)
- review of the Year 1 interim evaluation report
- review of feedback from Year 2 training participants at the end of the training in Yellowknife in September 2014

³ See Appendix 1 for data collection tools

- interviews with program facilitators who did not attend the wrap up meeting
- review of completed evaluation forms from participants in Year 2 pilot programs
- focus group with program facilitators from Year 2 pilot projects to get their feedback on the pilot program in March 2015
- review of project documents (proposal, final reports, etc.)

3. Findings from Year 1⁴

This section summarizes the findings from Year 1 of the project.

Objective 1: Develop two short community-based programs (one for males and one for females) that embed literacy and essential skills and engage young parents, out of school and currently unemployed, in learning that supports their families in positive ways.

During Year 1, *Literacy, Cooking and Nutrition Program for Young Mothers and their Families* was developed. The resource binder for the program was published in draft form by November 2013. Draft tools were reviewed by a dietitian, but there were further revisions based on facilitator feedback. The Cooking and Nutrition program was piloted in four communities. It was not possible to get six communities for Year 1 because of the short time line.

The literacy and essential skills component was also developed for the program to help program facilitators explicitly embed literacy and essential skills into the program. Their feedback revealed that this was difficult and that they need more support to do this. Most facilitators still had notions of literacy and essential skills as reading and writing and embedding literacy as using worksheets that participants would need to complete. Participants did not respond well to this approach. However, it was also clear that literacy and essential skills were taught implicitly throughout the program. This component was revised for Year 2 training based on the program facilitators' feedback.

The Family Literacy component was developed for the program. However, program facilitators had difficulty implementing family literacy as part of the cooking and nutrition program due to time and staffing constraints. They were very interested in doing family literacy and gave feedback on alternative ways that family literacy could be included in the future. Council staff members were not able to get children's books to all the programs.

⁴ Summarized from the Interim Evaluation Report 2014

Four focus groups were conducted with young fathers with data analyzed. Program development for a program for young fathers was to begin in Year 2.

An evaluation plan was developed. A more detailed framework was to be developed using the feedback from the Year 1 pilots.

Objective 2: Build capacity in communities to develop and deliver these programs

Communities were approached to participate in the project according to project criteria. In Year 1, twelve people from eight communities attended facilitator training for the cooking and nutrition program. The three-day training was delivered twice in Year 1, once in Yellowknife and once in Inuvik.

Participants in the training rated it very highly and were prepared to run the program. In the evaluation meeting in April 2014, program facilitators indicated they felt prepared to run the program and had been well-supported by Council staff. Program facilitators were interested in carrying on the program in their communities and some were looking at starting other programs especially on literacy and family literacy.

Program facilitators and participants would like to see an increased focus on traditional food and recipes in the future. This focus will be considered in program revisions.

Program facilitators revealed the importance of not limiting the program to mothers of a certain age group. They outlined the benefits of having older mothers and relatives attend the program.

Objective 3: Provide support to communities to implement the programs to ensure intended outcomes

Project staff developed an application form and administered funding and developed reporting forms for the project. The funding was distributed to the pilot projects in Year 1. Staff worked with communities to set up their programs and made regular contact with program facilitators. They found that program facilitators were independent and did not need a great deal of support. Staff visited three of the programs in Year 1.

They found that the idea of getting a family literacy person and a Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program worker in each community was sometimes limiting as there were other committed and qualified people to run programs that did not fall into these two categories.

Program facilitators received a proposal writing workshop in the April 2014 follow up meeting to look at how to put in a proposal for funding and the funding sources available to them. They were also offered ongoing assistance and support with proposal writing moving forward. They will be submitting funding proposals to continue their programs in the future.

The interim evaluation showed that participants had learned a great deal about nutrition and healthy eating. Participants were implementing these practices with their families. The evaluation also showed the importance of providing the opportunity for mothers and their children to get together to support and learn from one another. Their self-esteem and pride were enhanced through the program with their healthy cooking skills especially in their families.

Evaluator's summary comments for Year 1

The *Skill Builders for Young Parents Program* did extremely well in meeting the project objectives, outputs, and performance measures set out for Year 1. This was quite a feat given the very short timelines to do a mammoth amount of work.

Importantly, Year 1, through the pilot projects, indicated critical information on how to enhance programs for young parents for the programs offered in Year 2.

The interim evaluation findings showed that a quality program and process to implement the cooking and nutrition program were developed. It also showed that the project is building community capacity and having excellent results for young parents.

4. Findings for Year 2

A. Timeline of activities for Year 2 (2014-2015)

The following timeline outlines project activities in Year 2 to the end of the project in March 2015.

Table 1: Timeline of project activities

Activity	Time Frame
1. Communities selected for training and training program revised and enhanced for Year 2	May - September 2014
2. Three-day training for program facilitators in Yellowknife	September 2014
3. Pilot programs offered in 10 communities	October 2014 – March 2015
4. Evaluation follow up meeting and proposal writing training with program facilitators	March 16 th – 20 th , 2015

B. Changes made in Year 2



The most important thing I learned was the meaning of the drum, how to use it and stories from elders.

**--Program participant,
Drum Making Program**

Based on the evaluation feedback in Year 1 and the results of the focus groups with young fathers, there were some changes made to the project.

Development of a program for young fathers

One important change focused on the development of a program for young fathers. The original intention was to develop a ready-made program that could be used with young fathers in Year 2 as had been done in Year 1 with the *Literacy, Cooking and Nutrition Program for Young Mothers and their Families*.

The focus groups with young fathers conducted in Year 1 revealed many different ideas for a program focus. As a result, the Council let communities choose their program focus. This meant that the needs of communities around programming were met. However, it was impossible to develop a pre-made program for each focus. Instead, the Council chose to support each community in the development and delivery of its program. In addition, some communities indicated that the *Literacy, Cooking and Nutrition Program for Young Mothers and their Families* would best meet their community needs in Year 2. Therefore, there was a mix of programs for young fathers, young mothers and the two together.

Embedding literacy and essential skills into programs for young parents

The training of facilitators in Year 2 concentrated more on how to embed literacy and essential skills into the different topics for programming chosen by the different communities.

Evaluation training and tools

Year 1 feedback indicated that program facilitators needed more training on the importance of evaluation and how to get feedback from their participants. The evaluation training was enhanced in the year 2 training with the evaluator present for the training. In addition, a resource book with ideas and tools on how to do evaluation with participants was provided to each participating community offering a program to young parents. Youth facilitators collected evaluation data from program participants for this report.

Family literacy as a component of the embedded program

Based on the feedback from Year 1, Year 2 program were not required to have a family literacy component. However, family literacy information and resources were provided to program facilitators. Many communities involved with this project already had existing Family Literacy programs taking place. Program facilitators encouraged their participants to join Family Literacy activities as well.

C. Training of program facilitators Year 2⁵



There was lots of learning about literacy and how to implement it into everyday life.

--Program facilitator

⁵ See Appendix 2 for a summary of the final evaluation form findings.

Objects made from the team-building exercise from the September 2014 training.

This section outlines who attended the training and what was covered in the three-day training for program facilitators in September 2014. It also provides an overview of participants' feedback on the training.

Participants in the training

In Year 2, 21 people from 12 communities attended the September 2014 facilitator training in Yellowknife as follows:

- Ft. McPherson – Healthy Family Program (1 person)
- Gameti - Community Government of Gameti (2 people)
- Ft. Good Hope - Fort Good Hope K'asho Got'ine (2 people)
- Tulita - Incorporated Hamlet of Tulita (2 people)
- Whati - T'licho Government (2 people)
- Colville Lake - Colville Lake School (2 people)
- Aklavik - Aklavik Community Corporation (2 people)
- Deline - Deline First Nation (2 people)
- Wekweeti - Community Government of Wekweeti (2 people)
- Ft. Resolution - Deninu Kue First Nation (2 people)
- Yellowknife - North Slave Young Offenders Facility / Sir John Franklin High School (1 person)
- Inuvik - Ingamo Hall Friendship Centre I (1 person)

What the training covered

The training was divided into three days as follows:

Day 1 focused on introductions and expectations along with providing an overview of the project. Participants spoke about the focus of their programs along with community resources they would need for their programs. Literacy and essential skills were introduced as a concept to show people that this is more than reading and writing. Participants gave examples of how the nine essential skills are used in their communities. The concept of teamwork was highlighted and discussed along with how to embed literacy and essential skills activities around teamwork into one's program.

Day 2 focused on developing facilitation skills using a variety of activities and the *Facilitators' Guidebook*. Participants examined what makes a good workshop and different learning

styles. They got to ask their own questions about setting up their program. Council staff made a presentation on family literacy in the afternoon.

Day 3 focused first on evaluation: what it is, why it is important and how it is being used within the Skill Builders' project. Participants discussed what kinds of questions to ask and activities to use to get feedback from their program participants.

The rest of the day focused on many different ways that participants could intentionally embed literacy and essential skills activities into the focus of their programs.

Participant feedback on the training

The most important thing I learned was what makes a good facilitator.

--Program facilitator

Participants in the training provided feedback through different evaluation activities the first two days and an evaluation form and sharing circle at the end of the training. Overall they rated the training very highly.

Daily check ins with participants showed they were excited, thrilled, encouraged, hopeful and happy about the training they were getting and the possibility of offering programs to young parents in their communities. On a lesser scale, they were also a bit nervous. Getting to know other participants, hearing their ideas, and learning about literacy and essential skills were the aspects of the training that people liked best. Their favourite activities to use in future program were bingo, Scategories, dice game with charades and ice breakers in general. They will use one-minute public speaking exercise, multi-voting and brainstorming.

Participants indicated that they learned about literacy and essential skills, public speaking, and what makes a good facilitator. They were excited to get started on developing their program, involving others from their community and teaching literacy as part of the program. They also learned about funding, teamwork, communication, and evaluation. One person said, "Evaluation is key to making a program better."

For some participants, everything they learned was new to them. For most participants, the concept of an expanded definition of literacy and embedding it into other programs was new.

Suggestions for changes to the training

The main suggestion for change was to give more time for topics such as group discussions, reviewing information, funding sources and proposal writing. Another suggestion was to work through one program to demonstrate how literacy and essential skills could be intentionally embedded into it.

D. Pilot projects in Year 2



The most important things I learned in the program were healthy eating and cooking healthy foods.

--Participant, Cooking Program

In Year 2, there were eleven programs offered in ten communities. 72 Adults and Elders, 62 Youth, and 57 Children participated in the programs. Four programs focused on male youth and young fathers. Skills on the Land was mixed male and female. The cooking programs focused on female participants with some male youth.

Skills on the Land (1— Fort Good Hope)

Elders taught youth about preparation for living on the land. The goal was to have youth and Elders working together. There were twenty regular participants under thirty, mixed male and female along with Elder instructors who attended. There were many LES skills that were naturally part of this program including reading labels, safety information, schedules, maps, budgeting and planning skills. Working together was also an important skill learned in the

program. Participants spent a week learning and preparing to go on the land in the community hall and then a week on the land.

Cooking (6— Aklavik, Colville Lake, Paulatuk, Sachs Harbour, Tulita, and Ulukhatok)

There were six cooking programs. Some of the programs included a few fathers and male teenagers as well as young mothers and their children. These programs had, on average, 6-10 regular participants. The essential skills included were reading recipes, learning ingredients, writing out recipes, comparing food prices, budgeting, measuring, changing recipes for portions, thinking skills, working together.

Floor Hockey (1— Fort Resolution)

This program focused on getting fathers and their children out to play. The focus was on families who could not afford regular hockey. The program tried to include all nine essential skills: planning, scheduling, reading and learning rules, oral reading, oral communication, working together and keeping track of scores. Eight adults and sixteen children came to the program.

Drum Making (2— Tulita and Fort McPherson)

The drum making program focused on the cultural skill of learning to make drums. The participants were all males and included youth, fathers and sons and young adults. Sharing circles and storytelling from Elders were a big part of the program. Participants had to follow instructions to make drums and take their own notes for the step-by-step process. The skills of oral communications and working with others were highlighted in the program. Participants also learned traditional songs.

Moose hide Mitt Making (1—Yellowknife)

Nine youth, all male, attended the program. They prepared a moose hide, made mitts and wrote an instruction book with pictures on how to make mitts. The entire process was new to participants. The program focused on the essential skills of planning, writing and putting together an instruction book. Pattern making, and measurement, were also part of the essential skills learning.

E. Feedback on Year 2 pilot projects



Youth facilitators getting ready for their cooking session.

You can almost put all the activities you do and tie them to literacy. The facilitators had great ideas.

--Program facilitator at the final wrap up session

Overview of program results

All the programs were offered successfully based on the positive feedback from the participants, instructors and program facilitators. All program facilitators want to apply for more funding to run similar programs in the future. Program participants are interested in further learning through the continuation of the same program or different ones.

Participant feedback

Program participants (based on 76 responses from ten programs) rated the programs they attended highly without exception. This data was collected by the program facilitators.

They indicated they learned:

- how to work with others
- more about their culture especially from Elders
- traditional stories and songs
- how to make and use drums; their cultural importance
- about healthy food and how to cook it
- on-the-land skills; planning for and being on the land
- how to prepare hides and make mitts
- to play floor hockey with their children
- how to make an instruction book

Participants would like to see these programs continue or new programs be offered in their communities. The results showed that participants appreciated the hands on nature of the programs (making mitts, learning healthy cooking, making drums, playing a sport) they attended. They also liked the opportunity to work and socialize with others or play a sport with their children. Storytelling, learning from Elders and cultural learning were also rated as highly important.

Participant comments

Cooking Programs

"In the program we learned to work with other families and the coordinator as one. I am using what I learned here."

"The program was informative and very helpful."

"I learned a lot more cooking skills and to meet with other people which was nice."

"I like trying out new things and different foods."

"What I liked best was being around other parents."

"The most important thing I learned was learning to cook a different variety of good foods for my family."

"I learned new healthy recipes for my family to enjoy."

"I liked working together and new ideas."

Floor Hockey

"I'd like to see more programs like this."

"What I liked best was seeing all the kids out with parents."

"The most important thing was playing hockey with my son."

"There was always sharing and having fun. There was lots of interest. Great job. I would like another sports program like this one. It was run so well it should continue but maybe with another sport."

"Ask kids what they want their parents to learn to play and go with that sport." (for future programming).

Mitt Making

"It takes a lot to make a pair of mitts. Tanning the hide took a long time and now all this sewing. No wonder they cost so much."

"My boy really loved the mitts I gave him. Thanks for teaching us."

"What I learned was how to use the things around me for survival—traditional ways."

"My suggestions for other programs for young parents are cooking, making moccasins and beading"

"The most important thing I learned was to take my time when I'm working on things."

"I liked making mitts and learning from elders."

"What I liked best was working with my hands."

Skills on the Land

"My main reason for attending the program is that I am really interested in youth and elders learning together. I liked that there was so much interest from youth and elders."

"What I liked best was the learning experience. I wish there was a little bit more so I could learn a little bit more."

"I would just like to say thank you to everyone who participated in this program next time I hope to be an instructor. I like working with kids to show them what they don't know."

"The most important thing I learned was teamwork out on the land."

"The whole program was great throughout. I've learned a lot about the land and culture and old and new ways of surviving."

"The most important things I learned were safety tips about the land, things to pack when travelling long ways. I learned what to do if you break down and setting up a tent in winter."

Drum Making

"What I liked best was the stories and learning from the elder."

"I liked the story telling and learning new skills."

"The most important thing I learned was the meaning of the drum and how to use it."

"I learned about working together. What I liked best was the amount of young families and the knowledge of the elder."

"Have more drum making programs for youth because there is much teachings that come with it and its important youth learn them."

"The most important thing I learned was how to make a drum from start to finish."

"What I liked best about this program was culturally relevant activities that promote a healthy lifestyle. Also the experience opens up opportunities to develop longer-term relationships."

Program facilitators' feedback

Participant outcomes

This project was very worthwhile, because the participants walked away with more pride of their nationality. They now have a drum and songs to sing with them in their own language. This drum making has started a drum group in our community that will get together once a week to practice and welcome others to join in. This will continue to build confidence in the drummers and give them a sense of belonging.

--Program facilitator

Program facilitators indicated that participants shared, participated, took initiative and learned from each other. They indicated that:

- participants gained pride and confidence in what they can do or make
- participants from one program are working harder on their numeracy and literacy skills since their program finished

- participants in the cooking programs were able to budget better and make their food go further for large families; they learned how to double or triple recipes and are now cooking healthy food at home
- people learned to work together (across all the programs) even though they might have had issues with some of the people outside the program
- participants in cooking programs became more independent and can do things on their own
- Elders and youth are showing respect for each other and teaching each other
- communication skills and relationships improved through the programs
- there is a more positive perception of the youth who participated in the programs
- as a result of a positive learning experience, youth are interested in further learning

Program facilitator outcomes

Most program facilitators indicated that they learned how to set up, coordinate and facilitate a new kind of program. They are proud and confident in this regard. They are now interested in applying for funding to offer similar programs to young parents based on the success of the programs offered through this project.

Challenges

Some program facilitators stated that the time for their programs was too short making it impossible to intentionally embed new literacy activities or games into their programs. One youth facilitator noted that, "More time would have allowed for more activities." In other cases, such as Skills on the Land, there were too many participants to be able to add or embed literacy activities into the program. Another challenge was that participants were more interested in hands on learning. Literacy and essential skills learning usually worked best when it was a natural part of the program and interesting to participants as opposed to trying to add something new into the program. The feedback revealed that most youth facilitators needed more support in how to build on literacy and essential skills that a natural part of their programs. For many, it was the first time running a program or a new kind of program.

Lack of community leadership to support the program offered was a difficulty in some communities. This challenge made it hard to get programs going and maintain momentum for them. One program had a challenge motivating youth through parts of the program that were difficult.

Not enough funding to run the program was a common challenge, despite many finding additional sources of funding. Other challenges were lack of space, weather (had to cancel/postpone program), not enough people, too many young children, and storage.

Program facilitators would like to see their programs have more time per session and run for longer. This would allow them to include more activities and spend more time on each activity. They would also do more planning and get more leadership involvement from their community. For some, a designated space would be important along with more hands on materials.

F. Embedding literacy and essential skills Year 2

All program facilitators indicated that they had incorporated literacy and essential skills into their programs. To the degree to which they could do this depended on:

- 1) their understanding of and comfort with the concept of embedded literacy,
- 2) their experience with embedded literacy and essential skills,
- 3) the length of their program sessions, and
- 4) the size of their group.

In addition, some noted that the participants in their programs were more comfortable with hands on activities.

What is clear from the feedback is that many youth facilitators have gained more awareness of literacy and essential skills through this project. They identified very well where it is happening naturally in the program. However, they need more hands on support and examples of how to actually build more learning around literacy and essential skills. The literacy and essential skills learning needs to happen in a way that is integral to the program focus and of interest to participants. It is clear that it cannot look like formal school learning. In the context of programming for young parents, literacy and essential skills learning works best when it is meaningful and a means to an end. One area that might appeal to youth is to include more digital literacy into programming.

Facilitators indicated that literacy and essential skills had been included in the following ways:

Skills on the Land

- reading labels and handouts
- learning safety information for skidoo safety, chainsaw safety and maintenance
- scheduling
- reading first aid handouts
- budgeting and planning
- using pictures and videos

Cooking

- reading recipes

- learning the meaning of ingredients
- writing out recipes
- working together and teamwork
- numeracy—learning how to measure or change the portions in recipes
- comparison shopping
- budgeting for shopping
- sharing tips and stories around budgeting
- using cookbooks
- oral storytelling time
- playing string games and traditional games
- reading books in Inuinnaqtun

Floor Hockey

- planning and scheduling
- reading rules and learning them; oral reading of rules
- reviewing drills
- keeping track of scores and players' times
- teamwork

Drum making

- following step-by-step instructions
- note taking
- listening to stories and asking questions
- working with others
- making an instruction book

Mitt making

- writing instruction for a book on mitt making and preparation of hides
- organizing and plan the book
- measuring skills for mites
- Using the computer

G. Support to programs from the NWT Literacy Council Year 2

Thank you for giving us an opportunity to voice our opinions and for our literacy program we did in our community. I'm looking forward to future programs if we find funding!

--Youth facilitator at the final wrap up session

The NWT Literacy Council provided support to the programs and communities through:

- funding
- training on facilitating, embedding literacy and essential skills into programs, and proposal writing
- program visits to four programs
- wrap up sessions for providing feedback and sharing ideas
- resources on facilitating, embedding literacy and essential skills, cooking and healthy eating, and evaluation
- ongoing support of programs through weekly check ins with programs

Overall, youth facilitators rated the support they got from the Council very highly.

September Training

Looking back, program facilitators indicated they got confidence along with coordination and facilitation skills to set up and run their own programs. They learned communication skills. They shared and learned from others who attended. They also got funding, and good resources.

Proposal writing workshop

Program facilitators indicated that they greatly valued the proposal writing workshop that was part of the wrap up session. They will use the information they got to write proposals themselves and they will share the information with others in their communities. The information on funding options was seen as helpful. Some facilitators indicated they need more support to actually write their own proposal.

Resources provided

Program facilitators were provided with the following resources for their program development and delivery:

- Facilitation Skills Guide
- Literacy, Cooking and Nutrition Modules
- Embedded Literacy and Essential Skills Guide

Program facilitators would like specific essential skills resources for the topic of their program. Some people did use some of the materials from the Embedding Literacy and Essential Skills resource. However, people did not have time to integrate activities from the Facilitation Skills Guide into their program. Those who ran cooking programs used materials from the cooking binder. They like the idea of a small booklet for each module rather than one big binder.

Program facilitators were also provided with an evaluation guide. They used the feedback forms from the evaluation guide to collect participant and some instructor feedback. Most had no time to do other evaluation activities.

Program facilitators would like a program planning guide. This would include a program registration form, waiver form and consent forms. The guide could also include a template for a recognition certificate for participants. It also needs to include more on evaluation with an evaluation form for children and facilitators, and how to evaluate facilitators.

Other training participants would like

Program facilitators would like to see more time for proposal writing including cover letters and more information and support for literacy and essential skills. They would also like to have safety training (first aid) for facilitators and participants. Food handling training for cooking programs would also be helpful. Babysitters should receive training as well. Some program facilitators would like basic computer training, and training on how to make a video (along with proper equipment to do so).

Additional support from the Council that participants would like

The main additional support program facilitators would like included more community visits from the NWT Literacy Council and guidance to teach literacy and essential skills. They would also like more funding to run longer programs and more programs; and more ways to stay in touch with each other through phone calls, and newsletters. They would like to see more information on literacy and the specific topic of their program (such as floor hockey), books on planning programs, and funding information for land activities.

H. Final wrap up session for Year 2

I am very happy. I learnt to write a proposal. That's a start. I am going to try my best to try and make a difference in helping my people.

--Program facilitator at the final wrap up session

Ten program facilitators from seven communities with Year 2 programs attended the final wrap up session from March 16 -19th, 2015.

Day 1 was a proposal writing workshop.

Day 2 focused on participants' programs: what the focus was, who the participants were and how facilitators embedded literacy and essential skills into their programs. There was also a section on the importance of evaluation and feedback on how participants got feedback from participants.

Day 3 included roundtable on how the programs went: what worked, what was challenging and what should be changed for another time. The afternoon focused on looking at the nine essential skills in each program focus. Participants discussed which essential skills came up naturally in their program and how they could build on these to intentionally embed literacy and essential skills in different ways.

Program facilitators provided feedback on what they learned and what they got out of the three days. All nine participants completed evaluation forms.⁶

What attendees learned at the final session

Program facilitators learned about other people's programs. They got good ideas about new programs and how to run their programs that they can take home with them. They learned that the challenges across programs were similar. They were able to speak in front of others to give feedback on the project and talk about their own programs. They learned more about literacy and essential skills and how to embed these skills into their programs.

Program facilitators found it very helpful to learn about the proposal writing process and what organizations they might get funding from.

⁶ See Appendix 3 for a summary of the final evaluation form findings for the wrap up session.

What they thought was most important

There were a number of areas that were important to attendees. The most important aspects of the meeting were the proposal writing workshops, sharing ideas, and learning about each other's programs. Other important areas included evaluation, ideas about literacy and similar challenges across programs.

What they would change about the meeting or like more of in the future

Program facilitators would like to see more meetings like this, more discussion on each program, and more follow-up and communication among programs when people are back in their communities.

5. Overall project results (Years 1 and 2)



Young fathers and their children in the floor hockey program.

A. Program goals and objectives

Program Goal:

Young parents' increased knowledge and skills will enable them to support their families in positive ways, in areas such as family wellbeing and support, healthy eating and literacy development.

The overall positive feedback from program participants, facilitators and others showed that the project met its goal very well. The programs for young parents in Year 1 and Year 2 did

support healthy eating, family togetherness, a healthy lifestyle, traditional learnings and literacy development. Young parents learned skills and increased their knowledge in the areas of:

- Healthy eating and cooking
- On the land skills
- Drum making
- Floor hockey
- Mitt making

Program participants learned literacy and essential skills such as working together, how to measure, planning skills, reading safety instructions and rules, reading recipes, budgeting, using computers, and gaining an interest and desire for more learning.

The notion of individual, family and community wellbeing comes through in the feedback in terms of:

- providing healthy cooking for one's family
- learning important and sacred traditions such as drum making and associated songs
- an incarcerated father making mitts for his son
- the pride in finishing a project that was hard
- elders and youth working together and gaining respect for each other
- improved relationships among community members through programming
- a satisfaction with learning and wanting to learn more through other programming

Program objectives:

- 1. Develop two short community-based programs (one for males and one for females) that embed literacy and essential skills and re-engage young parents, who are out of school and currently unemployed, in learning that supports their families in positive ways.**

In Year 1, the NWT Literacy Council developed a program for young mothers called *Literacy, Cooking and Nutrition Program for Young Mothers and their Families*. This program was also used in Year 2. Instead of developing one program for young fathers, communities were allowed to develop their own programs based on needs and interests in the community. As a result, four new programs were developed in Year 2 (floor hockey, on the land skills, drum making and mitt making). The Council made this change based on their needs assessment with young fathers. This was a good call because each program in Year 2 met community

needs and interests and was positively received by those attending. In every case, young parents were interested in further learning and programming.

The downside to having four new programs in Year 2 was that the Council was not able to develop specific embedded literacy resources for all these new programs or train people on one program. The project staff chose instead to show how literacy could be embedded in different program topics in the September 2014 training and provide ongoing support to the programs as needed.

2. Build capacity in communities to develop and deliver these programs

The majority of program facilitators were new to developing, delivering and facilitating the kinds of programs that were offered as part of this project. What they did gain was the confidence and capacity to plan and carry out a program for young parents successfully in their communities. While they did gain awareness of literacy and essential skills and how these skills were part of their program, this is an area for further development.

Program facilitators need more hands on support in how to intentionally embed literacy and essential skills into the content area of their programs. This includes how to provide additional learning support for the literacy and essential skills that come up naturally in the program. These need to be done in such a way that the learning is seen as a seamless part of the program focus and is of interest to participants. Most of the program facilitators are not instructors nor are they literacy teachers. The fact that they need more support in embedding literacy and essential skills is not unexpected. Most had to learn the skills associated with program development and delivery first. In addition, their participants preferred hands on learning. This provides another challenge in terms of thinking about meaningful ways to embed literacy and essential skills that will engage participants.

Those program facilitators who were already teachers, run family literacy programs or had the opportunity to run a second program in Year 2 tended to show more capacity for embedding literacy and essential skills. In some cases, those new to program development and literacy had a good analysis of literacy and essential skills. They just needed more hands on and ongoing practical support on how to embed literacy and essential skills within the constraints of their programs.

Evidence of capacity and the success of this project is that most of the program facilitators now wish to apply for additional funding to continue to offer programs for young parents in their communities. Two program facilitators from Year 1 have gone on to college.

3. Provide support to communities to implement the programs to ensure intended outcomes

As evidenced by the findings from both year 1 and year 2, a great deal of support was provided by Council staff to the communities offering programs. This included ongoing support for all aspects of the programs, some program visits, intensive training sessions, resources and wrap up sessions.

Program facilitators rated the support very highly. They were able to run programs for young parents successfully. They indicated that now they need more support in:

- 1) resources for program planning,
- 2) embedding literacy and essential skills, and
- 3) writing funding proposals.

B. Program outcomes

Introduction

In total, fifteen programs were offered to young parents and youth in eleven NT communities. These programs were offered to both young mothers and fathers. Eleven cooking programs were offered to young mothers. Three programs focused specifically on young fathers. Two programs included a mixture of young mothers and fathers. This number of programs was within the scope of the project as outlined in the project proposal.

In total, thirty-four people attended a three-day training program in Yellowknife (2013 and 2014) or Inuvik (2014). In Year 1 participants hailed from eleven communities. In Year 2, twelve communities were represented. The number of participants in training was ten under the original plan from the project proposal. However, overall the project was on target for the number of communities represented.

Communities have the tools and resources they need to offer embedded youth literacy and essential skills programs.

Communities have the basic tools and resources they need to offer embedded youth literacy and essential skills. However, the findings show that there is a need for more hands on support for how to embed literacy and essential skills into programs in creative ways.

Communities have increased capacity to offer meaningful youth literacy programs.

Communities have the capacity to offer meaningful youth programs as evidenced by the overall positive feedback and results from the programs offered.

Young parents are actively engaged in learning and use what they learn to support their families in positive ways.

The results show that young parents and other youth were actively engaged in the learning they participated in and are hungry for more learning. The learning supported families in positive ways.

Young parents have more knowledge and skills to better support their families in specific areas (e.g. to plan and prepare healthy food for their families), and use the new knowledge and skills in their everyday lives.

Young parents do have more knowledge and skills to better support their families in specific areas related to the focus of their program. At this point, it is difficult to know how they are using the new knowledge and skills in their everyday lives. There is anecdotal feedback that those parents who attended the healthy cooking programs are using these skills at home. Another community started up a drumming group.

Young parents have more confidence, skills and tools to support their children's literacy development and are involved in daily family literacy activities.

In most cases, this objective could not be met within the scope of this project. The findings from year 1 showed that, generally, there was not the time or staff component to have a family literacy component of the young parents program. However, program facilitators received some family literacy training and resources. Some were interested in offering family literacy in the future if they were not doing so already.

C. Program outputs

This section comments on the project outputs. The major expected outputs of the project were:

- **A cooking program developed with a facilitator manual, program materials, literacy and essential skills check list and skill builder activities**

The cooking program as developed as described.

- **Evaluation framework**
An evaluation framework was developed.
- **Interim and final evaluation reports**
These reports have been completed.
- **Information from four focus groups with young men analyzed.**
Focus groups and analysis completed.
- **People selected for training and three-day training delivered.**
The training was completed for Year 1 and Year 2.
- **Applications are developed**
The application process was developed in Year 1
- **Programs are running**
The number of program planned was the same as the actual.
- **Proposals are developed for ongoing funding**
The Council assisted some communities in applying for funding through the present program in Year 2 and for other funding sources. A proposal writing workshop was offered along with potential sources of funding.

D. Lessons learned

Intentionally embedding literacy and essential skills

The results of this project showed that the embedding of literacy and essential skills is a developmental process that takes time. Program facilitators need support to see exactly what kinds of activities they can use within the topic of their program. They need more awareness on broader concepts of literacy and essential skills that are beyond reading, writing and worksheets. They need hands on support from the Council to do this. The findings show that as program facilitators have more exposure to literacy development in programming, their capacity increases. Moreover, program facilitators need to learn how to develop and deliver youth programs before they can put attention to intentionally embedding literacy and essential skills.

Meeting community needs

The programs offered through this project were successful because of the flexibility provided. The results show that choosing programs that met community needs was a better option than having one standardized program in Year 2. This allowed the communities that focused on young men to develop and offer programs relevant and of interest to them.

Infrastructure and support

Communities need infrastructure and ongoing support, not just funding, to be successful at running these kinds of embedded literacy programs. The project results show that additional training and resources on program planning and evaluation will help support program facilitators in developing, delivering and evaluating programs in the future. The training and resources should be practical, step by step and include tools that program facilitators can immediately use. They also need hands on support with proposal writing.

Programs for young men

Young men were engaged in learning that included traditional and cultural learning and learning from elders. This learning was meaningful to them and they want to participate in more cultural programs such as the ones offered through this project. A focus on sports such as floor hockey was also positively received by young fathers.

Community leadership

Having the leadership on board to support programming for young parents is a key success factor. In the future, this support needs to be formalized before a community gets funding.

Flexibility with respect to program facilitators

The project originally envisioned having a Canadian Prenatal Nutrition Program worker and a family literacy worker facilitating the cooking program. Experience showed these were not always the right people. In Year 2, various people beyond this arrangement facilitated the programs. Experience showed the need to be flexible to get the best program facilitators. In addition, having two facilitators worked well especially when a program was being developed for the first time.

The importance of evaluation

Evaluation is taking on much more importance than it has in the past. It provides evidence for program outcomes based on goals and objectives. It's really important that program facilitators are learning to conduct evaluations. They are asking questions and collecting information. This is especially important to funders. It is also important that funders hear directly from program facilitators in project wrap up sessions.

Ongoing communication

The project showed the importance of ongoing communication among the programs and with the Council. Facebook, Skype and conference calls could all contribute to more ongoing communication.

5. Evaluator's Summary Comments

Over all, the NWT Literacy Council achieved the goals, objectives, outcomes and outputs expected through this project. Young parents are re-engaged in learning and asking for more programming such as what was offered through this project. Their learning experience was positive and had an impact on their wellbeing. Programming also had a positive impact on communities as a whole.

The results of the project show that supporting communities to deliver embedded literacy programs is not something can be fully achieved through one two-year project. There needs to be ongoing funding and support for program facilitators to further develop capacity to offer these kinds of programs.

Appendix 1: Data Collection Tools

Final Evaluation Form for Yellowknife Training 2014

Youth Embedded Literacy Training: Evaluation Form

Please circle the number that describes your experience and write your comments. Thank you!

1. I learned how to plan and set up a program for youth.

Very much

Not at all



5

4

3

2

1



My comments:

2. I know how to include literacy and essential skills support in programs for youth.

Very much

Not at all



5

4

3

2

1



My comments:

3. I learned facilitation skills that will help me facilitate programs with youth.

Very much

Not at all



5

4

3

2

1



My comments:

4. The materials from this training program are useful to me.

Very much

Not at all



5

4

3

2

1



My comments:

5. What I liked best about this training was:

6. The most important things I learned were:

7. I need more support and help with:

8. One suggestion I have for improving the training next time is:

Final Interview/Focus Group Questions for Program Facilitators

1. What was your program about? When did you hold it? Who were the participants?
2. How did you include literacy and essential skills in your program? How did that go?
3. What parts of your program worked really well?
4. What were the biggest challenges in your program overall?
5. What did participants learn that they did not know about when they started the program?
6. What was the community impact of your program?
7. What did participants like best about the program? Do you have any feedback forms?
8. How well did the training in September and the support for from the NWT Literacy Council help you?
9. What were the most useful parts of the training?
10. How did you use what you learned in the training?
11. What other support or training would have been helpful to you?
12. What other kind of support and training would you like now from the Council?

Final Interview Questions for NWT Literacy Council Staff

1. What overall changes were made to the project from the proposal? Why did these changes happen? What changes were made to the project as a result of Lessons Learned in Year 1?
2. How well was community capacity built through this project to develop and deliver embedded literacy programs to young parents? What capacity was built? What changes were there between Years 1 and 2? What areas still need further work?
3. How did the Council support communities to develop and deliver their programs in Years 1 and 2? What worked well? What would you do differently for another time?
4. How were the needs of young fathers addressed in Year 2? How many young men participated in the program approximately?
5. What were the results of the pilot programs in Year 2?
6. What was challenging in Year 2? How was this the same or different from year 1?
7. How well were pilot programs able to embed LES in Year 2? How was this the same as or different from year 1?
8. What resources were developed as part of this project? How well did they meet participants' needs and how much did they use them? How will they be revised now?
9. How well were the intended outcomes realized for each of the three project objectives?
10. What are the greatest lessons learned through the whole project?

Final Interview Questions for the Project Funder

1. What has been achieved through the project?
2. What are the biggest challenges?
3. What are the lessons learned?

**Skill Builders for Young Parents Program
Follow-up Meeting in Yellowknife
March 17-19, 2015**

Participant Feedback Form

1. I had the opportunity to talk about my program and hear from others about their programs.

Very much



5

4

3

2

Not at all



1

Comments: _____

2. I had the opportunity to discuss aspects of my program that were challenging and find solutions to these challenges.

Very much



5

4

3

2

Not at all



1

Comments: _____

3. I had the opportunity to give feedback on the project for young parents.

Very much



5

4

3

2

Not at all



1

Comments: _____

4. I got information about how to write a proposal to get funding.

Very much



5

4

3

2

Not at all



1

Comments: _____

5. I learned more about how to embed literacy into my program.

Very much



5

4

3

2

Not at all



1

Comments: _____

6. The meeting met my expectations.

Very much



5

4

3

2

Not at all



1

Comments: _____

7. The most important things I learned in the meeting were _____

8. The meeting could be improved for another time by _____

The last word is yours! _____

Thank you!

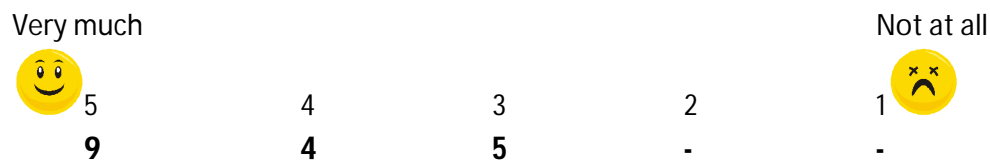
Appendix 2: Data Summary from Final Evaluation Forms (Facilitator training and Wrap up sessions)

Youth Embedded Literacy Training: Evaluation Summary for September 2014

Please circle the number that describes your experience and write your comments. Thank you!

4. I learned how to plan and set up a program for youth.

18 responses

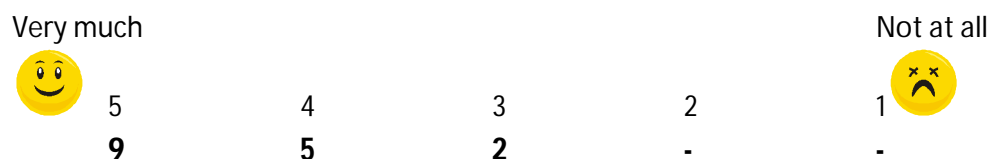


My comments:

- I am excited and nervous but I have my partner to help me
- As a youth coordinator I already organize weekly schedules for youth
- Pretty much
- It was not detailed enough on how to set up a program; maybe use another program as an example
- I like helping youth

5. I know how to include literacy and essential skills support in programs for youth.

16 responses

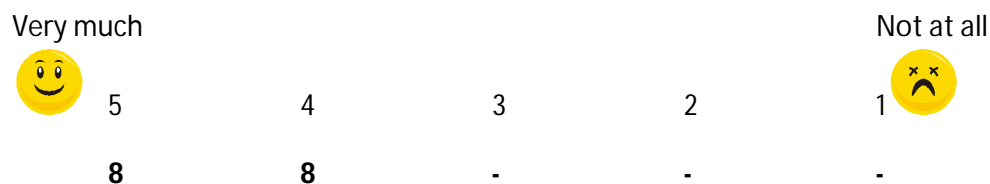


My comments:

- Nice to learn Essential Skills
- I have learned new ice breakers and how to incorporate them and brainstorming
- Using skills like reading and writing
- Lots of good activities where ideas were shared
- More information to bring home and use
- 9 Essential Skills

6. I learned facilitation skills that will help me facilitate programs with youth.

16 responses

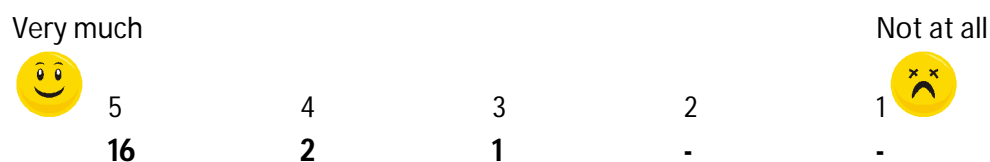


My comments:

- Icebreakers (2)
- Brainstorming
- I hope what I learned will help me with my group
- I already knew how

4. The materials from this training program are useful to me.

19 responses



My comments:

- Very much; found out about literacy
- Thank you for everything.
- I have to review everything
- Lots of good ideas shared
- Awesome cookbook.
- Very useful and helpful

5. What I liked best about this training was:

- Lots of learning about literacy; how to implement it into everyday life (4)
- Meeting new people and getting to know them (5)
- Working with others (4)
- Information sharing(2)
- All the ideas from each community; mine is no different from the rest (2)
- Everything(2)

- Collecting important information for upcoming program
- I am excited
- Learning materials
- How we can do projects.
- Brainstorming
- Well balanced (active versus passive)
- Good pace
- Welcoming
- Games
- How the facilitators got everyone involved in the sharing
- Great job
- The teachers
- Ice breakers
- Dice game
- Things I didn't know

9. The most important things I learned were:

- What is literacy and 9 ES(5)
- Public speaking. I am a shy person (4)
- What makes a good facilitator(3)
- Literacy means a lot more than reading(2)
- Everything(2)
- Preparing for activities
- Where to find funding and who to put the proposals to
- Teamwork
- Communication
- How to embed literacy into my program
- Knowing how to work with kids
- Group discussions
- Youth are important
- Ideas for reporting
- Evaluation
- Basic skills at work and at home

10. I need more support and help with:

- Writing proposals(4)
- Funding management
- Getting materials
- Planning and implementing new ideas
- Who to ask for help
- Not sure
- Public speaking
- On fixing projects
- Getting my community leaders involved with my program and to continue to support it

11. One suggestion I have for improving the training next time is:

- Give more time for group discussions, reviewing information, funding sources and less for games(2)
- The heat(2)
- Everything is a learning process; It is all good
- After workshop activities
- More time
- More pens
- Have a story of a particular program
- More reading and writing
- More games
- I am totally satisfied with all the learning over the last three days
- More time on proposal writing
- More participants

**Skill Builders for Young Parents Program
Follow-up Meeting in Yellowknife
March 17-19, 2015**

Evaluation Summary

N = 9

1. I had the opportunity to talk about my program and hear from others about their programs.

Very much



5

4

3

2

Not at all



1

9

-

-

-

-

Comments:

- Sharing ideas about all our programs was great. (6)
- Happy we got to talk about our program.
- It was informative.
- Wishing I was here the first day.
- Good to hear what worked and what didn't.

2. I had the opportunity to discuss aspects of my program that were challenging and find solutions to these challenges.

Very much



5

4

3

2

Not at all



1

4

1

2

1

-

Comments:

- We had similar situations and challenges. (2)
- Somewhat.
- We need our own cooking space so we can store our stuff.
- It was good way to learn to speak in front of others.
- At first it was hard, but we challenged ourselves to offer the program in our community.

3. I had the opportunity to give feedback on the project for young parents.

Very much

Not at all



5

4

3

2

1



7

1

-

-

1

Comments:

- I didn't attend the first day.
- We explained what the program was about.
- I love sharing what we are doing and getting ideas from other participants.
- Bring it home to young parents and young guys so they can use it in the future.
- We had similar situations.

4. I got information about how to write a proposal to get funding.

Very much

Not at all



5

4

3

2

1



7

1

-

-

1

Comments:

- It was very helpful and I am going to practise what I have learned. (2)
- I am happy; I learned to write a proposal and that's a start.
- I m going to try my best to make a difference and help my people. Thank you.
- It was a really good session but I wish we had time to practice what we would have written a proposal for.
- It was good to get new information and funding options.
- Yes it was very helpful. Now I know how to do a proposal.

5. I learned more about how to embed literacy into my program..

Very much

Not at all



5

4

3

2

1



7

2

-

-

-

Comments:

- Explaining about literacy made for better understanding; it's important to know it.
- You can tie the activities you do to literacy and participants have great ideas.
- I know that embedding literacy into a sport is a bit harder other than the rules.

- I did learn more on how to embed literacy.
- I really didn't know how to embed literacy into my program but I learned from the other communities.

6. The meeting met my expectations..

Very much



5

4

3

2

Not at all



1

9

-

-

-

-

Comments:

- I enjoyed every day and was happy I was invited to attend.
- Very much so and I learned a few new things.
- It was very informative and I hope we can continue for the next time.
- So good to hear what other are doing. I will share with my group at home.
- Very well organized.

7. The most important things I learned in the meeting were:

- Proposal writing (5)
- New ideas from others and their programs(3)
- About literacy (3)
- Funding organizations
- Evaluation

8. The meeting could be improved for another time by:

- Meeting like this again.
- Having more follow up so we can continue to support one another and share our knowledge.
- Making sure participants don't miss a day of the workshop.
- More time spent on each program in each community.
- Extending the time and length of our program.
- More funding and education for young people.

The last word is yours:

- Thank you for the invite; muchly enjoyed.
- Thank you for the opportunity to know more about literacy and it can be used more at the community level.
- Nice to see staff again and old/new friends. Thank you for everything. I learned and enjoyed meeting everyone.

- Thank you to the Literacy council for all the work you put into this.
- Had a great time. Thank you.
- Many thank and hope to do this again sooner than later
- I learned a lot from this program. My next step will be to train myself more about literacy programs. I hope we get more funding for these programs so more community members can get involved.
- Thank you for giving us an opportunity to voice our opinions for our literacy program we did in our community. I am looking forward to future programs if we find funding.
- Thank you for a great session. It's very rewarding to hear what others are doing and succeeding in.