For immediate release

Solving the Skills Gap through Upskilling

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Over the past 18 months, CLLN has been engaged in a series of research projects exploring the links between literacy and earnings, resulting in the complex Literacy and Earnings Project. The result is a substantial body of work that provides new insights based on current data. The reports illustrate the opportunities for individuals, business and government that open up when investing in upskilling Canada’s workforce.

As champions for literacy and essential skills, we know that literacy is a key factor in determining an individual’s labour market outcomes – and we set out to prove it by looking at linkages between benefit programs (Employment Insurance, Workers’ Compensation and Social Assistance) and literacy levels.

Key findings are:

- National and international literature confirms correlation between literacy proficiency and individual earnings, as is the common belief within the field, and that the impact of literacy on earnings varies from country to country yet is strongest in North America.
- Those Canadians who do not complete high school are more than three and a half times as likely to be on social assistance.
- Increasing Canadians’ literacy level to OECD recommended standards for internationally competitive productivity, Social Assistance rolls across Canada would be reduced by 84,000 people.
- Direct annual savings resulting from an assumed one-time $29 billion investment in upskilling Canadian adults 16 and older would be $2.92 billion: $330 million on Employment Insurance, $2.1 billion on Social Assistance, and $490 million on Workers Compensation.
- Investment in upskilling Canadians would increase earnings by $85.25 billion or an average of $3,244/worker annually.
- Tax revenue and program savings would increase annual fiscal return for governments in Canada by 425%.

These reports build the foundation for more things to come: CLLN – in partnership with Canada’s Public Policy Forum – will conduct a series of roundtables with policymakers and employer and labour stakeholders to further investigate the significant returns on investment – both, monetary and social – into literacy and essential skills. Investment on this scale would represent an important departure for Canadian public policy - away from passive income support to active education policy and represent a powerful tool that might be deployed to address current and future skills gaps and labour shortages.
You will find complete reports and summaries at [http://www.literacy.ca/research-and-resources/clln-literacy-and-earnings-project/](http://www.literacy.ca/research-and-resources/clln-literacy-and-earnings-project/)

**About Canadian Literacy and Learning Network**

Canadian Literacy and Learning Network, CLLN, is the national hub for research, information and knowledge exchange, increasing literacies and essential skills across Canada. CLLN, a non-profit charitable organization, represents literacy coalitions, organizations and individuals in every province and territory in Canada. We share knowledge, engage partners and stakeholders and build awareness to advance literacy and learning across Canada. We believe that literacy and learning should be valued — at home, in the workplace and in the community. Funded by—and working in consultation with—Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, we provide leadership, knowledge and expertise about literacy and essential skills, while developing partnerships with stakeholders across Canada.

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