

imagine

LEAVING
SOCIAL
ASSISTANCE
BEHIND AND
MOVING TO
SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT



ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY is a key component of breaking the cycle of poverty. This issue explores how you can engage your community.

Building the Foundation for Program Success: Engaging the community

Building a program from the ground up means taking things one step at a time and drawing on the resources around you.

Start by identifying who you would like to be involved. The community for a workforce Essential Skills program can draw from individuals in your own organizations as well as individuals throughout the larger community.

Get **education providers** such as the school districts and colleges on board as you decide who is in the best

position to deliver workforce Essential Skills programming.

Talk to other **service providers** from the community, such as employment service agencies, that might refer people to the program. Involving other service providers will send the signal that your new efforts are not intended to compete with existing efforts.

Involve **local employers** and economic development corporations. They will be able to help you identify a potential focus for your program. They might even be interested in offering

work placements or job shadowing opportunities.

Bring **community leaders** to the table as you figure out how best to meet local needs. Getting support from the chief, band leaders and elders will assist you when you reach out to potential participants.

And since workforce Essential Skills is about helping people help themselves, the final level of support comes from the **participants** you hope to serve. Make sure they are involved as you establish program hours and objectives.

Issue #2: CAMERA Training
Learner's Weekly Bulletin



2011

Last week's bulletin identified the need to create a team when getting a workforce Essential Skills program started. This issue offers some additional ideas for building a team and establishing support in your community. Continue to send ideas and suggestions to: imagine@imaginationfx.ca

Describing workforce Essential Skills

As you involve community members, you will need to help them understand what's different about workforce Essential Skills. Use the tools you learned about in Victoria to help you communicate.

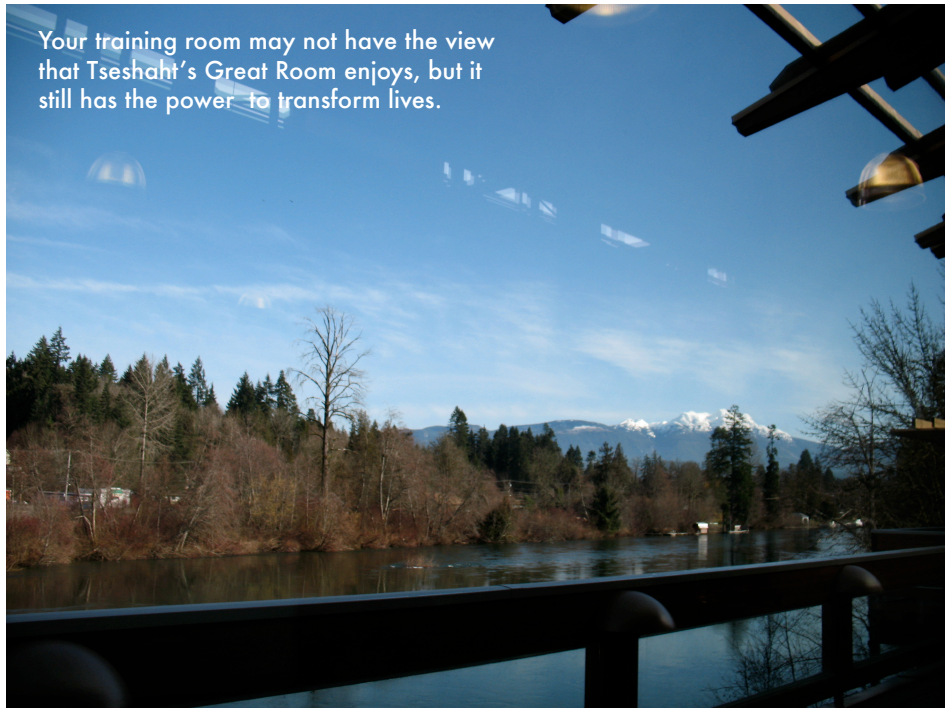
Let the videos do the talking. Show the full length video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yeqp6Max2Y&feature=related> or the two short videos that describe What workforce Essential Skills is (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrbvkrbYB4&feature=related>) and the benefits of it (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oznXeVOOU1M>).

A picture is worth a thousand words. Show *workwrite* and *Signposts* to help the community understand that workforce Essential Skills is about building the skills we use at work, and the skills we use in our everyday lives.

Guide the way. Share the *Workforce Essential Skills: Putting literacy to work* guide. It draws on the real experiences of agency staff across Canada as they built or enhanced workforce Essential Skills programs. Additional copies of the guide can be obtained from wes@ptp.ca or from www.ptp.ca.

"In practice, a workforce Essential Skills program looks very different from a traditional adult literacy program. The aim is not to progress the participant through grade levels towards a grade 12 equivalency exam, but rather to focus on work-specific skills and tasks. Learners are encouraged to identify the similarities of tasks and documents regardless of the job specifics so they understand the purpose of their instruction."
WESCan partner

Your training room may not have the view that Tseshaht's Great Room enjoys, but it still has the power to transform lives.



Engaging potential participants

We all know that without participants there's no program. Yet getting the first participants through the door can be the hardest task. Once the program is established and participants enrolled, programs that meet people's needs will grow by word of mouth.

But how do you attract those initial participants? The first step is thinking about it from their perspective. If you were a potential program participant, what would attract you? Make a list of the What's in it for me (WIIFM)? Use these as you prepare announcements, posters and when you talk to potential participants.

Announcements to Social Development Learners

Include announcements in SDL cheque envelopes. Be sure to:

- Provide an **overview** of the ES Program (Who, what, when, where, why)
- Highlight **benefits** to learners, WIIFM (e.g. bus pass, incentive, WOP)
- Point out **Section 2.1 Eligibility** requirement to attend training in order to be eligible to continue receiving benefits. Include this preferably 2 months prior to offering the program. You may want to provide the notice two months in a row to reinforce their responsibility to participate in training and employment programs.
- Use **language to help get people excited**. "The ___ Nation is excited to offer an Essential Skills Program to our membership! Are you tired of trying to survive on one cheque a month? Would you rather have a pay cheque every two weeks? Would you like to have an opportunity for work experience in an area that interests you? If you answered yes to any of these questions then the ___ Nation's Essential Skills program is for you! Please join us at _____ (location) for an information session on _____ (date) at ___(time).

Information sessions

Information sessions are a great way to both share information, as well as gather ideas from community members. Tell potential attendees that you plan to both share information about what you have in mind, while gathering information to make sure your program suits their needs. **Don't forget the snacks!**