

Want confirmation that the not-for-profit sector makes an important contribution?

Here are some recent key findings from Imagine Canada.

Canada's non-profit and voluntary sector

- is the second largest in the world
- includes an estimated 161,000 nonprofits and charities, half of which (54%) are run entirely by volunteers
- **employs 2 million people, or 11.1% of the economically active population**
- **represents \$79.1 billion or 7.8% of the GDP. This is larger than the automotive or manufacturing industries!**

Other facts:

- smaller provinces have a higher number of organizations relative to their populations
- the top 1% of organizations command 60% of all revenues



SOURCE:

Imagine Canada (2009). *Charities and Non-profit Sector Key Findings*. The full report is available online at www.imaginecanada.ca/en/node/32.

Report from the readers' survey

In November 2008, in place of our usual forum, we asked you what you thought about the journal and the role of *Literacies* in the adult literacy field in Canada. Here some of the results of the survey.

Most respondents chose "thought-provoking," "affirming," and "useful to my work" to describe *Literacies*. Here are some other words people used to describe *Literacies*:

- makes me feel proud to work in this field
- stimulating, encouraging
- *Literacies* helps me to feel alive in my work

Almost 95% of survey participants agree that *Literacies* helps move the field forward. Here are some of the ways how:

Literacies is essential conversations

- It helps us know who is in the field, why they are in the field and what they are doing or researching or challenging in the field. It provides a place for us to interact with each other. It helps me to know and be able to reference with other colleagues articles and concepts in *Literacies*, confident that they either have or will read the articles I refer to. That helps move conversations and conceptual discussions forward.
- It raises issues that need to be addressed, and challenges readers to think about these issues and, hopefully, to take action.
- The research in practice pieces help to clarify the fundamental features of different methodologies and thus allow us to be more sophisticated in how we think about research which in turn informs practice.
- The blog just keeps us thinking—it is excellent and a wonderful extension of the *Literacies* publication itself.

Literacies is essential perspectives

- Having an outlet for publication is **so** important—the academic journals are **not** accessible or practical. We need a place for literacy folks to aspire to, to want to write and share their work. *Literacies* is perfect for that. And needed.
- It's one of the few grassroots publications about Canadian adult literacy work. I can read a lot about the US, the UK, or Australia if I want, but only *Literacies* focuses on grassroots folks here in Canada. There are other literacy publications, but they're focused on institutionalized adult basic education—ho, hum. I was a teacher in a classroom, I know about that.
- It provides grassroots opinions and alternative views that are not found in the mainstream literacy documents. It broadens the notions of what 'counts' as knowledge.
- Only *Literacies* gives me the 'underground' stuff about literacy. Thanks!

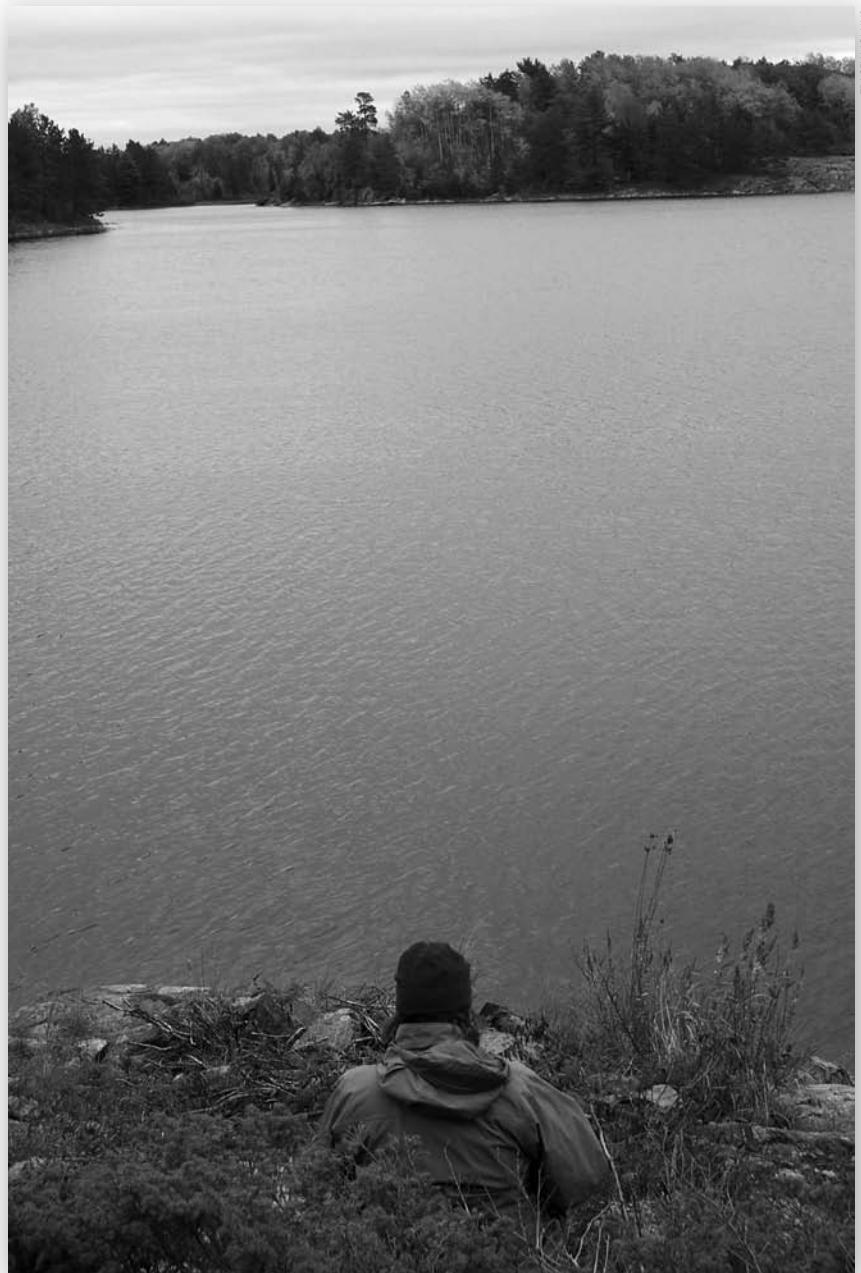
Literacies is essential evidence

- Any time adult educators can share experiences, document promising practices, expand our research and record our successes, we build the evidence that adult ed is a valuable and legitimate field of education that has a rippling effect on educational attainment—across nations.
- It gives us more credibility. It provides a venue for all of us to share and learn.
- I think it helps instill some professional pride.

Literacies is essential space

- I think that it creates a 'field'. It helps me feel part of a professional group. Also, I love that it is Canadian. It is about 'us'. The magazine relates to literacy in a Canadian context.
- Literacies raises tensions, challenging issues and is not afraid to critique. It's a sacred space.
- Makes me think deeper about literacy, thereby stimulating me to think deeper myself.
- It is hard to move forward when the field isn't entirely sure (or doesn't share a similar understanding) of where we are. *Literacies* goes a long way in helping us know where we are and inspiring thinking about future directions. It helps build strength, community and professionalism at a national level.
- Our field needs a forum where we can be thoughtful and develop ideas that further our work, not just propaganda for the agendas of our funders. There's also a

need for a forum that draws from our intellectual history and from current theory and research, in other words, that creates a big space for discussion, rather than cramping us into small rooms where we continually have to explain the fundamentals of literacy work to the latest posse of government overseers and attendance checkers.



TRACEY MOLINS

Almost 80% of survey participants agree that *Literacies* helps them meet their **professional development goals**. Here is how:

Literacies helps people stay connected

- It reflects a world that I experience myself.
- It helps me to feel connected to kindred spirits in the field.
- Professionally, reading *Literacies* keeps me fresh and in tune with the work and practice and challenges of others in the field.

Literacies helps people stay aware

- There is little professional development in our small rural city, especially of the literacy kind.

Literacies helps to make me aware of a bigger picture and of different issues that I'd never thought of before. *Literacies* helps me to make the link between the research and practice.

Literacies helps people learn about research in Canada

- It provides a pan-Canadian perspective on adult literacy - the only source I know that does that. *Literacies* is information; it provides a window to literacy work in other parts of the country.



Literacies helps people learn about research across the globe

- It broadens my understanding of literacy on a global basis. It helps me understand how other parts of the world are dealing with the literacy issue and I can then draw parallels and determine how I may use that information for the benefit of our adult learners.

Literacies helps people save time

- The content expands my knowledge and/or understanding of current issues, initiatives, practices, etc., and leads me to other appropriate sources of information—*Literacies* saves time!

Literacies helps people analyse

- *Literacies* provides a critical and questioning perspective that is missing from all other publications in the literacy field. This perspective challenges what I think I know, and broadens my understanding of this work. When I read *Literacies* (and I read every issue thoroughly) I find I am at times challenged to re-think my perception of what I do, at other times I am affirmed in my values and the beliefs that inform my work, and at times I learn something completely new that then adds to my work.

Literacies helps people reflect

- Issues often contain articles that help spark discussion and reflection among peers and with university students with whom I work.

Literacies helps people share my research and ideas

- *Literacies* is a professional development opportunity; it provides a venue for following through on (writing, publishing) research in practice.

Literacies models good practices

- I absolutely love the *Literacies* blog and have learned a tremendous amount from it—content-wise as well as practice-wise. It inspires me to blog and to move forward in using technologies.
- *Literacies* is an in-class tool; it allows me to model reading / writing / submitting to my learners (for example, "Remember that paper I was working on? Here it is in *Literacies*!")

Literacies helps people new to literacy work

- I've only been working in the literacy field for two years. So I've been learning a lot fast. This magazine has definitely been apart of this learning.
- Being new, sort of, in the area of literacy education, *Literacies* is a source of greater insight, and a link to a wider network of resources to support my own development as an educator.

Literacies helps those who are not so new

- *Literacies* has become essential to my ongoing professionalism as an adult literacy professional.

And Literacies helps people who work in fields that touch literacy

- The children we so often prepare university students to teach come from diverse homes educationally, economically, and socially. *Literacies* is a wonderful touchstone for those who work in an environment where adults have little, if any, ability to read. I use it to inform my thinking about the issues that face adults (the parents of those children mentioned previously) and I teach about these [issues] to my prospective teachers.
- As a nurse, I am required to participate in professional learning on a regular basis. I also aspire to work, one day, in the field of health literacy. Reading this journal helps me to keep current on adult literacy issues and thus, [to reach] both goals.