

President's Reflections

Helping Newcomers Unlock Their Potential: TD Bank Report



By Sherry Campbell

On September 28th I attended the launch of the latest report on literacy from TD Bank Financial Group: *Helping Newcomers Unlock Their Potential*.

As in their previous reports on literacy, TD has once again brought us outstanding research and we applaud TD's leadership in promoting and supporting literacy for the well being of both newcomers and Canada as a whole.

In *Helping Newcomers Unlock Their Potential*, TD reports:

- The economic well-being of immigrants has declined over the past 25 years
- Immigrants who arrived between 2001 and 2005 currently experience an unemployment rate of 11.5 per cent that's costing Canada billions of dollars in lost opportunities
- Today 35 per cent of immigrant families live in poverty versus 25 per cent in 1980.
- Low language proficiency and low literacy levels are part of the problem
- 6 in 10 newcomers have less than the desired level of literacy to succeed in a modern knowledge-based economy
- Increased literacy skills lead to higher employment, higher income and better jobs

The report calls on governments to make a greater effort to evaluate existing literacy programs and to make investments in data collection and the compilation of literacy program statistics a priority. Businesses are urged to champion literacy by hiring more newcomers, as well as conduct in-house literacy skills upgrading.



NEW FRONTIERS in Literacy

President's Reflections (cont.)

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As a provider of community-based literacy programs across Canada, including workplace literacy programs and literacy programs for newcomers, we've seen first-hand how newcomers struggle to establish themselves and we welcome the report's recommendations.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our community partners, funders and supporters for another great year in support of literacy. My best wishes to everyone for a happy holiday season and a successful new year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'SCampbell'.

Sherry Campbell
President