

1. TITLE PAGE

Name of your organization: Vancouver Community Network

Name of project contact: Peter Royce

Title of the project: Vancouver Community Learning Network

Project number: 99239

2. PROJECT INFORMATION

- *Project start date:* March 2001
- *Project end date:* February 2004
- *Total amount of funding received from OLT:* \$ 290,000
- *Other funding:*
 - Industry Canada Community Access Program \$ 33,000
 - CAP Youth Interns \$ 10,000
 - VanCity Credit Union Community Partnership Grant \$ 10,000
 - Law Foundation Small Projects Initiative \$ 6,000
 - Greater Vancouver Regional District \$ 5,000
- *Total project costs:* \$ 354,000

Vancouver Community Network would like to recognize that this project was made possible with funding support from the Office of Learning Technologies, Human Resources Development Canada.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The pilot initiative explored the effectiveness of using online interactive tools and public Internet access to support an “assets-based community development” (ABCD) process. The major objectives: (1) To provide the use of several Internet tools for ABCD: interactive services directories, neighbourhood “learning exchanges”, neighbourhood “portals”, and an issue-based online “agora”. (2) To integrate the project with a network of public Internet access sites to increase community participation. (3) To train residents in using Internet technology for ABCD purposes and to increase citizen participation.

Community participants were residents of several mixed-income, high density, adjacent neighbourhoods in East Vancouver. They included youths, seniors, volunteers, women domestic workers, unemployed arts and cultural workers, and non-English speakers.

Over three years, 10 partnerships were fostered with community organizations and an equal number of public access sites were integrated into the project. At the sites, four learning practices were tested; estimated attendance was over 1,600 from 435 learners. A large number of volunteers were involved to provide training and support.

Learners with low levels of computer and Internet skills were taught basic computer skills coupled with the effective use of the Internet for communicating with their peers, for researching information that enhances a person’s life, work, and place in society, and for publishing online personal expressions in text, images, and to some extent, audio. Advanced learners attached to ABCD processes were provided encounter sessions for assessing the strategic use of the Internet, mainly for creating greater community participation.

The project set out to help residents in their efforts to map community-based assets, improve the local economy, and develop plans for resolving critical issues in the community. Fifteen sets of neighbourhood and community portals were started with these aims in mind, and some are now in public use or in various stages of continuous development.

We determined the project was partially successful: we met goals for network development, attendance figures in skills training, and in principle to accommodate diversity; we were less successful in staging the project as planned and making the project visible in the community. We identified what to do differently in areas of developing partnerships, allocating human resources, and evaluating outcomes to make the project more successful. To answer, “how can an urban community such as ours be supported by a convergence of these three threads: the Web, ABCD, and public access”, we identified a general approach to take and ways of refining it based on our experiences during the project.

4. REACH OF THE PROJECT

Which of the following best describes the learners reached by your project (check all that apply):

- *Aboriginal community members* YES
- *Persons with disabilities* YES
- *Visible minority members* YES
- *Persons with lower education levels* YES
- *People living in rural and remote areas* NO
- *Women* YES
- *Unemployed persons* YES
- *Disadvantaged workers (for example: part-time or seasonal workers)* YES
- *Other (please specify: Youth, Seniors, Volunteers)* YES
- *Size of target group (number and percentage) compared to your overall community* 107,421 (2001 census); 100%
- *How many learners of the target group participated in e-learning activities?* 0

5. ACTIVITIES

The major activities completed each year as part of our CLN pilot project are outlined below, organized under the three main objectives.

OBJECTIVE 1

The activities for the first objective (divided into four sub-objectives) were for designing and implementing neighbourhood-based Internet tools that would support community development work using an approach called “assets-based community development”.

Sub-objectives:

- a. Establish neighbourhood information and learning exchanges.
- b. Establish neighbourhood portals to collect and archive written, pictorial, or oral histories and creations.
- c. Establish neighbourhood services directories that are each coupled with an interactive channel to convey public commentary.
- d. Provide an interactive “agora” for community planning around critical issues identified by the community.

We wanted to concentrate our efforts initially in several distinctly different urban neighbourhoods in East Vancouver, and in particular, three historical neighbourhoods adjacent to the Vancouver port area: the Downtown Eastside, Grandview- Woodlands, which includes the Commercial Drive district, and Hastings-Sunrise.

We planned that “most of the first year will be for setting up the tools and the community processes. The second year will be devoted to community development activities. The third year will be for expanding community involvement and intensifying the evaluation processes.”

Table 1
Target Groups vs Actual Activities for Objective 1: All Years

<i>Target Groups¹</i>	<i>Actual Activities²</i>			
• <i>Downtown Eastside residents</i>	1. Carnegie Community Centre web portals (Y2) http://carnegie.vcn.bc.ca	a	b	c
	2. Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Safety Office website (Y3) http://nso.vcn.bc.ca			c
	3. Ray-Cam Community Centre website (Y3) http://raycam.vcn.bc.ca		b	c
	4. Strathcona Skills Connection website (Y2) http://skillsco.vcn.bc.ca	a	b	
	5. Downtown Eastside Cafe website (Y3) http://dtescafe.vcn.bc.ca	a	b	
• <i>Grandview-Woodlands, West End senior residents</i>	6. Seniors' Portal (Y3) http://seniors.vcn.bc.ca	a	b	c
• <i>Hastings-Sunrise residents</i>	7. Kiwassa Neighbourhood House website (Y3) http://kiwassa.vcn.bc.ca		b	c
• <i>Renfrew-Collingwood residents</i>	8. Collingwood Neighbourhood House website (Y3) http://collingwood.vcn.bc.ca	a	b	c d
• <i>Unemployed arts and cultural workers</i>	9. Alliance for Arts and Culture – S.E.A.R.C.H. Graduates website (Y1) http://searchgrads.vcn.bc.ca	a	b	c
• <i>Filipina women domestic workers</i>	10. Domestic Workers' Association website (Y3) http://dwa.vcn.bc.ca		b	c
• <i>East Vancouver residents</i>	11. Impact of the Olympics on Community Coalition website (Y1) http://vcn.bc.ca/ioc		b	c d
• <i>East Vancouver community leaders</i>	12. E-Learning Portal (Y2) http://vcn.bc.ca/~netcd	a	b	c
• <i>East Van. public access users</i>	13. Community Access Portal (Y2) http://cap.vcn.bc.ca	a	b	c d
• <i>East Vancouver youths</i>	14. Youth Portal (Y2) http://youth.vcn.bc.ca	a	b	
• <i>East Van. non-English speaking residents</i>	15. Language Portals (Y3) http://language.vcn.bc.ca	a	b	c

1 Targetted neighbourhoods or other target group, *in italics*. Unplanned target groups are not in italics.

2 The attempted development of an online portal or one of its components by a target group. The starting project year is indicated by Y1, Y2, or Y3. The sub-objectives that the portal tried to address are indicated by a, b, c, or d.

There were 15 high-level activities for Objective 1 that saw significant engagement with the community and movement towards implementation.

For participants who tried to implement Objective 1a, “Establish neighbourhood information and learning exchanges” (e.g., “Unemployed arts and cultural workers”), there was not enough remaining time within the project timeline to populate the exchanges with real data.

Portals initiated by participants with special user groups (e.g., “Filipina women workers”) tended to implement Objective 1b, “Establish neighbourhood portals, to collect and archive written, pictorial, or oral histories and creations”, mostly enabling users to submit stories. These portals were also the most numerous (14 of 15).

Participants who represented community service organizations always implemented Objective 1c, “Establish neighbourhood services directories that are each coupled with an interactive channel to convey public commentary”, in order to highlight their services for the community, but almost never added an interactive channel for public commentary.

Only three portals attempted to implement Objective 1d, “Provide an interactive ‘agora’ for community planning around critical issues identified by the community”, but they also tried to implement most of the other objectives as well. None of the three progressed beyond the conceptual stage into a stage where it was used.

The greatest participation occurred in the neighbourhood of Downtown Eastside; the least occurred in Grandview-Woodlands, where two seniors’ groups contributed to the development of a portal for seniors.

Most of the portals started in the second or third year of the project; in the second year we switched to technology that was more capable and easier to use.

Our conclusion is that we were only partially successful in achieving Objective 1; the shortcomings can be partially attributed to a strong link between the first and second objectives and to the time delay induced by achieving Objective 2, which shortened the overall time for skills training. See next section for details.

OBJECTIVE 2. Provide public access points for informal learning activities.

For the second objective, we wanted to provide public access sites for the pilot so that learners need not have their own computers to participate in the learning project. Moreover, we wanted to use the public access sites as “learning nodes” within the network where we could schedule learning opportunities and provide skills training. Finally, we wanted to engage the community organizations hosting the access sites, and their members, with the pilot project.

We arranged for a phased approach: “Initially, we will focus on using existing public access sites in several adjacent, densely populated, historical neighbourhoods of East Vancouver, including the Downtown Eastside [DE], Grandview- Woodland [GW], and Hastings-Sunrise [HS].” We planned that “in the first year, the project will involve the use of several drop-in computer labs, with a total of about 50 Internet stations.”

*Table 2
Planned vs Actual Activities for Objective 2: Year One*

<i>Planned Activities (as stated in the project proposal)</i>	<i>Actual Activities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A family-oriented neighbourhood house in a mixed-income residential neighbourhood (24 days per month x 25 visits per day = 600 visits per month by neighbourhood residents, all ages) • A job resource centre (20 days per month x 25 visits per day = 500 visits per month by job seekers) • A seniors’ centre located at the edge of the downtown core (20 days per month x 10 visits per day = 200 visits per month by seniors) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kiwassa Neighbourhood House, located in HS, but effective use of the site was delayed to Y3Q1. (12 stations, 75 hours per week, 1,200 visits per month) 2. Not realized. Replaced in Y1Q3 by: Alliance for Arts and Culture, an umbrella of arts and culture groups, conducting a job search program for arts and cultural workers (2 stations, 40 hours per week, 240 visits per month) 3. Not realized due to difficulties in forming a partnership. Replaced in Y1Q3 by: Lion’s Den Seniors’ Activity Centre, located in GW. (3 stations, 26 hours per week, 80 visits per month) 4. Supplemented in Y3Q1 by: West End Seniors’ Network. (2 stations, 20 hours per week, 20 visits per month) 5. Supplemented in Y2Q3 by: 127 Housing Society. (2 stations, 20 hours per week, 20 visits per month)

<i>Planned Activities (as stated in the project proposal)</i>	<i>Actual Activities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A job training computer lab near a public transit intersection of a mixed-income neighbourhood (four day-equivalents per month x 25 visits per day = 100 visits per month by residents of East Vancouver) • An informal learning centre in an urban Native education centre (20 days per month x 5 visits per day = 100 visits per month by urban Native adults) • A job training centre located in the urban inner core • A university community liaison office located in the urban inner core (20 days per month x 5 visits per day = 100 visits per month by urban inner core residents) 	<p>6. Not realized, due to changes in their funding and governance. Replaced in Y3Q1 by: Collingwood Neighbourhood House, a mixed use neighbourhood house near a public transit intersection (see Table 3, activity 11).</p> <p>Not realized, due to changes in their priorities and funding. No replacement was found.</p> <p>7. Not realized due to provincial funding cuts and closure of the place. Replaced in Y3Q1 by: Strathcona Community Skills Connection, located in DE. (8 stations, 25 hours per week, 350 visits per month)</p> <p>8. Not realized due to difficulties in forming a partnership. Replaced in Y1Q4 by: Humanities Learning Lab, located in DE, which operated for one quarter and then closed due to provincial funding cuts.</p> <p>9. Replaced in Y1Q3 by: Carnegie Community Centre, a mixed-use community centre located in DE. (14 stations, 48 hours per week, 580 visits per month)</p>

After the first phase of the objective, we envisioned a second phase as follows: “Eventually, we will expand the CLN to include servicing the whole of East Vancouver and the West End neighbourhood, using newly established access sites that will be funded by Industry Canada’s Urban Community Access Program.” We planned that “by the third year, the project will extend the coverage of the public access network by ten or more sites to Southeast Vancouver neighbourhoods and the West End.” We forecasted that “altogether, there will be 1000 visits per month (i.e., 10 sites x 20 days per month x 5 visits per day) from members within ethnic and multicultural communities (for example, Hispanic and Vietnamese) and from urban Native youths.”

*Table 3
Planned vs Actual Activities for Objective 2: Year Three*

<i>Planned Activities (as stated in the project proposal)</i>	<i>Actual Activities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Likely sites will include a Hispanic community centre...” 	10. Not realized due to difficulties in forming a partnership. No replacement was found. Substituted in year three by developing a Spanish Language Portal, an online tool targeting the Spanish-speaking community, developed by volunteers within the community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...several more neighbourhood houses...” 	11. One more neighbourhood house was included in Y3Q1: Collingwood Neighbourhood House, located in Renfrew-Collingwood, a southeast Vancouver neighbourhood and a base for multilingual communities. (5 stations, 40 hours per week, 600 visits per month)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...a Filipina women’s centre...” 	12. Not realized due to difficulties in forming a partnership. Replaced in Y3Q1 by: Domestic Workers’ Association, a resource centre with a public access site and a policy advocate, servicing a large number of Filipina women workers, located in the DE. (2 stations, 20 hours per week, 160 visits per month)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...an environmental resource centre...” 	13. Not pursued. However, we were approached by the GVRD (Greater Vancouver Regional District) to participate in a \$10K study of the pilot to seek ways of adapting the learning network to be an “Eco-Industrial Small Business Network”. A relevant suggestion of the completed study is for the GVRD to fund a pilot using the learning node at Collingwood Neighbourhood House and its community-based activities in food security.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...a public legal education centre...” 	14. Not realized due to provincial cutbacks that led to their merging with others. Replaced by: Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Safety Office, a walk-in storefront for victims of crime.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “...an urban Native youth centre...” 	15. Not realized due to difficulties in forming a partnership. Replaced in Y3Q1 by: Ray-Cam Community Centre, a community centre with a strong youth program, located in an area of DE with a large number of urban Native residents. (9 stations, 78 hours per week, 2100 visits per month)

For all years, we recorded 15 high-level activities. They showed that Objective 2 was generally achieved but it was fraught with the difficulty of forming partnerships: there were 10 instances of failure out of 13 planned, with four failures due to targetting groups which relied heavily on provincial funding that was eventually cut back, which led to instability or closure.

Whenever we failed to form a partnership, we replaced it, but this came with time delays; in most cases, a replacement occurred within year three, dramatically shortening the time for skills training. If we failed to find a replacement, and in the one instance where we did not pursue the original activity (“an environmental resource centre”), we substituted it with another activity that signified the same or approximate goals. In one instance (“A seniors’ centre located at the edge of the downtown core”) we replaced a large access site with three smaller ones. In another (“A university community liaison office located in the urban inner core”), we replaced twice, after the first attempt suffered funding cuts. In a single instance (“An informal learning centre in an urban Native education centre”) we found neither a replacement nor a substitute.

In all of the successful activities except one (“a public legal education centre”), we used public access sites that were funded by Industry Canada’s Community Access Program, in an attempt to maximize our use of this new layer of community infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE 3. Provide skills training for community members and volunteers.

For the third objective, we wanted to conduct two threads of public skills training. The first would be workshops generally accessible to the public, typically at the learning nodes established as part of Objective 2:

1. Periodic orientation workshops for community members to support them to do assets-based community development using the Internet tools
(10 people x 36 workshops x 3 years = 1000 participants);

The second would be workshops held less frequently, conducted with community leaders:

2. Occasional “encounter” sessions with community members to deepen their skills and to focus on specific themes (for example, social housing, anti-poverty, job development, urban ecology, linguistic and cultural barriers).
(10 people x 12 presentations x 3 years = 360 participants);

A supplemental activity was to deliver a program for volunteers to further support community members:

- a. Volunteers participate in VCN workshops to enhance their skills to provide technical and public support at public access sites.
- b. Volunteers undergo training at the host community and learning node of their choice to understand its procedures and policies.
- c. Volunteers are placed at the learning node to increase the level of service to community members.

We planned that “volunteer intake will consist of individuals drawn to VCN and its partner community groups (30 per annum), youths trained in information technology and who have participated in the provincial ‘Youths@BC’ community-based internship program (5 per annum), and UBC students who want community experience to augment their academic studies (10 per annum).”

*Table 4
Actual Activities for Objective 3: Year One*

<i>Time³</i>	<i>Skills Training⁴</i>	<i>#⁵</i>	<i>Attendance⁶</i>		
Q3 - Y2Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lion's Den Seniors' Activity Centre: 4 lectures x 10 seniors Weekly lecture series at the Lion's Den; to create a community process that will entice participants to use the Internet for research and discussion. 	10	40		
Q3 - Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanities Educational Resource Centre: 24 drop-in workshops x 5 residents Community learning lab assembled; to support a barrier-free post-secondary presence in the Downtown Eastside. 	24	120		
Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self Help Resources Association: 1 session x 5 youths How to build the online component of an asset mapping process based on youth services. 	5		5	
Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vancouver Arts and Cultural Alliance: 8 sessions x 3 graduates SEARCH Program: how to build a skills bank using a content management system 	3		24	
Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of the Olympics on Community Coalition: 3 sessions x 2 community members To develop a community-based set of recommendations to forward to the Vancouver Olympic Bid Corporation. 	2		6	
Q3 – Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carnegie Community Centre: 24 workshops x 6 community members Learning Lab: basic Internet skills. 	28	144		
Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 sessions x 4 "webheads" Work with a volunteer group called the "Webheads". 	4		16	
Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 workshops x 6 learners Learning Centre: learner-initiated workshops on topics such as how to make pamphlets. 	6	24		
Subtotals:		Number of learners	82		
		Workshop attendance		328	
		Encounter session attendance			51

3 The time span in units of yearly quarters. If a workshop activity spans two project years, the attendance figure is counted in the year the activity mainly occurred.

4 The type of workshop and its location and context.

5 The number of learners; estimated for drop-in workshops by assuming five visits equal one learner.

6 The recorded or estimated attendance; includes repeats and so does not indicate number of learners.

*Table 5
Actual Activities for Objective 3: Year Two*

<i>Time</i>	<i>Skills Training</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Attendance</i>		
Q1 - Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vancouver Arts and Cultural Alliance: 36 drop-in workshops x 2 graduates CAP site: basic Internet skills training. 	14	72		
Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 sessions x 3 graduates SEARCH Program: Questionnaire and development work with former SEARCH graduates; a community learning plan is to be developed based on the feedback. 	3		12	
Q1 - Q2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 127 Housing Society: 24 workshops x 4 residents 2-station CAP site: open one evening each week for four hours; basic Internet skills training. 	20	96		
Q1 - Q2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lion's Den Seniors' Activity Centre: 24 workshops x 4 seniors 2-station CAP site: basic Internet skills training. 	20	96		
Q2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 sessions x 3 seniors Creative writing of online content and basic web page design. 	6		36	
Q1 - Q2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carnegie Community Centre: 24 workshops x 6 community members Learning Lab: basic Internet skills. 	28	144		
Q2 - Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 workshops x 2 volunteers Learning Centre: how to use interactive community portal to collect community histories. 	8		8	
Q3 - Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 workshops x 3 volunteers Learning Centre: Disability review forum developed (disbanded because of lack of community ownership of online tools). 	3		12	
Q2 - Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Langara Community College: 8 sessions x 10 community members Continuing Education Dept: <i>The Internet and Community Development</i> course. 	10		80	
Subtotals:					
	Number of learners	112			
	Workshop attendance		408		
	Encounter session attendance			148	

*Table 6
Actual Activities for Objective 3: Year Three*

<i>Time</i>	<i>Skills Training</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Attendance</i>	
Y2Q4 - Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carnegie Community Centre: 26 sessions x 2 learners Learning Centre; Desktop publishing course. 	10		52
Y2Q4 - Q2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 workshops x 3 team members <i>100th Anniversary</i> project: web team assembles an is given training (disbands after training sessions: the community does not take ownership of the process and website). 	3	9	
Q1 - Q2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 sessions x 6 volunteers <i>Downtown Eastside Community Play</i>: how to supplement with online interactive tools (the group originally had a community-based focus but they shifted to a more centralized approach). 	6		12
Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 workshops x 4 volunteers and 19 residents <i>Training of Trainers</i> program: <i>Internet in Action</i> course. 	23	56	16
Q1 - Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 workshops x 1 staff Newsletter project: how to build an online newsletter. 	1		4
Q2 - Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 sessions x 5 volunteers; 2 sessions x 9 vols. <i>Neighbourhood Voices</i> project: how to create and publish online audio content. 	9	38	18
Q1 - Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kiwassa Neighbourhood House: 5 workshops x 5 youths <i>Take Charge Youth</i> project. 	5		25
Y2Q4 - Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West End Seniors' Network: 4 workshops x 3 volunteers Computers for homebound seniors pilot project; training of trainers program conducted. 	3		12
Y2Q4 - Q1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domestic Workers' Association: 3 workshops x 33 domestic workers Pilot project training. 	33	99	3
Q2 - Q4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 workshops x 87 domestic workers (56 completed) Project training. 	87	170	6
Q1 - Q3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collingwood Neighbourhood House: 4 sessions x 2 community members Food security project. 	2		8

<i>Time</i>	<i>Skills Training</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>Attendance</i>	
Q2 - Q3	4 sessions x 5 artists Skills inventory project. • Ray-Cam Community Centre:	5		20
Q1 - Q3	4 sessions x 2 volunteers How to build a community portal for youths and other members.	2		8
Q4	3 sessions x 4 Chinese-speaking volunteers How to build a Chinese portal. • Strathcona Skills Connection:	4		12
Q2 - Q4	<i>Downtown Eastside Café</i> project: one on one training. • Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Safety Office:	20	20	
Q2 - Q4	2 staff trained; 10 residents trained • Seniors' portal:	12	10	2
Q3	2 sessions x 6 seniors Joint training conducted for volunteers of West End Seniors' Network, Al Mattison Lounge and Lion's Den. • Language portal:	6		12
Q4	12 workshops x 10 community members	10	120	
Subtotals:				
	Number of learners	231		
	Workshop attendance		484	
	Encounter session attendance			193
	Volunteer workshop attendance			55
Totals:				
	Number of learners	425		
	Workshop attendance		1220	
	Encounter session attendance			392
	Volunteer workshop attendance			55

The tables show that all target attendance figures were generally reached. Despite year one figures being lower than expected, we increased intake during years two and three to reach the target numbers; in fact, the attendance figures for the last two quarters of the project time frame showed the greatest rate of attendance, when many of the project components were meshing well together. There was a tendency to have activities of greater depth or with greater outcomes in year three, probably because by then (1) we de-emphasized general workshops in favour of encounter sessions, and (2) we discovered more focused methods of delivery.

Workshops were held in all of the public access sites listed in Tables 2 and 3, while encounter sessions often took place “behind closed doors” within nonprofit offices. The greater concentration of skills training was located at the Carnegie Community Centre and in the Downtown Eastside spots in general; there was also a healthy balance between public workshops and the specialized encounter sessions. The greater effect, as indicated by the corresponding activities presented in Table 1, took place in areas away from Carnegie Community Centre, probably because at those places (for example, Collingwood Neighbourhood House and Ray-Cam Community Centre) we discovered community processes with greater cohesion or focus.

Attendance figures for volunteer workshops in years one and two are not available as they are for year three; however, they are probably equal or greater. The volunteer program activities proved immensely beneficial; many of the main training activities would not have been possible without the volunteer support.

6. OUTCOMES OF THE PILOT PROJECT

This section contains the outcomes that were achieved as a result of OLT funding the project. Outcomes are benefits or changes in peoples' knowledge, skills, condition or status, following their involvement with a specific activity.

*How did the funding benefit the learners, your community and your organization?
Please check all that apply and provide details where required.*

- *Increased number of partnerships; specify the number of partnerships created and maintained throughout the project:*

We increased our number of partnerships by nine:

<i>Partnered with:</i>	<i>Reason, Context, Duration, Future</i>
1. Carnegie Community Centre, a mixed-use community centre, Downtown Eastside (DE)	To increase skills of DE residents to develop a neighbourhood portal; from Y1Q3 to end; continuing and ongoing.
2. Ray-Cam Community Centre, operating a youth outreach program in DE	To increase skills of DE youths to develop a youth-based online portal; from Y3Q1 to end; continuing and ongoing.
3. Lion's Den Seniors' Activity Centre, Grandview-Woodlands (GW)	To increase skills of GW senior residents to develop a seniors' portal; from Y1Q3 to end; now in discussion.
4. Kiwassa Neighbourhood House, Hastings-Sunrise (HS)	To increase skills of HS residents to develop a neighbourhood portal; to use the learning lab for the DWA pilot project; from Y3Q1 to end; continuing and ongoing.
5. Collingwood Neighbourhood House, Renfrew-Collingwood (RC)	To increase skills of RC residents to develop a neighbourhood portal; from Y3Q1 to end; continuing and ongoing.
6. Domestic Workers' Association, servicing a large number of Filipina women workers	To increase the skills of Filipina women domestic workers via a pilot project; from Y2Q3 to end; repeated the series using volunteer trainers due to demand; now exploring ways of repeating the activity.
7. Alliance for Arts and Culture, an umbrella of arts and culture groups, conducting a job search program for arts and cultural workers	To increase the skills and knowledge of arts and cultural workers to develop a self-help online portal; from Y1Q4 to end; now in discussion.
8. Langara Community College, Continuing Education Dept.	To deliver an adult education course called <i>The Internet and Community Development</i> ; from Y2Q2 to end; now one of its partners to design e-learning courses.

<i>Partnered with:</i>	<i>Reason, Context, Duration, Future</i>
9. Eco-Industrial Solutions Ltd., a local consulting firm that provides eco-industrial networking expertise; http://ecoindustrial.ca .	To study how the pilot project could be useful for engaging residents and small businesses in an “eco-industrial small network”; from Y3Q3 to end; now in discussion.

- *Increased use of technological/products or tools to acquire informal knowledge acquisition and skills development; specify the number of products or tools used:*

We began to use the following three tools, all open-source software packages:

<i>Name and details of tool</i>	<i>Our use of tool</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>PostNuke</i>, a content management system; www.postnuke.com 	Used during Y1 as the learning tool for two groups: arts and cultural workers, and residents in Downtown Eastside; retired in favour of <i>WebGUI</i> , which proved more useful in terms of function and capability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>WebGUI</i>, a content management system; www.plainblack.com 	Used extensively beginning in Y2Q3 as the basis of skills development. The learner can use it to quickly construct an online tool using a suite of modular web objects.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Audacity</i>, a sound editor; audacity.sourceforge.net 	Used as an essential component in the <i>Neighbourhood Voices</i> project at Carnegie Community Centre that began in Y3Q2.

- *Increased number of learning practices tested; specify the type of learning practices tested:*

We tested the following four types of learning practices:

1. Community course: domestic workers, community leaders, or volunteers signed up for a fixed number of weekly sessions, entered a structured workshop format, and studied a curriculum that reflected their needs; learners received completion certificates or recognition from the sponsoring community college. Before the pilot, there were no such courses within the Vancouver area with these specific aims or subject matter.
2. “Encounter” session: self-formed groups of community leaders or volunteers arranged for a facilitator to conduct one or more sessions at a place and about a topic of their choice; they were led by the facilitator to discover the fit between the Internet tool, their goals, and their capacities; learners completed the session by deciding not to further use the tool, to arrange for more learning, or to adapt the tool to their strategies. Before the project, there were no such learning opportunities for community leaders in the local area.
3. Design workshop: neighbourhood residents of diverse skills, backgrounds,

and motivations dropped in to a scheduled series at a public access site and engaged with a facilitator or with other learners. Learners were exposed to a design tool which they were encouraged to use immediately, ideally for creating content that reflected issues within the neighbourhood and the wider community. Then then continued the learning at their own pace at home over the Internet or by attending more drop-ins. They completed the workshop by helping other learners, by stopping their project, or by transferring it to others. Before the pilot, there were no such informal learning practices at the local public access sites.

4. *Training of Trainers* program: trainees assisted the delivery of public workshops conducted by a trained volunteer; when a trainee felt ready, the trainee assistant and volunteer trainer switched roles; afterwards, an assessment was conducted.

- *Increased use of effective e-learning opportunities; specify the number of learners who used e-learning as a way to enhance skills and learning:*

As much as our pilot involved the use of the Internet tools, we did not design the project to use e-learning techniques directly, relying instead on traditional face-to-face techniques. Whenever possible, we tried to encourage participants to design e-learning opportunities in the form of portals for their neighbourhoods or community portals for their special interest groups.

- *Increased capacity and skills among learners; indicate the number of learners who successfully completed the learning opportunities created by your project:*

As our pilot involved the use of several learning practices, conducted in several neighbourhoods, involving learners of widely different backgrounds, we find it convenient to describe the increased capacity and skills among the learners in sections. Each section is headed by one or more entries extracted from Tables 4 to 6, *Actual Activities for Objective 3*, indicating the relevant learning opportunities and the number of learners involved.

Domestic Workers' Association: <i>Computer Literacy Project</i> weekend course	120
Langara Community College: Continuing Education Dept: <i>The Internet and Community Development</i> evening course	10

The greatest increase in capacity and skills that we measured came from the two community courses for 120 domestic workers and 10 community leaders, respectively. The domestic workers typically had low skill and comfort levels with computers before the course of three weekends; after completion, they consistently rated an improved ability in areas such as: finding websites and looking up legal information online, consistently and without assistance; performing specific tasks, ranging from navigating a particular website to using email and saving documents on diskette; asking questions about

computers. An interview with the DWA Legal Support Worker (Grace) at the end of the project revealed that domestic workers now perform tasks that they had previously and repeatedly asked Grace how to accomplish. In contrast, the community leaders typically had relatively high levels of computer skills; they came to the eight-week evening course looking for an overview of key Internet tools and insights on how strategically to apply them to their nonprofit work; consequently, the course offered a balance between skills development and technology planning. Course participants improved their skills in creating and managing email lists, using content management systems, and assessing group collaboration tools to improve communication amongst staff and board members. The participants rated their learning experience high on the course evaluation form, but many also criticized our preparation and delivery. We traced three later developments back to the increased awareness and skills gained by some of the participants: (1) the *Computer Literacy Project* arose out of discussions between us and the Executive Director of the Domestic Workers' Association, one of the course participants; (2) many private and public email lists related to community development and public participation were created and continue to be managed; (3) a new community website targeting Spanish speakers was started.

N.B.: (1) The skills gained by neighbourhood residents attending our community drop-in workshops resembled those gained by domestic workers attending the weekend community course. However, the drop-ins occurred without the commitment of a scheduled course; they had a curriculum chosen and then changed often by the learners; and they had less formal evaluation. Therefore, they showed less potency in the outcomes. (2) Meanwhile, the skills gained by community leaders attending our encounter sessions resembled those gained by community leaders attending the evening course. However, the encounter sessions gave more attention to the learners' context and involved greater hands-on work.

Ray-Cam Community Centre: How to build a community portal for youths and other members	2
Strathcona Skills Connection:	2
Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Safety Office:	2
Collingwood Neighbourhood House: Food security and skill inventory projects.	7
Impact of the Olympics on Community Coalition (IOC): How to develop a community-based set of recommendations to forward to the Vancouver Olympic Bid Corporation.	2

In the various encounter sessions involving 15 learners who were staff persons or community leaders belonging to five nonprofit groups, we determined that participants were generally satisfied with their experiences, even when they

decided not to pursue the solutions. In all of the sessions, detailed working mock-ups of a website were co-designed and assessed for suitability. The awareness and knowledge that came with the hands-on experience enabled them to determine the scope of their needs and the means to articulate them.

Specific outcomes:

At a session with Ray-Cam’s Family Programs’ Coordinator, the community champion at the site who has a good understanding of the potential of Community Development and online tools, she was able to link the project to their family and youth members. They brought the mock-up to end-use quality and are now using it as a portal for members and youths.

At Strathcona, there was less outcome despite a greater involvement of learners, as seven staff and volunteers explored how to develop a learning network for the volunteers at their Skills Connection centre; further efforts to realize their initial ideas met with lack of interest from the volunteers.

Staff members from the Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Safety Office were trained in how to develop and maintain their website complete with interactive spaces for their specific Community Development purposes. In turn, introductory training for accessing and posting alerts from BC Corrections on the site was carried out at a street workers’ organization with end users.

Collingwood Neighbourhood House, through several encounter sessions engaging staff and community members over three months, did a detailed analysis for two of their projects and are now pursuing development for the food security project.

When we encountered them, IOC was a motivated and energetic group, anxious to provide a community forum for alternative thinking about the Vancouver Olympic Bid process. A straightforward learning experience with us led them to develop a website. When the new city council implemented a referendum on the subject, the website proved to be an important resource for local citizens participating in the referendum.

Self Help Resources Association (SHRA): How to build the online component of an asset-mapping process based on youth services.	5
Kiwassa Neighbourhood House: <i>Take Charge Youth</i> project.	5

In the two sets of encounter sessions listed above, we engaged 10 youths from two organizations. With five youths from a community asset-mapping project associated with SHRA, we did a detailed assessment of developing an online tool for the project. There was no direct outcome other than the awareness and knowledge gained from the sessions themselves; however, there was a broad

transfer of knowledge to other youths who eventually developed a youth portal, as part of their work in the pilot as CAP youth interns. In the *Take Charge Youth* project, we trained five youths who eventually became content managers and content providers, uploading text and images for public viewing.

Lion's Den Seniors' Activity Centre:	
Weekly lecture series at the Lion's Den.	10
2-station CAP site: basic Internet skills training.	20
Creative writing of online content and basic web page design.	6
Seniors' portal: Joint training conducted for volunteers of Lion's Den, Al Mattison Lounge, and West End Seniors' Network.	6

Our engagement with seniors spanned the whole project timeline, mostly centred at the Lion's Den Seniors' Activity Centre in the Grandview-Woodlands neighbourhood. It began with a public lecture series that drew an estimated 10 learners. The intent was to create a tiny local process that will entice participants to use the Internet for research and discussion. The series was coupled with the use of a small CAP site at the Centre, where we provided a long-term presence of several volunteers who gave basic Internet training to an estimated 20 learners. Later, we provided a set of encounter sessions for about six learners supporting their desire to publish personal histories online. The graduates of these sessions began uploading content for public viewing. Near the end of the project, we arranged for joint training of about six volunteers, four of them from two other seniors' activity centres, the Al Mattison Lounge, a "competing" centre situated in the same neighbourhood, and the other from the West End neighbourhood, culturally far away. The product is the seniors' portal, a tri-lateral arrangement using the project's content management software, representing a quantum jump in capabilities for some the participating seniors, both in skills development and in neighbourhood diplomacy.

Carnegie Community Centre:	
Worked with a volunteer group called the "Webheads".	4
Learning Centre: learner-initiated workshops on topics such as how to make pamphlets.	6
Learning Centre: how to use interactive community portal to collect community histories.	8
Learning Centre: Disability review forum developed (disbanded because of lack of community ownership of online tools).	3
Learning Centre: Desktop publishing course.	10

<i>100th Anniversary</i> project: web team assembles and is given training (disbands after training sessions: the community does not take ownership of the process and website).	3
<i>Downtown Eastside Community Play</i> : how to supplement with online interactive tools (the group originally had a community-based focus but they shifted to a more centralized approach).	6
Carnegie Community Centre Learning Lab: basic Internet skills.	56
<i>Training of Trainers</i> program: <i>Internet in Action</i> course	23
Newsletter project: how to build an online newsletter.	1
<i>Neighbourhood Voices</i> project: how to create and publish online audio content	9

Our engagement with the Carnegie Community Centre represents an effort spanning the whole project timeline, and a cast of many trainers. The above list of mostly encounter sessions tallies 53 learners (some could be repeat learners attending more than one of the learning opportunities at the Centre). Most were Centre members and volunteers, active within the projects providing a context for the training sessions. Typically, none of the sessions led to sustainable efforts outside of the training sessions. The exceptions are as follows: the *Training of Trainers* program led to four other volunteers being trained to give *Internet in Action*, a basic skills course; the newsletter project focussed on training one volunteer newsletter editor to take the printed version online; and the audio project is a recent initiative that saw a quick, impressive uptake of interests. After four sessions, the audio project spawned several audio content providers who have published their oral projects online.

Humanities Educational Resource Centre (HERC): Community learning lab assembled and basic skills training provided.	24
Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood Safety Office:	10
Strathcona Skills Connection: <i>Downtown Eastside Café</i> project: one on one training.	20

Outside the Carnegie Community Centre and within the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood, we provided several special learning opportunities. An early intense effort occurred in an annual quarter supporting HERC in their attempt to establish a barrier-free post-secondary presence in the neighbourhood, before the effort imploded from lack of funding. Before operation, we formed a technical support volunteer team to build and provision a fully operating, relatively large learning lab using open source software and lots of donated equipment. Once in operation, we provided ongoing training and support several evenings each week. We estimate the number of learners to be a very conservative 24, all of whom increased their basic computer skills. At the Neighbourhood Safety Office, and following upon the encounter session that

was held there, we engaged a special trainer to promote the appropriate use of the special content on their newly developed site (a bad date / bad drugs notice board) to service delivery organizations and street workers.

Ray-Cam Community Centre: How to build a Chinese portal	4
Language portal: 12 workshops x 10 community members	10

We provided two learning opportunities for an estimated 14 non-English speakers. At the Ray-Cam Community Centre, a special trainer was engaged to give four weekly training sessions for Chinese-speaking volunteers who would be looking after the Chinese members’ section of the website. On a larger scale, we formed a special corps of volunteers from the community-at-large to increase their skills in designing language-specific portals that would be useful and locally engaging. The skills gained by the 10 volunteers include: content research, translation from English, community outreach, designing interactive elements linked to community processes. The active portals that were developed before project end include French, Spanish, and Russian, but others were started: Macedonian, Serbian, Arabic, Korean, Chinese, Japanese.

- *Enhanced skills and learning for participation in labour market; (if available) indicate the number of learners who found work as a direct result of their involvement with the project:*

Our project did not directly respond to the need to enhance skills and learning for participation in the labour market; our involvement with the Vancouver Arts and Cultural Alliance brought us closest to this outcome.

Vancouver Arts and Cultural Alliance:	
How to build a skills bank using a content management system.	3
Questionnaire and development work with former SEARCH graduates; a community learning plan is to be developed based on the feedback.	3
CAP site: basic Internet skills training.	14

The Vancouver Arts and Cultural Alliance operates a public access site and a large-scale job search program for arts and cultural workers. We have engaged both staff and graduates of the job search program in the project. With the staff, we conducted a detailed assessment of how to develop a skills bank of its graduates; this led to awareness and knowledge of the process, and after a long gestation period, they were able to pursue the project with current resources. With three of the graduates, we explored how to develop a community learning plan for new graduates, one that involves using personal webpages to highlight their skills and portfolios to each other and potential employers; beyond the encounter sessions, general outreach began for the community of graduates to become volunteer administrators of the portal.

With the public access site, we were able to train an estimated 14 learners over several annual quarters in basic Internet skills and other job-related computer skills.

- *Increased awareness of learning assets available in your community.*

In the context of our pilot, the learning assets available in our community consisted of: (1) the neighbourhood portals being created as part of the project, (2) local and exemplary websites, and (3) the free services of the VCN. As an ongoing practice, we promoted the first two types to the project participants in course materials and during training workshops. Furthermore, as one neighbourhood portal was being developed, we promoted it to the other neighbourhoods in the project so that ideas could be cross-fertilized. How the newly created portals were promoted to community members and the general public was left to the community development processes linked to the online tools.

- *Increased use of learning assets available in your community.*

<i>Type of learning asset</i>	<i>Increased awareness or use</i>	
Neighbourhood portals and community portals being developed by project participants	We saw community volunteers working on language portals sharing ideas and templates, mainly as a result of our promotion. We also saw sharing amongst residents of different neighbourhoods, but to a lesser degree. We measured the number of unique visitors and hits within the project timeline to most of the portals listed in Table 1 of Section 5, as indication of their general awareness and usage, respectively (excluding as best we can activity caused by content designers):	
	Carnegie Community Centre	10,492 284,066
	Community Access Portal	7,581 132,887
	Ray-Cam Community Centre	2,996 32,005
	Collingwood Neighbourhood House	1,593 18,679
	Kiwassa Neighbourhood House	1,479 15,180
	Youth Portal	1,348 68,856
	Strathcona Skills Connection	1,105 18,424
	Seniors' Portal	845 19,324
	Neighbourhood Safety Office	395 3,701
	Domestic Workers' Association	344 7,573
	S.E.A.R.C.H. Graduates	262 10,274
	Downtown Eastside Cafe	124 1,285
	French Language Portal	64 2,720
	Russian Language Portal	34 6,271
	Spanish Language Portal	23 1,329

<i>Type of learning asset</i>	<i>Increased awareness or use</i>
Local online resources and exemplary websites of community groups; certain government websites	We highlighted local exemplary websites as resource materials for <i>The Internet and Community Development</i> course. These same examples were sometimes used in our encounter sessions and design workshops. We integrated the browsing and navigation of relevant government sites in the curriculum of the Domestic Workers' training project.
Free services of the VCN: email accounts, email lists, web site and domain name hosting	Many learners and project partners became aware of the VCN services for the first time as a result of their participation. Although VCN recorded an increase of about 1,500 new accounts in the four targetted neighbourhoods over the project timeline, we could not see a correlation with the project activities (see Section 7, community access indicators).

- *Enhanced capacity of your organization to build partnerships.*

During the pilot, we contacted or worked with several local institutions, influencing their awareness or perception of our organization as it relates to their missions, and potentially enabling us to gain their support to build partnerships. In addition, VCN has developed and tested a new framework for determining what a successful project partner would be. Taking into account our enhanced capacity, here are some possibilities:

<i>Enabling institutions</i>	<i>Possible partnerships</i>
Law Foundation of BC (www.lawfoundationbc.org), VanCity Credit Union (www.vancity.com)	Based on our successful pilot training project conducted with the Domestic Workers' Association and co-funded by the Law Foundation and VanCity Credit Union, we could partner with another group to conduct a similar training project for similar outcomes.
Vancouver Foundation (www.vancouverfoundation.bc.ca)	Based on the discussion paper that we submitted to this community foundation, we could partner with one or more neighbourhood groups to extend components of the pilot.
GVRD (Greater Vancouver Regional District, www.gvrd.bc.ca)	The GVRD commissioned Eco-Industrial Solutions Ltd. to evaluate the pilot and determine the suitability of using the model for setting up an "eco-industrial small network". If this is successful there is potential to develop partnerships with local business improvement associations and continue to work with the Collingwood Neighbourhood House, the Ray-Cam Community Centre and the Alliance for Arts and Culture.

- *Enhanced capacity of your organization to offer targeted e-learning activities.*

We worked with the Langara Community College to design and deliver a

continuing education course called *The Internet and Community Development* using traditional techniques. This primary experience has enabled us to intelligently assess the need for an e-learning version of the course: quickly following the end of the pilot, we became one of eight partners with the college to design eight e-learning courses suitable for practitioners of community development. The e-learning course is being developed at <http://netcd.vcn.bc.ca>.

- *Dissemination of information on successful e-learning practices or innovative tools.*

We engaged in the following activities to disseminate information about what we learned:

- Y2Q2 The project's volunteer model was presented to about 75 "community broadband champions" of the BC Community Networks Annual Conference in Kimberley BC, in the hope of it being useful for communities setting up community broadband projects.
- Y2Q3 The project was presented to about 100 attendees of *Learning Communities: Best Practices Workshop* in Winnipeg.
- Y2Q3 A discussion paper on extending components of the pilot was submitted to the Vancouver Foundation, in the hope of broadening its funding practice.
- Y2Q4 The project's *Training of Trainers* model was presented to about 30 attendees at the CAP/CLN Spring Conference in the Vancouver area.
- Y3Q2 The project's vision, experiences, and lessons learned was presented to 32 practitioners, researchers, policy planners and HRDC staff (including two HRDC ADMs and two IHAB DGs) attending a HRDC *Policy Conversation on Future Directions for Community Learning* in Ottawa.
- Y3Q3 The VCN and the project became one of six case studies in a three-year national research plan conducted by the Community Research Alliance for Community Innovation Network (CRACIN, pronounced "crackin"), funded by SSHRC for \$1M.
- Y3Q3 The pilot's tools and learning practices were presented to the Greater Vancouver Regional District as part of a study funded by them to find uses in an "eco-industrial small network".
- Y3Q4 We responded to a Request For Information issued by the City of Vancouver, by modelling their many decentralized operational units as a "community learning network" and applying the pilot's content management tool and learning practices to the "network".
- All years We set up a project website in year one and frequently updated it with current information. See <http://cln.vcn.bc.ca>.

- *Were there any unexpected outcomes? If so, please describe them.*
- *What do you feel were the most significant results of your project and why?*

<i>Category of significance</i>	<i>Winning result</i>
The greatest outcome...	DWA: Our partnership with the Domestic Workers' Association helped train a group of 120 domestic workers, many starting at the lowest level of computer literacy, to become noticeably better correspondents with themselves and others, better researchers of legal information, and more empowered citizens of our society.
The closest to our objectives...	CNH: Our support of the activities at the Collingwood Neighbourhood House helped their efforts to integrate a busy vibrant community centre and supportive staff with a major business intersection, a strong community vision centred on food security, and a network of involved volunteers. They were chosen by Eco-Industrial Solutions Ltd. as the candidate for piloting an eco-industrial small network.
The most unexpected...	NSO: Our support of the Neighbourhood Safety Office helped to begin an outreach program that will in time explore the effective use of an interactive portal with street workers and drug users, as they live their lives in the public and private spaces of the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood. We developed a partnership with them in record time near the end of the project timeline.

7. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This section is designed to help explain the approach we took to determine whether and how the expected results were achieved.

- *What methodology was used to conduct the evaluation (i.e., surveys, questionnaires, focus groups etc.)? Please explain.*

For final evaluation, we used: a survey completed by 12 project staff and volunteers; a survey completed by 12 staff or volunteers of participating groups; open-ended interviews of selected participants; a focus group of VCN staff and engaged community groups occurring at the end of the project; final reports written for sub-projects (Domestic Workers' Assoc. and Eco-Industrial Solutions Ltd.); transaction logs and statistics gathered from the hosting facility of the Internet tools and user accounts.

We also maintained a “social network map” throughout the project. Since the mapping process is labour intensive, it was often outdated by events occurring in the community, but at one point we felt we had found closure, where newly discovered relationships proved to be ones already found and located on the map. Past the half-way point, we re-mapped the social terrain by using some of our community co-ordinators as network “troubadours”. The main outcome: an identification of new, pertinent, feasible partners for the project. We also constructed a new evaluation framework for project partnerships based on the process, which we used rigorously for the remainder of the project timeline.

- *What were the key results of the project evaluation? How were those key results used?*

(Quotations are from the project proposal.)

“In order to show evidence of a growing community learning network (CLN) that could later reach a stage of maturity in the community, most of the project’s important indicators are of rising levels, rather than of absolute levels, of output.”

Network access: “We expect the public access network to be increasingly accessible to the target communities with respect to geography and weekly hours. *Indicators:* Increasing number of (a) learning nodes and (b) Internet stations within the CLN. (c) Increasing total number of weekly operating hours.”

	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
(a)	0	0	3	3	3	3	4	4	10	10	10	10
(b)	0	0	19	19	19	19	21	21	59	59	59	59
(c)	0	0	114	114	114	114	134	134	392	392	392	392

The indicators for network access show that the number of learning nodes started at 3 in year one, increased to 4 in year two, and then to 10 in year three. This resulted in increasing numbers of Internet stations and weekly operating hours, as was desired. As more public access sites become operational, we encouraged them to join the CLN as “learning nodes”.

Skills training: “We expect users to be increasingly trained and, in the longer term, become increasingly skilled, in the use of CLN tools and resources.

Indicators: (a) Increasing attendance in orientation and training sessions. (b) High and steady level of satisfaction and interest with training process and content as shown in post-session surveys. (c) Questions posed by attendees related to training and skills are infrequently recorded by the help desk and the other support channels.”

	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
(a)	0	0	153	206	224	228	110	96	171	67	134	214
(b)	Measured only for community weekend and evening courses; see Section 6, Outcomes.											
(c)	Not measured.											

The indicators for skills training show increasing attendance until Y2Q2, a hiatus for the next three quarters while there was a changeover in project co-ordinators, and then increasing attendance to the end of the project. The figures were used to make a change in strategy in year three, when we moved away from basic skills training at public sites to more encounter sessions. We also refined content and structure of training sessions.

Volunteer support: “We expect an increasing involvement of volunteers in technical maintenance, user training, and help support. *Indicators:* Increasing number of volunteers (a) attend volunteer orientation sessions, (b) attend technical workshops, (c) placed at learning nodes, and (d) complete one volunteer term.”

There are no useable data for evaluation, because two volunteer co-ordinators were engaged consecutively during the project (see Section 10, *Project Management*) and they kept incompatible sets of records. Also, one of the co-ordinators had a computer failure and lost most of the volunteer data for year three.

Community access: “We expect community members to increasingly gain access to the CLN. *Indicators:* Increasing number of (a) ‘hits’ to the portal and the message board, (b) visits to public access sites from community residents, and (c) registrations for accounts on the VCN by groups and individuals in the target communities.”

	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
(a)								1,397	11,615	57,913	130,203	194,624
(b)	0	0	2,700	2,700	2,700	2,700	2,760	2,760	16,050	16,050	16,050	16,050
(c)		186	186	124	102	98	101	108	168	132	135	92

The indicators for community access show an increasing number of hits for community content created as part of the project, beginning in the last quarter of year two. The figures include the activities of content designers, and for the portals that were the most active: Carnegie Community Centre, CAP portal, Ray-Cam Community Centre, Collingwood Neighbourhood House, and Kiwassa Neighbourhood House. The figures for visits to public access sites are estimates supplied by site operators in their recent final reports to Industry Canada. The figures can be translated into number of learners by assuming five visits equal one learner. Thus, in year three, there could have been about 3,200 learners coming into contact with the project at the 10 access sites. Our estimated total number of learners engaged with the project is 435, or about 14 percent. The figures for account registrations on the VCN for the related neighbourhoods of Downtown Eastside, Grandview-Woodlands, Hastings-Sunrise, and Renfrew-Collingwood are quarterly rates; they do not show a correlation with CLN indicators, probably because there are many other factors affecting account registrations, including the seasons and local usage trends.

Community content: “We expect community members to increasingly contribute new resources to the portal and the message board that are related to community assets in the form of services, stories, and issues. *Indicators:* (a) Increasing number of portal links and message board topics. (b) Increasing number of ‘hits’ to these resources over time.”

	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3			
(a)								7	17	330	946	1,126
(b)								76	568	5,984	10,796	19,949

The indicators for community content show increasing numbers starting in year three, coinciding with the deployment of a new content management tool. For the last three quarters, there was a doubling of hits for each quarter, far exceeding the rate of new content.

Community development: “We expect community members to interact with each other, mediated by the CLN and, in the longer term, form groups of associations for studying, planning, exchanging, and other collaborative activities. *Indicators:* (a) Increasing number of groups of associations participating or formed. Diversifying types of (b) issues involved, and (c) activities supported.”

We did not attempt to collect data for these indicators.

- *What were the strengths/weaknesses of the project identified during evaluation?*

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Network access</i>	An adequate number of learning nodes for public access was available throughout the project timeline. By year three, there were almost 60 Internet stations available for public use within the target neighbourhoods.	Learning nodes did not become engaged until the third quarter and the related increases (a doubling in number of nodes, a tripling in number of stations and operating hours) occurred in the last year, i.e., there were significant time delays in starting the project and in making it available to the public. Ironically, the learning lab under partial control by VCN did not become integrated into the project at all.
<i>Skills training</i>	Skills training began as soon as the first learning nodes were available and continued at a relatively high rate until the mid-point, when it was involving about 8% of the estimated number of visits to the public access sites.	The mid-point hiatus showed the disruption caused by a change in project co-ordinator. Counter to expectations, basic skills training decreased to about 1% of the estimated number of visits to the greater number of learning nodes available in year three (because of a change in project strategy).
<i>Volunteer support</i>	There was a constant supply of volunteers for public access support and training (despite a lack of evaluation data showing this).	
<i>Community access</i>	By project end, the estimated number of learners engaged was about 14% when compared with the estimated number of learners coming to the participating learning nodes (but they were probably not the same learners).	Project activities, especially skills training with VCN volunteers, in the targetted neighbourhoods seemed too low to significantly alter the rate of VCN account registrations. Conversely, a total of 1,500 people residing in the target neighbourhoods registered for VCN accounts, but many of them were not engaged with the project.

	<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>
<i>Community content</i>	Community content started to be contributed at the start of the last year, coinciding with the availability of a new learning tool, and began increasing in number to project end.	Content contributions did not keep up with the rate of hits to the resources.
<i>Community development</i>	Skills training became “deeper” and engaged more with community leaders in year three, although the evaluation data do not directly show it.	Although the project may have strengthened some existing CD (community development) processes by adding online components for them, there was no indication that the project “created” new CD processes.

- *What has changed as a result of this evaluation?*

See Section 9, Conclusions.

- *Recognizing that not every project is completely successful, would you say your project was partially or completely successful? Please explain.*

<i>Keys to success (as stated in project proposal)</i>	<i>Assessment of success</i>
Public access sites should be located where they are easy to get to, be physically accessible, and at places ‘where people are already spending time’. There should also be a place in the neighbourhood to go to for ongoing support. “There should be a person on-site once a week to answer questions”.	Partially successful: We arranged for an adequately diverse network of sites, replacing or substituting for the ones that could not be realized. For sites in need of ongoing support, we provided as best we could. But there was a time delay to engage some sites offering large capacities, which limited potential public participation until late into the project.
The project should accommodate diversity and the project should encourage people of diversity to get involved. The project should make its services available in different languages. Also, there should be no bureaucratic process to participate in nor any fees. The project should offer learning tools for marginalized individuals.	Completely successful: Throughout the project, we engaged the direct participation of youths, seniors, volunteers, women domestic workers, unemployed arts and cultural workers, non-English speakers. Our content management tool’s multi-lingual capability and its suite of interactive objects lowered a barrier so that marginalized individuals could train to become designers of learning tools for the community-at-large.

<i>Keys to success (as stated in project proposal)</i>	<i>Assessment of success</i>
<p>The project should be “integrated into the work communities are already doing...” It should have an advisory committee, and community members should be involved in determining success factors. Checkpoints and adjustments should be made along the way. The project should aim for “spreading out responsibility...”</p>	<p>Partially successful: The project tried hard to integrate into the work communities are doing, but this also had a dragging effect as we waited for community leaders to engage or change their priorities. An advisory committee and community members were involved in determining success factors early in the project, but these were weak components and offered no guarantees for success at local sites. Checkpointing and adjustments were often done. We attempted to spread out responsibility, but often there were no strong presences to spread to.</p>
<p>The project should be visible in the community and many people should know about it. It should also be particular to a community and a context.</p>	<p>Partially successful: The project was not widely advertised and remained invisible for many people. Over 400 learners did participate, but many probably did not understand the intent or the goals. Over 1,500 residents in four targetted neighbourhoods of the project registered for VCN accounts during the project timeline, but most were probably not engaged with the project. We were successful in having it be particular to a neighbourhood and its context by taking advantage of community leaders and organizations.</p>

8. SUSTAINABILITY

Have you taken steps (financial or non-financial) to ensure the activities of this project will be sustained after the OLT funding period is completed? Please explain.

More than a year before the end of the funding period, we started to take three steps to ensure the project activities will be sustained past the end:

1. We pulled back in some areas and shifted priorities in others. Two examples: At the Lion's Den Seniors' Activity Centre, we pulled back from higher level training while at the same time supplying them with CAP Youth interns and an HRDC funded summer student. At the Carnegie Community Centre, we began focusing on activities which would lead to sustainable use of the Internet, such as the newsletter and audio projects.
2. For the newer partnerships that were created, we gauged them using a set of "sustainability indicators", for example, the presence of an ongoing community development process, an active group of community members, and a community champion.
3. We established a small informal technology support network, consisting of a series of help sheets, a basic simulation, and a weekly workshop for the main learning tool we used, which should aid groups to change or add to their websites. We will continue to conduct the workshop past the end.

After the project ended, we immediately started to set up a regional technology support network for nonprofit groups at www.bcyk-tech.net as part of the National Voluntary Sector Initiative, funded by Industry Canada. We will engage the CLN partners with the network so that they can use it for gaining support.

Finally, we hope to continue to partner with some of the sites through seeking out further financial support, as we outlined in Section 6 under *Enhanced capacity of your organization to build partnerships*.

9. CONCLUSIONS

This segment of our final report contains our conclusions regarding the project. It answers any questions raised throughout the project and indicate which goals were met.

- *Comparing the skills levels of learners who participated in the project at the beginning and at the end of the project, what would you say?*

There were two types of learners who became engaged in the project. First were learners with low levels of computer and Internet skills. For them, we taught basic computer skills coupled with the effective use of the Internet for communicating with their peers, for researching information that enhances a person's life, work, and place in society, and for publishing online personal expressions in text, images, and to some extent, audio. Second were more advanced learners attached to community development projects or processes. In the community, they acted as leaders or worked with or for neighbourhood houses, community centres, advocacy centres, and other leadership organizations. For them, we provided specialized encounter sessions for assessing the strategic use of the Internet, mainly for creating greater community participation. We explored through hands-on demonstrations, sometimes creating on-the-spot mock-ups, and always involved them in design, both of structure and content.

- *Did the learners report satisfaction with their experience?*

As far as we were able to determine, satisfaction was high for both types of learners. All learners became engaged in the project through self-choice, paid no or very low fees, were provided with learning opportunities in public spaces requiring nothing more than themselves, their motivation, and their ideas.

- *Could you describe the strategies that lead to effective adult learning in your project?*

We designed the opportunities to allow for fluid, easy interaction between the facilitators and the learners and among the learners themselves. Most of the learning was achieved through drop-in workshops and allowed for diverse topics chosen by the learners. We tested format, content, and learning tools by designing and delivering two community courses, one a weekend course, the other an evening course, using more formal techniques. Then we "loosened them up" for wider and more diverse use. At times, a learning session was also a training session for volunteers, who observed while assisting the facilitator and then, in time, became facilitators.

The organizations acting as hosts of the large and small public access labs that we used typically provided community services within the surrounding neighbourhood or for special target groups. They were the connecting agents

between the two types of learners, and between the project and the greater community, and we made them partners of the project.

- *What would you say were the lessons learned from this project?*
- *If you were to do this project again, what would you do differently?*

Partnership arrangements

We had a range of partnership models: shared funding, shared staff time, shared resources (such as a lab), and shared ideas and goals. But there were disadvantages: Partnership development continued late into the project timeline, stalling things and creating uncertainties. Sometimes, we felt a partner would “hijack” their participation to create, for example, a much needed website, viewing us more as a service provider than a capacity builder.

To do it differently, we would implement a parallel workplan, one requiring less or even no partners, so that as we waited or lost one, we would still make progress. A parallel workplan would mean less organized use of public access labs, working more directly with neighbourhood residents and less with community leaders. (In fact, some of us preferred this workplan over the actual one.) We would also design a partnership package, structured in a way that would clearly indicate the benefits and costs of being a partner in the project.

Implementation of learning and skills development activities

We did not use VCN’s core competencies for project implementation. Instead, we hired project co-ordinators for a relatively long and complex project and gave them high-level responsibilities. But the project’s subject matter, Internet tools and ABCD (assets-based community development), demanded the strong, equal application of two different skill sets; alas, both co-ordinators were strong in only one of the two. We also did not spend enough time transferring technical knowledge and ABCD practices from core staff to the many community co-ordinators and trainers we used throughout the project’s lifetime. Instead, we engaged in micro-training: as needed for the moment and for the context.

To do it differently, VCN core staff would directly implement the project as one of its main activities, delegating tasks needing more commonly held skills to others.

Project evaluation

Our evaluation processes were not strong enough. We failed to collect some data for important indicators and we lost data for evaluating the volunteer activities, which was a strong component of the project. We relied on partners to collect some data, but they had varying capacity to provide them. We also collected a large number of anecdotes that were difficult to generalize and abstract.

To do it differently, we would build a better framework, one that would automatically turn out “real-time” indicators without the need for much hand collecting and processing.

Project promotion and dissemination approach

Our promotion of the project was too low-level and limited, there being a lack of connection between the project, the relatively large number of users visiting the participating public access sites, and the new VCN users that registered since the project started. Our dissemination to local institutions and local visitors was problematic as there was often “nothing to show”.

To do it differently, we would create new activities for public access users and VCN users that would be tangible, manageable, highly promoted, and highly indicative of what the project was about. We would use the same activities or their outcomes to complement dissemination.

How can an urban community such as ours be supported by a convergence of these three threads: the Web, ABCD, and CAP?

Our general approach was: find and engage CAP sites that are hotspots of ABCD processes; express the ABCD processes using Web interactivity; bring people out of their homes and from the streets into the CAP sites for training and face-to-face encounters.

Early along the way, we began to sense some patterns: individuals would respond to using the Web more for publishing personal expressions and histories than for a ABCD project; community groups would use the Web more to represent and identify their services and less to directly support local residents; people who accessed basic skills training were not currently involved with ABCD processes: they were interested in “survival skills”; conversely, people who were involved with ABCD processes were not neophytes in the use of Internet tools.

We refined the general approach to account for these patterns in the following ways: teach basic learners coming to the CAP site how to publish their stories and histories on the Web; help groups add interactive channels to their Web work to pick up and collect the stories; combine the stories and histories with the ABCD processes; work with advanced learners to support the CAP site, the basic learners, and the groups.

What are some possible future Internet tools for ABCD?

The general tool we used: a content management system that needs only a web browser for users and designers to use; one that has a suite of modular web objects for easy construction of message boards, information exchanges, skills inventory, and user submissions; one that is open-source so that any community network operating under resource constraints can host it without paying dues for proprietary development.

Early along the way, we heard that privacy and security on the Internet was of concern to many of the community leaders and participants; they wanted the interactive spaces created in password accessible areas and the contact information of community users to remain private. Many also wanted to have interactive spaces that were monitored or limited to the participation of a pre-defined community. Our conclusion: these concerns will arise when a “normal” ABCD process is suddenly lifted without its protective and naturally-occurring web of social protocols into the harsh, open glare of the Internet. Our remedy: we began to introduce participants to some of the more “advanced” concepts of the tool: user authentication, user roles, and moderation. Any Internet tooling of an ABCD process will need to make space for these features.

Conversely, how should ABCD be modified in the context of the Internet?

Our project did not progress far enough for us to gain enough experience to answer this question.

- *Do you have any recommendations/suggestions for OLT?*

10. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Please list the project personnel and briefly describe their responsibilities within the project.

Project Manager: Peter Royce

Project Co-ordinator:

2001/06 – 2002/06 Am Johal

2002/06 – 2002/09 Manuel Schulte (part-time and interim)

2002/10 – 2004/02 Kevin Nugent

Community Co-ordinator:

2001/06 Jeremy Foster

2001/10 Peter Hilborne, Jael Emberly

2002/11 – 2003/02 Sophia Kelly

2002/11 – 2003/03 Donovan Kuehn

2002/11 – 2003/05 Ron Collins, Brenda Belak

Public Access Co-ordinator:

2001/03 – 2001/12 Jack Vickery

2002/02 – 2004/02 Will Stacey

Training and Volunteer Co-ordinator:

2001/03 – 2002/02 Carolyn Nantais

2002/02 – 2003/10 Morgan Chojnacki

Public Support and Special Trainer:

2001 – 2002 Dave Olsen, provided training at Carnegie lab

2001/08 – 2002/02 Ljupko Mandic, provided technical support and training for Humanities Education Resources Centre

2004/02 Marisa Wytenburg, trained street workers and organizations in the use of web space created by Neighbourhood Safety Office

2004/02 Yi Yang, trained community residents and key staff persons in how to develop and maintain the Chinese members area on the Ray-Cam website

CAP Youth Interns:

2003/01 – 2003/03 Kristina Kun, Yang Chang, Derrick O'Keefe

2003/01 – 2003/03 Melissa Chu, helped to develop the seniors' portal

2003/01 – 2003/03 Richard Folgar, trained individuals at the Alliance CAP lab; assisted in developing the S.E.A.R.C.H. Grads portal.

Project Support:

2001/09 – 2002/03 Elzbieta Green, group partnership development

2001/05 – 2002/07 Vimmi Pruthi, project accounting
2001/10 – 2001/11 Theresa Neri, project accounting support
2002/04 – 2002/08 Marnie Caron, communications
Steven Chan, technical co-ordination

Describe how the project was managed. Did you follow the work plan, have regular reviews etc?

Overall, the project was guided by the work plan as outlined in the proposal. The project was managed by a small committee which worked in conjunction with the Vancouver Community Network Board of Directors with monthly activity reports being submitted to the Board.

The Project Co-ordinator developed committees at each of the community sites to manage activities in conjunction with partner organizations, and was responsible for the activities of Community Co-ordinators and other staff.

Everyday activities were co-ordinated through weekly staff meetings and special meetings where needed.