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Community Ideas Factory: The Life Skills Project Year 2 Report

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Community Ideas Factory: The Life Skills Project Year 2 Report



The Life Skills Project

The project aims to develop quality, creative and applied virtual life skills programming that will enhance the lives of marginalized populations in Halton Region and its surrounding areas. The result of this project will be a virtual comprehensive, lived-experience and EDI- informed life skills program on a Learning Management System (LMS) shared across the Halton Region and surrounding areas.

The third Community Ideas Factory Initiative (CIF) - The “Life Skills Project”, led by Sheridan College Professor, Dr. Sara J. Cumming was launched in July 2021. She is joined by co-investigators: Professor Dr. Julianne DiSanto, Professor Dr. Brandon McFarlane, Professor Mark Shufflebottom, Dr. Humaira Siddiqui, and Leah Burton, MSW.

This is an NSERC/SSHRC CCSIF funded research collaboration between Sheridan College, Big Brothers Big Sisters Halton Hamilton (BBBS), Bridging the Gap (BtG), Children’s Aid Society (CAS), Food For Life (FFL), Halton Multicultural Council: Connections (HMC), Halton Women’s Place, Halton Region, Kerr Street Mission (KSM), Oakville Community Foundation (OCF), Oak Park Neighbourhood Center (OPNC), Peterborough Housing Corporation, Sexual Assault and Violence Intervention Services (SAVIS), Shifra, United Way Halton Hamilton (UWHH), Woodgreen, and YMCA of Oakville.

Project Timeline



Over the second year of the project, the team focused on implementing its research findings from year one into the design and development of the life skills programming curriculum. Using identified life skills themes, along with several subthemes and learning outcomes, course content, materials and resources were compiled for each module. Project partners aided in this process by sharing existing materials and information. Simultaneously, the online module design elements were finalized with accessibility and user experiences in mind. Design templates were developed along with appropriate visual content

and voice overs. Interactive components have been created and built, including gamification, examples and case scenarios to provide learners the ability to apply the knowledge they are learning. Quizzes and pre/post tests were also embedded into modules to test learners' ability to grasp what is being taught. With all these efforts, the life skills program has broken ground and has evolved into a tangible program.

Year 2 Achievements

Creation of EDI-PAC



The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Project Advisory Committee (PAC) was brought together to offer the project further insight and feedback. Members of the EDI PAC consist of individuals with diverse backgrounds and lived experience.

Employment of Students



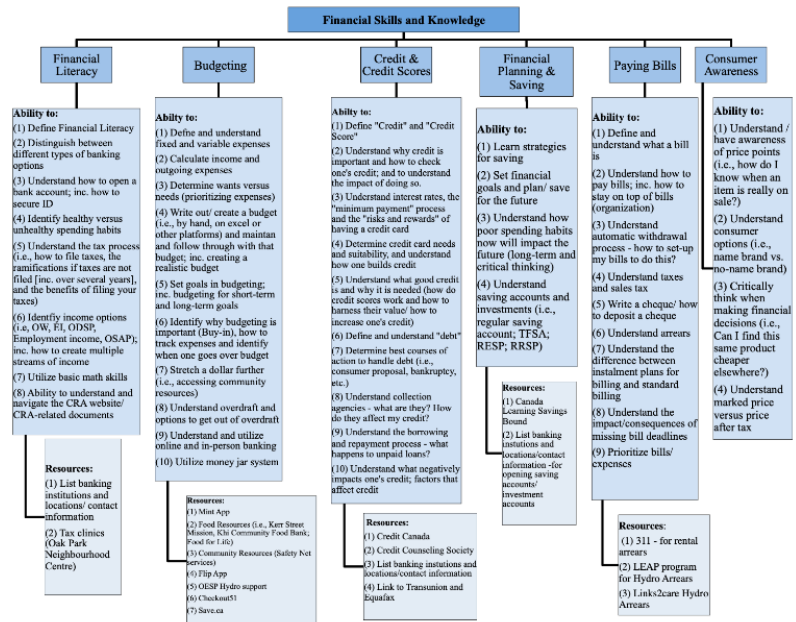
The Life Skills Project provided employment opportunities to 10 students, including international students, through the Sheridan College Work Study program.

Curriculum Development

Ten Life Skills Themes were found in the first year of research. The list consisted of:

- Financial Skills & Knowledge
- Interpersonal Skills
- Household Management Skills
- Personal Skills
- Skills for Success
- Critical Thinking & Research Skills
- Resourcefulness Skills
- Employment Skills
- Housing Research Skills & Knowledge
- Social Justice Skills

Each theme, along with correlating sub-themes, were assigned learning outcomes that were informed by key focus areas identified by participating front line workers and clients of the survey. With the support of project partners and research assistants funded through Sheridan's work study program, a learning curriculum was developed for each of the modules.



Consisting of a combination of text, videos, graphics, case studies, and interactive tests and quizzes, each module aims to provide the learner with a comprehensive and enriched learning experience. Visual components along with voiceovers were also included to offer accessible support and options. With available links, downloadable PDFs, and instructions, learners will also be directed to supporting resources and materials, including applications forms to community programs or up to date schedules for food programs or other resources.

Interactive Design

Seven interactive design interns from Sheridan College began their work for the project. They began their contract with the project with a tour of the community, visiting project partner, Kerr Street Mission. With a glimpse at the work being done in the community and reviewing initial research, the team eagerly began designing and developing interactive virtual applications for the life skills modules.

The interactive virtual applications will consist of activities in the form of games, situational scenarios that learners can navigate using learned knowledge, content exploration, and virtual simulation. The PAC and EDI PAC will be heavily involved with the interactive design interns to provide their feedback and knowledge to ensure that the project is meeting any EDI or accessibility requirements before the LMS soft launch amongst project partners.

Calculating Jamila's Total Monthly Income

Now it's time to put your skills to the test. Using the information from the video, calculate what Jamila's monthly income is.

Calculate Each Income Source

Using the information from the video, calculate the **monthly amount** for each income source individually.

Salary: \$

Online store: \$

Child support: \$

GST credit: \$

Trillium Benefit: \$

Add Up the Income Sources

Take the calculated amounts for each income source and add them together. **This total will represent Jamila's total monthly income.**

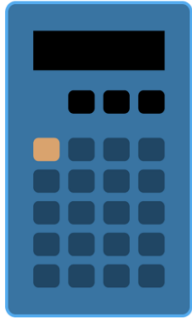
Jamila's Total Monthly Income

Total: \$

Done

Calculator

Use the calculator the help you calculate the income.



Knowledge Dissemination



The team has been busy spreading the knowledge and learnings discovered through The Life Skills Project. At the beginning of October 2022, Sara presented at The Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology (AACS) conference in Louisville, Kentucky. Then, in May 2023, Dr. Julianne DiSanto, Leah Burton-Saliba and Dr. Sara J. Cumming presented at Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences hosted by York University in Toronto, Ontario. The project caught the attention of many other non-profits and academics that are hopeful for the project's success and expansion to more organizations.

[Aditi Salhotra](#), the project's Marketing Assistant, continues to regularly share updates and news through weekly social media posts across [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#). The social media platforms also include featured posts that provide followers with research perspectives, community awareness, and further insights to project approaches.

Dr. Sara J. Cumming will be presenting her paper at the International Sociological Association in Melbourne, Australia on June 27, 2023 titled 'Working towards preventing homelessness: Collaborating to Build Life Skills'.

Next Steps

Upon concluding year two of the project, the team will continue to finalize the development of content curriculum and building the modules onto the Learning Management System. As the project enters its final year, the Life Skills Programming will be soft launched amongst project partners to be tested by frontline workers and clients. The program will undergo an evaluation to determine the efficacy of the innovation and will make recommendations for future improvements. A final report will be shared with the community to share the outcomes of the project.

Follow the CIF: Life Skills Project on Social Media

