



WOODGREEN

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Enabling Employment and Broad Adoption of Skills for Success for Older Workers

Table of Contents

Disclaimer	3
Note of Appreciation	4
Acknowledgment	4
Introduction	6
Executive Summary	7
Facts and Highlights	7

CHAPTER 1: Background 10

1.1. Skills for Success Model Overview	11
1.1.1. Funder Narrative	11
1.1.2. Previous Sector Contribution to SFS Model	11
1.2. Labor Market Literature Review	11

CHAPTER 2: Program Structure & Performance Management System 13

2.1. Program Profile and Resources	14
2.1.1. Need for the Program	14
2.1.2. Alignment with Government Priorities	14
2.1.3. WoodGreen Trainings' & Tools' Stream	14
2.1.3.1. Integration of OWI with SFS Model	14
2.1.3.2. Categorization of Skills (Foundational vs Transferable).	14
2.1.3.3. Community Participation	15
2.1.4. Program Governance, Resources and Components	16
2.1.4.1. Governance, Structure and Responsibilities	16
2.1.4.2. Financial Controls and Resources	16
2.1.4.3. Program Components	16
2.1.4.3.1. Program Communication & Outreach Direction	16
2.1.4.3.2. Program Delivery Process and Results	19
2.1.4.3.3. Training and Courses Curriculum	20
2.1.4.3.4. Training Delivery & Facilitation Methods	21
2.1.5. Target Population	22
2.1.6. Stakeholders	22

2.2. Logic Model	22
2.2.1. Logic Model Narratives	22
2.3. Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy	23
2.3.1. Description of Key Performance Indicators	23
2.3.2. The Outcomes Through the Kirkpatrick Training Evaluation Model	26
2.3.3. Data Collection, Processing and Management System	27
2.3.3.1. Data Collection	27
2.3.3.2. Data Storage and Management System	27
2.3.3.3. Agile Performance Management Approach for Continuous Learning	29
2.3.3.4. Core Evaluation & Measurement Issues	29

CHAPTER 3: Training Results & Recommendations 30

3.1. Success Stories / Testimonials	31
3.2. Satisfaction with Training Delivery	31
3.3. Training Results	32
3.3.1. High Level Target Achievements	33
3.3.2. Participants' Reaction to the Training. (Relevance & Efficiency Measures)	32
3.3.3. Learning and Behavioral Change (Effectiveness Measures)	33
3.3.4. Long Term Well-being Indicators	35
3.4. Learnings and Recommendations	37
3.4.1. Suggestions from Participants	37
3.4.2. Recommendations from the Committees	38
3.4.3. Conclusion	39

References 40

Note About Terminology

This report provides clarification on the terminology used to define the profile of program participants. As stipulated in the contractual agreement with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), the officially recognized term is “Older Worker.” However, through direct interactions with participants, “Mature Worker” emerged as a preferred reference, countering ageism stereotypes associated with “Older Worker.” Furthermore, WoodGreen’s committee’s members confirmed that “Experienced Worker” terminology sounds emotionally empowering to participants, and therefore it was strategically employed in the curriculum, communication, and marketing materials. For this report, WoodGreen adheres to the contract terminology using “Older Worker” interchangeably with “Experienced Worker” and “Mature Worker” to address diverse readers.

As a result, it is worth noting that SSEW, the acronym used throughout this report, stands for “Skills for Success for Experienced Workers.” This explicitly emphasizes WoodGreen’s commitment to the term “Experienced Worker” as the preferred and empowering reference for program participants.

Furthermore, pursuant to Section 25.0 of the WoodGreen-ESDC agreement, throughout project execution, the copyrights in the work vest in WoodGreen. ESDC is hereby granted a non-exclusive, irrevocable, and royalty-free license by WoodGreen, enabling translation, adaptation, recording, and reproduction of the work, except for commercial sale in competition with WoodGreen.

Finally, this report only covered the outcomes and insights from five out of the six planned cohorts. The findings presented herein offer a comprehensive view of the program’s impact based on the completed phases.



Note of Appreciation

WoodGreen Community Services expresses profound gratitude to Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) for their unwavering support and enduring partnership, which has been pivotal in the success of the Skills for Success for Experienced Workers (SSEW) program. The commitment and generosity of the funder has played an instrumental role in empowering individuals, enhancing skills, and fostering community development. This enduring collaboration underscores the shared vision of creating a highly skilled and inclusive workforce, ultimately contributing to the betterment of the community and the lives of those WoodGreen serves. The success achieved was a testament to the strength of WoodGreen partnership, and WoodGreen looks forward to continuing this impactful journey together.

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Gratitude is sincerely offered to WoodGreen's exceptional team members whose contributions were instrumental in bringing this effort to completion. Special thanks go to Steve Vanderherberg; Vice President, Community Programs Unit; and Sonya Goldman; Director, Employment & Skill Development; for their leadership direction and support.

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Together, a collective effort to support the program has shaped this report into a thorough and insightful document.

“I found out about this program from a community worker. The new skills I learned were networking, computer skills and writing an effective resume. I believe my skills improved significantly, and I feel more confident and efficient in these areas. Currently, I’m employed with TDSB (Toronto District School Board) as a lunchroom supervisor, and I’m also enrolled in a course. SSEW program has contributed a lot on my resume writing skills.”

– Cohort 4 Participant



Introduction

This report provides a methodology-based information for the program structure and design together with evidence-based analytics for the implementation results of the Skills for Success for Experienced Workers program that was delivered through WoodGreen Community Services.

The report looks in depth at the program's:

- Training **relevance** to the participants' needs.
- Training **effectiveness** on the participants' professional growth and **Well-being** aspects.
- **Efficient** practices followed to deliver the program & the **impact** the participants' experience.

By design, the report seeks to provide a descriptive overview of major findings from quantitative and qualitative prospectives while addressing the major themes objectively:

Program Impact:

- ❓ How does the program cater to the needs of the participants?
- ❓ How does the program improve the well-being and wellness of the participants?
- ❓ How does the program upgrade the foundational and transferable skills of the participants?
- ❓ How does the program encourage the number of participants pursuing further education?

Service Delivery:

- ❓ How does the program prepare participants for the job market?
- ❓ How is the overall participants' experience with the training?
- ❓ How does the program foster collaboration among other organizations and employers?

Logistically, the report is organized to first provide background information on the funder's narrative for the former Skills for Success Model and labor market literature review.

Then, it provides details on the program design and performance management system in Chapter 2 followed by a detailed examination of the implementation process; and then the training results in Chapter 3. The lessons learned, recommendations, and conclusion of the training program are included within chapter 3 toward the end of the report and directly preceding the Reference section.





E Executive Summary

The Skills for Success for Experienced Workers (SSEW) program, designed and executed by WoodGreen Community Services, has left a lasting impact on participants, successfully meeting their diverse needs. The overwhelming response of applications, either submitted online or through calls and visits to WoodGreen Employment Case Counselors (ECCs), attests to the program's relevance and resonance within the community. Through a pre- and post-training survey, enrolled participants affirmed that the training's content and the job preparation tools were pivotal factors influencing their decision to enroll.

The SSEW program has contributed to improving the application of well-being and wellness habits of SSEW participants. Furthermore, the strong social connections forged within the class, coupled with friendships and heightened self-awareness empowered participants to carry positive energy from the classroom into their homes. This holistic approach to personal development has proven instrumental in fostering a sense of community and emotional support among participants.

Central to the program's success was its ability to elevate both foundational and transferable skills among participants. The program resulted in an impressive 27% increase in confidence levels across all nine skills throughout the first five cohorts. This tangible improvement underscores the SSEW program's effectiveness in addressing the diverse skill needs of participants. Furthermore, the program has been a catalyst for educational aspirations, with an overwhelming 97% expressing their intent to pursue further education, indicating a sustained commitment to personal and professional growth.

In terms of service delivery, the SSEW program has emerged as a robust preparation ground for participants entering the job market. Post-training, participants highlighted newfound tools,

including goal-setting strategies, enhanced profiles on recruitment platforms, polished resumes, and interview readiness. This comprehensive skill set positions them as job-ready individuals equipped to navigate the employment landscape successfully. High satisfaction levels have marked the participants' overall experience with the training, ranging from guest speakers and program topics to the venue and training facilitators. These positive testimonials underscore the program's commitment to delivering a quality and impactful learning experience that resonates with the participants, setting a precedent for future training initiatives.



100%

Achieved 100% (more than 106) of the training participant target

FACTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Achieved 100% of the training participant **target** (108 were trained versus a target of 106).

Overall **Program outcomes** were tracked through THREE aspects:

1 Training Effectiveness in upgrading skills:

This was explained through improvement in confidence level based on self-assessment surveys before and after the training program:

- a. **Overall Confidence** across all the nine skills improved by 27%
 - (i) Confidence in **Foundational skills** (Reading – writing – Digital – Numeracy and Communication) improved by 33%
 - (ii) Confidence in **Transferable skills** (Collaboration – adaptability – Problem Solving – creativity & Innovation) improved by 21%

b. The outcomes of the SSEW program highlight **three distinct bundles of confidence improvements** across all skills, each with its unique trajectory:

- (i) (*Reading, Writing, Digital literacy*), and the transferable skills of (*Adaptability and Problem Solving*), demonstrated remarkable progress with an average improvement of 39% attributed to in-class dynamics and the use of digital tools.
- (ii) (*Communication and Collaboration*) skills, observed a commendable average

improvement of 18% which was credited to group assignments & participation.

- (iii) (*Numeracy and Creativity*) skills, exhibited an average improvement of 11%, recognizing the need for specialized academic exercises and case studies to achieve higher proficiency.

2 Training effectiveness in encouraging participants to pursue further education:

a. This was explained by 83% of participants confirming their intention towards upgrading their education to cope with the market knowledge demand, specifically after the training. SSEW succeeded in shifting mindsets by 17% versus before the training.

3 Training effectiveness in encouraging participants to apply well-being habits:

- a. The SSEW program demonstrated a remarkable impact on participants' well-being practices, elevating the application of weekly habits from 16% to an impressive 31%, marking a substantial 97% improvement.
- b. Additionally, daily well-being habits surged from 38% to 55%, reflecting a substantial 45% enhancement in participants' commitment to daily self-care.
- c. Notably, a sizable portion, 26%, of these practices were directed towards self-education and self-awareness, underlining the program's multifaceted influence on participants' holistic development.



45%

Enhancement in participant commitment to daily self-care



83%

of participants confirmed their intention towards upgrading their education



58

participants were referred to the WoodGreen ES (Employment Services) department



“The curriculum is great! There was lots of information on additional community and government support programs, training courses, and job opportunities for mature workers.”

– Cohort 5 Participant

The **effectiveness of the outreach plans** was clear:

- 1 Total number of information sessions was 18 sessions for cohort 1 to 5:
 - a. 4 in-person sessions, 12 online sessions, & 2 drop-in sessions
 - b. Ongoing online recorded information sessions on WoodGreen website
- 2 Total number of attendees to the information session led to 106 registered participants:
 - a. 25 attended the in-person session (either in WG halls or through a virtual meeting)
 - b. 261 watched the recorded info session.
- 3 Total number of WoodGreen webpage views: 1,615 views
- 4 Facebook & LinkedIn number of impressions: 590
- 5 Total number of emails sent to external agencies promoting the SSEW program: 114 emails

The **training relevance** to the participants’ needs was demonstrated through the following:

- 1 Approximately 300 older jobseekers’ applications to participate in the program were received before and after attending the information sessions.

The **efficiency of the process rollout** was evident:

- 1 The total number of screening consultation interviews was 153.
- 2 The total number of eligible participants in the waiting list was 49 and were reached weekly to enroll on availability.
- 3 79 laptops were distributed and 2365 TTC tickets were provided to facilitate the training.
- 4 \$ 119,784 total allowance was provided to support marginalized participants.
- 5 225 hours were spent on a 1:1 counseling session between ECCs and participants.
- 6 90 participants were enrolled across the 5 cohorts with an attendance rate of (95%)
- 7 1 participant dropped out or did not complete the training course.

The indicators measuring the **employment readiness** were traced through:

- 1 58 participants from four cohorts were referred to the ES (Employment Services).



CHAPTER 1

Background



21.8%

Right now, more than
1 in 5 persons of working
age are between 55 to 64
years old

(Statistics Canada, 2022)

1.1. SKILLS FOR SUCCESS MODEL OVERVIEW

The Skills for Success program, a recipient of funding from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), stands as a testament to the alignment of its mission with the overarching goal of enhancing the standard of living and quality of life for all Canadians. ESDC's commitment to cultivating a highly skilled labor force materializes through grants aimed at supporting jobs, training, and social development within an efficient and inclusive environment.

1.1.1. Funder Narrative

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) has been instrumental in championing the Skills for Success (SFS) Program. This initiative, characterized by two distinct streams focusing on Research and Innovation as the first stream, and the Training & Tools as the second stream, aims to elevate nine critical skills categorized under both foundational and transferable skill sets. The training stream, generously resourced by the funder, empowers organizations such as WoodGreen Community Services to craft comprehensive training programs, curricula, and skills assessments. (Canada, 2023a)

Within the framework of the SFS Program, the nine identified skills, comprising four foundational skills (reading, writing, numeracy, digital proficiency) and five transferable skills (collaboration, adaptability, creativity & innovation, problem-solving, and communication), are systematically defined with predetermined components and proficiency level criteria. (Service Canada, 2023).

1.1.2. Previous Sector Contribution to SFS Model

The Skills for Success (SFS) Program has funded 38 projects nationwide since 2017, with 18 currently active or completed in Ontario. This expansive initiative reaches across seven provinces, emphasizing its

substantial impact on skills development and social inclusion. The projects' diverse nature and broad geographical distribution contribute rich experiences and insights, informing the overarching goals of the SFS Program. (Service Canada, 2023c)

These projects target a diverse audience, including apprentices, employers, youth, individuals with diverse skills, job seekers, newcomers, and minority communities. The varied project durations, ranging from a few weeks to five years, highlight a commitment to sustained and impactful interventions tailored to the specific needs of diverse groups. This inclusive approach underscores the program's dedication to addressing the unique challenges faced by various demographic segments. (Service Canada, 2023c)

1.2. LABOR MARKET LITERATURE REVIEW

Presently in Canada the number of seniors aged 65 and older grows six times faster than children 0-14. As a result, Canada is seeing greater numbers of Experienced Workers in its labor force. Right now, 21.8% (more than 1 in 5 persons) of working age are between 55 to 64 years old (Statistics Canada, 2022).

The City of Toronto is no exception to this trend. The 2021 population census data further reveals that the City of Toronto has 982,700 people (about the population of Delaware) in the 45- to 74-year-old cohort (Toronto, 2022). This means 35% of the city's population belong to the mature experienced workers age group. Of them 18% are men and 17% are women. (Statistics Canada, 2023 a).

Ageist views in society and amongst employers, co-workers, and workplaces pose greater challenges for mature experienced workers (OW Report). Age related discrimination exists at all stages of employment and in society (OW Report).

Ageism and age-based stereotyping are the “most tolerated forms of social prejudice” that older people face (Fancey, P. et. Al., 2021).

Both ageism and stereotypes may contribute to age discrimination at all employment stages, from recruitment to workforce exit. This discrimination can manifest in mature experienced workers not being considered for hiring, training or promotions or being encouraged to take early retirement. Age-based discrimination as shown in figure 1, impacts Experienced Workers, as well as the community, at three levels:

- 1 *Individual level:* health, adaptability, warmth (friendliness), competence, and work-life balance
- 2 *Organizational level:* costs and benefits, return on investment and promotion.
- 3 *Societal level:* lump of labor (younger workers are denied employment opportunities when older adults engage

in work and delay retirement) and the retirement age norms (Fancey, P. et. Al., 2021).

Recognizing the vital economic and social contributions of the mature experienced workers, it is important to create more employment opportunities and work environments that are inclusive and suitable for this cohort of workers. Toronto Seniors Strategy Accountability Table recommended “*Expand employment support services to further address the needs of Older Workers*” (Toronto, 2022 a). Accordingly, Toronto Employment and Social Services division provides support to Experienced Workers through training and employment programs to clients aged 45+. While youth employment is capturing major attention, mature experienced worker employment support has been overlooked for a long time (OHCRIF Report). Only three TESS (Toronto Employment Social Services) programs are targeted for 45+ year old population: 1) Age Advantage

45+ Program offered by Gateway Cafe; 2) REBOOT by Springboard and 3) Older Workers Initiative by WoodGreen Community Services. However, all these programs are designed to serve Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Supports Program (ODSP) recipients only. City of Toronto’s Toronto Seniors Strategy Version 2.0 Final Report recognizes that:

“[There are] not enough programs and services to support Older Workers’ entry, re-entry, retention in the labor market” (Toronto, 2022 a).

The only employment support program targeted towards the 45+ year population who are neither OW nor ODSP recipients was Skills for Success for Experienced Workers program at WoodGreen Community Services.

“It was refreshing to have so many attentive eyes scrutinizing my resume, which I discovered, in my opinion, was somewhat archaic and fell short of getting past any automated test or algorithms.”

– Cohort 5 Participant





CHAPTER 2

Program Structure & Performance Management System

2.1. PROGRAM PROFILE AND RESOURCES

2.1.1. Need for the Program

The modern workplace is rapidly evolving, compelling workers, especially those above 45, to adapt by enhancing and upgrading their core literacy skills especially digital knowledge, their socio-emotional skills like adaptability & innovation, and finally their set of soft communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills. On the other hand, Experienced Workers who participated in the program confirm the need to upgrade their proficiency level to remain competitive and relevant to employers. This program addresses these critical needs of both the employers and the workforce.

2.1.2. Alignment with Government Priorities

WoodGreen stands firmly in alignment with and fully embraces the government priorities outlined in the Objectives of the Training and Tools Stream. (Canada, 2022). WoodGreen had diligently designed and implemented training programs aimed at empowering individuals to enhance their foundational and transferable skills. This strategic initiative not only equips participants to meet the challenges of on-the-job demands but also fosters collaboration with employers and employment organizations, emphasizing WoodGreen's commitment to being a partnership-driven community service organization. WoodGreen also leveraged lessons learnt from the previous Older Workers Initiative program and connected the needs of the targeted participants.

2.1.3. WoodGreen Trainings' & Tools' Stream

WoodGreen, as the fund recipient, must comply with the funding agreement's mandate, conducting the Skills for Success training program tailored for the senior racialized population.

The program seamlessly integrates strategic outreach, continuous client engagement,

and guest speaker sessions to ensure a dynamic and impactful experience. In the initial stage, lasting three months, WoodGreen concentrated on redesigning the Older Worker Initiative (OWI) by incorporating the Skills for Success model and initiating cohort 1. Moving forward, the subsequent three months were dedicated to training cohort 2 and 3, with a strong emphasis on refining WoodGreen's approach based on valuable insights gained from cohort 1. Over the preceding six months, WoodGreen efforts were directed towards the training of the remaining cohorts, planning for evaluations, finalizing the curriculum, preparing for webinars, and generating quarterly reports. Simultaneously, WoodGreen geared up to share the curriculum online through the WoodGreen website. This initiative aimed to offer other non-profit organizations access to adapt the materials for their adult training programs in the future, fostering a collaborative and knowledge-sharing environment. Additionally, this online resource will serve as a valuable reference for participants, enabling them to revisit and benefit from the course materials they acquired during the program.

This strategic and phased approach underscores WoodGreen commitment to continuous improvement throughout the program.

2.1.3.1. Integration of OWI with SFS Model

Analysis of the Initial Needs Assessment: The Skills for Success for Experienced Workers program's needs assessment stems from the Stemming the Gray Tide 2018 report, which initially informed WoodGreen's Older Workers Initiative (OWI) program. The OWI program targeted mature workers aged 45 and above, unemployed for a year, and recipients of Ontario Works assistance. The program's training focus aligns with the 2018 report, emphasizing the need for tailored employment training for mature workers in Toronto. Priority was given to participants identifying as racialized, lacking post-secondary education, and facing long-term unemployment.

Description of Design Frameworks and Models Used: The program adopts the OWI program's design, encompassing training structure, curriculum materials, and support services. The curriculum evolves with feedback from OWI, tailoring it for clients' specific needs. Key learnings from OWI include age-centered programming boosting job seeker confidence, collaboration with employers and sectors aligning skill sets, virtual programming enhancing digital skills, and cohort-based programming building social capital. The program incorporates the Skills for Success (SFS) model from Employment and Social Development Canada, emphasizing nine key skills. Additionally, it integrates WoodGreen's core values – Diversity, Inclusion, Equity & Belonging (DIBE) and Employability, fostering an inclusive environment and enhancing employability for mature workers.

2.1.3.2. Categorization of Skills (Foundational vs Transferable).

According to the Skills and Competencies Taxonomy, from the Government of Canada, a skill is defined as "capabilities that an individual must have to be effective in a job, role, function, task or duty" (Canada, 2023b).

Therefore, and in alignment with the Funder's Skills and Competencies Taxonomy 2023 Version 1.0, WoodGreen strategically classifies skills into two overarching categories: Foundational Skills and Transferable Skills. This taxonomy provides a comprehensive framework that guides WoodGreen's approach to skill development, ensuring a systematic and targeted effort to enhance participants' capabilities and employability.

- Foundational Skills
 - A. Core Literacy
 - Reading
 - Writing
 - Numeracy
 - B. Communication
 - C. Digital



“During the pandemic, I found the way people communicate totally changed. I felt left behind, the lack of knowledge of digital literacy really scared me.”

– Cohort 4 Participant

- Transferable Skills
 - A. Collaboration
 - B. Adaptability
 - C. Creativity and Innovation
 - D. Problem Solving

The division into foundational and transferable skills enables WoodGreen to tailor interventions & efforts toward skill development according to its existing resources which correspond to its rationale. Therefore, it was particularly important to realize that WoodGreen strategically distinguishes core literacy skills as a separate category to enhance precision in interpreting outcomes. While acknowledging the organic development of literacy skills, WoodGreen emphasizes participant-driven efforts. In contrast, targeted initiatives focus on elevating digital skills, recognizing their significance in the modern workplace. The organization creates an empowering class environment fostering well-being and interconnected transferable skills such as adaptability and collaboration. The observed results affirm WoodGreen’s impact, enhancing participants’ knowledge and practical capabilities in communication and problem-solving, translating into increased employability and real-world application.

WoodGreen Research, Evaluation & Learning stream

WoodGreen, while not mandated for research, integrates research and analysis for program evaluation and quality assurance. This strategic decision aligned with WoodGreen commitment to a comprehensive understanding and continuous improvement. WoodGreen employed evidence-based insights, surveys, and established frameworks for methodologically sound evaluation. WoodGreen performance assessment involves thorough desktop research and literature review to inform and guide the evaluation task, ensuring a nuanced understanding of the program’s multifaceted impact.

2.1.3.3. Community Participation

Committee themes, Structure & Responsibilities

There are three advisory committees for the program. These committees consist of external members to WoodGreen and play a vital role in improving and evaluating the training program/curriculum; boosting participants’ confidence; creating awareness in the community about ageism; and more. These committees are:

- 1 **Employer Advisory Committee:** Four employers of different business sizes and from different fields employ or work with older/experienced populations.
Current Members: MCIS Language Services, Paragon Security, S & C, Patisserie La Cigogne.
- 2 **Organization Advisory Committee:** Consists of two organizations who train or work with older/ experienced populations.
Current Members: PTP Adult Learning & Employment Programs, Arab Community Centre of Toronto
- 3 **Experienced Workers’ Advisory Committee:** Eight individuals 40 years or older from different ethno-racial backgrounds and field of expertise living in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area.
Current Members: 3 East Asians, 1 Black, 2 Caucasians, 1 South Asian, 1 Persian, 1 Man, 7 Women

Responsibilities of Advisory Committees

Quarterly Meetings: Committees meet quarterly. At these meetings committee members provide their feedback on program design and curriculum. WoodGreen staff often facilitate guided discussion following pre-determined questions. These meetings allow committee members to:

- Participate in program discussions and provide ongoing feedback on curriculum development, revisions, and improvement for the program.

- Evaluate the impact of the training curriculum and the impact and effectiveness of the program on participants’ job search journey.

Surveys, interviews and focus groups: apart from these quarterly meetings, committee members also participate in surveys, interviews, and focus groups to provide valuable feedback and recommendations about the program.

- 10 interviews and 2 focus groups were conducted; 9 committee members responded to curriculum evaluation surveys.

Guest Speaking: committee members also lead guest speaking sessions to share their knowledge, experience, and employer insights and hiring tips with program participants.

- Committee members delivered around 4 guest speaking sessions per cohort.

Partnership Development: Two partnership opportunities came through the committee members which greatly benefited program participants.

- Partnership with Paragon Security provided security guard training to interested program participants. The program covered the cost for five days training, including Basic Security Guard license.
- Digital Skill Upgrading with PTP Adult Learning and Employment Programs: with this partnership, participants with lower digital skills took five days digital skills training course before starting the cohort training. It was observed that 30% of participants were required to take this digital upgrading course to fully participate in the main training.

Collaboration through Insights & Feedback Gathering

- WoodGreen collaboratively gathered insights & feedback from the following stakeholders: Committee members, guest speakers, staff members & program participants. Participants’ observations of the curriculum included:

“It was a very comprehensive curriculum. Lots of learning, teaching, and hands on learning opportunities.”

“Having a few classes online was very important. As in most jobs these days, some work is done through a hybrid format (e.g., online reporting, client communication etc.”

2.1.4. Program Governance, Resources and Components

2.1.4.1. Governance, Structure and Responsibilities

Governance is vital in community service, particularly with vulnerable populations. Key aspects include:

- *Structure, Roles & Responsibilities:* Implementing the RACI (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, and Informed) framework ensures clear accountability, minimizing conflicts and promoting efficiency.
- *The Evaluation Direction:* WoodGreen robust program evaluation covers OKRs (Objective Key Results) and KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) for relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and economic aspects.
- *Training Geographical Coverage:* Strategic site selection (East and West offices of WoodGreen) maximizes impact, considering convenience and unique branch needs.
- *Program Interdependencies:* Regular alignment sessions foster team synergy, prioritizing collective success through enhanced communication and collaboration.

2.1.4.2. Financial Controls and Resources

Budget categories were aligned with ESDC requirements. Resources include all budgeted & in-kind resources provided to make the program successful. The in-kind resources provided by WoodGreen were office space, laptop loans, daily refreshments, and PTP’s contribution to additional focused digital skills training for certain individuals.

2.1.4.3. Program Components

This section will outline details related to the program outreach plan, the implementation process, the course curriculum, and the training delivery in the class.

2.1.4.3.1. Program Communication & Outreach Direction

Our communication strategy has been deliberately crafted to resonate with the target audience. From visually appealing graphics to crisp, clear content, every element of WoodGreen campaign was tailored to ensure clarity and relevance. Moreover, the WoodGreen website serves as a comprehensive information resource, reflecting the program’s principles and ensuring transparency and accessibility for all potential participants.

“Workers’ Rights and LinkedIn Profile creation were very important & they are included in the curriculum.”

– Staff Member



Communication and Outreach Strategic Design

Discussion of outreach objectives:

Conducting internal and external outreach was an important part of this program in enabling WoodGreen to support and assist unemployed or underemployed Experienced Workers (age 45+) in enhancing their foundational and transferable skills, to ensure that they were well-prepared to meet on-the-job demands. The goal of the program's outreach was to help WoodGreen promote a new program that can help experienced workers amplify and develop new skills for employment.

Outreach to the target audience: The outreach coordinator played a crucial role in facilitating the program's outreach to its target audience. This support included consulting the research and evaluation coordinator's insights into the demographic population in the Lakeshore area, along with identifying the neighborhoods where racialized individuals predominantly reside. These findings proved instrumental, enabling the outreach coordinator and other WoodGreen West staff to pinpoint local community centers

and agencies. Subsequently, they reached out through email or phone to promote the program and disseminate the program flyer effectively.

Furthermore, during both in-person and virtual information sessions, the coordinator consistently emphasized that "the program was specifically tailored to support individuals who had encountered racial discrimination, while also welcoming applications from all backgrounds as space permits." This approach aimed not only to attract individuals from racialized communities but also to ensure that individuals from non-racialized backgrounds felt encouraged and welcome to apply. The intention was to create an inclusive environment that recognized the unique challenges faced by racialized individuals while maintaining openness to a diverse range of applicants.

Significance of the outreach assets: The outreach coordinator supported the Skills for Success for Experienced Workers' Program by developing a range of outreach assets, including social media posts, program

flyers, and organizing virtual and in-person information sessions.

Significance of outreach platforms:

WoodGreen utilized a range of online and in-person channels, such as Facebook, Google, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Eventbrite, Outlook, and the organization's website, to effectively reach the SSEW program's target audience. These platforms offered interactive opportunities, allowing participants to engage directly and access additional details.

Process of how the outreach was setup and conducted: The outreach coordinator created key assets for program promotion, sharing essential information through internal and external emails, in-person outreach at GTA social service agencies, and collaboration with WoodGreen's Marketing team for social media posts and online ads. Information sessions played a crucial role in introducing prospective clients to the program, covering offerings, application process, and compelling reasons to apply.

Communication Rollout plans.

Main source(s) of outreach assets to promote the program: Online program interest form, WoodGreen website program page, program flyers, Eventbrite weblinks for information sessions, recorded session video on the webpage, outreach communications list, social media posts, QR codes for direct form access, and the PowerPoint presentation for in-person and online sessions. Secondary assets included testimonials, gathered in written and video formats post-cohort, serving as powerful tools to highlight success stories from recent graduates.

The program strategically used three media platforms for marketing: paid Google Ads, free owned media, and earned free media through outreach to external organizations. Paid Google Ads targeted the specific audience of unemployed/underemployed workers aged 45 and above. Owned media channels, including social media, the WoodGreen website, Outlook, and printed flyers, played a pivotal role in enhancing program awareness.

KPIs (Outputs, Outcomes) measurement methodology

The SSEW program gauged its outreach progress and participant engagement by examining various key aspects: **the source of program awareness, awareness through partnerships, interested leads, information session engagement and attendance, expressions of interest (indicating a desire to enroll), and communication effectiveness.** Utilizing outreach analytics, the program gained insights into the number of individuals who had actively engaged with and interacted with program content, providing a comprehensive understanding of the outreach impact.

Performance & Data Management System

The SSEW program benefited from the collaboration and support of various members at WoodGreen, contributing to the successful promotion of the program across online and social media channels. Key individuals and platforms involved in the data collection process for the program's outreach included:

- *Marketing and Communications Team:* They assisted the SSEW team by publishing SSEW social media posts and running paid ads on Google. Additionally, they had access to social media post analytics.
- *Employment Services Social Media Administrator:* This individual supported the SSEW team by publishing SSEW social media posts across WoodGreen Employment Services' distinct social media channels and had access to social media post analytics.
- *Website Enhancement Manager:* Assisting the SSEW team in setting up and publishing the program webpage, this member continuously updated the page with latest information and had access to

program webpage analytics.

- *Outreach Coordinator:* Collaborating with the SSEW team, the Outreach Coordinator played a crucial role in creating outreach assets, developing social media posts, and had access to analytics for Eventbrite information sessions, YouTube information session videos, and bit.ly link analytics.
- *Microsoft Forms Platform:* Serving as the primary SSEW outreach platform, this platform aided the SSEW team in tracking the number of applications the program receives.

Outreach Statistical Results

- The total number of information sessions was 18 sessions for cohort 1 to 5 (4 in-person sessions, 12 online sessions, 2 drop-in sessions) and ongoing online recorded sessions on WoodGreen website.
- Total number of attendees to the information session was 106 potential participants (25 attended the in-person session (either in WG halls or through a virtual meeting), 261 watched the recorded info session)
- # of WoodGreen webpage views: 1,615 views
- FACEBOOK # of impressions: 303
- LinkedIn # of impressions: 287
- # of emails sent to external agencies promoting the SSEW program: 114



1,615

WoodGreen webpage views



303

Facebook impressions



287

LinkedIn impressions



114

Emails sent to external agencies

2.1.4.3.2. Program Delivery Process and Results

The implementation process of the program unfolded in three cohesive phases to ensure a seamless and impactful participant experience:

The pre-program phase, the mid-program phase & the post-program phase.

This integrated approach reflects WoodGreen's commitment to guiding participants through each stage of the program, from initial enrollment to sustained empowerment beyond the training. Results were recognized throughout.

Pre-Program Activities:

Interest Tracking: Prospective participants completed the MS interest form through WoodGreen's website, providing information on contact details, age and other eligibility and suitability details which were then recorded on the interest tracking sheet and assigned to Employment Case Counsellors (ECCs) using the sheet to manage outreach tasks. The sheet acted as a centralized tool, streamlining communication, and tracking progress.

Screening: During the screening process, ECCs utilized an excel template that had screening aspects. Categories in the tool covered program fit, suitability, digital skills, eligibility, cohort dates, and online/in-person training components. Suitability questions encompassed culture/fit, group work/social skills, program readiness/goals, course schedule, and program awareness. As part of the screening process, participants' digital skill level was assessed with some additional digital questions. They consisted of a list of activities clients needed to complete with an ECC to check their digital skills. Clients with low digital skill levels attended a 5-day digital upgrade class that took place before the SSEW training.

Registration Eligible participants were added to the registration list or waitlist for their chosen cohort. Once participants expressed interest in a specific program cohort, ECCs

completed the necessary forms, included the Program Agreement, Program Registration, Privacy Consent, and Vendor Request Forms. These registration/intake documents, along with ID, proof of immigration status, and void cheque/direct deposit slip were uploaded to the WoodGreen system after verifying the SIN number.

Performance & Data Management Systems: Excel tracking sheets were created by the program coordinator. They included the Interest Tracking Sheet for tracking activity with leads, the Program Tracking Sheet (Screening & Registration) for screening leads, registering clients/adding them to the waiting list, and tracking activities/tasks completed with clients throughout the program, and the Program Stats Sheet for tracking various program stats.

Mid-Program Activities:

Class Structure, Duration, and Capacity: The classes were scheduled at different WoodGreen locations to reach a wide range of demographics. The program spanned four weeks, with Mondays designated as at-home study days. Class days, in-person or online, were scheduled from Tuesday to Friday. The usual capacity for each cohort was 18-20 participants.

Logistical Support: Logistical support during the program included various provisions such as TTC tickets, a welcome package (binder, notebooks, pens, highlighters, sticky notes, earbuds), living support stipend, laptop loans, and in-class refreshments. Participants received TTC tickets after each class or in-person activity. Living support stipends were distributed in three deposits throughout the program. Laptops were loaned at the start and returned on the last day, with a documented tracking process. In-class refreshments, including coffee, tea, and cookies, were contributed in-kind from unrestricted funding at WoodGreen, and amenities like masks and hand sanitizer were consistently available.

Teaching & Delivery Method: The program was delivered through onsite and online

sessions, with approximately 13 in-person and three online sessions. Classes ran from 10 am to 4 pm with one-hour lunch breaks.

Post-Program Activities:

CRM (Client Relationship Management) Database Client Updates: ECCs used a Client Relationship Management application to record comprehensive participant information covering personal details, education, and program enrollment data etc. Client data was recorded in an organized way which included training, equipment, counselling, referrals, exit procedures, and post-program support. Case notes, documenting 1-1 counselling sessions, the 1-month post-program call, and referrals, were diligently updated. Key documents, such as the program agreement, registration, privacy consent, final resume, and cover letter, were uploaded.

Life Stability in the Labour Market: ECCs conducted one-to-one check-in calls one month after program completion to assess participants' progress toward post-program goals. Referral success to employment services was evaluated, with collaborative problem-solving for unsuccessful cases. ECCs identified the need for additional services, like mental health or housing support, making referrals, and connecting participants to available resources as required.

Tracking Program Stats: The Program Stats Sheet served as a comprehensive tool for monitoring various metrics throughout the program. In this Excel sheet, key data points included: new leads, # of screened leads (all cohorts), registration numbers per cohort, waitlist figures, attendance at info sessions (created and regularly updated by the Program Coordinator), completion numbers for each cohort, total participants, TTC tickets distributed, laptops loaned & returned, job placements, referrals to employment services, participants sent to Paragon Security Training, racialized participant count, guest lecture bookings (including topics), and attendance details (# of participants, any lates/absences).

2.1.4.3.3. Training and Courses Curriculum

Our curriculum stands as a testament to WoodGreen commitment to holistic learning. It strikes a balance with an array of topics, hands-on exercises, interactive learning circles, and content tailored to nurture all the skills outlined in the SFS.

Curriculum Design & Development Process

SFS Model Outcome Mapping: In the initial training outline, WoodGreen cross-referenced the Older Workers Initiative (OWI) curriculum with the SFS model to address the connections between related program outcomes, program content/activities, and corresponding SFS skills.

Going forward, and in the retrospective analysis of the SSEW curriculum, it is evident that 53% of the topics were strategically designed to enhance foundational skills, while the remaining 47% were dedicated to bolstering transferable skills. This meticulous distribution of topic weight aligns with the program’s objective of providing a balanced and comprehensive learning experience for participants.

The detailed breakdown of the topic weight distribution across the nine skills is visually represented in the accompanying diagram, offering a clear visualization of the curriculum’s emphasis on foundational and transferable skills. This approach not only underscores the program’s commitment to addressing the diverse needs of participants but also reflects the deliberate effort to equip them with a well-rounded skill set for success in the workforce.

Curriculum Topics & Materials Coverage:

The curriculum encompasses a comprehensive array of training modules, each designed to address specific facets of professional development. A breakdown of these modules and the topics covered was as follows:

- Job Readiness: resume, cover letter, interview skills, LinkedIn, networking, business communication, employer engagement, online job search,

FIGURE 1: WOODGREEN SSEW PROGRAM MODEL



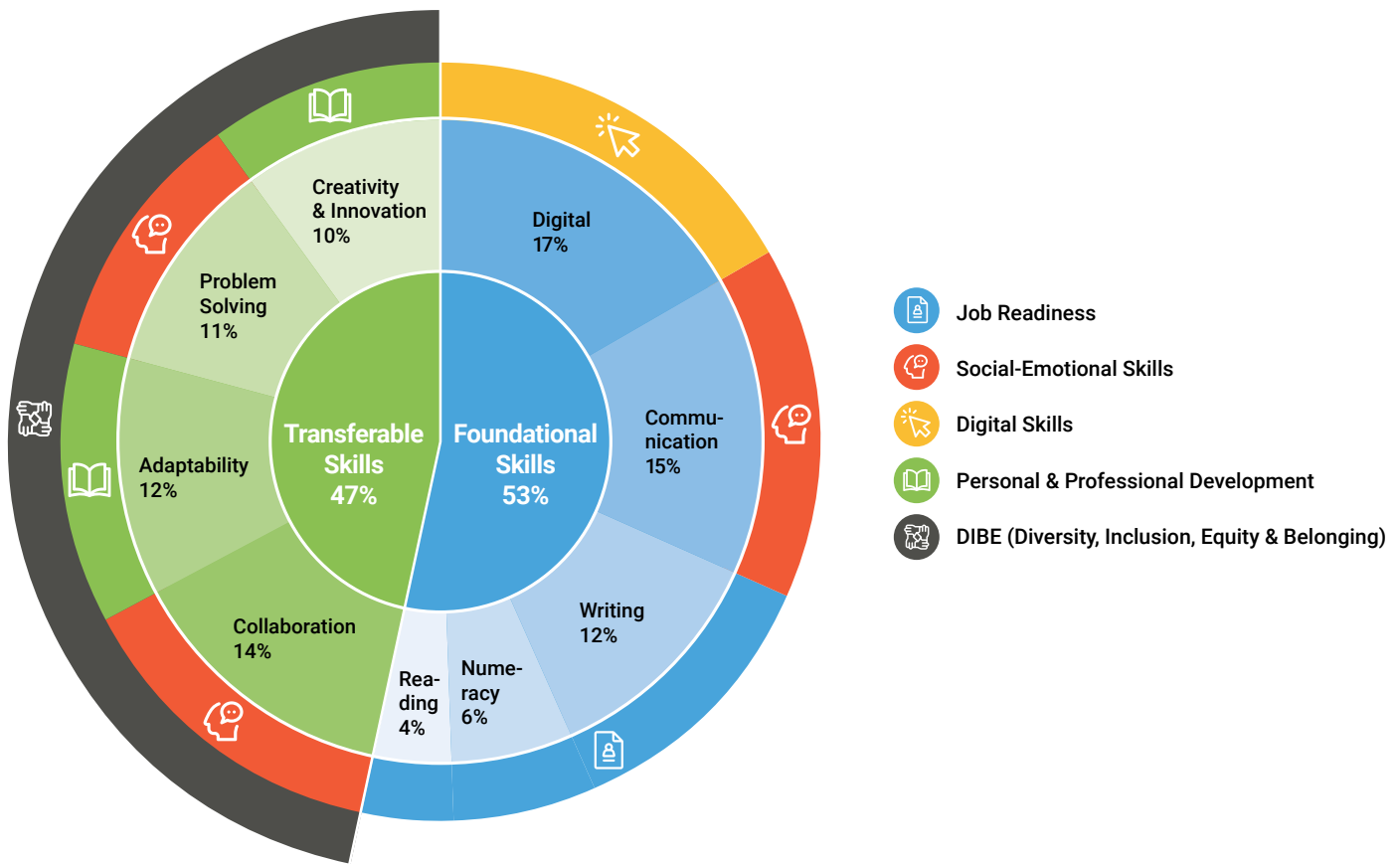
- workplace success strategies.
- Digital Skills: computer basics, Internet, Microsoft Word, Excel, email basics, Outlook, OneDrive, Teams, web browser, LinkedIn Learning.
- Social-emotional Skills: communication, collaboration, problem-solving, social awareness, confidence, leadership, conflict management, relationship building, stress management, emotional intelligence.
- DIBE (Diversity, Inclusion, Equity & Belonging): building spaces of trust and acceptance, inclusive language, respect for others, intersectional identities, systemic chatter and counter strategies, cultural competencies, creating a culture of equity and inclusion.

- Personal and Professional Development: leadership, mentorship, networking skill, time management, adaptability (growth mindset, goal setting, resilience), self-care (physical and mental well-being), creativity and innovation, self-reflection, mindfulness.

Curriculum Assessment & Improvement Methodology

1 *Stakeholder Involvement:* Stakeholder engagement was pivotal for effective curriculum development. Facilitators contribute teaching insights, while clients provide feedback on relevance through surveys. Advisory committee members engaged in discussions and surveys, ensuring comprehensive perspectives. Support staff played a crucial role in aligning the curriculum with institutional

FIGURE 2: CURRICULUM FOCUS: A STRATEGIC DISTRIBUTION OF TOPICS FOR SKILLS IN SSEW TRAINING



goals and overseeing successful implementation.

2 Alignment with Funder Attributes:
Adherence to the funding agreement was paramount. Regular evaluations ensured the curriculum aligned with specified skill development objectives, meeting the terms outlined in the funding contract.

Implementation Approach (Binders)

WoodGreen implementation approach offered clients both digital and physical curriculum binders, catering to diverse learning preferences. The dual provision ensured accessibility, with digital copies for online access and physical binders for tangible resources. The binders, containing printouts and handouts, aimed to accommodate varied learning styles and technological accessibility.

2.1.4.3.4. Training Delivery & Facilitation Methods

The training program was distinguished by facilitators with a tailored training style and approach, ensuring a safe space for participants to engage fully. However, recognizing diverse learning preferences, WoodGreen employed methods that stimulated various learning modes, catering to visual, auditory, and other learning styles among WoodGreen participants. Finally, the curriculum incorporated a dynamic mix of teaching methods, including engaging lectures, insightful guest speakers, and thought-provoking case studies.

Facilitation, Training style and Approach

As a facilitator the key role was fostering a positive classroom environment which

helped participants feel safe and motivated with routines and options for learning styles. A safe space was created where they could take risks, ask questions, speak about their challenges, and work it out by themselves by providing options and choices.

- **Safe Space:** Creating an inclusive safe environment respecting the diversity of the participants and the diversity of their learning needs and their transition journey.
- **Learner Centered Pedagogy:** Crafting a learner centered approach by treating them as the co-creators of the learning loop.
- **Teaching Style:** Recognizing the different learning styles and integrating them in the sessions.
- **Assessment:** To evaluate learner satisfaction after each session, formative

assessments through observation and feedback were used every day.

Participants Learning Method

Learners take in and process information in diverse ways: by seeing and hearing, reflecting and acting, reasoning logically and intuitively, analyzing and visualizing, steadily and in fits and starts. Teaching methods varied based on student learning styles.

Teaching & Delivery Method

Active learning requires participants to do meaningful learning activities and think about what they were doing. It also includes regular feedback to reflect on learning. Topic review in the SSEW program included:

- *use of interactive instruction, guest speakers' lectures, interactive group discussions, small group work, case studies, integration of technology, break out rooms, graphic organizers.*

2.1.5. Target Population

The program's recruitment criteria were stringent to ensure WoodGreen served those who could benefit the most. Participants were required to possess legal status in Canada including Canadian Citizen, Permanent Resident or Convention Refugee status and be above 45 years old. A special emphasis was placed on supporting racialized older job seekers who reside within the Toronto region. Whether underemployed or unemployed, WoodGreen's focus remained on empowering this specific demographic and understanding the unique challenges they face to enter the job market.

2.1.6. Stakeholders

Our program operated within a vast network of engagements, which included both internal and external stakeholders. Internally, WoodGreen participants, staff, and other departments within WoodGreen played vital roles (e.g., Marketing & Communication department, Employment Services, People & Culture, IT, Finance.).

Externally, WoodGreen has fostered partnerships with entities like Retail

Council of Canada, Paragon Security and PTP Adult Learning Agency, and routinely engaged with three committees (Employer Advisory Committee, Organization Advisory Committee, Experienced Workers' Advisory Committee) that were established to serve as sounding boards, with members appointed to provide consultation for the delivery of the SSEW program. Finally, diverse guest speakers attended to provide their expertise and perspectives.

Those stakeholders, both within and outside WoodGreen organizational structure, were foundational to the program's functionality and continuous improvement.

2.2. LOGIC MODEL

2.2.1. Logic Model Narratives

Every stage of the SSEW program had a clear narrative, connecting needs with actions and desired outcomes. The driving force behind the SSEW program was not solely focused on individual participants. WoodGreen recognized the dual-pronged impact of its efforts, addressing the needs and potential of two key groups: the participants who underwent the SSEW training and the potential employers looking for skilled and dynamic candidates.

Activities:

SSEW integrated the Skills for Success model into a mix of diverse activities, each meticulously crafted to support the older worker in the job market. Through outreach activities, WoodGreen tapped into a pool of potential candidates. Information sessions shed light on what the program entails, and the screening process, comprised of consultations and interviews, ensured WoodGreen enrolled the most suitable participants. With a blended learning model spanning over a month, participants engaged in both online and in-person learning. An important facet of the program was the socio-emotional support integrated into the activities. Mechanisms like peer interactions,

group discussions, provision of coffee and tea fostered a sense of community. The SSEW curriculum, based on ESDC's Skills for Success Model, placed a special emphasis on Digital Skills. Furthermore, individualized employment counseling, continuous feedback loops, and employer-centric curriculum development, bolstered by regular team communications and market research, formed the backbone of the training program.

Immediate Outputs:

The success of WoodGreen's SSEW program can be gauged through a variety of immediate outputs post-implementation. Metrics included the number of informational sessions organized, applications received, participants selected, and their program completion rates. Distinct data points, like those directed to Employment Ontario or those pursuing further training, provided insight into participants' pathways. Additionally, the collaborative engagements with employers and a myriad of knowledge products, ranging from marketing materials, lesson plans, to research and evaluation reports, encapsulated the breadth of the training immediate outcomes.

Midterm Outcomes:

By the end of each cohort, WoodGreen's anticipated discernible shifts in participants' confidence levels. WoodGreen's efforts aimed to enhance foundational and transferable skills, enabling participants to become valuable assets to potential employers. The program's mission was twofold: to equip participants with the knowledge and tools to identify and seize appropriate employment opportunities, and to provide employers with candidates whose expertise aligns with in-demand roles. Additionally, a noticeable uptick in the number of participants seeking advanced education and training serve as a testament to the program's influence.

Long-term Impact:

Beyond immediate and midterm results, there are long-term reverberations of the SSEW program. At the heart of WoodGreen's endeavor is the ambition to elevate the overall

well-being and wellness of the participants. WoodGreen envisioned a future where they not only thrived in their professional spheres but also enjoyed a holistic sense of contentment. Concurrently, the SSEW program aspires to be a beacon for employers and organizations. By furnishing them with an array of resources, WoodGreen aimed to embed the program’s principles and practices in their institutional frameworks, magnifying WoodGreen’s impact manifold.

2.3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORKS

WoodGreen’s SSEW program effectively follows a performance management system that incorporates a variety of frameworks for both externally and internally.

Externally, WoodGreen information was enriched through:

- *Best Practices’ Methodology*, utilizing program evaluation and performance management benchmarks as guidelines for detailed assessment.
- *Secondary Desktop Research Methodology*, thoroughly reviewing the Older Worker Initiative program and other literature materials from the funder.
- *Participatory Discussions Methodology* ensured a community-centric approach, collecting opinions and feedback from community members through focus groups, surveys, and discussions.

Internally, the SSEW program taps into:

- *Observations’ Methodology*, gathering insights from the screening process and conducting internal process mapping for a comprehensive understanding.
- *Appreciative Inquiry Methodology* was employed to foster participant engagement and self-assessment, eliciting feedback from training attendees.

2.3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION STRATEGY

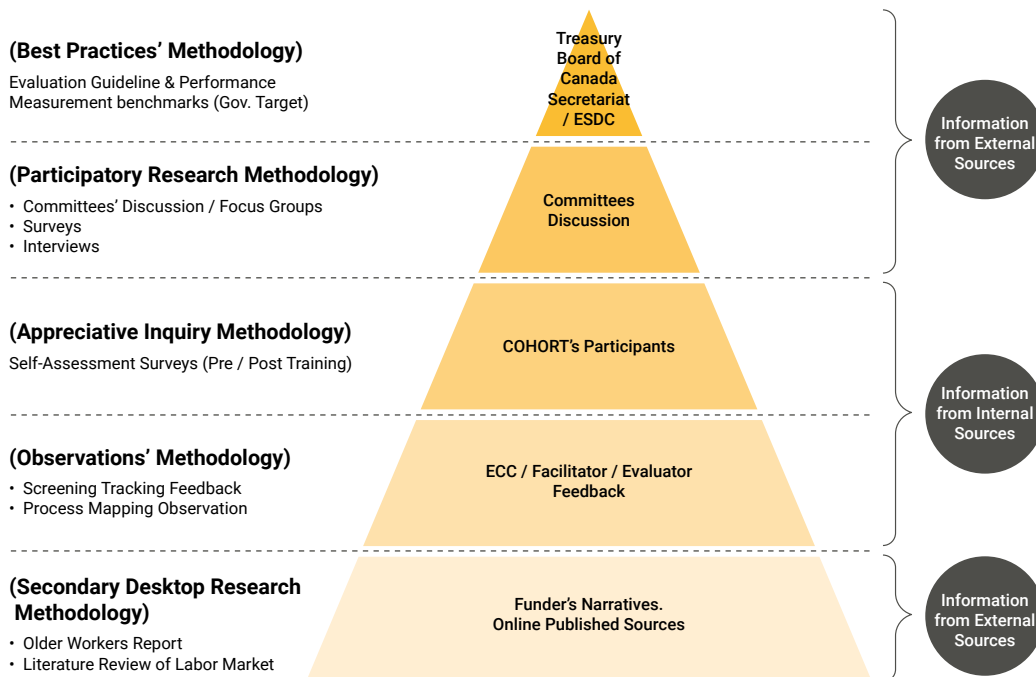
2.3.1. Description of Key Performance Indicators

WoodGreen was unwavering in its commitment to evaluation credibility, following the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat’s Guide to Developing Performance Measurement Strategies. This guide, mandated by the Policy on Evaluation, serves as WoodGreen’s comprehensive reference, aligning the evaluation efforts with recognized best practices. By embracing key terms and definitions outlined by the Secretariat.

The program OKRs (Objective Key Results) were defined as per the glossary section of the Secretariat guide which informs WoodGreen’s decision making processes throughout the program:

- *Relevance*: is the extent to which a program addresses a demonstrable need, is appropriate to the federal government

FIGURE 3: SOURCES OF DATA AND INFORMATION



and is responsive to the needs of Canadians.

- *Effectiveness*: is the extent to which a program is achieving expected outcomes.
- *Efficiency*: is the extent to which resources are used such that a greater level of output is produced with the same level of input, or a lower level of input is used to produce the same level of output. The level of input and output could be increased in quantity or quality, decreases in quantity or quality, or both.
- *Economy*: means minimizing the use of resources. Economy is achieved when the cost of resources used approximates the minimum amount of resources needed to achieve expected results.

Program impact was measured through tailored indicators. Relevance included demand rate and alignment with target needs. Effectiveness gauged skill improvements, wellness, and further education. Efficiency assessed participant satisfaction, optimizing resource use. Economic aspects ensured cost-effectiveness. For details, refer to the diagram below.

The above KPIs deliver on the above four evaluation aspects through a series of daily and weekly tasks that formed the program outputs, which consequently led to the achievement of the program outcomes. To illustrate these outputs in practical terms, WoodGreen employed a *client journey framework* that supervised the various outputs generated throughout the engagement with participants.

The client journey reflected the progression from recruitment and screening to the delivery of the SSEW training, capturing outputs at each stage. This included the number of participants enrolled in the training, successfully completing the program, or those referred to other partners or programs.

FIGURE 4: PROGRAM'S EVALUATION DIMENSIONS

Relevance KPIs	The participants' reaction to the program before / after enrolment & participation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Demand – As a result of Outreach activities. • Eligible Waitlist – Number of participants passed the Screening process & are in the waitlist. • Need fulfillment % – Realized benefits after the training using the Post-Program Survey. 	
Effectiveness KPIs	The participants' learning and change in behavior during and after the program.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Upgrade – Manifested through the improvement rate of participants' confidence rate. • Educational Upgrade – Manifested through participants' willingness to pursue further education. • Employment Readiness – Manifested through the application of employment tools (Goals, Resume, Etc.). • Wellbeing – Manifested through the application of wellness habits. 	
Efficiency KPIs	The reaction to the quality of the training delivery after the program.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfaction rate – Shown through qualitative feedback and quantitative satisfaction rate to the program implementation. • Recommendation rate – Realized by the clients' willingness to recommend the program to their social network. 	
Economy KPIs	The use of resources & cost throughout the program to achieve the program targets.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The achievement of the program numerical targets. • The compliance to the approved budget. 	

FIGURE 5: SSEW HIGH-LEVEL WORKFLOW DIAGRAM

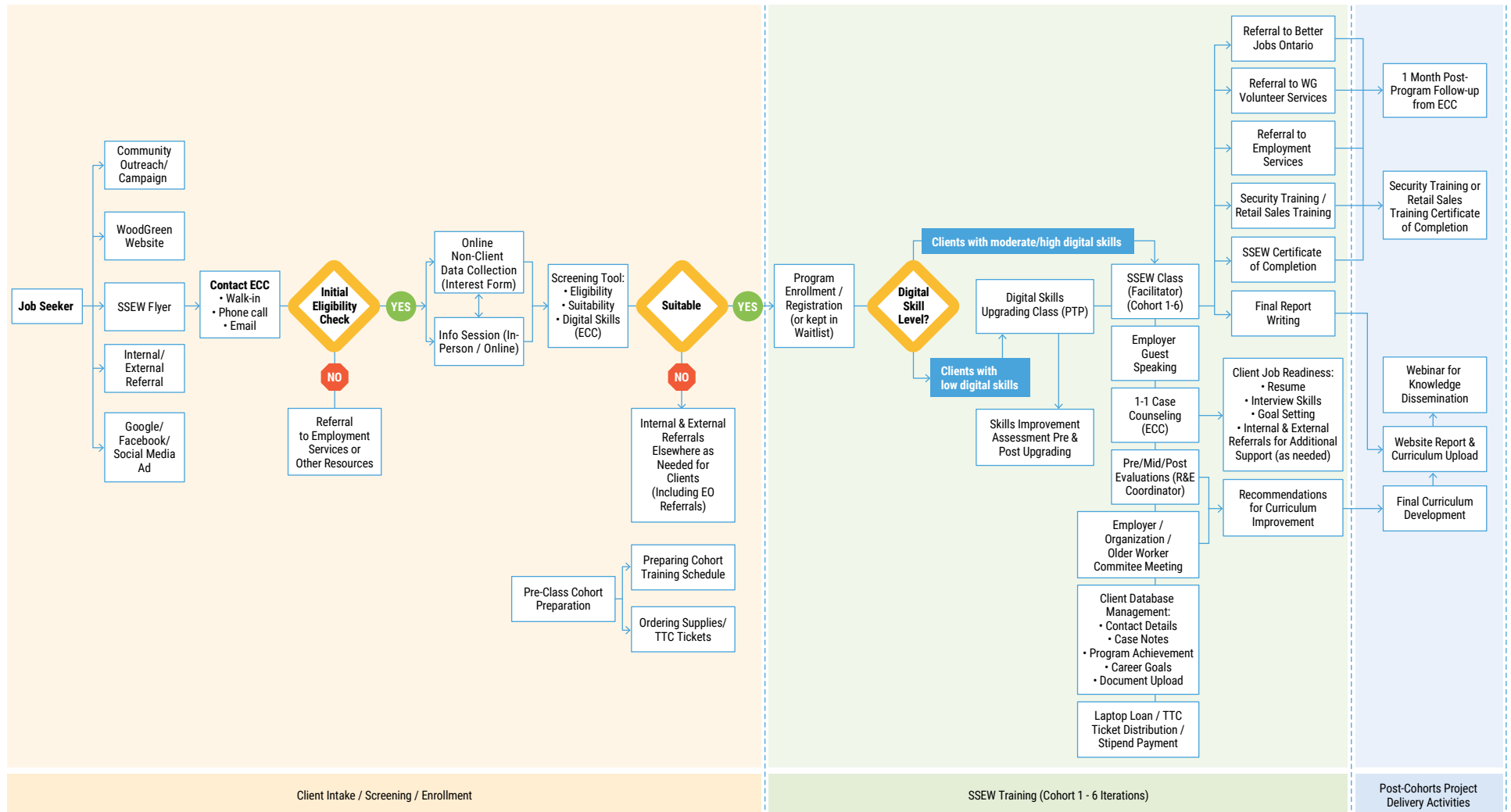


FIGURE 6: THE KIRKPATRICK MODEL FOUR LEVEL CRITERIA



2.3.2. The Outcomes Through the Kirkpatrick Training Evaluation Model

The Kirkpatrick Training Evaluation Model has four levels that progressively assess a training program's impact and effectiveness. The levels are as follows:

Level 1 – Reaction: Measures participants' immediate reactions and responses to the training. Evaluates the perceived usefulness, relevance, and satisfaction of participants.

Level 2 – Learning: Assesses the extent to which participants acquired new knowledge and skills during the training. It focuses on the improvement of participants' understanding and proficiency.

Level 3 – Behavior: Examines the extent to which participants apply the acquired knowledge and skills in their actual work environment. It evaluates behavioral changes and the integration of new practices.

Level 4 – Results: Measures the overall impact of the training on organizational goals and objectives. It assesses the tangible outcomes and contributions of the training program.

WoodGreen recognizes The Kirkpatrick Model as the optimal framework for assessing the effectiveness of the Skills for Success for Experienced Workers training, given its ability to align with the objectives, outcome and KPIs of the program in the following manner:

Outcome 1: Improve foundational skills + transferable skills + workplace preparedness among participants.

- **Kirkpatrick Level:** Level 2 (Learning) and Level 3 (Behavior)
- **Explanation:** The improvement of foundational and transferable skills can be measured at the learning level (Level 2) through assessments and skill-based surveys. The application of these skills in the workplace, indicating behavior change (workplace preparedness), aligns with Level 3.

Outcome 2: Increase the number of participants pursuing further education.

- **Kirkpatrick Level:** Level 3 (Behavior) and Level 4 (Results)
- **Explanation:** The ultimate outcome of participants pursuing further education was a result that can be measured at Level 3 & 4. This level assesses the impact of the training on participants' long-term behavior, which, in this case, was their decision to pursue additional education.

Outcome 3: Improve wellness & well-being among participants.

- **Kirkpatrick Level:** Level 2 (Learning) and Level 3 (Behavior) and Level 4 (Results)
- **Explanation:** Assessing the participants' understanding of wellness strategies and observing their application of these

strategies in their lives aligns with Level 2, 3 and Level 4 of the Kirkpatrick model.

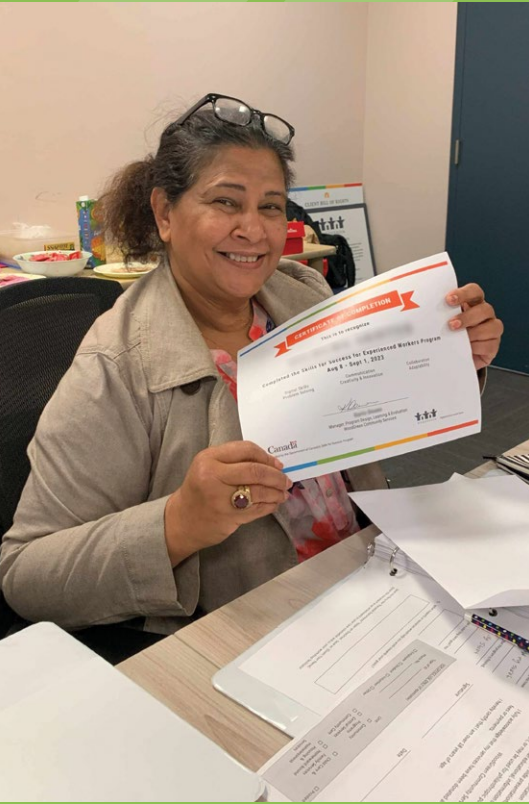
Outcome 4: Increase access to resources for organizations & employers to use in program delivery in their own organization.

- **Kirkpatrick Level:** Level 4 (Results)
- **Explanation:** The increased access to resources (e.g., sharing the course curriculum, Webinar sessions etc.) for organizations and employers represents a result that can be measured at Level 4. This level evaluates the broader impact and changes in the organizational environment resulting from the training program.

On the other hand, the successful achievement of the training delivery collectively embodies the exceptional service delivery of the Skills for Success training. This can also be mapped with and explained through the Kirkpatrick model:

Objective 1: Deliver a satisfactory training Experience

- **Kirkpatrick Level:** Level 1 (Reaction) and Level 3 (Behavior)
- **Explanation:** Participant satisfaction with the training delivery can be measured at Level 1 through surveys and feedback. The continuous satisfaction throughout the program indicates behavioral change (engagement, attendance, active participation), aligning with Level 3



“I have spoken about the program to a number of individuals. It has improved and broadened my vision overall.”

– Cohort 5 Participant

Objective 2: Fulfill the participant needs to cope with the job market demand

- **Kirkpatrick Level:** Level 2 (Learning) and Level 3 (Behavior)
- **Explanation:** The fulfillment of participant needs can be assessed at the learning level (Level 2) by evaluating the acquisition of skills and knowledge. The behavioral change, demonstrated by participants applying these skills to cope with job market demands, aligns with Level 3.

Objective 3: Recommend the SSEW program to the participant’s social network

- **Kirkpatrick Level:** Level 4 (Results)
- **Explanation:** Participants recommending the program to their social network represents a result that can be measured at Level 4. This level assesses the broader impact and the participants’ advocacy for the program within their community, indicating the success and effectiveness of the training.

2.3.3.2. Data Storage and Management System

In managing the Skills for Success for Experienced Workers (SSEW) program, WoodGreen meticulously outlined key outcomes, KPIs, and associated outputs to ensure a comprehensive evaluation. To effectively manage and control the quality of data, WoodGreen employed a robust data management system. This involved utilizing various data sources such as participant assessments, program observation reports, surveys, and collaboration logs. Regular data updates ensured ongoing participant engagement, and program activities were accurately reflected.

A comparative analysis against predefined targets and baselines helped track progress, with continuous monitoring and periodic evaluations. The internal database system at WoodGreen served as a reliable application for secure and organized data storage, enabling a systematic and comprehensive approach to program evaluation.

2.3.3. Data Collection, Processing and Management System

2.3.3.1. Data Collection

Quantitative Indicators:

While qualitative indicators capture the essence, quantitative metrics lend realistic weight to WoodGreen’s program impact. Through periodic surveys and feedback mechanisms, WoodGreen gauged the extent to which the program aligned with participants’ needs.

Qualitative Indicators:

Performance assessment is not merely tethered to numbers; the qualitative indicators provide a lens to perceive these nuanced shifts. Through open-ended questions, focus groups, and feedback loops, WoodGreen ensured the curriculum remained relevant, aiding participants in their journey of skill acquisition and personal growth.

The data management system defined roles and responsibilities as part of WoodGreen’s data governance system. It is important to note that baseline and target information was only available for numerical milestones determined by ESDC in its agreement with WoodGreen. For the remaining KPIs, there was neither a baseline nor a target, given that this was the first skilled training program launched, signifying a unique and pioneering initiative in which comprehensive evaluation frameworks were being established for the first time.

FIGURE 7: DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Evaluation Level	Evaluation Measures / Outcomes	Description	Indicator	Data Source	Frequency	Date to Achieve Target	Position Responsible for Data Collection	Data management system
Program Impact	Effectiveness	Outreach Effectiveness	Set of outputs	Quantitative Survey	Once Per Program	End of the Program	Outreach Coordinator	Microsoft Office (Excel - Forms)
		Training Effectiveness	Skills Upgrade %	Quantitative Survey	Twice/Month	Pre/Post Program (monthly)	Evaluation Coordinator	
	Efficiency	Process Efficiency	Set of outputs	Counselors' Feedback	Once Per Program	End of the Program	Program Coordinator	
		Enrollment KPIs	Set of outputs	Qualitative Analysis	Once Per Program	End of the Program	Program Coordinator	
	Relevance	Employment Readiness	Set of outputs	Counselors' Feedback	Once/Month	End of the Program	Evaluation Coordinator	
		Need Fulfilment	Satisfaction with Acquired Knowledge	Pre-Post Surveys	Once/Month	End of the Program	Evaluation Coordinator	
Program Outcomes	Improve foundational skills + transferable skills + workplace Preparedness	Skills Upgrade	Confidence Change %	Quantitative Survey	Twice/Month	End of each Cohort	Evaluation Coordinator	Microsoft Office (Excel - Forms)
	Increase number of participants pursuing further education.	Education Upgrade Intention (before/after)	Aggregation Rate %	Quantitative Survey	Twice/Month	End of each Cohort	Evaluation Coordinator	
	Improve wellness & wellbeing among participants	Application of wellbeing habits	Aggregation Rate %	Quantitative/Qualitative Survey	Twice/Month	End of each Cohort	Evaluation Coordinator	
	Increase access to resources for (organizations & employers)	Webinar	N/A	Zoom/Teams	Once Per Program	End of the Program	Program Supervisor	
Program Outputs	Outreach Effectiveness	Social Media Indicator	Online Impressions	Third Party	Once/Month	Before Each Cohort	Outreach Coordinator	Google Analytics
		Number of Interest forms received	# of forms	Survey	Once/Month	Before Each Cohort	Outreach Coordinator	MS Form
		Number of Information sessions held/viewed	# of attendees	Meeting Count	Twice/Month	Before Each Cohort	Outreach Coordinator	Zoom/Eventbrite
		Number of participants in information sessions	# of Headcount	Meeting Count	Twice/Month	Before Each Cohort	Outreach Coordinator	Zoom
		Number of Intake applications received	# of forms	Survey	Once/Month	Before Each Cohort	Program Coordinator	MS Form
	Process Efficiency	Number of screening consultation interviews	# of Headcount	Manual Process	Twice/Month	Before Each Cohort	Program Coordinator	MS Excel
		Number of Eligible Participants in the waiting list	# of Headcount	Manual Process	Once/Month	Before Each Cohort	Program Coordinator	MS Excel
		Number/type of resources & tech. provided	Units	Manual Process	Once/Month	Before Each Cohort	Program Coordinator	MS Excel
		Number of 1:1 counseling hours spent per client	Sessions	Manual Process	Twice/Month	Before Each Cohort	Program Coordinator	MS Excel
		Number of participants selected per cohort	# of Headcount	Manual Process	Once/Month	Before Each Cohort	Program Coordinator	MS Excel
		Attendance rates/cohort	# of Headcount	Manual Process	Daily	After Each Cohort	Program Coordinator	MS Excel
		Number of participants completed/Withdrawal	# of Headcount	Manual Process	Once/Month	After Each Cohort	Program Coordinator	MS Excel
	Employment Readiness	Application of employment tools (Resume, etc.)	% Rate	Survey	Twice/Month	After Each Cohort	Evaluation Coordinator	MS Excel
Service Delivery	End-Program Assessment	Overall Program Satisfaction	%	Quantitative Survey	Once/Month	End of the Program	Evaluation Coordinator	Microsoft Office (Excel - Forms)
		Recommendation	%	Quantitative Survey	Once/Month	End of the Program	Evaluation Coordinator	



2.3.3.3. Agile Performance Management Approach for Continuous Learning

WoodGreen proudly adopts an agile methodology in the management of the entire program, emphasizing continuous learning and adaptation within the same cohort and for future cohorts. This approach allows WoodGreen to remain responsive to evolving needs and challenges, ensuring that adjustments can be made swiftly to enhance program effectiveness.

By embracing an agile framework, WoodGreen demonstrates its commitment to iterative improvements, fostering a dynamic and flexible environment that values real-time feedback, learning, and the seamless incorporation of insights into ongoing and future program iterations.

This agile mindset underlines WoodGreen's dedication to maximizing the positive impact of the program and continually refining strategies for the benefit of participants and the broader community.

2.3.3.4. Core Evaluation & Measurement Issues

In WoodGreen's systematic approach to measuring the effectiveness of the SSEW (Skills for Success for Experienced Workers) program, WoodGreen has employed a methodical and evidence-based strategy. The key focus has been assessing the overall effectiveness and impact of the program on participants' foundational and transferable skills.

However, despite all best efforts, WoodGreen encountered a key challenge in the performance measurement journey. This significant challenge related to the task of scientifically assessing participants' proficiency for each of the 9 skills targeted by the SSEW program. The funder's guidelines prescribe beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels for most of the skills. WoodGreen's goal was to measure the baseline and the subsequent improvement in proficiency levels for each participant.

The issue's essence lies in the question: How can proficiency levels be assessed scientifically and neutrally? Participants might lean towards either refraining from assigning low ratings to themselves or inflating their skill levels to highlight advancement, potentially influencing the precision of the self-assessment.

To address this challenge, WoodGreen explored three potential solutions that were thoroughly examined below:

- **Utilizing Testing:**

Pros: Testing provides an objective and standardized measure of participants' proficiency levels, aligning with the funder's definitions. This method contributes to a systematic and comparable assessment.

Cons: The administration of exams may negatively impact participants' self-esteem, potentially affecting their engagement and achievement. Additionally, designing and implementing tests for multiple skills can be resource intensive.

- **Participant Self-Assessment Survey (Scale of 5):**

Pros: This approach allows for participant input, providing insights into their perception of skill proficiency. It was a cost-effective method that can be easily administered.

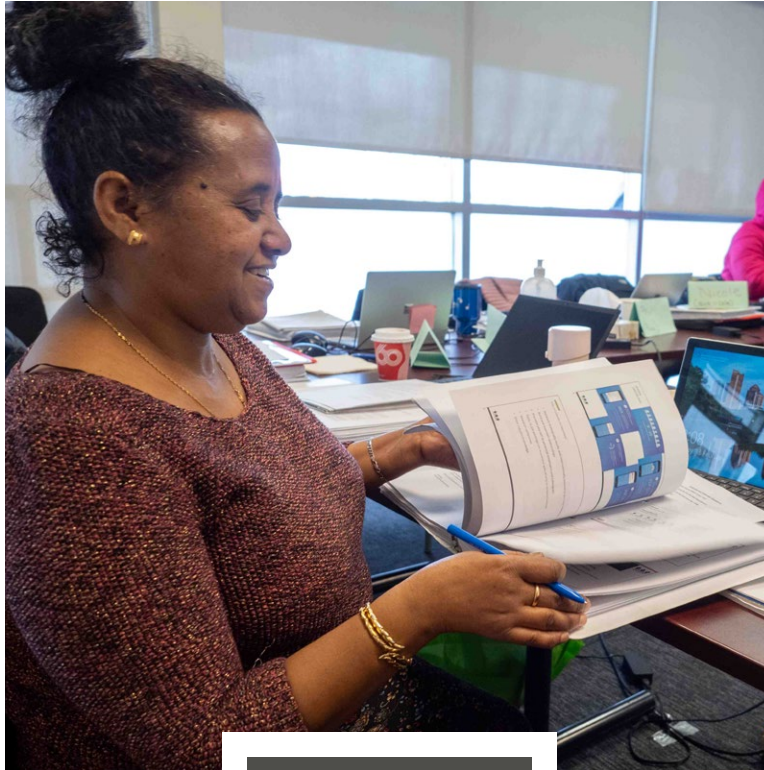
Cons: Participants may be inclined to either avoid rating themselves low or overrate their skills to project progress, impacting the self-assessment's accuracy. This method relies heavily on participants' self-awareness and honesty.

- **Case Counselor Assessment:**

Pros: Case Counselor assessments offer a more reliable and objective measure of participants' proficiency levels. Counselors, being actively involved, can provide informed judgments based on observed behaviors and performance.

Cons: This method can be resource-intensive, requiring the active involvement of case counselors in pre- and post-training assessments. The process may also be time-consuming and potentially expensive.

In summary, each method presents its own set of advantages and challenges. The choice between them should consider the balance between reliability, efficiency, participant engagement, and resource constraints.



CHAPTER 3

Training Results & Recommendations

3.1. SUCCESS STORIES / TESTIMONIALS

The SSEW program has been a transformative journey for many participants. The supportive community created in the class provided not just knowledge but a sense of belonging.

“This training provided the best thing which is community. For me, I was feeling very isolated, and my self-confidence was waning. Coming to class, meeting new people, being able to help classmates, all that made me feel connected to the world again and [has] given me courage to get back into the job search market ASAP.”

- Program Participant

3.2. SATISFACTION WITH TRAINING DELIVERY

The satisfaction assessment of the training program employed a comprehensive approach, evaluating various criteria including the provision of free laptops, financial allowance & support, curriculum quality, stipends, venue suitability, hospitality, and the impact of guest speakers. This multifaceted assessment aimed to capture participants’ experiences across different dimensions, ensuring a thorough understanding of the program’s strengths and areas for improvement.

The overall **satisfaction** results reflected a highly positive reception of the training program, with 96% of participants rating it as Excellent, Very Good, or Good.

Exploring specific aspects, it was noteworthy that, based on a small sample size (slightly less than 40 participants from cohort 4 & 5), a significant 72% of participants rated all facets of the SSEW program as “Excellent.” The primary contributors to this high

FIGURE 8: SATISFACTION SUMMARY

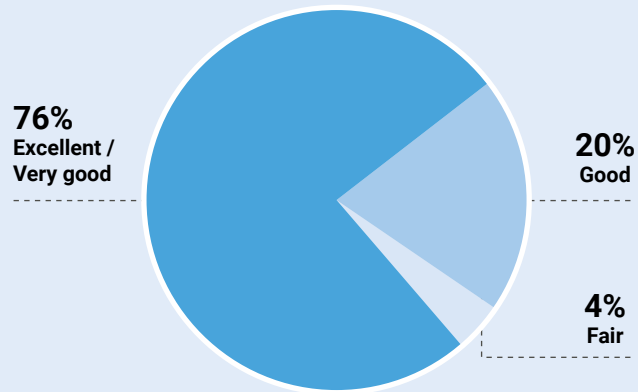


FIGURE 9: SATISFACTION CRITERIA

Satisfaction Criteria	Excellent	Satisfied	Needs improvement	Poor	Grand Total
The computer devices provided.	89%	7%	4%	0%	100%
The hospitality service (coffee, snacks, refreshments).	71%	18%	7%	4%	100%
The course topics.	64%	25%	11%	0%	100%
The training venue.	61%	21%	18%	0%	100%
The selections of guest speakers.	54%	32%	14%	0%	100%
The financial support	82%	12%	6%	0%	100%
Grand Total	69%	20%	10%	1%	100%

satisfaction level were the free provision of laptops (89%), financial allowance & stipend support (82%), and the quality of hospitality services (71%).

The **course curriculum** received an impressive satisfaction rate of 89%, as echoed in one participant’s testimonial:

“I learned the STAR interview technique to convey my story, mastered public speaking, honed my resume and cover letter writing skills, collaborated

effectively with classmates, and embraced both fixed and growth mindsets, among other valuable lessons.”

- Program Participant

Furthermore, an impressive 93% expressed their willingness to **recommend** the program to their social network, indicating a strong endorsement of the program’s value and impact among participants.



96%
of participants rated the training program as Excellent, Very Good, or Good.

3.3. TRAINING RESULTS

WoodGreen conscientiously recognizes and interprets the results of the Skills for Success (SSEW) program through The Kirkpatrick Model/Framework, acknowledging its efficacy in aligning with the program’s objectives, outcomes, and key performance indicators (KPIs). The comprehensive evaluation covers various facets of the program’s impact, illustrating improvements across foundational and transferable skills, workplace preparedness, and overall participant effectiveness.

It is essential to note that the behavioral aspect and long-term results exhibit less pronounced shifts. This observation was rooted in the program’s relatively short duration of four weeks, which limits the depth of behavioral changes that can be achieved. WoodGreen acknowledges that more substantial and enduring impacts may be realized through extended training periods, complemented by academic tools, and structured assessments, facilitating a more profound and lasting transformation for participants.

3.3.1. High Level Target Achievements

WoodGreen Community Services takes pride in surpassing the anticipated targets set for the Skills for Success (SSEW) program. The overwhelming demand for the program far exceeded initial expectations, underscoring the community’s recognition of the program’s value. Beyond the quantitative metrics, the program achieved remarkable success in enhancing participants’ **confidence** levels by an impressive 27%, surpassing the baseline expectations. These achievements reflect WoodGreen’s commitment to delivering impactful and transformative programs that exceed set targets as detailed below:

- ✓ Job seekers participate in training: 108 achieved vs. 106 target.
- ✓ Participants identify as part of a racialized population:

- 91 of the 108 participants were racialized vs 95 target.
- 84.26% achieved vs. 90% target.

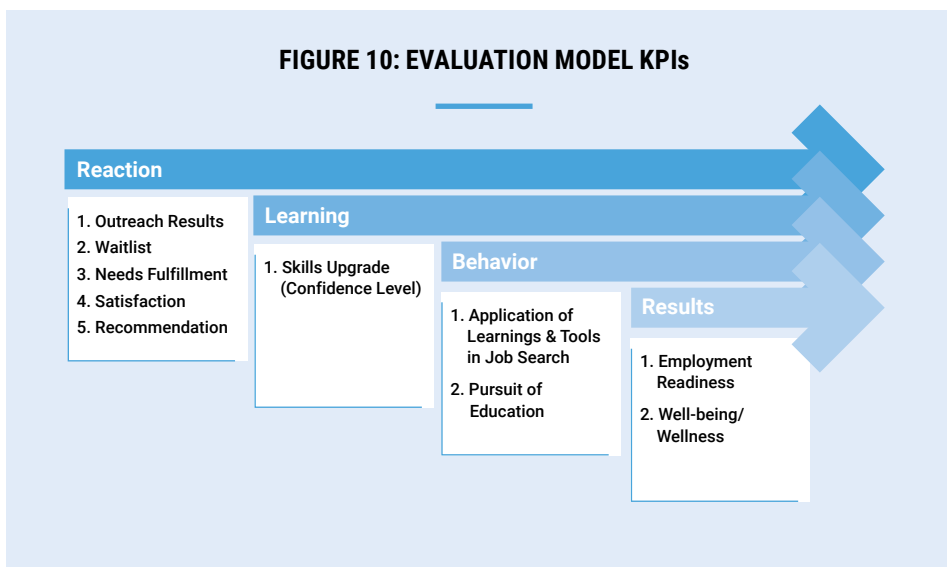
- ✓ Participants completed the training: 100% achieved vs 85% target.
- ✓ 6 Successful training and service delivery cohorts implemented: Achieved.
- ✓ 1 Skills for Success program curriculum made available to the public: Achieved
- ✓ 1 public facing project report with results, findings and lessons learned: Achieved
- ✓ 2 employers or employer organizations provide targeted skills training: Achieved
- ✓ Employer partners collaboratively contribute to the success of the training model for racialized older job seekers: 4 employers vs. 5 target.
- ✓ 2 organizations collaboratively contribute to the success of the training model for racialized older job seekers: Achieved.
- ✓ An annual report of aggregate data on individual demographics and outcomes: Achieved.

3.3.2. Participants’ Reaction to the Training. (Relevance & Efficiency Measures)

Participants’ reactions to the Skills for Success (SSEW) training were best encapsulated through five key performance indicators (KPIs), each offering a unique perspective on their experience:

- i. The **demand rate**, marked by the influx of 289 applications, reflects the program’s popularity and its perceived value within the community.
- ii. **The waitlist:** Over a year, WoodGreen targeted 106 trainees for its 4-week training program. There was limited capacity due to high demand. WoodGreen reserved 49 extra applications, representing 46% of the target. This indicates the program’s responsiveness to community needs.

FIGURE 10: EVALUATION MODEL KPIs



iii. Finally, The SSEW training surpassed **participants' needs & expectations**, with 31% confirmed acquiring a diverse skill set beneficial for their careers, while 30% and 26% specifically highlighted their fulfillment in gaining proficiency in core literacy skills and essential soft skills, respectively.

On the other hand, the participants' satisfaction to the Skills for Success (SSEW) delivery in class was compressed through two key performance indicators (KPIs):

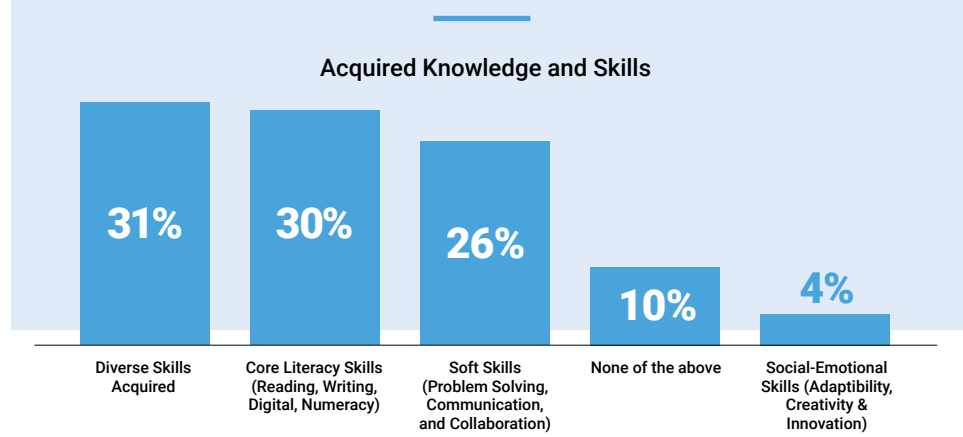
- iv. Overall **training delivery satisfaction** levels with participants was 96%, which expressed contentment with various aspects such as guest speakers, topics covered, venue, hospitality services, stipend, and financial allowance.
- v. The **recommendation rate** (93%) underscores the program's success, with participants expressing a willingness to endorse SSEW to their peers, affirming the positive impact of the training.

3.3.3. Learning and Behavioral Change (Effectiveness Measures)

Participants' learning and behavioral changes stemming from the Skills for Success (SSEW) training were captured through three key performance indicators (KPIs):

- i. **An increase in confidence levels across the 9 different skills:**
At the heart of the Skills for Success (SSEW) program's success lies in its commitment to enhancing both foundational and transferable skills among participants. The program achieved remarkable results, with an overall 27% increase in confidence levels observed across all nine skills throughout the five cohorts. Notably, foundational skills exhibited a robust improvement, recording a notable 33% increase, outpacing the 21% improvement in transferable skills. The outcomes of the SSEW program highlight distinct bundles of skill improvements, each with its unique trajectory:

FIGURE 11: SKILLS RELEVANCE TO PARTICIPANTS POST-TRAINING



- a. **The first bundle**, encompassing the foundational skills of Reading, Writing, Digital Literacy, and the transferable skills of Adaptability and Problem Solving, demonstrated remarkable progress with an average improvement of 39%. This substantial boost can be attributed to the dynamic in-class interactions and targeted training strategies.
- b. Moving to **the second bundle**, which includes Communication and Collaboration skills, WoodGreen observed a commendable average improvement of 18%. These gains were credited to engaging group assignments that fostered collaborative learning environments.
- c. Lastly, **the third bundle** encapsulates Numeracy and Creativity skills, exhibiting an average improvement of 11%. Recognizing the need for specialized academic exercises and case studies to achieve higher proficiency, WoodGreen has strategized future collaborations. Specifically, partnering with PTP, an Adult Learning & Employment Program agency, will provide additional support for eligible participants seeking to enhance their basic core literacy skills. This comprehensive approach reflects WoodGreen's commitment to addressing the diverse learning needs of participants and ensuring tailored support for continued skill development.

FIGURE 12: IMPROVEMENT IN CONFIDENCE ACROSS SKILLS

Overall Program Effectiveness in Improving Confidence %		27%	Ranking
Foundational Skills		33%	
A. Core Literacy Skills		38%	
Reading	49%	2	
Writing	52%	1	
Numeracy	14%	8	
B. Non-Core Literacy Skills		28%	
Communication	17%	7	
Digital	39%	3	
Transferable Skills		21%	
Collaboration	20%	6	
Adaptability	24%	5	
Creativity	9%	9	
Problem Solving	33%	4	

This nuanced difference can be attributed to the program’s unique operating model, emphasizing class readings and the utilization of technological tools for resume writing. The SSEW program continues to highlight its efficacy in shaping a well-rounded skill set, fostering confidence and proficiency among participants.

14%

Remarkably, 14% of initially hesitant participants, who did not perceive the need for educational upgrades, reconsidered their stance post-training.


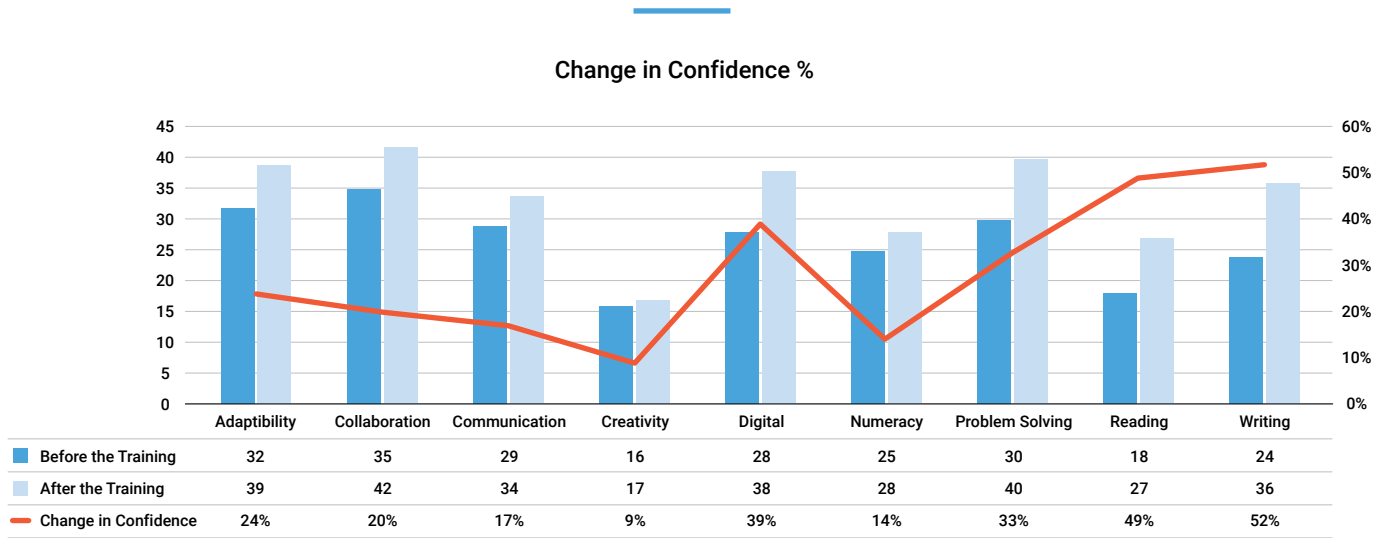


FIGURE 13: TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS AND SKILLS UPGRADE



The positive outcomes underscore the effectiveness of the program in enhancing various facets of participants’ abilities. However, it is noteworthy that the numerical and innovative skills exhibited comparatively lower increments. This observation was not a reflection of the SSEW program’s limitations but rather highlights the specific nature of these skills, which often require more intensive academic curriculum and case studies for comprehensive development. They were not the focus of the 4-week program.

ii. Reinforced willingness to pursue further education:

The intention to participate in educational upgrading was the seed toward future behavioral change and faster integration in the workforce. WoodGreen identified a notable shift in participants’ intentions

regarding further education, evidencing a 17% increase, particularly following the SSEW training.

Remarkably, 14% of initially hesitant participants, who did not perceive the need for educational upgrades, reconsidered their stance post-training. This shift reflects a meaningful change in mindset compared to their pre-training responses. Additionally, the rate of participants rejecting further education decreased to 4%, highlighting a positive shift from the initial 6% before the training. The SSEW program was not only instilling practical skills but also inspiring a renewed commitment to continuous learning among its participants.

iii. The practical application of the acquired tools during the job search journey:

Upon assessing the application of acquired knowledge among SSEW

program participants, two distinct categories emerge. First, the **“Responsive Participants”** were those individuals who, post-training, had confirmed possessing four or more essential tools for a successful job search. These six tools included (1) having a well-defined five-year goal, (2) a polished resume, (3) an active profile on a job search platform, (4) a growing professional network, and (5) the capability to fill in and submit job applications online, coupled with (6) interview readiness.

However, the second category was labeled as **“Participants who need support”** encompassing participants who show possession of three or fewer of the mentioned tools. This classification aids in recognizing participants’ readiness for the job market and strategically

guides WoodGreen in tailoring additional support to those who may require further assistance in certain aspects of their job search journey.

3.3.4. Long Term Well-being Indicators

WoodGreen’s approach to understanding the application and significance of well-being habits involved a two-phase process:

- In the initial phase, a broad assessment was conducted to gauge the frequency of applying general well-being habits. Participants were given options to assess their engagement with mental health strategies, interactions with peers, and seeking community support. This was applied on cohort 1,2,3.
- Following this, the second phase delved into more specific attributes of well-being practices. Derived from the Canadian Well-being Index survey, participants of cohort 4 and 5 were asked to evaluate their engagement in five key areas. These areas encompass applying healthy living habits to maintain mental health, leveraging personality strengths with a flexible mindset, utilizing government and community support during stressful times, engaging in occasional paid work, and pursuing self-study and skill development.

In analyzing the participants’ application of well-being tactics during the first phase (cohort 1, 2, 3), a noteworthy finding reveals that 83% of the frequency revolves around daily, weekly, and monthly practices. This was further broken down into 47% for

daily tactics, 24% for weekly routines, and 11% for monthly strategies. The emphasis on these short-term tactics underscores the importance participants placed on integrating wellness practices into their regular routines.

FIGURE 14: CHANGE IN WILLINGNESS TO PURSUE EDUCATIONAL UPGRADE

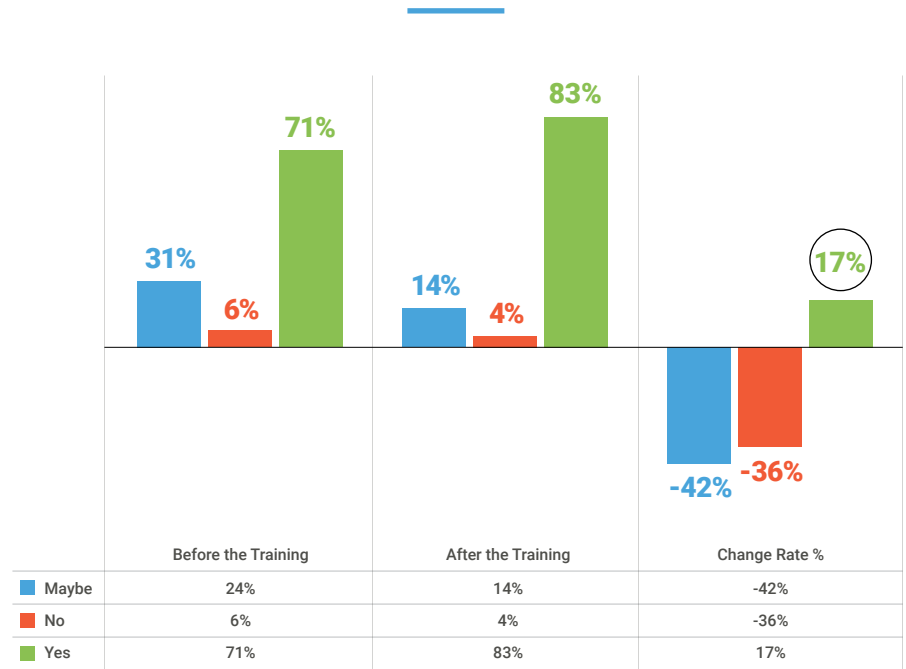


FIGURE 15: WELL-BEING BEHAVIORAL CHANGE - COHORTS 1, 2 AND 3

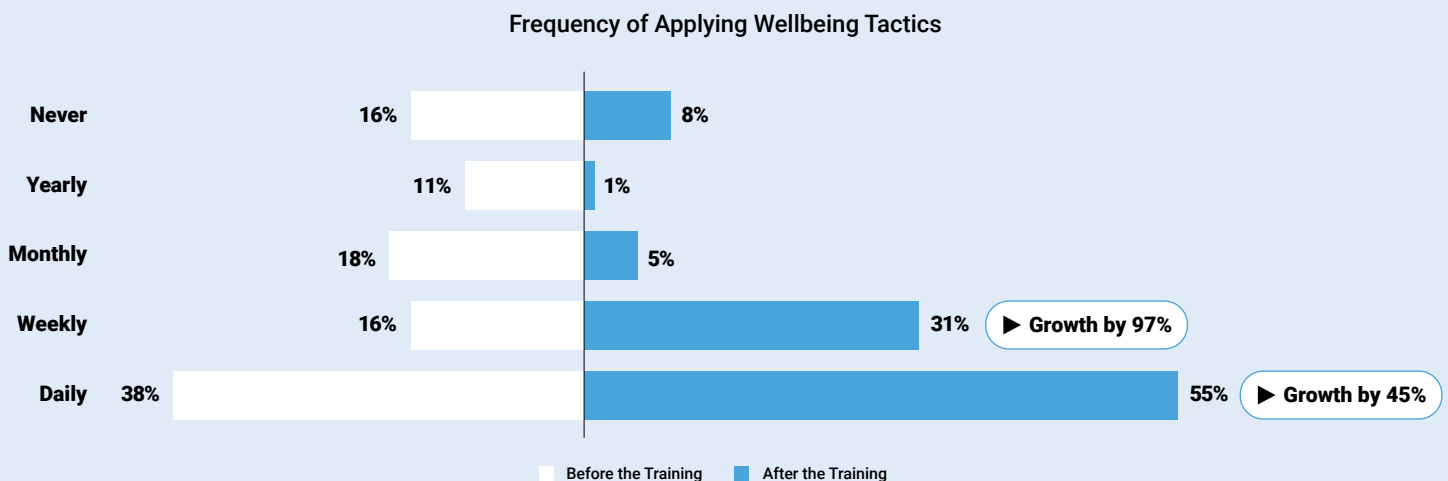


FIGURE 16: ADOPTION OF WELLNESS TACTICS BEFORE AND AFTER THE TRAINING

Wellbeing Tactics	Daily	Monthly	Never	Weekly	Yearly	Grand Total
Apply strategies to maintain your health	39%	22%	32%	29%	28%	33%
Interact with peers in a positive, supportive environment	41%	22%	13%	35%	28%	33%
Seek community supports and resources for support	20%	57%	55%	36%	44%	34%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Furthermore, the SSEW training has proven successful in shifting participants' mindsets towards prioritizing short-term wellness tactics. Post-training, 86% of participants actively applied well-being strategies on a daily and weekly basis, marking a substantial increase from the 54% engagement observed before the training. This translates to an impressive 71% growth in participants' dedication to incorporating wellness into their immediate lifestyle. A significant transformation was also observed in the segment of participants who rarely applied well-being tactics or did so yearly. This percentage, which initially stood at 28%, experienced a remarkable reduction to 9% after the SSEW training. This outcome signals a positive impact on participants' long-term commitment to their well-being, emphasizing the training's effectiveness in fostering sustained healthy practices.

Regardless of whether participants adopted well-being tactics before or after the SSEW training, a noticeable trend emerged in their habits. Social interaction played a dominant role in participants' daily routines, indicating its consistent importance in their lives. On the other hand, seeking community support emerged as a dominant aspect, but its frequency varied, being more

prevalent either on a weekly, monthly, or even annual basis.

On the second phase of assessing the application of pre-determined well-being practices, the results were mapped across the following five practices:

The application of three well-being tactics stands out prominently among participants, surpassing the utilization of the subsequent five wellness tactics. Participants indicated a higher frequency of engagement with the initial strategies: applying healthy living habits (30%), attending self-study courses, and seeking knowledge enhancement (23%), and recognizing and applying their personality strengths with flexible mindsets to adapt easily to changes (23%). These findings underscore the significance of daily habits, personal development, and adaptability in participants' overall well-being practices.

Over two cohorts, the assessment of participants' well-being practices revealed a remarkable 33% increase in their realization that utilizing resources and receiving government support serves as a key stress relief practice. This notable shift indicates the effectiveness of the SSEW training in fostering an awareness of available resources and support mechanisms for



“I have learned to use email better and the chat tool. I met some wonderful people, and I socialized, which I do not usually do because I have severe anxiety around people. I also plan to come in on my own time.”

– Participant, Cohort 1

stress management. Additionally, the training successfully influenced participants' mindsets, leading to a substantial 22% increase in their focus on understanding

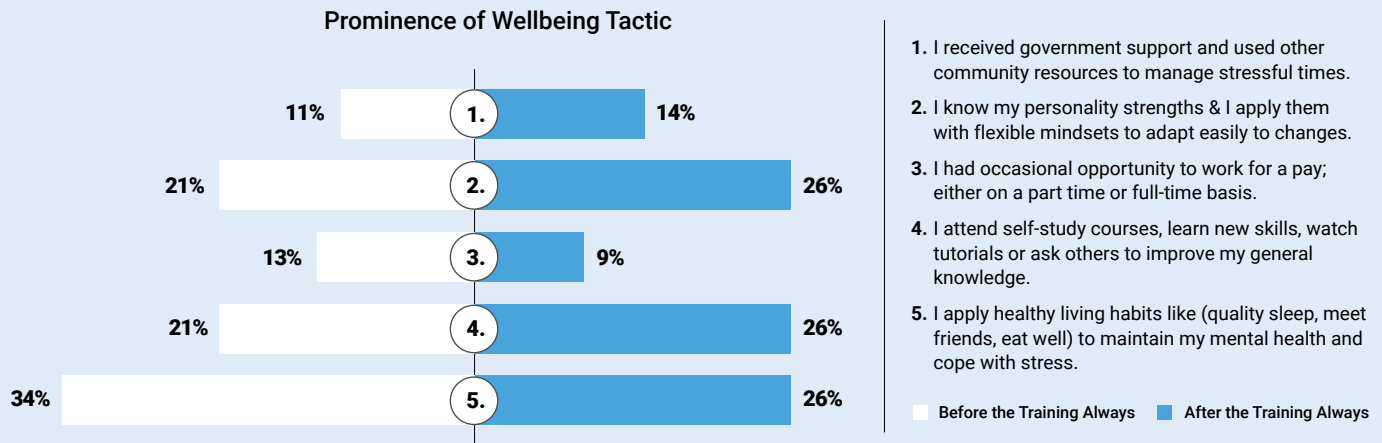
their strengths and prioritizing educational upgrades. The findings underscore the transformative impact of the SSEW program, not only in immediate stress relief strategies

but also in fostering a proactive approach toward personal growth and resilience among participants.

FIGURE 17: ADOPTION OF WELLNESS TACTICS BEFORE AND AFTER THE TRAINING

Wellbeing Tactics	Always	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Very frequently
I apply healthy living habits like (quality sleep, meet friends, eat well) to maintain my mental health and cope with stress.	30%	4%	11%	16%	23%
I attend self-study courses, learn new skills, watch tutorials or ask others to improve my general knowledge.	23%	16%	18%	20%	18%
I know my personality strengths & I apply them with flexible mindsets to adapt easily to changes.	23%	0%	4%	20%	28%
I received government support and used other community resources to manage stressful times.	12%	60%	32%	20%	11%
I had occasional opportunity to work for pay; either on a part time or full-time basis.	11%	20%	36%	23%	20%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

FIGURE 18: WELL-BEING BEHAVIORAL CHANGE - COHORTS 4 AND 5



3.4. LEARNINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The refinement and evolution of the SSEW training program were essential considerations for ensuring ongoing effectiveness and relevance. In shaping the future version of the program, valuable insights and recommendations will be drawn from two primary sources:

- *The participants who directly experienced the training:* By actively engaging with the

end recipients of the training, WoodGreen sought to capture firsthand perspectives on the program's strengths and areas for improvement, ensuring that their voices contribute significantly to the program's continuous enhancement.

- *The members of the three committees involved in program oversight:* Insights from the committees played a crucial role in the program's strategic decision-making and provided valuable institutional perspectives and strategic guidance.

This collaborative approach, involving both participants and committee members, aims to create a well-rounded and comprehensive foundation for refining and optimizing the SSEW training program.

3.4.1. Suggestions from Participants

Participants' valuable feedback, gathered through the post-training survey, served as a guiding compass for refining the SSEW program. The recommendations, intricately analyzed from 73 responses, illuminated key areas for enhancement:

- A predominant theme emerged with 45.21% of participants expressing a desire for more focused topics, that match the level of participants emphasizing the importance of tailoring content to specific needs (e.g., intensive MS Office and digital literacy, trending skills such as ChatGPT, networks & servers, HR assessment).
- Addressing logistical concerns resonated with 31.51% of respondents, underlining the significance of seamless program arrangements (e.g., training name to change from “Older Worker” to “Experienced Worker,” digital curriculum/binders, entrepreneurial guest speakers, etc.).
- Additionally, 13.70% advocated for an extended training duration, recognizing the benefits of a more immersive learning experience and further practice.
- Further insights included calls for additional practice (6.85%) (e.g., mock interviews, customizing resumes & templates, practicing excel features.).
- Requests for ESL “English as a Second Language” training (2.74%), further enriched WoodGreen’s understanding of participant preferences and aspirations for the program’s continuous improvement.

3.4.2. Recommendations from the Committees

WoodGreen’s commitment to refining the SSEW program extends beyond participant feedback. Through comprehensive interviews and focused group discussions with committee members, we have garnered valuable insights into the program’s strengths and areas for improvement. Therefore, 11 interviews and 2 focus groups were conducted. As a result, one clear gap and many recommendations were captured. The gap observed was that employers and organizations did not have written policies on Experienced Workers. It is mostly unwritten practice. Advocacy can be done to include this in the organization’s DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) pieces.

- Implemented Recommendations:
 - ✓ **Program Name Change:** The program name was successfully changed from “Older Workers” to “Mature or Experienced Worker,” aligning with the committee’s recommendation.
 - ✓ **Lifelong Learning Awareness:** The culture of self-investment and lifelong learning awareness was emphasized, aligning with the committee’s recommendation.
 - ✓ **Reviewing Job Postings:** The recommendation to educate participants on reviewing job postings was explored using different examples from diverse organizations.
 - ✓ **Long-Term Alumni Engagement:** A Facebook group and WhatsApp group were created to foster a long-term relationship among program alumni, as recommended by the committee.
 - ✓ **Healthy Living in Classes:** WoodGreen included healthy living habits, such as laughter yoga, healthy eating, and stretching exercises, as part of the program classes. It was mainly led by participants.
- Pending Recommendations Requiring different delivery design & implementation approaches:

- **Extended Program Duration:** Recognizing the importance of allowing participants to fully comprehend the curriculum, the program duration needs to be adjusted from 4 to 6 weeks, with 2 extra weeks for digital literacy, so a total of 8 weeks (about 2 months) for each cohort.
- **Portfolio Inclusion:** Teaching candidates how to create and include various documents in a portfolio, as recommended by the committee, will be explored for future implementation.
- **Curriculum Related Recommendations:** These recommendations emphasized the inclusion of different topics for future implementation.

- **Computer Skills Enhancement:** Further details on MS Suite programs, networks, servers, and artificial intelligence were suggested to be incorporated into the curriculum.
- **Financial Wage Components:** A clear understanding of financial wage components, including CPP (Canada Pension Plan), employment insurance, and pay stubs, **was recommended to be further integrated into the curriculum.**
- **Additional Topics:** Topics such as *Body Language* during interviews, *Budgeting*, *Money Management*, *Listening Skills*, *Emotional Intelligence*, and dealing with younger employees will be considered for future inclusion.

WoodGreen’s proactive approach in implementing key recommendations demonstrates its commitment to adapting the SSEW program based on real-time feedback and participant needs. The ongoing efforts signify WoodGreen’s dedication to delivering a responsive and impactful training program.





WoodGreen's SSEW Program Model prioritized a continuous monitoring and improvement mechanism, emphasizing integration of key concepts through a spiral curriculum.

3.4.3. Conclusion

In the comprehensive evaluation of the Skills for Success for Experienced Worker (SSEW) program, notable achievements were realized in skills enhancement, well-being outcomes, and the positive training outputs. The program's success can be attributed to the curriculum's robust implementation model and operational excellence in training delivery. Also, the deliberate creation of a healthy learning environment grounded in Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Equity (DIBE) principles exemplifies WoodGreen's dedication to ensuring peer support and a nurturing atmosphere, contributing to the overall success of the SSEW curriculum.

WoodGreen's SSEW Program Model prioritized a continuous monitoring and improvement mechanism, emphasizing

integration of key concepts through a spiral curriculum. This ensured that each revisit to the subject matter reinforced and solidified information. The commitment was directed at cultivating job readiness, improving well-being, and fostering community integration. By seamlessly weaving social-emotional skills, digital competency, and personal and professional development together, the curriculum offered a comprehensive, interconnected learning experience. This intentional integration prepared participants for immediate job requirements while fostering long-term community engagement.

In addition, WoodGreen sought research-specific knowledge to inform the teaching of skills for adult participants and contributed to the broader educational community's knowledge base. While the decision to share the curriculum publicly demonstrated

WoodGreen's commitment to collaborative learning, a noteworthy recommendation from the funder is essential to provide evidence-based insights for future scientific approaches in assessing and teaching specific skill sets.

In terms of program delivery, many strategic improvements have been identified. However, a key recommendation advocates for extending the program duration to 8 weeks (about 2 months) for comprehensive skill acquisition, which includes a two-week module dedicated to focused *Digital Literacy*.

Additionally, the introduction of post-program employment support counseling for two months reflects a strategic approach to securing employment opportunities and ensuring sustained life stability and participant well-being.

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