

WORKSHOP

An Inter-Sectoral Approach to Improving Health Literacy For Canadians

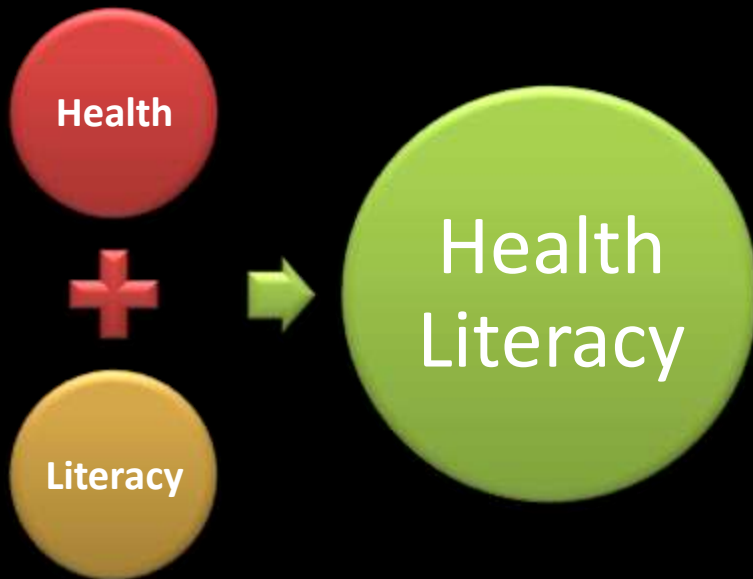
BC Public Health Association Conference.
Vancouver BC
November 4-5, 2013
Irv Rootman, Sandy Vamos & Wayne Mitic



Workshop Plan

- 2:45-2:50: Introduction to workshop
- 2:50- 3:05: Presentation on Health Literacy and Intersectoral Approach
- 3:05-3:15: Update on Developments since release of Discussion Paper
- 3:15-3:20: Instructions on Table Discussions
- 3:20-3:45: Table Discussions
- 3:45-4:15: Reports back and Plenary Discussions

What is health literacy?

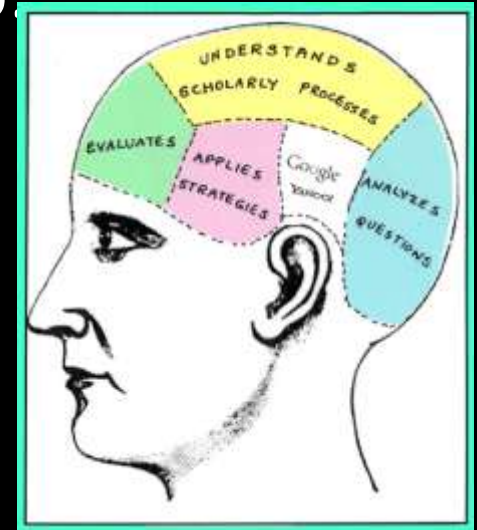


Health literacy builds on the idea that *both health and literacy are critical resources for everyday living.*

Definition

“The degree to which people are able to:

- ✓ access
- ✓ understand,
- ✓ appraise
- ✓ communicate

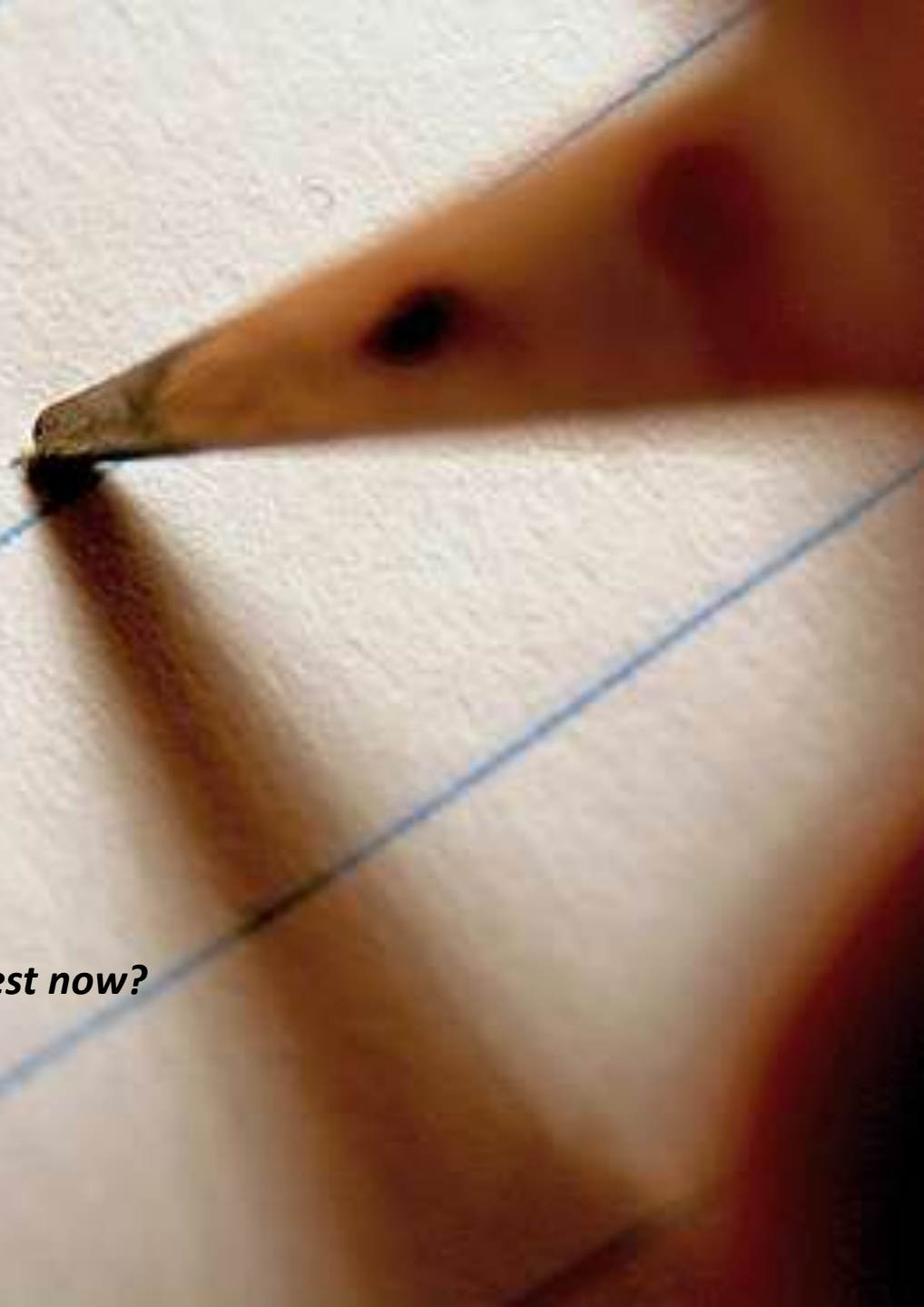


information to engage with the demands of different health contexts in order to promote and maintain good health across the life-course”

Why is health literacy important?

- It affects peoples ability to....
 - **Navigate** the health care system
 - **Share** personal and health information with providers
 - **Engage** in self-care and chronic disease management
 - **Adopt** health promoting behaviours
 - **Act** on health related news and announcements

Why



Why all this interest now?

Correlations with low health literacy



- Poorer overall health
- Less likely to make use of screening & preventive services
- More likely to be hospitalized
- Poorer understanding of treatment regime
- Lower adherence
- Increase health care costs
- Die earlier

A Mismatch



60% of the country is below the proficient level in health literacy

Over 300 studies have shown that most health materials are beyond the comprehension skill of most people.

Cost

Additional costs of limited health literacy ranged from 3 to 5% of the total health care cost per year.



Eichler, K., Wieser, S., Brügger, U. (2009). The costs of limited health literacy: a systematic review. *Int J of Public Health*

“Health literacy is a stronger predictor of a person’s health than age, income, employment status, education, and race”

Institute of Medicine (2004) Health Literacy: A Prescription to End Confusion.

*“Enough
is known
for
action”*

E. Zeigler





An Inter-sectoral
Approach for Improving
HEALTH LITERACY
for Canadians

2012

A Discussion Paper



**"IF I HAVE
SEEN FURTHER,
IT IS
BY STANDING
ON THE
SHOULDERS
OF GIANTS."**

ISSAC NEWTON (1643 - 1727)

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**Vision,
Mission,
Goals, and
Principles**



Vision

A health literate Canada in which all people are able to access, understand, evaluate and use health information and services that can aid them and others in making informed decisions that will enhance their health and well-being.



Mission

... to develop, implement and evaluate an approach that will support, coordinate and build health literacy capacity in Canada.



Goals



To improve the health literacy abilities of all Canadians by:

→ ...developing a **sound knowledge base** that provides access to the existing and most recent information as well as evidence on effective ways to improve health literacy

→ ...raising the **awareness** and increasing the **capacity** of all Canadians to improve health literacy levels

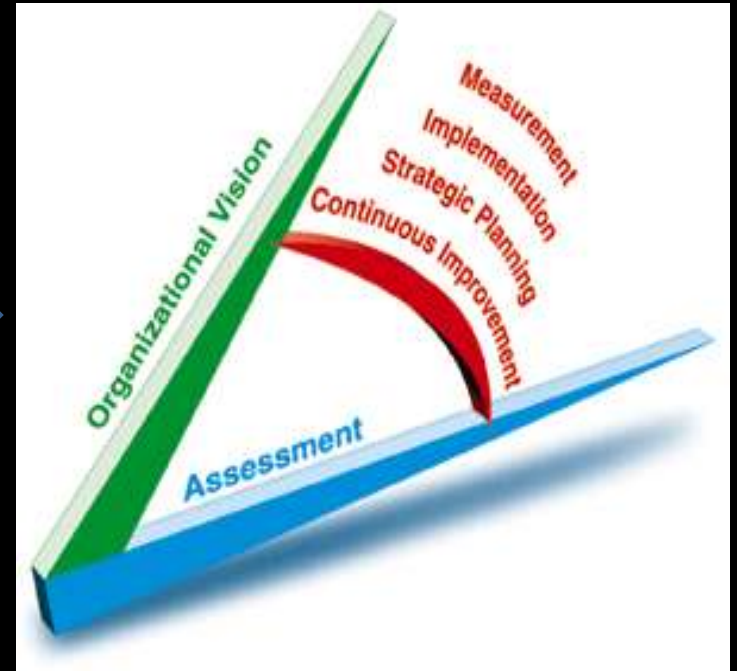
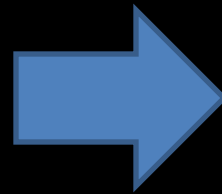
→ ...building the **infrastructure** and identifying the **partnerships** necessary to develop a coordinated approach to advancing health literacy initiatives

Values



- Every person has an **equal and inherent right** to accurate, understandable, and culturally appropriate health information and services.
- **Life-long learning** is a fundamental ingredient for health literacy
- Improving health literacy is a responsibility to be shared among **multiple sectors**
- Creating opportunities for innovation and making use of all available **evidence-informed strategies** are both critical to success
- The work will be approached with **integrity** and uphold the honest, fair and respectful treatment of all people.
- Financial and social **accountability** is paramount at all times.

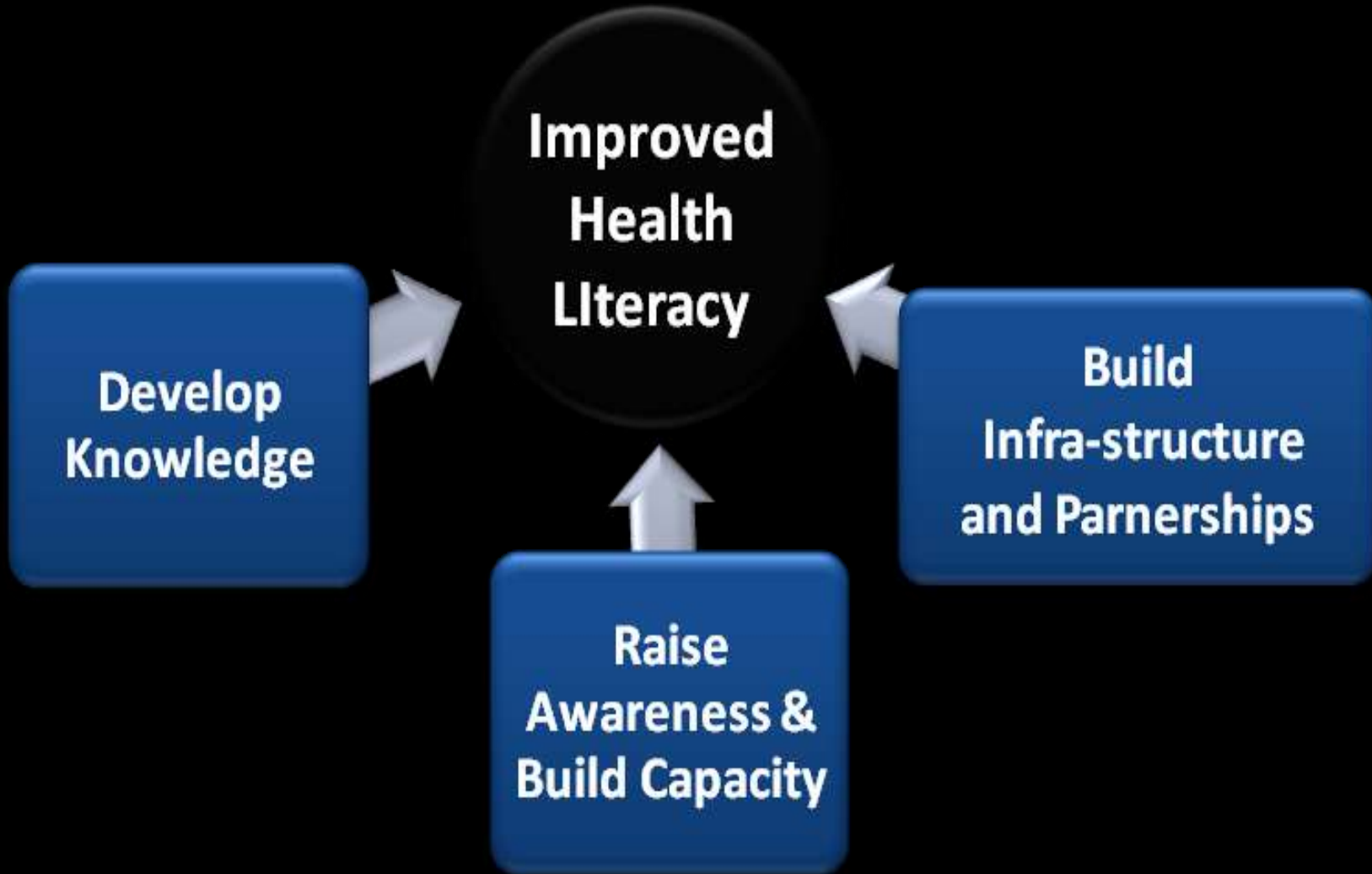
A Comprehensive Approach



Key Settings

- **Governments** – Federal, Provincial, Territorial and municipal governments
- **Health Services** – health care providers including medical personnel, health care institutions and clinics
- **Education Sector** – public and private schools, post-secondary institutions, and centres for continuing education
- **Workplaces and Businesses** – small, medium and large businesses and places of employment
- **Community Organizations** – libraries, community recreation and community-sponsored continued learning, religious institutions and the media.

Fundamental Components



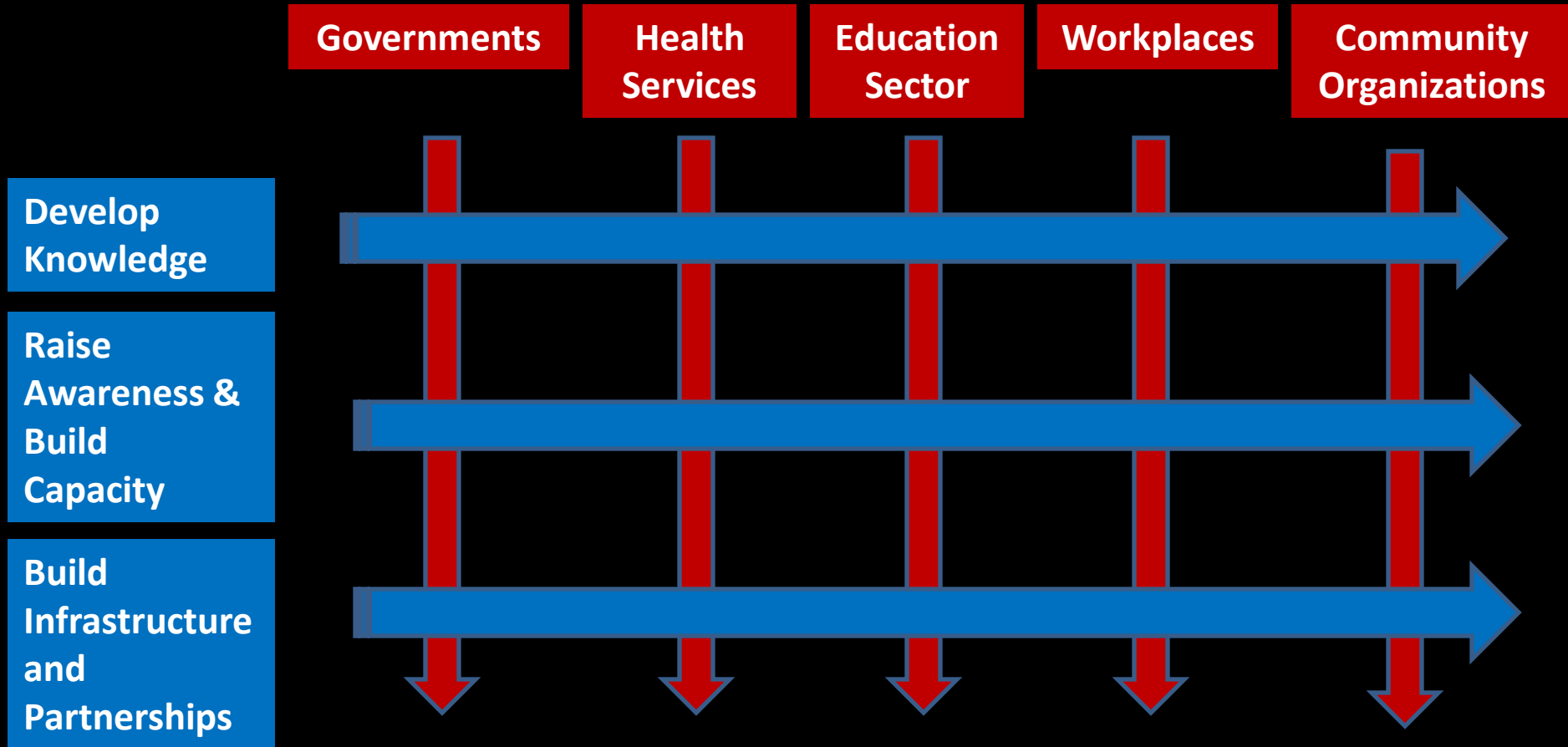
Components

Component 1. **Develop Knowledge:** Develop and facilitate an extensive knowledge base that provides access to research and evidence on effective ways to improve health literacy.

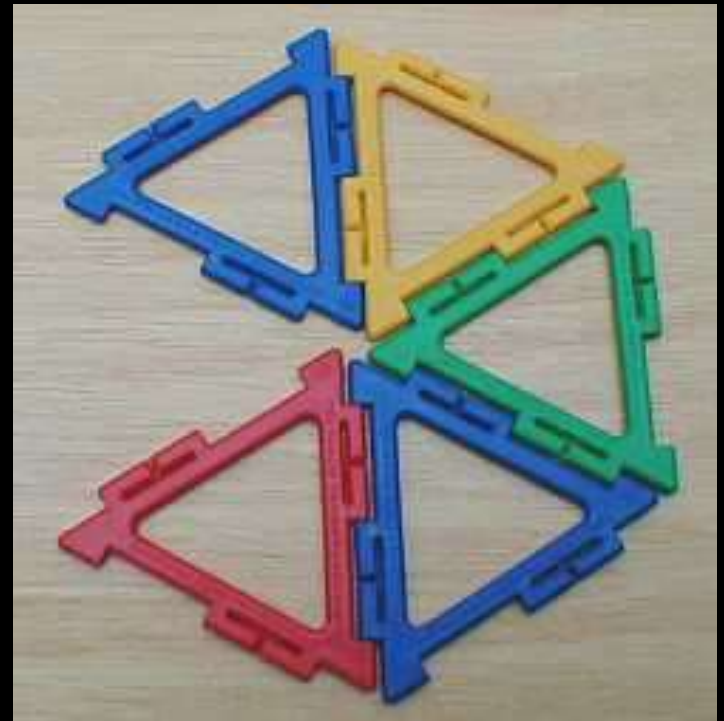
Component 2. **Raise Awareness and Build Capacity:** Develop and provide learning opportunities that enhance the knowledge, understanding and abilities of the public sector workforce, professionals and community members in their efforts to support and promote integrated health literacy. Develop, implement and foster health communication strategies that evoke the attention of key stakeholders and convey the importance of health literacy.

Component 3. **Build Infrastructure and Partnerships:** Allocate sufficient fiscal, human, organizational and physical resources to support and sustain a coordinated effort to build the partnerships and implement the activities outlined in the *Plan*.

Sample Activities



*Frameworks help us
make order out of
chaos....they help us to
make sense of our
environments... and
focus our actions.*



Vision: A Health Literate Canada in which all people can access, understand, evaluate and use health information and services that can guide them and others in making informed decisions to enhance their health and well-being.

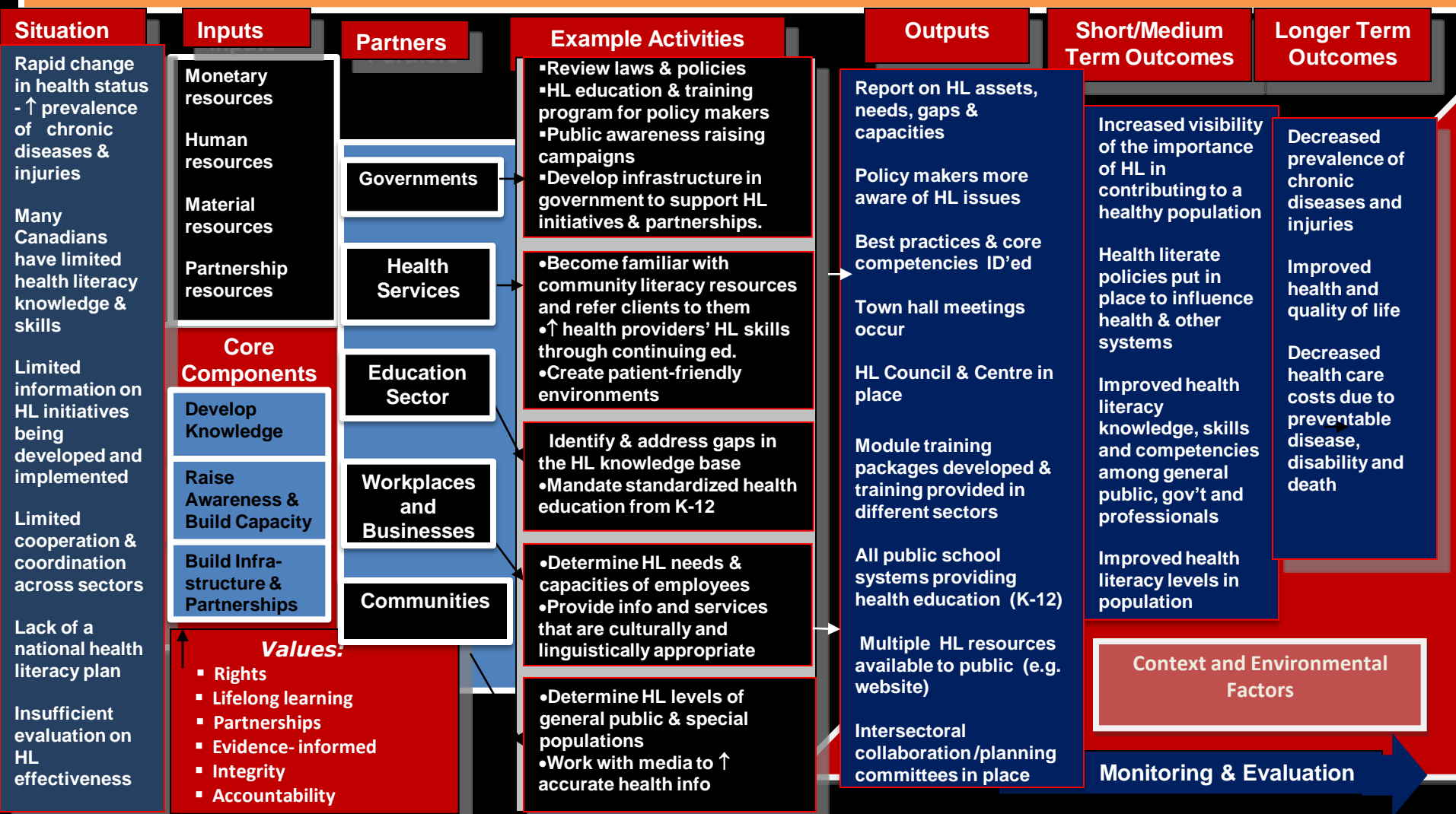
Mission: to develop, implement and evaluate an approach that will support, coordinate and build health literacy capacity of the general public, and people and systems that deliver health information and services in Canada.

Goals: To improve health literacy abilities of all Canadians by:

- developing a sound knowledge base that provides access to the existing and most recent information as well as evidence on effective ways to improve health literacy

- raising the awareness and increasing the capacity of all Canadians to improve health literacy levels

- building the infrastructure and identifying the partnerships necessary to develop a coordinated approach to advancing health literacy initiatives



Tenets that support the Plan

- participatory approach
- evidence informed
- monitoring and evaluation
- comprehensive - ecological
- inclusive

“An idea that is put into action is more important than an idea that exists only as an idea.”

- Buddha

Updates on Developments Since Release of Approach

- Very little has been done to implement plan
- Lack of 'national' awareness and use of Discussion Paper to date
- Lack of Federal support and leadership
- Lack of provincial and territorial awareness and interest
- ✓ Commented on favorably and cited by 'international' leaders in the health field
- ✓ Provided some past guidance to PHAC to link some work plans and projects to *Approach*

Example 1: Health Literacy Scan Project

Develop
Knowledge

Raise
Awareness
& Build Capacity

Build
Infrastructure
& Partnerships



The purpose of the scan was to address questions of:

- 1) What examples exist of **noteworthy health-literacy activities** at a Federal or national level in Canada and a set of comparable countries?
- 2) What have been the **successes, areas of innovation, and challenges** of those activities?
- 3) What do you see as the **emerging opportunities and responsibilities** for your division, agency or organization to address at this time in the area of health literacy?

Key Findings: Types of Health Literacy Initiatives in Canada

Knowledge Development

- Health literacy definition and concept development
- Measurement of health literacy levels
- Identification of best practices by research / demonstration projects

Capacity Building / Awareness Raising

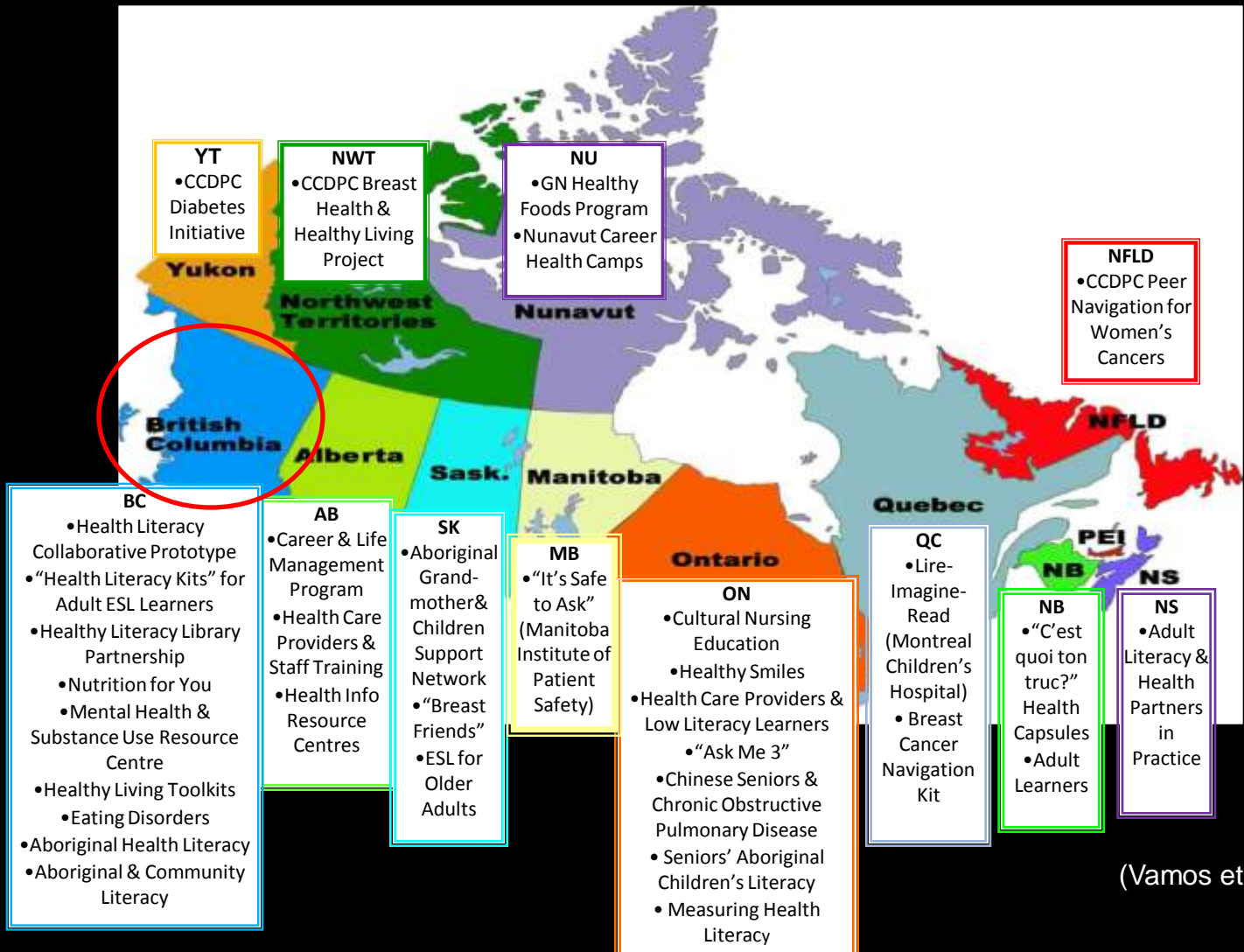
- Training / educating the public / patients
- Educating health professionals
- Working with vulnerable groups
- Producing tailored, targeted programs, reports, and other materials
- Utilizing social media sites for communication

Infrastructure Building & Partnerships

- Organizing cross-agency and cross-sectoral collaboration
- Developing supports to inform policies, regulations, and standards for HL work
- Requests for additional resources & positions for health literacy work

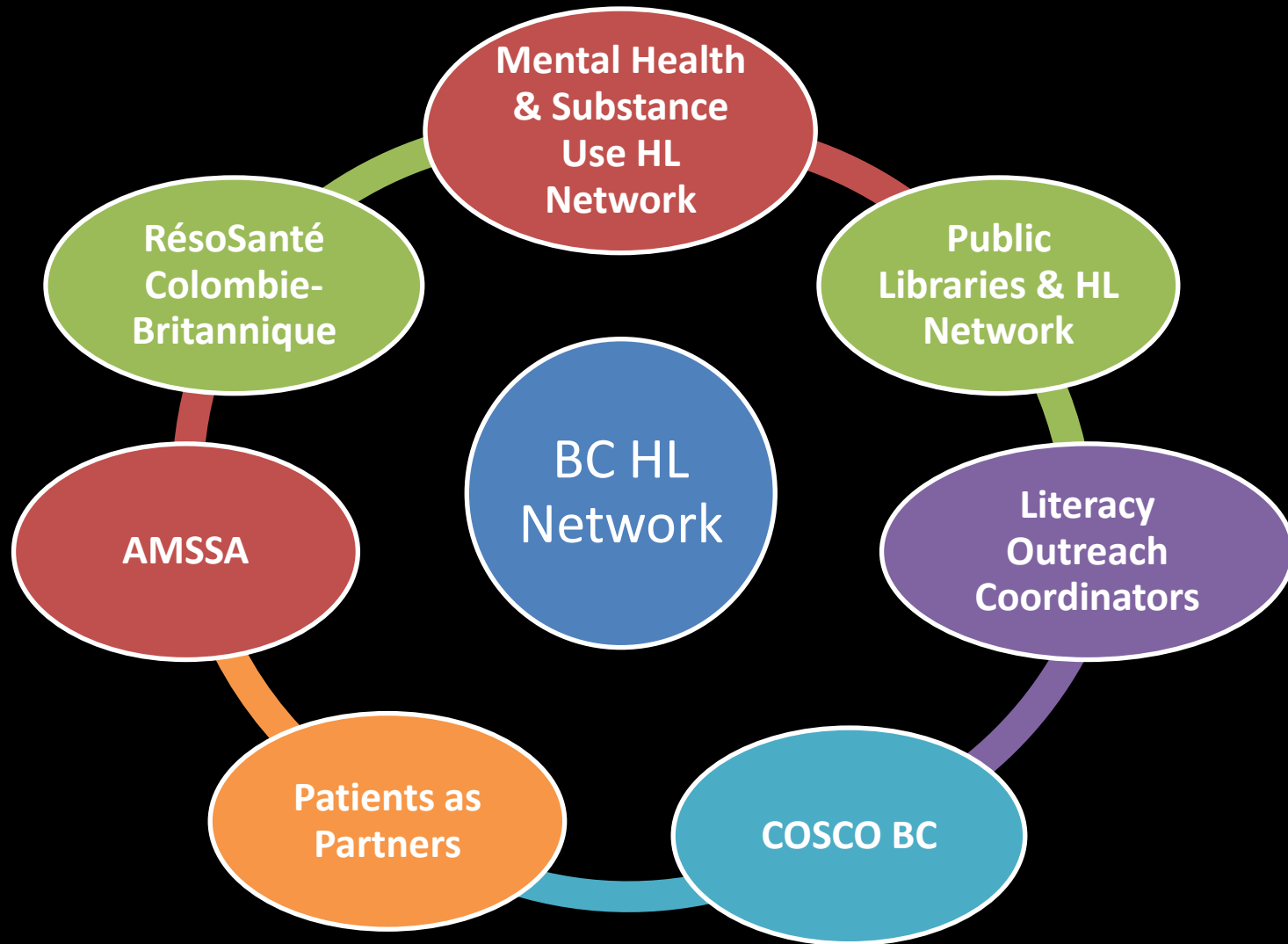
Example 2: Canadian Health Literacy Examples in the Field Project

Raise Awareness & Build Capacity



(Vamos et al., 2012)

BC Health Literacy Network



B.C. Health Literacy Network Operating Structures

- **Steering Committee and Advisory Committee**
- **Working Groups:**
 - Health Care Professionals
 - Partners
 - Provider and Public Engagement



Workshop Activity: Generating a List of Priority Actions



Components	The “What”	The “How”
Develop Knowledge		
Raise Awareness & Build Capacity		
Build Infrastructure & Partnerships		

Questions for Tables

1. What are the three most important things for the BC Health Literacy Network to do over the next two years to **encourage and support**:
 - the **development of knowledge?**
 - **raising awareness and building capacity?**
 - **building infrastructure and partnerships?**
2. How can these priorities be effectively and practically addressed?

Thank you

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