

**EVALUATION OF PUBLIC LEGAL  
EDUCATION AND INFORMATION:  
An Annotated Bibliography**

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rr2002-2e



Research and  
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November 2002

*The views expressed in this report are those of the  
author and do not necessarily represent the  
views of the Department of Justice Canada.*





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# Acknowledgements

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The author would like to thank Kim Pasula of the Public Legal Education Network of Alberta and Gordon Hardy of the People's Law School in British Columbia for their help during this project.





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# Abstract

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This annotated bibliography digests academic literature, government documents and program reports regarding the evaluation of public legal education and information (PLEI). In collecting materials for review, emphasis was placed on the Canadian PLEI context and materials that have been produced over the last five years. Following a general overview of each document, the annotations are organized into four prevalent themes: (i) challenges to PLEI evaluation; (ii) connections between goals of PLEI and its evaluation; (iii) challenges of funders evaluation requirements; and (iv) evaluation methodologies. In addition, the report highlights ideas and approaches to evaluation, a variety of challenges that impede PLEI assessment and a number of research and knowledge gaps in the area. Given the multi-faceted challenges facing PLEI evaluation, few comprehensive evaluations of programs and materials exist. Moreover, little attention has been paid to discussing and ameliorating these challenges. Where applicable, the bibliographic entries identify which elements in the documents are directly useful to PLEI evaluation. These useful tools can serve as guidelines for an evaluative framework. Depending on the nature and objectives of the evaluation, these tools will be helpful for developing standards as well as in methodology design.







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# Executive Summary

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This annotated bibliography attempts to amass the current available materials on evaluating public legal education and information (PLEI) initiatives. The provision of PLEI manifests in various forms including distribution of pamphlets or information packages, classroom-format teaching, telephone hotlines, audio-visual products and multi-day seminars or workshops. There is growing recognition among many jurisdictions that acquisition and “ownership” of legal knowledge resides in an exclusive domain insofar as it is confined to university-operated law schools. Moreover, the Canadian government continues to expand and explore the dimensions of access to justice. Accordingly, momentum has been building for enhancing traditional approaches to access, which include more solution-oriented and participatory forms of justice.

The literature and materials reviewed in this project are divided into sections based on document type. The contractor was asked to review a range of documents on PLEI evaluation with a focus on Canadian materials produced over the last five years. The types of documents reviewed include academic articles that discuss various PLEI initiatives, government materials on PLEI and actual evaluation reports of PLEI projects. Where practical and useful materials are included in the document, they have been identified and explained. The annotations have been organized around four prevalent themes that emerged in earlier reports of PLEI evaluation. Although many of the findings evade concrete classification, issues were partitioned into thematic headings in anticipation of the bibliography’s intended use. Two overarching purposes for which these themes were developed are utilization, in terms of designing evaluation, and identification or prevention of common difficulties. The four themes that run throughout the bibliography are: (i) challenges to PLEI evaluation; (ii) connections between goals of PLEI and its evaluation; (iii) challenges of funders evaluation requirements; and (iv) evaluation methodologies. A section on research and knowledge gaps is included in the Overview of Findings. The themes that directly identify challenges may be used preemptively. In identifying and documenting challenges this bibliography recognizes the potential for benefit through the experience of others, which was also a recurring thread in the articles. Ideas concerning the connection between stated goals of PLEI programs and evaluation objectives were singled out, as articulation of these connections can often dictate what evaluation methods should be used. Evaluation methodologies were included to illustrate trends and creativity in both external and internal evaluations. Finally, research knowledge and gaps were summarized in the Overview of Findings section to highlight areas for future research and consideration.

It is apparent from the materials reviewed that challenges facing PLEI evaluation are multi-faceted. Therefore, it is not surprising that despite the extensive list of PLEI organizations and initiatives across Canada, there are very few reports that directly evaluate PLEI programs, services or materials. There are a small number of well-organized evaluations that have been produced in the last five years in addition to a larger number of evaluations for other legal-related programming such as legal aid (Brantingham and Brantingham, 1984). The most comprehensive and functional document available is the *Evaluation Resource Book for PLEI Organizations*, written by Focus Consultants in 1986. This detailed guide was the result of earlier research in which prominent issues and obstacles faced by PLEI providers were

addressed. Most of these issues are still very much alive today and therefore are reiterated in the annotations.

### **Recurring Themes in Evaluation**

The themes as described above are set out below along with a few of the prevalent findings.

#### **1. The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation**

- Lack of skills, resources, money.
- Insufficient definitions of PLEI and evaluation.

#### **2. Connections between Goals of PLEI and its Evaluation**

- Many of the goals and objectives of PLEI projects cannot be measured by quantitative means.

#### **3. Challenges of funders' evaluation requirements**

- Without stable funding PLEI providers are dissuaded from engaging in extensive evaluation efforts.
- Different emphasis and goals between funders and PLEI providers leads to distinct methods of evaluation and misinterpretation of findings.

#### **4. Evaluation Methodologies**

- Most common forms: questionnaires and surveys, semi-structured interviews, call back/follow up; pre/post-testing; focus groups.

#### **5. Research and knowledge gaps**

- No mention is made as to how evaluations, assessments or quality reports should be used by the program or organization under evaluation.
- Similarly, there is no discussion about how findings or recommendations of evaluations conducted and transcribed can be used by other PLEI agencies and organizations.



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# 1.0 Introduction

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## 1.1 What is PLEI and Why an Annotated Bibliography on Evaluation?

Law-related education beyond what is taught in university faculties throughout the country has come to be known as “public legal education and information” or PLEI. The proliferation of PLEI materials, services and programs has occurred over the past three decades in Canada, in step with other common law jurisdictions, and very likely with other legal systems around the world. Each province and the territories now have organizations that are solely dedicated to PLEI provision. Some of these core PLEI providers function as an umbrella for various associations, schools and community organizations that offer PLEI services and programs. In other provinces, there is less focus on coordinating PLEI i.e., by performing needs assessments and they are one of a number of organizations exclusively devoted to PLEI. Furthermore, in some provinces such as Ontario and British Columbia many PLEI initiatives are enveloped in the provincial legal aid institutions and managed under the Office of the Attorney General. Regardless of how PLEI is administered and delivered across Canada, its mandate seems to be generally consistent. Providing information about legal rights and obligations to the Canadian public is one practical and effective way to ensure greater access to justice.

The purpose of this project was to review the available literature, government, non-government and program material on the evaluation of PLEI initiatives. The emphasis was on Canadian materials produced within the past five years, however, it will be noted that many of the evaluations pre-date this timeframe. This is largely due to the shortage of PLEI evaluation and discussion that has been formally documented. The objective in looking at these sources was to determine what types of approaches are being taken to evaluate PLEI and what barriers exist for evaluators. Many authors have maintained that an overarching problem to accessing and conducting PLEI evaluation is the result of imprecise definitions. The lack of precision and concurrence regarding the terms “public” “legal” “education” and “information” poses ongoing difficulties for those who engage in any form of comparison and/or assessment. Consequently, the 1986 *Survey of Canadian PLEI Providers* discovered that many organizations that include PLEI in their activities do not self-identify as PLEI organizations. This is still true today.

## 1.2 Methodologies

Bibliographic materials for this report were gathered from several sources. The three prominent legal databases, Quicklaw, Lexis-Nexis, and Westlaw, were searched for academic articles in addition to multi-library searches for relevant legal literature. PLEI documents developed by and for the Department of Justice were forwarded directly from the contract supervisor in the Research and Statistics Division. The Public Legal Education pages of ACJNet were searched and a number of materials were also sent from the Legal Resource Centre, an affiliate of the Legal Studies Program at the University of Alberta. The balance of the materials collected was forwarded in response to a nation-wide information/solicitation notice sent to over 50 organizations connected with PLEI. In addition to these sources, a number of Internet searches were conducted to find evaluation materials. As the bibliography was concentrated on the Canadian PLEI context, Internet research in other jurisdictions was purposefully limited.

The challenges faced in the bibliography were mostly related to time and lack of materials. Most of the electronic mail correspondence and material gathering occurred in the month of December. This is a particularly difficult time to contact people in both governmental and non-governmental organizations. With more time, it is likely that a few more evaluation reports may have been located. Despite this constraint the materials annotated represent the types of evaluations that have been performed by and for PLEI providers and their funders. The government documents and academic articles were not impacted by time limitations. Lack of information was the other primary challenge. Most of the academic articles found pertained to legal aid programs in the United States and only addressed public or community education peripherally. Furthermore, papers on public legal education almost universally advocate for the use of PLEI or discuss in detail specific PLEI initiatives. Few articles ever mention the need or methods for evaluating programs. Relatedly, many of the organizations that did forward evaluation material supplied one or two-page “feedback forms” or questionnaires which they distribute after a particular program or along with educational materials. These evaluation efforts are unquestionably valuable for needs assessment and content/format revision, however, they do not provide useful information for this bibliography.

Although the bibliography cannot claim to be exhaustive of all available PLEI materials in Canada, the use of multiple approaches to finding materials as well as the variation of document type reviewed ensures that the collection is comprehensive.

### **1.3 The Continued Case for PLEI**

**T**he scope of PLEI programs and materials is extensive and varies between organizations and regions depending on the surveyed and perceived public need. Under Canadian law all citizens are entitled and even expected to know their legal rights and responsibilities. However, given the language used in statutes and regulations, among other systemic barriers, access to justice demands more than making these laws publicly available. To a greater or lesser degree federal, provincial and municipal laws affect all people. PLEI offers a constructive and transformative method for achieving understanding of the content, process and impact of laws on our lives. Independent of discrete legal disputes or specific compliance requirements where individuals encounter the legal system directly, every person stands to gain from understanding the political-legal institutions in which they function. For these reasons PLEI is often aimed at elementary and secondary school students as well as new immigrant populations.

PLEI is also one way to empower low-income individuals or other marginalized groups who are in need of information. In addition to the general desire to inform and educate persons about their rights and responsibilities under the law, PLEI can be used for purposes of self-representation or to indicate when it is necessary to retain a lawyer. There is ongoing debate about whether self-representation is to be encouraged as a form of empowerment and a realistic response to legal aid gaps/reductions or whether increased access to legal aid is unquestionably the preferred route of under-served populations. Recent studies in the United States found that 50% of low and middle income clientele can be served through community legal education materials and that the limited access to lawyers was largely the result of lack of information about when to seek legal advice (Powers, 1997). Regardless of the outcome of this discussion, PLEI provides knowledge required by individuals to make informed decisions. PLEI is also a way for the public to become informed and educated about the laws that affect daily life. Going beyond the government mandate of securing access to justice, it gives meaning to



the “pendant” that policy makers have for public consultations. In the cases of referendums or political polling about proposed legislation little attention is paid to whether the “public” in fact understands the impact of the laws on which they are voting (Bowal, 1998). PLEI could play a role in legitimating this aspect of the political process by dispelling myths and correcting mistaken assumptions about the legal system in Canada, which is largely informed by the American media, including entertainment and news programming.

Although television, video, radio, computers and phone lines have all been used successfully in PLEI initiatives, some writers express concern regarding the potentially disadvantaging impact of increased use of technology in the provision of PLEI on low-income people. The use of technology must be assessed and monitored to ensure that clients are finding information, accessing assistance and obtaining favorable outcomes. If the universal starting point is focused on access, the provision of services should be equally available to those with limited access to computers and limited education. Projects that opt for these modes of communication and dissemination must be alert to unintended consequences, and must also ensure that low-income individuals have access to computer training and computers through social service agencies and public libraries (Houseman, 1998). Once these concerns are addressed it is commonly believed that selective use of computer and Internet technologies can be vastly beneficial to PLEI organizations and ultimately to the populations they serve. Province-wide and inter-provincial coordination could be exponentially improved through suggested developments. The range of activities include: province-wide email access for all community based organizations and institutional providers, province-wide websites for up-to-date information about legislation, regulation and policy developments that impact various constituencies, electronic libraries of relevant materials which are accessible to all PLEI providers, development of a coordinated research strategy integrating internet usage, on-line services, proprietary sources and other resources, and development of coordinated data-management systems to facilitate information sharing (Houseman, 1998: 422-427).

## 1.4 PLEI Evaluation: Approaches and Ideas

The following notes are drawn from various reports and articles included in the bibliography. Combined with the list below, they provide some overarching guidelines to bear in mind as the annotations are reviewed.

- Assessment must be audience-driven in that its design and objectives are sensitive to how knowledge/information will be used by participants and the learning contexts in which they operate. The greater the extent to which these factors are examined and built into program design, the more effective an evaluation will be at determining if needs are met and the extent of impact.
  - Authors of *VIOLET: Learning on the Net* identified six characteristics of the particular target audience and related assumptions were accounted for in the evaluation process.
- *Tools for Moving Forward* noted that two opposing approaches persist regarding what “level” of administration is better positioned to develop and implement PLEI

evaluation. While some providers believe that an umbrella organization such as PLEAC or the Department of Justice should use their resources to develop evaluation tools for PLEI providers, others suggest that core PLEI organizations as well as intermediaries are in the best position to design and implement evaluations of their programs and client impact.

Below are further ideas and observations that the author has gathered from various reports. These are not directly articulated in the materials.

- In developing an evaluation framework for PLEI the latest evaluation research in the fields of education and human/community services should be obtained and incorporated.
- Findings of evaluation studies and conclusions drawn from assessments can and should be used by funders in setting and guiding priorities.
- It is important to have a comprehensive list of community organizations that are involved in PLEI delivery as well as inventories of materials that exist in topical areas. This need is being addressed in part by ACJNet, however, as it was found in the *Survey of Canadian PLEI Providers* in 1986, “the survival of PLEI activities is dependent upon active coordination and communication among organizations who provide PLEI” (p.108). This massive undertaking can only be accomplished in a fashion similar to the work of Godin, Gill & Alderson, Shariff and others. Projects such as these have gathered all PLEI materials that relate to a specific topic and have summarized the contents. Making this type of inventory available in all areas of law will facilitate evaluation by identifying gaps and allowing providers to compare their programs and materials.
- Given the reality of budgetary constraints, it is recommended that PLEI providers and funders incorporate an assessment of flexibility and adaptability of their programs and services as a matter of course in all evaluations. This element will ensure that programs are maximally responsive to the unique characteristics of audiences and additionally, it will facilitate creative exploration of how materials may be widely applicable across PLEI areas and organizations.
- As methods and tools used in assessment tend to vary with the model of program delivery and audience more than they do over time, preparation of a comprehensive evaluation framework should include some examination of the older non-PLEI evaluations.
- Both internal and external evaluations should always make recommendations for ongoing evaluation/quality control/assessment of programs and services. Given the prohibitive nature of full-scale evaluations, this is a critical component of any formal evaluation process as it is directly beneficial to those in the organizations and may be implemented immediately. Whereas staff may not have skills or time to contemplate the best methods for ongoing assessment, an evaluator is ideally situated to consider this component of PLEI.





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## 2.0 Academic Articles

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### 2.1 Articles on PLEI

The following articles, drawn from Canadian and American legal journals, span a wide range of initiatives and commentary and come from a broad-based conception of PLEI.

**Barry, M. M. (1999). Accessing justice: Are pro se clinics a reasonable response to the lack of pro bono legal services and should law school clinics conduct them? *Fordham Law Review: Special Issue*, 67, 1879-1926.**

#### General Overview

This article lies slightly beyond the scope of PLEI delivery and its evaluation in Canadian organizations and clinics. The object of the paper is to examine the gap that exists for individuals who are acting on their own behalf in a legal dispute and address the question of whether the needs of this group can be served by clinical programs established through US law schools. Similar to the configuration in various provinces, many of these clinics offer a blend of legal representation and dissemination of legal information, while some are directed exclusively at one or the other. Based on the presupposition that self-represented clients, most often from a marginalized or disadvantaged position in society, require access to both legal substantive and procedural materials as well as opportunities for legal representation, the definition of “pro se clinics” used by the author is any organization whose mandate is to provide “general information about the law, procedure, and practice to a group of litigants or prospective litigants who share a common category of legal issues. The idea is to provide sufficient information to allow participants to understand and access the type of pleadings required, basic rules such as service of process, basic information that the court will require to render a decision, and a sense of the range of remedies available. The term...has been used to describe programs that provide some or all of this information” (p.1883). Within this framework, community legal information is credited with the potential to “create a rising tide of litigants who will gain insight sufficient to demand that their needs be served more effectively” (p.1926). The author walks through a description of types of services offered by these clinics across the United States (some of which are very innovative) to assist prospective litigants. This includes information and form-based kiosks located at courts, law student programs, and various roles filled by paralegals and attorneys. The author looks specifically at two types of educational programs. However, the discussion of evaluation is centered on what law students stand to gain, as opposed to the clients to whom services are directed. The impact and benefit identified for participants is addressed on a very basic level.

### The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation

- One recurring challenge for PLEI is the barrier of language. This includes consideration for non-English speaking clients as well as the legalistic nature of how and what is being conveyed. Aside from ensuring that legal information was available in the native languages of clients, lawyers and staff who are making presentations to community groups must be encouraged and reminded to speak in general terms. This challenge extends to PLEI evaluation. If participants are unfamiliar with the terminology used, and therefore unable to distil information that is relevant to their particular situation, they will be unable to assess its usefulness. Moreover, where feedback is not offered in the participant's first language, a common result is one-word descriptors that do not sufficiently address the content or format of the program.
- When information is provided in a "mixed model" context it may be difficult to distil a meaningful assessment from clients. The line between information and legal advice is a hard one to draw and there is a greater risk that feedback will be purely outcome driven. Although this is a valid response from clients who were seeking a precise legal remedy, this type of feedback will not be as useful for improving the type or content of material being provided.

### Evaluation Methodologies

- In one clinical program in Florida written questionnaires were distributed after training sessions and phone interviews were conducted three to six months after completion. The primary aim was to collect ratings about convenience and format of the sessions, as well as the amount of social support that was made available. In addition to clarity and overall satisfaction participants were invited to comment on any shortfalls of the sessions. Concerns expressed related to complexity of court proceedings and general intimidation of the process.
- Most of the other programs appraised in the article measured their success using activities indicators i.e. how many people attend the clinic sessions, how many calls are received/processed annually, and how many clients obtained a divorce (or any other result they were seeking).

**Bowal, P. (1998). A study of lay knowledge of law in Canada. *Indiana International and Comparative Law Review*, 9, 121-141. Not annotated.**

This statistical analysis is relevant reference material for access to justice issues in general as it is not limited to PLEI for low-income persons. The study illustrates the lack of legal knowledge among university-educated Canadian citizens and points to the media, and predominantly American media, as the greatest source of (mis)information.





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**Brustin, S. (1993). Expanding our vision of legal services representation: The hermanas unidas project. *American University Journal of Gender and the Law*, 1, 39-59.**

### **General Overview**

This article describes the creation and subsequent growth of the Hermanas Unidas project in Washington D.C. The project is not a typical “legal” community legal education (“CLE”) program, but more of a community empowerment project that was introduced by the author and modeled on similar projects in Mexico and throughout Latin America. The project primarily involves immigrant Latina women who have enlisted the services of lawyers at AYUDA, a traditional legal aid clinic, regarding domestic, immigration and employment matters. The core group of women who were initially involved in the project have now become “leaders” or “directors” who shape the direction of the project and help other Latina women in the community “move ahead” and overcome systemic barriers that lead to legal actions. This type of community empowerment project seeks to address shortcomings of the traditional legal system by providing support networks through which disenfranchised individuals can share experiences. The method emphasized for achieving this goal is education, both between members and through outreach programs, so that common problems do not escalate to the point of litigation. By looking at the range of concerns – economic, emotional and legal – the members recognize that many problems faced by this community are collective, socio-political problems as opposed to discrete legal issues. The legal system, including legal aid clinics that are positioned to address the needs of disadvantaged groups, generally overlooks issues of intersectionality, whereas this new model for community legal education actively includes this analysis in defining goals and objectives. Empowering these women through education and information-sharing has proved to be an effective and successful way to build the confidence necessary to seek resolutions without total dependence on professionals. The holistic approach of the project simultaneously addresses economic and emotional needs that are beyond the scope of the legal system, while alleviating, if only marginally, the constant demand that plagues the legal aid system. Given the nature of the project, referred to by the author as “grassroots legal education,” the lawyers involved play a facilitative, rather than an advisory role to the group. Accordingly, these individuals do not seek to evaluate the progress, content or benefits of the programs. Moreover, if members of the project ceased to derive any benefit from its activities, new directions and ideas would likely be canvassed by both lawyers and community participants.

### **Connections between Goals of PLEI and its Evaluation**

- The self-generated nature of the project means that needs assessment and evaluation are seen as organic to the process of the organization. Any external evaluation, even by the facilitators, is ideologically opposed to the central objective of empowerment, as its goals would be governed by “outsider” perspectives. Therefore, it is essential to allow members to create agendas and resolve conflicts, which inevitably involve self-evaluation.

### Challenges of Funders' Evaluation Requirements

- By situating this CLE project outside the ambit of general 'legal services,' they are removed from competitions for government funding that is earmarked for that purpose. This allows the project to avoid the notion of attorney as authoritative problem-solver and decision-maker.

### Evaluation Methodologies

- Although it would be possible to assess the numbers served and obstacles to access in the same way as other CLE programs, any such quantification would bypass the non-legal concerns that participants are attempting to address. Once again this runs counter to the holistic approach which presupposes a direct link between the non-legal concerns of individuals and the impact these have on legal decision-making.

**Eagly, I.V. (1998). Community education: Creating a new vision of legal services practice. *Clinical Law Review*, 4(4), 433-484.**

### General Overview

Part I of this paper explores the history of legal services and the role of community legal education. Starting with the well-known article by Stephen Wexler which advocated "rights" education for the poor, the author traces various theories and practices that have been developed to address legal needs of low-income citizens. This culminates in an exposition and analysis of the "new poverty scholarship," in which PLEI (CLE as it is referred to in the United States) plays a significant role. Part II describes one community legal education program based in Chicago that centers on legal employment issues faced by immigrant women. Five different education models were used: (i) media campaigns to publicize workplace laws; (ii) educational materials (written and video); (iii) training for social service providers; (iv) workshops for community members; and (v) a workplace rights course. The article then evaluates the community legal education approach to legal services by analyzing the programs delivered and assessing the effect on participants. The different educational models called for different types of evaluation. Although this observation is somewhat obvious, the article clearly illustrates why the nature and the objective of each type of CLE project requires varied methods of evaluation.

### The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation

- Differences in class, race, educational levels and social contexts between PLEI providers and participants increases the difficulty of evaluating whether programs for targeted populations are effective.
- A recurring issue with PLEI evaluation is the diversity of benefits gained, many of which cannot be measured by traditional quantified research. Yet, it is important not to underestimate the value of these immeasurable benefits. For example, facilitators found that hearing about other women's experiences who had faced similar challenges and suffered similar violations was extremely significant, especially for populations like domestic workers who tend to be isolated. Therefore, the challenge remains regarding how to document these immeasurable benefits.



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## Connections between Goals of PLEI and its Evaluation

- Defining specific goals for legal education projects directly impacts the mode of delivery and the orientation of the project, including how it is to be evaluated. For example, it is crucial to know exactly who is being targeted so that evaluation can concentrate on whether an appropriate method of delivery was utilized for reaching that particular group (e.g. if the program is for women who cannot read or speak English, an assessment should identify whether an appropriate mode of communication is being used to accommodate that characteristic).

## Evaluation Methodologies

- Assessing a program's effectiveness often comes down to stories of individuals and how they themselves identify changes in their approach or transformations in actual situations. Volunteering this feedback usually includes how participants have been able to assist others either through peer education or by making connections so others can get assistance or seek it out themselves. One informative method is to see what is done with the acquired knowledge and how skills have been employed i.e., do they form a group on their own and/or share their knowledge with others, or have they taken steps to transform a problematic situation.
- Getting people to participate in "active learning" during the program can also help to assess what has been gained. This exercise is especially useful during longer educational programs. Relatedly, mini-evaluations were found to be beneficial when administered part way through a longer program as the participants still had a stake in the course and could participate in making it relevant to their needs.
- Effects can also be evaluated by asking participants to take part in future activities. By watching what experiences are shared with others, project managers can see the impact directly and make adjustments to programs where necessary.
- At the completion of a program "action plans" were created by participants where they outlined how they intended to use acquired information. By these means coordinators can determine what knowledge and skills participants identify as being most useful.

## Useful Materials for PLEI Evaluation

Once appropriate adjustments are made for methods and objectives, the following headings used in Eagly's study could be used to guide thinking about PLEI evaluation. In this project, individuals' stories were used by coordinators to analyze major effects that programs had on the lives of participants.

1. Reaches populations not served by traditional legal services
  - a. Does the program take place in a location that is known and trusted.
  - b. Should ask directly about: (i) prior engagement with the law; (ii) knowledge acquired in program; and (iii) plans to use in future situations/how will this change your course of action.

2. Provides support for individuals involved in litigation
  - a. Is there a noticeable increase in interest in concurrent or subsequent litigation.
3. Responds to concerns that cannot be redressed by the legal system.
4. Allows individuals to develop their own problem-solving skills.
5. Develops leadership skills.
6. Raises consciousness.

**Hunter, R. & Genovese, A. (2000). Qualitative aspects of quality: An Australian case study. *University of British Columbia Law Review*, 33(2), 319-342.**

### General Overview

The focus of this study centers on the provision of family law services in the legal aid context. The quality of services provided is examined from the view of legal aid lawyers based on their understandings of quality. In approaching this assessment the authors make two significant observations. First, they acknowledge that in the era of significant cost-cutting quality assessment may be “too fussy” since it is generally agreed that some representation is better than none at all. This attitude is also prevalent among PLEI providers. As noted in the introduction, the lack of sufficient resources often means evaluation is relegated to a low priority, especially as against the provision of PLEI programming and materials. Second, the authors denote that “reliance on cultural norms [may be] a more efficient and effective means of quality assurance than reliance on externally imposed, bureaucratic quality criteria and procedures” (p.325). This sentiment also applies to the relationship between funders and core PLEI providers. Although there are standard concerns about objectivity, PLEI providers like lawyers are in the best position to set realistic quality standards and are no less fit to define and assess quality than various funding agencies.

### The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation

- At multiple points in the article, the authors note the importance of considering evaluation criteria “locally.” This is emphasized due to the differences found from one practice area to another vis-à-vis quality standards. This observation may be relevant in the Canadian PLEI context as between criminal and civil streams and in accounting for different audiences.
- The main obstacle in undertaking this evaluation of quality assessments in general was the lack of consensus regarding “adequate” versus “good” services among lawyers. In an attempt to address this issue a number of tools were suggested. While this failure to agree on consistent standards is very likely to emerge on the national or provincial PLEI stage, the tools discussed in this paper would not provide much assistance given their strong origins in the institutions of legal aid. For example, the accreditation system was regarded as a possible source of external standard for quality assurance. However, PLEI organizations are not, and arguably should not be subject to a system of



accreditation. Also, unlike traditional representation where the court can provide an external, knowledgeable assessment, there is no reciprocal institution by which the merits of a PLEI program may be measured. Finally, unlike legal aid lawyers who are often engaged in an adversarial relationship with other lawyers, PLEI providers do not *need* to work with other organizations (though they often benefit from doing so), and therefore there is no apparent need for peer review as there is with practitioners.

### Connections between Goals of PLEI and its Evaluation

- In attempting to correlate the objectives of legal aid with the assessment of quality of services provided, it is important to adjust the methods of evaluation to match the mode of services provided.
- The article notes that evaluation must always consider the substance of what is provided as well as client satisfaction, but that emphasis will vary depending on who is asking the questions i.e., is it the program providers themselves or a funding agency.
- In any evaluation there is value in exploring what is being done elsewhere i.e., in the same legal areas and among different community groups in the same location.

### Evaluation Methodologies

- Client surveys.
- Interviews with lawyers, both specific to family legal aid and otherwise.
  - The questions in the interviews were formulated around four topics: structure, process, input and output.
- File review/analysis.

**McDonald, S. (2000). Beyond caselaw: Public legal education in Ontario legal clinics. *Windsor Yearbook of Access to Justice*, 18, 3-59.**

### General Overview

The first part of this paper provides a synopsis of the historical and current state of PLEI in Ontario and explains the need for PLEI in the context of the liberal legal model. The author then canvasses the emerging “new poverty law scholarship”, which advocates a shift away from the traditional lawyer/client model. After explaining the rise of the plain language movement and setting out the basic goals of legal literacy, she argues that PLEI must go beyond these tenets to challenge the substance and procedures of the legal system. The Ontario PLEI projects are placed within a framework of three general PLEI models and it is posited that within the province PLEI still falls under the liberal legal model, especially insofar as it is tied to state funding and aligned with accessibility of the traditional legal system. Current methods of PLEI are comprised of information dissemination that employ a didactic approach. The information tends to be content and process oriented, with the absence of challenge or critique of that information and little or no audience participation. In examining the

shortcomings of this approach, the author advocates for pedagogically appropriate education that will achieve legal literacy by “developing capacities to use law and rights as a political resource and to gain skill and power needed to effect positive change” (p.35). An analysis of PLEI activities was undertaken by way of document review (funding applications) and interviews with PLEI providers. The discussion involving evaluation was tied to general goals of PLEI, which was the primary characteristic that differentiated among the three classifications/models. Synthesis of the data collected clearly demonstrated the importance of coordinating PLEI evaluation given the limited resources available and the opportunity to learn from the identified mistakes of others. The author found that most providers included assessment or review of effectiveness of PLEI activities in the stated goals of the projects.

### **The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation**

- Where the primary goal of PLEI is defined as expanding accessibility to legal information the task of measuring these increases proves to be very difficult.
- Whereas short-term goals such as timely dissemination of information relating to a piece of legislation may be easier to assess, longer-term goals such as empowerment, improving the legal system and assisting people with the complexities of the legal process are often immeasurable.

### **Connections between Goals of PLEI and its Evaluation**

- If education is viewed as a two-way street, part of evaluation can concentrate on what the “teacher/coordinator” is learning about the community being served.
- Insofar as PLEI (and especially self-help materials) is understood to be integral to the provision of legal services, and not opposed to or as “filler” for representation, evaluation should be done as part of a larger “strategy” assessment.

### **Challenge of Funders’ Evaluation Requirements**

- The funder’s perspective on PLEI evaluation, as derived from the funding applications, was largely focused on activities indicators such as time spent on PLEI activities.
- Accountability was sought through requisition of goals, though it was left up to PLEI providers to indicate what significant activities were produced and there was no requirement that these included PLEI projects.

**McDonald, S. with Cross, P. (2001). Women’s voices being heard: Responsive lawyering. *Journal of Law and Social Policy*, 16, 207-239.**

### **General Overview**

Within a theoretical framework, this paper describes an extensive PLEI project that targeted immigrant women who had experienced domestic violence. The project brought together various community groups and academics to engage in a collaborative process of client-centered PLEI. Although the multi-layered needs of this target group were recognized, the





emphasis on education accommodated the objective of sustained empowerment. The project offers a good example of the proactive and creative approach to PLEI design and delivery that was proposed in the background papers to the McCamus Report (Charendoff, Leach & Levy in McCamus, 1997). The need for PLEI evaluation decreases, and the type of evaluation required changes if the model developed and employed in this study were to be adopted. This is because the participants are integrated into the process of creating and defining their PLEI needs. As long as “clients” are involved at this level, evaluation processes are built into the programs and will shift over time ensuring that objectives and goals are being met in the various manifestations of PLEI provision. It is important to note that this potential result requires the use of methods such as feminist participatory research and the collaborative efforts of multiple groups of “experts” as well as participants. The authors raise a salient point about gaps in evaluation in emphasizing the need for evaluation to consider *how* a program is delivered in order to assess the totality of effectiveness. Although a few exceptions are noted, generally needs assessment is purely content-focused, which overlooks the crucial factors of audience and context. Finally, the authors suggest that evaluation should consider whether a PLEI initiative has increased the “options” that are available to participants. The mandate of most PLEI projects is to provide information that clients need or would find useful, and is thus inherently client-centered. Accordingly, it is indicative of success to assess whether the student/client/participant has been introduced to more tools and resources than they were aware of prior to program delivery.

### The Challenges to PLEI Evaluation

- Authors acknowledge the difficulty in quantifying the benefits of education noting “learning can help address systemic barriers to equality and social change, as well as prevention, the results of which are never immediate and often cannot be evaluated” (p. 236).

### Report of the working group on assessment of systems for delivering legal services. (1999). *Fordham Law Review: Special Issue*, 67, 1869-1878.

#### General Overview

This paper compiles a list of recommendations for assessing and evaluating legal services, and outlines the discussions that led to them. The recommendations are categorized under eight headings and seek to answer a number of key questions. No clear distinction is drawn in most of the recommendations between direct, one-on-one legal aid services and broader “volume-oriented” approaches such as hotlines and community legal education. The consensual starting point among this diverse group was that assessment and evaluation are both important and necessary in order to ensure the dissemination of quality legal services and information. The intention of the recommendations is to offer an overarching approach to assessment as well as some specific guidance that will be useful to a variety of organizations that fund or provide legal services. The paper presents a thorough synopsis of general areas that should be addressed in PLEI evaluation as well as some of the challenges involved. Whether funders are looking for accountability or organizations are seeking to ensure that programs are meeting articulated goals, these recommendations may be appropriated and tailored to specific programs to conform with whatever type of resources are being devoted to evaluation and assessment.

## Useful Materials for PLEI Assessment

The report is divided into the eight questions reproduced below. The recommendations and commentary from the working group are paraphrased and edited to highlight the key points discussed.

### 1. What is the purpose of assessment?

- a. Assessment is value-laden and as such, values must be articulated up front.
- b. Evaluation is necessary for achieving quality and looking at the efficacy of the efforts expended.
- c. Needs of communities must be considered for representation as well as information.
- d. The purpose of the evaluation must be clearly articulated to ensure that funders are not using it narrowly as a punitive tool. Therefore, the evaluation must be directed to supporting and improving delivery of programs/information, but may also be used to articulate and publicize the value of PLEI.
- e. Evaluation, although necessary, should not be mandatory. Accordingly, no recommendations were given as to frequency or whether it should be a requirement for funding. The working group recognized that assessment is often informal and ongoing. Given limited resources, this is believed to be reasonable.

### 2. What are the goals of the assessment?

- a. Evaluation should address concerns in the following general areas (specific examples of questions are provided in the paper): (i) national, provincial, and local system and program design for serving client communities; (ii) quality of client services; and (iii) leadership, management and administration.
- b. Under each of the headings above, there should be an assessment as to whether overarching goals are being achieved and to what extent resources are being used effectively to address the identified need.
- c. All evaluations should look at what is not being done in addition to determining the effectiveness of the activities of the program.
- d. Depending on the context it may be important to compare approaches i.e., traditional client representation and the alternatives such as PLEI initiatives. This is important where the provision of legal aid and PLEI occur within the same association and therefore are financially accountable to the same agencies.

### 3. What data should be collected?

- a. Data should be collected and analyzed further to the goals listed under the same headings as above [see 2(a)]. Useful areas include:
  - Administrative data; existing government and organizational statistics; surveys of clients, staff and community addressing client satisfaction, understanding of information and outcomes; focus groups of clients, staff and community members; information regarding legal, social, economic and political contexts





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(i.e., changes in entitlements and law affecting clients; literature (legal needs surveys, cost-effectiveness studies, etc)).

- b. Evaluators at the government level should recognize the use of broad empirical data for understanding the identified need and developing activities to address it. This recognition would help to legitimize efforts expended to address these needs.
- c. The group rejected the option to insert ethical requirements into data collection.
- d. No final decision was reached on specific criteria to be used. However, the recommendation implicitly suggests a range of evaluative criteria.

#### 4. Who should be involved in assessments?

- a. A wide range of stakeholders should be included:
  - Clients; legal services program staff; management and governing bodies; advocacy groups; community based organizations; social service providers; private lawyers and bar associations; courts; law schools; social scientists; public officials.
- b. Without the participation of a broad range of stakeholders and clients, evaluation could be excessively staff-oriented. The danger is that assessment of programs could be defined around particular interests and priorities.

#### 5. Methodology: How should assessment be undertaken?

- a. Model data collection instruments and methods should be formulated by organizations at all levels as well as researchers and academics.
- b. Community programs should collaborate with others to set research agendas and undertake research.
- c. Programs should collect data as part of the ongoing operation.
- d. Due to a preference for local, community-based decision-making, the group rejected the idea of establishing a specific set of standards.

#### 6. Who should provide funding and resources for data collection and assessment?

- a. Independent entities i.e., academic institutions, foundations and non-profit research institutes should be encouraged to conduct this research.
- b. Federal government.
- c. Major funders should form a consortium to fund the development of model assessment methodologies. They should also create a research grant program to assess the effectiveness of different approaches to delivery of PLEI.
- d. The group recognized that individual programs should not be expected to expend significant resources on self-assessment, but that government and other institutions should fund assessment in order to improve delivery of services.

7. How do we share information?

- a. Establish a national clearinghouse that gathers information about evaluation methods and findings, including assessment, evaluation, methodology and research instruments. The use of technology would be essential to ensure that information is linked and widely accessible.
- b. Establish a library.
- c. Standardize data on community, provincial and national providers and make it available for research.
- d. Encourage projects to share methodologies as well as official assessments.
- e. Publish findings in journals.
- f. Issue reports at the national, provincial or local level.
- g. The group noted some significant drawbacks to sharing evaluations. However, these are to be weighed against the benefits in knowing what is working in other locations and precludes the unnecessary duplication of efforts.

8. What are the challenges of assessment?

- a. Programs and researchers should:
  - Assure client confidentiality; Respect integrity of judgments involved in local decision-making; Avoid undervaluing what is difficult to assess i.e., quality of justice; Minimize burden on clients and programs; Determine priority to be given to assessment; Avoid undervaluing informal assessments.
- b. Assessment should be sensitive to external factors such as funding, political culture and demographics of the community.
- c. Goals and values should be clearly stated.
- d. Evaluation should not divert resources away from program delivery. Therefore, in order to prevent a chilling effect on creativity of programs, time spent must be balanced against the drain on resources that can be burdensome and overwhelming.
- e. Assessment must support, as opposed to undermine, the mission of providing meaningful access to legal information for low-income people.
- f. The group recognized the difficulty in valuing legal assistance on a social level.



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## 3.0 Government Documents

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### 3.1 PLEI-Related Documents

A number of the documents reviewed in this section precede the five-year period mandated in the bibliography's objectives. Some older materials were included if they were believed to be relevant to current evaluation contexts. Others, such as the 1986 evaluation assessment, were included to provide an historical perspective on the types of research conducted by and for the Department of Justice. This report can be contrasted with the most recent, comprehensive PLEI evaluation from 1997: *Tools for moving forward*.

**Abdelahad, L., Sansfacon, D. & Beaulne, A. (1989). *Access to justice: research reports on PLEI, research notes*. Research and Development Directorate, Department of Justice Canada.**

#### General Overview

This compilation of “notes” summarizes twelve PLEI-related research reports written for the Department of Justice’s “Access to Justice” series between 1986 and 1987. Although the summaries do not provide guidance for evaluating PLEI in themselves, four of the entries may prove useful in developing an evaluation framework. In 1984 the Department of Justice created the “Access to Legal Information Fund” along with a strategy to fund new PLEI organizations in six provinces and territories. The funding was granted for a three-year period and toward the end of that time a call for tenders to evaluate these programs was issued. Two external consulting companies were hired to evaluate three out of the six programs (Manitoba, Yukon and Newfoundland), and their reports are annotated in this document.

- R. Hikel, C. Meredith, C. Wihak, A. Woods (ABT Associates of Canada) (1986): Evaluation of the Community Legal Education Association [Manitoba], Department of Justice, Ottawa.
- R. Hikel, C. Meredith, C. Wihak, A. Woods (ABT Associates of Canada) (1987): Evaluation of the Yukon Public Legal Education Association, Department of Justice, Ottawa.
- D.H. Access Research Associates Inc. (1987): Evaluation of the Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland, Department of Justice, Ottawa.

The other summary in this collection that is especially relevant to PLEI evaluation was on the Resource Book created by Focus Consultants as a result of the proposal annotated below.

- Currie, Janet & Roberts, Tim (1986): An Evaluation Resource Book for Public Legal Education and Information Organizations, Department of Justice, Ottawa. [See section 4.2].

**Alderson-Gill and Associates. (1995). *Public legal education and information program: A new vision for PLEI*. Department of Justice Canada.**

### **General Overview**

This document outlines a new role for the Department of Justice within the existing PLEI network and proposes three areas for emphasis and development. The three specified areas are: (i) cultivation of partnerships; (ii) ACJ Net; and (iii) focus on education. The new “vision” was created with the intention of addressing limited availability of resources while maximizing national benefits of PLEI activities. Each area of emphasis identified in the report situates the Department in a position to undertake the necessary evaluation components. Moreover, there is explicit recognition that assuming a leadership role in specialized research and evaluation of PLEI is a cost effective measure for all parties participating in PLEI. Under the mandate of cultivating partnerships, the Department can facilitate networking between PLEI providers. Through centralized coordination, providers can be certain that activities and efforts are not unnecessarily duplicating those of others. This encourages information sharing and should ultimately lead to incremental improvements for PLEI. Examples given for the Department’s role include fostering a national network of organizations, creating a national PLEI advisory process, maintaining a current telecommunications network, and coordinating national strategies. Much of this work can be facilitated by ACJNet, which is the second major area of emphasis recommended. The link between evaluation and an emphasis on education is clearly anticipated in the report. By focusing on this area, Departmental contributions will increase knowledge about the relative effectiveness of different approaches to legal education through research and evaluation that is too costly for individual jurisdictions to fund in a systematic way. As the need for research and evaluation is widely acknowledged, the Department has a role to play in demonstrating leadership and coordinating partnerships in this area.

### **Challenges of Funder’s Evaluation Requirements**

- The paper states that due to scarce resources funders are most interested in knowing whether PLEI services are having an impact and that “evidence of impact is easier to come by in the case of targeted PLEI programs than it is in the general distribution of PLEI pamphlets and booklets to the public” (p.13).
- Funders that focus on quantitative data i.e., how many pamphlets were distributed, overlook the more active meaning of PLEI dissemination that “incorporates a responsibility to ensure that the recipients receive the information, understand it and act on it.”

### **Evaluation Methodologies**

- PLEI involving plain language in legislation, etc. requires testing on consumer/client groups to determine if the language is clear and if the impact of the change can be perceived.
- Use of ACJNet to facilitate ongoing consultations, both formal and informal about programs and materials.



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## **Currie, J. & Roberts, T. (1984). An evaluation resource book for PLEI organizations: A proposal. Department of Justice Canada.**

### **General Overview**

This is a proposal for the creation of an evaluation resource book for PLEI organizations. The Canadian Law Information Council (“CLIC”), which was the clearinghouse for PLEI in Canada at the time of the research, contracted out this project to Focus Consultants. The paper identifies and discusses a number of basic challenges and specific problems that inhibit PLEI evaluation. Although most groups contacted did engage in some form of evaluation, the general consensus was that current evaluations were ineffective, incomplete and poorly utilized for the desired purposes. In advocating for the creation of a Canadian PLEI evaluation resource book, the authors note that “while there is a great deal of evaluation material being produced for human services and educational organizations, [they] found little that relates specifically to PLEI. PLEI incorporates aspects of both human service and educational programming but it has a distinctive overlay because of its legal focus and involvement of legal professionals” (p.23). Moreover, the PLEI providers interviewed identified a number of evaluation skills that were lacking within their organizations. They all thought that the proposed resource book would be extremely useful, especially for ensuring a common understanding between the Government, other funders and among PLEI organizations. Most of the challenges and specific problems identified in the report can be addressed through centralization of evaluation materials and criteria by an agency such as PLEAC or a branch of the Department of Justice. Many of the obstacles to meaningful evaluation come from a lack of clarity as to definitions and objectives of the projects and the evaluation itself. By providing guidelines and the skills/methods required to undertake evaluation, some of the burden may be alleviated. The challenges and obstacles enumerated in this report are still relevant to PLEI evaluation today. Together with the resource book that was written by the same authors in 1986, this report has enduring significance and should be used in developing evaluation materials and information.

### **The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation**

#### ***Contextual Factors***

- The findings of this extensive research revealed a number of contextual factors that present significant barriers to PLEI evaluation. These include:
  - (i) Lack of experience and expertise.
  - (ii) Diversity in the structure and delivery of programs. Differences in focus and format often relate to varying definitions and/or intentions of the program. For example, a program targeted at knowledge acquisition ought to be assessed differently from one that seeks to effect attitudinal changes. Similarly, some services tend to be case-flow oriented and therefore outcome-driven, while others adopt broader objectives of empowerment, equality enhancement and increased democratic participation. Again, it is necessary to understand these objectives before approaching a program for evaluation.
  - (iii) Different emphasis and goals held by funders and providers leads to distinctive modes of evaluation (qualitative versus quantitative).
  - (iv) Resistance and inability of lawyers to elicit feedback for their services.

- (v) Ideological opposition to reinforcing barriers between participants and the authoritative “teachers”.
- (vi) Practical considerations include: confidentiality of client information and lack of funds
  - a. Lack of funding in the system generally (evaluation = cutting programs).
  - b. Lack of funds in organizations: low priority to direct resources toward evaluation.
  - c. Lack of significant funds from any one funder to support comprehensive evaluation.
- The cumulative effect of these contextual barriers was that evaluation was seen as “too difficult, too time consuming and too painful.”

### ***Problem Areas Discovered***

- Contextual factors are often difficult to change.
- Internal evaluations:
  - (i) Lack of evaluation skills in the staff and lawyers working in the organizations.
  - (ii) Lack of objectivity.
  - (iii) Lack of information sharing between PLEI organizations.
  - (iv) Resort to purely quantitative evaluation to satisfy funders.
  - (v) Questionnaires and surveys are not sufficiently critical or in depth to assist with increasing effectivity.
  - (vi) Poorly articulated goals and objectives.
- External evaluations:
  - (i) Lack of control over type and content of evaluation.
  - (ii) Lack of commitment to using results beyond statistics collected.
  - (iii) Funders and external evaluators do not accept responsibility for programs.
  - (iv) Poorly articulated goals and objectives (interviewees indicated that goals were often too lofty or unrealistic to produce a meaningful evaluation).

### **Evaluation Methodologies**

- External, professional evaluations were discussed in the report and although they can be very beneficial in some circumstances, they cannot constitute the primary method of ongoing PLEI evaluation.
- Informal methods discussed include: peer review, staff “think tanks” and community networks which involve other PLEI and non-PLEI organizations that share or overlap in terms of clientele or research areas.



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**Godin, J. (1994). More than a crime: A report on the lack of public legal information materials for immigrant women who are subject to wife assault. Research Section, Department of Justice Canada.**

### **General Overview**

As noted in the title, this paper confirms the lack of PLEI materials available at that time for immigrant women who were victims/survivors of wife assault. Through interviews and a literature review the author identifies the need for PLEI materials in this area and some of the major challenges that must be recognized if and when the materials are produced. When read as a form of needs assessment, this document reiterates that comprehensive and effective evaluation requires informative and thorough needs assessment on the front end. Only by understanding the obstacles faced by various populations to accessing legal information can the provision of that information be assessed in a meaningful way.

### **The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation**

- Although the basic need for PLEI materials was undisputed by various organizations and agencies that dealt with immigrant women and/or victims of wife assault, the stronger message from these groups was the need for this material to be sensitive to corresponding issues faced by the target groups.
- Due to complexity, it is very difficult to evaluate cultural sensitivity.
- The author recounts that “PLEI is not useful if it is not retained” (p.13). This is an important point for evaluators to remember, since the common post-program survey does not account for retention levels. Therefore, while some key information such as suitability of location and time may be lost if evaluation is postponed, other data cannot be assessed immediately. Depending on the purpose of the evaluation, it may be pertinent to conduct follow up interviews after one, six, or twelve months have passed.

### **Challenges of Funders’ Evaluation Requirements**

- The objectivity gained by funders’ evaluations must be offset against the unparalleled feedback that community groups can offer regarding the effectiveness of PLEI materials. Just as genuine understanding of particular circumstances is critical at the needs assessment phase, evaluation must also be tailored to reflect the cultural, social and political characteristics of the targeted group.

### **Evaluation Methods**

- PLEI materials in this area were being field tested in consultations with relevant communities throughout the province.



**Moliner, M. (1997). *Public legal education and information review: Tools for moving forward*. Programs Branch, Department of Justice Canada.**

### General Overview

This review offers the most recent assessment of the Department of Justice's involvement in PLEI programs. The report articulates multiple reasons for the Department's continued connection and suggests that Justice Canada clarify its role in PLEI delivery, which may be accomplished by ceasing to produce PLEI materials and distinguishing Departmental "Communications" from PLEI. After looking at PLEI delivery across Canada and consulting with many providers, the Advisory Committee proposes that the Department set criteria for funding PLEI, as well as introduce a multi-year funding strategy and a funding infrastructure for a national NGO such as PLEAC. The review further advises that funding and policy initiatives be targeted in order to fill existing gaps in PLEI (both population-related and issue-related gaps) and that the Department should take a leadership role in ensuring that this "targeted approach" is adopted by core PLEI providers. With regard to PLEI evaluation specifically, the review reaffirms that "evaluation of PLEI program delivery is necessary to ensure that it is achieving results" and that the Department of Justice should "support the creation of an evaluation tool to assess whether or not PLEI is having the desired impact." It further suggests that any evaluative framework developed be consistent with the targeted approach taken to funding and policy issues: the "needs, gaps, and priorities" analysis. Evaluation is seen here as a shared responsibility between funders and core PLEI providers. Accordingly, the role of the Department of Justice and other funders is to identify evaluation objectives and the provider's task is to make the evaluation relevant. The single evaluation-related recommendation is found in "Proposed Direction 7": *It is proposed that Justice Canada require evaluations of audiences reached by the PLEI initiatives it funds and the impact they achieved.*

### The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation

- Problems arise when evaluation purposes are not clearly defined, and more specifically what motives/agendas/biases are informing the evaluation.
- Many providers think it is too hard and too expensive to measure the impact of their services.
- The value of PLEI work remains largely unmeasured and therefore the willingness to continue funding programs is faltering.
- Due to the complexity of the PLEI context many critical questions go unanswered:
  - (i) Against what standard (internal or universal) is PLEI being judged.
  - (ii) In any given evaluation is it PLEI that is "on trial," a particular approach, or a specific activity.
  - (iii) How are relevant comparisons made when activities and audiences vary greatly.
  - (iv) How do you place a value on the impact realized from each separate effort or activity.
  - (v) How do you evaluate the evaluation i.e., the results may be predetermined depending on whether the evaluator places greater "value" on cost efficiency as opposed to reaching a small group of multiply-disadvantaged persons.





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## Connections between Goals of PLEI and its Evaluation

- PLEI organizations understand and routinely insist that the evaluation be tied to goals and objectives.
- The necessary objectives cited for determining whether a PLEI program is successful were taken from a 1979 Report of the “Law and the Layman Committee.” Though unquestionably important, these criteria were fairly simplistic and uninformative in terms of providing guidance for how evaluations may be addressed.

## Challenges of Funder’s Evaluation Requirements

- Concern that funder-driven evaluations will be misinterpreted and lead to skewed funding decisions.
- An ongoing concern for the Department is that “the reputation of [its] PLEI program remains misunderstood if it is unable to present a business case which indicates that the services it funds are effective as well as cost-efficient” (p.39).
- A program review initiated by the Law Foundation of Alberta resulted in cutting 40% of funding to programs such as PLEI intermediary organizations. This illustrates that the fear that evaluations equal funding cuts is valid.
- Even when methods for evaluating PLEI are devised, it is difficult to attach a dollar value to the various successes or shortfalls that emerge.

## Evaluation Methodologies

- Types of “soft” evaluation methods discussed include: gathering anecdotal comments, counting heads, using evaluation forms, soliciting expert critiques, field testing and comparing efforts of one PLEI program to another to learn from the experiences of colleagues.
- One PLEI provider suggested the use of a “pre-test experimental design [that would] assess changes in knowledge, attitudes, etc” (p.42).
- Another method suggested was to engage in participant observation (i.e. in small claims court) to observe changes in self-help skills.
- Other methods discussed in the electronic conference were:
  - (i) Qualitative – anecdotal comments, focus groups, field testing.
  - (ii) Formative – early client input, focus groups of target populations, field testing.
  - (iii) Peer review – specific activities or informal/spontaneous feedback.
- Methods can be facilitated by provincial and national PLEI associations and it is generally agreed that experiences should be shared to a greater extent.

- Due to a lack of resources longitudinal studies are not realistic and other types of evaluative interactions/efforts have not been well documented. However, feedback seems to suggest that these less formalized methods are beneficial, but that they must be synthesized in some manner in order to track changes and incorporate transformations more effectively.
- The report does not indicate that PLEI providers would like to see formal evaluations substituted for other methods of assessments and impact analysis.

### Useful Materials for PLEI Evaluation

One possible evaluation methodology was suggested where the purposes of evaluating PLEI would be to:

1. Evaluate what PLEI needs are met by core PLEI providers. Specifically:
    - a. Who is reached?
    - b. How did they gain access?
    - c. Did they understand the information they received?
    - d. Were they able to act effectively on the basis of the legal information provided?
  2. Evaluate what gaps exist in PLEI delivery:
    - a. Who is not reached and why?
- It is anticipated that adhering to this type of evaluation would facilitate priority setting by identifying which populations are most in need and are not being adequately served by existing programs.

***Public legal education and information: An evaluation assessment.* (1986).  
Programme Evaluation Section, Department of Justice Canada.**

### General Overview

This document looks at the current state of PLEI delivered and funded by the Department and contemplates whether the operation as a whole should undergo a full-scale evaluation. The evaluation is focused on the level of support by the Department to other PLEI providers, and therefore, it is somewhat limited in its applicability to independent PLEI organizations who are engaged in self-evaluation. In light of the interrelationship between definitional clarity and useful evaluation, a portion of the text is dedicated to defining the terms “public” “legal” “education” and “information.” The following section provides a profile of the Department’s PLEI program both pre and post 1984 by outlining various initiatives. It is noted that there is a definite lack of policy development in this area. The paper divides major issues of evaluation and methodology into two parts: (i) program management issues (highlighting flaws in design and implementation) and (ii) impact and effectiveness issues. A series of questions accompany each “issue.”



Under the program management rubric, questions are styled to help refine and focus the program and the manner in which funding decisions are made. The questions under the second rubric are more directly relevant to PLEI organizations or their funders who are seeking accountability. Despite the general nature of the questions, they may be useful for guiding development of evaluation criteria and methodology. However, this assessment is not universally applicable to PLEI provider evaluation. For example, a PLEI organization would want to elicit responses that enable them to measure a program's effectiveness for a particular target group. Yet, in this study the question of "how much understanding of the information provided do the recipients display" was deemed to be "non-evaluable."

In summary, the division between management and impact/effectiveness used in this study may still be useful for Departmental assessments when considering its role in PLEI. Beyond that there is little practical utility to this paper for PLEI providers as the basis for this particular assessment was to determine the degree of risk for the Department if it made a decision about its PLEI programs with or without the results of a full-scale evaluation. Thus, where the goals and objectives of an evaluation are related to overall efficiency of resource use for the Department the issues raised are still applicable, whereas for purposes of ongoing monitoring and specific program evaluation, they are not critical. Finally, the costs involved in a full evaluation such as the one described are much higher than could be realistically spent by a PLEI organization, even on the provincial level. Therefore, the only PLEI partner who could benefit from using the information provided in this document would be the Department of Justice as they endeavour to assess their role in the Canadian PLEI landscape.

### **Evaluation Methodologies**

- Interviews with Department of Justice officials.
- Expert assessment of PLEI materials.
- Documentation review.
- Project review.
- Surveys (e.g. PLEI sponsors, other PLEI programs, etc.).
- Incorporating information from other evaluations.

### **Useful Materials for PLEI Evaluation**

Some of the questions included in the impact and effectiveness section include:

- Whether the PLEI projects funded by the Department have produced the intended effect of providing the general public and/or specified target groups with information related to their needs.
- Whether the availability of PLEI has increased the general public's and/or selected groups' knowledge and understanding of the law.
- Whether the PLEI programme has led to a change in public and/or target group attitudes to the law and the legal system.

- Whether the Department has promoted the development of new methods and techniques for PLEI delivery.

### 3.2 Other Evaluation Documents

The Department of Justice has undertaken many evaluations of the PLEI projects it has funded. Although this practice has been less frequent in recent years, the report noted below is a good example of a governmental impact assessment.

**Ellis, P. (1995). *Educational programs that alter knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of youth*. Research and Statistics Division and Evaluation Directorate, Department of Justice Canada.**

This is a good review of literature and discussion on changing attitudes through Youth-in-school programs, Youth-out-of-school programs and also with regard to adult education and attitude changes in general. It looks at eight possible behaviour modification components and surveys 46 documents that study and address attitudinal change through education.



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## 4.0 Evaluation Reports

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### 4.1 PLEI Evaluations

The reports annotated in this section are actual evaluations, both internal and external, of recent PLEI initiatives. Based on the selection, it can be noted that PLEI organizations that perform comprehensive evaluations do so in a methodical and consistent manner. The approach, documentation and analysis in many of these reports can be applied to various PLEI programs in other jurisdictions.

**Burtch, B. & Reid, K. (1993). *Discovering barriers to legal education: First-generation immigrants in greater Vancouver*. Vancouver: The People's Law School.**

#### General Overview

This evaluation report was produced for the People's Law School ("PLS") in Vancouver, British Columbia. The objectives of this assessment were three-fold: (i) to determine who is using the PLEI programs provided by the school; (ii) what barriers exist for first generation immigrants to accessing legal information resources and how PLS can overcome these barriers; and (iii) to measure the role played by PLEI in immigrant settlement and adaptation. The primary method of PLEI provision addressed is the school's free law classes that are offered as part of the Cultural Minorities Program. The study used a control group approach whereby participants were divided on the basis of whether or not they had attended PLS free law classes. The study is intended to improve the delivery of services offered by PLS and to provide "information of direct relevance to immigrant-serving agencies in B.C., as well as people concerned with policy development and the administration of justice in B.C." Much of this report may be useful to organizations that encounter first generation immigrant populations in their work. However, the actual questionnaire and Interviewer's Manual may be very helpful to a wider range of PLEI organizations. In particular, the "rules for interviewing" provide some simple directions for eliminating bias in questioning and prompting. These instructions are especially pertinent where consistency concerns arise due to multiple interviewers. Furthermore, the background information and legal needs questions may be easily adapted to accommodate different populations and other topics of legal information.

#### Common components of evaluation

- External evaluation.
- Four objectives for the study are clearly articulated in the document and are linked to the conclusions.
- Recommendations include a number of suggestions for further research/assessment projects.

## The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation

- Evaluators found it difficult to generate a population sample. Most of those approached were suspicious of the law, often because of political repression experienced in their country of origin, or thought that the data would be used for government purposes. Moreover, many participants perceived the questions as dealing with private matters and were hesitant to discuss income levels and attitudes toward policies.

## Evaluation Methodologies

- The study was conducted by way of semi-structured interviews that followed a lengthy questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: (i) 24 questions regarding background information (personal characteristics); and (ii) 18 questions regarding legal information needs.
- The questionnaires in all five languages were pre-tested and modified where necessary.
- Interviewers were recruited from the five ethnic communities surveyed. All interviewers were bilingual and attempts were made to match genders between the interviewer and interviewee. Interviewers participated in a training session on the questionnaire and were given an Interviewer's Manual that included general rules for interviewing as well as specific background information and probing techniques for most of the questions.
- Hypothetical legal scenarios were used to test knowledge differentials for those who have attended free law classes in each of the five cultural groups.

**Curtis, C. K. & Meehan, G. (2001). *Courtlink auto crime prevention program: Evaluation report*. Vancouver: Law Courts Education Society of British Columbia.**

## General Overview

This 13-hour program was designed for senior elementary classes and alternative schools in British Columbia and was developed by the Law Courts Education Society of B.C. The goals of the evaluation were two-fold: (i) to identify reactions of experiences with the program; and (ii) to assess the degree to which the program met its two stated goals of increasing knowledge and promoting positive attitudes. Different evaluation tools were used to measure the two goals. This report exhibits an extremely thorough understanding of evaluation methodologies and included a detailed analysis of findings. At every stage of the report the authors explain why particular choices were made in the process and offer suggestions as to effective methods for developing PLEI evaluations for different populations. Similar to other formal, external evaluations, the methodologies sections provide useful information for subsequent PLEI evaluations. The steps taken in developing both the survey research and the pre-test/post-test instruments are explained in detail and may be adapted to other educational programs. Research questions and various assessment instruments that were developed are all appended to the report and would be a good starting point for any school-based PLEI programs.



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## Common Components of Evaluation

- External evaluation.
- Built into the project design and conducted pre-program, concurrently and post-program.
- Goals of the evaluation and the educational program were articulated in the report and evaluation methods were matched to different goals.
- One of the recommendations suggested an annual review and update of materials used by teachers to ensure that they are time sensitive. This is a common way that projects can perform ongoing monitoring without incurring great expenses of hiring external evaluators.

## The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation

- Open-ended questions are often desirable to elicit emotional, psychological and intuitive responses, however, it is important for PLEI providers to rank the preferred or “more desirable” answers to questions in order to clarify intended outcomes.
- Limitations placed on feedback surveys may encourage consistency in reporting. It is important to offer an opportunity to discuss “factors” that affect the administration of the program somewhere on the questionnaire. For example, it is not sufficient to ask whether a particular activity was useful or effective without knowing how much time was allocated to that activity or if it was appropriate to the particular students involved.
- One drawback of pre-testing is that participants have knowledge of the study which may threaten the validity of the tests.

## Connections between Goals of PLEI and Evaluation

- Goals of PLEI programs should be realistic and sensitive to target audiences and environments. For example, if students show possession of prior knowledge about a particular topic, facilitators should not expect to see “substantial gains in knowledge” which may be a stated goal.

## Evaluation Methodologies

- Questionnaires were constructed for three groups (facilitators were given two different questionnaires to complete) to measure the experiences of the program.
- Pre- and post-tests were given to students to measure change in knowledge and attitude.
  - All tests were pilot-tested and modifications were made accordingly.
  - Tests included some scenario questions that asked for responses as to what should be done and what action would likely be taken.



- Evaluators also sought oral feedback from students and teachers regarding what they thought and how they felt about the program.

## **Ellis, D. (1997). *Program review*. Vancouver: The People’s Law School.**

### **General Overview**

This study summarizes a comprehensive review of the People’s Law School (“PLS”) PLEI programs. It involved a range of PLEI stakeholders in an attempt to view PLS services from a local and provincial perspective. Thirty conclusions were drawn, which were grouped into eight categories of inquiry, as well as five recommendations directed specifically toward the staff and Board of PLS. Although the “findings and learnings” collected for each population or method of evaluation were intended for the staff and Board of PLS, other PLEI organizations will benefit from reviewing these findings. The evaluation is clearly written and the structure of the report allows for easy access to relevant information, especially the bulleted section that follows each question entitled “What do we/can we learn from these findings?” The tools used in the various evaluation components are appended to the report and may be useful to PLEI providers in designing evaluations. These include samples of the interview guide, client feedback sheet, resource/pamphlet feedback sheet and focus group guides with topics and questions.

### **Common Components of Evaluation**

- External evaluation.
- Conducted post-program.
- Program review had clear, but broad objectives: “to analyze the efficiency and effectiveness of the present programs of the People’s Law School with regard to current and emerging needs for PLEI and to consider the Society’s role in relation to other PLEI providers in the province” (p.8).
- No comment on further or ongoing evaluations.

### **The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation**

- It is difficult to assess whether there is overlap between programs for a number of reasons:
  - PLEI providers believe that need is so great that there can never be enough PLEI.
  - No commitment to sharing information in order to decrease duplication.
  - Not enough trust between organizations to effectively coordinate initiatives.
  - Belief that innovation is more likely to occur with a larger number of smaller organizations than with larger amalgamations.





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## Challenges of Funders' Evaluation Requirements

- Despite the reticence to discuss overlap, funders are highly concerned with duplication of efforts and program overlap between PLEI providers and want this type of analysis included in evaluations.
- Suggestions for better coordination between core PLEI providers came primarily from funders even though there is reluctance from PLEI organizations.

## Evaluation Methodologies

- Identified methodology was a qualitative, participatory approach.
- Two focus groups: (i) staff at PLS and (ii) Board of PLS.
- Materials/pamphlet feedback from PLEI distributors.
- Interviews with funders, groups with unmet PLEI needs, co-sponsors of PLS programs and observer-experts in the PLEI field all conducted in informant's native language.
- Client feedback surveys (684 were returned).

**Law Courts Education Society of British Columbia. (2000). *Journeys of justice First Nations research project: Final report*. Vancouver: Law Courts Education Society of British Columbia.**

## General Overview

This detailed evaluation began two years after the First Nations Journeys of Justice curriculum was introduced into elementary schools in British Columbia. The study was conducted over four years and the primary objective was to examine whether the curriculum has a “positive effect on the students’ knowledge, attitudes and ultimately behaviour regarding the law” (p.4). The breadth and nature of the study required both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods to be developed. The ways in which these two research aspects interrelate (complement or contradict) is analyzed within the reports findings. This section is particularly informative as there is usually little or no attention paid in the evaluation reports reviewed regarding how various tools interact with one another. The other section that has potential for general application to PLEI evaluation is Part 6 “Key Issues of Research Methodology” (p.106-117). Some details of these challenges are highlighted below, but given the infrequency with which these issues are addressed in other reports, PLEI organizations may find it helpful to review this section and identify challenges faced by other educational programs. Overall this is an excellent model for evaluation. However, the extent of the research and the allocated funding are significantly greater than what is feasible for most PLEI organizations or funders.

## Common Components of Evaluation

- External, committee-driven evaluation that was primarily coordinated by Law Courts Education Society of B.C. There were some First Nation education consultants included, who were also involved in designing the curriculum.
- Evaluation commenced two years after the program was implemented in schools and was conducted concurrently to program delivery for grades 4,5 and 6 students.
- Goals of the evaluation were clear, but expansive given the length of the study.

## The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation

- Due to the native content and partially native participant populations in the program, it was important to have qualitative studies conducted by local residents who had training and familiarity with the community. Even though the materials and tests were pilot-tested, this still proved to be an important issue for collecting relevant data.
- Three key issues were highlighted for future research in similar settings (longitudinal studies in elementary schools). They were:
  - (i) Change in makeup of student populations.
  - (ii) Change in school personnel and teaching styles.
  - (iii) Modifications in testing variables and curriculum.
- Other issues/challenges specific to the project were grouped into three major categories:
  - (i) Local issues i.e., getting permissions, teachers/student changes during school year, travel distances, unexpected interruptions, change in research process to accommodate unique problems.
  - (ii) Analysis and research issues i.e. programs followed differently in schools, gaps in comparative data, lack of consistency in teaching and testing procedures.
  - (iii) Administrative issues i.e., due to complexity the project required more time and effort than anticipated.

## Evaluation Methodologies

### *Quantitative Tools Developed*

- Pre/post-tests covering general and specific knowledge.
- Attitude surveys (pre/post surveys were interchangeable).
- Behaviour questionnaires tailored to three population groups.



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### ***Qualitative Tools Used***

- Semi-structured interviews.
- Focus groups.
- Classroom observation and recorded field notes.
- Classroom stories/ “lived experience stories” communicated orally by teachers, students and community members mostly related to noticed changes in behaviours and attitudes. The authors note that “this story approach is congruent with First Nations oral tradition which utilizes life experience stories...and can be used to illustrate themes and to provide a basis or structure for ‘data analysis’” (p.56).

**Shariff, S. (2000). *Identifying successful school and community programs for youth: An evaluation rubric and compendium of sources – DRAFT*. Youth Justice Education Partnership, Department of Justice Canada. Retrieved December 20, 2001, from <http://www.extension.ualberta.ca/youthjustice/rubric.htm>.**

### **General Overview**

The two primary objectives of this document were to (i) identify sources of information on conduct intervention programs both in school and in the community (Compendium of Sources); and (ii) to develop an evaluation rubric to help identify critical intervention programs both in school and in the community (reproduced below). Twenty-two school programs were evaluated using the rubric, which was developed to be sufficiently flexible to apply to a variety of multi-disciplinary programs; here the programs were categorized under health, education and justice. The rubric forms the basis of a national standard for program analysis, and as such it should not be seen as restricted to programs directed at youth. Although the findings of these twenty-two program evaluations are divided into “didactic” and “holistic” programs, this distinction is not necessary to the value of the rubric. The structure incorporates four conceptual approaches to evaluation, which are based on the work of 5 different authors. Combining elements from these various approaches a rubric was created that is “broadly and consistently applicable to programs, policies, or evaluation studies of programs and policies” (p.29). As mentioned in the introduction, the production of comprehensive resources that list the available PLEI materials in any given area are extremely useful and can benefit all PLEI providers nationally and internationally. The compendium of sources compiled in this research project is an excellent example of such a resource. Categories of sources include: journals, relevant journal articles and academic papers, video-tapes and databases, books relevant to schools, conference papers, relevant legislation, etc. These are further divided up under whole school programs, school-community programs and community programs and additionally there are topical lists of sources such as restorative justice and mediation and programming for youth.

One recurring practice in evaluation that was emphasized in this project was the need to understand the subject matter from a range of perspectives. This familiarity can be acquired thorough a multi-disciplinary literature review. Depending on the resources available and who

is undertaking the evaluation this background work will vary in degree. For example, if a PLEI organization is conducting an evaluation of their programs or materials they may not require much extensive research into the area. On the other hand, in order to ensure that projects are addressing pressing issues and are maximally sensitive to contextual factors facing the targeted audiences, it is valuable to be alert to current, relevant research. In this vein, the project looked at the influence of administrative policies within schools, studies on boredom as it relates to youth and violence and other animating factors such as poverty and employment.

### **Common Components of Evaluation**

- Classification of internal or external is not applicable to this research project given the mandate of developing an evaluation rubric. However, among the programs evaluated with the rubric, most had been subject to some form of evaluation with a mix of internal and external evaluators.
- Objectives of the project were clearly articulated

### **The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation**

- Main limitation noted throughout the project was time and as evaluation is an ongoing process there is always the ability to collect more information. For this reason, the authors noted that many exceptional programs could not be included.
- The scope of the programs evaluated in the project made it logistically difficult to obtain data from across the country.
- Finding documented reports of programs was difficult as “those running excellent programs are too busy to document their work because they expend all their time and energy on the young people they serve...and have too little time to record or document the philosophy, activities, or successes and failures” (p.31).
- As with most other subject areas, there is the need to attempt to overcome assumptions and rhetoric used in the language and approach to youth at risk and violence in schools.

### **Connections between Goals of PLEI and Evaluation**

- The second branch of the rubric requires an examination of whether the stated goals of the programs are being met, which is especially relevant to funders seeking accountability.

### **Evaluation Methodologies**

- Methods used in the evaluation studies ranged from oral accounts of successes to formal and extensive tracking of student’s lives, careers, activities and families over many years. Other common methods included: pre/post program tests; student incident reports of bullying, rebellious or delinquent behaviour; classroom



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observation; website feedback; home visitation studies; surveys and questionnaires; staff/teacher interviews; information gathering regarding attitude changes between pre and post program.

### **Useful Materials for PLEI Evaluation**

The rubric is reproduced below in its entirety and can be found in the executive summary of the document.

#### ***YJEP Evaluation Rubric***

##### **Rationale and goals: What is the program trying to accomplish?**

**(Is it critical, ethical, transformative, educational, dialectic, legally defensible?)**

- What is the underlying philosophy behind the program and what are its objectives?

##### **Key Elements of the program: How does it meet its goals?**

- What are the key elements (content, format and implementation) that contribute to success or demonstrate potential success?

##### **Program evaluation disclosed in the research**

- Describe the results of studies evaluating the program and methods used to conduct such evaluation, if available.

##### **Examine the context: For whom, what setting and with what attitude?**

- Evaluate the potential of programs and models for intervening in different settings among different populations of youth (in terms of individual characteristics of youth targeted by the program; the socio-cultural school context; antecedent factors that impact their lives such as age, family background, ethnicity, poverty, boredom, gender, sexual orientation, physical and mental health, ability or disability and existing administrative policies.)

##### **Implications for program success or areas of improvement:**

**(Is the program approach transformative, critical, educational, ethical, dialectic, and legally defensible?)**

- Analysis and discussion of program in terms of the above criteria and the literary research from multi-disciplinary perspectives: education, social psychological and transforming personas.

Sy, S. S. & Anderson, K. (1999). *Violet: Learning on the net. Final report to the Office of Learning Technologies*. Retrieved December 24, 2001, from <http://www.acjnet.org/home.cfm>.

### General Overview

This is a multi-phase project which involves construction, training and evaluation of an interactive website for women who have experienced violence and their service providers. The first phase entailed constructing the website and building the capacity of women's shelters to access the Internet. The second phase, reported in this document, involved a literature review, descriptions of the web design process and the research methodologies and the findings of two evaluations. In an attempt to improve understandings of how a particular group of women (abused women and their service providers) learn about the law using Internet technologies two research strategies were used: (i) small-group qualitative study; (ii) external evaluation using expert analysis and usability testing. This document is an excellent resource for other web-based learning projects. The literature review and bibliography are extensive and multi-faceted and the evaluation findings are summarized thematically and easily transferable to other subject areas. The excerpt from the external evaluation includes numerous and detailed suggestions regarding effective methods for tailoring websites to accommodate different learning styles and contexts. Additionally, Appendix B delineates the research plan and may be a helpful guide to any organization that is designing an evaluation process.

### Common Components of Evaluation

- Two separate evaluations were conducted: external and internal.
- Evaluation was built into the design of the project. This is particularly useful where a program is still in the developmental stages and where the nature of the medium used is rapidly and constantly evolving as a learning and communication tool.
- Goals of phase II are clearly articulated in the report and were instrumental in project development.
- Outlined possible follow up research questions for subsequent evaluations (internal and external).

### The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation

- Using web-based delivery, researchers cannot know definitively who is using the site although there are some ways to identify users such as knowing how and to whom the site is promoted or through on-line feedback.
- Difficult to measure success and usefulness of the site for intended audience. Could institute a counting system, but this would not measure the usefulness, whether there was any change in the person's situation as a result of the program or whether it had an empowering effect on the user.



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## Connection between Goals of PLEI and Evaluation

- Objectives of the project, including long-term outcomes, were indicated at the start of the design process which assists with directing evaluation. The conclusions and findings were matched to the intended outcomes to determine success and effectiveness of the learning tool.

## Evaluation Methodologies

### *Group Qualitative Study by Project Members*

- Semi-structured question periods were held after training sessions with shelters and other organizations; included rural and urban shelters and emergency and second stage shelters.
- Pilot study of website conducted during half-day session with an organization that involved training, use of program and debriefing.
- No pre/post evaluation devices used to test knowledge, understanding, attitude change.
- Electronic diary was used after all testing sessions to track findings and record evaluation.

### *External Evaluation*

- Close examination of site including content, structural design strategy and identification of situational and psychological factors that impact site navigation.
- “Talk-aloud” with users as they navigate the Internet program while observing movements and facial expressions (this was done with five women with varying degrees of education, who were randomly chosen and who had not necessarily experienced domestic violence).
  - This method of evaluation has limited use i.e., not appropriate for young children.
  - It is very time-consuming, though highly informative.

**The People’s Law School. (1994). *Report of the multicultural and immigrant seniors legal education project, 1992-1994*. Vancouver: The People’s Law School.**

## General Overview

This project had a number of PLEI elements as well as a strong community development component. The target population and the specific needs they faced were identified through research of community and government agencies, and the People’s Law School created the Legal Education Project to address these identified needs. The evaluation report was produced, in part, for the purpose of helping other community-based PLEI organizations in



implementing their legal education programs with seniors. Five strategies were enumerated at the outset and a variety of activities were developed to achieve these objectives and strategies. These included over 90 legal education classes, professional workshops, radio programs, and two publications that were reproduced in five languages and disseminated to thousands of seniors. This report will be useful for PLEI providers and especially those whose mandate is to serve senior and/or immigrant populations. It is succinctly written and addresses a number of evaluation issues overlooked in other reports reviewed.

### **Common Components of Evaluation**

- Evaluation was internal and was developed and written by those who designed and implemented the various programs. An external evaluation was included in the original plans but had to be abandoned for budgetary reasons.
- Assessment occurred after most of the activities were concluded, however some of the key features of the project entailed long-term, ongoing objectives such as building community networks.
- Future research projects with evaluative components were suggested.

### **The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation**

- Advantages and disadvantages for using an internal evaluation were discussed. The authors recognized that integrated evaluations lack the objectivity gained from an evaluation that is removed from design and implementation. However, direct involvement was seen to inject the knowledge of where progression has occurred and how the project has adapted and changed over time.
- Many of the project's objectives cannot be measured by quantified means. For example, the benefits of networking between different immigrant populations about legal issues facing seniors in order to build information-sharing relationships "cannot be measured by counting the numbers of participants at events, or copies of publications distributed" (p.14).
- Similar to other community-based programs, the directives and directions for these projects came from participants and community members. Therefore, it is seen as inappropriate to evaluate the "success" of any given activity, as project management (from conception to completion) was administered by community members and tailor-made for unique audiences.

### **Challenges of Funders' Evaluation Requirements**

- Report included one section on the tension of balancing the community development process, which produces intangible benefits, against "deliverables" such as events or publications for both projects and funders. The authors note that "[i]f all or most deliverables are focused on numbers, events or publications it leaves few resources (time, energy, money, volunteers) for the community development work. Due to these pressures, the process may become the traditional 'top down' approach in which needs are defined by those furthest away from the community, and from those most affected" (p.21).





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## Evaluation Methodologies

- Feedback forms were distributed to all seniors who were involved in the project.
- Evaluation meeting/consultation was held for all committee members.
- Informal, oral feedback was given by service providers who attended professional development workshops.
- General observations of committees and events.
- Some project activities incorporated evaluation into design i.e., “breakout”/brainstorming sessions on how to establish and improve community ties and many new initiatives evolved out of the committees and projects.

**Whyte, K. J. (2000). *Native youth at risk courtlink program: Pilot project evaluation report*. Vancouver: Law Courts Education Society of British Columbia.**

## General Overview

This short evaluation report is very thorough and can serve as an excellent model for PLEI evaluation. The program evaluated is a two-day educational program for youth at risk, part of which takes place at a courthouse in the community where the school is located. The format used in collecting information closely matches the goals of the assessment such that all of the key issues are addressed. The range of evaluation techniques employed in the program review ensured that feedback could be easily translated into conclusions and recommendations. Participants were explicitly invited to share their views as to whether the program met its stated goals, yet they were also offered space in which to make general comments and suggestions for future programs. In evaluating the presentation of materials a range of variables was articulated and subdivided into categories under student and program variables. This element highlights the evaluator’s recognition that *how* the program is delivered is equally, if not more important than the curricula and materials of the program. This report also emphasizes the crucial link between the quality and effectiveness of the program and the ability of the program’s structure to adapt to a wide variance in student interest and ability.

## Common Components of Evaluation

- External evaluation
- Evaluation was built into the design of the pilot project and was conducted concurrent with program delivery.
- Goals of evaluation were clearly articulated in the report.
- Third goal was to determine whether further evaluation regarding impact and outcome was recommended. Given that all of the information and data collected indicated that the present curricula and presentation was very successful in reaching target group, no further evaluation of present materials was recommended.

## The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation

- Evaluator found that the feedback varied between the questionnaires and the personal comments of participants. For this reason, it was suggested that multiple forms of evaluation are preferred, where possible, to accommodate different levels of familiarity/comfort to alternative evaluation devices.
- Evaluator noted that the need for evaluation increases where the subject matter/topics addressed in the PLEI program touch on more sensitive issues. It was suggested that “should this Courtlink...incorporate materials on family violence and sexual abuse, it would be important to undertake an extensive evaluation, requiring multiple program contacts with the participating youth, teachers and family members” (p.20).

## Evaluation Methodologies

- Evaluator sat in on the full program at five sites throughout the province. Observations were recorded as well as substantive material covered in program activities.
- Informal interviews and discussions with teachers and students during and after program.
- Interview with the facilitator after each day of the program at all sites (10).
- Collection of quantitative data using written questionnaires from four groups: (all forms are appended to the report in Appendix A through D).
  - Students.
  - All observers (teachers, teach aides, volunteers, committee members, etc.).
  - Court personnel – questionnaire addressed pre-program information package.
  - Teachers – evaluation of pre-program materials.

## 4.2 Useful Materials and Sources

Although legal aid is often seen as separate from PLEI, the two services overlap more or less directly in different provinces. Given the historical connection to government funding, legal aid services have been the subject of numerous assessments and evaluations. Due to this pattern, these types of reports (arguably beyond PLEI provision) should be deferred to in developing PLEI evaluation. The first two entries were included by way of example as they are commonly referenced in other evaluation sources.



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**Brantingham, P. & Brantingham, P. (1984). *An evaluation of legal aid in British Columbia*. Bureau of Programme Evaluation and Internal Audit, Department of Justice Canada. Available from the Legal Resource Centre, Legal Studies Program, University of Alberta.**

This older report is a very comprehensive evaluation of legal aid in British Columbia, which includes “indirect” services such as PLEI. However, the aspect that pertains to PLEI evaluation is predominantly descriptive in nature and focuses on which organizations and offices at that time tended to prioritize PLEI. This evaluation was underway at the time when the province introduced budgetary cuts to legal aid, and therefore it includes some discussion of the relationship between the Legal Services Society, whose mandate includes PLEI delivery and the provision of other legal aid services. The evaluation was comprised of an accessibility analysis, an impact analysis and quality studies.

**Canadian Bar Association Standing Committee, National Legal Aid Liaison Committee. (1987). *Legal aid delivery models: A discussion paper*. Available from the Legal Resource Centre, Legal Studies Program, University of Alberta.**

This report focuses specifically on legal aid models and only peripherally addresses the impact of various models on community legal education. Here Community Legal Education is defined as the provision of information to low-income clientele who are already receiving some legal representation. Therefore, it does not include legal education to the broader public per se. However, this paper provides a good overview of various legal aid models and insofar as PLEI is included under legal aid in some provinces such as Ontario and BC, it is a useful analysis of how different models interact with complementary services such as public interest advocacy (test case litigation), law reform initiatives and community legal education.

**Currie, A. (1999). *Legal aid delivery in Canada: Past experience and future directions*. Research and Statistics Division, Department of Justice Canada.**

This report uses empirical studies to assess the cost and quality of different delivery models of legal aid. The author builds on the Canadian Bar Association’s report that was published in 1987 and offers a comprehensive overview of findings and analyses of various evaluation studies conducted between 1981 and 1998.

**Currie, A. & McEwon, C. (1998). *Assisted self-representation in criminal legal aid: An experiment in limited service delivery*. Research and Statistics Division, Department of Justice Canada.**

This report examines the factors affecting self-representation against a criminal charge once an individual has been refused legal aid. The review considered who rejected explanatory materials when offered, who accepted these materials and what difficulties these individuals face in using the materials for effective self-representation. The study looked at the usefulness of both general and specific PLEI materials and identified problems such as language barriers and overly complicated court proceedings. The authors concluded that the sample size used was too small to draw sufficient data for quantitative analysis and in-depth interviews would have produced more useful information. However, they did assert that although self-representation is not a promising or viable alternative, the PLEI materials in this area could be useful in other contexts to describe general court proceedings and provide information on other resources available to those in need of legal assistance.

**Currie, J. & Roberts, T. (1986). *An evaluation resource book for public legal education and information organizations*. Research and Statistics Section, Policy, Programs and Research Branch, Department of Justice Canada.**

### General Overview

This resource book is a practical evaluation tool and a source of information and ideas regarding approaches to PLEI evaluation. The book was designed to “deal with the evaluation needs of staff from large quasi-government PLEI organizations to small experimental programs; from well-developed programs with long histories to short-term focused projects” (p.1). The book is broken into six Modules that can be used independently from one another, although Module I is generally recommended for all PLEI evaluations. Though most of the Modules are task-oriented, they also provide background information to assist in making choices about appropriate evaluation methods. Some of the Modules are quite technical and will only be useful for those who have significant time and resources to devote to evaluation. However, the whole spectrum is covered in this one resource and many of the sections can be isolated for discrete purposes. This is an excellent resource for any organization that is involved in the provision of PLEI, and despite the date of publication it remains relevant to current PLEI services and programs.

The six Modules are:

- (i) PLANNING YOUR EVALUTION.
- (ii) USING AN EVALUATION CONSULTANT.
- (iii) TYPES OF EVALUTION YOU CAN DO.
- (iv) GATHERING THE DATA.
- (v) ANALYZING THE DATA.
- (vi) WRITING AND UTILIZING THE DATA.



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For consistency, examples of key issues/topics that are addressed in the resource book have been inserted under the same thematic headings that are used throughout this bibliography.

### **The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation**

- Who will do the evaluation: internal (staff) evaluator or external evaluator.
- Conflicts between the evaluator and the group.
- What to do if you have no power to affect the evaluation.

### **Connections between Goals or PLEI and its Evaluation**

- Goal oriented approach.
- How to develop evaluation goals and objectives.
- How can you determine whether the utilization rate of your program is satisfactory.
- How does the type of PLEI program affect data collection.
- Relating data collection to your evaluation purposes.

### **Challenges of Funders' Evaluation Requirements**

- Establishing a budget for an evaluation.
- Cutting evaluation costs.
- Determining costs and benefits for PLEI programs: difficulties and solutions

### **Evaluation Methodologies**

- Needs assessment.
- Program evaluations; organizational assessment; assessment of program utilization.
- Materials assessment.
- Impact assessment.
- Cost effectiveness assessment.
- Ways of structuring the questionnaire.
- Training interviewers.

Hessing, M. & Thompson, L. (1984). *The telephone legal information service of the legal resource centre of British Columbia: Evaluation report*. Available from the Legal Resource Center, Legal Studies Program, University of Alberta.

### General Overview

The legal information service is a telephone line where trained librarians offer legal-related information to the public as well as to intermediaries (businesses, government, schools, libraries and other private organizations such as NGO's). The staff librarians commissioned this evaluation study which looked at the phone lines exclusively and not the other PLEI services and programs offered in conjunction with the Legal Services Society of B.C. After many years of service they wanted statistical and qualitative data, collected from an objective party, that could identify if and how they could improve the provision of legal telephone services in the province. In addition to assessing the content of information disseminated and the utility and impact of the service provided to clients, the evaluator recognized the importance of considering other variables such as staff scheduling, the physical surroundings and office layout, training and upgrading and quality control.

### Common Components of Evaluation

- External evaluation.
- Conducted after services had been in place for seven or eight years. Although staff librarians maintained a monthly record of caller statistics, no formal evaluation had occurred to date.
- Evaluator noted that current methods of quality control such as “listening in” to calls are helpful in ensuring that information offered is accurate, appropriate and sufficient and that responses are consistent. Ongoing quality control was advised and recommendations were made to increase internal monitoring through information manuals, workshops and discussions.

### The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation

- Phone staff self-selected the “clients” that would participate in the study. Therefore, if someone was too emotional or there was a language barrier they were not asked to participate. This may produce some inaccuracies insofar as those who were not fluent in English or had other unique characteristics were not represented in the study.
- By involving staff in evaluation there is an increased risk that data collected is incomplete due to the added burden of collecting data and tracking their responses in addition to performing their work obligations. This was seen in a failure to include certain aspects of their “responses” to callers.
- It is difficult to ensure that methods of evaluations accommodate all the uses/users of the services. For example, although this service is primarily rendered by phone there are often written submissions for legal information that arrive via mail. These enquiries were not included in the study, as client profiles were limited to incoming calls.



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## Connection between Goals of PLEI and Evaluation

- Staff specified ten questions about the services they were providing that they wanted addressed in the evaluation. However, the opportunity for external evaluation was seen as a means of securing “not only ‘factual’ and quantifiable data, but also as a means of introducing a fresh and objective perspective into the work process for the staff members themselves” (p.2).

## Evaluation Methodologies

- Client information sheet used by staff during initial call (statistical element).
  - Staff were trained on how to use the forms.
- Detailed client assessment through phone (call back) interview.
  - Clients were randomly selected (1 in 10) for call back two weeks after initial call.
- Legal assessment for accuracy and adequacy by staff lawyers from another office.
- In-depth and informal staff interviews.
- Observations.

**Prairie Research Associates, The Coopers and Lybrand Consulting Group & Linden, R. (1991). *Evaluation of the legal aid Manitoba expanded eligibility program*. Research and Development Directorate, Department of Justice Canada.**

## General Overview

Although this report did not seek to evaluate any aspect of PLEI, two of the “main issues” identified for evaluation commonly constitute objectives for PLEI evaluation. These are client satisfaction and attitude assessment toward the program (here the attitudes considered were about repayment of fees). Questions were divided into categories, which were further subdivided into specific issues/questions to be addressed. This is a useful approach to evaluation as “multiple lines of evidence strengthen the conclusions and provide a stronger basis for the recommendations” (p.5). Findings were also organized by the method used to collect information i.e., survey, interview, file review, as well as which population group would be asked each question. Although it is time consuming to develop separate questionnaires for each group of informants, this is often necessary as clients and staff engage with materials and programs from unique perspectives. Furthermore, it is preferable to tailor evaluation questions to specific PLEI clients/students on the basis of characteristics that distinguish their access, knowledge and use from other audiences. The information in this report that may be of use to PLEI evaluators is the “Methodology” section. As in most cases the content must be modified to fit the project undergoing evaluation, however the report contains some elaboration on the steps involved for administering each type of assessment tool.

### **Common Components of Evaluation**

- External evaluation.
- Conducted after one year of pilot program.
- Evaluation set out the main issues to be examined (similar to goals).
- Recommendations included mechanisms to assist in management efficiencies dealing, in part, with ongoing monitoring mechanisms.

### **The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation**

- It was a difficult population to locate as there were problems in retrieving phone numbers. Approximately 40% of the informants had no telephone or an incorrect number was on file.

### **Evaluation Methodologies**

- Data sources included: administrative file review; applications for eligibility; accounting information; case management file review; surveys; interviews.
- There was an intensive review of accounting information due to the nature of the project.
- Report outlines how different evaluation tools were used i.e., what steps were taken for administrative file review, client surveys, interviews with private Bar, etc.





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## 5.0 Overview of Findings

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The summaries set out in this section cannot claim to be comprehensive. Drawing on all of the materials annotated, a collection of findings and observations have been compiled under the four recurring themes. The points listed under each theme represent some of the significant conclusions based on frequency or force with which the statements were made. A fifth category is added to the end, which highlights research and knowledge gaps in the available materials.

### 5.1 The Challenges of PLEI Evaluation

After reviewing the annotations, it should be abundantly evident that numerous challenges continue to face the evaluation of PLEI initiatives. These challenges include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Language barriers are common in eliciting PLEI feedback. This includes those who do not speak English as well as the use of “legalese” of complex legal terminology to teach concepts.
- PLEI has no concise definition and it is often difficult to draw a line between provision of information versus legal advice.
- There is ongoing debate between whether internal or external evaluators are preferable, where cost is not at issue. On one side PLEI providers seek objectivity through external evaluation. On the other are those who maintain that a connection to the program and the community is a necessary component to evaluation as it ensures sensitivity to the context which informs one’s assessment of project benefits.
- High cost of external evaluations or “lost work time” for staff continues to pose difficulties for undertaking program evaluation.
- Difficulty in measuring stated goals i.e., when accessibility to legal information is the goal it is often difficult to assess why/how the program failed as targeted people were NOT reached.
- Different impacts based on different delivery methods cannot be compared i.e., it is difficult to compare a pamphlet with a three-day workshop.
- Some PLEI initiatives attempt to address collective and chronic needs of low-income people, yet evaluation of community impact may be difficult to quantify. As such, these desired goals raise challenges for successful documentation.
- Difference in race, class and social contexts between the evaluators and clients/students/ participants affects perceptions of programs and measures of success.

- Lack of definition or consensus on what constitutes evaluation. One author is quoted as saying that evaluation is “all things to all people.” In addition to external evaluations, many activities can and should be considered legitimate forms of evaluation. Some examples include: comparative studies, pre-testing of materials, mail-back evaluations, impact studies, periodic studies, in-service training, annual reports, analysis of media news coverage, assessment of mailing lists, audience feedback, monitoring statistics, compilation of statistics, follow-up with clients, and reports to funders (see Lane, 1984).
- When the prevalent method of evaluation is oral feedback through stories and discussions, it can be difficult to document responses and replicate account of impact.
- Lack of evaluation skills among staff and lawyers.
- Hard to measure PLEI tools such as Internet programs.
- Post program surveys do not assess whether information is retained or whether it is used.
- There are multiple obstacles to determining whether there is overlap and duplication of PLEI.

## 5.2 Connections between Goals of PLEI and its Evaluation

Organizations, schools, agencies and governments use PLEI to fulfill a wide range of objectives. The materials suggest that in developing tools and methods of evaluation these specific goals and objectives should be taken into account. Some related conclusions include:

- The importance of defining what is being evaluated cannot be overestimated. One PLEI provider articulated the question poignantly: “Are we trying to measure knowledge of specific pieces of legislation or critical consciousness regarding a certain piece of legislation, or critical and informed debate, government policy, or self-help skills, or empowerment in local communities, or what?” (Moliner, 1997, p.43).
- Goals and objectives of evaluation must be sensitive to target audiences and learning environments.

## 5.3 Challenges of Funders’ Evaluation Requirements

Evaluations are often conducted and/or requested by PLEI funders who may have different objectives for seeking and using findings of such reports. These objectives pose the following particular challenges:

- Need for funders to “accept responsibility” for PLEI projects that they support which can be done by assisting with meaningful evaluation.
- Impact assessments must go beyond asking simple questions such as gauging satisfaction if they are to contribute to improving program delivery. Important



elements of evaluation include accountability for delivering proposed programs and general approval. However, these measures do not sufficiently address effectiveness and suitability of program content and format.

- Funders can use evaluation to undermine efforts of PLEI by narrowly interpreting goals and achievements to justify funding cuts.
- The danger of using evaluations to cut programs is greater where PLEI is tied to provincial legal aid offices (B.C. and Ontario) since budget restrictions and changes may be imposed with little or no warning.
- Misinterpretations of evaluations lead to skewed funding and priority decisions.
- As noted in a 1984 legal aid evaluation, budget restraints changed both the levels of service actually provided and the direction of policy emphasis.
- Lack of stable funding for many providers prohibits the development of innovative mediums for conveying PLEI to target audiences. It also undermines explorations for new and emerging issues and initiatives. Issues such as improving access to the law, legal literacy, readability and so forth, are being investigated primarily by those with secure funding.
- Evaluations set by funders often do not account for culturally specific needs and therefore do not accurately assess effectivity.
- Different emphasis and goals between funders and PLEI providers leads to distinctive modes of evaluation i.e., quantitative versus qualitative and deliverables versus non-tangibles.

## 5.4 Evaluation Methodologies

**A**vailable evaluation methodologies are vast. The following list notes those methods that are frequently cited in the materials, but is by no means exhaustive:

- Range of surveying and questionnaire distribution.
- Informal discussions, semi-structured interviews, case-specific follow up and file review.
- Focus groups and consultations.
- Pre- and post-testing of knowledge and attitudes.
- Observation.
- Peer review and expert assessment of legal accuracy.
- Increasingly, it is recognized that a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods should be used in conjunction. This mixed approach produces more comprehensive evaluations and encourages development of creative methods of data collection and documentation.

## 5.5 Research and Knowledge Gaps

This bibliography covers the academic literature and a thorough sampling of evaluation reports and government documents available at this time. The gaps outlined below are pertinent to PLEI assessment and should be contemplated as the bases for future research.

- General lack of PLEI evaluation, with exceptions in one or two organizations.
- Need more publications that consolidate PLEI materials i.e., *Inventory of Public Legal Education and Information Materials and Programs Related to Crime Prevention and Victims*; the literature review section of *More Than a Crime: A Report on the Lack of Public Legal Information Materials for Immigrant Women Who Are Subject to Wife Assault*; and the *Compendium of Sources in YJEP* report.
- Little exploration has occurred for partnership between the provincial/territorial bar, ministries, legal clinics and community organizations.
- Poor utilization of data collected. Time constraints often mean that once information is collected it gets filed away and never “assessed” or incorporated into subsequent program design. Also there is a general failure to share findings between organizations, which results in duplication of efforts. Finally, the lack of negotiation and/or consultation with external evaluators, in terms of content and methods, produces materials that are unhelpful for purposes of program design, or are disregarded completely due to bad feelings generated through the evaluation process.
- Few evaluation reports reviewed noted any external uses for the findings or recommendations.
- Ongoing gap in needs assessment and priority setting.
- No evaluation reports, PLEI or otherwise, with the exception of one or two mentioned the connection between program evaluation and monetary constraints.
- More investigation is required of the impact of technology on access to PLEI.
- With one noted exception, there is no discussion regarding the interrelationship between different evaluation tools and methodology i.e., between quantitative and qualitative data.
- There appears to be a bias in the evaluation reports for “real” or quantifiable data. As is noted elsewhere in the bibliography, this presupposition does not necessarily reflect the objectives and goals of many PLEI initiatives, which are better suited to various qualitative methods of evaluation.



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# Appendix A: The Art and Science of Evaluation\*

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## Allison Mackenzie, Law Society of Alberta Power Point Presentation

### What Is Evaluation?

- Using science to answer "how did we do ? what can we do better?"
- Systematic program evaluation is the foundation for demonstrating value.
- We need to embrace rigorous program evaluation in order to demonstrate value.

### Why Evaluate?

- Gather data to justify programming.
- Identify new needs.
- Determine what's being done right and importantly, what needs to be fine-tuned.

### Why Evaluate?

- Measure program impact or effectiveness with respect to goals and objectives.
- You know what you are presenting / intending ? do you know what is actually being delivered?

### Setting the Stage for Evaluation

- Do you have a formal plan for overall business operations and for each initiative?
- Have you established program objectives and outcomes to provide a basis for the measurement of true results.

### Setting the Stage for Evaluation

- Are your project goals linked to organizational goals? Have you identified your purpose / messages, target groups and desired outcomes?
- It is difficult to measure PLE as it involves measuring changing attitudes, beliefs and perceptions.

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## **Tools?**

- No single measurement tool for measuring PLE effectiveness.
- Use a combination of measurement and evaluation tools and techniques to establish program benchmarks
- Determine success in "moving the needle. "

## **Techniques**

- Media content analysis
- Cyberspace analysis
- Trade show and event measurement (always after, never during)
- Polls and surveys
- Focus groups

## **When to Use Surveys**

- Need to explain the motivations and attitudes driving public's behaviour.
- Want to establish a baseline of information to measure the effectiveness of a program.

## **When to Use Surveys**

- Survey construction is an art; You can be confident asking respondents program related questions ? keep it simple; Use the same survey repeatedly.
- To create a survey go online and do some research ? many useful examples of good surveys available online to suit most needs.

## **Surveys**

- Quantitative ? telephone, mail, in person, email, internet ? provides overall information.
- Qualitative ? focus groups, in depth one on one interviews ? provides in?depth information.

## **Simple Survey ?**

- Most common are telephone and exit; Or follow up by mail surveys.
- Combination of open and closed ended questions.
- Scale of 1 to 5 ? measurable.
- A few, but not many open ended questions (interpretation is complex).



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## Questions

- Simple clear and direct, and short.
- One concept per question ? with difficult concepts, reword and ask in another way geographically removed from first asking.

## Questions

- Open ended questions ?solicit top of mind awareness, thoughts and opinions;
- Closed ended questions provide a range of responses and respondents are asked to select one.

## To Survey or Not to Survey?

- You can do simple surveys.
- Keep it simple ? 10 to 15 closed ended questions ? numerical scale of 1 to 5.
- Final question asking for comments.

## Focus Groups

- Most common research method used.
- Ethnographic research ? observation, participation observation.
- Provide a basis for sound decision making.

## Focus Groups

- Need a specially trained facilitator.
- Provides qualitative results about thoughts and feelings.
- As a follow up to a survey ? provides more detail to issues to help you understand why participants answered they did.

## Informal Focus Groups

- Gather a group of volunteers ? community league, friends ? ask them to review your brochure or materials and provide their opinions.
- Talk to them and find out what works and what does not work.
- Create an online focus group.

### **Informal Focus Groups**

- Set a topic and a time frame.
- Ask an informed colleague to facilitate.
- Invite key stakeholders to participate.
- Monitor; Ask facilitator for clarifications.
- Results can be used for evaluation or needs assessment.

### **Interviews**

- Talk to people ? what do they think or feel ? prepare questions in advance.
- Ask people involved in delivery, staff and participants how they perceive an issue.
- Ask for understanding on issues.
- One-on-one interviews (long) can be especially appropriate.

### **Content Analysis**

- Content analysis is a form of systematic analysis using clearly outlined factors for analysis.
- Any issue you'll be delivering on ? monitor your local newspapers.
- Do on line research ? what are the commonly held misperceptions ? what do you intend to change ? how much coverage do these issues get ? i.e. perceptions re gun control.
- What words/rhetoric are used used to describe the topic?

### **Other Quantitative**

- Phone calls
- E-mail responses
- Web site hits



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## 5 Tips for Evaluation

### #1

- Carefully set your program objectives.
- Remember that evaluation begins when planning starts.
- Evaluation will be based on more than assessing whether whether the program was delivered ? did participants gain knowledge? Change opinions?
- Did it do what was intended?

### #2

- Consider getting someone else to do the evaluation.
- Colleague or coworker.
- You want impartial, independent feedback.

### #3

- Evaluation does not have to cost \$\$\$.
- Conference or trade show ? simple exit survey like the one we'll use today.
- Evaluating printed materials ? readership survey with small prize.
- Websites ? seek visitor input.

### #4

- Evaluate at the time of running the program or within the yearly planning cycle.
- Results can be considered in planning process.

### #5 - Commit to Act on Results

- Commit to act on evaluation outcomes.
- Meaningless if not acted upon.
- Crucial if used to hone, learn and fine tune.





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# Appendix B: Evaluation Standards; Publication Standards; Seminar Standards; Speakers Standards\*

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## Community Legal Education Association

### Evaluation Standards

#### *Objective*

1. The objective of these standards is to offer guidance in the evaluation of CLEA programming activities.

#### **Evaluaton Methods**

2. Evaluation methods should be used to measure the effectiveness of programming activities in achieving their objectives.
3. Evaluation methods may include:
  - the use of approved evaluation forms;
  - telephone interviews;
  - personal interviews;
  - unsolicited telephone calls; and
  - client evaluation of written materials.
4. Evaluator may be staff or external consultant.

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## EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

To assist Community Legal Education Association in its future endeavors, please complete the following evaluation questionnaire.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. How did you find out about this event? (Check all relevant categories)

friends and relatives\_\_\_\_\_ radio\_\_\_\_\_ library\_\_\_\_\_

television\_\_\_\_\_ newspaper \_\_\_\_\_ other\_\_\_\_\_

2. What was the biggest problem you had to overcome to get here?

scheduling\_\_\_\_\_ child care\_\_\_\_\_ transportation\_\_\_\_\_

length of notice \_\_\_\_\_ other\_\_\_\_\_

3. Why did you come to this legal information event?

general information\_\_\_\_\_ specific problem\_\_\_\_\_ other\_\_\_\_\_

4. Please rate the convenience of the event on the following factors:

	POOR				EXCELLENT
time of the day	1	2	3	4	5
location	1	2	3	4	5

5. If you received written materials from CLEA in advance of the class or from the speaker, how would you rate the materials on the following factors:

	POOR				EXCELLENT
understandable	1	2	3	4	5
interesting	1	2	3	4	5
	TOO MUCH				NOT ENOUGH
quantity	1	2	3	4	5

6. How would you rate today's speaker on the following factors:

	POOR				EXCELLENT
understandable	1	2	3	4	5
interesting	1	2	3	4	5
comprehensive	1	2	3	4	5
overall	1	2	3	4	5





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7. How much did you know about this topic before you came to the session?

a great deal\_\_\_\_\_ some main ideas\_\_\_\_\_ very little\_\_\_\_\_ nothing\_\_\_\_\_

8. How much do you know about this topic now?

a great deal\_\_\_\_\_ some main ideas\_\_\_\_\_ very little\_\_\_\_\_ nothing\_\_\_\_\_

9. Are you interested in attending another information event sponsored by CLEA?

yes\_\_\_\_\_ no\_\_\_\_\_ maybe\_\_\_\_\_

If not, why not?

10. What other areas of law are you interested in?

consumer protection\_\_\_\_\_ separation and divorce\_\_\_\_\_ income tax\_\_\_\_\_

human rights\_\_\_\_\_ immigration and refugees\_\_\_\_\_ law as a career\_\_\_\_\_

11. Do you have any comments, questions or concerns about this or future programs?

## EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

To assist Community Legal Education Association maintain a high quality of service through its Speakers Bureau, please complete the following questionnaire.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. How did you learn of CLEA's Speakers Bureau?

CLEA brochure \_\_\_\_\_ word of mouth \_\_\_\_\_ directory of public services \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

2. If you received written materials from CLEA in advance of the class or from the speaker, how would you rate the materials on the following factors:

	POOR				EXCELLENT
understandable	1	2	3	4	5
interesting	1	2	3	4	5
	TOO MUCH				NOT ENOUGH
quantity	1	2	3	4	5

3. How would you rate today's speaker on the following factors:

	POOR				EXCELLENT
understandable	1	2	3	4	5
interesting	1	2	3	4	5
comprehensive	1	2	3	4	5
overall	1	2	3	4	5

4. Are you interested in phoning the Speakers Bureau again?

yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_ maybe \_\_\_\_\_

5. What other legal areas are you interested in?

consumer protection \_\_\_\_\_ separation and divorce \_\_\_\_\_ income tax \_\_\_\_\_

human rights \_\_\_\_\_ immigration and refugees \_\_\_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you have any comments, questions or concerns about the Speakers Bureau?



# EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

To assist Community Legal Education Association maintain a high quality of service through its Speakers Bureau, please complete the following questionnaire.

Date\_\_\_\_

1. If you received written materials from CLEA in advance of the class or from the speaker, how would you rate the materials on the following factors:

	POOR				EXCELLENT
understandable	1	2	3	4	5
interesting	1	2	3	4	5
	TOO MUCH				NOT ENOUGH
quantity	1	2	3	4	5

2. How would you rate today's speaker on the following factors:

	POOR				EXCELLENT
understandable	1	2	3	4	5
interesting	1	2	3	4	5
comprehensive	1	2	3	4	5
overall	1	2	3	4	5

3. How much did you know about this topic before you came to the session?

a great deal\_\_\_\_\_ some main ideas\_\_\_\_\_ very little\_\_\_\_\_ nothing\_\_\_\_\_

4.How much do you know about this topic now?

a great deal\_\_\_\_\_ some main ideas\_\_\_\_\_ very little\_\_\_\_\_ nothing?\_\_\_\_\_.

5. Are you interested in attending another legal information event?

yes\_\_\_\_\_ no\_\_\_\_\_ maybe\_\_\_\_\_

If no, why not?

6. What other areas of law are you interested in?

consumer protection\_\_\_\_\_ separation and divorce\_\_\_\_\_ income tax\_\_\_\_\_

human rights\_\_\_\_\_ immigration and refugees\_\_\_\_\_ law as a career\_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you have any comments, questions or concerns about this or future programs? If so, please feel free to write them on the back of this form.

## **Publication Standards**

### ***Objective***

1. The objective of these standards is to:
  - a) provide a basis for assessing and editing written work proposed to be published;  
and
  - b) to provide a guideline to writers.

### ***Scope of Written Materials***

- 2.1 The purpose of written materials shall be to inform the reader of the substance and process of the law, and to direct them to available resources which might enable them to achieve personal legal objectives.
- 2.2 Texts intended for the general public should be general in scope and should avoid extensive, detailed or technical legal discussions.
- 2.3 Generally, texts may include a glossary of legal terms common to the subject of the text, and a glossary of legislation which lists and explains the purpose of statutes relevant to the subject.
- 2.4 Each text should include a «contents» page, listing major topics and the pages on which they may be found.

### ***Language of Materials***

- 3.1 Materials should avoid the use of technical legal terms insofar as possible. Where a term is used it should be explained at the first usage, and it should be included in the glossary. A «technical legal term» is any word or expression in any language which is not commonly used in everyday speech, or which, if commonly used, has a meaning not clearly related to its «legal» meaning.
- 3.2 Texts shall be written in non-sexist language. This means at least:
  - a) gender specific pronouns shall not be used. It is preferable to use (the grammatically incorrect) plural personal pronoun «their» or «they», rather than the gender specific terms «he», «his», «him» or «she», «hers», «her».  
  
An exception to this is allowable when an example, or factual event is discussed, in which case the appropriate pronouns may be used.
  - b) gender specific examples should be avoided. Where they are used, care must be exercised to avoid stereotypes of any kind.



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- 3.3 In giving effect to rule 3.2, it is desirable to avoid the use of common words or expressions if they contain the prefix, suffix or other language form «man».
  - 3.4 Texts shall be written in a non-personal and non-patronizing tone. In particular, second person speech, including use of the personal pronoun «you», should be used sparingly.
  - 3.5 Publications intended for general distribution should be bilingual (as distinct from simultaneous publications).
  - 3.6 Materials produced in support of any particular project should be produced in the appropriate language for the audience.

### ***Layout and Graphic Design***

- 4.1 Generally, publications should be consistent and uniform in visual appearance.
- 4.2 Generally one of the following three standard layout formats should be used:
  - a) 8.5» x 3.5» folded leaflets;
  - b) 8.5» x 5.5» saddle stapled booklet; and
  - c) 11» x 8.5» cerlox bound manual.
- 4.3 Text shall be printed in either 10 point or 12 point in either Helvetica or Geneva typeface.
- 4.4 Generally, text should be laid out in single line spacing where 12 point type is used and 1.5 line spacing where 10 point type is used.
- 4.5 Generally, (in booklets and manual format) there should be not more than two consecutive pages without «white space». White space is either:
  - a) an area of blank page at the beginning or end of a topic; or
  - b) an illustration or combination of illustrations totally in area at least 25% of a page;or
  - c) a side bar margin of at least 20% of the page.
- 4.6 Where reasonable, new topics should begin on a new page.
- 4.7 In using the manual format, generally the text should be laid out to use 2/3 of the page width, leaving a 1/3 page margin in which «sidebar» headings may be placed.
- 4.8
  - a) Topic headings shall be separated from the preceding or following text by a double line space, and shall be in all capitals, bold face type, 2 point sizes larger than the text but not underlined.
  - b) Sub headings shall be separated from the preceding or following text by a double line space, and shall be in all capitals, plain face type, the same size as the text, but not underlined.

- c) Secondary sub headings should be avoided. Where they are used, they shall be separated from the preceding or following text by a double space, capital initial letters for each word, plain face type of the same size as the text, but not underlined.

4.9 Headings and subheadings shall be «left justified» without indentation.

### ***Credits and Disclaimers***

5.1 Generally, authorship of leaflets will not be attributed.

5.2 Authorship of booklets or manuals will not be shown on the outside cover but may be indicated on the inside title page.

The Association's name and logo shall appear on the outside cover, and the name of the Association shall appear on the inside title page.

5.4 Every publication shall contain publishing information on the reverse side of the inside title page. The publishing information shall at least include:

- a) The title;
- b) Statement of disclaimer;
- c) Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data (unless not applicable);
- d) ISBN serial number;
- e) Copyright mark, date and the Association's full legal name;
- f) The name and address of the Association; and
- g) Attribution of general funders of the Association and any specific funding for the text.

5.5 Every text shall include, on the final page, an information sheet containing:

- a) Information about other publications;
- b) Notice about Law Phone In and Lawyer Referral;
- c) Disclaimer statement; and
- d) The Association's name and address.

5.6 The statement of disclaimer to appear at the front and end of the text shall read:

“Produced as public information by Community Legal Education Association, a non-profit community service providing legal information to Manitobans. This booklet is intended as general legal information only, not as advice. Every situation is unique, and involves individual legal issues. If you want legal advice, call a lawyer. If you need help finding a lawyer, call our Lawyer Referral Service at 943-2305 or 1-800-262-8800 (IF PHONING FROM OUTSIDE WINNIPEG).”

together with any other statement appropriate to the text.



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## **Republication**

6.1 Prior to any reprinting results of evaluation will be considered.

## **Seminar Standards**

### ***Objective***

1. The objective of these standards is to ensure that legal information events sponsored by CLEA are characterized by accessibility, consistency and sensitivity to audience needs.

These standards do not apply to events which CLEA is supporting, but which are sponsored by others.

### **Physical Premises**

- 2.1 Premises to be used shall be fully wheelchair accessible.
- 2.2 In selecting premises, priority concern shall be given to proximity of bus service, and availability of parking.
- 2.3 Program staff shall visit the proposed premises to satisfy themselves as to the suitability, adequacy, and general appearance of the premises before confirming location.
- 2.4 Program staff shall be at the location well in advance of the published start time.

### **Publicity**

- 3.1 A proposed publicity plan shall be included in the program action plan presented to the Program Committee, and modified at their direction.
- 3.2 Publicity materials shall adequately identify CLEA as the sponsoring agency, and shall identify any significant funders of the event.
- 3.3 Insofar as they identify speakers' credentials, publicity materials shall conform to the terms of CLEA's speakers standards.
- 3.4 Publicity materials shall include notices as to:
  - availability of day care;
  - accessibility;
  - local bus lines and parking;
  - a phone number for further information and where appropriate, a location map.

## **Materials**

- 4.1 Generally, materials to be distributed shall be prepared at least two weeks prior to the event.
- 4.2 Copies of materials to be distributed shall be sent to presenters a week before the event.
- 4.3 All materials prepared or created for an event, shall adequately identify CLEA, and all appropriate funders.
- 4.4 CLEA's standards for written materials shall be followed in selections or preparation of materials.
- 4.5 For each event, materials prepared shall include:
  - an agenda for the event;
  - a topic outline;
  - an evaluation instrument complying with CLEA's evaluation standards; and
  - such other materials as are appropriate.

## **General**

- 5.1 Adequate refreshment and meal breaks shall be incorporated in agendas.
- 5.2 Generally, programs should not proceed longer than 90 minutes and in no event longer than 2 hours without a break.
- 5.3 Generally, afternoon programs should end no later than 4:00PM.
- 5.4 Where appropriate, registration material should include identifying name tags and personalized materials folders.

## **Speakers Standards**

### ***Objective***

1. The objective of these standards is to ensure that volunteers used to present legal information in events sponsored or supported by CLEA are:
  - a) fairly and appropriately selected;
  - b) properly informed of the details of the event;
  - c) subject to evaluation by participants; and
  - d) given to understand the bonds of appropriate personal advertising.





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## **Selection of Speaker**

- 2.1 CLEA will solicit volunteers from the legal profession generally, and as the topic/occasion warrants, from related justice agencies.
- 2.2 Volunteers will be catalogued as to preference of topic, media and audience, based on their own indications.
- 2.3 CLEA will not act to monitor or verify a volunteer's skills or competence in a legal topic.
- 2.4 The Program Coordinator will exercise discretion in selecting volunteers for assignment, based on knowledge of the person, the volunteer's indicated preferences, and evaluation reports from previous assignments.

## **Material to be Supplied to Speaker/Program Initiator**

- 3.1 In every case, a letter of confirmation detailing the date, time, place and topic will be sent to the volunteer the day the oral commitment is made. The letter will advise the name, address and phone number of the person to contact for additional information, and a paragraph setting out rule 5.2 of this guideline.
- 3.2 In cases where CLEA acts as «broker» to get a speaker for some other groups, a letter of confirmation, setting out reciprocal information, will be sent to the program organizer suggesting they contact the volunteer to discuss the program's content.
- 3.3 All volunteers will receive a suggestion leaflet \_ of guidelines for making their presentation (a copy is attached).
- 3.4 Volunteers in CLEA organized events will receive a topic outline, as a suggestion of points to include in their presentation.
- 3.5 Organizers of «CLEA brokered» events will be given the name of the presenter and invited to send the volunteer a topic outline if they wish to.
- 3.6 Following the event, some tangible form of acknowledgment should be sent to the volunteer thanking them for their participation.

## **Evaluation of and/or Absence of Volunteers**

- 4.1 Evaluation data and any complaints as to style related to each volunteer will be compiled by the Program Coordinator.
- 4.2 Incidents of volunteers failing to meet commitments will be investigated in an informal manner. Emergency explanations will be noted.

Non emergency explanations will be noted. After two such failures, the volunteer will be removed from the list.

- 4.3 Complaints from program initiators and/or audience, dealing with the substance of a presentation, will be referred to the committee.

## Identification of Lawyer to Audience

5.1 In any advance advertising, and in introducing the speaker, it is proper to indicate:

- a. the participant's affiliation with a law firm;
- b. the participant's affiliation with a university;
- c. the participant's affiliation with a non-profit organization;
- d. their employment by the government;
- e. that they are a member of the Bench;
- f. their work with or on a Law Reform Commission;
- g. professional associations.

5.2 It is not proper for a lawyer in private practice to give a member of the audience their professional card. If there is any approach by a member of the audience related to engaging the lawyer's services, the lawyer should request that person to call the firm