

extended repayment period for those who need it; and debt reduction for borrowers who are encountering financial difficulties.

In addition to loans, HRDC offers (since 1995) non-repayable assistance in the form of Canada Study Grants to students with disabilities, high-need part-time students, female doctoral students enrolled in certain Ph.D. programs, and students with dependants to help with education-related expenses. During the loan year 1999-2000, some 65 000 Canada Study Grants were issued to students at a value of \$98.6 million.

The Canada Student Loans Program also offers part-time loan assistance to help students cover education costs. The maximum part-time loan a student may have at any given time is \$4000 (see www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/student_loans).

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) is Canada's federal funding agency for research and advanced training in the social sciences and humanities. In 1998, a joint initiative worth \$2.5 million over five years with the National Literacy Secretariat was announced to stimulate applied research aimed at providing policy makers and practitioners with leading-edge knowledge in the area of literacy.

Valuing Literacy in Canada is fostering collaborative, multi-disciplinary research on a broad range of issues that affect adult learners' ability to participate fully in Canadian society and to respond to new economic and social challenges. This initiative is providing literacy specialists with solid applied research that will enhance the effectiveness of their work. It is also enabling policy makers to better target their strategies and practitioners to adapt their interventions so they may create successful learning environments.

HEALTH, NUTRITION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD STRATEGIES

The Government of Canada has undertaken various initiatives to address health, nutrition and early childhood strategies development. These programs pay particular attention to women, minorities and vulnerable populations.

Health Canada

Since 1990, Health Canada has supported the Comprehensive School Health Model and its application at the provincial, regional and school levels to support schools wishing to undertake an initiative to promote healthy living. In addition, Health Canada has developed the Voices and Choices School Health Model in response to schools and educational organizations requesting practical tools for implementing the Comprehensive School Health Model.

Voices and Choices is a strategic planning model consisting of a planning and implementation guide, a quantitative school health needs assessment questionnaire and a school health profile based on the data collected from the needs assessment. Voices and Choices involves students in developing school health plans and action plans built on the needs identified through the School Health Needs Assessment and Profile. The school health plans and action plans focus on the