



English + Health + Literacy: Building Health programs and partnerships for English language learners

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I have no conflicts of interest

# Survey 1: Who is here today?

- a) Adult literacy educators?
- b) English language educators?
- c) Non profits serving vulnerable populations?
- d) University health literacy experts?
- e) Health providers?
- f) Patient advocates?
- g) Health literacy researchers?
- h) Librarians?
- i) Others?

# What are English + Health + Literacy Programs?

Programs to increase the learners' English and literacy skills: Listening, speaking, reading, writing, and reasoning applied to health content.

\*Must help language learners engage in the local health practices.

# Today's Objectives

To explore the development of English + Health + Literacy programs through

- Essential elements of these type of programs
- **BUILDING AND MAINTAINING PARTNERSHIPS**
- New needs during a pandemic
- Addressing Potential Barriers
- Role of the facilitator

# Literacy + Health + English Programs: What do you need?

- Literacy expertise
- Health expertise
- Language learning expertise
- Familiarity with Learners
- An approach to challenges and barriers
- Space for the program
- Volunteers or paid staff
- Funding
- Curriculum
- Supplies

# New Needs for Online Learning

- Program Delivery Technology
- Technology for learners
- Technology Support and Training for learners, teachers and volunteers
- Curriculum appropriate for online teaching
- Interpreters to assist in technology onboarding
- Assistance in the classroom in case of tech failure

# Our Program for Refugees/Language Learners

- Structure (pre pandemic):
  - 5 week program for adults in the summer (same time as the public school summer school)
  - Met for 3.5 hours on Tuesdays- Thursdays.
  - Learners chose morning or evening classes (child care provided in the morning)

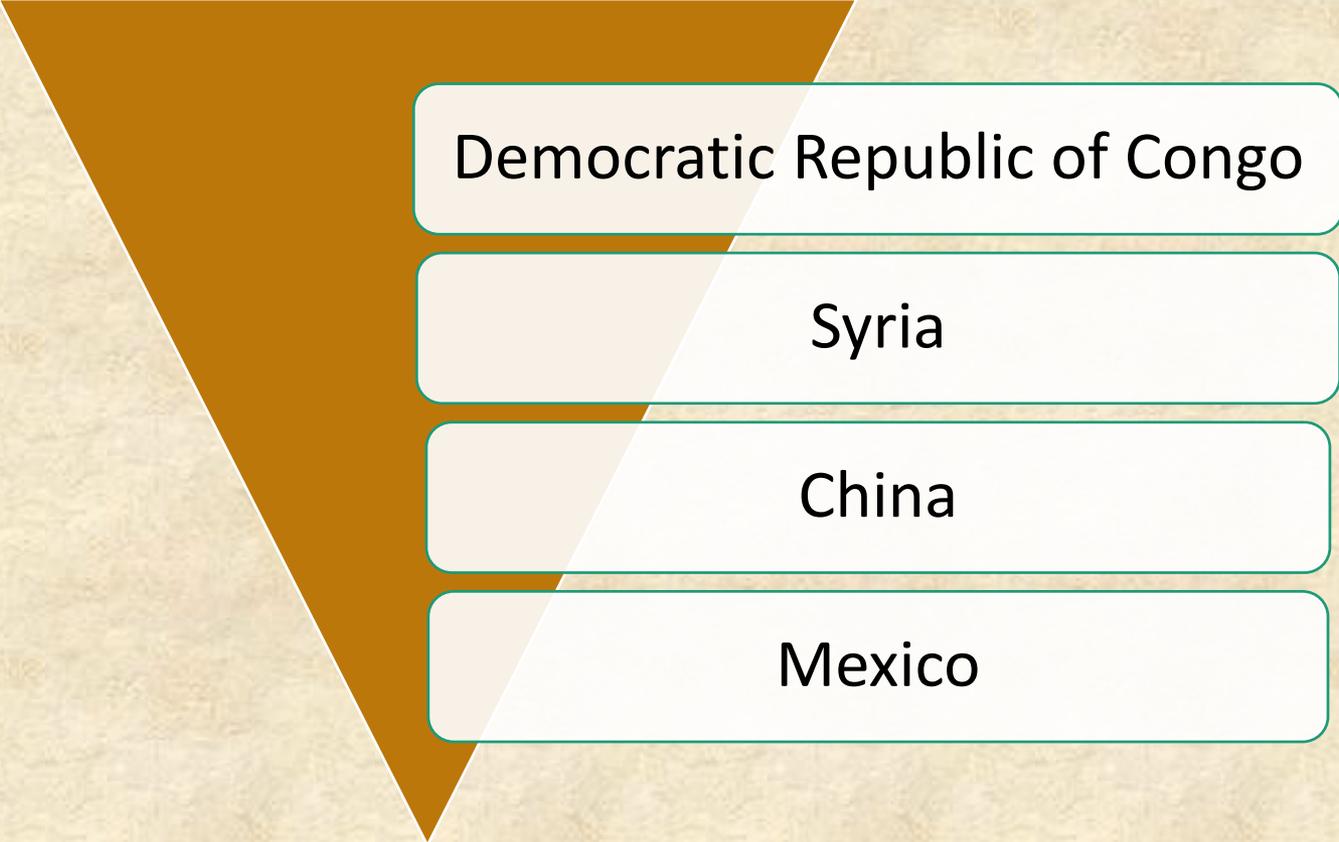
# Our Program for Refugees/Language Learners

- Pandemic Structure
  - 5 week program for adults in the summer
  - Met for 1.5 hours on Mondays -Thursdays.
  - Learners chose morning or evening classes
  - Moved to totally online delivery
  - All registration and tech training completed online
  - Provided a variety of resources to teachers, with adaptable curriculum and break out rooms
  - Volunteers served as classroom assistants.

# Our Program for Refugees/Language Learners

- Delivery: English Immersion
- Curriculum:
  - 2018: “What to Do When Your Child Gets Sick”: H.E.L.P. (Health Education Literacy Program)
  - 2019: “Simply Good” nutrition curriculum
  - 2020: “Staying Healthy” Florida Literacy Coalition (Wisconsin Literacy Supplements)/ CoVid-19 Resources

# Most Common Origin Countries



Democratic Republic of Congo

Syria

China

Mexico

# Lessons in Moving to Online

- Few Learners refused to go online
- More learners came in the evening than in previous years
- Many relatives and friends stepped in to help get learners online
- Those who didn't have relatives and friends needed someone to closely work through the online process
- For the lowest levels need to keep technology demands simple
- Incorporate the rest of the family into the classes

# Your Ideal Program, Part 1: What Type of Health + English + Literacy Program is needed in your community?

1. Who would your participants be?
2. What type of topics would be most important? Staying health (nutrition, exercise, taking care of yourself)? Accessing health care? Talking to your Dr.? A specific disease or treatment? Navigating the health care system?
3. Online or on the ground?

# Partnerships upon Partnerships!

How we got to our summer program

# Three Types of Partnerships

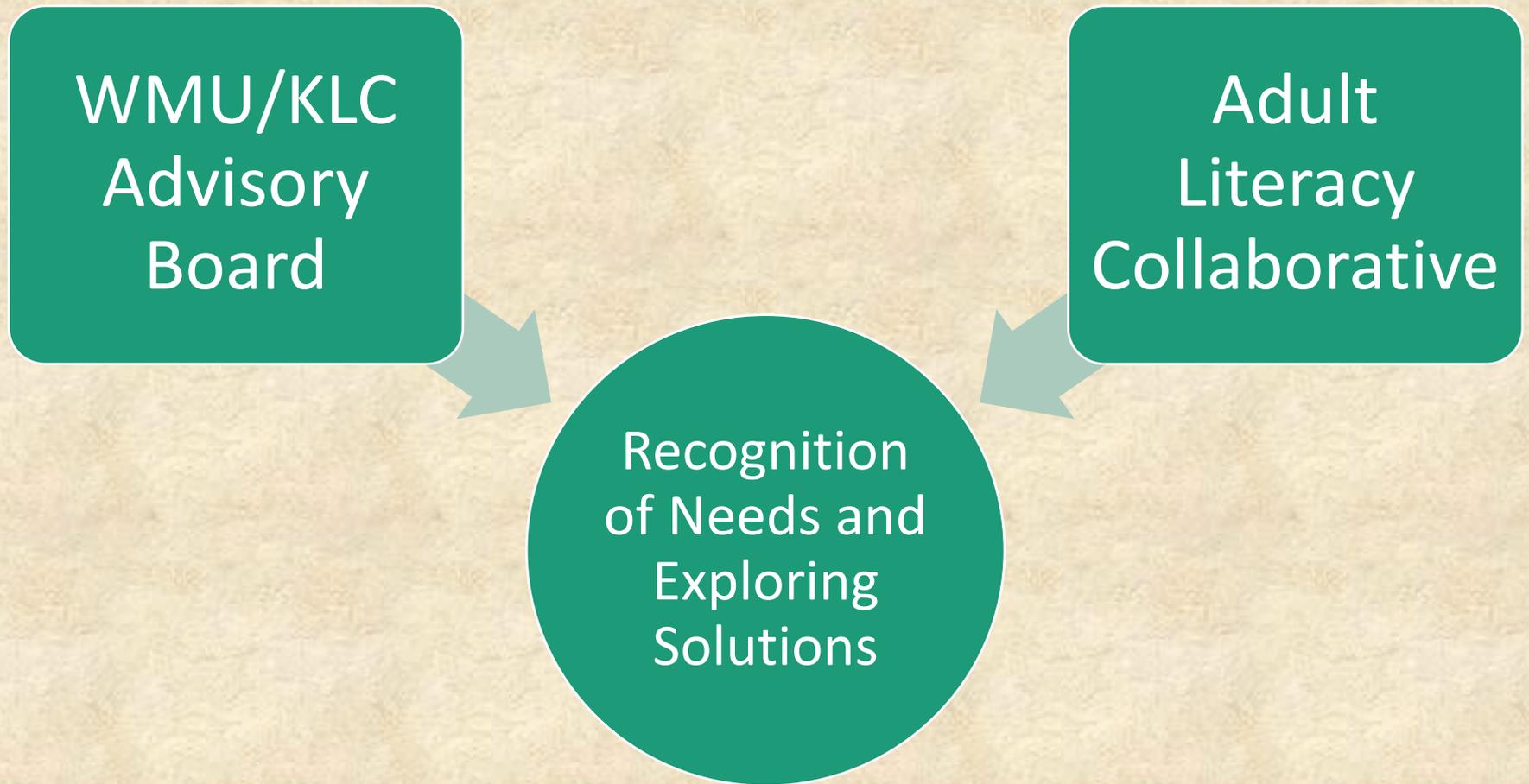
## Essential Partners

- Coalitions: groups with similar goals established for community planning, prevention of duplications, and to identify needs.
- Advisory groups: Group to encourage new projects and partnerships in particular areas.

**Organizing partners:** Partners to organize and implement an intended program

**Contributing partners:** Partners can contribute one or a handful of elements to an intended program. These are often supplies or volunteer positions

# Essential Partnerships: Build for the Future



# Adult Literacy Collaborative of Kalamazoo County

**Goal:** every adult in Kalamazoo County has the literacy skills necessary to be successful at work, at home, and in the community.

**Approach:** strengthening the systems and infrastructure needed to provide learning for adults with low literacy skills

# Western Michigan University/ Kalamazoo Literacy Council (WMU/KLC) Advisory Board

## Goal:

- to develop concrete community/university strategies that will improve the state of adult literacy in the region.
- **Adult Literacy Research and Training Symposium** and related program and research activities.



Workforce  
Literacy



Parent  
Literacy



Health  
Literacy



ESL Tutor  
Forum

# Seeing the Needs through Essential Partnerships

Limited English  
learning programs  
in the summer



Health content  
needed in  
programming



New community  
literacy center  
needed to attract  
learners

# What we Knew Going In

- Learners engaged in English lessons focused on health infrequently.
- Refugees needed assistance in managing health matters in a new country.
- There were few options for learning English in the summers.
- The majority of our learners were parents.

# Adding a New Partner: Kalamazoo Refugee Resource Collaborative

Services supporting refugees

English language summer program in 2017: funding limited to that year

Many refugees not involved in formal English language learning

# Organizing Partners



# Literacy + Health + English Programs: What do we have with our partners?

- Literacy expertise
- Health expertise
- Language learning expertise
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- Funding
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- Supplies

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**Your Ideal Program (Part 2): Where would you find these Elements in your Community? Do you have existing partners to help identify the need? What do you bring to the table? What do you need from organizing partners? Who would be the best organizing partners?**

- Literacy expertise
- Health expertise
- Language learning expertise
- Familiarity with Learners
- An approach to challenges and barriers
- Space for the program
- Volunteers or paid staff
- Funding
- Curriculum
- Supplies
- Technology needs: including lending, training and support

# Working with Organizing Partners

- Define clear roles of each partner group
- Define health literacy in the context of the intended program.
- Recognize partners' limitations as well as strengths
- Acknowledge the differences between employees and volunteers
- Brainstorm together about needed elements of the program
- Find contributing partners for elements uncovered by organizing partners.

# Role of the Facilitator

- Lead the planning and brainstorming process
- Maintain and negotiate clear roles of each partner group/renegotiate when needed
- Keep the group on task with the established goals
- Mediate any conflicts between partners
- Lead the search for contributing partners for elements uncovered by organizing partners.
- Oversee day to day functioning of the program

# Possible Barriers to Success

- Partnerships take time and it is easy to be pulled into too many meetings.
- Program can become too complicated while trying to please everyone.
- Learners need to trust organizers
- A program must address the barriers that learners deal with (transportation, childcare, technology, etc.)

# **Your Ideal Program: Part Three**

## **What Elements are left over after defining organizing partners? Brainstorm about contributing partners**

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- Health expertise
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- Technology needs: including lending, training and support

# Sharing Plans & Questions

# Thank you!

Feel free to contact me at:

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