

# **Exploring the Use and Impact of Mobile Technology in a Work-Based Employment Program for Adults who Face Barriers to Employment**

## **Final Report**

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***Exploring the Use and Impact of Mobile Technology in a Work-Based Employment Program for Adults Who Face Barriers to Employment*** is a research project led by Stella's Circle and funded by the NL Workforce Innovation Centre (NLWIC).

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## Executive Summary

Stella's Circle received funding from the Newfoundland and Labrador Workforce Innovation Centre (NLWIC) to undertake a research project to explore the use and impact of mobile technology in a work-based employment program for adults who face barriers to employment. The research project began in April 2019 and was designed to answer the question:

*Can adding mobile learning and technology to a work-based employment program enhance participants' digital literacy, increase job satisfaction, and increase long-term attachment to the labour market for adults who face many barriers to employment.*

Four cohorts of Stella's Circle's Clean Start participants were recruited, whose involvement with the program varied in terms of length of time attached, as well as hours of work per week. The cohorts ran for several weeks as shown below:

- Cohort 1 (C1)– November 2020 to Feb 2021 (16 weeks)
- Cohort 2 (C2)– April 2021 to August 2021 (16 weeks)
- Cohort 3 (C3)– September 2021 to December 2021 (16 weeks)
- Cohort 4 (C4) – November 2021 to February 2022 (This Cohort had continuous intake, and participants were involved in the project for 10 to 16 weeks depending on their start date and the end date for the project)

Goss Gilroy Inc. (GGI) was contracted to design and implement the evaluation including the development of the logic model and related evaluation matrix, an intensive consultation process over the course of the project, as well as guidance regarding data collection for the project, and overall support to project implementation as requested.

The Methodology employed involved a series of surveys including baseline data gathered in person during the research design phase, specifically in the fall of 2019. A variety of surveys at key points during the research project were utilized including a short one-on-one follow-up survey that was undertaken with ten participants from the first two cohorts in an effort to identify if there was ongoing use of the project tools.

### Participation rates in the Clean Start project

Cohort	# who started their cohort <u>and</u> completed a pre-project survey	# who completed their Cohort	# who completed a post-project survey
C1	10	8	8
C2	7	5	6
C3	5	4	4
C4	5	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>

Other data gathered in addition to surveys involved the use of assessment tools which were implemented with the project participants and which had relevance to this evaluation. These included:

- The Employment Readiness Scale (ERS), a standardized instrument that considers a number of employability dimensions,
- The mood tracker, an online, interactive tool developed for the NLWIC Research Project and available on the main page of the project's website. It provides four 'emoji' responses used as a self assessment around an individual's sense of well being.
- A Skills Tracker that considered both cleaning and transferable skills administered by Clean Start Team Leads and self-administered by research participants.
- Data from Google Analytics (being managed and provided by Bluedrop Learning Networks) helped to inform the project participants' online activity related to accessing the online tools (e.g., 'how-to' videos).

To inform ongoing course corrections, following the second cohort, individual interviews were conducted with some of the Team Leads who had been attached to the project for at least several months. Finally, a group interview was also held with the employment counsellors, again in an effort to better understand their perspectives on and attachment to the project, and whether there was a need and way to ensure better connectivity to the project, so as to best support the participants. The results of these interviews are integrated in this report, where applicable.

The results presented herein would indicate that providing the technology and related training in a work-based employment program can enhance digital literacy and increase job satisfaction:

#### *Enhanced digital literacy*

- Section 15: The majority of the post-project survey respondents said their comfort level with technology had increased from pre- to post-project. For many, this was a significant increase. None of the respondents indicated a decrease in comfort level. About 80% of the post-project survey respondents said their experience in the project would help them in using other technologies.
- Section 18: The large majority of the follow-up survey respondents said that their use of technology has increased since they finished in the project.

#### *Increased job satisfaction*

- Section 16: The majority of the post-project survey respondents said their satisfaction level with their Clean Start job had increased from pre- to post-project. For a few, this was a significant increase. None of the respondents indicated a decrease in satisfaction levels from pre- to post-project.

- Section 18: The majority of the follow-up survey respondents provided high ratings of job satisfaction, and most indicated being in the project had influenced their rating.

#### *Increased long-term attachment to the labour market*

There is evidence that the project has supported participants to feel more confident in and likely attached to their Clean Start jobs and increased their satisfaction when working in the project (as previously noted):

Section 17: Approximately 80% of the post-project survey respondents felt that participation in the project would help them in their ongoing work with Clean Start; the remaining respondents said it might help. They noted, for example, that the project helped them build technical knowledge, stay organized, and work more efficiently, as well as take comfort from knowing what needs to be done and assurance that they are doing their job correctly.

Section 18: All of the follow-up survey respondents felt participation in the project helped them do their job better, citing both the tools and supports available were of great help.

There is no specific evidence to demonstrate that there would be longer-term attachment to the labour market should the participants move on to employment outside of Clean Start. Of note, this is not a failure of the current research project, but rather arising from the time frame in which the project was run and the many impacts that COVID-19 had on the project, including challenging recruitment and resulting in fewer opportunities in the broader labour market due to the economic slowdown and businesses closing temporarily or permanently.

However, there are some encouraging results given, as noted previously, about three-quarters of the post-project survey respondents said they felt the project would help them to acquire other employment.

## 1.0 Introduction

Stella's Circle received funding from the Newfoundland and Labrador Workforce Innovation Centre (NLWIC) to undertake a research project to explore the use and impact of mobile technology in a work-based employment program for adults who face barriers to employment.

The project began in April 2019 and concluded in March 2022.

The research question was:

*Can adding mobile learning and technology to a work-based employment program enhance participants' digital literacy, increase job satisfaction, and increase long-term attachment to the labour market for adults who face many barriers to employment.*



The research was undertaken with four cohorts of Stella's Circle's Clean Start participants, whose involvement with the program varied in terms of length of time attached, as well as hours of work per week. The cohorts ran for several weeks as shown below:



- Cohort 1 (C1)– November 2020 to Feb 2021 (16 weeks)
- Cohort 2 (C2)– April 2021 to August 2021 (16 weeks)
- Cohort 3 (C3)– September 2021 to December 2021 (16 weeks)
- Cohort 4 (C4) – November 2021 to February 2022 (This Cohort had continuous intake, and participants were involved in the project for 10 to 16 weeks depending on their start date and the end date for the project)

Goss Gilroy Inc. (GGI) was contracted to design and implement the evaluation of the NLWIC Project. This has included development of the logic model and related evaluation matrix, an intensive consultation process over the course of the project, as well as guidance regarding data collection for the project, and overall support to project implementation as requested.

## **2.0 Methodology**

### **2.1 Surveys**

#### ***2.1.1 Baseline surveys***

To support project development, a face-to-face individual survey was implemented with 17 Clean Start participants during the research design phase, specifically in the fall of 2019. It was explained to the participants that they may or may not be chosen to join the project, once the developmental work was completed.

This baseline survey was designed to inform the development of digital tools which would be most responsive to the needs of the Clean Start project participants, including to assess their familiarity with various technologies and related functions/activities. Additionally, the survey was to identify any concerns the participants might have had about their work and activity with Clean Start, in an effort to offset any issues which could impact project outcomes.

This baseline survey also supported development of the evaluation methodology and tools.

#### ***2.1.2 Pre- and post-project participant surveys***

The primary evaluation methodology for the NLWIC Project was one-on-one participant surveys. Depending on the COVID-19 pandemic alert levels over the course of the project, these were undertaken face-to-face or over telephone/Zoom both at the outset of the participants' engagement in the project ('pre-project surveys') and at the end of their time in the project ('post-project surveys').

The *pre-project surveys* were designed to inform on the participants' background and experience with Clean Start, including their duties and any concerns they might have with

effectively undertaking these duties. This survey also sought feedback on their familiarity and degree of comfort with a range of technologies, as well as on activities which they undertake on these technologies.

The *post-project survey* also sought information on the participants' perspectives on their Clean Start work, as well as whether the project technologies helped them with their work performance. Further, this survey sought information on the extent and frequency with which they used the mobile technology (Chromebook) supplied through the project and the online tools (e.g., task checklists and 'how-to' videos).

Table 1 shows the number of individuals who started in the project (27) and completed their cohort (20) for a retention rate of 74%. Participants who left the project early did so at various times over their respective cohorts. Reasons for their early exits included, for example, medical issues, their mental health and for other employment opportunities.

Also as can be seen in Table 1, all of the project participants (27) completed a pre-project survey, and 21 completed a post-project survey. This is higher than the number of participants who completed their cohort because, for C2, one of the survey respondents had left early, but had sufficient time in the project to participate in the post-project survey process. The survey response rate was 78%.

**Table 1: Participation rates in the Clean Start project**

Cohort	# who started their cohort <u>and</u> completed a pre-project survey	# who completed their Cohort	# who completed a post-project survey
C1	10	8	8
C2	7	5	6
C3	5	4	4
C4	5	3	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>

### *Survey reporting*

A pre- and post-project survey report was provided for each of C1, C2 and C3. Due to timing, a similar report was not provided for C4. However, this final evaluation report provides a summary of the results from all of the cohorts' pre- and post-project surveys, as well as any data relevant to participants' activity while in the project.

For the purposes of reporting, the participants who completed a survey are referred to as "survey respondents". Unless otherwise stated, the results provided herein are for the 21 pre- and post-project survey respondents from the four cohorts.

### **2.1.3 Follow-up surveys**

A short one-on-one follow-up survey was undertaken with seven C1 participants and three C2 participants in an effort to identify:

- if there was ongoing use of the project tools;
- if participants identified any longer-lasting impacts on their work with Clean Start and/or in using technology in their daily lives; and
- in retrospect, if there was additional training/learning that would have been helpful while in the project.

The follow-up surveys were undertaken about five to eight months post-project participation. The results of these surveys are integrated herein. For ease of reference, this group is referred to as the 'follow-up' survey respondents.

## **2.2 Interviews**

To inform ongoing course corrections, and following C2, individual interviews were conducted with some of the Team Leads who had been attached to the project for at least several months. The intent was to identify the degree to which the Team Leads were engaged in the project – e.g., viewing the online tools, encouraging the project participants to access the tools. This was important to discern, as the Team Leads are in the best position to support the participants in this regard.

A group interview was also held with the employment counsellors, again in an effort to better understand their perspectives on and attachment to the project, and whether there was a need and way to ensure better connectivity to the project, so as to best support the participants.

The results of these interviews also are integrated in this report, where applicable.

## **2.3 Assessment data**

The assessment tools which were implemented with the project participants and which had relevance to this evaluation are described in the following sections.

### **2.3.1 The Employment Readiness Scale<sup>1</sup>**

Employment readiness is defined as being able, with little or no outside help, to find, acquire, and keep an appropriate job as well as to be able to manage transitions to new jobs as needed. Of note, research shows that just being self-sufficient in the five employability dimensions shown below is not enough. Clients facing significant challenges without support to address them are likely to fail at work, even if they are successful in getting a job. Therefore, all three parts of the employment-readiness model are equally important.

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<sup>1</sup> Information on the Employment Readiness Scale™ was garnered from [http://www.employmentreadiness.info/sites/employmentreadiness.info/files/files/Organizations/ERS%20Definitions%26Factors\\_cdn.pdf](http://www.employmentreadiness.info/sites/employmentreadiness.info/files/files/Organizations/ERS%20Definitions%26Factors_cdn.pdf).

The Employment Readiness Scale™ (ERS) model is founded, therefore, on the belief that employment readiness is achieved if individuals have met three goals:

*Goal #1 - Self-sufficiency in five employability dimensions:*

- Career decision-making, or knowing what they want
- Skills enhancement, or having the skills for the work
- Job search, or having the skills to find work
- Job maintenance, or having the skills to keep a job
- Ongoing career management, or managing transitions

*Goal #2 - Understanding the particular challenges one faces:*

- Personal challenges, which clients can address
- Environmental challenges, which clients need help with
- Systemic challenges, which clients have to manage

*Goal #3 - Coping with challenges using four sources of strength:*

- Self-efficacy, or a sense of being able to perform well
- Outcome expectancy, or expecting to succeed
- Social supports, or the client's network for getting help
- Work history, or the client's previous work success

### **2.3.2 Mood tracker**

The mood tracker is an online, interactive tool developed for the NLWIC Project and available on the main page of the project's website. It is self-completed and a quick check-in/assessment regarding how the participants felt about their work week, with available responses (emojis) being 'great', 'good', 'okay', and 'not good'.

During C1, the participants were encouraged and reminded to complete this quick self-assessment. However, within the context of this first cohort and everyone getting comfortable with and understanding the various tools, the reminders were not always consistent. As such, the frequency and regularity with which the participants completed this tool varied.

For subsequent cohorts, participants were asked to complete the mood tracker once weekly. Reminders were provided via email, telephone and/or during individual participant meetings. Any participant without access to internet at home could complete the mood tracker at Stella's Circle's Cabot Street site or another location with Wi-Fi access. This improved the response rate but inconsistencies persisted.

### **2.3.3 Skills tracker**

At two specific points during their cohorts (mid- and near the end-point), participants were asked to provide a rating for their cleaning skills (how well they do each task) and transferable

skills (how often they do each task). For each cohort, one of more of the Team Leads also provided ratings for each participant in these areas. The specific skill areas and rating scales are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Areas of interest for the skills tracker**

<b>Cleaning skills (how <u>well</u> they do the tasks)</b>			<b>Transferrable skills (how <u>often</u> they do the tasks)</b>		
<b>Rating scale:</b> <i>Needs improvement    Below expectations</i> <i>Meets expectations    Exceeds expectations</i>			<b>Rating scale:</b> <i>Rarely   Sometimes   Usually   Always</i>		
<b>Task areas:</b>			<b>Task areas:</b>		
Attention to detail	Able to manage time	Speed in completing tasks	Being on time	Shows up for shifts	Works a whole shift
Basics of cleaning a kitchen	Basics of cleaning a bathroom	Basics of cleaning hallways and stairwells	Takes direction well	Receives feedback effectively	Takes initiative
Basics of cleaning common areas	Basics of cleaning offices	Basics of cleaning boardrooms	Works well with others	Ability to problem solve	Communicates effectively

### 2.3.4 Google Analytics

Data from Google Analytics (being managed and provided by Bluedrop Learning Networks, a partner in the NLWIC Project) helped to inform the project participants' online activity related to accessing the online tools (e.g., 'how-to' videos). A limitation for C1 was that, at the outset, the tools also were viewed by a number of project stakeholders, including the evaluators, so that all had a degree of familiarity with the tools and to ensure these were easily accessed. As such, the number and times of only the participants' views could not be identified with any degree of certainty For subsequent cohorts, and as possible, the participants were the primary viewers of the tools. This is further discussed in Section 13.

## 3.0 Profile of the survey respondents

For ease of reference for the profile, the number of pre-project survey respondents was 27 and post-project survey respondents was 21, unless otherwise indicated.

### **3.1 Demographics**

#### *Age range*

About two-thirds of the pre- and post-project survey respondents were 40+ years of age, with the majority being over 45 years. (Of note, this finding was about the same for each of the pre- and post-project survey respondent groups). The next largest age group was in the 25-29 years age range.

#### *Level of education*

The majority of the pre- and post-project survey respondents either had some high school or had completed high school (60%). The remaining respondents generally identified as having some post-secondary or having completed college or university.

### **3.2 Connection to Clean Start**

#### *Length of time working with Clean Start*

At the time of their surveys, the majority of the respondents across the four cohorts had been working with Clean Start for a few weeks to about four years. A small number indicated they had been with the program for more than four years, with one noting they had been with the program for up to 12 years. It is important to state that Clean Start has been in progress for about six years. The respondents who indicated that they had been in the program for several years, likely were involved in early inceptions of the program.

#### *Number of hours per week worked during their cohort*

Most of the survey respondents indicated they were working the same number of hours per week both pre- and post-project. Of the remaining few respondents, they were about equally split in working more or fewer hours.

Additionally, most of the respondents were working about two to eight hours a week. The remaining respondents cited working between 10 and 30 hours weekly.

## **PERSPECTIVES ON WORKING WITH CLEAN START**

### **4.0 Work tasks or duties**

In terms of specific work tasks or duties with Clean Start, all pre- and post-project survey respondents across the four cohorts cited doing tasks which fit under the broader categories of basic cleaning, dusting, mopping, disinfecting and sanitizing.

The respondents were asked what were the easiest and hardest tasks they complete. They could provide multiple responses.

There was no consistency between or within cohorts as to what participants found easiest or hardest to do. For example, some identified cleaning bathrooms as being easy, while others identified this was difficult.

There was some consistency in reasons provided for the tasks which respondents identified as being harder to do – most of which related to physicality. These included, for example, that the tasks are hard on the body (e.g., on knees and backs), require exertion (e.g., scrubbing to remove stains), employ heavier equipment (e.g., industrial mops) and/or take longer to complete.

Similarly, for the tasks which respondents identified as being easier to do, reasons were fairly consistent. These included that the tasks were simple, quick and/or straightforward to complete.

**5.0 Survey respondents’ self-assessment of work-related and transferable skills**

**Key findings:**

**Work-related skills**

- 80% to 100% of the pre- and post-project survey respondents said they were ‘very good’ at the majority of the work-related tasks:

<i>being on time for work</i>	<i>making it to all of their shifts</i>	<i>showing initiative</i>
<i>following safe work practices</i>	<i>attending to detail.</i>	<i>getting work tasks done in a timely manner</i>

- About 80% of the pre-project survey respondents and 70% of the post-project survey respondents said they are ‘very good’ at *remembering what they have to do on the job*.
- About 60% to 75% of the pre- and post-project survey respondents said that were ‘very good’ at *being organized on the job* and/or *solving problems*.

**Transferable skills**

- 70% to 86% of the pre- and post-project survey respondents said they were ‘very good’ at just over half of the tasks related to communication and working relationships:

<i>asking for help when they need it</i>	<i>taking direction from their supervisors</i>	<i>taking feedback about their work</i>
<i>communicating with other Clean Start staff/their supervisors when there was a problem</i>		

▪ About 75% of the pre-project survey respondents and 67% of the post-project survey respondents said they were 'very good' at *getting along with other Clean Start team members and Team Leads*.

▪ About 50% to 60% of the pre- and post-project survey respondents said they were 'very good' at *dealing with conflict with other Clean Start staff and their supervisors and/or managing or coping with stress on the job*

*Did being in the project help with these tasks*

The majority of the pre- and post-project survey respondents said that being in the project helped them with the work-related tasks. Fewer of the respondents identified that being in the project helped with the tasks related to communication and working relationships (i.e., transferable skills).

Aspects of the project which supported respondents with work and/or communication tasks included the various on-line job aids (e.g., 'how-to' videos), as well as support and encouragement from the Clean Start staff.

**Note:** For the following results, the pre-project survey had 27 respondents and the post-project survey had 21 respondents, unless otherwise stated.

The pre- and post-project survey respondents were asked how well they felt they did a series of work-related tasks and how well they communicated and worked with other participants and their supervisors. The scale used was from 1 to 5:

1=Not very good at all 2=Not good 3=In the middle/Okay 4=Good 5=Very good

The following provides the results for both work-related and transferable skills.

#### *Work-related skills*

- All pre-project survey respondents and 95% of the post-project survey respondents said they were 'very good' at *being on time for work*.
- About 95% of the pre- and post-project survey respondents said they were 'very good' at *making it to all of their shifts*.
- 93% of the pre-project survey respondents and 85% of the post-project survey respondents said they were 'very good' at *showing initiative*.
- 89% of the pre-project survey respondents and 100% of the post-project survey respondents said they were 'very good' at *following safe work practices*.
- 89% of the pre-project survey respondents and 81% of the post-project survey respondents said they were 'very good' at *being attentive to detail*.
- About 86% of the pre- and post-project survey respondents said they were 'very good' at *getting all of their work tasks done in a timely manner*.
- 78% of the pre-project survey respondents and 71% of the post-project survey respondents said they are 'very good' at *remembering what they have to do on the job*.
- 59% of the pre-project survey respondents said they were very good at *being organized when doing work tasks* (another 30% said they were 'good' at this task). In contrast 76% of



the post-project survey respondents said they were 'very good' at *being organized when doing work tasks* (the remaining respondents said they were 'good' at this task).

- 59% of the pre-project survey respondents and 71% of the post-project survey respondents said that were 'very good' at *solving problems*.

#### *Transferable skills (communication and working relationships)*

- 85% of the pre-project survey respondents and 81% of the post-project survey respondents said that they were 'very good' at *taking direction from their supervisors*.
- 78% of the pre-project survey respondents and 71% of the post-project survey respondents (n=20) said they were 'very good' at *asking for help when they need it*.
- 78% of the pre-project survey respondents and 86% of the post-project survey respondents said they were 'very good' at *communicating with other Clean Start staff/their supervisors when there was a problem*.
- 77% of the pre-project survey respondents and 81% of the post-project survey respondents said they were 'very good' at *taking feedback about their work*.
- 74% of the pre-project survey respondents and 67% of the post-project survey respondents said they were 'very good' at *getting along with other Clean Start Team Leads and other team members*.
- About 58% of the pre- and post-project survey respondents said they were 'very good' at *dealing with conflict with other Clean Start staff and their supervisors*. The balance of the survey respondents provided the lowest ratings for all of the Clean Start tasks – 2 ('not good') or 3 ('okay') out of 5.
- About 54% of the pre- and post-project survey respondents said that they were 'very good' at *managing or coping with stress on the job*.

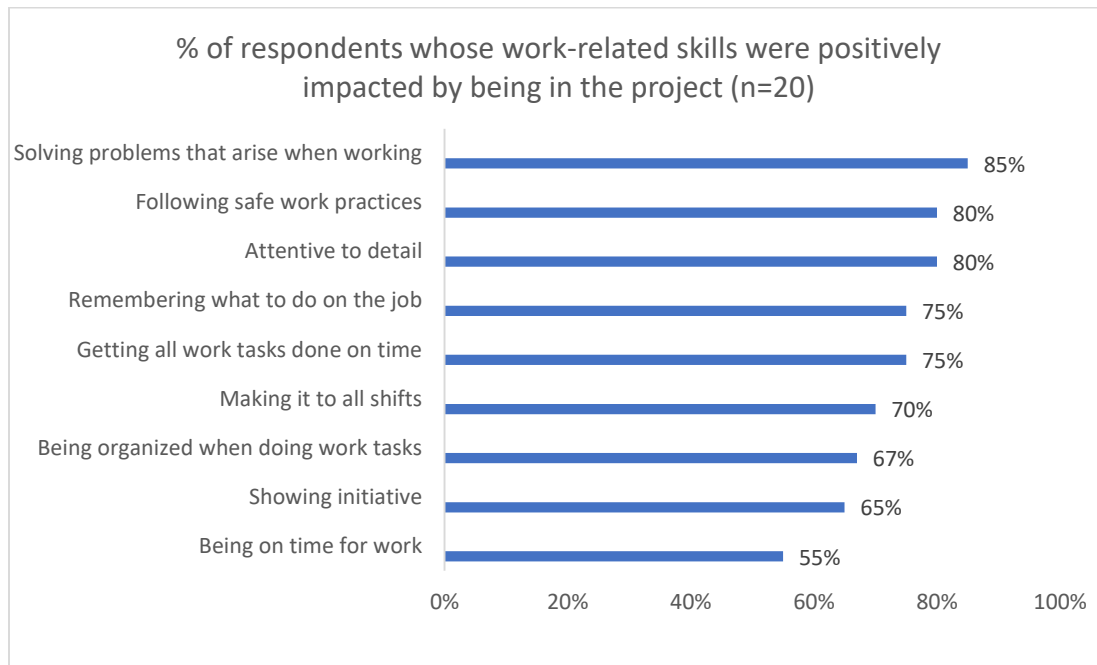
### **5.1 Did being the project help you with these tasks**

For the post-project survey, the respondents (n=20) were also asked whether or not participating in the project helped them with each task.

#### *Work-related skills*

As can be seen in Figure 1, the majority of respondents indicated that being in the project helped with one or more of the work-related tasks, with the largest majority of respondents identifying the tasks of solving problems that arise when working, following safe work practices and being attentive to detail. It is important to note that given the respondents were working within the context of COVID-19 and in a cleaning business, it is not surprising that working safely and attending to detail were noted.

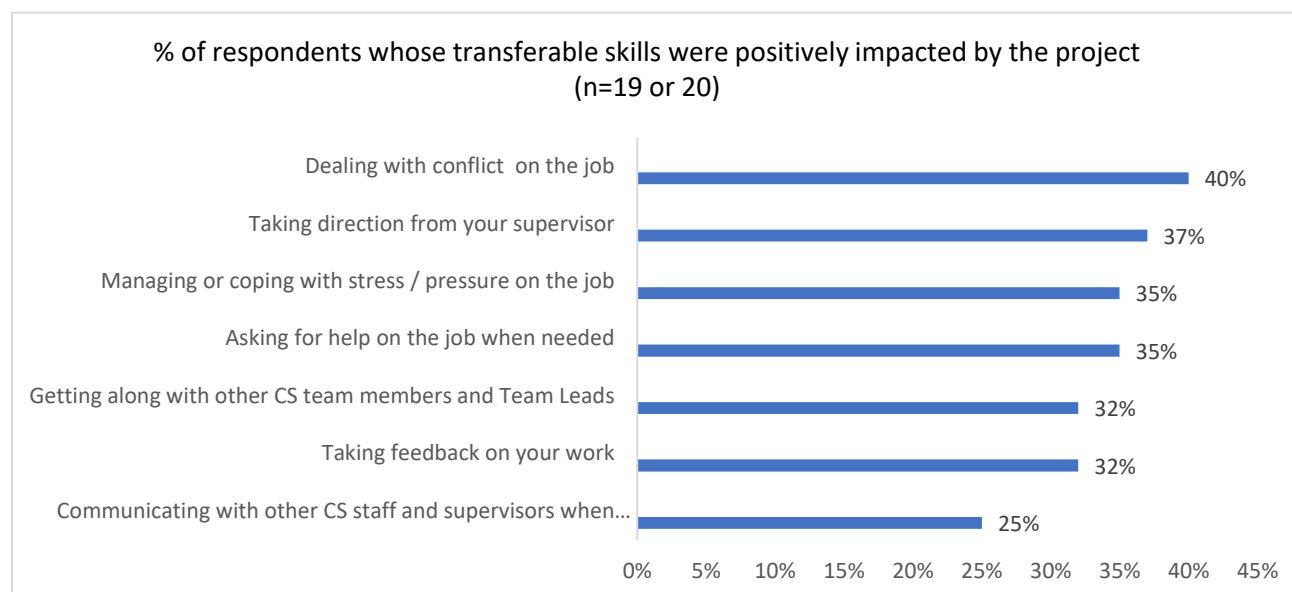
**Figure 1: % of post-project survey respondents who indicated the project helped them with work-related skills**



*Transferable skills - communication and working relationships*

As can be seen in Figure 2, fewer than half of the post-project survey respondents said that being in the project helped them with tasks related to communication and working relationships. The two most often cited areas with which the project helped were dealing with conflict on-the-job and taking direction from their supervisor.

**Figure 2: % of post-project survey respondents who indicated the project helped them with transferable skills**



Some respondents indicated what aspects of the project helped them with the various work-related tasks and those related to communication and working relationships. They identified many of the same aids/supports. This included the 'how-to' videos, checklists, work schedules, accessing Google Maps, as well as support and encouragement from staff, and opportunities to reach out to staff as needed.

## 5.2 Skills tracker

As noted in Section 2.3.3, the project participants were asked to provide a self-assessment rating in relation to how well they did certain cleaning tasks and how often they did certain transferable tasks – both mid- and end-of-cohort. Many of these tasks also were discussed in Section 5.

It is difficult to compare the results garnered from the participants' post-project surveys with their own self-assessments for many reasons, including that one is self-administered and one was delivered by one of the GGI Team, the timing at which the various self-assessments were undertaken, and the different ratings used. However, the value of the skills tracker is it allows the employment counsellors and Clean Start management and Team Leads to see how realistic and accurate the participants are in assessing their work performance.

### *Cleaning skills*

A review of the results across all of the cohorts shows that the average ratings for cleaning skills vary depending on the participant and Team Lead who are providing ratings. In some cases, a participant and Team Lead provide the same average ratings; other times, a participant might provide ratings of 'meets expectations' when the Team Lead provides ratings of 'exceeds expectations'. In other instances, a Team Lead might cite a participant 'needs improvement' while the participant notes they 'meet' and/or 'exceed expectations'. Also, the ratings provided by multiple Team Leads for any one participant could vary, depending on when they were viewing the participant and the task they were undertaking.

### *Transferable skills*

While the average ratings between participants and Team Leads also often varies in relation to transferable skills, there is closer alignment in relation to the ratings each provides. The ratings from both groups tended to be 'always' and 'usually'. The ratings of 'rarely' and 'sometimes' were few.

### **Considerations:**

*The skills tracker is a useful tool to continue to employ in Clean Start and, more broadly, in any of Stella's Circle's training programs. Any program participant (e.g., in the Trades Helper Program) could self-assess and provide a rating for specific program-related skills (e.g., how well they do each task), and transferrable skills (how often they do certain tasks). It would be important to explain to the participants why the self-assessments are being done and to encourage them to be honest in how they feel they are doing. Similarly, program supervisors/managers across Stella's Circle's skills-building programs could provide a rating for each of their participants for these skill areas.*

*However, the benefit of this exercise would only be realized if the supervisors/managers consistently complete the skills tracker for participants and then share, compare and discuss their ratings with each of the program participants, and provide any context which could have impacted a participants' performance (e.g., personal crisis, work ethic, new job site). Any discrepancies in ratings could be highlighted – positive or negative and, as necessary, a course of action determined to build on any areas of weakness. A key component for enabling more accurate self-assessment overall would be this ongoing feedback - to support participants' understanding of their areas of strength and challenges, as well as where improvement is needed.*

## 6.0 Survey respondents' self-assessment of what help they need to do better in their job

### Key findings:

About 22% of the pre- and post-project survey respondents said they did not need help to better do their job. Of note, in almost all cases, the respondents who identified not needing any help were not the same pre- and post project, nor were the areas of need identified.

For the pre-project survey, the highest percentage of respondents (29%) needed help in one or two areas; for the post-project survey the highest percentage of respondents (42%) needed help in three or four areas.

About 80% of the post-project survey respondents said that the amount of help they needed decreased following access to the online tools.

The pre- and post-project survey respondents were asked what, if anything, they needed to help them better do their job, and they could provide multiple responses.

About 22% of the pre- and post-project survey respondents said they did not need help to better do their job. The remaining pre- and post-project survey respondents reported needing help in one or more areas as can be seen in Figure 3.

Of note, in almost all cases, the respondents who identified not needing any help were not the same pre- and post project. Similarly, the respondents who identified needing help – did not necessarily need help in the same areas from the pre- to the post-project survey.

For the pre-project survey, the highest percentage of respondents (29%) needed help in one or two areas; for the post-project survey the highest percentage of respondents (42%) needed help in three or four areas. Only a small number of pre- and post-project survey respondents cited needing help in 11 to 14 areas.

It is not unusual for some of the post-project survey respondents to need help in more areas than before starting the project, even with access to the online tools. This could be a reflection of, for example, their mental or physical health, changes in the job sites, taking on new cleaning tasks, feedback about their performance and/or better understanding of what they need to do their work well.

**Figure 3. # of areas for which pre and post-project survey respondents' reported needing help**

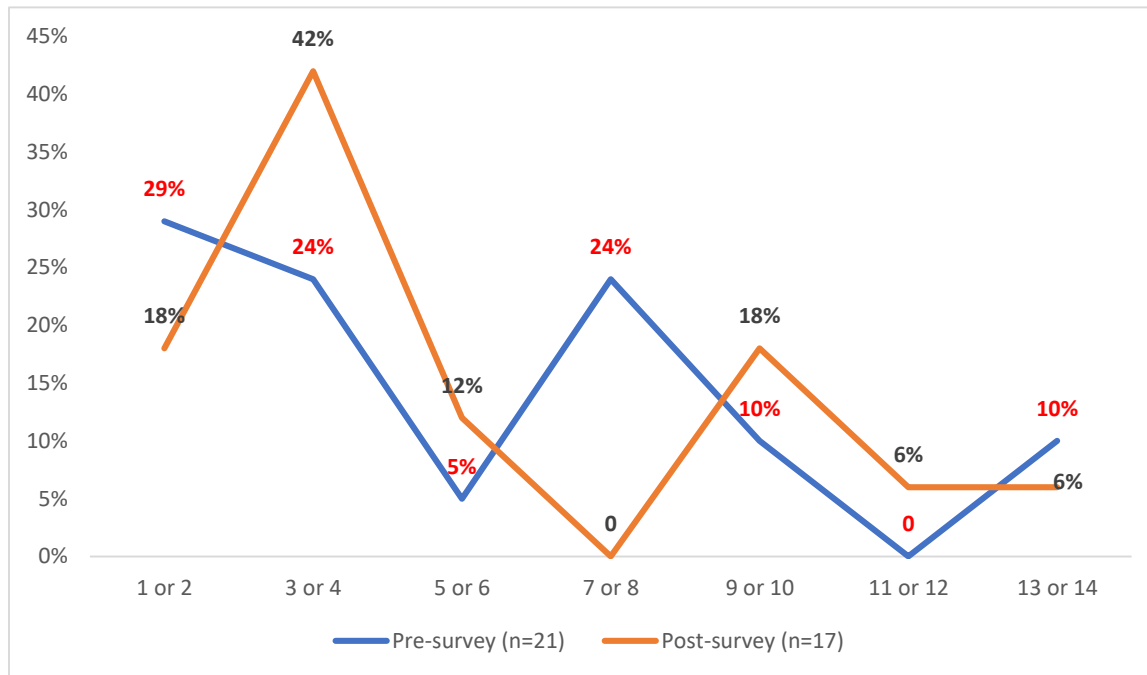


Table 3 shows the specific areas in which the pre- and post-project survey respondents cited needing help.

**Table 3: Specific areas of help needed by the pre- and post-project survey respondents**

What respondents need to help them do their job	Pre-project survey respondents (n=21)	Post-project survey respondents (n=17)
More support to learn new ways of doing things	57%	53%
More time to complete tasks	48%	41%
Different cleaning equipment	48%	41%
Reminders on how to do some things	43%	47%
Reminders of what task is next	43%	47%
More direction on what you have to do	43%	41%
Help with preparing for work	38%	24%
Help learning to get tasks done on time/more quickly	33%	24%
More training on how to keep yourself and others safe (e.g., using PPE)	33%	41%
More training on sanitizing and disinfecting surfaces	29%	47%

Finding out when you are working	24%	35%
More training on certain tasks	24%	12%
Determining how you will get to the place you are working	19%	24%
Knowing where you are working	14%	18%

### 6.1 Impact of access to online tools on the amount of help needed post-project

Post-project, the survey respondents were asked if the amount of help they needed on the job increased, decreased or stayed the same once they had access to the online tools. As can be seen in Figure 4, 79% of the survey respondents (n=19) said the amount of help they needed decreased, while the needs of the remaining respondents either stayed the same (16%) or increased (5%).

In terms of why they needed less help, the survey respondents said, for example:

*The videos help to refresh information on cleaning. [They] give tips to help on [the] job.*

*Use of [the] computer gave [me] access to all the skills [I] might need.*

*[The videos] gave me reminders on how to do things. [They freshened] my memory.*

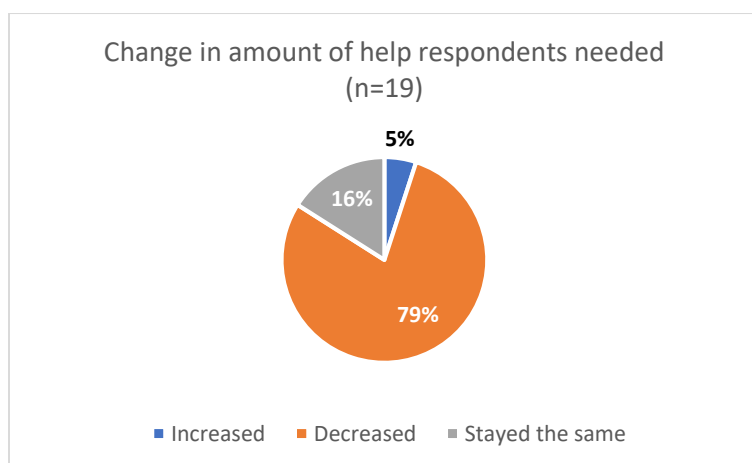
*Videos helped [me] to know what to do.*

*Online tools have helped with scheduling and 'pointers', and the 'how-to' videos are helpful.*

*Helpful steps to do things in a certain order.*

For those who said they needed the same amount of help, this was generally due to the survey respondents doing the same work over the course of the project. The survey respondent who said they needed more help found the technology complicated.

**Figure 4: Impact of the online tools on the amount of help post-project survey respondents needed**



## 7.0 Survey respondents' self-assessment of how their supervisors would rate their work with Clean Start

### Key findings:

95% of the pre- and post-project survey respondents felt their supervisors would rate them from 7 to 10 out of 10, with about one-third of this group indicating they would be rated a 10/10.

The pre- and post-project survey respondents were asked to provide a rating of how well their supervisors would rate their work with Clean Start, using a scale of 1 to 10, where:

Not very good=1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10=Very good

Results were calculated for those who completed both a pre-project and post-project survey (n=21). Of these respondents, 95% provided ratings of 7, 8, 9, or 10 out of 10 at both the pre- and post periods, with 33% of this group providing a rating of 10/10.

Most of the post-project survey respondents felt that they were doing a good job. Reasons for this perspective included, for example, that they are told they do a good job, always follow directions, are a good listener, help co-workers, attend to detail, bring experience to their jobs and/or are efficient/timely in their work. Comments included:

*I'm a fast cleaner, and I always get good comments.*

*Very good at what I'm doing; paying attention to details.*

*I do a good job and get done what needs to be done.*

*Sometimes I concentrate more than others. Doing well so far.*

*I'm usually taking initiative on the job. I know basically what needs to be done. Main issues is probably the speed of completing tasks.*

A few of the respondents, even those who provided higher ratings, did note there is always room for improvement. One respondent, who provided a rating of 6/10 pre-project and 4/10 post-project, felt they were generally doing a good job but needed help in many areas. Others who commented on areas for improvement identified, for example, that they are not addressing conflict well, are uncomfortable asking questions and/or apprehensive about communicating.

### Considerations:

*If Clean Start participants are asked to provide similar ratings going forward, and if these ratings are not generally reflective of what the Team Leads would identify, it will be important that there be ongoing and clear feedback to the participants. This should facilitate a better understanding of their capacities and abilities, while simultaneously providing opportunities for discussing areas for improvement.*



## 8.0 What pre-project survey respondents like best about having a job with Clean Start

### Key findings:

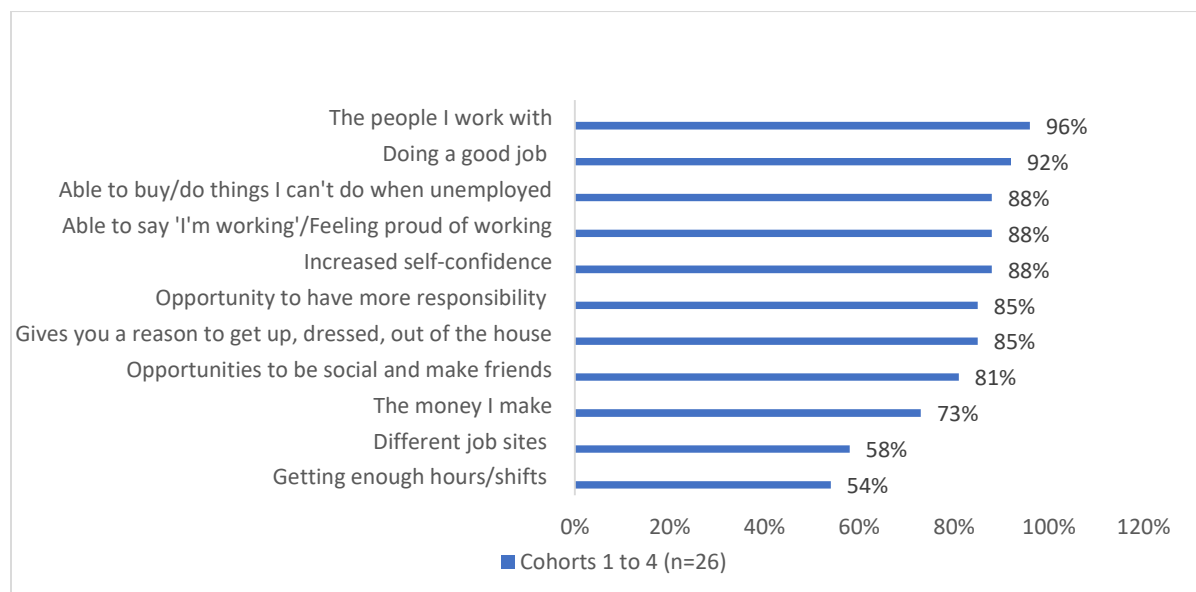
All pre-project respondents cited multiple benefits to having a job with Clean Start with the top two being the people with whom they work and doing a good job.

Pre-project, the survey respondents were asked what, if anything, was the best part about having a job with Clean Start, and they could provide multiple responses. Of note, none of the respondents felt that there was 'nothing good about Clean Start', and all of the respondents said they liked this kind of work.

Figure 5 shows that all pre-project survey respondents felt there were multiple benefits to having their Clean Start job, with over 80% citing eight benefits. Those most often cited reasons included, for example, the people with whom they work, doing a good job, able to buy/do things they could not do if unemployed, feeling proud of work, and/or increased self-confidence.

The fewest number of pre-project survey respondents said they liked getting enough hours/shifts and/or working at different job sites.

**Figure 5: What pre-project survey respondents liked best about their work with Clean Start (n=26)**



## Considerations:

*The value of a enabling a conflict-free environment and ensuring good communication to offset any misunderstandings is evident given the number one benefit identified by respondents in working with Clean Start is the people with whom they work (96%). Further, another 81% said that working gives them an opportunity to make friends.*

*Another interesting finding is that the second highest rated benefit was 'doing a good job' (92%). Related to this, is that 85% of the pre-project survey respondents cited as a benefit – the opportunity to have more responsibility. With this in mind, and as previously cited, the importance of timely, constructive and ongoing feedback cannot be understated. Such feedback supports their motivation to do a good job and, in doing well in their role, the opportunity for more responsibility.*

## DIGITAL LITERACY – Pre-project survey respondents

**Note:** the results for the pre-project survey respondents' experience with digital literacy are reported for 26 participants. The remaining pre-project survey respondent had no prior experience with technology

### 9.0 Pre-project survey respondents' history and comfort level using technology

#### **Key findings:**

None of the pre-project survey respondents had ever owned a Chromebook.

Most of the pre-project survey respondents had owned a mobile phone (85%), with over half also owning or previously owning a PC/computer or laptop. The respondents provided high comfort ratings for these devices (average of 4.6 to 4.8 out of 5).

Small numbers of respondents cited owning a Tablet, iPad and/or iPod. Comfort level ratings for these devices was also high - 4.3/5 or more.

There was much debate about the most effective device to use for the project. While a cell phone provides for useful learning, it was felt that the Chromebook would be more amenable to the participants. The Chromebook has a bigger screen for reading and viewing the online tools and enabled the participants to learn how to use transferable skills (e.g., using a keyboard) for other technologies - a tablet/touchscreen and a laptop.

Initially, it was envisioned that the online technology would be based around an all-encompassing App. However, ongoing planning between Stella's Circle and Bluedrop Learning Networks, and discussions with the project funder, allowed for an evolution to a set of Google-based Apps. It was recognized that this type of approach would have more real-world application – e.g., navigating websites, using email, accessing online calendars for scheduling.

At the time of the pre-project survey, the respondents were asked if they owned or previously owned a number of different technological devices, and they could provide multiple responses. If they did own or had owned one or more devices, they were asked to rank their *level of comfort* using the specific devices based on a rating of 1 to 5 where:

1=Very uncomfortable 2=Uncomfortable 3=Average/Okay 4=Comfortable 5=Very comfortable

**Of note:** The ratings for ease of each activity were averaged across respondents who had engaged in the activity.

As can be seen in Table 4:

- 85% of the pre-project survey respondents owned a mobile phone. The average comfort level rating by these respondents was 4.8 out of 5.
- Just over 60% of the pre-project survey respondents owned or previously had owned a PC/computer or laptop, with an average comfort level rating of 4.6 out of 5.
- Almost 30% of the pre-project survey respondents owned or previously had owned a tablet, and they gave an average comfort level rating of 4.7 out of 5.
- 16% of the pre-project survey respondents owned or previously had owned an iPod, with an average comfort level rating of 4.3 out of 5.
- 8% of the pre-project survey respondents owned an iPad, citing an average comfort level rating of 4.5 out of 5 with this device.
- None of the survey respondents owned or previously had owned a Chromebook.

**Table 4: Pre-project survey respondents' history and comfort level with mobile devices/technology (n=26)**

Device	Currently own	Previously owned	Never owned	Comfort level rating of those <i>who own or have owned the device (averaged)</i> Rating: 1 to 5 / 5
1. Mobile phone – e.g., Smartphone/iPhone	85%	-	15%	4.8/5 (n=22)
2. PC/computer or laptop	50%	12%	38%	4.6/5 (n=16)
3. Tablet	23%	4%	73%	4.7/5 (n=7)
4. iPod	12%	4%	85%	4.3/5 (n=4)
5. iPad	8%	-	92%	4.5/5 (n=2)
6. Chromebook	-	-	100%	

## 10.0 Pre-project survey respondents' online activity

### Key findings:

A large majority of all pre-project survey respondents were active online in relation to entertainment and for communicating – e.g. accessing the internet/You Tube, sending email.

Overall, fewer of the pre-project survey respondents reported going online for day-to-day activities such as paying bills/rent, and banking.

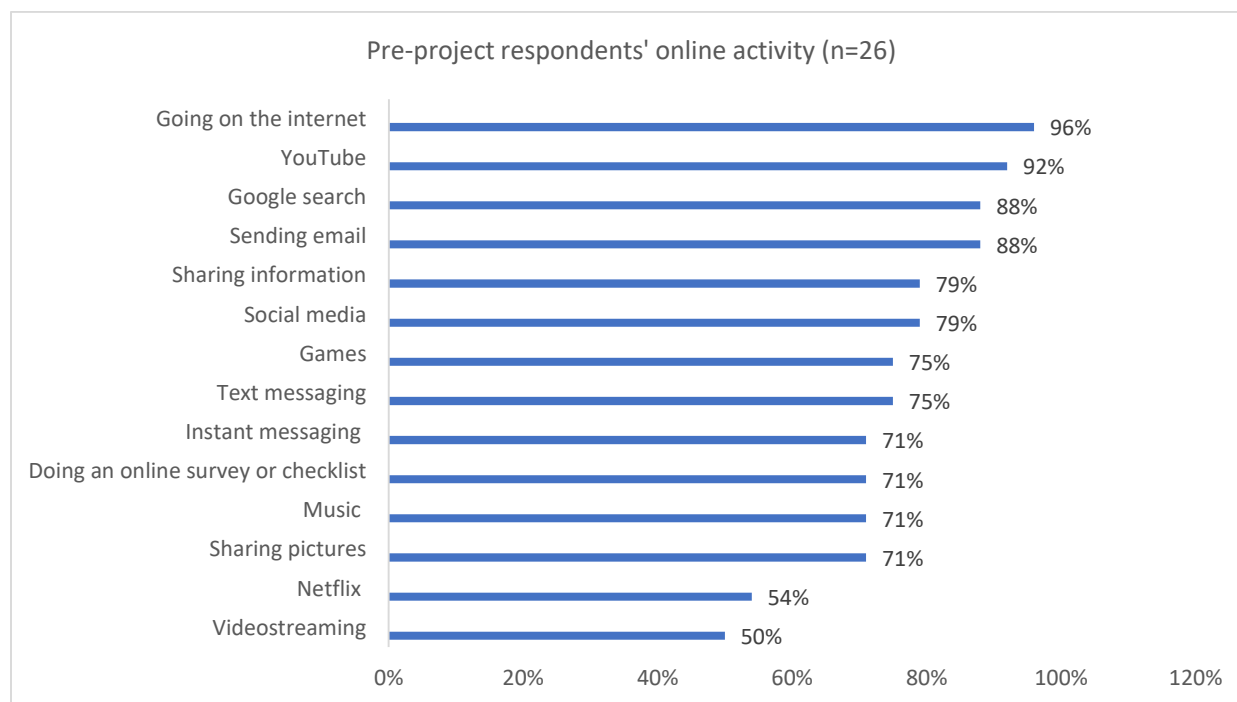
One-third of the respondents said they had gone online for informal learning activity, with far fewer respondents identifying they had done formal learning online.

The pre-project survey respondents were asked to indicate which of a series of day-to-day type activities they had done online, and they could provide multiple responses.

### 10.1 Online communication and entertainment activity

Figure 6 shows that a large majority of the pre-project survey respondents (n=26) were active online, including to access the internet and/or YouTube, as well as to undertake a Google search and/or send e-mail. Additionally, 71% to 79% of the respondents engaged in many other online activities including, for example, text messaging, instant messaging, social media and/or doing an online survey. The fewest number of respondents indicated engaging in Netflix (54%) and/or video streaming (50%).

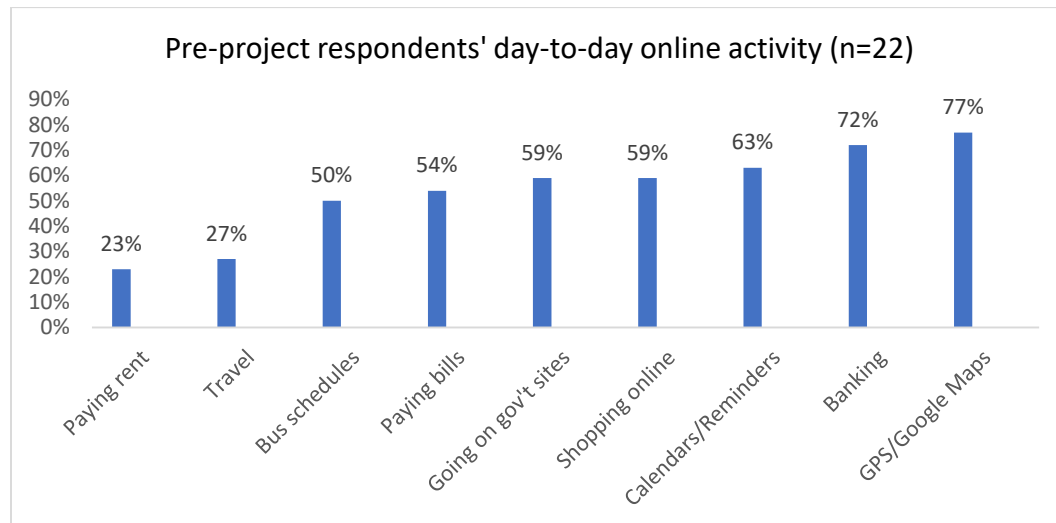
**Figure 6: Pre-project survey respondents' online communication and entertainment activity**



## 10.2 Day-to-day online activities

Overall, fewer of the pre-project survey respondents (n=22) reported going online for day-to-day activities, as can be seen in Figure 7. The two most often cited day-to-day online activity included GPS/Google Maps (77%) and banking (72%). The fewest number of respondents indicated they went online for any activities related to travel (27%) and paying rent (23%).

**Figure 7: Pre-project survey respondents' day-to-day online activities**



## 10.3 Online learning activities

One-third of the pre-project survey respondents (n=26) indicated engaging in online learning, with most identifying this to be informal in nature. Of the few respondents who cited engaging in formal online learning, they cited taking WHIMIS, music lessons, and/or a class on how to set up email.

## 11.0 Pre-project survey respondents' experience and comfort level with technical activity

### Key findings:

The majority of the pre-project survey respondents had undertaken diverse technical-type activities on their mobile devices/technology, with most having done what would be described as 'easier' activities – e.g., turning on and/or changing the volume on a computer; accessing a home page.

All pre-project survey respondents indicated that the activities they had undertaken were 'easy' or 'very easy'.

The pre-project survey respondents were asked to indicate if they had done any of a series of specific technical-type activities on their mobile devices/technology.

As can be seen in Table 5, the majority of the pre-project survey respondents had undertaken diverse technical-type activities on their mobile devices/technology, with most having done what would be described as ‘easier’ activities – e.g., turning on and/or changing the volume on a computer, tablet, laptop or phone; accessing a home page. Fewer respondents had undertaken activities which likely would be considered more technical in nature – e.g., disabled or enabled pop-up blockers, upgraded an operating system/installed an update, and/or changed a privacy setting.

**Table 5: Pre-project survey respondents’ experience and comfort level with technical activity (n=26)**

92% had turned on a computer, tablet or laptop
88% had changed the volume on their computer, tablet or phone
85% had accessed a home page
81% had connected to Wi-Fi, undertaken a Web search and/or created a password for a device
77% had created an email account
73% had changed a password, created a user account and/or downloaded info from the internet
69% had used an App and/or logged in or out of an account or device
65% had changed the brightness on their computer, tablet or phone screen
62% used their device for learning purposes
58% had disabled or enabled pop-up blockers, upgraded an operating system/installed an update, and/or downloaded an App
54% had determined if online information was true or spam
50% had changed a privacy setting and/or fixed an issue they were having with their device
46% had to stop using a device because something went wrong

### 11.1 Ease of doing each of the technical activities

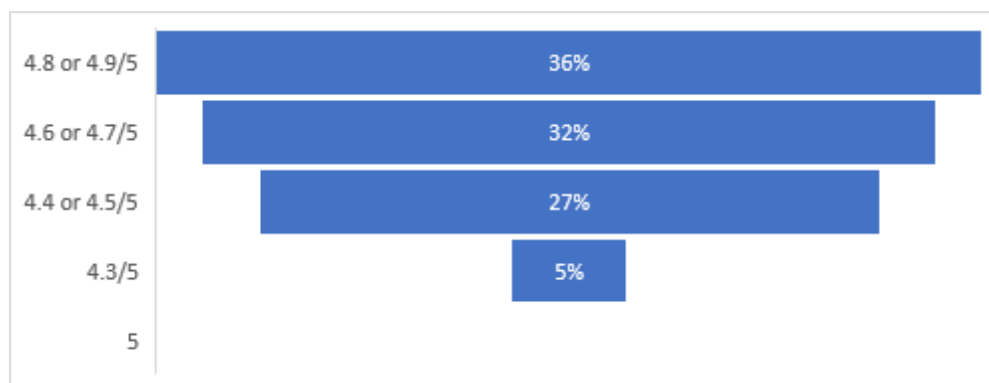
The pre-project survey respondents were asked to rate how easily they were able to do the technical activities cited above using a scale of 1 to 5, where:

1=Very hard 2=Hard 3=In the middle/Okay 4=Easily 5=Very easily

**Of note:** The ratings for ease of each activity were averaged across cohorts and across respondents who had engaged in the activity.

As can be seen from Figure 8, all of the pre-project survey respondents (n=22) provided ratings in the ‘easy’ (4/5) to ‘very easy’ (5/5) range for all the activities they had undertaken.

**Figure 8: Pre-project survey respondents ease of doing technical activities (n=22)**



## DIGITAL LITERACY – Post-project survey respondents

**Note:** One of the post-project survey respondents only answered some of the following questions and so the number of respondents is n=20 or 21.

### 12.0 Post-project survey respondents’ perspectives on the helpfulness of training to support use of technology

#### Key findings:

The majority of the survey respondents needed help on one or more digital literacy tasks at the outset of their project participation. Almost all of these respondents said that the training they received for each task was ‘very helpful’. Additionally, 90% of these respondents said that the overall training was ‘helpful’ or ‘very helpful’.

On completion of the project, the large majority of the post-project survey respondents, who provided a rating, cited most of the digital literacy tasks as being ‘very easy’ to do.

During their time in the project, training was offered to the survey respondents on a series of technical activities which would be important to support their use of the Chromebook. Early on in the planning for the project, it was felt that there would be a concentrated period of time (e.g., two weeks) during which the participants would receive in-class, group-based training.

During Cohort 1, it quickly became apparent that the participants were at differing knowledge levels about technology and due to the pandemic, the idea of group-based learning provided logistical challenges. It was felt that the more prudent and effective approach would be to work with each of the participants individually, as needed, to support training on a range of digital activities. This individualized approach was employed for the C2, C3 and C4 participants.

Table 6 provides a summary of training the post-project survey respondents received. It is evident that the majority of the post-project survey respondents had required training on one or more digital literacy tasks.

**Table 6: # of post-project survey respondents who received training for each digital literacy task (n=20 or 21)**

<b>50% to about 75% of the survey respondents received training in one or more of the following tasks</b>		
Connecting to Wi-Fi	Setting up a Gmail account	Logging into a Gmail account
Receiving an email message	Viewing videos on a site	Accessing Google Calendar
Completing an online training course		
<b>25% - 49% of the survey respondents also received training in one or more of these tasks:</b>		
Sending an email message	Accessing a specific website	Locating information on a site
Viewing a meeting on their calendar	Setting up a calendar entry	Finding a location on Google Maps
Planning a route using Google Maps		
<b>Under 25% of survey respondents received training in one or more of the following:</b>		
Bookmarking a site	Accepting a meeting invite via email	Doing video calls

### 12.1 Ease of each digital literacy task for the post-project survey respondents

At the end of their cohort, all post-project survey respondents were also asked to rate the degree of difficulty for each digital literacy task cited above in Table 6, as relevant, using the following scale:

Very hard=1 2 3 4 5=Very easy

The large majority of the post-project survey respondents, who provided a rating, cited most of the digital literacy tasks as being 'very easy' to do (5/5).

In a few instances, respondents provided ratings of 1 to 4 out of 5 on select tasks, indicating, for example, that they were not yet very good at the tasks, did not know how to do the tasks, and/or still required some help and/or practice in these areas, as they were more difficult.



## 12.2 Helpfulness of the digital literacy training

*How helpful was the training for each task?*

The post-project survey respondents who had received training from the Project Coordinator were asked to rate how helpful this training was for each digital literacy task, using the following scale:

Not very helpful at all=1 2 3 4 5=Very helpful 6=N/A

Almost all of the post-project survey respondents said that the training they received for each task was 'very helpful' (5/5).

*How helpful was the digital literacy training overall*

Using the same scale as above, the post-project survey respondents also were asked to provide an overall rating of how helpful the digital literacy training was. Seventy percent of the respondents (n=20) who provided a rating, said the overall training was 'very useful' (5/5), with another 20% noting the training was 'useful'. Comments included:

*The training made you encouraged to ask questions and get assistance.*

*[The Project Coordinator] knows what she is doing, but it takes me a lot longer to catch on.*

*Showed me how things can be done differently. You get so used to doing things a certain way but there may be a better way to do it.*

*A lot of things I already knew but it did give me a few pointers which helped.*

*It is an awesome program and shows you how to do stuff.*

*They taught me how to do new things and different ways to do things*

*Additional technology training that might have helped*

A few of the post-project survey respondents identified other training they might have needed. This included access to Wi-Fi at job sites, more training on the Chromebook, and/or a refresher with the Project Coordinator, as needed, during the project.

## 13.0 Accessing and viewing the online tools

### Key Findings:

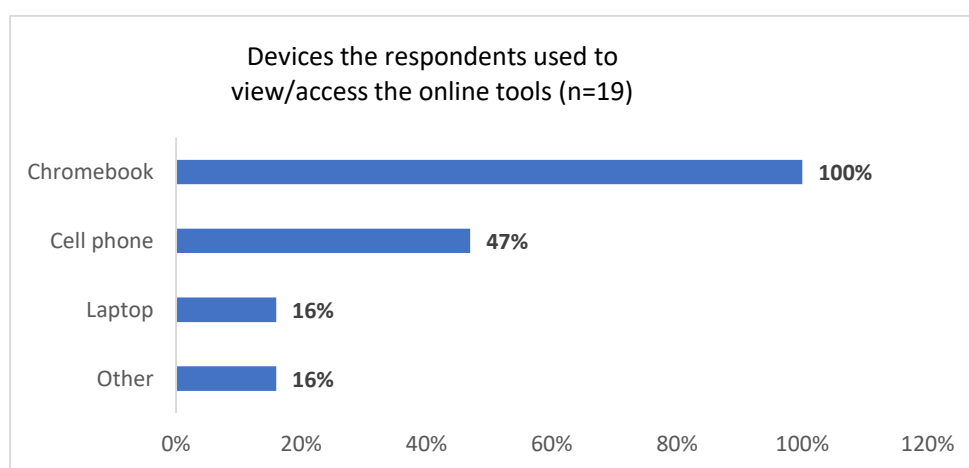
All of the post-project survey respondents used a Chromebook to access/view the online tools, and some had also used other devices – e.g., cell phone. The average amount of time spent viewing the tools varied, with the largest number of respondents viewing the tools several times a week.

The large majority of the post-project survey respondents accessed the online tools on their days off/downtime, while just under half also did so after their shifts. The most popular time for project page views across the cohorts was between about 5 p.m. and 11 p.m. The most popular days for viewing were Friday and/or Saturday, with Saturday being the predominant day.

As depicted in Figure 9, all of the post-project survey respondents (n=19) used a Chromebook to access/view the online tools. Just under half of the respondents also used a cell phone and another 16% used a laptop. Of note, three respondents identified using one or more other devices, specifically referencing a desktop computer and/or a tablet.

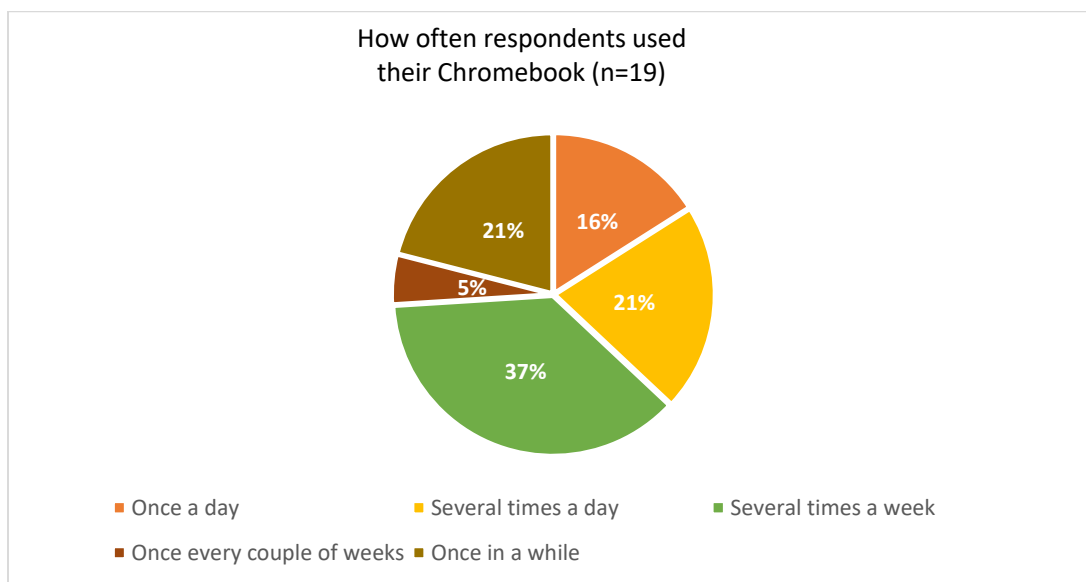
The post-project survey respondents who referenced using more than one device to access/view the online tools were asked to specify which device they used the most. Of the nine respondents who cited using multiple devices, four used their Chromebook the most while three others used a cell phone more frequently. Of note, the remaining two respondents who identified using more than one device said they used their Chromebook and cell phone equally.

**Figure 9: Devices the post-project survey respondents used to view the online tools**



In terms of how often on average the post-project survey respondents used their Chromebook, and as can be seen in Figure 10, the frequency identified by respondents varied somewhat. Thirty-seven percent of respondents used their Chromebook 'several times a week' while 21% indicated using their Chromebook 'once in a while' and/or 'several times a day'. Fewer respondents (16% and 5%) used their Chromebook 'once a day' or 'once every couple of weeks', respectively.

**Figure 10: Frequency of post-project survey respondents' use of their Chromebooks**



#### *When did survey respondents access the online tools?*

The post-project survey respondents were asked when they generally accessed the online tools, and they could provide multiple responses. The large majority of respondents (84%) accessed the online tools on their days off/downtime, while just under 50% also did so after their shifts. Fewer respondents (16%) accessed the online tools just before their shifts and/or during their shifts (5%).

This information is confirmed by the Google Analytics data, which show that the most popular time for project page views across the cohorts was between about 5 p.m. and 11 p.m. The most popular days for viewing were Friday and/or Saturday, with Saturday being the predominant day.

Also, of note, those accessing the online tools during these evening hours and on Saturday, also, could have been working with less staff support – without a Team Lead – and/or on their own. This could have been an impetus for accessing the tools during these periods.

Further, and as referenced in this report, in some cases it was not practical to use the tools at a job site, particularly when there was no access to Wi-Fi.

## 14.0 Post-project survey respondents' use of the online tools

### ***Key findings:***

About 70% to 80% of the post-project survey respondents reported using the majority of the online tools. The largest number of respondents (89%) cited viewing the instructional cleaning videos on kitchens. The least number of respondents (37%) accessed the video on 'how to use Google calendar'.

There was no specific trend across the cohorts in relation to how frequently the survey respondents viewed the tools.

About 75% or more of the post-project survey respondents identified that the online tools were 'very helpful'. The highest number of ratings were provided for 'safely lifting and bending' (100%) , 'preventing slips, trips, and falls' (100%), and 'how to use Google Calendar' (100%), although the number of respondents providing ratings for each of these tools varied.

When asked to identify, overall, which tools were the most helpful, the respondents cited the cleaning videos and 'mixing concentrated cleaners'. A few of the respondents noted that some of the tools were less helpful because they were already familiar with the processes.

An in-depth discussion was held with the post-project survey respondents in relation to the online tools, i.e., whether they used the tools and if so, how often, and how helpful the tools were. The rating of helpfulness used was on a scale of 1 to 5 where:

Not very helpful at all=1 2 3 4 5=Very helpful

Overall and on average, the post-project survey respondents cited viewing the instructional cleaning videos once, 2 to 5 times, or often. There was no specific trend for either of the cohorts in terms of frequency of viewing.

The following tables present information related to using and rating the following tools:

- Instructional Cleaning Videos
- Instructional Cleaning Task Lists
- Safety Guides
- Site/Tool Navigation – 'how to' videos
- Job Sites

### ***Instructional cleaning videos***

About 75% or more of the post-project survey respondents had accessed four of the instructional cleaning videos (kitchens, bathrooms, floor mopping and dust mopping). Fewer of the survey respondents had viewed the remaining two videos – cleaning stairwells (63%) and vacuuming stairwells (53%).

About three-quarters or more of the post-project survey respondents (n=19), who had accessed the instructional cleaning videos and provided ratings, indicated the videos were 'very helpful' (rating of 5/5). The highest number of respondents provided this rating for videos on 'kitchens', as 'cleaning stairwells' and 'vacuuming stairwells'.

Instructional Cleaning Videos		
	How many survey respondents used the tool? (n=19)	How helpful was it? (rating of 1-5)
<b>Kitchens</b>	89%	5/5 – 88% 3 or 4/5 – 12% (n=17)
<b>Bathrooms</b>	79%	5/5 – 73% 3 or 4/5 – 27% (n=15)
<b>Floor mopping</b>	79%	5/5 – 73% 3 or 4/5 – 27% (n=15)
<b>Using a dust mop</b>	74%	5/5 – 79% 3/5 – 21% (n=14)
<b>Cleaning stairwells</b>	63%	5/5 – 92% 3/5 – 8% (n=12)
<b>Vacuuming stairwells</b>	53%	5/5 – 90% 3/5 – 10% (n=10)

### ***Instructional cleaning task lists***

About 70% to 80% of the post-project survey respondents accessed nine of the instructional cleaning tasks lists. The fewest number of respondents accessed the task lists related to 'preparing the clean cart' (63%) and 'proper disposal of sharps' (47%).

Three-quarters or more of all of the post-project survey respondents, who had accessed the tasks lists and provided ratings, indicated that all but one of the instructional cleaning task lists were 'very helpful' (rating of 5/5). The one exception was the 'proper disposal of sharps' list which was provided a 5/5 rating by 63% of the respondents.

The highest number of respondents (92%) provided a rating of 'very useful' for the 'disinfecting task list' and 'mixing concentrated cleaners'.

Instructional Cleaning Task Lists		
	How many survey respondents used the tool? (n=19)	How helpful was it? (rating of 1-5)
Kitchen cleaning	79%	5/5 – 86% 3/5 – 14% (n=14)
Washroom cleaning	79%	5/5 – 86% 3/5 – 14% (n=14)
Disinfecting task list	79%	5/5 – 92% 3/5 – 8% (n=13)
Disinfecting tools step-by-step guide	74%	5/5 – 75% 3 or 4/5 – 25% (n=12)
Floor mopping step-by-step guide	68%	5/5 – 83% 3/5 – 17% (n=12)
Proper use of a dust mop	68%	5/5 – 75% 3/5 – 25% (n=12)
Stairwell cleaning	68%	5/5 – 75% 3/5 – 25% (n=12)
Wearing PPE	68%	5/5 – 83% 3 or 4/5 – 17% (n=12)
Mixing concentrated cleaners	68%	5/5 – 92% 3/5 – 8% (n=12)
Preparing the clean cart	63%	5/5 – 80% 3/5 – 20% (n=10)
Proper disposal of sharps	47%	5/5 – 63% 3/5 – 38% (n=8)

### ***Safety guides***

About 70% to about 80% of the post-project survey respondents reported accessing all of the safety guides.

The large majority of respondents (85%-100%), who had accessed the guides and provided ratings, cited the guides as ‘very helpful’ (5/5).

Safety Guides		
	How many survey respondents used the tool? (n=19)	How helpful was it? (rating of 1-5)
Safely lifting and bending	79%	5/5 – 100% (n=14)
Safely sweeping and mopping	79%	5/5 – 86% 3/5 – 14% (n=14)
Safely handling garbage	74%	5/5 – 92% 3/5 – 8% (n=13)
Safely wiping and dusting	74%	5/5 – 85% 3/5 – 13% (n=13)
Safely using water pails and buckets	74%	5/5 – 92% 3/5 – 8% (n=13)
Safely vacuuming	74%	5/5 – 85% 3/5 – 13% (n=13)
Preventing slips, trips and falls	68%	5/5 – 100% (n=12)

### ***Site/tool navigation – ‘how to’ videos***

While about 80% of the post-project survey respondents had accessed the ‘How to use the site’ video; far fewer (47%) had viewed the ‘How to use Google Maps’. The lowest number of respondents (37%) had viewed the ‘How to use Google Calendar’.

About 90% to 100% of the survey respondents, who had accessed the guides and provided ratings, cited the ‘How to use Google Maps’ and ‘How to use Google Calendar’ guides as ‘very helpful’ (5/5). About two-thirds of the respondents provided this rating for the ‘How to use the site’ guide.

Site/Tool Navigation – ‘How-to’ Videos		
	How many survey respondents used the tool? (n=19)	How helpful was it? (rating of 1-5)
How to use the site	79%	5/5 – 66% 3 or 4/5 – 20% 2/5 – 13% (n=15)
How to use Google Maps	47%	5/5 – 89% 3/5 – 11% (n=9)
How to use Google Calendar	37%	5/5 – 100% (n=7)

### ***Job sites***

About half of the post-project survey respondents had viewed one or both of the job site tools. More of the respondents (78%) cited the 'tasks lists for the job sites' as 'very helpful' as compared to the numbers providing a similar rating for the 'interactive maps' (56%).

<b>Job sites</b>		
	<b>How many survey respondents used the tool? (n=19)</b>	<b>How helpful was it? (rating of 1-5)</b>
<b>Tasks lists specific to 39 job sites</b>	53%	5/5 – 78% 3/5 – 11% 2/5 – 11% (n=9)
<b>Interactive maps to 39 job sites</b>	47%	5/5 – 56% 3/5 – 22% 2/5 – 22% (n=9)

#### *The online tools that were the most helpful to the respondents*

About three-quarters of the post-project survey respondents (n=19) identified online tools that they found to be the most helpful, with a few of these respondents saying that all of the tools were helpful. Those most often cited included 'mixing concentrated cleaners' and the cleaning videos (e.g., bathrooms, kitchen and stairwells). When asked to elaborate, a few of the respondents provided reasons including, for example, the cleaning tools provide a refresher and/or reminder of what needs to be done, and/or it was important to be able to confirm appropriate amounts of chemicals and procedures for mixing.

#### *The online tools that were least helpful to the respondents*

A few of the post-project survey respondents said that some of the online tools were not very helpful because they were already familiar with the processes/procedures (e.g., basic cleaning videos) and/or performed the tasks regularly.

#### *Other online tools that might have been helpful*

Suggestions from a small number of post-project survey respondents included:

- Having a smaller device to use – more amenable when at the job sites
- Adding more task lists; having a task list for each job site and prioritizing the list to ensure effective use of time
- Ensuring access to Wi-Fi at all of the job sites.



## Outcomes and Impacts

### 15.0 Level of comfort with digital technology

**Key findings:**

The majority of the post-project survey respondents said their comfort level with technology had increased from pre- to post-project. For many, this was a significant increase. None of the respondents indicated a decrease in comfort level.

About 80% of the post-project survey respondents said their experience in the project will help them in using other technologies.

The post-project survey respondents were asked to provide a rating of how comfortable they were with technology at the beginning and end of the project, using the following scale where:

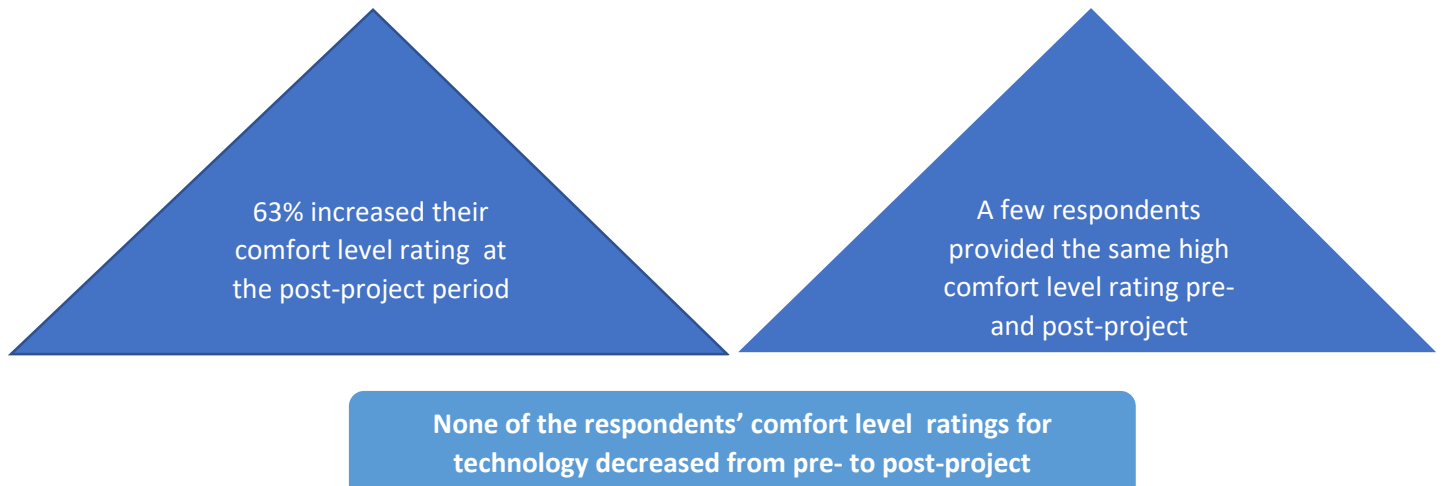
Not very comfortable at all=1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10=Very comfortable

As can be seen in Figure 11, of the 19 post-project survey respondents, 63% increased their comfort level ratings from pre- to post-project. Most of these respondents indicated a significant increase of five to eight points (e.g., 2-10, 5-10).

A few of the post-project survey respondents, whose rating did not change as significantly, provided a higher rating both before and after the project – 8, 9 or 10 out of 10. A few of the respondents also provided lower comfort ratings for before and after (4 or 5 out of 10) but still indicated that their level of comfort with technology had increased.

Almost 40% of the post-project survey respondents provided the same comfort level rating both before and after the project. Of note, no respondents indicated a decrease in their level of comfort with technology from pre- to post-project.

**Figure 11: Survey respondents pre- and post-project comfort level ratings with technology (n=19)**



*Will the experience in the project help the survey respondents when they are using other technology?*

Approximately 80% of the post-project survey respondents indicated that the project would help them when using other technologies, while the remaining respondents indicated 'maybe'. Comments included:

*I have the ability to look up new information and how to do things.*

*I feel a bit more confident.*

*[The project] helps me use [technology] quicker. I know how to look for information.*

*[The project] gave me more experience. It shows you where you can access online help.*

*My technology skills have increased so much, and I am so much more comfortable now.*

## 16.0 Job Satisfaction

### Key findings:

The majority of the post-project survey respondents said their satisfaction level with their Clean Start job had increased from pre- to post-project. For a few, this was a significant increase. None of the respondents indicated a decrease in satisfaction levels from pre- to post-project.

Overall, it would seem that the Clean Start participants' mood tracker responses are in line with the survey respondents' ratings of job satisfaction. Almost all of the participants (91%) reported feeling 'good' or 'great' at the times they completed the tracker, with over half of this group (59%) reporting feeling 'great'. Of note, the frequency and timing of responses varied greatly among participants.

The post-project survey respondents were asked to rate how satisfied they were with their Clean Start job before the project and on completion of the project, using the following scale of 1 to 10 where:

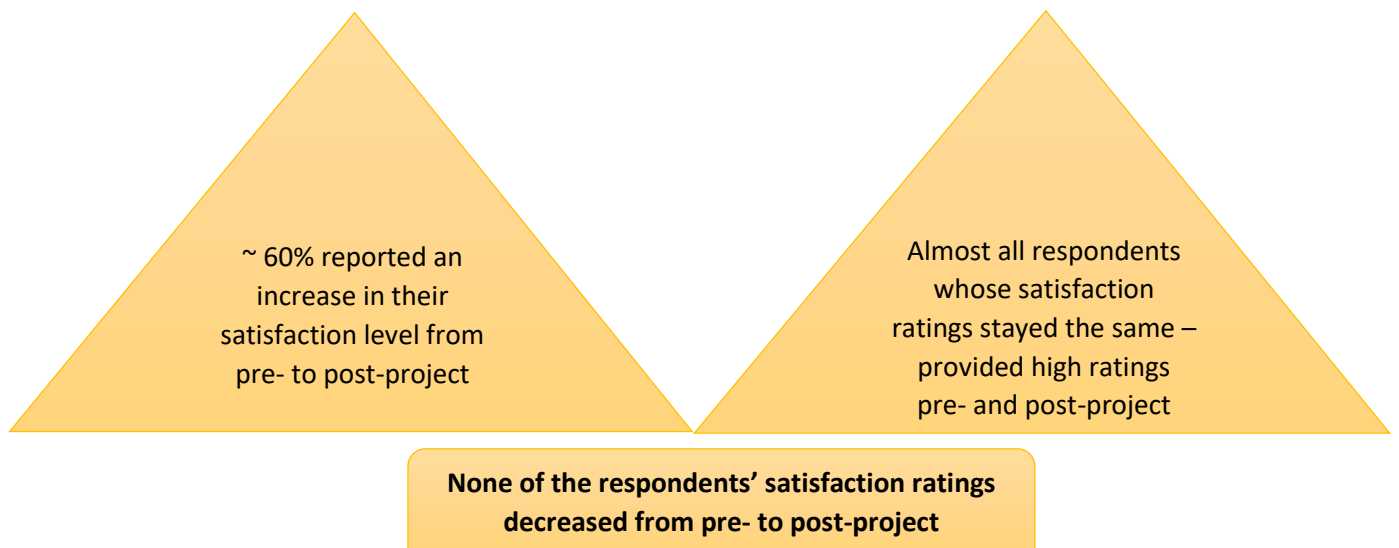
Very unsatisfied=1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10=Very satisfied

As is presented in Figure 12, almost 60% of the post-project survey respondents (n=19) indicated an increase in their job satisfaction from before to on completion of the project, while the ratings of the remaining respondents did not change pre- to post-project. Of the eleven respondents who cited an increase, four indicated an increase of three to five points (e.g., 4-9, 6-10), while the others indicated a smaller increase of one to two points (e.g., 6-7, 8-10).

All but one of the post-project survey respondents whose ratings did not change pre- to post-project provided high ratings (e.g., 8, 9 or 10 out of 10); the final respondent provided a rating of four out of 10 at both points.

Of note, none of the post-project survey respondents indicated a decrease in their job satisfaction from before to after the project.

**Figure 12: Survey respondents pre- and post-project satisfaction ratings for their Clean Start job (n=19)**



The post-project survey respondents were asked to explain their ratings. Comments included:

*I love the tool guides. I found them very helpful.*

*It is hard always [being] on the same site. I would like to go new places.*

*I feel more confident.*

*The videos helped me relate to proper ways to do things.*

*It's stuff I like to do. It is easy for me.*

*Having work experience helps.*

### **16.1 Mood tracker**

A review of the mood tracker results shows that about 75% of the project participants (22/27) across all four cohorts inputted at some point over their time in the project. In total, they inputted 154 times. However, the number of times each participant inputted ranged from twice up to 30. The times at which they inputted (e.g., early, mid or late cohort; daily/weekly/bi-weekly/monthly) also varied, with a small number of participants inputting more than once daily.

Almost all of the respondents (91%) reported feeling 'good' or 'great' at the times they completed the tracker, with over half of this group (59%) reporting feeling 'great'. The small number of participants (8%) who reported their work week had been either 'okay' or 'not good', also provided responses of 'good' and/or 'great' in other weeks. There was no clear indication as to why their responses varied.

Overall, it would seem that the mood tracker responses are in line with the survey respondents' ratings of job satisfaction.

## Considerations:

*The mood tracker is another tool which could have great relevance for Stella's Circle, outside of Clean Start. The opportunity to capture participants 'in the moment' mood, when in training or working, can support intentional communication with the participants if they are describing their mood in negative terms on an ongoing basis. Such a check-in could result in timely intervention to offset personal or work-related issues from impacting a participant's retention in a program and/or a job.*

*If it were to be employed in the future with Clean Start or other Stella's Circle's programs, the intent of the mood tracker and its use should be well-explained to program participants/employees, with specific times identified for inputting. Reminders should be provided to facilitate maximum participation.*

*For this tool to be of maximum benefit, however, results of the mood tracker should be provided to the relevant manager/supervisor and/or employment counsellor in a timely manner – as possible 'in the moment'. Similarly, when there is a concern about participants who are expressing ongoing negative moods, timely discussions should be held to explore the reasons for the ratings/dissatisfaction and related solutions.*

## 17.0 Impacts on employment

### Key findings:

Approximately 80% of the post-project survey respondents felt that participation in the project would help them in their ongoing work with Clean Start; the remaining respondents said it might help. Reasons included that it helped them build technical knowledge, to stay organized and/or work more efficiently.

Additionally, just under 70% of the post-project survey respondents felt that being in the project would help them to move on to other employment, and another 28% said it might help. Reasons included that it has served as valuable work experience and helped them with their confidence.

While the ERS results were less telling in terms of increased employability, it is important to contextualize the results in relation to the many and diverse challenges which the participants face, including mental health, the number of hours they have the capacity to work, and their own self-perceptions.

### 17.1 Working with Clean Start

Approximately 80% of the post-project survey respondents (n=19) felt that participation in the project would help them in their ongoing work with Clean Start, while the remaining respondents said 'maybe'. Overall, the respondents said that the project helped them with, for example, building technical knowledge, staying organized, and working more efficiently, as well as having comfort in knowing what needs to be done and assurance that they are doing their job correctly. Comments included:

*It can't hurt, that's for sure. But I did feel comfortable in knowing what needed to be done on the job when I started.*

*It helps me know I'm doing the job right.*

*I can do work faster. Experience with videos helped.*

*[It was] a matter of refreshing my knowledge, listing tasks, keeping track of meetings, etc.*

*It keeps me on track of what to do.*

*Yes, definitely. It helps me to be better at my job. It takes the guess work out. It is very informative. If you know what you need to do, it makes your job easier.*

## **17.2 Moving on to employment external to Stella's Circle**

Of the 18 respondents who provided a response, just under 70% felt that being in the project would help them to move on to other employment, while the remaining respondents said 'maybe' (28%) or 'no' (6%). Of note, the respondent who indicated 'no' explained that this was due to being unsure of their future plans rather than being a reflection of the impacts of the project.

Some of the post-project survey respondents who indicated 'yes' or 'maybe' said, for example, the project has increased their confidence, served as valuable work experience, provided necessary knowledge, opened new opportunity for future employment, and/or provided them with the chance to improve their life/financial situation overall. Comments included:

*More confident and better worker, taking pride in my work.*

*I feel more confident in accessing online help – improved abilities.*

*Gives me the tools and knowledge I need.*

*More experience using computers on the job opens up more possibilities.*

*[I will] hopefully be able to improve my life and financial situation.*

*I have more experience and I learned new things, especially using a Chromebook.*

## **ERS Assessment**

Twenty of the C1 to C4 participants completed the pre- and post-ERS assessment. As can be seen in Table 7:

60% of the program participants' ERS results remained unchanged from the beginning to the end of the project. For most, they remained as 'not ready', although two of the participants were cited as 'fully ready' at both junctures.

20% of the program participants' ERS results showed more positive results, while another 20% showed more negative results.

**Table 7: C1 – C4 program participants’ ERS pre- and post-scores (n=20)**

Participants whose ERS results stayed the same pre- to post-project		
<b>C1-10</b>	Not Ready	Not Ready
<b>C1-11</b>	Not Ready	Not Ready
<b>C1-12</b>	Not Ready	Not Ready
<b>C1-14</b>	Not Ready	Not Ready
<b>C1-15</b>	Not Ready	Not Ready
<b>C2-17</b>	Not Ready	Not Ready
<b>C2-18</b>	Not Ready	Not Ready
<b>C2-19</b>	Not Ready	Not Ready
<b>C3-25</b>	Not Ready	Not Ready
<b>C4-28</b>	Not Ready	Not Ready
<b>C1-09</b>	Fully Ready	Fully Ready
<b>C2-21</b>	Fully ready	Fully Ready
Participants whose ERS results changed - negatively		
<b>C1-06</b>	Fully Ready	↘ Not Ready
<b>C3-23</b>	Fully Ready	↘ Not Ready
<b>C2-16</b>	Fully Ready	↘ Minimally Ready
<b>C4-31</b>	Minimally Ready	↘ Not Ready
Participants whose ERS results changed - positively		
<b>C1-08</b>	Not Ready	↗ Minimally Ready
<b>C3-24</b>	Not Ready	↗ Minimally Ready
<b>C4-29</b>	Not Ready	↗ Fully Ready
<b>C3-27</b>	Minimally Ready	↗ Fully Ready

It is important to contextualize the ERS scores in relation to the participants in question – i.e., the population has diverse challenges which can impact their capacity and ability to get work at any given time, even when their scores are predictive of success. As well, depending on their own self-perceptions, their ERS self-assessments could be inflated or diminished. This can be seen in some instances when the ERS self-assessments are compared to self-assessments of their cleaning and transferable skills.

As examples:

C1-09 identified being 'fully ready' at both the pre-and post- assessment times but showed some decrease in their ERS scores at the post-assessment period. (On average, this participant identified 'meeting' and 'exceeding' expectations in relation to their cleaning skills; and noted that they 'always' did their transferable skills.)

C3-23 identified as being 'fully ready' and then 'not ready' and showed a significant decrease across all of the ERS assessment areas - an average of about 20 percentage points. (On average, this participant identified 'meeting' and 'exceeding' expectations in relation to their cleaning skills; and noted that they 'usually' or 'always' did their transferable skills.)

C4-31 identified as being 'minimally ready' and then 'not ready' and showed decreases across nine of the ERS assessment areas - an average of about 20 percentage points. (On average, this participant identified 'meeting' expectations in relation to their cleaning skills; and noted that they 'usually' or 'always' did their transferable skills.)

## 18.0 Longer term results from the project

### **Key findings:**

The majority of the follow-up survey respondents were still using the online tools to some degree.

All of the respondents said that the project helped them better do their job.

The large majority said that their use of technology has increased since they finished in the project.

The majority of the respondents provided high ratings of job satisfaction, and most indicated being in the project had influenced their rating.

As noted earlier, follow-up interviews were held with 10 past participants of C1 and C2. A key focus of the discussion was any longer-term impacts experienced from their project participation. Relevant information is presented in the following sections.

### *Ongoing use of the online tools*

All of the follow-up survey respondents had availed of the online tools during their time in the project. Several months later, six of the ten were accessing the tools to some degree. For example, one of the respondents cited continuing to use the scheduler and another referenced checking the videos if they needed a reminder. Two of the remaining respondents said they might use the tools again – as needed and/or if they have more ready access to the internet/Wi-Fi.



### *Job performance*

All of the follow-up survey respondents felt participation in the project helped them do their job better, citing both the tools and supports available were of great help. Comments included:

*It helped me a lot. Looking at the videos really helped me focus on things I was missing out on. It also helped me do things properly.*

*The safety videos and knowing procedures on how to clean things were helpful.*

*Yes, I could double check my work to make sure I'm doing things right.*

*Yes, all the extra support was very helpful.*

Some of the respondents offered suggestions as to what else would have helped them in their work during the project including.

- Clearer information around addresses for businesses
- Updated 'how-to' videos
- An initial group session for project participants, where relevant information would have been provided (this respondent said they realized this opportunity was constrained by COVID-19, but for people working part-time, it provides an opportunity to meet the other participants).

### *Increased use of technology*

Eight of the follow-up survey respondents felt their use of technology has increased since being in the project. Respondents said, for example, that they are more comfortable and confident with technology, using it all the time, and/or availing of new online tools and programs. At the time of the interview, one of the respondents was doing a technology-related course.

Two respondents felt the project did not increase their technology use, as they were already tech savvy before the start of the project.

### *Job satisfaction*

Six of the follow-up survey respondents provided job satisfaction ratings ranging from 8 to 10 out of 10 citing, for example, that they are happy and/or confident in their job, and/or they do a good job. Comments included:

*It really helped me do well at the job and continued over into my cleaning at home. (Rating 10 out of 10)*

*It gets me out of the house and keeps me active. (Rating 9 out of 10)*

*I'm confident on-the-job, especially with the support provided. (Rating of 9/10)*

*I'm happy with my job. I do what I am supposed to do and do a good job, rather than do it half-hearted. (Rating 8 out of 10)*

The remaining four follow-up survey respondents provided ratings of 5 to 7 out of 10. Reasons for the ratings varied but, for example, two respondents said it might be time to move on to other work (ratings of 5/10 and 7/10). Other respondents noted:

*I am happy with my job but would love to move beyond part-time; it is easier to get another job when you have one. (Rating of 7.5/10)*

*I don't feel I get paid enough, but the people I work with are great and the hours are good. (Rating of 7/10)*

Most of the follow-up survey respondents also said they thought being in the project has increased their job satisfaction, arising from increased comfort and confidence and/or skills gained. Of the follow-up survey respondents who did not identify the project as having helped their job satisfaction, reasons included that they feel they should be better compensated and job satisfaction is more to do with 'personal issues'.

## OVERALL

### 19.0 Answering the research question

As detailed in Section 1, the research question for this project was

*Can adding mobile learning and technology to a work-based employment program enhance participants' digital literacy, increase job satisfaction, and increase long-term attachment to the labour market for adults who face many barriers to employment.*

The results presented herein would indicate that providing the technology and related training in a work-based employment program can enhance digital literacy and increase job satisfaction. As presented earlier:

#### *Enhanced digital literacy*

- Section 15: The majority of the post-project survey respondents said their comfort level with technology had increased from pre- to post-project. For many, this was a significant increase. None of the respondents indicated a decrease in comfort level. About 80% of the post-project survey respondents said their experience in the project would help them in using other technologies.
- Section 18: The large majority of the follow-up survey respondents said that their use of technology has increased since they finished in the project.

#### *Increased job satisfaction*

- Section 16: The majority of the post-project survey respondents said their satisfaction level with their Clean Start job had increased from pre- to post-project. For a few, this was a significant increase. None of the respondents indicated a decrease in satisfaction levels from pre- to post-project.

- Section 18: The majority of the follow-up survey respondents provided high ratings of job satisfaction, and most indicated being in the project had influenced their rating.

### *Increased long-term attachment to the labour market*

There is evidence that the project has supported participants to feel more confident in and likely attached to their Clean Start jobs and increased their satisfaction when working in the project (as previously noted):

Section 17: Approximately 80% of the post-project survey respondents felt that participation in the project would help them in their ongoing work with Clean Start; the remaining respondents said it might help. They noted, for example, that the project helped them build technical knowledge, stay organized, and work more efficiently, as well as take comfort from knowing what needs to be done and assurance that they are doing their job correctly.

Section 18: All of the follow-up survey respondents felt participation in the project helped them do their job better, citing both the tools and supports available were of great help.

There is no specific evidence to demonstrate that there would be longer-term attachment to the labour market should the participants move on to employment outside of Clean Start. Of note, this is not a failure of the current research project, but rather arising from the time frame in which the project was run and the many impacts that COVID-19 had on the project, including challenging recruitment and resulting in fewer opportunities in the broader labour market due to the economic slowdown and businesses closing temporarily or permanently.

However, there are some encouraging results given, as noted previously, about three-quarters of the post-project survey respondents said they felt the project would help them to acquire other employment.

## **20.0 Looking Back and Looking Forward**

A workshop was held with nine key stakeholders for the NLWIC Project, following project completion. The intent was to reflect on the project from a range of perspectives to identify what worked/what did not, effective practices, lessons learned, challenges and solutions, impacts, moving forward and transferability of the model.

Additionally, information that was garnered from discussions with employment counsellors, Team Leads and other key informants (outside of survey respondents) throughout the course of the project, is integrated in the following sections as this relates to the key themes raised at the workshop.

## 20.1 Looking back - a retrospective

### 20.1.1 Challenges

#### COVID-19

The most significant challenge identified for Stella's Circle's NLWIC Project was in relation to COVID-19, which constrained the pool of available participants. For example, some participants were reluctant to work and/or at higher risk of the illness; some chose to access the CERB; and some Clean Start clients closed their businesses at various points, which impacted the number of participants who were working.

If a more intentional recruitment process had been possible with a broader pool of applicants (e.g., with a defined criteria for acceptance), the project could have selected those considered to be the 'best fit' for the project (see discussion in Section 20.1.2). While the selection had been based on Clean Start criteria, if there were larger numbers per cohort, it might have been possible to better compare outcomes across cohorts on key areas relevant to the evaluation and/or the research.

As a result of some of Clean Starts' clients' businesses shutting down at various points of the pandemic, it was considered a missed opportunity for some participants to train at different sites and in different cleaning skills. It was felt that this could have led to some complacency in relation to their efforts in the project, including their need to access, and interest in using, the online tools.

Of note, the pandemic did result in some positive impacts for the project:

→The experience of COVID-19 lifted up the diverse and alternative ways of using technology, in particular in a workplace and as a learning tool. As commented at the workshop:

*Digital tools and services have proliferated. All of a sudden, digital literacy and access became everything – entertainment, education, therapy and connection. Took on a life of its own.*

Using the online tools during Stella's Circle's research project, therefore, was more normalized, as technology was being used by all facets of society, for every aspect of their day.

→Another positive result from COVID-19 was that some participants who previously only had the opportunity to work a few hours a week, were now working a longer shift. Working within the context of the pandemic showed the capacity and tenacity of some participants, who might never have had the opportunity to and/or tried to work more hours otherwise.

→It was stated that some Clean Start participants felt 'important' and 'valued' because their efforts were supporting others to be safe.

## **Team Leads' engagement in and support to the project**

The Team Leads' engagement in the project varied. For example, during the first cohort, they were using their own phones, which did not have the various Apps already uploaded, as per the Team Leads' preference, and this impacted consistent and equitable access. Further, it was identified that more training was needed for them to have a sufficient level of knowledge and comfort with the tools. As of the second cohort, the Team Leads were provided phones with the online tools already uploaded and easily accessible.

With this increased access, the Team Leads were noted to have had more opportunity to familiarize themselves with the tools and direct their Clean Start participants to specific tools to support their own work performance. However, and as noted for participants, the Team Leads varied in the extent they needed or wanted to access the tools and, after work, some noted they were too tired to 'work' again.

A key learning early on was that supporting participants in accessing and using the tools was best undertaken by staff external to the work sites, i.e., the Project Coordinator and Team Lead Technology. It became clear that Team Leads would have been challenged to take on this supportive role because of time constraints arising from completing their own job duties.

## **Data collection**

As discussed earlier in the report, there were limitations to the data collected via Google Analytics – e.g., Google Analytics did not provide information on individual use of the tools (it is group data). As a result, there is little reliable data from this source related to each individual participant's usage of the tools, e.g., who used the tools and how frequently, what they were viewing, and whether the usage over time varied (increased/decreased). As such, there was little information garnered from this data source to inform guiding the participants.

As another example, and as discussed in Section 16.1, project participants did not consistently complete the mood tracker. Some completed it weekly, others periodically. There also was little qualitative information provided to understand participants' ratings at any given time.

### ***20.1.2 Lessons learned and effective practice***

#### **Design and delivery**

##### ***Change management***

On the surface, it would seem relatively straightforward to offer a new suite of tools to a group of participants who could benefit from the tools. However, during the project, it became evident that a focus on change management was needed. The project had been designed with the participants in mind but integrating a new digital literacy initiative into an existing program was a significant shift for all parties – the Clean Start Manager, Team Leads and participants, especially those with longer-term attachment to the program who had been in an established routine. However, it was felt that the pre-survey implemented with project participants, discussions with the Project Coordinator, and processes implemented for

informed consent supported participants to better understand there would be new ways of working in and with Clean Start, which included a digital/technology focus.

### *Shared understanding about the project*

It is important to ensure that stakeholders who have a role in leading the project, and/or supporting participants, have a consistent level of understanding about its goals/objectives.

Discussions with key stakeholders including Team Leads and employment counsellors identified that they were in agreement on the project goals – in summary, to increase participants' digital literacy skills and confidence, which would support their work with Clean Start and enhance their overall employability. As noted by the Team Leads:

*The main goal is to integrate technology to workers who may not have this experience - introducing them to the tablet, the internet and going online to fill out forms. Get the participants to have an easier time learning how to do their job and make it more efficient in terms of being on time, using maps, and for skills – see if they need any improvement; if lack of skills, look at tips or videos on the App.*

*Introduce participants to something they would not do without the project, as they are focused on cleaning. Help them to become literate so they can have options for jobs outside of Clean Start.*

### *Approach to training and support*

As discussed in Section 12, before COVID-19, it was felt that initial training on the tools and for basic digital literacy would be done in a group. COVID-19 necessitated a shift in this approach to working one-on-one with individual participants, which proved to be the more effective method. It was quickly identified that participants were at very different places in relation to knowing about and using technology and, as such, some would need very little training while others needed more intensive help. As commented during the workshop:

*We had the idea of doing group training but looking back, I don't know how we would have done it. Everyone would have been at a different place, and everyone would have been frustrated - it just wouldn't have worked.*

It also was identified that an hour per week is insufficient for teaching digital literacy skills, again given varying capacities and abilities:

*An hour per week is not enough for teaching digital skills - some participants go over the information once and they are well on their way, but others need daily help and continuous assistance/reminders. It is important to support people in the repetition they need with regard to the steps they have to take for information to stick.*

Despite this challenge, it was stated that the very nature of accessing online tools is a learning in and of itself.

For the purposes of the project, one of the Team Leads was assigned the role of Team Lead Technology. While this was seen to be an effective practice, going forward it would be

important for all Team Leads to have a sufficient level of digital literacy to effectively engage with the participants, as they are ‘on-the-ground’ and could assist them ‘in-the-moment’. The Team Leads should display competence with the tools and be able to provide guidance on which tool to access, and how to access it. To that end, the project should provide opportunities for the Team Leads to access digital literacy training and deepen their own capacity in that regard.

### **Engaging and supporting participants**

In terms of who was the best ‘fit’ for the project, the following were identified during the workshop and/or the evaluation:

- Participants with an interest in both their work with Clean Start and technology, including those who might have a low level of digital literacy but also are curious about technology and the online tools.
- Participants who are functionally literate – e.g., able to read instructions to access the tools, follow checklists.
- Participants who have the capacity for learning and using new technology, regardless of whether they would be construed to be ‘quick’ or ‘slower’ learners (even if they have low digital literacy to start).
- Participants who are working a minimum number of hours a week – to increase the likelihood of needing to access the tools (e.g., doing more tasks, working at more job sites).

#### ***20.1.3 Overall impacts of the project on Stella’s Circle***

The following were identified as impacts on Stella’s Circle:

- There is a renewed appreciation of Clean Start, arising from a better understanding of the work – as gleaned in particular from the videos. Stella’s Circle’s staff who viewed the online tools recognized the complexity of the Clean Start tasks and required skill sets to successfully engage in the work.
- The project helped Stella’s Circle to better understand the value of digital literacy and how lack of access to technology further isolates and marginalizes people.
- The project has further demonstrated Stella’s Circle’s capacity to be innovative – one of the organization’s values. Additionally, in providing an opportunity to try something different, there was ongoing learning on effective practice.
- Stella’s Circle has built additional organizational capacity in relation to research and evaluation. The project has provided another platform for future initiatives.

## 20.2 Looking forward

### 20.2.1 *Undertaking a second iteration of the NLWIC Clean Start Project*

A primary discussion during the workshop was in relation to what would be needed should Stella's Circle undertake a second iteration of the NLWIC Project.

A few workshop participants highlighted the value of engaging **all** Clean Start participants and new Team Leads in the project as the tools are an important learning resource. Further, it was noted that it would be beneficial to expand the tools available. For example, it was suggested that it would be extremely helpful to include the specific tasks for each of the current 47 job sites. This would support a more efficient process as Team Leads and participants would have some idea of the type and scope of work in advance of working at a site.

#### *Human Resources*

It was felt that a critical need would be additional human resources. A key component of the NLWIC Project was having a Coordinator – a position which would be needed going forward. Their role would include, for example, identifying participants (if the project did not expand to all Clean Start workers); initial training and orientation on the devices and technology for both participants and Team Leads; supporting identification of data of interest and ensuring the necessary processes are in place for collecting and reporting on data; establishing schedules for the skills tracker and mood tracker to be completed; and facilitating the needed lines and modes of communication between the project stakeholders for feedback and interventions, as issues arise with participants. Additionally, this resource, or another identified staff, would need to monitor and ensure that the online information on, for example, job sites, schedules, bus routes and addresses is updated.

It was anticipated by Stella's Circle, and was evidenced during the project, that there is a need for a front-line person whose focus would be on supporting participants with the technology and in accessing the tools – e.g., a Digital Literacy Mentor. This person would not be tied to a particular job site for extended periods but could move from one job site to another. With this human resource available, the Team Leads might have to provide a level of digital literacy support to project participants, but it would not constrain or interfere with their own work and responsibility.

#### *Clear and consistent lines of communication between and among Stella's Circle's stakeholders*

It is important in a project such as the one under consideration that the Clean Start Project Manager, Team Leads, NLWIC Project Coordinator and employment counsellors are well connected, communicating and collaborating. All stakeholders must be 'in the loop' in relation to project participants (e.g., who is in the project and what is their level of engagement) and project activities. Equally importantly, they must be clear on their own roles in relation to the project and participants, and where each others' roles might intersect and/or overlap.

As an example, during the NLWIC Project there was an intentional focus on knowledge sharing and communication. The Project Coordinator completed a number of staff presentations, had



regular meetings with the Clean Start Manager, Team Leads and Team Lead Technology and, on a bi-weekly basis, attended Employment Support team meetings. In addition to chairing quarterly Steering Committee meetings, the Project Coordinator held regular meetings with the design team from Bluedrop Learning Networks, the Director of Employment Services and evaluators.

The timelines for feedback also must be clearly delineated and, of note, these might vary for different aspects of the project – e.g., the mood tracker, feedback forms. As well, clarity is required on whose role it is to act on the feedback received.

### *Data and documentation*

For a second iteration of the project, and as was done at the outset of the NLWIC Project, there should be an early discussion of what questions Stella's Circle would need answered and what data is needed to inform the answers. Further, there should be clarity between and among the various project and Stella's Circle's stakeholders as to what data is being collected, for what purpose, by whom and when.

It would be helpful going forward if there was a mechanism for tracking individual participant's use of the online tools (perhaps with a unique identifier – as opposed to an individual's name). While this would not link the specific participant to their level of use, it would provide information about the pattern of use by each participant.

Further, there has to be a concerted and ongoing effort to encourage and monitor participants' inputs related to the skills and mood trackers. For the latter tool, it would be helpful to encourage participants to provide an explanation for any given rating they provide.

It also was noted that there is a need for a central point – perhaps a shared online folder, for capturing critical project information and/or data (especially qualitative). Again, however, for such a centralized system, project stakeholders would need to know who would be inputting information/data, how, and for what purpose, as well as who would have access to the information/data inputted.

### *Technology*

In relation to suggestions for ongoing use of the technology, it was felt that there was more functionality which could be realized from the G Suite – e.g., moving away from hard copy forms as possible and adding these online. Examples provided by the Team Leads included the attendance sheets and Occupational Health and Safety forms. (It was noted that fillable Google Forms is another option.) A specific suggestion was to link participants' schedules to the G Suite home page.

There was no consensus on whether it would be better for the Team Leads and participants to access the tools via an App, or a Chromebook. It was stated that participants could use both – depending on what they needed at any given point and the particular job site. For example, at a job site, they could quickly access information from their phone; whereas for learning purposes and broadening their digital literacy skills, the Chromebook provides more opportunities.

It was identified that more reminders should be built into the system – e.g., to encourage participants to use the tools and complete any relevant online assessments; and to remind the Team Leads of when they have to complete assessments and what has to be submitted.

A long discussion was held around how to better motivate participants in training on digital literacy. Many suggestions were received around creating a set of digital literacy modules/units which participants could work through (e.g., novice, intermediate). It was stressed that this type of training would need to be engaging and interactive and enable assessment of skills acquisition, with feedback relayed to, for example, the Digital Literacy Mentor and/or Project Coordinator to support participants in their skills building as needed to progress from level to level.

### **Considerations:**

*The intent to provide more formal training designed to hone participants' digital literacy skills is a good one, but it is not without its challenges. If this approach to training is employed, consideration has to be given to those who could be challenged by online/written assessments, by for example, reasons of disability, as well as those whose mental health could impair memory and learning. Participants unable to move forward through modules/units could be demotivated in both their learning and work with Clean Start.*

*This would be an area needing further discussion but, with a responsive approach, could provide more measurable outcomes in relation to digital literacy, as applied in other of Stella's Circles' programs.*

#### **20.2.2 Potential expansion to other Stella's Circle's programs**

Workshop participants felt that the NLWIC Project could be expanded to include both the Trades Helper and Food Services programs. There would be an upfront cost for tailoring the videos to each program (although there may be some readily available online), but less effort to adapt other project tools such as the skills tracker (e.g., by inserting more specific program-related skills).

It was stated that Bluedrop Learning Networks could provide templates for the tools that have been created so this could more easily be changed and/or uploaded.

For such an expansion – all requirements noted under Section 20.2.1 would need to be in place.

#### **20.2.3 Transferability to other workplaces/sectors**

Workshop participants felt the project is transferable to other workplaces and sectors. To do so would require a clear plan, including:

- Identification of a potential partner, who should have similar values as Stella's Circles and a clear focus on strengthening participants'/workers' skills and employability.
- Development of an orientation package/digital toolkit for the project and online tools/technology to support understanding and adaptation of the project.

- Overview of the Clean Start project (so as to give the partner an idea of how the project could evolve).
- A Project Coordinator who would support the partner's engagement in and implementation of a pilot project within their own context.
- Continued work with Bluedrop – there would need to be a main contact who would be engaged in the work Stella's undertakes with a partner.

## **21.0 Recommendations**

It is important to state that the full impact of the Clean Start project likely was not realized due to much of its implementation being done during the pandemic. Additionally, as with any new project, there was much to be learned early on which resulted in some key course corrections for later cohorts.

In addition to the learnings that occurred over the past three years, a key foundation for a second iteration of the project, and potential expansion, has been laid. To respond to the potential for deeper learning and impacts, it is recommended that Stella's Circle move forward in two phases:

### **Phase 1 – Ongoing internal focus to deepen the project and outcomes for Stella's Circle's participants, Team Leads and the organization**

It is recommended that the Clean Start Project be open to ALL Clean Start participants (who fit the criteria delineated previously) to facilitate access to tools which will both support their work with Clean Start and enhance their digital literacy skills, both of which should broaden and deepen their employability.

It is further recommended that the Clean Start Project be expanded to one other of Stella's Circle's programs, within the context of a clear framework of change management. As was learned from the current project, there is much upfront work to set a foundation for all stakeholders to successfully engage in the project.

Overall, for both of these strategic directions, there has to be a solid framework on which to operate in relation to staff and participant training, updating and expanding the tools, identifying the data to collect and ensuring consistent processes for collection and reporting, having a central site for documenting project activities and outcomes, and facilitating clear lines of communication and feedback for and between all stakeholders.

### **Phase 2 – Partnering with an external organization to pilot the project**

Finally, it is recommended that Stella's Circle develop a robust plan for engaging in a partnership with an external organization or business who could employ the tools, processes and activities developed during the project. Careful consideration must be given to the goal for such an initiative, time frame for development and implementation, level of effort needed to facilitate and maintain the partnership (including what human resources would be needed), and potential benefits to Stella's Circle and the partner organization, as well as to their participants/workers. Section 20.2.3 provides the basis of a framework for such expansion.

## 22.0 APENDIX A

### Dissemination Plan

2022-23	Status	Dimension
Presentation to key government stakeholders.	Completed	Dissemination
Building on information in this report, Stella's Circle will first be looking at increasing familiarity with the Digital Clean Start platform in a non-research context of usage. This includes two days of training with Bluedrop Learning Networks staff.	Completed	Capacity Building
Research findings have been (and will be used) as the organization continues to seek resources through a variety of funding sources to explore the relationship between access to technology, digital literacy, employability and overall quality of life.	Completed-awaiting response	Dissemination Partnership Exploration Additional Funding Additional Research
Stella's Circle is completing a two-day workshop with Evolution Group considering a variety of programming including the further integration of aspects of Digital Clean start and associated learnings.	Pending	Capacity Building
Sharing summary graphics and results from research project on socials	Pending	Dissemination
Additionally, Stella's Circle is working with Inclusion Winnipeg following from this NLWIC research project to explore overlap with an identified digital application used and being evaluated by that organization.	Ongoing	Capacity Building Additional Research Partnership exploration Dissemination
Presentation to member organizations of the Community Employment Collaborative	Pending	Dissemination

2023-24	Status	Dimension
Consider adoption of Digital Clean Start resources within a second identified Stella's Circle Initiative	Pending	Capacity Building
Attend the second World Supported Employment Conference: Inclusion Works in Vancouver June 6 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup>	Ongoing	Capacity Building Partnership exploration
Apply to present at CANNEXUS 24 on	Pending	Dissemination