Promoting Inclusivity:
Advancing Anti-Oppressive Settlement Services through Capacity Building

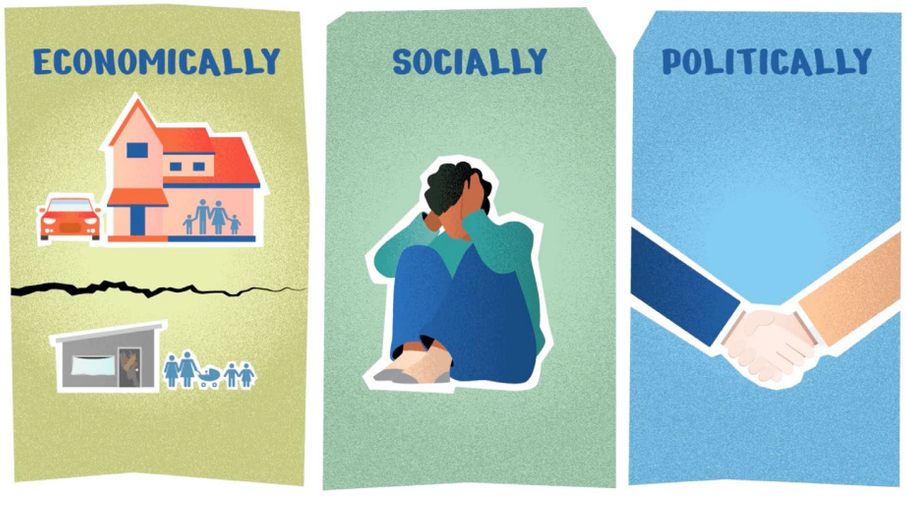
What is the Anti-Oppression Capacity Building Project?

The Anti-Oppression Capacity Building Project is a pioneering research initiative investigating how applying an anti-oppressive approach can foster the delivery of more inclusive and anti-oppressive settlement services.

TCLIP
TRI-CITIES LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

The project led by the [Tri-Cities Local Immigration Partnership] aimed to build capacity in the immigrant-serving sector by offering training and coaching on anti-oppression principles, enabling practitioners to address systemic racism and oppression.

Why is this important?



Oppression manifests itself economically, socially and politically due to discrimination, biases and stereotypes.

The pervasiveness of systemic racism and oppression often undermines the effectiveness of settlement services, which are meant to help newcomers to successfully settle in Canada.

The Intervention

The project through the Centre for Anti-Oppressive Communication delivered introductory Anti-Oppressive training to participating service providers with the aim to strengthen their awareness, knowledge, and skills to apply anti-oppressive approaches to service delivery in the settlement sector.

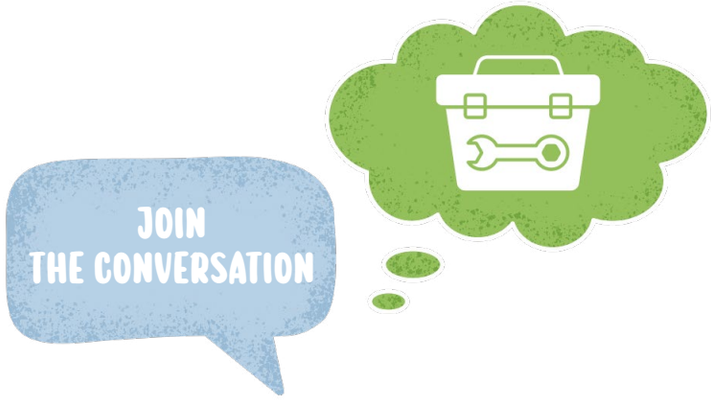
FOR EACH TRAINING COHORT THE PROJECT DELIVERED

three on-line workshops over three months

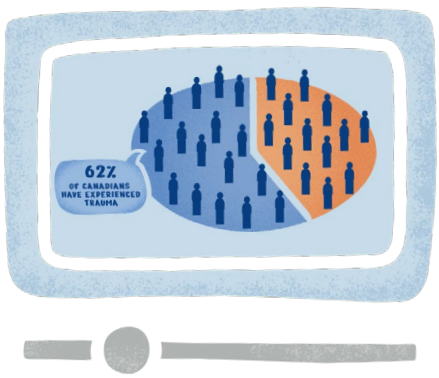
two discussion sessions delivered in small groups

one individual coaching session

Responding to participants' requests for tools, the Tri-Cities Local Immigration Partnership developed the following additional resources to complement and support participants' learning:



“Join the Conversation” anti-oppression tool kit



Trauma-informed practices in your role video

Anti-oppression in program design video

The Evaluation

The evaluation and learning component in the project aims to understand the effectiveness of the capacity building activities.

Key evaluation questions are:

RELEVANCE

Was the content and information relevant to their work?
Did the training meet their needs?

LEARNING

To what degree did training participants acquire the intended knowledge and skills?

ACTION

What did participants do with the learned knowledge and gained skills?

The Evaluator, Social Research and Demonstration Corporation, collected both quantitative and qualitative data to answer the evaluation questions.

A Gender-Based Analysis Plus lens was applied to the evaluation to ensure that consideration was given to how multiple identity factors may affect training participants' experience with the project.

FOCUS GROUPS

INTERVIEWS

Who participated in the training?

131 practitioners

in **43** organizations

GENDER

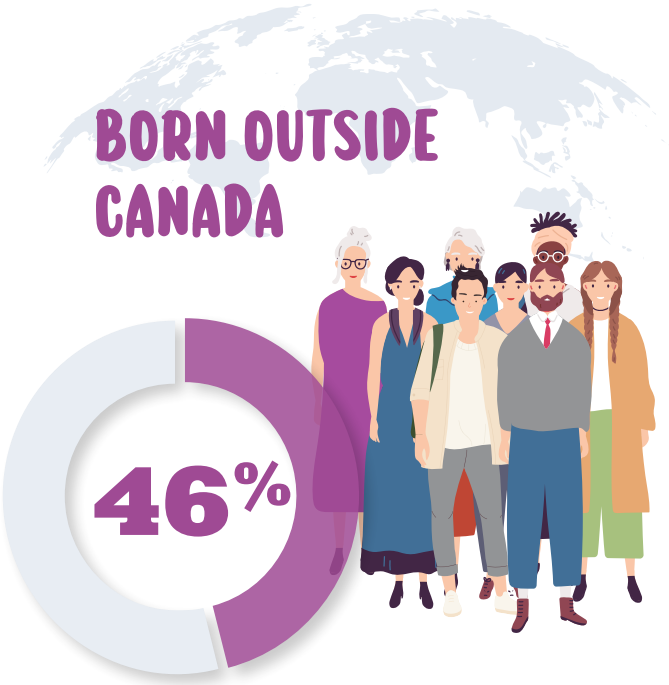
88%

identify as women

ETHNICITY

identified as a member of a racialized community

BORN OUTSIDE CANADA



were born outside Canada

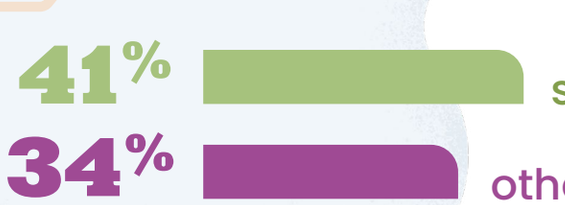
YEARS WORKING WITH NEWCOMERS

10+ years

29% have 10+ years experience working with newcomers

EMPLOYMENT ROLE

TYPE OF AGENCY



What we heard about participants' experience with the project training and learnings?

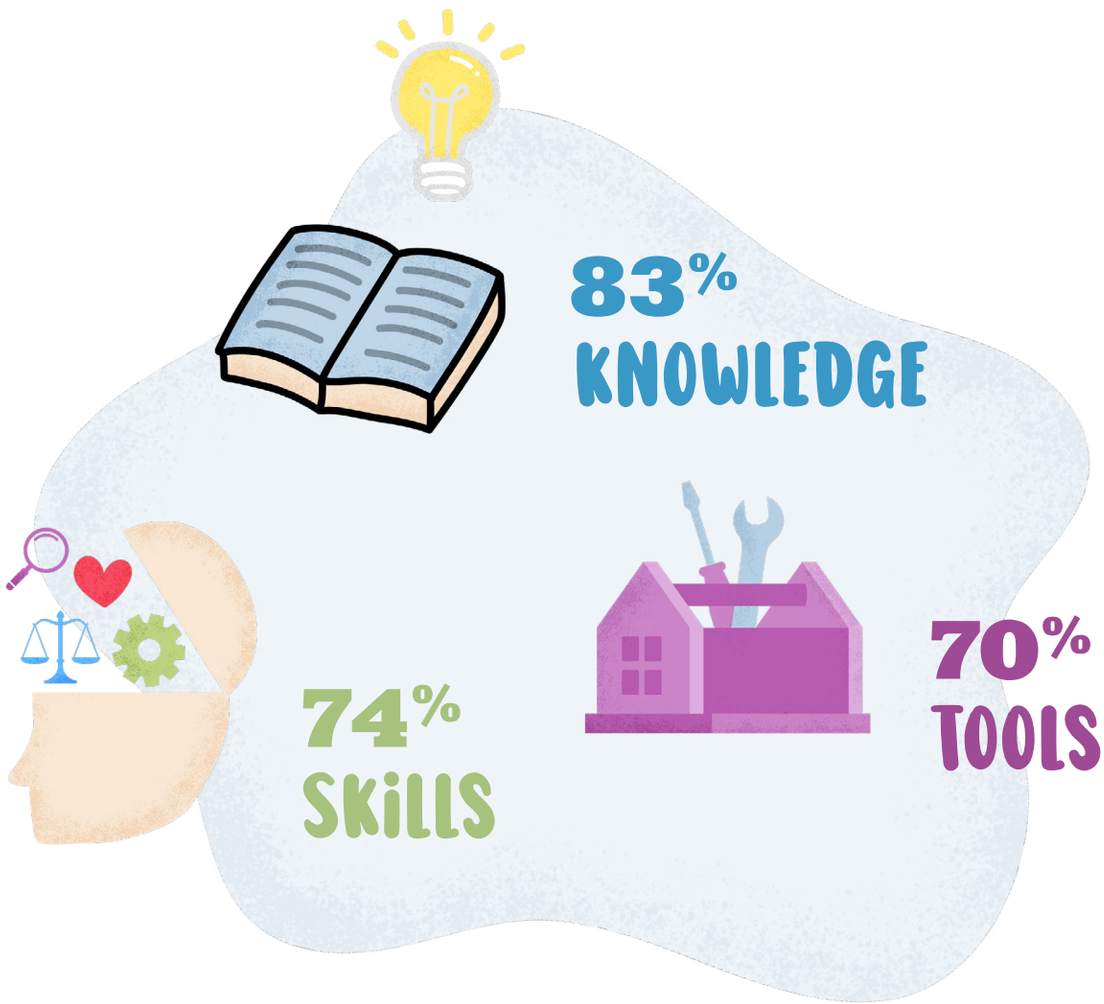
Before taking the training, half of the training participants indicated they were new or early in their journey of learning and action on equity and anti-oppression

84% found the training appropriate for their level of understanding

90% indicated the training was relevant to their work

70% said the training met or exceeded their expectations

After completing the training, almost all training participants indicated they gained new



64%
also said they have
MORE CONFIDENCE
applying anti-oppressive approaches

Most significant change for participants

ALL OF IT

When asked for the most important thing learned from the training, participants said:

What kind of oppression exists, and how we unconsciously become oppressive to others in our daily operations.

I am the tool. I can read and learn about oppression and racism, but I need to work on myself to be brave and commit to action when it's possible.

How did they apply their learnings?

of participants indicated they applied their learnings in their practice.

AWARENESS

How to realize and address my own biases and stereotypes.

I have privileges, and if I am not constantly creating a self-reflection of my role while helping people, I can potentially reinforce oppressive practices. I can become an agent of change from the small things that I do. Enhancing anti-oppressive practices in an organization takes time as it is a constant dialogue for awareness led by baby steps.

COMMUNICATIONS

I am able to recognize the behaviour more easily and also choose my words more carefully.

Learning to respond to ableist/racist/sexist/transphobic (and other) comments in a way that does not come across as aggressive or attacking the person.

CLIENT ENGAGEMENT

I applied the anti-oppression lens in my work when taking my privilege in my position and socioeconomic status into consideration when working with clients.

In my communications with clients I constantly stop to think about what privilege I am experiencing and how I can mitigate it so that the client has a better experience.

Challenges

Applying the learnings at the organizational level was more challenging.

Lack of organizational or leadership support

Fear of backlash for speaking up

44%

Resistance from others who are not ready

MENTIONED ORGANIZATIONAL BARRIERS

to listen

Lack of funding to make changes/organize speakers about anti-oppression

Time and competing processes

Difficulty in explaining to others why an anti-oppression approach is important to their work

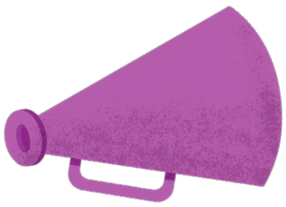
I'm very hesitant to even bring it up. And I see the signs of it. I see oppression in different levels. I also see racism.... I don't see the willingness to change. I think everything is on [the] surface, just to check the boxes but not really taking action and making any changes.

People don't want to change a system that works for them.

The privilege of the awareness of the oppressive system is a blessing and a challenge. It is hard to stay with the uncomfortable sensations from this awareness daily. Especially after realizing how this oppressive system is also in our organizations, and the experience of being oppressed as a staff as well.

Amplifying impact

Participants offered several recommendations to enhance the training. The consensus from all project partners as well as many participants was that an **organization-wide approach to the training** may work better to create systems change.



organization-wide approach to the training

Concluding comments

The evidence shows the importance of the project and its effectiveness to increase the **awareness**, **knowledge**, **skills**, and **confidence** of practitioners related to anti-oppression.

Initiatives like this are vital as they continue to support settlement services to meet the evolving needs of newcomers in an anti-oppressive manner.

> *...instead of changing the flow of the river, we can move rocks, and with time, the flow will change by itself. I see this anti-oppression training as a way to learn how to move rocks, so with time, if more people are willing to relocate small rocks, the flow of the river will be transformed.*

Contact information

Anti-Oppression Capacity Building Project - Evaluation Report

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Who's involved?

Funded by: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

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TCLIP TRI-CITIES LOCAL IMMIGRATION PARTNERSHIP

CFAC CENTRE FOR ANTI-OPPRESSIVE COMMUNICATION

SIETAR BC

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