

Building Sustainable Futures: Essential Skills for Employment Project NEWS AND VIEWS UPDATE – NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2016

Building a national learning community for Canada's economic and social prosperity

Background: **Building Sustainable Futures** is a national project that was launched in March 2014 by YWCA Toronto's Skills Development Centre and is funded by the Government of Canada's Adult Learning, Literacy and Essential Skills Program. This project aims to replicate new promising practices in essential skills programming among YM/YWCA Associations in nine cities across Canada.

For over a decade, YWCA's Skills Development Centre has been pioneering Essential Skills for Employment training to support vulnerable individuals. We continue to assist marginalized women, particularly mature job seekers, youth and immigrants to compete for jobs in today's knowledge-based economy and to achieve more sustainable participation in the broader economy and society.

Through this project, the Skills Development Centre is able to share best practices and learning nationally. YM/YWCA Associations have adapted the Skills Development Centre model to their unique employment programs, and in turn are contributing to building sustainable futures for job seekers throughout Canada.

Looking Ahead:

Promising and Emerging Practices

Today, promising practices and learning are already surfacing across the project's nine collaborative partners who remain committed to building the capacity of Essential Skills programming, across Canada. The emerging practices and learning aim to demonstrate **impact on three levels**: improved participant livelihoods, organizational livelihoods, and community livelihoods. Evaluation research from the program will be published in the summer of 2017. The goal is also to replicate the essential employment skills program on a local and national scale, in order to build a skilled and inclusive workforce in Canada.



YWCA Toronto's Skills Development Centre is facilitating a national initiative which includes the following YM-YWCA Collaborators:

YWCA Halifax (NS), YWCA Hamilton (ON), YWCA Agvvik (Iqaluit, NU), YWCA/YWCA National Capital Region (ON), YWCA St. John's/Moncton (NB), YWCA Saskatoon (SK), YWCA Thompson (MB), YWCA Toronto (ON), and YWCA Vancouver (BC).



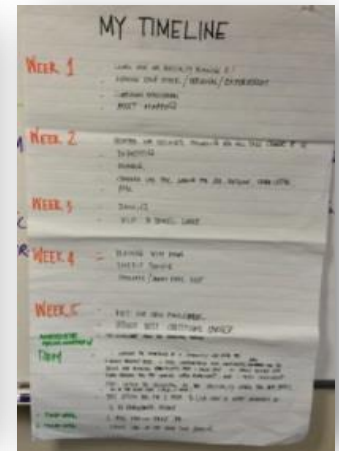
Building a National Learning Collaborative: Sharing the Stories

YWCA Agvvik (Nunavut)

An Indigenous woman in Agvvik, NU was assisted by YWCA Iqaluit's *Sewing to Success* program, which has embedded building sustainable futures and Inuit tradition into their employment skills model. She gained the strength to move out of an abusive situation, and also developed the skills and confidence to start her own small business.

YWCA Saskatoon (Saskatchewan)

YWCA Saskatoon's *Hospitality Boot Camp* adapted the building sustainable futures model into their sector-specific training program. A newcomer who was experiencing language issues and low self-esteem shared that the program supported him to gain hands-on employment experience. Today, he is happily employed and able to further settle into his new life in Canada.



Left image: An amazing product made by a *Sewing to Success* participant in Agvvik.
Right image: An in class activity and work plan developed during Saskatoon's unique pilot.

We invite you to become part of this Learning Community:

An Evening with the Essential Skills for Employment Project Team

On Monday, December 5, 2016, we would like to invite organizations, employers, and individuals for our first special information and networking event in Toronto, Ontario. The nine YM-YWCA Collaborators will share more about the Essential Skills Employment project and ways to get involved. To register for this event, or to learn about future events, contact linkstojobs@ywcatoronto.org.

Join this exciting Learning Community!

If you would like to learn more about the Essential Skills Employment national program, receive program updates through our e-bulletins, and be part of this learning community, subscribe to our list serve at: ywcatoronto.org/ese or tinyurl.com/gu4z9j7.

Please stay tuned for more information on our Essential Skills Employment publications in 2017!

Thank you for your support and interest in this exciting employment skills initiative!

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