

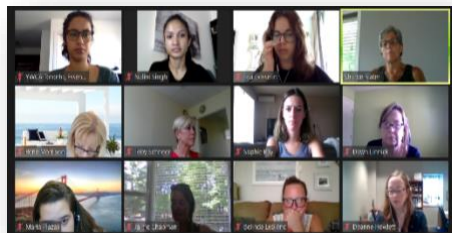
YWCA Toronto's Building Sustainable Futures Project

2020 IN REVIEW

YWCA Toronto's Building Sustainable Futures (BSF) initiative is a national learning collaborative that spans across YWCAs in ten provinces and three territories, and a host of national employers and community partners. We work together to develop the capacity of literacy and essential skills organizations to help women gain employment opportunities, create sustainable livelihoods using an asset-based approach.

Prior to entering 2021, YWCA Toronto's Essential Skills for Employment program wrapped up a roller coaster of a year. 2020 introduced several challenges that humbled us and encouraged us to learn creative ways of fostering connection and community across provinces. Despite the challenges presented by an unexpected lockdown a week prior to our biggest national event, we successfully held nine virtual events and meetings, welcomed two new staff and a student Research Assistant, and completed several activities for Phase Three of the BSF project.

As part of the BSF project, we hold regular events to promote collaboration and build a sense of community with our partners. The lockdown caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in March shifted our focus from in-person events to virtual meetings during which we aimed to deliver a new but similar sense of community-building. The team combined all efforts to introduce innovative ways of sharing information, successfully hosting nine informative virtual trainings. We delivered Life Skills training to 16 future coaches, and trained program staff in LinksToJobs Employer Engagement, Emerging Skills and Asset-Mapping which are a few examples of best practice models that YWCA Toronto has developed over the years.



As the structure of the economy quickly shifted, we engaged in research to highlight the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on feminized industries. Lack of child care along with a rapid increase in job losses within women-dominated sectors played a central role in the financial barriers that women continue to face during the pandemic. The goal of Phase Three was evidently integral in creating trainings and workshops that we hope will contribute towards fueling the future of our economy by continuing to build capacity of professionals to better serve women who face marginalization.

Adapting and innovating, the BSF project will continue to expand its reach in 2021. The team will continue refining the Employer Engagement Strategy, creating an effective and interactive online presence, and building an online learning community to utilize and share the knowledge we possess as a collective.

To learn more about this project, receive program updates through e-bulletins, and participate in upcoming events and forums please visit [Essential Skills for Employment at YWCA Toronto](#) or email us at buildingfutures@ywcatoronto.org.