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Career
Advancement

Diversity Drives Success



Career Advancement for Immigrant Professionals (CAIP)

End of Project Report

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Canada 

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FSC is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to preparing Canadians for employment success. We believe Canadians should feel confident about the skills they have to succeed in a changing workforce. As a pan-Canadian community, we are collaborating to rigorously identify, test, measure, and share innovative approaches to assessing and developing the skills Canadians need to thrive in the days and years ahead. The Future Skills Centre was founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint ADE, and The Conference Board of Canada

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1. Executive Summary

The research shows that immigrant professionals do not advance as far or as quickly as their Canadian-born counterparts. With most publicly-funded employment services focused on supporting newcomers in securing their first jobs in Canada, little exists to address the inequalities that exist with career advancement. CAIP was created to address this by:

- **supporting newcomer employees in developing** the skills and knowledge needed to better navigate advancement at their organization
- **helping managers to become better equipped** to support newcomer team members with career advancement
- **providing organizations with** insights on the gaps and barriers that exist within their organization around immigrant career advancement and how to address them.

The CAIP Program

The **Original CAIP program** began in spring 2020 and ended in September 2022. We designed and piloted the program with three employers. Based on CAIP's success, FSC extended the project.

For **CAIP 2.0**, TRIEC refined the sessions and added a **Train-the-Trainer (T3)** component for sustainability. TRIEC then delivered the program to three organizations. **Additionally, the CAIP team designed and piloted a method for engaging with leaders and key contacts more deeply and influencing organizational change.**

By the end of the project, TRIEC had engaged a total of **134 participants** (74 immigrant employees, 49 managers, 11 Train-the-trainer participants) **across five employers and delivered the program nine times.**

Project Outcomes

- immigrant participants reported increasing their **networks**, accessing **new career-building opportunities** and **discussing their career goals** with their managers.
- **64% of newcomer participant respondents saw positive changes to their careers within one year** of the program.
- Managers reported increasing their knowledge and felt **better prepared to support their newcomer team members with career advancement.**
- Two out of our three employer partners from the Original CAIP program **leveraged TRIEC's insights and recommendations to implement organizational-level change** within one year of program completion.

Original CAIP Program

- **100% satisfaction rate**
- **100% of participants increased their knowledge and took new actions** that they learned during the program
- **Within a year of the CAIP program, newcomer team member participants advanced in their careers.**

CAIP 2.0 Program

- **100% satisfaction rate**
- **100% of participants increased their knowledge and took new actions** that they learned during the program
- **The T3 participants indicated increased confidence** in delivering the program.
- **All employers plan to deliver CAIP in 2024.**
- **Within three months of the CAIP program, newcomer participants accessed new professional development opportunities.**

Project Insights

Through project implementation, the CAIP team generated insights about influencing inclusion change, successful program delivery, sustainability and future of inclusion programs such as CAIP.

Insight topics include:

Influencing change: There were a few factors that were key for influencing change:

- **The opportunity to hear directly from colleagues** about their insights and experiences had a significant.
- **Building trust** with our employer partners over time helped to influence change.
- **Engaging with employers at multiple levels** contributed to change happening at both the individual and organizational level.

[Details here](#)

Partnering with employers: Developing a clear process for collaborating with employers, knowing what to ask for and building relationships with multiple people within an organization contributed to successful partnerships. [Details here](#)

Program delivery: clear communication with participants before and during sessions, providing a variety of contexts for discussion in the sessions, addressing power imbalances and safety, and support for program participation from leaders was important for session attendance and participation.

[Details here](#)

Train-the-trainer (T3) program: the combination of T3 participant workshops, observing regular CAIP sessions, debriefs and coaching sessions provided a solid base for T3 participants from a variety of professional backgrounds to successfully deliver the CAIP sessions. [Details here](#)

Evaluation: The initial assumptions for the project around creating a successful program were found to be true.

Expansion: Possible areas of expansion for CAIP include SMEs, immigrant women, and international student graduates. [Details here](#)

Adoption: key insights and findings from CAIP could be leveraged by other projects, such as:

- engaging with employers at multiple levels to influence systems change
- the importance of creating meaningful dialogue amongst colleagues
- action-reflection being key to generating change
- provide practical, concrete recommendations for change so that people can easily act
- Build trust over time to influence change.

[Details here](#)

Scalability and Sustainability: Our employer partners gained interest in growing the CAIP program at their organizations based on:

- Positive results from the CAIP program.
- Buy-in from senior-level colleagues. For several partners, this increased as the program was shown to be impactful
- Fully trained internal facilitators (T3 grads)
- Quality program design and materials

[Details here](#)

Lessons for Policy: Taking a systems-thinking approach can influence change at multiple levels. Providing opportunities for generate trust is critical for influencing change with leaders. Creating opportunities for internal dialogue is critical for deepening awareness and motivating people to do things differently. Additionally, the government could have a role to play in building better relationships between employers and international credential systems since bias against education and expertise gained outside of Canada can still impact newcomers with employment. [Details here.](#)

Insights to Career Advancement

The formal and informal processes around career advancement can vary widely around the world. Immigrant participants shared that the CAIP program helped them to identify and better understand what was different at their current organizations in comparison to places they had worked prior to immigrating. Managers, on the other hand, were unaware that many of these differences existed and misinterpreted newcomer team members' actions or inactions as a lack of suitability or interest in advancement.

Key take aways for both immigrant and manager participants included:

Positioning yourself for advancement: Many newcomer participants shared that credentials and performance were the basis for promotion in places they had worked prior to immigrating. In Canada, however, other factors are also considered. Managers learned they could not assume this was obvious to their newcomer team members and that discussing these was important. [Details here.](#)

Internal hiring processes were not always clear to immigrant participants. As one person said, "I understand what the formal processes are, but I sense there's more I should know." Identifying and unpacking these less obvious nuances about internal hiring helped participants to better understand what to do and what to expect. It also helped managers to understand what was unclear and how to coach their newcomer team members. [Details here.](#)

Career-goal conversations: In many places in the world, team members don't discuss career goals with their managers. In fact, initiating such a conversation with one's manager could have negative consequences. This difference in

experience coupled with the fact that many participants' current managers had not discussed career goals with them with any depth or at all meant that their managers were unaware of their goals and had made little or no effort to support them in this area. Manager participants came to realize how critical these conversations were and how to have more impactful career goal discussions with their newcomer team members. [Details here.](#)

Networking versus social capital: Many newcomer participants had been focusing on building large numbers of weak network connections and had not considered the importance of developing trusted, professional relationships to better leverage their networks. This shift to considering social capital was a key take-away for many. Managers developed an understanding of how to support their immigrant team members with this. [Details here.](#)

Unpacking commonly used terms: Many managers would give advice such as "take initiative", not realizing that the term had a meaning that was specific to their organization. This made it difficult for newcomer team members to implement as their managers expected, sometimes impacting their ability to advance. Both newcomer team members and managers realized the importance of asking clarifying questions and using specific examples to increase clarity. [Details here.](#)



2. Introduction

In 2020, just as Canada's first COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns were implemented, TRIEC learned it had won funding for its Career Advancement for Immigrant Professionals (CAIP) project. A few months later, George Floyd's murder and the subsequent protests shook employers into discussing racism and inclusion in a way most had never done before. The next year, the Great Resignation began as employees became increasingly dissatisfied with their workplaces. This was the backdrop for the development of CAIP. It was an unrepresented time and employers were struggling to navigate the complex social realities and their employees' demands for change. Several GTA employers were open to engaging with TRIEC to pilot our new program designed to increase inclusion and employee retention through addressing immigrant career advancement.

The CAIP team took a very intentional systems-thinking approach for influencing inclusion change. TRIEC had long realized that programs targeted solely at immigrants for the purposes of integration could only have limited success. Everyone operates within systems; those from equity deserving groups face more challenges with navigating them as they were not designed for them. There is a moral

imperative as well as a practical benefit for employers to change their systems if they want the skilled talent that immigrant professionals bring. In this case, we sought to increase managers' abilities to better understand and support newcomer team members with career advancement. We also aimed to influence organizations to make their processes and practices more visible and inclusive.

Building on TRIEC's extensive experience and expertise, we developed, delivered, and evaluated a program that successfully equipped immigrant professionals to better navigate career advancement, helped managers to better support newcomer team members, and influenced organizations to make their workplaces more immigrant inclusive and more fully engage and retain newcomer talent.

The Project Need and Opportunity: TRIEC's Role in Career Advancement in Canada

Immigrant talent is one of Canada's key drivers of economic growth and innovation. Increasingly, the percentage of residents in who were born outside of Canada is growing; in the GTA, immigrants account for [half of the core-age labour force](#). Simultaneously, employers are concerned about employee retention and some struggle to fill skilled positions. As the Canadian government brings in record numbers of new immigrants, diversity has become the reality within the labour market.

Unfortunately, the research shows that immigrants are not advancing in their careers as far or as quickly as their Canadian-born counterparts. The underutilization of immigrant skills is a persistent issue and [a loss for the Canadian economy](#). We know that many highly educated and experienced immigrants are hired for roles not commensurate with their qualifications and previous work experience. They are underemployed and face challenges in advancing. This can lead to immigrant professionals leaving positions and [increasingly, leaving Canada to try their luck elsewhere](#). If Canada wants immigration to positively contribute to economic growth and innovation, employers must be persuaded to change. The employers who develop inclusive practices and create workplaces in which all employee can thrive will be the ones best able to attract and retain the skilled talent they need.

This is a reality [TRIEC](#) is well-aware of given our work with employers around immigrant inclusion for over twenty years. Well known for our [Mentoring Partnership](#) program, supporting job-ready immigrant professionals with mentoring opportunities in their field, our work supporting the capacity building of [Professional Immigrant Networks](#), as well as numerous [learning](#) and [inclusion measurement](#) projects, TRIEC was uniquely positioned to consider and develop a project to address this need.



Historically, most work-related initiatives developed to support immigrant professionals have focused on helping newcomers secure their first jobs. Our project aimed to change that. **The Career Advancement for Immigrant Professionals (CAIP) program was developed to address the gaps and barriers around immigrant career advancement. It was also an opportunity to learn more about immigrant career advancement, both in terms of the barriers and gaps as well as what helps to create meaningful change.**



3. Overview of the CAIP Project

Approach

The CAIP program aimed to create change at multiple levels within an organization to improve immigrant career advancement by:

- **Interviewing senior leaders, HR and key contacts** to learn about career advancement at that organization for program customization at the beginning of the partnership.
- **Meeting with this group again at the end of the program** to share insights and recommendations for organizational change.
- **Delivering customized, discussion-based learning workshops for both newcomer team members and managers.** Newcomers learn to better navigate career advancement and managers learn better to support their newcomer team members with career advancement.
- **Train-the-trainer (T3) component** – train employees at each organization to become CAIP facilitators

Project Delivery

The Original CAIP launched in spring 2020 and ended in fall 2022.

The CAIP team built on this success and delivered a second project, **CAIP 2.0**, from 2022 to 2023 with a new **train-the-trainer (T3)** component.

The CAIP team considered the feedback from the Original CAIP program participants and slightly modified and condensed the program for CAIP 2.0. In addition, they developed a new program for T3 participants to be able to deliver the program in their organizations in the future, thus increasing sustainability.



Original CAIP program

The Original CAIP program delivered a series of workshops for both managers and newcomer team members within a single organization over 2.5 months.

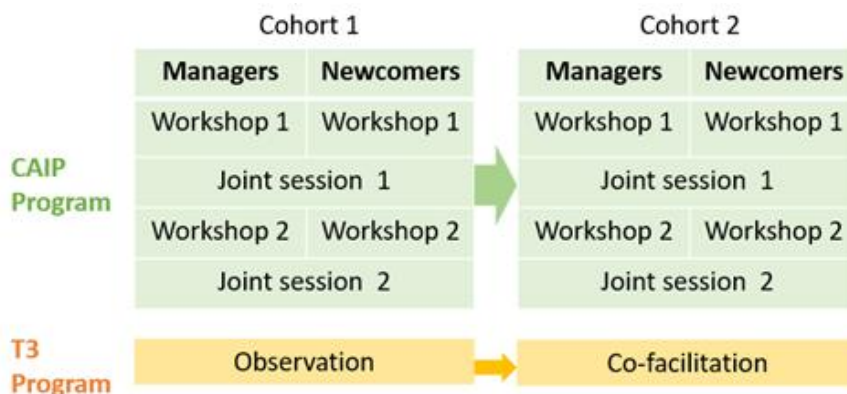
	Managers	Newcomers
Session 1	Dialogue session (90 mins)	Dialogue session (90 mins)
Session 2	Workshop 1 (120 mins)	Workshop 1 (120 mins)
Session 3	Learning session 1 (90 mins)	Learning session 1 (90 mins)
Session 4	Workshop 2 (120 mins)	Workshop 2 (120 mins)
Session 5	Learning session 2 (90 mins)	Learning session 2 (90 mins)
Session 6	Joint session (90 mins)	
Session 7	Joint session (60 mins)	

CAIP 2.0 and Train-the-trainer (T3) program

The CAIP 2.0 program was shortened from the original version and included a Train-the-trainer (T3) component to ensure sustainability following the end of the organization's partnership with TRIEC.

The program consisted of a series of six, two-hour sessions delivered to managers and newcomer team members from the same organization (participants would attend four sessions each).

Train-the-trainer: During the delivery to the first cohort, T3 participants observed the sessions to become familiar with the program. When the program was delivered to the second cohort, T3 participants co-facilitated the sessions with CAIP's facilitators. T3 participants also attended a T3 introductory workshop, a facilitation prep workshop, pre-facilitation coaching sessions and post-session debriefs and were given facilitation guides.



Employer Partners

TRIEC partnered with three employer partners for the **Original CAIP program**: Employer X, Employer Y, and Employer Z. **For CAIP 2.0**, TRIEC partnered with three employer partners: Employer Y, Employer A, and Employer B. Employer Y partnered with TRIEC twice because of program's effectiveness and its alignment with their strategy. It also enabled the CAIP team to more quickly develop and deliver the new program since they were familiar with the organization.

The organizations came from the finance, telecommunications, retail, communications and advertising, and staffing and recruiting sectors. All either had head offices or key offices in the GTA. Employer sizes ranged from 10,000 to 95,000 employees.



Engaging Organizational Stakeholders

With each employer, the CAIP team engaged different levels of stakeholders:



- **Senior leaders** participated in interviews to share insights into what helps employees in their organization stand out and their organization's culture around career advancement.



- **HR team members** were interviewed regarding their organization's formal practices regarding performance review and career goal discussions, professional development resources and supports, and inclusive HR practices and supports.



- **EDI professionals/champions** engaged in the program by:
 - 1) implementing the CAIP program in their organization, including the recruitment of participants
 - 2) connecting the CAIP team with key contacts and resources within the organization
 - 3) providing insight into equity, diversity and inclusion within the organization including gaps and challenges as well as resources and supports.



- **Newcomers** completed initial surveys about their experiences with career advancement. They then participated in the CAIP sessions. Later they completed post-program surveys and interviews.



- **Managers** completed initial surveys about career advancement within their organization and their work experience there. They participated in the CAIP sessions and later completed post-program surveys and interviews



4. Evaluation Strategy

The evaluation and outcomes from the original CAIP program informed the approach to evaluation and program design for CAIP 2.0, both of which we outline below.

Original CAIP Program Evaluation Framework

Program Theory

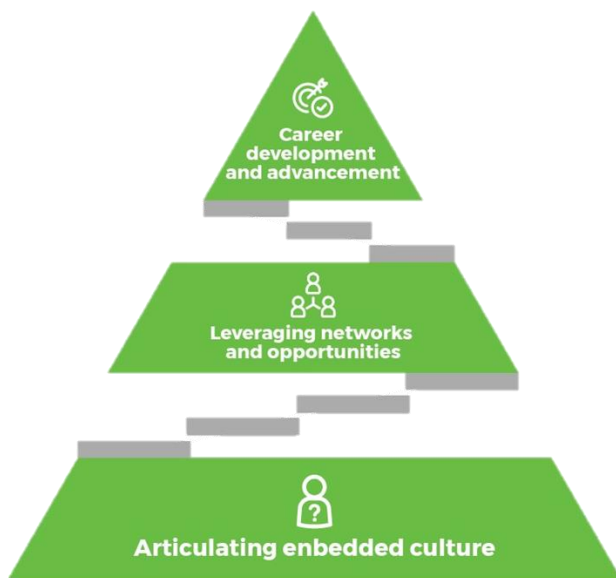
CAIP was based on the premise that if embedded culture is articulated immigrants will be better able to leverage networks and opportunities which in turn will support career development and advancement.

Articulating embedded culture:

A key component of the CAIP program was understanding an organization's culture around advancement (the unwritten rules). This was accomplished through a review of an employer's HR documents, interviews with key stakeholders (senior leadership, HR, key contacts), participant interviews, surveys, and group dialogue sessions.

This also highlighted barriers and gaps, particularly with regards to the advancement of immigrant employees.

The CAIP team incorporated their findings into the program's sessions. They also shared them with the organization's leaders upon the program's conclusion along with recommendations for how to make career advancement more inclusive.



Intended impact

CAIP was designed to generate change at three levels:

- **Immigrant Employees:** Facilitate the development of insights and skills to better navigate career advancement in their organization and to take steps to progress in their career journeys.
- **Managers:** Facilitate the development of insights and skills needed to better support their newcomer team members in advancing in their careers and then take steps to do so.
- **Organization:** Enable the employer to make meaningful inclusion change by providing them with insights, feedback and specific recommendations for making their career progression processes and culture more immigrant inclusive

Leveraging networks and opportunities

The CAIP program is interactive, which helped to foster a deeper understanding of the material while participants build new professional connections with one another. Manager and newcomer participants at all organizations reported that the sessions in which all participants were together were the most thought-provoking and impactful.



5. Evaluation Results

Between 2021 to 2022, the CAIP team successfully delivered the program three times to three organizations and 36 participants as part of the **original program**. Between 2022 to 2023, the team delivered the **CAIP 2.0 program** nine times to three organizations and 98 participants. This represents a total of 72 sessions and 116 hours of training.

During the CAIP 2.0 program, the team also delivered training and coaching sessions as part of the Train-the-trainer (T3) program.

Through this process, we were able to validate the original premise of the program that articulating an organization's embedded culture within the program would help immigrant employees to understand what they needed to do to better position themselves for advancement. The responses to our end-of-program surveys and follow up surveys showed that during and following the CAIP program, **immigrant participants increased their networks, accessed new career-building opportunities and discussed their career goals with their managers**. Some longer-term data from the participants in the original CAIP program showed that **64% of newcomer participant respondents saw positive changes to their careers within one year of the program**. Specifically, 41%

of participants won promotions, 14% others won salary increases beyond the rate of inflation, and 9% made lateral moves.

Through our surveys and interviews, we were also able to show that **managers increased their knowledge and felt better prepared to support their newcomer team members with career advancement**. They also started to take new actions based on what they learned in the program. In addition, some of the managers presented at town halls in their organization and shared their insights with other employees to leverage their learning from CAIP.

Further, **we saw a change at the employer level**. Two out of our three employer partners from the original CAIP program leveraged their learnings and our recommendations to implement change at an organizational level within one year of completing the program. One employer partner from the CAIP 2.0 program reported a small, immediate change and all three CAIP 2.0 employers plan to deliver the CAIP program in the future.

Evaluation Highlights

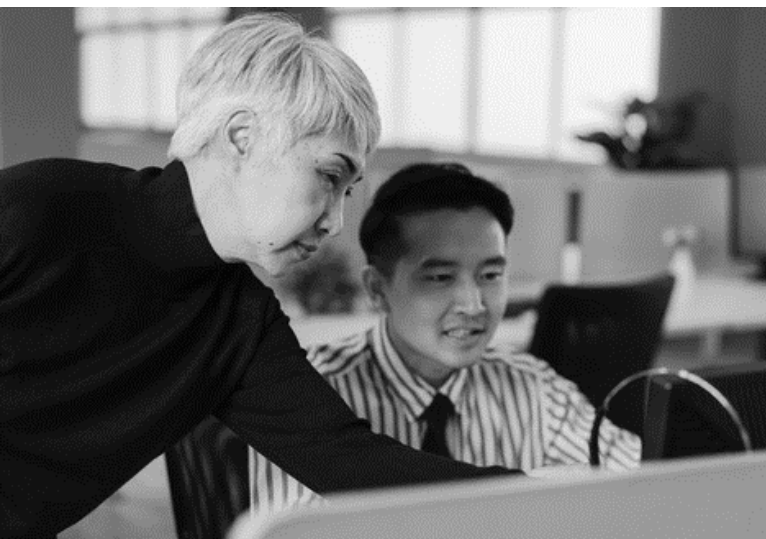
- The CAIP program was delivered to **five employers for a total of nine times**.
- There was a total of **134 participants (74 immigrant employees, 49 managers, 11 Train-the-trainer participants)**.

Original CAIP Program

- **100% satisfaction rate**
- **100% of participants increased their knowledge and took new actions** that they learned during the program.
- Organizations took actions to become more inclusive based on the insights and recommendations we shared.
- **Within a year of the CAIP program, newcomer team member participants advanced in their careers.**

CAIP 2.0 Program

- **100% satisfaction rate**
- **100% of participants increased their knowledge and took new actions** that they learned during the program.
- **Managers reported feeling more prepared to support their newcomer team members** compared to before the program (based on the pre-survey and post-survey comparison) – an increase from 5.6 to 8.5 on a ten-point scale in which one is “not prepared” and ten is “extremely prepared”.
- **The T3 participants indicated increased confidence** in delivering the program.
- **All employers plan to deliver CAIP themselves in 2024.**
- **Within three months of the CAIP program, newcomer participants accessed new professional development opportunities.**



Program Outcomes: Original CAIP

Program participants

	Employer X	Employer Y	Employer Z	Total
Newcomers	2	7	13	22
Managers	2	6	7	15
Total	4	13	20	37

The Original CAIP program was implemented with three organizations as planned, engaging a total of 37 participants.

From immediate outcomes, most of the survey respondents indicated that the Original CAIP program was helpful in taking action toward newcomers' career advancement (100% of respondents increased actions). Also, managers perceived that the program was helpful in supporting newcomers' career advancement. In addition, the satisfaction rate was high (100% satisfied either satisfied very much or somewhat satisfied).

Additional feedback from our program participants and interviews with key contacts in the employers indicated that the program was effectively delivered to the participants.

Medium and Long-term Outcomes of Immigrant Participants: One year after the program

Employer X

- Both participants **won promotions** for their desired roles

Employer Z

- Three **increased their salary** (beyond inflation)
- One **won a promotion**
- Two made **lateral moves**

Employer Y

- Six out of seven participants were **offered promotions**

Program Outcomes: CAIP 2.0

CAI 2.0 program participants

	Employer Y		Employer A		Employer B		Total
	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	Cohort 1	Cohort 2	
Newcomers	6	7	7	8	11	13	52
Managers	5	3	7	8	5	7	35
T3 participants	5		3		3		11
Total	26		33		39		98

While we did not ask managers about their immigration status, we learned that some managers were also immigrants. As such, the total number of immigrant participants is slightly higher than the 52 newcomer participants reported.

Most of our newcomer participants had **prior work experience outside of Canada** and held **bachelor degrees**.



Overall participant satisfaction and likelihood of recommending the program

100% of survey respondents in CAIP 2.0 were satisfied with the program, and **100%** of survey respondents will recommend the program to other people.

Motivation for joining CAIP 2.0

The most popular reasons to participate in the program included:

Managers



Support newcomers



Better manage teams

Newcomers



Promotion



Top producing



Skill development



Manage a team

Taking actions since starting CAIP

Post survey findings also indicated **newcomer participants' behavioral change since participating in the program.**

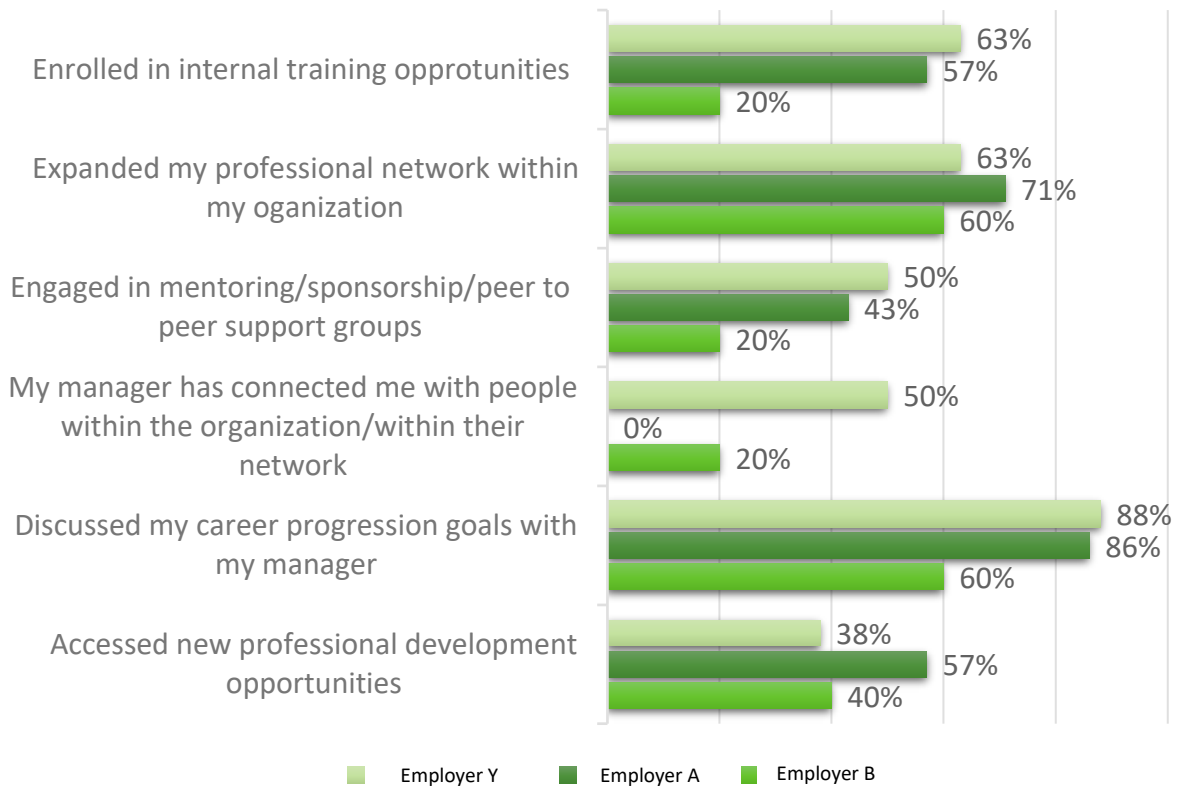
Many newcomer participants took actions in the following ways:

- **Discussing their career progression goals** with their managers
- **Expanding their professional network** within their organizations
- **Accessing new professional development opportunities** (e.g., high-profile projects, new assignments)
- Enrolling in **internal training** opportunities

*“Starting the conversation about these sensitive topics amongst newcomers and managers was the **most impactful step** to advancing my career.”*

-Newcomer participant

Career advancement actions taken by newcomers since starting CAIP



Immediate Outcomes - Managers

1. Managers increased knowledge

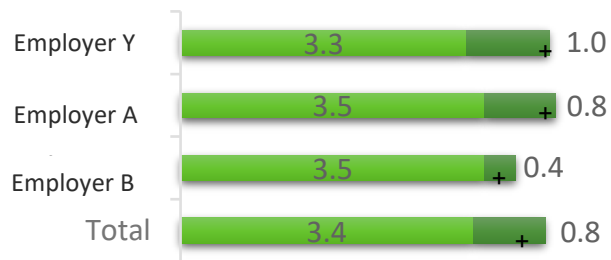
Participants reported increases in:

- How to have **performance conversations in an interculturally competent** way
- **Understanding the unique needs of newcomers** around developing and leveraging social capital
- Being able to **better articulate their lived experiences** around workplace culture with newcomers
- Knowledge of **unconscious biases** and inclusion

“it is important to recognize cultural differences instead of assuming or attempting to treat ‘everyone the same’”

- Manager participant

Average increase in manager knowledge post-CAIP sessions



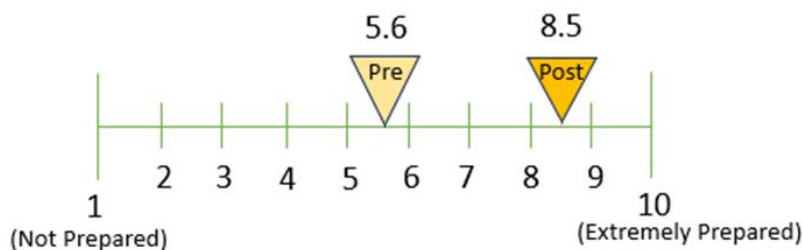
(1= no understanding and 5 = a deep understanding)

2. Managers' behavior changed since participating in the program

- **Asking questions** about skills, credentials, and assumptions around career advancement
- **Discussing internal professional development opportunities** with newcomer team members
- Discussing **career progression goals**
- Discussing **formal career advancement processes**

3. Preparedness to support

Managers reported that they feel **more prepared to support their newcomer team members** compared to before the program (based on the pre-survey and post-survey comparison).





Immediate Outcomes - Newcomers

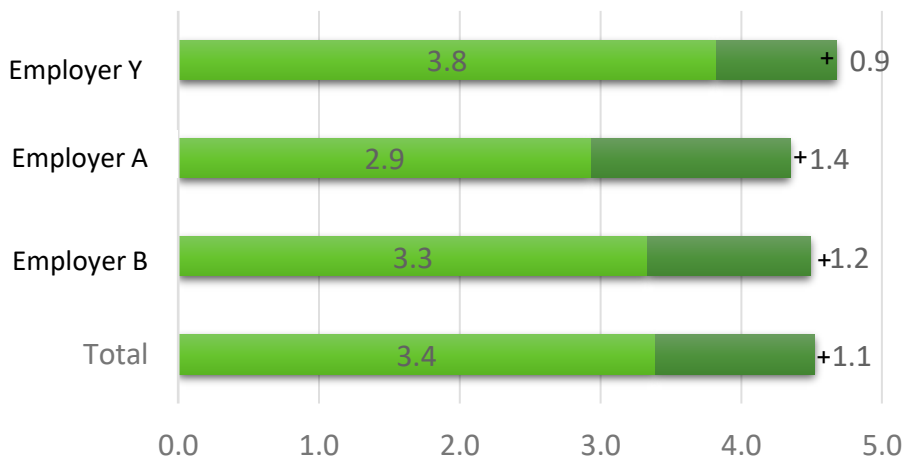
At the end of the program, we conducted a survey (Post survey) to newcomers and managers to understand **how their knowledge increased and how their behavior has changed** since they participated in CAIP 2.0.

Newcomers increased their skills and knowledge in the following ways.

- Identifying their key strengths, skills, and unique abilities
- The ability to identify and discuss unwritten rules and processes in their workplace
- Understanding the difference between networking and social capital (strong, trusted professional relationships)

Average increase in newcomer knowledge of CAIP topics

(1= no understanding and 5 = a deep understanding)



Program delivery and effectiveness of the CAIP program:

CAIP 2.0 was delivered as intended, and outcomes have been increasing since the program's completion.

Based on the pre and post program surveys, both manager and newcomer participants indicated an increase of knowledge and behavioral changes. **These findings support that the CAIP program was effectively delivered to the participants and achieved our program goals.** We could see that articulating embedded culture and creating opportunities to increase networks (such as within the CAIP sessions) contributed to new actions that are important for career advancement (such as having career goal conversations with one's manager).

Since it will take time to achieve meaningful career advancement changes, we will keep tracking our participants and employer partners through surveys and interviews to see the long-term impact of our program.

CAIP 2.0 - Medium and Long-term Outcomes:

Three months after the program

Employer Y

- Two newcomers **received promotions** at their organization
- Four newcomers **accessed new professional development opportunities** (high-profile projects and new assignments)

Employer A

- Five newcomers **accessed new professional development opportunities** (high-profile projects and new assignments)

Employer B

- Six newcomers **accessed new professional development opportunities** (high-profile projects and new assignments).

Note: Due to organizational restructuring at all employers, opportunities for participants to advance have likely been impacted.



Six months after the CAIP 2.0 program – follow up survey in January 2024

Employer A

Among survey respondents, newcomer participants have not had any employment change yet (N=4). However, they have been taking following actions to reach their career goals.

- Accessed new professional development opportunities
- Discussing their career progression goals with their manager
- Expanded their professional network within their organization

Employer B

Among survey respondents, newcomer participants have not had any employment change yet (N=7). However, they have been taking following actions to reach their career goals.

- Accessed new professional development opportunities
- Discussing their career progression goals with their manager
- Expanded their professional network within their organization
- Enrolled in internal training opportunities

Our employer contact also shared that **one participant had secured a promotion.**

One year after the CAIP 2.0 program

Employer Y

Six newcomers earned promotions in their organization (one participant received two promotions in one year). One participant won a salary increase beyond the rate of inflation. Two newcomer participants left Employer Y since program completion.

Note: one-year surveys are pending for Employers A and B at this time as their delivery of CAIP took place later than with Employer Y.



Train-the-trainer (T3) Model Delivery

Immediate Outcomes

All employer partners chose to enroll more employees than the minimum required (two) in the T3 program to ensure sustainability (in case of role changes, departures from the company, etc.). In total, 11 people were enrolled and six completed the program. The T3 program was delivered as planned.

As predicted, the participants who had the most experience and knowledge around facilitation and equity, diversity and inclusion were best able to understand and effectively co-deliver the sessions. However, **those with less experience and knowledge were still able to effectively meet the T3 program requirements and were awarded certificates**. While Learning and EDI professionals are still the preferred candidates, it's clear that a wider range of people can successfully complete the program and lead future CAIP sessions.

Upon program completion:

- All T3 participants reported **increased confidence in facilitating the CAIP program** in the future.
- All T3 participants felt the program **increased intercultural skills to support newcomers' career advancement**.

Manager and newcomer participants gave the T3 participants positive feedback on their facilitation:

- knowledge able about the session's topic
- well-prepared for the session
- effectiveness of their delivery
- engagement of participants in the session

Preparation for future delivery:

TRIEC provided facilitator guides, session outlines, slide decks, handouts, email templates, and session evaluation templates to employers for future delivery. **Our employer partners commented on the high-quality of the program and the provided materials**. They all confirmed that they felt well prepared to deliver the program in the future.

Organizational Change

The CAIP program was designed to engage employers at multiple levels and to create change at those levels. While the primary focus was on helping manager and newcomer participants acquire new knowledge and insights and taking new actions to improve immigrant career advancement, we also built in multiple touch points with other organizational stakeholders and consequently saw high-level changes.

At the beginning of each employer partnership, we met with senior leaders (e.g., C-suite leaders, VPs), HR, and key contacts to learn about the formal policies and practices as well as the informal organizational culture around career advancement. We wanted to know what was valued when considering candidates for promotions or development programs for high-performers beyond credentials and performance. Not only was this useful for our sessions with their manager and newcomer team member CAIP participants, but it also often piqued leaders' curiosity about CAIP and immigrant career advancement.

At the end of each partnership, we would report back to our champion, senior leaders and HR through a written report and a presentation. We shared data on impacts and outcome, the insights on organizational culture around advancement, barriers and gaps, as well as recommendations for making career advancement more immigrant inclusive.

Employers always responded positively, and the majority took action based on what we had shared (both Original CAIP and CAIP 2.0 employers). This included:

- **Incorporating key learnings from CAIP into existing internal training for managers** on how to have performance and career goal conversations with team members.
- Leveraging new understandings around organizational culture and bias **to inform the organization's EDI strategy.**
- **Creating and delivered a series of lunch-and-learn workshops for immigrant employees** and allies addressing the areas we had identified as gaps or barriers for career advancement.
- **Adding "immigrant" as one of the demographic choices** for optional self-identification in employee engagement surveys to better understand who is in the organization and their experience as an employee.
- **Planning to deliver the CAIP program on their own** (all three CAIP 2.0 partners).



A New Approach for Engaging Leaders

The CAIP 2.0 project included a new component: creating an approach **to engage with leadership more deeply** and further influence organizational change. To that end, the CAIP team developed and piloted a post-program discussion with leaders from one employer partner.

Generating buy-in:

Trust was key to securing this opportunity. Our champion at one employer had observed the impact we had had at his organization and the quality of the CAIP program and so was open to trying this new offering. He later shared with us that although they had limited time, they realized that if they wanted impactful change to happen, they needed to make the time.

Our approach:

We leveraged our insights about the key barriers for inclusive career advancement at this organization as a starting point for the discussion. After validating our starting point with key contacts, we designed the larger session.

We took a systems-thinking approach to the larger group discussion. The leaders and key contacts represented different areas and levels of responsibility. We asked that they consider the barriers identified and to think about ways to address them from their perspective and their scope of influence. The idea was to take the diversity within the room to create a unified approach.

The outcome:

Leaders were able to identify areas in which the learnings from the program could be applied to address barriers and gaps. It also broke down the siloing that happens in organizations as they quickly offered to collaborate with one another. They also learned about new initiatives from one another that not everyone was aware of and could help further inclusion. The discussion enabled information sharing and encouraged further collaboration and support.

At the end of the session, each participant had committed to at least one action item. This included:

- **More leaders agreeing to participate in existing initiatives** aimed at clarifying career options and requirements (e.g., expanding on the competencies required for different roles and publish these internally to help employees understand which skills and knowledge are required for each position).
- **New actions** such as
 - Developing resources for managers to help them have more effective career-goal conversations.
 - Increasing managers' accountability for fully completing performance and career-goal discussions with team members.



Insights into Career Advancement

While the organizations we worked with were all very different, we saw similarities in terms of where newcomer team members struggled with advancement and where managers struggled to support them. These insights were brought to light through the discussions in the CAIP sessions and were consistent with all five organizations.

The key insight topics include:

- Positioning yourself for advancement
- Internal hiring processes
- Career-goal conversations
- Networking versus social capital
- Unpacking commonly used terms

Positioning yourself for advancement

In the sessions with newcomer participants, we regularly heard that prior to immigrating, many had worked in organizations where career advancement had been tied to performance and credentials. They were surprised to hear that their employer in Canada valued a variety of other factors as well. These included:

- Speaking up in meetings
- Proposing new ideas
- Thinking from the perspective of the next role and proposing ideas based on that level of understanding.
- Understanding how other teams and departments work and their concerns and priorities.
- Identifying a problem and coming up with a solution
- Participating in high-visibility projects
- Participating in stretch assignments
- Volunteering on organizational committees (good for visibility, networking, showing skills not leveraged in one's current role, and also a signal in some organizations that you are ambitious and interested in advancing)

Demystifying internal hiring

While newcomer team member participants were aware of the official process of how to apply for a job as internal candidate, at every organization we worked with they had questions about the nuances of the process. This included:

- Are there different expectations for internal candidates?
- Are internal candidates asked different questions in a job interview?
- Do internal candidates have an advantage over external ones (or vice versa)?
- As an internal candidate, can you get feedback about your application and interview?
- In addition to performance and qualifications, what else helps a candidate stand out for a role they've applied for?
 - When should you tell your manager that you're applying for another position?
 - Is it okay to email the hiring manager to ask for more information about the position?



Career-goal conversations

Many immigrant participants shared that **prior to immigrating to Canada, they hadn't ever discussed their career goals with managers**. It wasn't an organizational practice. In fact, had they initiated a conversation about career goals it would have jeopardized their relationship with their manager and opportunities for advancement. Other participants shared that although their managers had discussed advancement, it was very much a one-way conversation (manager to team member). This meant that many immigrant participants were uncomfortable and unsure of how to discuss their goals and were wary of initiating this kind of conversation.

We heard from **both immigrant and manager participants** that **discussions about career goals did not happen regularly if at all at their current organizations**. Managers primarily focused on discussing performance and tasks. Although most employers had processes and resources in place for career goal planning and discussions, in general, they did not hold managers accountable for implementing them. Consequently, many participants, **both managers and newcomer employees, were unfamiliar with how to have effective career goal discussions let alone interculturally competent ones**.

Some managers shared that that if their team member did not bring up career goals or didn't have much to say when directly asked about goals, **they would assume they were happy with their current role and not interested in advancing**.

Impact: Telling newcomer participants that it is okay to initiate career goal discussions and that it would help their managers connect them to opportunities prompted them to take action. In the original program, **three participants** reported in the sessions that **they had immediately spoken with their managers about their career goals and had been connected to supports and opportunities**. In the post-program surveys, we saw that **discussion of career goals with managers was a key action that many participants took**.

Managers also indicated that they would ask more questions to better understand their team member participants and their goals as a result of CAIP, and this was reported in the post-program surveys as well.

Social Capital

Key for many participants was **the shift from thinking about professional networking to recognizing the importance of developing social capital, which we defined as the development of trusted professional relationships**. Leaders from all of our employer partners told us that building relationships and increasing visibility is an important part of building one's career, this distinction was an important insight for advancement.

Prior to CAIP, many newcomer participants had been focused on expanding their technical skills / experience and acquiring designations. However, once they saw the value of social capital, they were uncertain about how to initiate and deepen new connections into trusted professional relationships. They shared that because they are working remotely much of the time, their interactions with colleagues outside their team were limited. They were also worried that reaching out and connecting with others could upset their managers.

Additionally, they were concerned that trying to build a relationship could annoy a new contact. In the sessions, we explored different ideas of how to do this in a positive, impactful way which the participants then started to put into action.

Manager participants explored how cultural differences and prior experience influenced team members' level of comfort with making new connections. They discussed the importance of discussing social capital with team members.

Manager participants were accustomed to helping team members make new connections but had not considered the importance of supporting them with deepening these relationships. In the sessions, we brainstormed simple actions they could take to support their team members such as recommending that they volunteer with an employee resource group.

Unpacking commonly used terms

Every organization has terms that have specific meanings within the organization but are not explicitly defined. When unpacking these in the CAIP program, it became apparent that there was often a misalignment between how the terms were used by leadership and how newcomer employees understood them. These subtle differences meant that newcomer employees frequently missed some of the nuances of what their manager and organization expected of them, particularly with regards to positioning themselves for advancement. For example, the term **“taking initiative” was interpreted by many newcomer employees** as taking on additional responsibilities. **When managers used this term, however**, they were often referring to actions such as proposing new ideas, expecting their team members to start thinking from the perspective of the next role, or learning about other teams and departments and bringing that broader perspective to their work. Other terms included **“good communication”, “entrepreneurial mindset”, and “hard work”**.





6. Learnings and Recommendations

Through the development and implementation of the CAIP program, we gained insights and learnings on influencing inclusion change, employer partnership, program delivery, as well as on sustainability, investment, expansion, as well as what key elements could be adopted by other projects or organizations. The details shared in this final section demonstrate our learning as well as information that could benefit those in funding, program development and delivery, as well as in policy.

Highlights include:

Influencing change: There were a few factors that were key for influencing change:

- **The opportunity to hear directly from colleagues** about their insights and experiences had a significant impact.
- **Building trust** with our employer partners over time helped to influence change.
- **Engaging with employers at multiple levels** contributed to change happening at both the individual and organizational level.

Partnering with employers: Developing a clear process for collaborating with employers, knowing what to ask for and building relationships with

multiple people within an organization contributed to successful partnerships.

Program delivery: clear communication with participants before and during sessions, providing a variety of contexts for discussion in the sessions, addressing power imbalances and safety, and support for program participation from leaders was important for session attendance and participation.

Train-the-trainer (T3) program: the combination of T3 participant workshops, observing regular CAIP sessions, debriefs and coaching sessions provided a solid base for T3 participants from a variety of professional backgrounds to successfully deliver the CAIP sessions.

Evaluation: The initial assumptions for the project around creating a successful program were found to be true.

Expansion: Possible areas of expansion for CAIP include SMEs, immigrant women, and international student graduates.

Adoption: key insights and findings from CAIP could be leveraged by other projects, such as:

- engaging with employers at multiple levels to influence systems change

- action-reflection being key to generating change
- the importance of creating meaningful dialogue amongst colleagues
- provide practical, concrete recommendations for change so that people can easily act.
- build trust over time to influence change.

Scalability and Sustainability: Our employer partners gained interest in growing the CAIP program at their organizations based on:

- positive results from the CAIP program.
- buy-in from senior-level colleagues. For several partners, this increased as the program was shown to be impactful.
- fully trained internal facilitators (T3 grads)
- quality program design and materials

Lessons for Policy:

- **Initiatives for supporting immigrants with employment cannot simply focus on the first job.** Newcomers also face systemic barriers with advancement which impacts long-term outcomes. This must also be addressed.
- **Taking a systems-thinking approach can influence change at multiple levels.**
- **Creating opportunities for internal dialogue is critical** for deepening awareness and motivating people to do things differently.
- Even after being hired, formal training and education qualifications and credentials may still be used in different promotion and advancement decisions. **Few employers are aware of foreign credential systems. The government may have a role in building a better relationship between these systems and employers.**
- Employers will invest time and money to overcome cultural differences only if the labour market makes it necessary and/or because they see it as an important societal contribution. The government can influence employers to make important inclusion change. **Having immigrants officially recognized as an equity-denied (equity-deserving) group could significantly impact inclusion change.**

Influencing Change

The core goal of the CAIP program was to influence change at multiple levels within an organization: at the level of immigrant employees, managers and across the organization.

Influencing individual change

Key to influencing individual change was **providing opportunities for newcomers and managers to meet and have discussions** in their respective groups as well as in a larger, joint group. Newcomer team member shared that it was validating to hear from colleagues with similar struggles with career progression. Additionally, they learned from one another in terms of what actions were helpful.

Managers shared that they appreciated the safe space to talk with other managers and reflect on the challenges they had with effectively supporting newcomer team members.

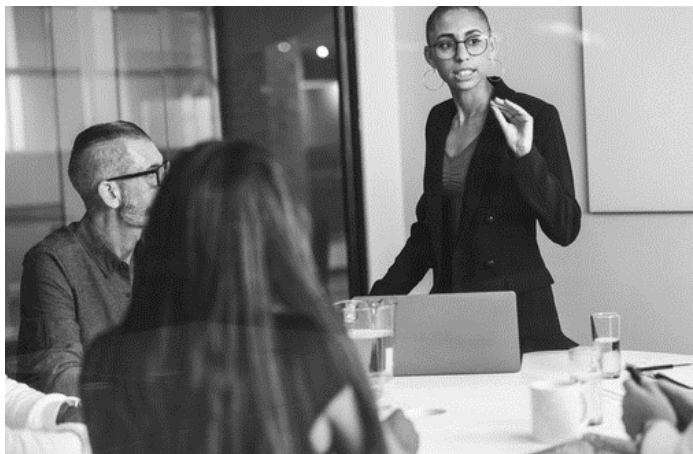
During the original CAIP and CAIP 2.0 programs, participants from **both groups reported that the joint sessions were very impactful**. When managers heard newcomer team members' questions and comments, they were more open to seeing the gaps and barriers that existed and to try to address them. When newcomers heard managers discuss how to position oneself for advancement, they were more open to considering new steps to further their careers.

Throughout the program, **we also unpacked why specific actions were recommended and how to implement them**. Some participants shared that it helped to know how to implement an action and why it was important at their organization. Several participants reported taking new actions as a result, such as initiating career-goal discussions with their managers.

Influencing organizational change

We gained key insights about what helped with influencing leaders to make inclusive organizational changes

Two employer partner champions shared that **the trust we built** with them was fundamental to their willingness to consider the final feedback and recommendations we made about making their workplace more inclusive.



This was particularly true for the employer who agreed to our facilitated discussion pilot with leaders. **Having worked with them closely, providing a high-quality program with positive results and a detailed report and final presentation contributed to developing trust and credibility**. It also helped them to get buy-in with their colleagues and leaders to discuss inclusion change and to take action.

A director who participated in the Manager's cohort of CAIP told us he **was motivated by what his manager and newcomer colleagues shared** in the sessions about their experiences and perspectives to change existing trainings for managers and to influence an EDI strategy at his organization.

An Associate VP at another organization explained that **partnering with us on the program**, including the information interviews we conducted with VPs and HR, had **been a catalyst for starting an ongoing conversation amongst senior leaders** about immigrant. It also led to "immigrant" being included as a demographic category in their regular employee engagement survey. Once they start collecting data on the experiences of immigrants in the organization, they'll be better able to get the buy-in to address immigrant inclusion.

By engaging an organization in the process of customizing CAIP and collaborating in its implementation, we were also able to generate interest in immigrant inclusion beyond CAIP.

At a different organization, our champion was a director and a leader within a large and well-established multicultural employee resource group (ERG) with membership across the country. To add to their regular career support offerings, the ERG leveraged what they learned from CAIP and our recommendations for inclusive action. The ERG

designed and delivered a year-long lunch-and-learn series that covered a range of CAIP-related topics. **They attributed catalyst for this to the CAIP program. Having strong buy-in from an influential champion** was important for program implementation and post-program change.

Partnering with Employers

During the Original CAIP program, we developed a process and supporting resources for partnering with employers through the implementation of the program. We refined this for CAIP 2.0 and **received feedback from our CAIP 2.0 partners that we were organized, easy to work with, and that we made it easy for them to implement CAIP**. Our process included:

- At the beginning of the partnership, **providing a clear overview of the program** and the steps required by both the employer and CAIP team to implement the program.
- **Sharing a prepared timeline with tasks clearly assigned to different parties**. The dates for the timeline were agreed upon by both groups in a meeting. This document served as an important reference throughout the process.
- **Knowing what to ask for as part of the process**. This can expedite program implementation. For example, if you know that collaborating with an internal communications person at the organization will help with tailoring and launching a recruitment campaign for participants, ask that this person be included in an early meeting around recruitment.
- **Providing clear guidelines and templates for complex tasks that the employer was responsible for** implementing, such as recruiting program participants. Employers were always appreciative for the clear direction, and this helped them to accurately describe and promote the program internally.
- **Build connections within the organization beyond the key contact**. While we had to be mindful of protocols in terms of who we contacted about specific pieces and how often, we discovered that we could expedite certain processes if we could reach out directly to people other than our key contacts. For example, while wrapping up our interview with HR as part of our program customization process, we would always ask if we could get in touch again if we needed to confirm some information about HR processes in the future, such as if a program participant had a question we couldn't answer. This greatly expedited certain tasks.



- **Set clear expectations at the beginning about when the program champion could expect to receive updates** from us once the sessions had begun **and what kind of information we could provide**. Managing expectations at the beginning will make the process smoother later.
- **It's critical that organizations check for mandatory department/organizational meetings and trainings to ensure that they don't overlap with dates initially proposed for CAIP sessions**. Once the program begins, someone internal must also provide the CAIP team with updates if meetings or trainings are added. A challenge we encountered with several organizations was that employers added mandatory training or events to participants' calendars after we finalized the CAIP schedule and did not tell us. Affected participants could not attend the sessions. In some cases, we rescheduled the CAIP session.
- **Providing a final report to employers** with evaluation findings, insights and recommendations was something that our employer partners valued. They were able to share this with colleagues, leverage pieces for their own reporting on EDI initiatives to demonstrate their return on investment (the time and resources dedicated to CAIP), and reference when considering inclusion changes.
- The TRIEC team was **very careful with handling organizational and participant data** and communicating this to employers and participants. We created a **data agreement** for our external evaluator to ensure clarity. We found that some employers had more questions about how we would handle data than others and some had us sign data agreements with them. It's possible that the increasing number of data breaches we're seeing in society at large is heightening concern around how organizations handle and store data (like TRIEC). We found that **being knowledgeable about our organization's processes around data storage and handling**, ensuring that our team was clear on this (both employees and consultants/facilitators), and using data agreements when appropriate, **helped our employer partners to feel confident in sharing information with us**.

It was also **important to discuss what confidentiality and safe data handling meant with the facilitators we hired to deliver the program**.

Program Delivery

Based on what went well during the delivery of the original CAIP program and where we needed to improve, we implemented the following for CAIP 2.0:

- **Communicated with applicants about program details**, such as the time commitment and topics covered, **throughout the application and initial orientation process**. When employers promoted the program, they often included few details about the program beyond the fact it was a program to address immigrant career advancement. To prevent misunderstandings and drop-outs, we added in program details where appropriate (e.g., asking participants in the application form about their availability for specific session dates).
- **Explained how any pre-work will be used in future sessions and then reference it in the session**. While the activity should still be doable for participants who didn't complete the pre-work, ensuring that the pre-work is used in the session increases motivation for participants to complete it.
- **Assigned only minimal pre-work**. We kept the pre-work to 10 to 15 minutes per session and shared optional resources for those who wished to go deeper. The participants who reported that the pre-work wasn't useful were from the organization in which most participants didn't open the pre-work. It seemed that in some cases, participants preferred not to do pre-work. This limits the learning but is a reality to be mindful of.
- **Because strong networks are important for career advancement, we were intentional about mixing up the participants each time there was a small group discussion**. This enabled participants to meet as many people as possible. We also made a point of highlighting this as an opportunity to get to know others in the program and to reach out to one another outside of the sessions to encourage participants to connect.
- **Provided certificates for participants** who attended a minimum of three out of four sessions. The certificate was a significant enticement for some people to complete the program.
- **Provided a variety of contexts for discussion**. Some people were more outgoing than others and some clearly felt safer or more comfortable than others. By providing a mix of paired, small group and large group discussions, participants had different contexts in which to engage. We noticed that even the quietest participants would come back from breakout rooms in mid-sentence.
- Dialogue between managers and participants was key to the program's success for both groups, **but because of the power imbalance between the groups** and the different levels of safety, the newcomer team members were often very quiet. This was particularly when restructuring was happening within organizations. **Being mindful of this, we took different approaches to encourage dialogue:**
 - **Emphasized the importance of the groups learning from each other**, not just managers sharing insights with newcomer team members.
 - **Structuring small group activities so that newcomer team members were also sharing**, teaching and asking questions and not just listening to managers talk.



- **Emphasizing to managers the importance of asking questions** and not making assumptions.
 - **Giving newcomer team members multiple ways to ask managers questions.** In addition to asking openly in the sessions and small groups, we also checked with newcomer participants before a session about any questions that they would like us to ask on their behalf (anonymously). During the sessions, they could message the facilitator directly with any questions they wanted the facilitator to ask the managers.
- Since many employers were returning to the office when we launched CAIP 2.0, we offered the option of in-person training. Without exception, **all our employer partners told us they preferred that we deliver the program online.** This was because:
- **They could offer it to a larger group of people from more locations** across Canada.
 - For the most part, their employees preferred it as it required **less of a time commitment** (no time required for travel, parking).
 - It required **less coordination on the part of the employer** (they did not have to book a space, meet the facilitator and escort them to a training room, etc.).
- **We chose not to record the sessions.** This was because participants would feel less safe talking about their experiences. We also wanted participants to actively participate and not be passive learners, which would be the case with watching a recording.
- Many employer partners had a culture of keeping their cameras off during meetings. Because this decreased the feeling of safety to share experiences and lowered engagement overall, **we strongly encouraged participants to keep their cameras on.** This was an ongoing challenge with some participants, especially since the organizational culture for many was to keep their cameras off during online meetings.
- Facilitators recognized that some of the participants were **multi-tasking by doing work during the sessions.** We also discovered that at two organizations, **the norm was to double or triple book employees for meetings and some would attend both the CAIP sessions and meetings at the same time.** This impacted participation and participants' ability to learn. For the employers planning to deliver CAIP in the future, **we recommended that they seek permission from managers and leaders for all participants** (team members and managers) **to prioritize the CAIP training** so that they can be fully present in the sessions.



Train-the-trainer (T3)

The T3 program was a new component developed and piloted as part of the CAIP 2.0 project. Overall, we achieved our objective of preparing our employer partners to deliver CAIP in the future.

T3 Participants

Initially, we required each organization to enroll two people in CAIP's train-the-trainer program. We set a low target as we knew it would likely be difficult for them to find enough people. However, all our employer partners chose to enroll more in case their T3s left the organization or changed roles.

Delivery of CAIP's T3 program

Because of the small cohort sizes for the T3 program, we used a mix of T3 specific workshops (Introduction and Facilitation Prep), session observation during the delivery to Cohort 1, post session debriefs, co-facilitation of sessions for Cohort 2, coaching/facilitation prep sessions, and facilitation guides and related materials.

Although the program was quite time intensive, **it was critical to engage T3 participants in action-reflection learning through these different approaches to ensure that they both understood the key concepts as well as how to successfully facilitate the sessions.** The workshop pieces looked deceptively simple, but like most EDI training if they are poorly facilitated they had the potential to cause damage by creating an unsafe space for those from historically marginalized groups and/or reinforce stereotypes and discrimination. It was critical, therefore, that T3 participants invest the time to actively participate in and reflected on the sessions and materials throughout the T3 program. **We found that this enabled them to effectively co-facilitate the program during the Cohort 2 delivery and demonstrate their ability to deliver the program in the future.**

Those who completed the program also **reported feeling well prepared to deliver the program in the future.**



Expansion

Based on our experience with the CAIP program and considering areas of need and/or priority set by the government, we have identified new groups that CAIP could be customized for, including SMEs, immigrant women and international students.

Medium-sized Enterprises

Given that SMEs provide the highest number of jobs in Ontario and are considered a priority by government for immigrant inclusion, this is the first new area of focus for CAIP. We decided to focus on medium-sized organizations over small ones, given that they will likely have more opportunities for employees to develop and advance. We also expect they will have at least one HR professional, which will be helpful for us in terms of understanding their career advancement processes and hopefully for influencing organizational change.

Immigrant women:

More than half of CAIP's participants were women. [TRIEC's report on immigrant women and labour market integration \(2022\)](#) found that the state of immigrant women's employment has not changed over 10 years. It is critical to focus on how intersectionality affects women's career advancement and their work environment. In the report, two in five respondents were in lower-level jobs than they last held before immigrating, and they must manage more career challenges than their Canadian-born counterparts.

The CAIP program could build on its successes to be adapted more specifically for immigrant women. In addition to the valuable content, it provides the opportunity to build networks within an organization, which is critical for advancement, as well as creating a safe space for participants to reflect on and share their career advancement experiences with others. The program would pair well with mentoring or sponsorship programs. Additionally, it would help employers better understand and take meaningful steps towards better supporting immigrant women employees.

International student graduates:

Some participants in CAIP 2.0 were new international student graduates. Since they reported participating in CAIP to be helpful, we think the program could be useful for this group as well.

The government is interested in keeping international student grads in the country. Still, they need to succeed in their first job and see an opportunity to build a career in Canada. To do so, international student graduates need to know how to work with their managers, how to identify and navigate workplace norms and expectations, how to excel, and how to position themselves for advancement. While many new graduates struggle with similar challenges, the cultural differences and the lack of a strong Canadian support network make this different and much harder for international students. Supporting international student graduates in developing the skills and knowledge needed to build their careers in Canada will help them succeed and deepen their interest in remaining in their organization and in Canada. Such a program could also influence employer change as they work towards increasing retention of both new graduates and immigrant employees.

Adoption

There are elements of the CAIP program that could easily be leveraged by other organizations. These include:

- **Engaging with employers at multiple levels.** It's not enough to work just with the target group. Programs must work with multiple stakeholders to have a deeper impact with program participants and beyond.
- **Create opportunities for meaningful dialogue.** People react differently if they learn about someone else's reality directly from them as opposed listening to a lecture in a traditional classroom setting where concepts are much more abstract. Conversing with a colleague is far more impactful and is more likely to motivate people to take new actions.
- Learning happens best when people can try something new and then reflect on it. **Action-reflection is key** for people who are taking new actions, whether it's a newcomer positioning themselves for advancement or a manager wanting to be more effective in supporting newcomer team members.
- **Provide practical suggestions** for both individuals and organizations. Give a range of options from easy-to-implement to more complex. Too many EDI programs stay at the level of awareness raising and participants are left wondering what to do. Or the recommendations seem too daunting to operationalize. If people have simple options, they will start with those and are more likely to build towards taking more complex ones.
- **Engage over time.** One-off workshops have very limited opportunity for creating impact. Programs are much more likely to help participant develop new levels of understanding and take new actions if there are multiple sessions with time in between to reflect and try new actions.
- **Building trusted relationships is key for influencing.** If you can build trust and establish credibility over time, you are much more likely to influence employers to take action towards meaningful change.
- **Developing a clear process, setting expectations, and knowing what to ask for.** When working with employer partners, especially when they are not paying for the program you're offering, you have very little sway in how and when they do something. To ensure that the program implementation goes smoothly, developing a clear process with supporting materials (e.g., a project overview doc with timelines and responsibilities clearly assigned), setting clear expectations about what you and they will need to do, and knowing what supports to ask for is critical.
- **Develop a strong evaluation process and invest in a solid analysis of your results.** It's worth spending time and resources on this part of the project not only to better understand what's working and what isn't, but also so you can share meaningful insights as part of your knowledge mobilization process. In addition, findings can be something employer partners share in their organizations to demonstrate the return on investment to leadership. Solid data can also generate trust with new organizations who are considering a future partnership with you.

Scalability and Sustainability of CAIP

CAIP participants are progressing in achieving their career goals. Those from the original program are securing promotions and raises. CAIP 2.0 participants are accessing key professional development opportunities and winning new roles. **CAIP 2.0 employers see the value of the program and plan to deliver the program on their own.**

Factors that contributed to an organization's willingness to deliver the program in the future:

- **Positive results** from TRIEC's delivery of the CAIP program (increased learning, actions taken, participant satisfaction levels, and **long-term results from the Original CAIP program showing career advancement for immigrant participants**).
- **Buy-in from senior-level colleagues**, which was helped by leadership's engagement with the CAIP team at the beginning and end of the program delivery.
- **Insight and understanding developed at the leadership level about** the need to address immigrant career advancement and how to address the gaps.
- **Experience supporting the implementation of the program** from the initial delivery of CAIP (e.g., participant recruitment).
- **Fully trained internal facilitators (T3 grads)**.
- **Quality program design and materials** in both English and French (facilitator guides, handouts, slide decks).

“(I) would like to thank you for the help you do for newcomers like me; I think it is an important step to empower newly landed immigrants and make them confident they can achieve the results they had in the past.

I believe you are establishing important link between the person with the powerful skillset and the business, that in general would make Canadian society stronger and connected.”

– **Newcomer participant**

Investment or Partnership

Since launching CAIP, we've had several inquiries about bringing the CAIP program to other organizations. TRIEC has a strong reputation and the success of the program, particularly with recognizable employers, is appealing. Employers like the fact that managers gain inclusive leadership skills, that newcomers learn to better navigate advancement, and that there is a focus on employee retention. Also, some CAIP employer partners had more applicants than could be accepted to the program, and those who did participate reported that they would recommend CAIP to their colleagues.

After wrapping up the program, the CAIP team met with two of our employer partner champions to discuss the program's appeal as a fee-for-service offering. They were able to provide some guidelines for pricing as well as to explain the value. **The pieces they most valued about the CAIP program were:**

- **We framed an issue and offered a well thought out solution.**
- **We made it very easy for the employer to implement** (clear process, project management, provided the people who implemented/facilitated the program).
- Participants, T3s and their internal learning team told our champion that **the sessions were high calibre.** They had been well researched, well-designed, excellent accompanying handouts/resources.
- **TRIEC has strong branding as credible experts in this area.** This was helpful for pitching the program internally (to those he reports to, for attracting participants, etc.).
- **It helped them to make changes at the organizational level** as well as the individual level. It helped them to see their blind spots.

This year, **TRIEC plans to explore the possibility of leveraging CAIP as a fee-for-service offering.** Our limited capacity is the main reason why we have not yet pursued this. We are in the process of considering our options for increasing capacity to meet employers' interest in CAIP in the near future.



Lessons for Policy

With the federal government's plans to approve high numbers of new immigrants for Canada annually, greater consideration needs to be placed on the role of employers to help with successful integration. **The focus cannot simply on helping immigrants get a first job**, which has been the primary goal until now. Newcomers need to access employment that is commensurate with their qualifications as well as opportunities for progression. And while programs aimed at individuals are needed, **an increasing focus on the change of social structures must be made through a systems-thinking approach.**



As the CAIP program was able to show, **initiatives that engage employers at multiple levels not only support individuals in the target group, such as immigrant employees, but can have a wider reach.** The manager participants we interviewed reported using new approaches learned from CAIP with all their team members. And three of our five employer partners shared multiple examples **of how CAIP had influenced them to make changes at an organizational level. This has the potential to impact many more newcomer employees than will ever attend CAIP.** Organizational change around immigrant inclusion cannot be solely dependent on the actions of a few individuals. **Individual actions matter, but improved conditions for inclusive career advancement cannot be dependent on the chance that a few managers might have the knowledge and motivation to better support newcomer team members. Meaningful change must also come from the top –** the structures, practices and policies that are in place must become more inclusive so that all immigrant professionals within an organization no longer struggle with the significant biases, barriers, gaps and discrimination that negatively impacts their ability to advance.

Influencing change also takes trust. As we've highlighted in the Influencing Change section (link to the page), building relationships over time and gaining trust and credibility with an organization means that they are much more likely to listen when a problem is explained and when a solution is recommended.

Creating opportunities for internal dialogue was also critical to influencing change. Manager and newcomer team member participants told us again and again that the biggest "ah ha!" moments came in discussions with one another in the joint sessions. The ideas were no longer abstract - they had faces and names to go with the experiences and the advice. The insights we gained from talking with leaders was also impactful for participants. And leaders shared that hearing about their employees' challenges and insights in our final report and presentation was influential for thinking about immigrant inclusion at their organizations.

Trust with leadership was also critical for persuading leaders at one organization to participate in a facilitated discussion about leadership change. **The trust and credibility we built over time** also meant that the leaders

in the meeting were **willing to discuss real issues** they were seeing, to **talk openly about related initiatives** they were involved with to colleagues from different teams and departments, **and to offer to help one another.**

Lastly, rising immigration levels means that **intercultural competence is becoming increasingly important in Canadian workplaces.** As employers become more and more reliant on immigrant talent to fill positions, employees will need to know how to more effectively bridge cultural differences to collaborate and effectively work together.

Additional reflections:

- Employers are often risk averse and compliance minded and take their cues from government policy, such as the Employment Equity Act. Currently, most equity, diversity and inclusion strategies target women and “visible minorities,” but don’t consider immigrant status as an intersecting identity and marginalizing factor. Getting employers to pay attention to how their policies and practices affect immigrant inclusion might require having immigrants officially recognized as an equity-denied (equity-deserving) group. **Employers will invest time and money to overcome cultural differences only if the labour market makes it necessary and/or because they see it as an important societal contribution.**
- **Micro-credential programs on in-demand skills** can build in workplace cultural competency training for newcomers based on CAIP learnings. This could help them better understand Canadian work culture and their individual roles in career development.
- Mentoring initiatives for immigrants largely focus on pre-employment. **Government could fund structured post-hiring mentoring programs** through ESDC’s foreign credential recognition program, for example. CAIP learnings could inform the design of these programs.
- Even after being hired, formal training and educational qualifications may still be used in different promotion and advancement decisions. For immigrants educated outside of Canada, this can work against them, as **many employers assume foreign education is inferior to Canadian education.** Few employers are aware of organizations like WES and often don’t know how to recognize credentials. The government might have a role in building better relationships between Canadian employers and foreign credential systems.



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