



# **Anti-Racism Arts Project**

## **Overview, Deliverables and Outcomes**

**The County of Lambton**



# Overview of the Project

The Anti-Racism Arts Project (ARAP) was initiated by the Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) as part of the community wide anti-racism campaign which was established in 2016. The ARAP, a unique program funded by the Government of Ontario through the Municipal Innovation Fund, was implemented within Lambton County to foster inclusion by celebrating and sharing the benefits of diversity and immigration. The Sarnia-Lambton ARAP was completed in March 2019. Through the efforts of Sarnia-Lambton LIP all deliverables have been completed and performance indicators have been met.

The campaign aligned with the Sarnia-Lambton LIP's goal to build Lambton County's' capacity as a **welcoming community for immigrants and newcomers**. The ARAP falls directly under the Sarnia-Lambton LIP's Settlement Strategy recommendation to **increase community support of cultural diversity** through media campaigns and community events.

The ARAP campaign had three components:

## 1. Increase Youth Participation

1. Engage communities in arts based workshops to address racism and discrimination

2. Establish Sustainable Program Facilitation

## Summary of Key Outcomes

As a means to understand the impact of the ARAP, Sarnia Lambton LIP staff surveyed community members who participated in ARAP programming. Participants responses demonstrated an increase in knowledge and capacity as a result of the campaign.

### Increased Knowledge and Capacity

**81%**

Indicated that they have a more positive attitude towards newcomers, immigrants, refugees, and racialized populations

**81%**

Reported an increased awareness of racism and/or discrimination and its impact in the community

**82%**

Reported an increased knowledge of how communities are challenging racism

**100%**

Agree that the Sarnia Lambton LIP is relevant to creating a welcoming community for newcomers

## Increase Youth Participation

Sarnia-Lambton LIP continued to build on its existing relationship with the Multicultural Awareness Club (MAC), a student led club at a Sarnia high school. For 20 years, MAC has been holding a Multicultural Awareness Night which attracts hundreds of visitors from across Lambton County. Sarnia-Lambton LIP collaborated with MAC in 2018 on anti-racism initiatives, including the ARAP campaign.

Another youth focused aspect was a secondary school art challenge, which provided students within Lambton County an opportunity to submit artwork reflecting sentiments of diversity and anti-racism. This multi-media art challenge invited all students in grades 7-12 across the county to submit artwork reflecting sentiments of diversity and anti-racism.

More than 60 submissions were entered and prizes were awarded to the top three contestants. These contestants had the opportunity to showcase their work at ArtWalk, MAC Night and the ARAP wrap up event.



### MAC Night

LIP staff surveyed individuals that visited the LIP ARAP information table at MAC. These individuals reported the following impacts:

- 94% Indicated they feel more motivated to challenge racism and discrimination within the community
- 100% Indicated their awareness of racism or discrimination increased based on the ARAP campaign
- 100% Agreed ARAP provided a positive outlet for youth to address or challenge racism and discrimination



# Engaging Communities

A series of education sessions and art workshops were offered for individuals within the community to help define racism and create opportunities for positive change and growth in areas of cultural diversity.

11 separate art workshops were offered to members of the community who have experienced racism or discrimination and/or wanted to learn more about racism and discrimination. These workshops were held within Lambton County and were facilitated by 5 artists whose work reflected a theme of diversity or anti-racism. The workshops used a variety of artistic media including storytelling, beading, painting, traditional first nations dancing, instrument building, poetry, spoken word and multi-media expression. Over the course of the Anti-Racism Arts Project, more than 200 members of the community participated in these workshops, 76% of which were participating in an arts program for the first time!



↑ 300%  
over the project's target!

Reported they learned something new about racism or discrimination

96%

Agreed that the workshops provided a positive outlet to discuss, learn about and/or deal with racism and discrimination

92%



Hosted by the County of Lambton, the Sarnia-Lambton Local Immigration Partnership with funding by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, the March 2019 project wrap up event delivered a review of the overall objectives of the Anti-racism Program and how it has impacted more than 260 local participants. A dynamic speaker, Leroy Hibbert, facilitated creative discussion about how racism impacts communities of similarity to Sarnia-Lambton. Participants were provided an opportunity to contribute to the sustainability of the Sarnia-Lambton Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

## Increased Knowledge and Capacity

Through the efforts of the community art workshops and educational sessions, LIP staff were able to increase awareness among community members regarding the local anti-racism strategy. As a result, LIP staff can more effectively engage with community members and promote future events. It is anticipated that these efforts will increase support for the work of the Local Immigration Partnership within Lambton County.

- ✓ The ARAP Facebook page was created and **surpassed the initial target by 71%↑**
- ✓ 22 community members joined the Diversity and Inclusion Committee.
- ✓ 68% reported they were interested in being part of the community planning process
- ✓ The LIP mailing list has **increased** as a result of interest from community members.
- ✓ 25 youth volunteers joined Sarnia-Lambton LIP for ArtWalk and MAC Night.
- ✓ 400 community members visited the LIP information table at MAC Night.

92% reported an increased awareness of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee anti-racism strategy

88% reported an increased interest in supporting anti-racism events and initiatives

77% indicated they would like to learn more about how to affect positive change in the community



## Sustaining Program Facilitation

A committee was established to oversee the continuation of an anti-racism campaign. This will ensure that efforts to educate, inform and promote community solidarity will be sustainable within the community. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee consists of 22 community volunteers from various sectors including law enforcement, education, faith groups, industrial, health, finance and activism. The committee is working with LIP to develop a terms of reference in order to create a sustainable model for the foreseeable future.

## Conclusion

The Characteristics of a Welcoming Community report (2010) noted that positive attitudes towards immigrants, cultural diversity, and the presence of newcomers in the community are among the top 5 characteristics of a welcoming community.

The ARAP campaign's objective was to impact racism and discrimination on a local level while promoting and celebrating diversity. It also sought to provide newcomers an opportunity to challenge racism and discrimination through creative expression. The project engaged youth within the community to understand and appreciate the value that diversity brings to communities.

These efforts resulted in an increased awareness of diversity and its benefits and an increased understanding of the impact that discriminatory attitudes and anti-immigration sentiments have on individuals, specifically newcomers and immigrants.

## Future Targets for Sarnia Lambton LIP

1. LIP staff will continue to work with the Diversity and Inclusion Committee to draft a Terms of Reference and help them to develop a model of self-sustainability.
2. LIP staff will reach out to community partners such as County of Lambton Libraries to display artwork created through the Anti-Racism Art Campaign.
3. LIP staff will continue to support initiatives in Lambton County that combat racism and discrimination.

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