



Committee for
Accessible
AIDS
Treatment
Toronto, Canada

20
YEARS

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



ME TO WE

Helping Ourselves
Helping others
Building Communities





About CAAT

Mission

The Committee for Accessible AIDS Treatment (CAAT) is a coalition of affected individuals and organizations from the legal, health, settlement, social service, and HIV/AIDS sectors committed to promoting the health and wellbeing of people living with HIV (PHAs) who are facing access barriers related to their precarious status in Canada.

Vision

Our vision is a healthy urban community in which all individuals living with HIV/AIDS have the information and tools they need to access health, social and legal services that are welcoming, inclusive, and respectful regardless of their immigration status.

Guiding Principles

The highest value is put on the voices and leadership of people living with HIV/AIDS in our work, and the view that health is holistic and inclusive of the physical, emotional, sexual, and spiritual aspects of life.

Equity and Social Justice

We value a human rights-based approach that respects individual rights to diversity and access to treatment and health care - including access to sexual and reproductive health services regardless of HIV and immigration status - and demonstrates respect for the voices of all stake holders. We are committed to social justice for all. CAAT works from an anti-oppression, anti-racism, anti-homophobia/transphobia and anti-sexism framework aimed at reducing discrimination, stigma and prejudice based on culture, ethnicity, religion, age, ability, sexual orientation and above all, HIV status.

Community Ownership / Responsiveness

We place great value on community and evidence-based advocacy and solutions as a means to effect systemic and policy change. At CAAT, we also emphasize community ownership, transparency, accountability, and meaningful collaboration with the communities we serve.

CAAT's key program areas include:

1. Empowerment Education and Outreach
2. Community Development
3. Service and Volunteer Coordination
4. Research & Evidence-Based Advocacy

Co-Chairs & Director's Report



Andrew Miao


Haran Vijayanathan

2018 has been a year of significant growth for CAAT.

This year we have continued our training and information sessions on ETSN, Legacy, Immigration Training and launched our alliance CHAMPs in Action project. These programs have grown to new heights and gone into new communities. A true sign of success is the increase in the number of requests for such trainings.

A key accomplishment led by CAAT was the creation of a clinic for undocumented individuals new to the country who little to no medical coverage. A passion project of the staff team of CAAT and the needs identified by community – CAAT has been able to bring community partners together to establish this clinic.

This work is extremely difficult and can be emotionally and psychologically draining. We are grateful for the continued passion



and tireless efforts the staff, volunteers, and community partners of CAAT. Without your passion for the work, CAAT would not have achieved the tremendous success it has had over the years.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our Director, Maureen Owino. Maureen's vision and leadership has resulted in an expansion of funding sources, visibility and programming.

In our role as Co-Chairs, we are proud and humbled to share the leadership of this incredible organization. We are constantly amazed by the compassion and commitment our staff, committee members, community members, volunteers and community partners bring to CAAT. Thank you for another wonderful year!

Andrew Miao, Co-Chair
Haran Vijayanathan, Co-Chair

Director's Report




Maureen Owino

**“Without Community
there is no Liberation”**


Audre Lorde

CAAT is turning 20, and as we start celebrating CAAT at 20 years, it is also time to reflect on CAAT's leadership in meaningfully and equitably engaging Immigrant Refugee and Non-status PHAs (IRN-PHAs) in all areas of our work including program design, delivery, research and policy advocacy. Through our peer treatment counselling program ETSN, CAAT has increased the knowledge and skills of IRN-PHAs to take care of themselves, take care of others, and collectively build communities. Beyond being a capacity building program, ETSN has been instrumental in facilitating lifelong friendships, development of chosen family, creating networks and most of all transforming our community. I want to take this opportunity to especially remember our community members who are no longer here with us.

A few years ago, at a CAAT staff retreat, I was asked to describe my image of CAAT, my answer was a “matatu.” A matatu is a public transport vehicle in Kenya name after (tatu) three shillings as that was the cost of travel during the colonial era, although the cost of travel, type of vehicles and political situation has shifted over time



the name has stuck thus matatu. Unlike the Toronto bus, the matatu picks up and drops off passengers at both designated and undesignated stops with the flexibility to fit all people's needs. The CAAT bus is made up of multi-talented, diverse, resilient, knowledgeable, innovative and creative individuals. Similar to the matatu there have been many changes both internal and external, what has not changed is our core values and vision.



After twelve years in CAAT I can wholeheartedly say that CAAT is a family that loves and supports its members unconditionally. My team most of whom I have known for years make this a home: Alessandro, Dale, Raj and Solomon, you are the pillar of the work we do and the perfect team. Your flexibility, innovativeness, willingness to step-in and step-up, hard work, commitment and creativity continue to impress me. Together we continue to work towards creating a community of practice that is inclusive, non-violent, holistic, healing and socially just.

Kishor, Ower, Derek and Lucy, you are an inspiration. The CAAT steering committee and specifically the co-chairs Haran and

Andrew, thanks for all your support and always being available and responsive.

The CAAT team has the privilege of being mentored and supported by the best mentors, beyond mentorship, we have also had the experience of working with, learning from and being friends with some of the most compassionate, inspiring, caring and selfless group of people. Through them I have grown personally and professionally, I have learned to empathize and respect people's experiences regardless of status or class, I have learned to be present and listen, I have learned what it means to believe in community and to give unconditionally and most importantly I have learned the true meaning of community and what it means to truly and meaningfully engage, inspire, invest in and collaborate equitably and meaningfully with community. Alan, Josephine, Keith and Lena, my team and CAAT cannot thank you enough; you are trailblazers and mentors. It is you whose legacy we celebrate today.


Maureen Owino
Director

Reflection as CAAT Enters its 20th Year



Alan Li

At the end of 1999, a group of executive directors from community health centres and health service providers got together to strategize ways to address the growing challenges they faced in working with racialized, newcomer and non-insured people with HIV to access needed life-saving treatment and care. Within weeks, the small group grew into a wider and wider partnerships with AIDS service organizations, legal services, immigrant services and broader health sectors and formed the network the Committee for Accessible AIDS Treatment (CAAT). In the next 3 years that followed, CAAT engaged affected communities, service providers, corporate and government stakeholders in research study to document the challenges faced by newcomer and PHAs without health coverage, and to explore strategies and solutions to overcome those barriers. As a result, we established the compassionate drug access program at the People with AIDS Foundation, obtained funding for Immigration lawyer at HIV /AIDS Legal Clinic of Ontario, and developed the HIV and Immigration Service



Access Training for educating affected communities and service providers. All these programs are still running strong today.

As a founding member of CAAT, what gave me the most pride and joy is the remarkable community transformation that I have witnessed along the way. What started as a service provider driven network with a rescue mission has transformed into a PHA driven powerhouse for collective community empowerment, for its innovative practices to advance GIPA/ MIPA, and for its unwavering commitment to champion for programs and services to address challenges faced by newcomer, racialized and other marginalized PHAs.

As we enter our 20th year, we do have much to celebrate, I am very proud of the work we have done together as a community and I am very grateful for the privilege of the friendship, collaborations, shared experiences and lessons we learnt along the way. However, I am also deeply concerned about the growing xenophobia,

racism, erosion of public health care and community services, and cutbacks in legal aid for immigrants and refugees. This has given rise to a whole new generation of marginalized and disenfranchised people living with HIV. At the very moment we are working on starting a new clinic for PHAs without health care coverage, and training for another generation of health service providers at community health centres exactly like what we did 20 years ago. While in many ways this is very disheartening and exhausting, I also see our flames of grassroot activism being once again ignited, I see growing passion from a wide range of allies, and a renewed sense of comradeship and community. With our history of the colors of resilience in our diverse communities, I have every confidence we will overcome. Let's celebrate hope, let's celebrate communities.

Alan Li
CAAT Founding Co-chair

CAAT Program Reports

Community-Engaged Research & Evidence-Based Advocacy

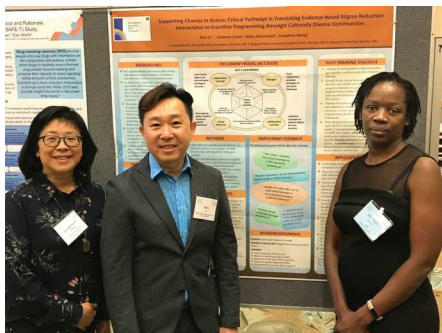
Alan Li, CAAT Research Committee Chair & the CAAT Research Teams

Building on our successes in 2017 in translating research knowledge into real-life programming and building evidence base on wise practices to advance GIPA/ MIPA and to inform programming to address emerging needs, 2018 has been a year of exciting knowledge mobilization and groundbreaking community action.

Translating Research Knowledge into Action:

In our second year of implementing our CHAMPs In Action alliance program based on our research-informed intervention from our CIHR funded CHAMP research study, we have successfully engaged our 5 alliance

agency partners in building a community of practice to roll-out our anti-stigma training in 4 ethno-racial communities, reaching diverse priority populations such as Gay/Bi/MSM, Transgender communities, People with HIV/AIDS, newcomer immigrants and refugees and diverse sector service providers who work with racialized and newcomer populations. CAAT plays a central role in the capacity building, coordination and program evaluation role of the project and will ensure we capture the impact and the valuable lessons learnt in this groundbreaking initiative that can inform sector wide implementation practice. (See CHAMPs In Action report below for more details)



CAHR, 2018

Through the Supporting the Supporters and Resiliency Dialogues pilot projects funded by ViiV Health Care, we have engaged diverse cohorts of newcomer and racialized PHAs, affected youths and family members of PHAs in innovative health promotion initiatives that are now being considered for long term program integration at CAAT, ACAS and other partner agencies.



Identifying Wise Practices in Building Community Resilience: ETSN Evaluation Study

The Ethno-racial Treatment Support Network's (ETSN) Learning and Helping Out Peer Counselling training programs have long been highly regarded as one of the most effective community capacity building programs in the HIV sector. Since it started in 2003, ETSN has trained over 200 participants and supported over 50 of its graduates to take on service provider or peer facilitator roles. As CAAT has expanded its mandate since 2013 to include provincial capacity building roles, there have been growing interests amongst community and organizational stakeholders to replicate and adapt our programs outside the Greater Toronto Area. To enable us to develop comprehensive knowledge and evidence base to fully address these needs, the ETSN evaluation study team engaged 92 ETSN graduates in quantitative survey and 62 graduates and community stakeholders in focus groups to identify and document:

- the long-term impact of the ETSN program at individual, organizational and community levels;

- the unique content, structure and process components of the program that contributed to its positive outcomes and impact;
- barriers and strategies that affect participation and knowledge utilization from the program;
- recommendations to strengthen the program and to enhance its positive impact.

Using evaluation domains identified by our community engaged process, the evaluation findings confirmed the major positive changes that the ETSN program contributed to its graduates and affiliated communities in the areas of improved health literacy, self-health management efficacy, treatment adherence, connection to social support, level of community engagement and sense of empowerment. The study identified many innovative structural design and practices of ETSN that were instrumental to its effectiveness in advancing GIPA/MIPA which include the creation of a safe and inclusive learning space for racialized newcomers, intentional practice to promote PHA leadership, responsive curriculum based on lived experiences, experiential learning design, and meaningful and progressive

engagement of PHA graduates in mentored practice to support community succession. The study also highlighted strategic areas that can be strengthened to enhance knowledge utilization which include expanding outreach, collaboration and advocating for formal structural support and improved access to resources to support sector wide peer engagement initiatives. We are grateful for our diverse academic-community evaluation team for their heard work in leading the study, and are proud to be releasing our evaluation report at this year's annual general members meeting.

Advancing care access for international students with HIV and non-insured PHAs:

In response to the growing number of international students testing positive for HIV and facing complex barriers in accessing care, CAAT launched a pilot research study in 2017 to document their experiences and engage multi-sector stakeholders in exploring strategies to bridge these gaps. Our study engages both health service providers and international students living with HIV in focus groups to learn from their lived experiences and explore strategies to bridge the service gaps. Our research successfully generated multi-sector interest and mobilized diverse community partners to work together

to develop a drop-in clinic for all PHAs without access to insured health services and treatments, to be based at Regent Park Community Health Centre and slated for opening later this summer. Following the examples of the Compassionate Medication Access program, Legacy PHA mentorship program, HIV and immigration training and CHAMPs in Action anti-stigma training, this is yet another example of how CAAT and our community network has been able to utilize and leverage research processes and findings to build ground breaking program and services to improve the lives of diverse marginalized communities living with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Advancing health of racialized and newcomer PHAs through networking, collaboration and advocacy:

A part of CAAT's core mission is to advance the health of our affected communities



CHAMP team celebrating our nursing student Anita's graduation



CAAT team presenting at OHTN conference 2018

through collective empowerment efforts that engage and collaborate with diverse partners to build a more compassionate and caring society for all. In addition to the research initiatives that CAAT led, we also actively collaborate with and support the work of the following local, provincial, national and global networks through a variety of initiatives:

- **Newcomer Resource Development:** In 2018 we completed and launched the Hello Ontario resource guide for newcomers in collaboration with ACCHO, GMSH and WHAI.
- **Toronto To Zero Initiative:** CAAT has leadership roles in co-chairing the African Caribbean Black Working Group and the Newcomer Health Access Working Group under the Toronto to Zero initiative to advance holistic HIV prevention and care access for all affected communities.


- **ICAD:** Newcomer, Migrant and Refugee Health Advisory Committee

- **Collective leadership in practice project (Health Nexus and OPHA):** Partnership project to strengthen collective and equitable leadership in the non-profit sector specifically in the context of partnerships and networks.

Other research studies that CAAT plays an active leadership and/or collaborative roles include:

- **Project PEER:** PHAs Engaged in Employment Roles: Uncovering the impact of GIPA/MIPA and the Wise Practices of formal and informal peer support, CIHR-REACH CBR Collaborative.
- **Understanding HIV Infection Post Migration amongst ACB Populations in Ontario,** University of Toronto

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- **Co-morbidities Prevention and Healthy Living**, Dr. Sharon Walmsley, University Health Network.
 - **Learn PrEP:** African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) service-provider perceptions and understanding biomedical approaches to HIV prevention, Dr. Darrell Tan, St. Michael's Hospital.
 - **Randomized Implementation Trial of Accelerated Resolution Therapy to Mitigate Effects of Post-Traumatic Stress and Stigma on Symptom Distress in African, Caribbean and Black Canadians**, NIH funded project led by Dr. LaRon Nelson, OHTN ACB Research Chair.
 - **WeSpeak: Straight Black Men Building Resilience to HIV in Ontario**, Ryerson University, AIDS Committee of Toronto, University of Windsor, University of Ottawa, and Western University.
 - **The Canadian HIV Stigma Index Project**; (Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS, CIHR-REACH CBR Collaborative).
 - **Black PRAISE* study:** Working with Black pastors and their congregations on HIV-stigma reduction activities, ACCHO, OHTN, Universities of Toronto, Windsor, Louisville, WHIWH. ***PRAISE:** Pastors Raising Awareness and Insight of Stigma through Engagement.



Community Development, Training & Capacity Building

Raj Jagwani & Dale Maitland, *Capacity Building Coordinators*
Solomon Lome, *CHAMPs In Action Project Coordinator*

HIV & Immigration Service Access Training

CAAT's HIV& Immigration Service Access Training program engages PHAs and service providers to enhance their awareness of legal, social, health and service access issues affecting newcomers living with HIV/AIDS. Since 2013, with additional funding support from the Ontario's Ministry of Health, AIDS Bureau, CAAT has taken on the expanded role in facilitating capacity building on HIV and immigration related issues for ASOs across Ontario that serve newcomer PHAs. This initiative has provided us with an opportunity to strengthen existing partnerships and build new coalitions.

Highlights of HIV & Immigration in 2018

- In collaboration with HALCO we conducted HIV and Immigration Service Access basic level training for Gilbert Center and AIDS Committee of Windsor.
- In partnership with Windsor Law and HALCO, we piloted the newly developed HIV Immigration training curriculum for law students in January 2019.
- For the Greater Toronto Area, we conducted 2 series of Basic level HIV & Immigration training: one for international students and one for service providers and affected community.
- We facilitated a community dialogue session for frontline staff and HALCO lawyers to network, develop better understanding of each other's roles and explore improved mechanism for referral and collaboration.
- We hosted a community strategizing session with HIV sector partners to facilitate on collaborative planning and working to address emerging needs.
- We did two presentations on the Immigration System and Service Access Issues affecting newcomer PHAs for the University of Toronto Social Work/Sexual Diversity Class and at the Intersectional Community Health Forum Faculty of Health, York University.

Ethno-racial Treatment Support Network (ETSN)

ETSN integrates GIPA/MIPA and shared leadership in its treatment literacy and peer counseling skill development training program to facilitate collective empowerment and community succession. ETSN provides training in three levels:

- Level 1: **“Helping Ourselves”** (3 days) focuses on treatment literacy and health access skills;
- Level 2: **“Helping Each Other”** (4 days) focuses on peer counseling support skills;
- Level 3: **Facilitators Training & Mentored Practices** to support peer graduates to deliver training to new ETSN participants..

Highlights of ETSN in 2018:

Connecting to Care

- We conducted two series of ETSN level 1 training for a total of over 40 participants from culturally diverse communities.
- We conducted one series of ETSN level 2 training was conducted and attended by a diverse group of participants including ETSN Level 1 and Synergy of care graduates to further their skills on in supporting their peers and advocating for service access;

- We conducted four series of Peer Facilitator Training for ETSN to prepare former ETSN graduates to facilitate future trainings
- For ETSN alumni, we conducted a one-day training session on non-violent communication to further strengthen their peer support skills.
- In partnership with APAA and Black CAP, ETSN supported the two agencies to develop a 2-days peer engagement orientation training program that was delivered by ETSN peer facilitators, for the agencies’ peer workers and volunteers serving the ACB communities.



Legacy Project: Alessandro Ciro presenting on our ACE program



CAAT strategic planning

Community Development and Supporting Ongoing Care

- We conducted a website development training session for CAAT volunteers.
- We conducted a two-day strategic planning retreat session for staff and peers.
- Our annual summer alumni social was held in August 2018 and was attended by about 30 ETSN peer graduates and their families.
- CAAT took a lead and collaborated with Black-CAP, APAA and CCVT for pride parade in 2018.

CHAMPS In Action: Community Alliance to advance anti-HIV stigma interventions

In 2017/2018, CAAT launched the **CHAMPS In Action**; a five-year community and evidence-based stigma reduction intervention and community capacity building training initiative. Based on our CHAMP research study, the intervention consists of Acceptance Commitment Training (ACT) that promotes psychoflexibility in addressing mental stressors and stigma; and Social Justice Capacity Building (SJBC) that builds skills in community mobilization to address systemic barriers to social determinants of health. CAAT plays a coordination and training support role in implementing this program in collaboration with four other

AIDS service organizations in our CHAMP Alliance: Africans in Partnership Against AIDS (APAA), Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP), Asian Community AIDS Services (ACAS) and the Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples (CSSP).

The CHAMPS In Action program uses a train-the-trainer model to build a community of practice amongst our partner agencies to deliver the intervention and support participants to champion HIV prevention and support initiatives in their respective priority populations. In our first year of frontline implementation, our partners have engaged priority populations including *PHAs, Gay and MSM, Transgender communities, queer Youth, at-risk Ethno-cultural communities, Newcomer migrants and refugees, as well as ethno-racial service providers and stakeholders*

from diverse sectors. This year, our main focus was on training and supporting our pool of core trainers, community needs assessment, targeted outreach, recruitment and training of the priority populations across the four alliance agencies.

2018 CHAMPS in Action Highlights

Recruitment:

- Recruitment brochure: Based on findings from our partner agencies' community needs assessment, we developed a cross agency promotional brochure for recruitment of priority populations. The brochure has powerful messages under four broad mottos: "You don't have to fight alone", "Connect & Engage", "Be a champ!" and "You have what it takes to be a champ!"

CHAMPS In Action training





Implementation and Training:

- Refining CHAMPs in Action intervention manual: Based on the experiences and feedback from the pilot cohort and the Train-the-trainer participants, we have updated and refined the CHAMP training manual.
- CHAMPs in Action training: To address turnover amongst partner agency staff and core volunteers, CAAT conducted an additional series of CHAMP experiential training for 12 graduates.
- CHAMPs in Action Training the Trainer (TTT): To build our partner agencies' capacities in implementing the program, we conducted 2 series of Train-the-Trainer activities and supported 20 TTT graduates in implementing training in their respective community agencies.
- CHAMP in Action rollout: With support from the program mentors, the trained staff and peer program associates from all alliance agencies have successfully delivered their first cohort of the CHAMPs in Action training to their respective priority populations.

Community of Practice:

To support ongoing capacity building and continuous programmatic improvement, the CHAMPs in Action program has built in its design a community of practice as a forum where the team get together

to share, debrief, and reflect on their implementation experiences, outcomes and lessons learnt.

- Mentorship: The CHAMPs in Action program mentors provide ongoing mentorship to the trainers' onsite during the delivery of the training as well as the monthly community of practice meeting to ensure quality of program delivery, support capacity building and facilitate community succession.
- Evaluation: To maximize our learning from our unique cross sector evidence-based program implementation experience and to measure our program's impact, we collect multiple sources of data from all program participants. This includes: pre, post and follow-up surveys that track changes in attitudes and behaviors, training session evaluation feedback, post training team debriefing and field notes, and activity logs on participant driven HIV championship initiatives.
- Monthly team meetings to support collaborative work planning, debrief on implementation experiences, share successes and lessons learnt, and strategize on emerging challenges.
- Alliance Partner Leadership also meets on an ongoing basis to review and evaluate project progress.



Empowerment, Education & Outreach

PHA Mentorship: Forward Together: “Building a Community Legacy from Individual Engagement to Collective Empowerment”

Ciro Alessandro Bisignano, *Legacy Project Coordinator*

The Legacy Project is a PHA Mentorship program funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, and is implemented in partnership with other ethno-racial ASO's. The goal of the project is to improve access to health and social services, address stigma and increase uptake of behaviors that prevent HIV and improve health and wellbeing among people living with and affected by HIV, especially those who are from racial minority communities and those who are newcomers to Canada.

The project engages diverse PHA and community partners in individual, peer and group mentoring and Arts-based initiatives to promote capacity building, professional engagement, reduce social isolation and HIV stigma, improve access to services and determinants of health.

2018 program highlights include:

Legacy replication

- We implemented the second round of Legacy Orientation session for the Parkdale/Queen West Community Health Centre CHEERS program

- We continue to partner with Moyo Community services (formally Peel HIV/AIDS Network) in their replication of the Legacy program

Acceptance Commitment to Empowerment (ACE)

- ACE is a 10-session empowerment program developed to meet the needs of people living with HIV and experiencing psychological, emotional or mental health challenges.
- We successfully conducted the third and fourth cohort of our Acceptance and Commitment to Empowerment Program (ACE) with 100% graduation rate.
- We conducted an ACE Facilitator Training to build the capacity of former ACE Graduates to facilitate upcoming ACE trainings.

Mentorship and peer engagement

- As part of the Legacy Project, CAAT in collaboration with 7.10 Stories will be using a narrative model of story making and sharing to creatively engage youth and adult groups. This year weekly meetings had happened to prepared for the young adult session.

- We implemented our first round of Art based group mentoring with young adults living with or affected by HIV to discuss topic around grief and loss. Stay Tuned for the unveiling of their work later this year.
- CAAT legacy project peers have continues to be meaningfully engaged in KTA in multiple ways through conference presentations, proposal writing, facilitation Including:
 - a. Opening Doors Conference
 - b. ABRPO Turning to one another conference
 - c. Outreach at George Brown college
 - d. OHTN Endgame Conference
- Legacy has conducted writing circles for proposal writing and abstract writing and supported our peers in writing program funding proposals as well as multiple conference abstracts
- Hosted a group mentoring on in-depth Non-Violent Communication Training
- A successful 3-day group mentoring for our Older Adults 45+ pilot project was implemented with enthusiastic participation from our target groups with very positive participant responses.

Community Development

- Legacy Coordinator attended a “Pitching the Tent Meeting” where he convenes a working group to work barriers to health care for non- status PHA, visitors and International students, this was the inception of the Non-Insured Clinic
- Presented the ACE program at the Gay men’s Health Summit in Vancouver
- Legacy was involved in meeting around Patient Declaration of rights for Casey House
- Legacy Coordinator and SOC graduate attended an Evidence-based practice and evidence informed public health workshop
- Legacy Coordinator presented at a PrEP Panel at the Sexual Health Network of Ontario



CAAT team at the OAN Award 2017

Ethno-racial Treatment Support Network

The ETSN (Ethno-racial Treatment Support Network) is a peer-based HIV health literacy and peer support training program developed by ethno-racial AIDS service organizations in response to the multidimensional discriminations and complex service barriers faced by racialized and newcomer people living with HIV/AIDS (PHA) in accessing treatment and support. Since its inception in 2003, the ETSN program has trained over 200 PHAs from culturally diverse communities and 50 service providers, caregivers and family members of PHAs.

Widely regarded as one of the most innovative peer training programs and a best practice model for advancing the Greater and Meaningful Involvement of People living with HIV/AIDS, ETSN



ETSN Replication in Ottawa, 2017

Innovative Peer Engagement. Reflections from our participants, facilitators and mentors

completed a detailed evaluation study in 2018 that engaged



ETSN art

over 100 of its graduates and community stakeholders in surveys and focus group interviews to document its impact and reflect on its wise practices. The study's results confirmed ETSN's effectiveness in supporting major positive changes in its graduates' health literacy, self-health management skills, adherence to treatment, connection to services and support, and sense of empowerment. The participants identified the key innovations that made ETSN so special and effective were that it created a safe and inclusive space for racialized and newcomer PHAs to learn, to share, and to build communities together. The training content is responsive to their needs, acknowledge their struggles, honors their lived experiences and affirm their resilience. The progressive engagement model with structured mentorship support for graduates is an intentional practice to promote PHA leadership and nurture community succession.

Identifying Wise Practices In Building Community Resilience

To mark the launch of the ETSN evaluation report and to celebrate this year's theme of honoring peer engagement, here are some words from our ETSN graduates, peer facilitators and trainers.

"I'm a pansexual Latino living with HIV born and raised in Venezuela. ETSN empowered me with knowledge that motivated me to be an activist, advocating for PHAs' human rights and fighting against the Stigma and discrimination to HIV/AIDS."

Ower, 2018 Graduate

"ETSN has been a great journey where I've gained updated knowledge, honed various soft skills, and met a group of amazing peers. ... have made me more informed about resources available, and above all, gave me hope and empowerment so that I am able to live with positive energy, and potentially to help people around me."

2017 Graduate, Peer facilitator

"I have benefited tremendously from the ETSN program which has empowered me to be able to have better coping skills. Also, additional skills sets that I use daily and the ability to share, mentor, and give back to my community. I have seen how this program initiative has changed lives for the better I included."

Wayne 2018 graduate, peer-facilitator



ETSN Retreat, 2014



CAAT/ETSN alumni
Amutha Samgam
receiving OAN
Caring Hands
Award 2019

"ETSN for me was a space to connect with a community of purpose, get an update on treatment and care options in Canada as well as get connected with service providers, the information was delivered by peers in a cultural competent and sensitive space. It was lovely connecting with others and sharing our lived experiences"

MA, 2018 Graduate

"ETSN provided me essential knowledge on HIV and anti-retroviral treatment and peer-counselling skills through a supportive peer-based learning environment. The training enhanced my health as a person living with HIV, my capacity as a peer in the community, and life-long friendships in the community. Thank you ETSN!"

Christian, 2012 Graduate

"The ETSN.. gave me the essential skills and confidence to do frontline work in the ASO sector. As a person with lived experience, ... it gave me the tools to meet my own needs... and I developed solid peer counseling strategies that I applied at work to meet the needs of my clients. ... Without ETSN training, I would not have met so many passionate advocates for social justice, and I would not be the person I am today."

S.I., 2016 Graduate

ETSN mentor and CAAT staff



"Remember the past, Hands on the present, Change the future"

Michael Wu, 2019 Graduate

"ETSN has granted me the Serenity to accept the things that I cannot change, Courage to change the things I can, Wisdom to know the difference. I have gained knowledge and self-love. Thank you ETSN ♥"

R.S., 2017 Graduate, Peer Facilitator

"The Synergy of Care (SOC) program provided an opportunity for me to gain valuable knowledge on the topic of HIV transmission and prevention. As someone who was in a sero-discordant relationship, I found the skills on non-violent communication, compassionate listening and team building activities helped me work through my relationship problems. Furthermore, SOC provided me an opportunity to be a part of a community which I will cherish moving forward."

2018 Synergy of Care Graduate

"ETSN gave me a better understanding of what HIV is and way of coping and maintaining both mental and physical health. Not just for me but also being the partner of someone who is has HIV."

R.R., 2018 Graduate

"As a Latina transwoman immigrant and newcomer to Toronto I couldn't ask for a better program/training to help me learn to integrate myself into the Canadian systems and society, and to improve, empower, educate and support me to maintain my mental, emotional and physical health in balance. Thanks CAAT for making it inclusive for all of us!"

Viviana Santibanez, 2018 Graduate

"After more than 15 years I am still using what I learned and still deeply inspired. Thank you so much forever ETSN"

Victor Iñigo, 2003 graduate
Peer Facilitator,
CAAT Coordinator 2004-2007

"ETSN is a program that helps to change a lot of us as new comers, the way we access services, talk to our doctors and how we think about ourselves as persons living with or affected by HIV."

Dale Maitland
2011 Graduate, Peer Facilitator,
CAAT staff



ETSN alumni, Victor, Maureen and Eugene at AIDS 2018

ETSN Graduation, 2017



"SOC, ETSN has furthered my knowledge greatly on the topic of HIV/AIDS, giving me the correct foundation and information to educate and support my peers thoroughly. I would recommend sessions and programs like this to anyone to get inspired."

2017 Graduate

"ETSN is a safe space where individuals from diverse backgrounds come together to build their skills and grow in their communication and leadership skills. The training is facilitated by PHAs who are all past graduate from ETSN. This gives them a sense of pride in the development, planning, implementation and delivery of the ETSN program. Over the course of the training, I have witnessed the growth of individuals in their presentation skills and their support of each other and their community. It is a true model that demonstrate the Greater and Meaningful Involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS."

Lena, ETSN mentor

"Not only does ETSN offer culturally relevant spaces for learning but it also promotes important strategies for personal reflection so members can better advocate for themselves and for their peers. I've seen this program change people's lives. people don't simple graduate from programs, they often undergo transformative experiences and graduate into a powerful family of rockstars."

Vijaya Chikermame

*Former ED of
Alliance for South Asians AIDS
Prevention*

"We had a metaphor from an early CAAT research, with a little person watering a tree. With the hard work of many dedicated gardeners for more than a decade, we are so encouraged and blessed to see a canopy of beautiful trees that have spread their seedlings far and wide, making their impacts everywhere!"

Keith, ETSN Mentor

"I derive courage, humility, love and understanding from CAAT for which I am grateful. Big Hugs"

Josephine, ETSN Mentor

CAAT Event Highlights

January 2018

- ETSN Level 2 facilitators training
- Acceptance Commitment to Empowerment Training series 3
- CHAMP Alliance needs assessment planning
- CHAMP training manual revision
- February 2018
- ETSN Level 2 Training
- Legacy replication at for CHEERS project at Queen West/Parkdale CHC
- ACE 3 cohort retreat
- March 2018
- Anti-stigma Event at George Brown College
- CHAMP community needs assessment implementation

April 2018

- Non-Violent Communication Training
- CHAMP community of practice sessions launched (monthly)

May 2018

- CAAT Strategic planning retreat
- Consultation with Black Legal Clinic
- June 2018
- CAAT's Colors of Resilience team at Pride Parade 2018
- CHAMP Training the Trainer (TTT)

August 2018

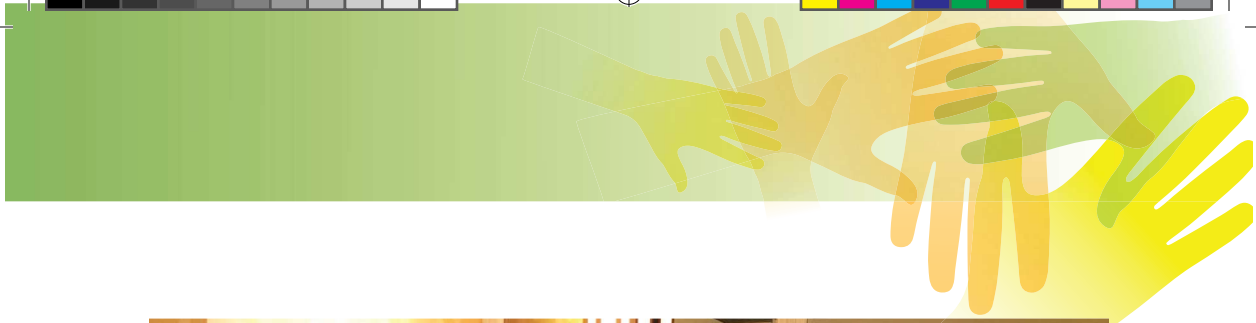
- CAAT/ETSN Alumni Summer Social
- HIV/AIDS Service Access Training in Windsor Ontario
- CAAT Provincial training advisory committee meeting
- ACB Volunteers Peer Engagement training

September 2018

- CHAMP experiential training for core staff and volunteers
- Acceptance Commitment to Empowerment facilitators training



Maureen and Victor: two generations of CAAT coordinators reunited at AIDS 2018



CAAT staff and co-chairs 2017 at the 2017 CAAT AGM

October 2018

- Legacy older adults intervention pilot
- HIV/AIDS Immigration Service Access presentation at the University of Toronto
- HIV Immigration Service Access training in Barrie, Ontario
- CAAT website development training
- Acceptance Commitment to Empowerment training series 4

November 2018

- Legacy young adult arts-based intervention pilot
- Presentation at the Gay Men's Health Summit in Vancouver
- ETSN Level 1 training series
- HIV Service Access training in Toronto

December 2018

- Multiple presentations at the OHTN conference HIV Endgames 3: Breakthrough Initiatives

January 2019

- HIV Immigration training for University of Windsor
- Acceptance Commitment to Empowerment 4 Retreat
- Presentation at the intersectional Community Health Forum at York University

February 2019

- CHAMP Directors Network Meeting
- CHAMP Cohort One Roll Out amongst alliance partners
- Legacy Adults Art-based intervention pilot



Volunteers & Staff Acknowledgement

CAAT Steering Committee

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Funding Partners

Operational Funding Partner

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- AIDS Community Action Fund, Public Health Agency of Canada

Project Funding Partners

- Department of Family Medicine's CASS Family Grants for Catalyzing Access and Change, University of Toronto
- Ontario HIV Treatment network
- Viiv Healthcare Positive Action Fund

Sponsoring Partner and Trustee Agency

- Regent Park Community Health Centre

Special Thanks

Legacy Project

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work and commitment of all participants and facilitators of all the group mentoring initiatives of the legacy project.

I would like to acknowledge the two placement students Krisel and Anita for their dedication and commitment

I would like to acknowledge Kishor Prabaharan for his continued involvement and meaningful contribution to all of CAAT programs.

CHAMPS in Action

On behalf of CAAT and the CHAMP team, I would like to acknowledge Dr. Alan Li and Professor Josephine Wong who are the trainers and mentors of the CHAMPS in Action program. Dr. Li and Pro. Wong have tirelessly worked on this program from its inception as a research project to its current level as an integrated community program to tackle HIV stigma.

I would also like to thank our Alliance agency's CHAMPS in Action project coordinators at ACAS, APAA, ASAAP and CSSP.

I would also like to thank our Alliance Executive Directors and Program Directors .of ACAS, APAA, ASAAP and CSSP.

I would like to acknowledge the CAAT and Alliance agency's peer program associates.

I am so grateful to the CHAMPS in Action facilitators.

Last but not least, I appreciate the program participant for their active participation as well as sharing their lived experiences.

Capacity Building

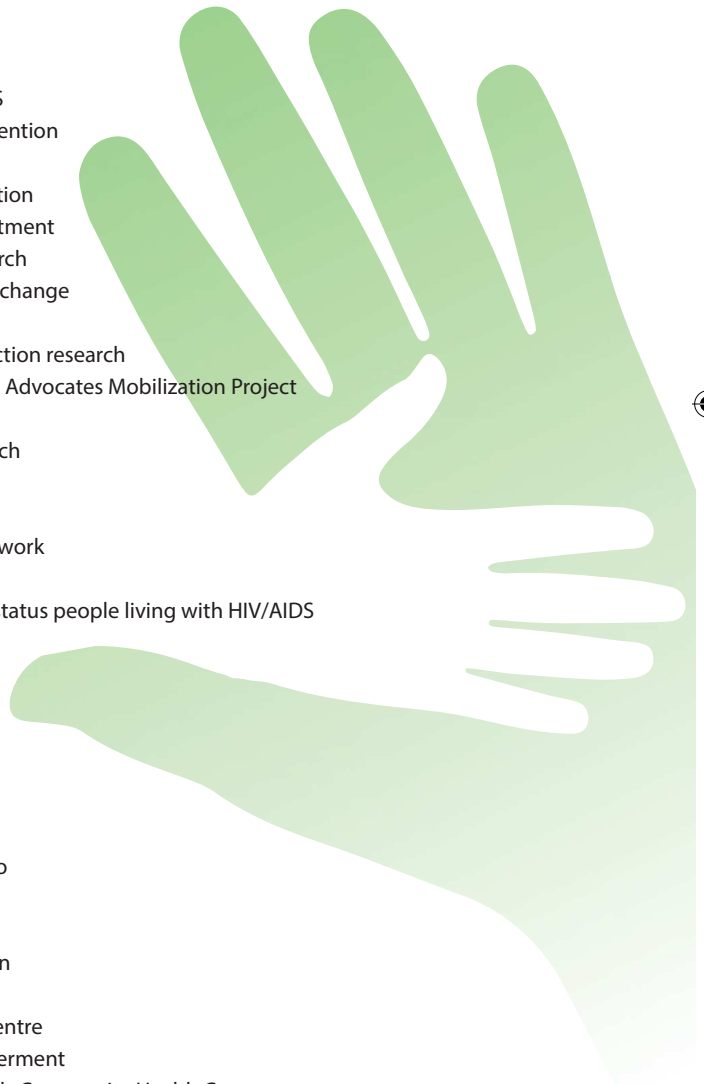
Thank You to the great team of persons in each of my program who make it the great success it is, the team of lawyers from HALCO and Jordan Battista offices, The Advisory Committee, for both ETSN and HIV& Immigration.

To the amazing Team of mentors and facilitators for your time and commitment to the ETSN program, without you all it would have not been possible.

To all the participants for your understanding, participation, feedback and just for letting yourself be open for learning.

Glossary

ABRPO – AIDS Bereavement and Resiliency Program of Ontario
ACAS – Asian Community AIDS Services
ACCCHO – African and Caribbean Council on HIV/AIDS in Ontario
ACE – Acceptance Commitment to Empowerment
ACT – Acceptance Commitment Training
ACT – AIDS Committee of Toronto
ACO – AIDS Committee of Ottawa
APAA – Africans in Partnership Against AIDS
ASAAP – Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention
ASO – AIDS service organization
Black CAP – Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention
CAAT – Committee for Accessible AIDS Treatment
CAHR – Canadian Association for HIV Research
CATIE – Canadian Treatment Information Exchange
CBO's – Community based Organizations
CBPAR – Community-based participatory action research
CHAMP – Community Champions HIV/AIDS Advocates Mobilization Project
CIA - Champs in Action
CIHR – Canadian Institutes of Health Research
CSSP – Centre for Spanish Speaking People
CTAC – Canadian Treatment Action Council
ETSN – Ethno-racial Treatment Support Network
HALCO – HIV/AIDS Legal Clinic Ontario
IRN-PHAs – Immigrants, refugees and non-status people living with HIV/AIDS
KTE – Knowledge transfer and exchange
LPO – Latino Positivos Ontario
MSM – Men who have Sex with Men
OHTN – Ontario HIV Treatment Network
OPA+ – Ontario Positive Asians
PHAC – Public Health Agency of Canada
PHAN – Peel HIV/AIDS Network
PHAO – Public Health Association of Ontario
PHAs – Person/People living with HIV/AIDS
PrEP – Pre-exposure Prophylaxis
PWA – Toronto People with AIDS Foundation
RHAC – Regional HIV/AIDS Connection
RPCHC – Regent Park Community Health Centre
SJCE – Social Justice and Collective Empowerment
WHIWH – Women's Health in Women's Hands Community Health Centre





Design: Aries Cheung

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