

EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATING LEGAL INFORMATION TO NEWCOMERS IN SASKATCHEWAN

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ABSTRACT

The Canadian Hub for Applied and Social Research (CHASR) was contracted by CREATE Justice, the College of Law and the Government of Saskatchewan Ministry of Justice to examine what formats of legal information are most effective for newcomers to Saskatchewan.

In sum, the overarching finding from this study showed that the content of the resources mattered more than the format in which the content was communicated.

Effectively Communicating Legal Information to Newcomers in Saskatchewan

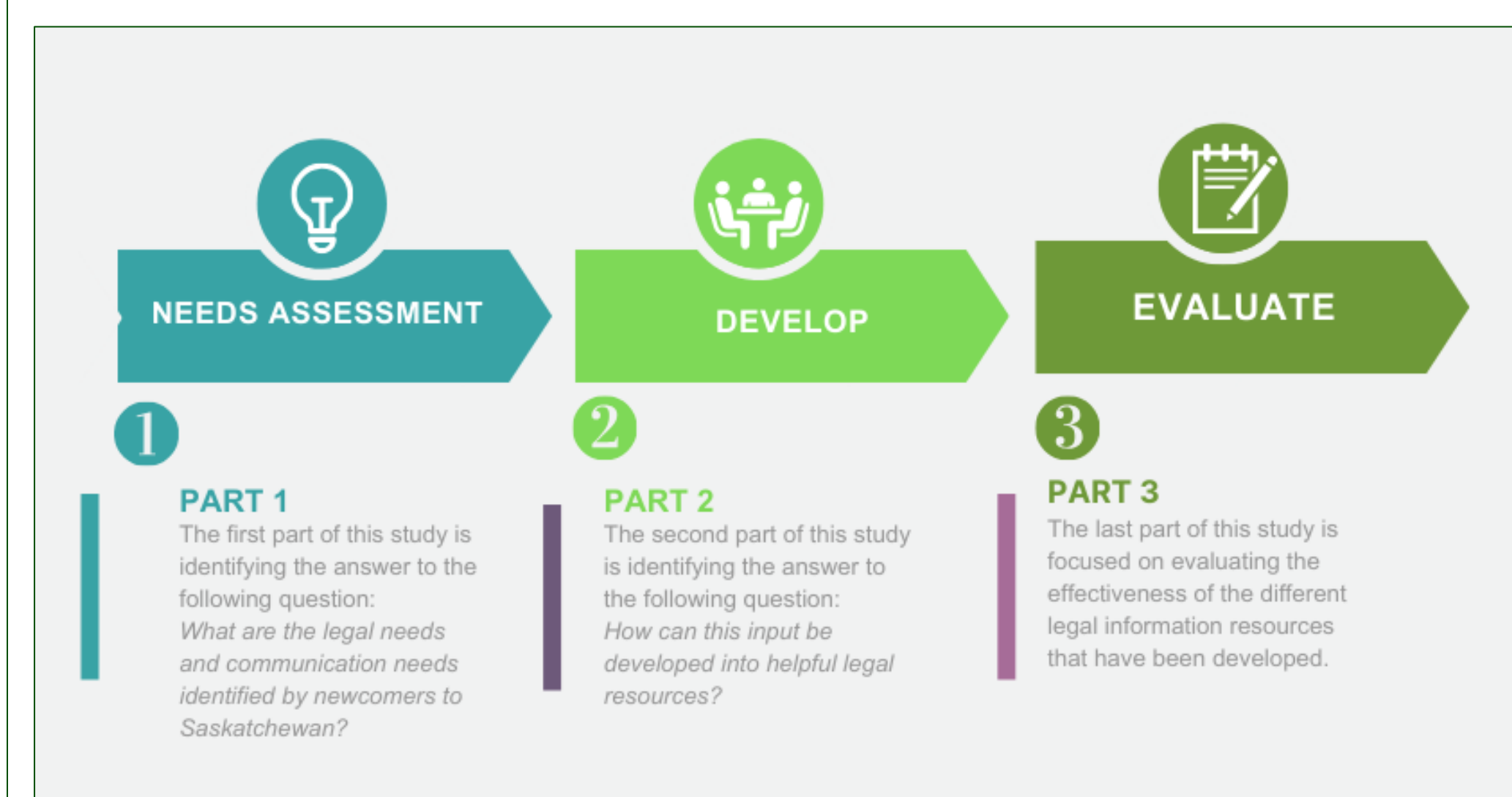
Evaluation Report

September 2023



INTRODUCTION

This project serves to advance the principals of access to justice, particularly in communities composed of newcomers to Saskatchewan. In order to do so, this project has been broken down into 3 main parts:



Throughout this study, participants from a diversity of demographics were consulted and included as the participant study sample. The hope of this project is to use the survey results, tied with the issues discovered through evaluation of the Canadian Legal Problems Survey and the Saskatchewan Legal Needs Survey in order to respond and develop resources that are able to reach more of Saskatchewan's populace.

METHODOLOGY

Phase 1: Needs Assessment

- CHASR initially connected with seven service providers who worked with newcomers to Saskatchewan to identify some of the key barriers faced by newcomers in terms of legal information. Given the different English abilities and legal needs of newcomers, a 1.5-hour virtual focus group was held. Based on focus group findings, as well as data from the Saskatchewan Legal Needs Assessment and Saskatchewan findings of the Canadian Legal Problems Survey, the project team determined it would focus on testing various forms of legal information resources on the topic of renting rights and responsibilities.

Phase 2: Development of Online Legal Resources

- a government lawyer first developed legal information.
- A graphic designer then developed the materials, which were presented in three ways: a picture (i.e., infographic), a video, and a plain language summary.

Phase 3: Process and Outcome Evaluation

- An experimental survey was launched to evaluate the effectiveness of the legal information resources. The survey consisted of 104 respondents, who were randomly assigned one format of the legal resource (31 picture, 37 video, 36 plain language summary).

PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLE DEMOGRAPHICS

Participants ranged from 18-56 years and were on average 33 y/o.

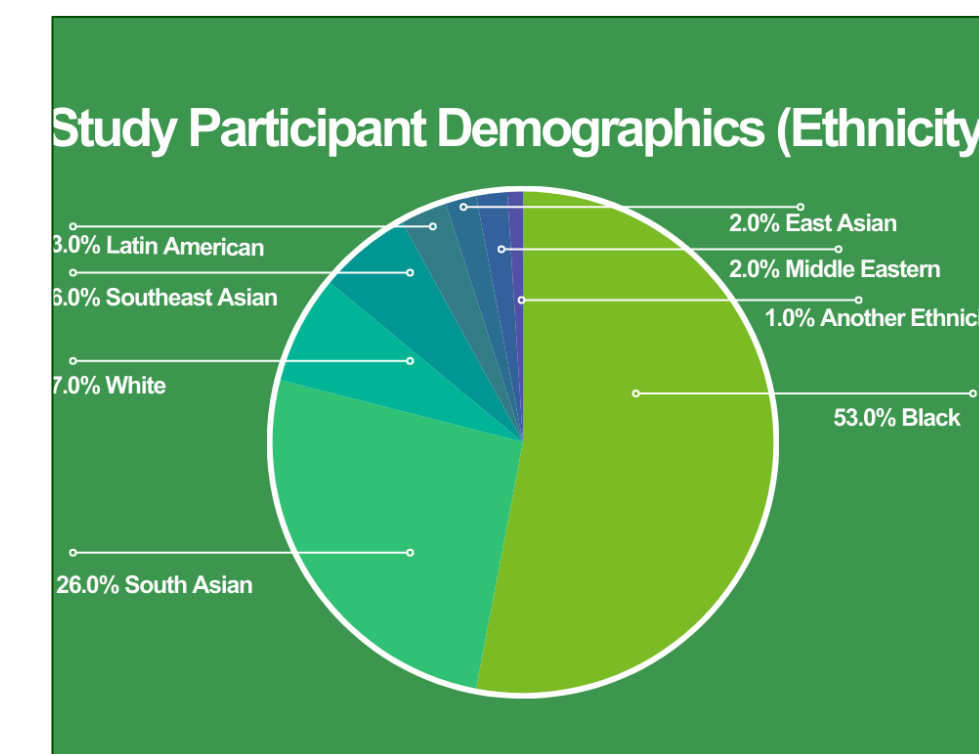


Figure 1: This figure demonstrates the breakdown of people's ethnicities that composed the study sample.

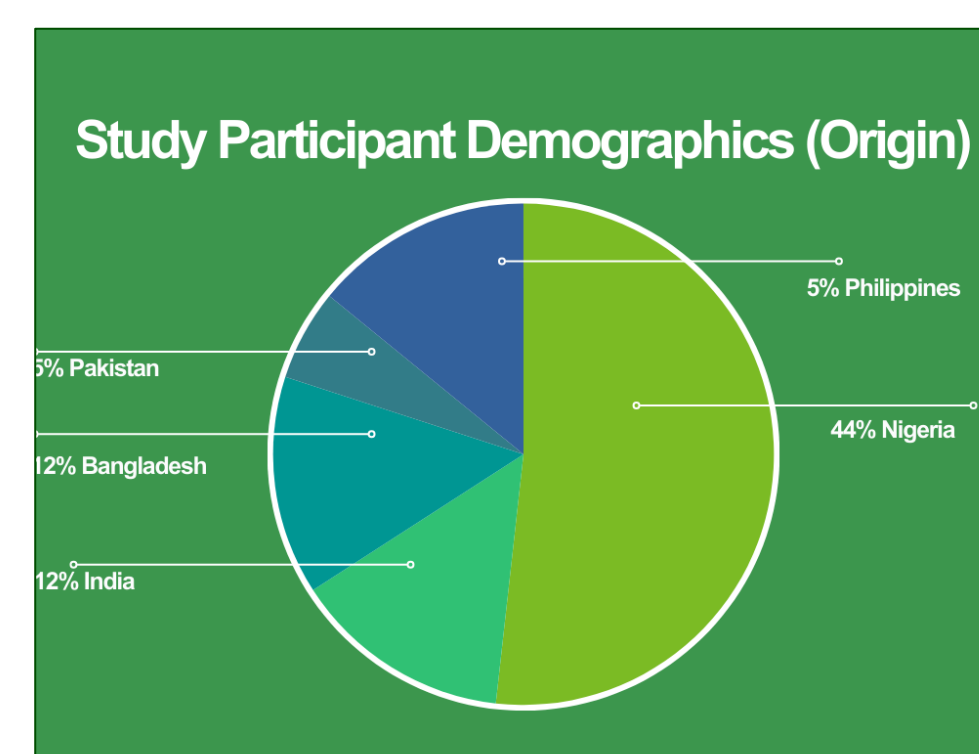


Figure 2: This figure breaks down the varying countries of origin that composes the study sample.

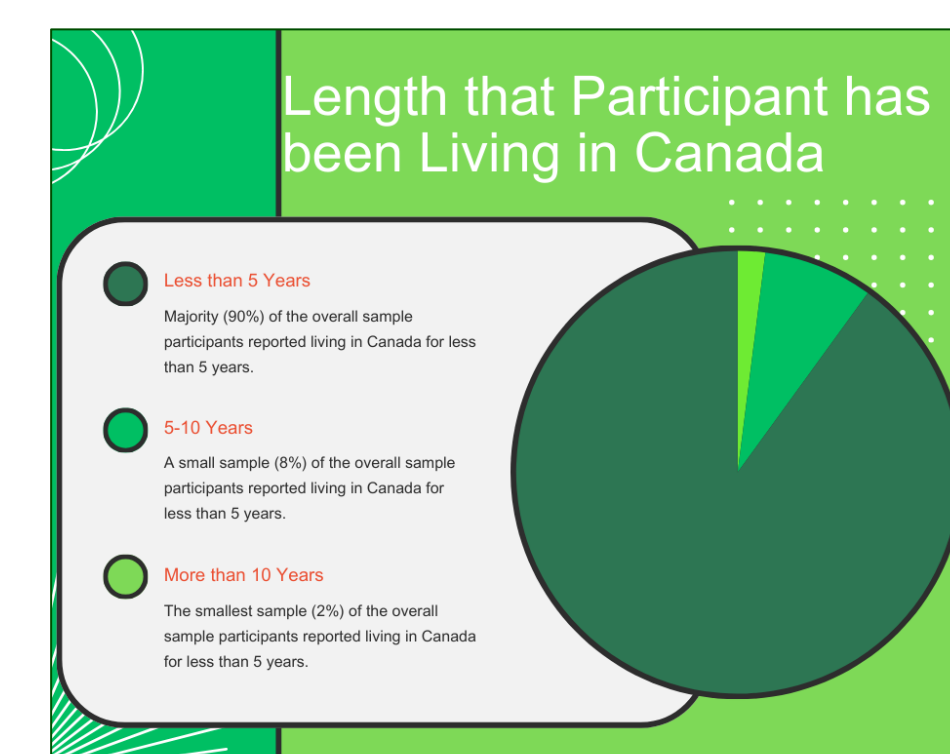


Figure 3: This figure shows the duration of time that the participants have been living in Canada. Majority shows that many participants have been living in Canada less than 5 years.

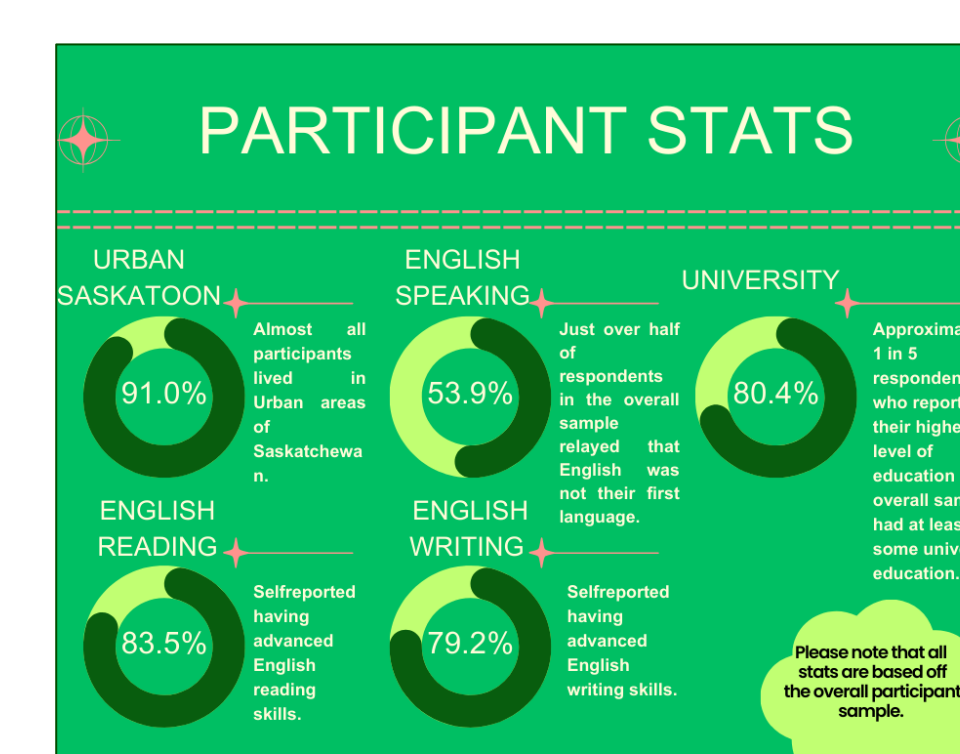
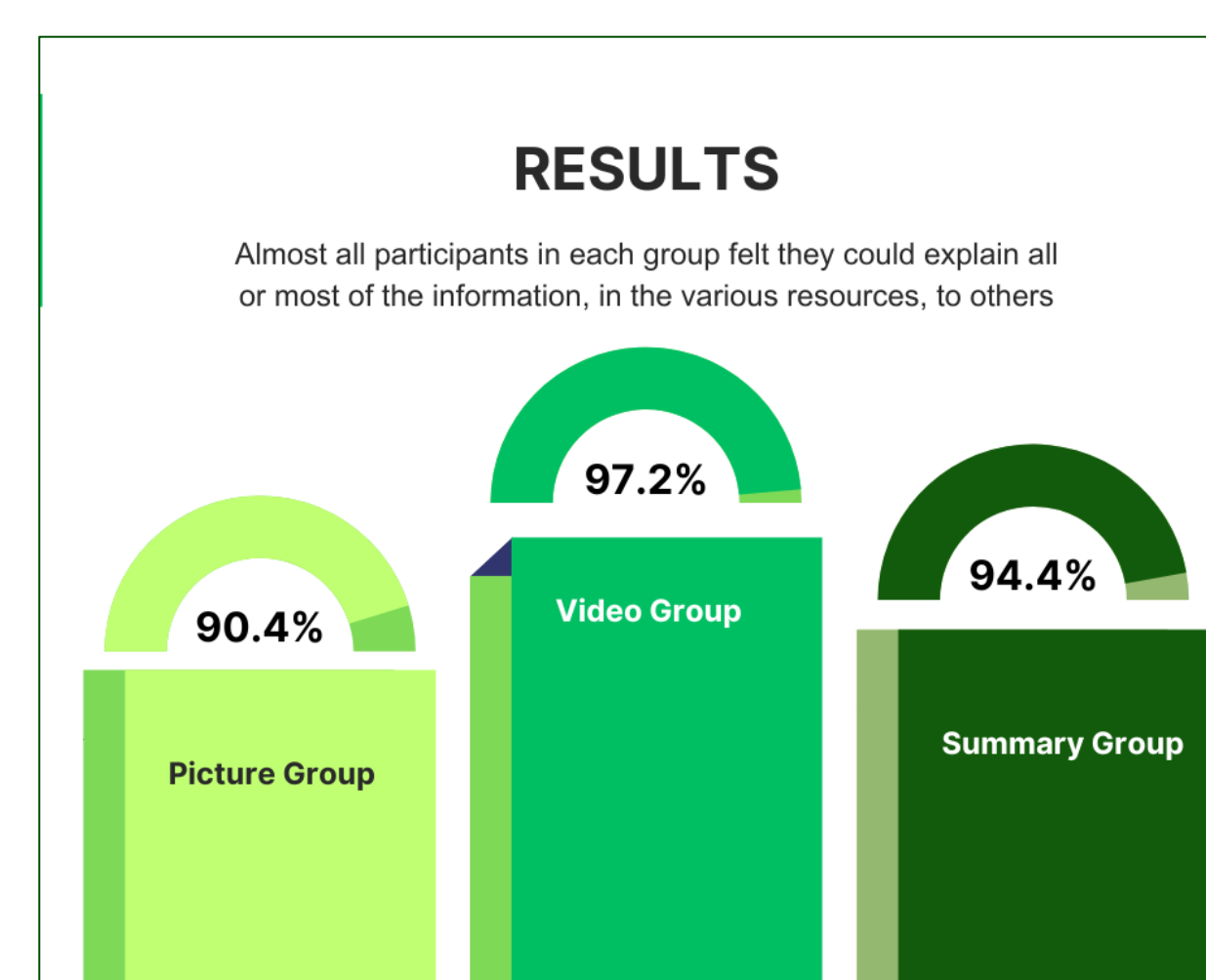
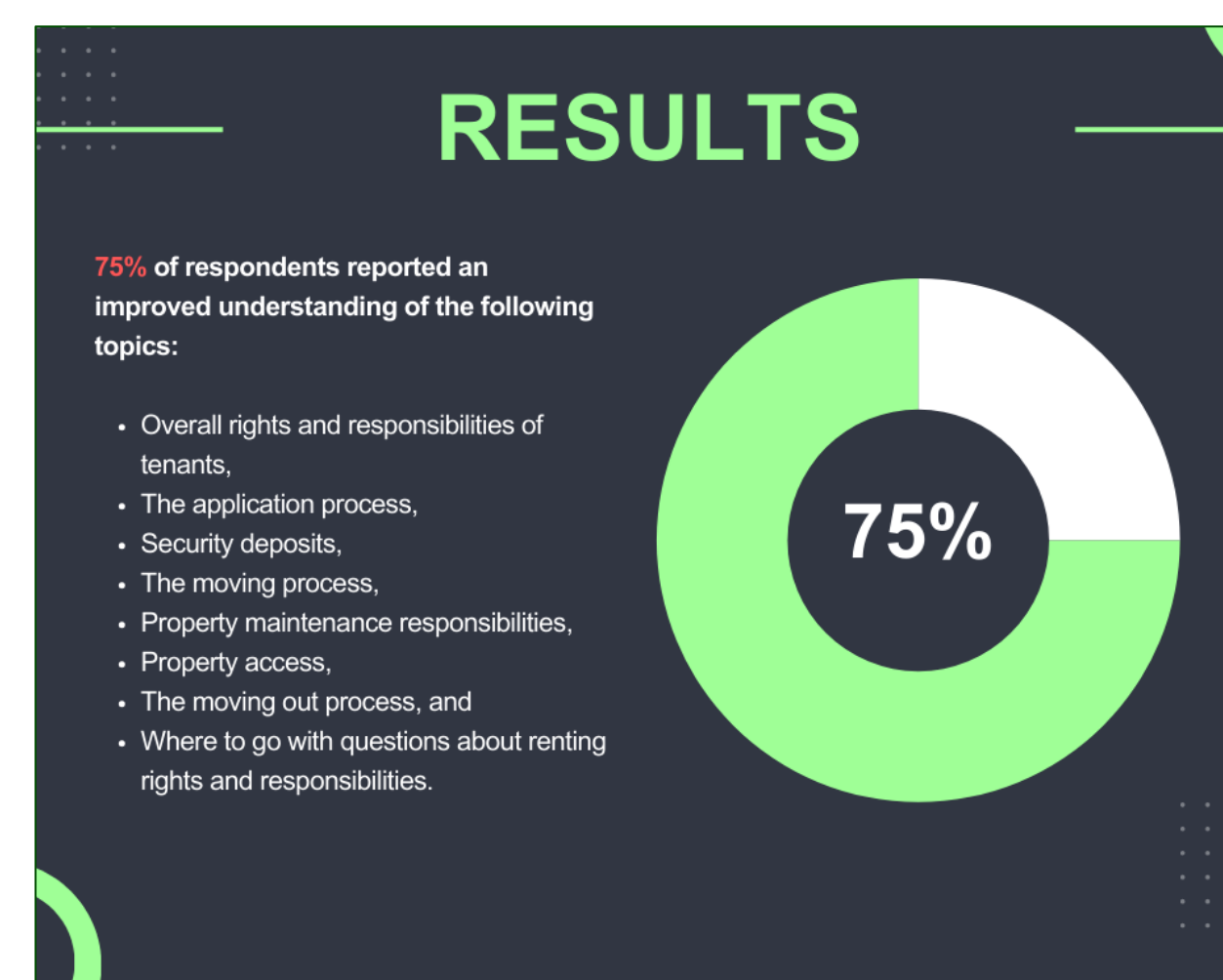
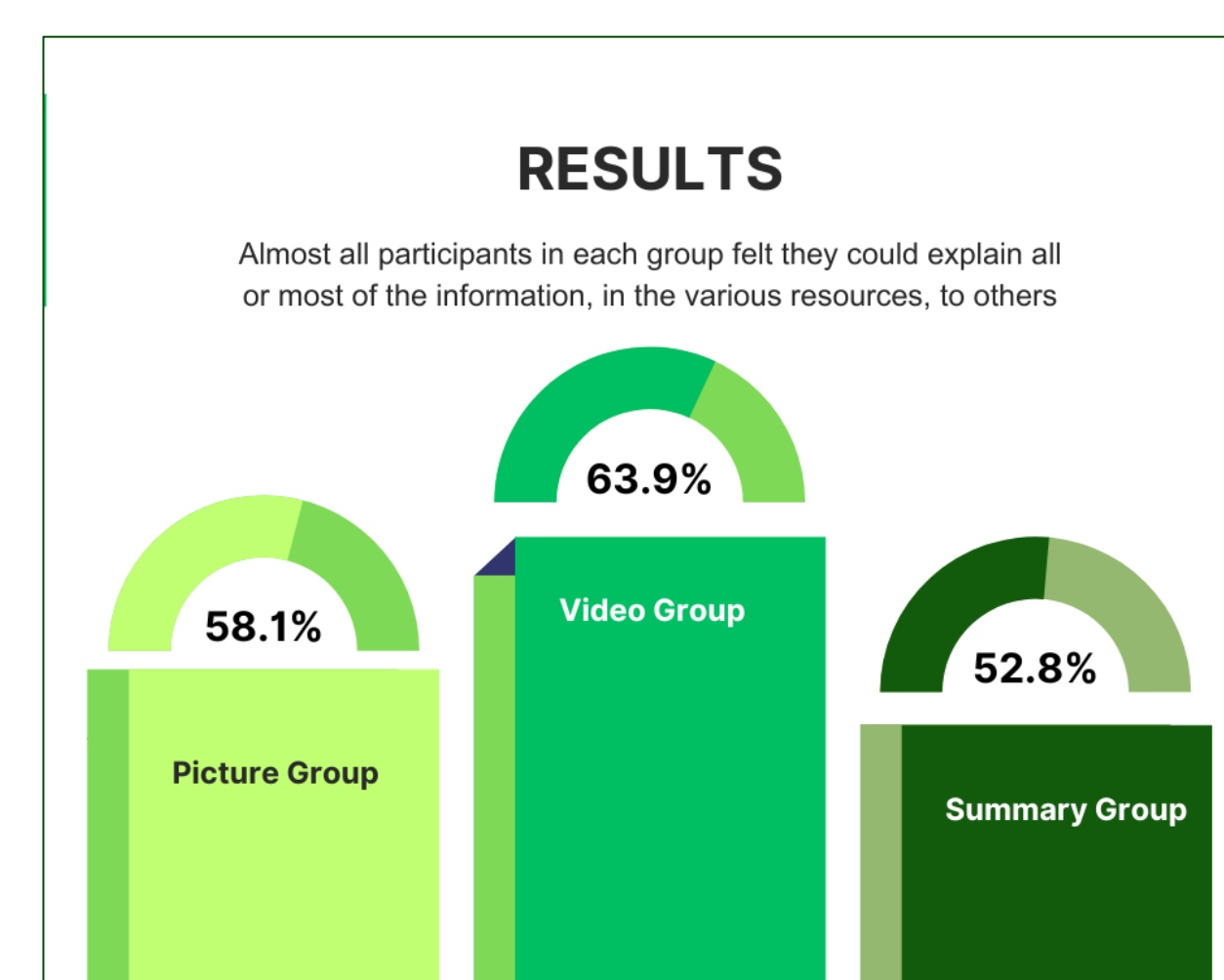


Figure 4: This figure shows the breakdown of participant's demographics further, including capacity with the English language, location of living, and University education levels.

RESULTS



There were no significant group differences in knowledge gain or self-reported gains in understanding about renting rights and responsibilities. No significant gains were found based on the format of the content. Together these findings suggest that the content of the resources mattered more than the format in which the content was communicated.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis found:

- The more that respondents reported understanding what the resource was saying, the more they reported learning.
- The more participants believed the information was true/accurate, the more they reported learning.
- The more respondents viewed the resource as helpful, the more they reported learning.
- The more respondents liked the resource, the more they reported learning.

Additionally, after reviewing the resources:

- There was a significant increase in pre-resource to post-resource test scores, which demonstrated an increased understanding of the material.
- There was significant improvement in self-reported understanding of renting rights and responsibilities in which the median score changed from "mostly understand" to "clearly understand".
- There were no significant group differences in knowledge gain or self-reported gains in understanding about renting rights and responsibilities.
- Together these findings suggest that the content of the resources mattered more than the format it was presented in.

REFLECTIONS FOR ACTION

The researchers have also compiled individual and collective reflections and hopes on how organizations will utilize the research – and welcome such ongoing feedback. The recommendations from the report are:

- Use **mixed** or multiple formats of materials.
- Create **shorter & long** versions of resources.
- Create resources in **multiple languages**.
- Make resources in **color** and with content depicted **pictorially** and **graphically**.
- Include **contact information** for ongoing learning.
- Do: **bigger font**, **bold** important words, use **plain** and **clear** language, use **relatable** examples, make words clear and **understandable** on multiple devices, use supplemental **videos**.

REFERENCE

CREATE Justice, Effectively Communicating Legal Information to Newcomers in Saskatchewan, (2023).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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