



Inclusive Communities for Older Immigrants (ICOI) Partnership

Developing multi-level, multi-component interventions to reduce social isolation and promote connectedness among older immigrants in Canada



Greetings

Dear ICOI team members:

Greetings as we enter the Winter season! We hope that this newsletter finds you well.

We are getting ready to hire RAs to code the qualitative data. This newsletter includes more information about the data analysis plan.

As in past ICOI newsletters, this issue introduces more ICOI team members. We hope you enjoy reading their bios.

This newsletter also includes updates about the Mid-Term Report to SSHRC (the funding agency) and the status of the participant observation activity.

We are grateful for all your contributions to the project and are pleased to continue moving the project forward with you. Please stay in touch.

Warmest regards,
Sepali Guruge, ICOI Project Director
Kaveenaa Chandrasekaran, ICOI Project Manager

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Introducing ICOI Team Members

Marichu Antonio, ICOI Community Partner (Calgary, Alberta)



Marichu Antonio is a pioneering leader, innovator, and risk-taker with over 47 years of experience in community development. Marichu is the Executive Director of Action Dignity

(previously Ethno-Cultural Council of Calgary or ECCC), a community-based organization that promotes full civic participation and integration of ethnocultural communities. She is a strong advocate of social justice, human rights, and equity for all citizens. Marichu's leadership has transformed Action Dignity into a strong organization that amplifies the collective voice of over 80 culturally diverse groups and organizations. Since moving to Canada 24 years ago, Marichu has been a trailblazer since her first job as a Community Development Coordinator at the Centre for Newcomers. Marichu is a proud recipient of the 2012 Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal and Avenue Magazine's A-List of Volunteers in 2009.

Daljit Kaur, ICOI Community Partner (Vancouver, British Columbia)



Daljit is the Better at Home program coordinator at Diversecity Community Resources Society. Daljit has been serving the senior community

with Diversecity for 10+ years. Daljit loves to see the direct impact her team makes on the lives of seniors every day. Helping seniors is a passion, and easing the livelihoods of those in need is a priority for Daljit and her team. Daljit has received many accolades for the positive effect she has had on the community.

Dr. Kateryna Metersky, ICOI Academic Partner (Toronto, Ontario)



Kateryna Metersky is an Assistant Professor at the Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing, Toronto Metropolitan University.

Kateryna continues her nursing practice in General Internal Medicine at Toronto Western Hospital. Her program of research focuses on health professions and nursing education, nursing and interprofessional practice, and persons with social, economic, and health challenges. This work is focused on the integration of research into pedagogy and practice. Kateryna also authors and publishes nursing poetry in academic journals to help students understand complex theoretical and conceptual content. She serves on the Editorial Board of the International Journal of Health Trends and Perspectives, and sits on the Toronto Metropolitan University's Research Ethics Board. She recently completed the Sigma Theta Tau International Academy on Global Advocacy.

Dr. Melissa Northwood, ICOI Academic Partner (Hamilton, Ontario)



Melissa Northwood is a Registered Nurse and Assistant Professor in the School of Nursing at McMaster University. Before joining McMaster, Melissa held a

Canadian Institutes of Health Research-funded health system impact post-doctoral fellowship with the Saint Elizabeth Health Research Centre and the University of Waterloo. Melissa's program of research focuses on system integration for older adults with clinical complexity. Informed by her clinical practice as a certified gerontological nurse in acute care, complex continuing care, and most recently, home and community care, Melissa aims to conduct highly embedded research with health- and social care partners, to change and benefit the quality of life and well-being of older adults, the culture of the practice environment, and the integration of the healthcare system.

Henry Parada, ICOI Advisory Council Member (Toronto, Ontario)



Henry Parada is an action-oriented researcher and academic who has worked as a child protection worker and sexual abuse specialist in Toronto

prior to his academic appointment at Toronto Metropolitan University. His research includes social development, children's and women's social welfare, and violence prevention projects

which have been funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Global Affairs Canada, Latin American and Caribbean Exchange Grant (LACREG), UNICEF-Santo Domingo, Italy International Cooperation, Ryerson International Initiative Funds, and Network of European Foundations. Henry's research program, focused on child protection, family violence, and children's rights, was awarded a 7-year SSHRC Partnership Grant.

Anna Victoria Wong, ICOI Community Partner (Toronto, Ontario)



Anna Victoria Wong is a journalist, a speech-language pathologist, and a community advocate. She is the Executive Director of Community Family Services of Ontario

(CFSO), providing East-Asian Ontarians with mental health, newcomer settlement, disabilities, and special needs services. CFSO serves socio-politically oppressed Hongkongers. Anna also started the disabilities and special needs services at CFSO, the first and only professional service for East-Asian Ontarians. Anna is the Chair of the Ontario Chinese Health Coalition, a Board Director of Family Services Ontario, and the Chair of Communications for the Scarborough-Ontario Health Team. Anna received the Communicative Access Award in 2013, the Communitas Award for Excellence in Community Service in 2010, and the Platinum Hermes Creative Awards - Special Event and Pro Bono categories in 2007.

Introducing the New Project Manager



Kaveenaa Chandrasekaran is a Registered Nurse with diverse experiences in various specialities, including acute care, emergency medicine, geriatrics, rehabilitation, and community health. Beyond her clinical responsibilities, Kaveenaa is committed to supporting nursing students, new graduates, and internationally trained nurses within a range of care settings.

In 2024, Kaveenaa earned her Master’s Degree in Nursing from Toronto Metropolitan University. Her thesis examined the health implications of social isolation and loneliness among older adults during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting a set of critical issues that have emerged in contemporary healthcare. Kaveenaa has been a research staff in research projects and initiatives focused on integrating Indigenous education into the undergraduate nursing curriculum and suicide prevention efforts within the Sri Lankan Tamil community, addressing critical mental health challenges and promoting awareness and support.

ICOI Project Timeline Update

The ICOI Project has been granted a one-year extension because of the delays encountered during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the completion of the research activities to achieve the expected outcomes. Please see the revised timeline below and read through the newsletter for ICOI project activity updates.

Timeline	Year 1				Year 2				Year 3				Year 4				Year 5				Year 6				Year 7				Year 8							
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4				
Activities																																				
1	A1. Mixed method lit review	→																																		
	Ethics Approval	→																																		
	A2. Recruitment and data coll.	→																																		
	A3. Geospatial Analysis	→																																		
	A4. Analysis of CLSA data	→																																		
2	A5. Integrate findings	→																																		
	A1. Mixed method lit review	→																																		
	A2. Prep of questionnaire	→																																		
	Ethics Approval	→																																		
	A3. Collect intervention data	→																																		
3	Data analysis	→																																		
	A1. Co-design interventions	→																																		
4	A2. Capacity build implem.	→																																		
	Ethics Approval	→																																		
4	Recruitment	→																																		
	A1. Implement intervention	→																																		
	A2. Evaluation & analysis	→																																		
Kmb activities	→																																			

ICOI Project Phases and Progress to Date

The 4 phases aim to: 1) establish the social, economic, and political factors that are most strongly associated with social isolation/connectedness among older immigrants; 2) identify and assess interventions to foster social connectedness; 3) co-design multi-level, multi-component interventions to promote social connectedness among older adults and build community capacity via community partnerships; and 4) evaluate the interventions' feasibility, fidelity of implementation, and effectiveness.

Phase 1 involved four sets of activities: First we conducted an extensive literature review which helped to identify 35 risk factors of social isolation among older immigrants. Building on this work, next we conducted a quantitative survey to examine the relevance of these factors to older immigrants in the Canadian context. Following this, we conducted individual semi-structured interviews with older immigrants to gather more nuanced qualitative data about the factors. All the interviews have been translated into English and transcribed. We will be hiring and training research assistants to code the interview data using Nvivo software. Then, we will work with our team to conduct participant observation data collection.

In March 2024, we applied and received approval from Toronto Metropolitan University's research ethics board committee to conduct participant observation activities. Since then, we have received research ethics board approval at 10 other institutions for this activity. At this time, we are waiting for research ethics board approval from 2 other universities. Once approval is received from all universities, we will be able to move forward with the participant observation activities. Please look out for upcoming communications from your Provincial Leads/Co-Leads to plan this data collection phase.



Partnership Grant Mid-Term Report and Feedback

The partnership grant mid-term report was submitted to SSHRC (the funding agency) on October 30, 2023. This report captured an overview of accomplishments up to that point for the Midterm Review Committee to assess the project progress. The report also included a plan of activities for the remainder of the project. We received feedback from the review committee in January 2024. The revised mid-term report was submitted in February 2024 with additional information.

The ICOI project received funding in the middle of the pandemic and some of the initial project activities were delayed because of the pandemic-related social distancing, etc. The midterm review committee has given us a one-year extension to complete the project.

The midterm review committee recognized the success of the training and mentoring activities of the ICOI project. To date, we have engaged 74 trainees through workshops, summits, co-authorship opportunities, and research activities. Overall, we engaged with 24 undergraduate students, 22 master's students, 11 doctorate students, 1 postdoctoral student, and 16 others in related fields, such as, technicians and professional research associates.

Team Member Highlights

We are happy to share an article published by CTV news, featuring ICOI partner Liza Chan. Liza shared insights into the experiences of loneliness felt by older immigrants from China and Hong Kong. Liza is the executive director of the Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens Association, whose mission is to promote Chinese older adults' wellbeing and their integration into Canadian society. Liza highlighted some of the services offered by the Association to promote social inclusion. Volunteers' house visits and transportation to activities help reduce dependence on children and address issues with mobility. Liza Chan is a member of ICOI's executive council, and we are very grateful for her hard work, and congratulate her on her recent recognition in the news.

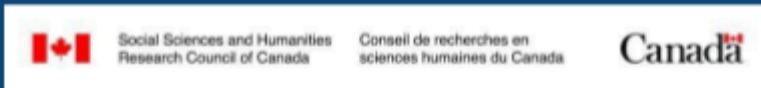
The full CTV news article can be found here:

<https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/immigrant-seniors-lonelier-than-those-born-in-canada-but-research-lacking-satcan-1.6486040>.



Inside the Next Issue

The next ICOI newsletter will introduce more ICOI team members and provide further project activity updates.



The Inclusive Communities for Older Immigrants
is a 8-year Partnership.

Please share this newsletter with
your networks

Management/Editorial Team

Sepali Guruge, Project Director

Kaveenaa Chandrasekaran, Project Manager