



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 another summer season!

The Inclusive Communities for Older Immigrants (ICOI) project has been keeping busy with a variety of efforts as detailed below. We are so pleased to share that we are making great progress on the first data collection activity with older immigrants across the nine participating Canadian cities. We also had the good fortune of meeting many team members at the first in-person ICOI Summit held in Calgary this past April. Please read through the newsletter to learn more!

Again, we are very grateful for everyone’s participation and contribution to ICOI, and are looking forward to making significant progress on this project in the coming months.

Warmest regards,
Sepali Guruge, ICOI Project Director
Kerith Paul, ICOI Project Manager

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Greetings	1
Advisory Council	1
ICOI Summit 2023	2
ICOI Activity Updates	2-3
Full List of ICOI Team	4
Next Issue	5

Thank you to the ICOI Advisory Council



The ICOI Advisory Council consists of local and international members who bring knowledge of best practices in aging and immigration from age-friendly cities in Canada and beyond, with different sets of social, economic, and political contexts and factors, and different immigrant communities.

The ICOI Advisory Council meets every 6 months to discuss ICOI project progress, and their advice has been critical in developing guiding principles, informing decisions, and supporting the overall project. A big thank you to all members for your wonderful contributions!

ICOI Summit 2023



ICOI's Year 3 Biennial Project Summit was held in-person at the University of Calgary, Alberta from April 4-6. 32 ICOI team members attended in person, while over 50 others joined virtually via Zoom. We are grateful for the opportunity to connect with and spend productive time together with you.

Some of the key outcomes included: group work and team member input on the qualitative data collection interview guide, as well as what observations could look like in each city and each province; re-commitments from team members towards knowledge mobilization outputs; hearing directly from Community Partners about what they are experiencing in the field with older immigrants; and spending time together as a team – meeting one another and growing a sense of purpose together.

ICOI Activity Updates

Fall 2022 – Summer 2023 Data Collection

The **Older Immigrant Survey** activity (quantitative data collection) was completed this past fall/winter across the 9 participating cities (Montreal, Gatineau, Toronto, Hamilton, London, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver, and Victoria). The creation of the survey was led by the Souraya Sidani (Data, Design & Evaluation Committee), Sepali Guruge (Project Director), and the Research Stream Leads: Jill Hanley, Sandeep Agrawal, Zhixi Zhuang, and John Shields. The survey includes measures of social isolation/connectedness and the factors affecting social isolation/connectedness. It was available in 5 languages: Arabic, Mandarin, Punjabi, French and English. Provincial coordinators and research assistants were hired to support City Leads and Co-Leads in completing this work. Over 650 older immigrants (60+) participated, and results are currently being analysed.

The **Older Immigrant Interviews** (qualitative data collection) will begin this summer once approval from the participating university's research ethics boards have been received. Aspects of the Interview Guide were developed with the full team at the ICOI Summit, and finalized by Sepali Guruge (Project Director) and Oona St-Amant (Ontario Provincial Lead and critical ethnography lead for the project). The results of these interviews, upcoming observation, along with the survey results and CLSA data analysis, will inform future project phases.

ICOI Activity Updates (cont.)

CLSA Data Analyses Activity

As of September 2022, the CLSA team, led by Souraya Sidani (Toronto Metropolitan University) and Denise Cloutier (University of Victoria), has completed analysis of the baseline and follow up 1 data obtained in the **Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging** (CLSA). The data were collected from approximately 7,600 older (55+) immigrants residing in rural and urban regions within seven Canadian provinces. We are in the process of conducting analyses on follow up 2 (6 years following baseline) data. The team examined the influence of different personal, health, social, environmental and immigration-related factors on social isolation, which was represented in levels of loneliness and participation in social and community activities. Two factors consistently influenced levels of loneliness and participation in activities; these were depression and perceived life satisfaction. The results of this project will indicate which of these factors are most influential; they will complement the findings of the Older Immigrant Survey in pinpointing the most important factors for intervention.

Community Partner Survey Report

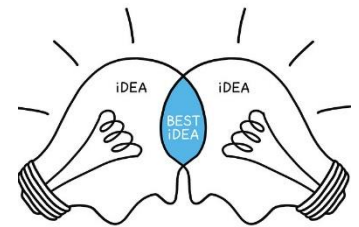


Last spring, ICOI published a study focused on understanding service providers' views on the risk factors for social isolation among older immigrants, including in the East Asian, South Asian, and Middle-Eastern communities – the fast-growing immigrant communities in Canada. Service providers employed at the 38 community agencies or organizations that are ICOI partners were asked to complete an online survey. The survey results indicated that challenges in accessing health, social, and settlement services

were considered as very or extremely important to address by 100% of providers working with different older immigrant communities. The survey was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, a time of scarcity in healthcare resources and/or increased demand for pandemic-related services. It corroborated other pre-pandemic studies, which indicated the need for additional healthcare services for older immigrant adults.

2022 Webinar Series

Following the success of the Winter/Spring webinar series, the ICOI's **Education & Training Committee**, led by Sandeep Agrawal (University of Alberta), organized a



Fall Webinar Series that ran every 2 weeks from September to December 2022. These sessions focused on the Research Stream themes (Social, Economic, Political, and Geo-Spatial Inclusion) and cover a range of topics. This series not only supported the sharing of information across the ICOI team and beyond, but also contributed towards our project knowledge mobilization targets.

2022-2023 Project Reporting

ICOI's **Year 3 Annual Contribution Summary** was submitted to SSHRC on April 30, 2023, leveraging over 23.7% over years (target is 15% up to this point). This report captures all ICOI partners' contributions (cash and in-kind).

The SSHRC Midterm Report is due this coming October where we will report on all aspects of the project.

Full List of ICOI Partners (Updated in June)

Rashed Afif, Wesley Urban Ministries
 Sandeep Agrawal, University of Alberta
 Dima Amad, Arab Community Centre of Toronto
 Eva Soom Ammann, University of Bern
 Marichu Antonio, Action Dignity
 Daisy Au, MOSAIC
 Andrea Austen, Senior Services, City of Toronto
 Satwinder Bains, University of the Fraser Valley
 Mohammed Baobaid, Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support & Integration
 Bettyna Bélizaire, Accompagnement des femmes immigrants de l'Outaouais
 Sonia Ben Soltane, University of Ottawa
 Helene Berman, Western University
 Huda Bukhari, Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture
 Corina Carvallo, Skills for Change of Metro Toronto
 Eralba Cela, Università Politecnica delle Marche
 Liza Chan, Calgary Chinese Elderly Citizens' Association
 Michèle Charpentier, Université du Québec à Montréal
 Shirley Chau, UBC
 Queenie Choo, S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
 Fred Chou, University of Victoria
 Shambhu Chowdhury, Mill Woods Seniors Association
 Ruxandra Oana Ciobanu, Université de Geneve
 Denise Cloutier, University of Victoria
 Michelle Dellamora, Age Friendly Network London
 Linda Ensley, Edmonton Seniors Centre
 Rebecca Ferguson, Affiliation of Multicultural Societies & Service Agencies of BC
 Ilyan Ferrer, Carleton University
 Lee Fion, ASSIST Community Services Centre
 Tineke Fokkema, Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute
 Christine Garinger, Centre for Research on Health Equity and Social Inclusion
 Amanda Grenier, University of Toronto
 Jo Griffiths, Les Petits Frères
 Balbir Gurm, Kwantlen Polytechnic University
 Sepali Guruge, Toronto Metropolitan University
 Jill Hanley, McGill University
 Samya Hasan, Council of Agencies Serving South Asians
 Nadia Hébert, Action Centre Ville
 Naceur Ibtissem, Accueil-Parrainage Outaouais
 Krista James, Canadian Centre for Elder Law
 Maribel Javier, Calgary Community Member
 Sian Jones, Age Friendly Calgary
 Alexis Kampman, Age Friendly Network London, City of London
 Parvathy Kanthasamy, Vasantham (Tamil Wellness Centre)

Daniel Lai, Hong Kong Baptist University
 Kahir Lalji, United Way of Lower Mainland
 Marie-Emmanuelle Laquerre, Université du Québec à Montréal
 Winnie Lee, Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria
 Haixia Liu, Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society
 Vivien Lok, Immigrant Services Calgary
 Guida Man, York University
 Naj Mankal, Islamic Centre of Southwest Ontario
 Nigel Mantou Lou, University of Victoria
 Salima Massoui, Université du Québec à Montréal
 Sheri McLeod, NDG Senior Citizens' Council
 Kateryna Metersky, Toronto Metropolitan University
 Raktim Mitra, Toronto Metropolitan University
 Melissa Northwood, McMaster University
 Henry Parada, Toronto Metropolitan University
 Victor Perez-Amada, Toronto Metropolitan University
 Anne Pizzacalla, Hamilton Council of Aging
 Annie Pontbriand, Institut Universitaire SHERPA
 Jordana Salma, University of Alberta
 Jenn Sandu, London Cross Cultural Learner Centre
 Bharati Sethi, Trent University
 Kathy Sherrell, Immigrant Services Society of BC
 John Shields, Toronto Metropolitan University
 Souraya Sidani, Toronto Metropolitan University
 Maryse Soulières, University of Montreal
 Andrew Ssawe, South Riverdale Community Health Centre
 Oona St-Amant, Toronto Metropolitan University
 Fiona Stevenson, DIVERSEcity
 Kelly Thompson, St-Antoine 50+ Community Centre
 Hongmei Tong, MacEwan University
 Josephine Tsang, Calgary Chinese Community Service Association
 Liz Vander Horst, London InterCommunity Health Centre
 Olive Wahoush, McMaster University
 Christine Walsh, University of Calgary
 Margaret Walton-Roberts, Wilfrid Laurier University
 Lu Wang, Toronto Metropolitan University
 Ajwang' Warria, University of Calgary
 Anna Wong, Community Family Services of Ontario
 Bonnie Wong, Hong Fook Mental Health Association
 Omar Yaqub, Islamic Family & Social Services Association
 Jie Zhang, University of Victoria
 Zhixi Zhuang, Toronto Metropolitan University

Inside the Next Issue

The next ICOI newsletter will introduce more ICOI team members, share news about the Older Immigrant Survey results, and provide further project activity updates.



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