



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:

Happy New Year to you! We hope that you had a restful holiday season. We also hope that this newsletter finds you healthy and well.

In spite of the many challenges the pandemic continues to present, we are moving forward with our first round of data collection with older immigrants. More information about the plans are included in this newsletter.

Jordana Salma is stepping down from her role as the Alberta Co-Lead. We wish Jordana all the best in her new roles and opportunities. We would like to welcome Hongmei Tong as the newly-appointed Alberta Co-Lead.

As in past ICOI newsletters, we will introduce more ICOI team members in this issue. We hope you will enjoy reading their bios. The full and updated list of ICOI team members is also included in this newsletter.

An update about the Community Partner Survey, the Older Immigrant Survey, and the Training Plan is also included.

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

Warmest regards,

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

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Introducing More ICOI Partners

Shirley Chau, University of British Columbia



Shirley Chau is an Associate Professor in the School of Social Work Faculty of Health & Social Development, at UBC Okanagan Campus. She holds a BA Psychology (Hons.) from Simon Fraser University, a BSW degree from UBC Vancouver, and an MSW and a PhD from the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work at the University of Toronto. Previous to her academic appointment at UBC Okanagan, Shirley was a clinical social worker specializing in crisis intervention work for a national service provider for large corporations.

Michelle Dellamora, Age-Friendly London Network



Michelle Dellamora is a Manager, Policy & Strategic Issues at Neighbourhood, Children, and Fire Services with the City of London. She oversees London's Age Friendly initiative, and has supported its network for the past seven years. She enjoys working with its many volunteers and member organizations. Michelle holds a Master's degree in Health Sciences from Western University.

Sian Jones, City of Calgary



Sian Jones is an Issue Strategist supporting Age-Friendly Calgary. She works with community service providers, health care providers, Calgary citizens, and other stakeholders to implement the Seniors Age-Friendly Strategy. Prior to joining as an Issue Strategist, she worked as a Research Social Planner with the City of Calgary to support the research and evaluation needs of Calgary Neighbourhoods. Sian previously worked in social research and evaluation in the UK and Canada for 11 years focusing on adult social care, youth justice, and international security issues. She holds Masters degrees from the University of Wales and the University of Calgary.

Yeonjung Lee, University of Calgary



Yeonjung Lee is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary. Yeonjung's research focuses on how to improve the quality of life for older adults, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Yeonjung's most recent research projects explore aging in place and the consequences of caregiving within individual cities and countries, as well as across cities and countries.

Salima Massoui, Université du Québec à Montréal



Salima Massoui is an Associate Professor at the School of Social Work at University of Quebec in Montreal. Salima's fields of interest relate to immigration, interethnic relations, gender relations, as well as domestic violence and homicide in Canada and North Africa. More recently, Salima has broadened her research to the migratory journeys of refugees and asylum seekers newly settled in Quebec, and more particularly, to their journey of access to health care and social services. Salima is a member of several university research groups such as Trajetvi, a project focusing on domestic violence in Montreal, Quebec City, and Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, and the Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative with Vulnerable Populations at Western University and the University of Guelph.

Salima Massoui est professeure associée à l'École de travail social de l'Université du Québec à Montréal. Ses champs d'intérêt se rapportent à l'immigration, aux relations interethniques, aux rapports de genre, de même qu'à la violence et à l'homicide conjugaux au Québec comme en Afrique du Nord. Plus récemment, elle a élargi ses recherches aux parcours migratoires des personnes réfugiées et demandeuses d'asile nouvellement installées au Québec, et plus particulièrement à leur parcours d'accès aux soins de santé et de services sociaux. Salima est enfin membre de plusieurs groupes de recherche universitaire tels que Trajetvi, un projet axé sur la violence domestique à Montréal, Québec et Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, et la Canadian Domestic Homicide Prevention Initiative with Vulnerable Populations, à l'Université Western et à l'Université de Guelph.

Sheri McLeod, NDG Senior Citizens' Council, Montreal



Sheri McLeod is the Executive Director of the NDG Senior Citizens' Council, located in the west-end of Montreal. Having worked in various capacities in the community sector as both a professional and a volunteer, Sheri has extensive experience in policy analysis, program development, and change management as well as strategic planning in the not-for-profit sector. With a degree in social work from McGill University, Sheri aims to influence policy at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels as well as within the local communities.

Fiona Stevenson, DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society, Surrey



Fiona Stevenson is the Senior Manager of Community Development at DIVERSEcity, a settlement agency in Surrey, British Columbia. She leads a highly skilled and passionate team in building holistic, client-centred supports to empower immigrants, using anti-oppression, anti-racism and decolonizing frameworks. Coming from an adult education background, Fiona is skilled in creative and empowerment-based program design and development and has applied these approaches to develop a set of specialized programs for immigrant and refugee seniors. As an immigrant herself, Fiona is committed to finding ways to build equitable settlement pathways, and create positive community change.

ICOI Activity Updates

Introducing the new Geo-Spatial Inclusion Research Stream

In order to address the geographical and spatial aspects of older immigrants' social isolation and social connectedness experiences, a fourth Research Stream has been created. This new Research Stream is called the **Geo-Spatial Inclusion Research Stream, which is led by Zhixi Zhuang**, who has done extensive research in this area. This Research Stream will focus on the space and place context, housing, transportation, and accessibility, among other factors, and ensure that these key factors are considered in all aspects of the ICOI project. If you are interested in joining this Research Stream, please email Zhixi at zczhuang@ryerson.ca or Kerith Paul at kerith.paul@ryerson.ca.

Research Streams

Zhixi Zhuang, Jill Hanley, Sandeep Agrawal, and John Shields (Research Streams Leads), Souraya Sidani (Data, Design & Evaluation Committee Lead), and Sepali Guruge, met several times over the summer months, and worked with their teams to analyze the results from the English and French qualitative and quantitative literature reviews.

Based on this work, they created a list of key factors that have an impact on social isolation of older immigrants within their own respective Research Stream domains: Geo-Spatial, Social, Economic, and Political Inclusion. These key factors, along with the key factors identified from the literature reviews, were then organized into three levels: the individual level (micro), the community level (meso), and the societal level (macro). The final list of key factors and related measures informed the Community Partner Survey (see page 6) as well as the Older Immigrant Survey (also see page 6).

ICOI Training Plan Update

Based on the results of the Education & Training Survey that was completed by the ICOI team members, Sandeep Agrawal (Education & Training Support Committee Lead) is currently organizing the ICOI Training Plan for the upcoming year which will include a series of training sessions that are scheduled to begin on Jan. 28.

These bi-weekly training sessions will be open to all ICOI partners, community partner staff, current and incoming research staff, as well as undergraduate and graduate students working with the ICOI academic and community partners. The sessions will be facilitated by various ICOI team members, recorded over Zoom, and made available on the ICOI website.

Session topics include mixed methods, consent, law, and equality rights, ethical practices in research, engaging older immigrants in data collection, theoretical approaches, analyses of large datasets, collaboration models, critical ethnography, and ICOI Research Stream topics.

If you are interested in offering a training session on a topic of relevance to the ICOI team, please contact Sandeep at sagrawal@ualberta.ca.

Data, Design & Evaluation Committee Work

The Data, Design & Evaluation Committee formed sub-committees to conduct literature reviews on existing data collection methods, recruitment strategies, and translation/interpretation practices to inform the Older Immigrant Survey protocol development and research design. Their Committee work will continue over the coming months.

Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging (CLSA) Activity

A previous analysis of CLSA data conducted by Sepali Guruge and Souraya Sidani revealed that older immigrants in Canada tend to have smaller social networks compared to Canadian-born older adults, make less frequent trips for social activities, and report less emotional and information support, and positive social interactions.

The analyses of subsequent waves of CLSA data will help us examine changes in social networks and social participation as older immigrants age (from baseline to 3-year follow-up). We will use hierarchical linear models to examine interindividual differences in intra-individual changes, and identify demographic and socio-economic factors that contribute to changes in social network, participation, and support.

ICOI Community Partner Survey

The overall goals of the ICOI project are to identify factors that contribute to social isolation among older immigrants, and subsequently, to design culturally and linguistically appropriate interventions to address social isolation and to improve social connectedness.

The proposed Community Partner Survey aims to elicit the ICOI community partners' perceptions of the key factors that contribute to social isolation; specifically, they will be asked to rate these key factors so that we can identify those that should be given priority for intervention.

Thank you to Souraya Sidani, the literature review teams, and the Research Streams Leads and teams for your hard work to create this survey. The Community Partner Survey will be shared with our over 40 community partner agencies in January, 2022.

Older Immigrant Survey

We are pleased to share that the research ethics board (REB) application for the project's first round of data collection was submitted on Friday, December 3, 2021. This application was based on the work conducted by the literature reviews teams, Research Streams, and the Data, Design & Evaluation Committee.

This round of data collection involves a quantitative survey of up to 900 Arabic-, Mandarin, and Punjabi-speaking older immigrants from across the 9 city sites. The survey will be available in online and paper formats, and can be self-administered or with support from a research assistant over the phone, Zoom, or in-person.

Approval from community partner agencies and REBs from all universities will have to be obtained before we can move forward with data collection.

Data collection is tentatively scheduled to begin in March/April 2022.

Provincial coordinators and research assistants will be hired in all 9 city sites soon to support this activity.

Please look out for upcoming communications from your Provincial Leads/Co-Leads in order to plan for this data collection phase.

ICOI Vaccination Policy

To protect the health and safety of older immigrants and to comply with the recommendations of public health authorities and requirements of the provincial government, many post-secondary institutions and their research ethics boards (REBs), require employees to be vaccinated against COVID-19 and submit proof of vaccination.

We understand that this policy is not consistent across all universities or community agencies in Canada, however, we are following the vaccination expectations set forth by Ryerson University (renaming in progress), which is **the lead institution for the ICOI Project, that all research staff be fully vaccinated and provide proof of vaccination.** This expectation was discussed and approved by the ICOI Executive Committee on Nov. 23, 2021.

Our primary concern is to protect the health and safety of both our staff and our study participants (older immigrants). As you are aware, older adults may have complex health issues, and are at a higher risk of death from Covid-19.

There are groups of older immigrants who are not vaccinated (due to misinformation, personal choice, etc.). Not including them in the study will further marginalize an already disadvantaged population. As such, pending research ethics board approval across all sites, proof of vaccination will not be a requirement for older immigrants to participate in the study.

We have completed the Safe Human Participant form as part of Ryerson University's REB application submission, which outlines our commitment to mitigating the risk of spreading Covid-19.

We will also continue to monitor the pandemic situation across all 9 city sites for any changes to the local public health guidelines. If necessary, we may delay in-person data collection meetings between research staff and study participants to the spring when meetings can be held outside.

Thank you to all ICOI team members for your support and cooperation in ensuring the health and safety of our study participants.



Full List of ICOI Partners (Updated)

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
 *Brampton Multicultural Community Centre
 Huda Bukhari, Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture
 Lori Cameron, Affiliation of Multicultural Societies & Service Agencies of BC
 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.
 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
 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
 Balbir Gurm, Kwantlen Polytechnic University
 Sepali Guruge, Ryerson 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
 Parvathy Kanthasamy, Vasantham (Tamil Wellness Centre)
 Karen Kobayashi, University of Victoria
 Jean Marc Laforest, Table de concertation des aînés de l'île de Montréal

Daniel Lai, Hong Kong Baptist University
 Kahir Lalji, United Way of Lower Mainland
 Marie-Emmanuelle Laquerre, Université du Québec à Montréal
 Yeonjung Lee, University of Calgary
 Winnie Lee, Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria
 Vivien Lok, Immigrant Services Calgary
 Guida Man, York University
 Naj Mankal, Islamic Centre of Southwest Ontario
 Maureen Markle-Reid, McMaster University
 Salima Massoui, Université du Québec à Montréal
 Sheri McLeod, NDG Senior Citizens' Council
 Raktim Mitra, Ryerson University
 Melissa Northwood, McMaster University
 Henry Parada, Ryerson University
 Anne Pizzacalla, Hamilton Council of Aging
 Annie Pontbriand, Institut Universitaire SHERPA
 Jordana Salma, University of Alberta
 Jenn Sandu, London Cross Cultural Learner Centre
 Caroline Sauriol, Les Petits Frères
 Bharati Sethi, Western University
 Kathy Sherrell, Immigrant Services Society of BC
 John Shields, Ryerson University
 Souraya Sidani, Ryerson University
 Maryse Soulières, University of Montreal
 Andrew Ssawe, South Riverdale Community Health Centre
 Oona St-Amant, Ryerson University
 Fiona Stevenson, DIVERSEcity
 Kelly Thompson, St-Antoine 50+ Community Centre
 Hongmei Tong, MacEwan University
 Josephine Tsang, Calgary Chinese Community Service Association
 Wendy Keiller, City of Edmonton
 Francesca Valenti, Central Amal pour Femmes
 Christine Walsh, University of Calgary
 Margaret Walton-Roberts, Wilfrid Laurier University
 Lu Wang, Ryerson University
 Anna Wong, Community Family Services of Ontario
 Bonnie Wong, Hong Fook Mental Health Association
 Omar Yaqub, Islamic Family & Social Services Association
 Zhixi Zhuang, Ryerson University

*Representative to be finalized

Inside the Next Issue

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



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Research Council of Canada

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sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

The Inclusive Communities for Older Immigrants
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Please share this newsletter with
your networks

Please email kerith.paul@ryerson.ca to
offer ideas or suggestions for this
newsletter.

Management/Editorial Team

Sepali Guruge, Project Director

Kerith Paul, Project Manager