



# 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:

We hope your spring term is off to a great start!

This newsletter provides updates on the ICOI team's progress with Phase 2 data collection.

We are pleased to welcome new team members to the ICOI project. As in previous newsletters, this issue features bios of some of our team members. We hope you enjoy learning more about them.

This issue also captures a few of our team members' highlights.

We are grateful for your ongoing support and look forward to advancing the ICOI project together!

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

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# Introducing ICOI Team Members

## Bouchra Taïbi, ICOI Academic Partner, QC Team



Bouchara Taïbi is a social worker and professor at Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières. Her research focuses on the realities and needs of individuals aging in migratory contexts. Central to her work are questions related to where older adults wish to live and age, and the nature of their intercultural, intergenerational, or transnational connections. She is interested in the dynamics these relationships generate, the social configurations they produce, and how they shape experiences of ageing and the broader realities that surround them. Bouchara also explores how migration narratives can be used and their clinical potential in intervention and research. Her work is grounded in a commitment to decolonising knowledge and practice. To that end, she prioritises centring the voices and perspectives of those directly concerned, in all her approaches.

## Cristina Catallo, ICOI Academic Partner, ON Team



Cristina Catallo is a Registered Nurse and an Associate Professor in the Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing at Toronto Metropolitan University. Her program of research focuses on evidence dissemination and use through technology. Cristina's research has examined how healthcare organizations use social media to support patient uptake of evidence and how vulnerable populations use technology and social media to support their healthcare decisions. Within this broader program of research she has investigated various issues that cross into: a) health informatics such as virtual care, immersive virtual reality, social media; and b) support various populations such as refugee and immigrant older adults, women exposed to violence, health policymakers, and healthcare decision makers.

## Hasina Amanzai, ICOI Academic Partner, ON Team



Dr. Hasina Amanzai is a nurse practitioner with extensive experience in emergency medicine and community medicine. She completed her PhD in Urban Health at the Daphne Cockwell School of Nursing at Toronto Metropolitan University in 2024. Her dissertation focused on exploring the acceptability of pedometer-based walking exercise among South Asian women experiencing menopause. Her program of research focuses on developing culturally acceptable health care interventions. As a nurse practitioner in both community and hospital settings, Hasina focuses on health promotion, disease prevention, and treatment, from a diverse and inclusive lens.

# ICOI Activities: Progress to Date

## Phase 2 Data Collection

We are pleased to share that by the end of April 2025, we received Research Ethics Board (REB) approval from all our academic partner institutions. This marked a major milestone for the project and allowed us to move forward with Phase 2 data collection.

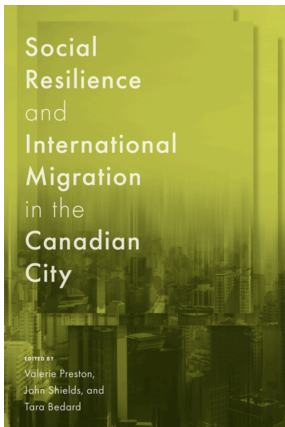
Following ethics approval, we began training our team of research assistants (via Zoom). Each city hired two to three research assistants per language group. Professors Sepali Guruge and Souraya Sidani continue to meet with the research assistants bi-weekly to provide ongoing guidance and support throughout the data collection process.

At this time, data collection is underway. We anticipate completing this phase by the end of June 2025. Once data collection is complete, we plan to clean and prepare the data in July, with the goal of beginning data analysis by early August.

We are grateful for the dedication of our team of research assistants and the continued support from our academic and community partners as we move closer to generating meaningful insights that will inform future work with older immigrant communities.



## Team Member Highlights



John Shields is pleased to announce the publication of his new book *Social Resilience and International Migration in the Canadian City* (co-edited with Valerie Preston and Tara Bedard, McGill-Queen's University Press). This timely volume examines how policies, institutions, and places influence the lives of immigrants and temporary migrants to Canada and how, in turn, those newcomers transform the cities in which they live. The book explores disparities in outcomes for migrants and proposes strategies to enhance their participation in cities of all sizes. Focused on Ontario and Quebec, chapters pinpoint factors that affect the settlement and integration of immigrants, as well as growing numbers of international students, foreign workers, and refugee claimants. Contributors illustrate how federal, provincial, and municipal policies and diverse institutions – from grassroots churches to settlement agencies – can influence migrants' capacity to navigate and leverage the resources required to overcome integration challenges. The book's

social resilience framework attends to the social supports that empower migrants to take collective action for their future. As migrants interact with a broad range of institutions, those institutions are transformed and become more resilient themselves. The volume is available in both print and open access format.

The Open Access Link can be found at: <https://hdl.handle.net/1974/34569>



As the Provincial Coordinator for Alberta, Prince played a key role in developing a scholarly manuscript titled "It's all About the Connection": Digital and Physical Spaces for Mandarin and Punjabi-speaking Older Immigrants in Calgary", now in press with the *Journal of Aging and Social Policy*. The paper explores how older immigrants mitigate isolation through adaptive strategies in virtual and real-world settings. In June, Prince presented this research at the British Society of Gerontology Conference, where he also shared findings from his doctoral work on older African refugees in Calgary, emphasising culturally grounded approaches to integration and care. He also led two graduate workshops at the University of Southampton, on Ubuntu philosophy in older African refugees' migration journeys and practical strategies for post-graduation career development.

The link for the manuscript is below:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/08959420.2025.2568447>

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*Inside the Next Issue*

*The upcoming ICOI newsletter will share the latest updates on Phase 2 data collection and analysis.*



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sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

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