



Project Team

Research Working Group

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The Project: Workplace Wellness for Immigrant Women

An applied research project funded by the Alberta Government, *Workplace Wellness for Immigrant Women* will explore occupational health and safety (OHS) concerns for immigrant women through the intersectional lens of gender, language, and migration.

Over the last 50 years there has been a shift in how workplace safety and rights are conceived and practiced. This shift sees a move away from employers being fully responsible for ensuring safe workplaces toward a focus on a worker's individual accountability for their safety while ensuring their rights are met. Research shows that in practice, this responsibility falls more heavily on workers and due to intersecting factors related to language, migration, and over representation in precarious employment, immigrant women workers are particularly at risk of experiencing OHS violations in the workplace.

In particular, this project seeks to more fully understand psycho-social hazards in the workplace such as harassment, bullying, and toxic environments on immigrant women workers' wellbeing and health.

Our research plan will contribute to a fuller, evidence-based understanding of psychosocial hazards for English language learning (ELL) women in the workplace, their experience of these hazards, and how to prevent them. Further, by arriving at a greater understanding of the intersection of systemic and skill-based factors that contribute to, or challenge, workplace wellness, this work will help enhance professional and employer practices.

Our Partners

For over a decade project partner **Talent Pool** has built a trusted reputation among immigrant populations, employers, and community stakeholders locally and provincially. Chris Thomas will help provide access to and insight on employers' perspectives as well as offer an informed perspective into the issues facing newcomers to Alberta and their labour market attachment.

As a community collaborator, the **Alberta Workers' Health Centre** brings their experience providing public education on workers' rights to marginalized workers. Jared Matsunaga-Turnbull will sit on the project advisory committee and provide input in to all phases of the project. Specifically, they will assist in ensuring that the project maintains an awareness of the complex power dynamics involved in research with marginalized workers, particularly when asking them to co-create with employers. Dr. Janki Shankar, a fellow researcher from the **University of Calgary**, brings significant research experience with marginalized immigrant workers. She will also sit on the project advisory committee and will contribute to research design and data analysis.

Our Partners Con't

In line with the team's co-creative process, women ELL workers are also engaged as primary project stakeholders. They will be given the option of participating beyond being research subjects when are invited to contribute to the knowledge co-creation group at all stages of the research.

The Research Plan

The Workplace Wellness for Immigrant Women research project will employ a knowledge co-creation methodology, engaging diverse stakeholders in all phases of the research – from design to analysis to knowledge transfer and mobilization.

Timeline:

Data Collection: April – July 2019

Analysis: August – November 2019

Knowledge Mobilization and Reporting: December 2019 – ongoing

Future project newsletters will share insight from each phase and will map the projects progress as the team works toward the goal of contributing a scalable set of promising practices that can be incorporated into ELL classrooms, employment programs, and workplace policies informed by our understanding of the intersection between gender, migration, culture, and workplace practices.

Key Concepts: Co-Creation

Including community participants with relevant lived experience in a research project can generate different kinds of knowledge than a traditional research practice. By partnering with research participants in data collection, planning, and analysis, outcomes such as programs and resources can have more immediate relevance and greater impact on policy. The type of engagement involved in co-creation is more involved than in most participatory projects. Participation consists on a spectrum of passive to active engagement, and co-creation seeks to be on the active end; it involves transformative relationships, where the research team seeks to both engage in conversations and input from participants, and through this process to co-create a shift in social conditions.