



Project Team

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From Research to Practice – Co-Creation with Research Participants

Since May 2017 a small but mighty group of research participants have worked to develop two pilot activities responding to service and policy gaps identified in our research. Meeting over lunch at Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA), the research participants worked together with the research team to elaborate on the findings from the research and brainstorm solutions to critical issues.

The co-creation group is made up of six women who have participated in aspects of the research (interviews and participant observation). The participants have varied immigration and settlement experiences, come from different countries of origin, and have a variety of professional backgrounds. Despite these differences they each make unique contributions to advance the research and co-creation.

The process began with the research team sharing salient research and key findings with the co-creation group. Participants then shared their perspectives on the findings and confirmed, as well as added complexity and richness, the data already collected. Additionally, this approach provided an important opportunity for participants to get to know one another and exchange retirement experiences, as well as share information about resources, programs, and services.

Following the initial co-creation exchange, the group identified two issues to focus on more deeply: *challenges related to caregiving and isolation and loneliness*. Participants identified these as key barriers to the social and civic participation of retired immigrant women. Together, the research team and participants brainstormed causes, solutions, and actions for each issue.

The group then narrowed in on two activities to pilot in Fall 2017. Those activities are now in development. The first is a pilot peer-support program for immigrant women seniors. Working with CIWA staff, the co-creation participants are being trained to offer effective peer-support. This training considers the participants' previous leadership experiences and filling in areas they have identified, such as cross-cultural communication. Throughout October 2017 the co-creation participants will attend an ongoing CIWA program for immigrant women seniors called *My Community, My Home*. They will act as peer-support mentors to the other program participants. The focus of this pilot is on adapting the peer-support training as needed and generating learnings for similar initiatives in the future.

The second pilot involves partnering with stakeholders who work in senior and immigrant inclusion in Calgary. The partnership will map assets and gaps in the provision of services, policies, and supports to immigrant women seniors. The goal of this collaborative mapping is a policy brief to share with partners including the City of Calgary and the Alberta Seniors Advocate.

The co-creation phase of the project is proving to be an excellent opportunity to translate key learnings from the research into policy and practice. Working in collaboration with CIWA provides an opportunity to engage the expertise of our community-based partner and leverage their considerable skillset engaging immigrant women. Throughout, the co-creation participants have remained active and engaged and appear keen to see the project through to completion.

Project Update

Phase I: Data Collection & Preliminary Analysis

July 2016 – March 2017 (Complete)

Phase II: Program Co-Creation

April – December 2017 (In Progress)

- Collective data reflection (May, 2017)
- Prioritizing themes, action planning, and program design (June - August 2017)
- Implementation and evaluation (September - December 2017)

Knowledge Dissemination

February 2017 – Present

- Bow Valley College Brown Bag Lunch presentation (February, 2017)
- Annual Metropolis Conference presentation (March, 2017)
- Western Canadian Conference on Gender, Immigration, and Integration presentation (March, 2017)
- Research in Action stakeholder world café (June, 2017)
- Presentation at Grey Matters conference in Hinton, AB (September, 2017)

Knowledge Mobilization – Grey Matters 2017

On September 13, 2017 the Enhancing the Social and Civic Wellbeing of Immigrant Women Retirees research team presented key findings from the research to an enthusiastic audience at the Grey Matters conference in Hinton, Alberta.

This conference offers provincial service providers opportunities to network, gain knowledge and increase awareness of issues, supports, and services for seniors. The focus of this year's conference, *Footprints in the Foothills*, explored the benefits of an active seniors' community to individual seniors and the community as a whole.

Our research team organized a panel titled, "Embracing the Wellbeing of Immigrant Women Seniors: Insights into Promising Practices for Engagement and Program Design." The panel covered two topics: 1) addressing immigrant women's wellbeing and continued social participation as they transition from work to retirement and 2) exploring the often hidden issue of elder abuse and potential for community engaged responses when addressing this issue in immigrant communities.

Approximately 40 Alberta service providers attended and they asked questions about how to improve programming for immigrant seniors in their community, the availability of resources to address elder abuse and how to engage seniors in participatory action research. Attendees also participated in an interactive exercise exploring the question of identity and intersectionality. The goal of this interactive activity was to encourage service providers to consider the multiplicity of life experiences that immigrant seniors might bring to their programs and services.

