



# WELCOMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

## **E-Bulletin - June 2010**

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### **Announcements and Updates**

#### **WCI – LIP Meeting Report Released**

A report outlining the discussions which took place in London on April 30<sup>th</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup> surrounding the Ontario LIPs is now available on the WCI website under Documents. Please click [here](#) to read the document. In addition, we are

continuing to work with the LIPs on their needs assessments and strategic plans.

#### **WCI Awareness Building Workshop & Governing Council Meeting**

On June 14<sup>th</sup>, members of the WCI and representatives from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Region, convened in Hamilton, Ontario to hear about research being undertaken by the WCI, including the six studies funded by CIC, Ontario Region. Immediately following, on June 15<sup>th</sup>, the Governing Council – made up of university and community representatives and domain leaders – met to discuss governance issues, including ideas for strengthening corporate functions and operational supports, progress in building local collaboration, growth in research activities and funding. Further consultations will follow and a report will be issued in July. As well, presentations from the meeting will be made available on the WCI website under Events.

#### **Presentations and Networking**

On June 14<sup>th</sup> Vicki Esses presented an overview of the Welcoming Communities Initiative to the Northern

Interministerial Council. On June 17<sup>th</sup>, she and Leah Hamilton were invited to Ottawa by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Integration Branch to present their report on Characteristics of a Welcoming Community, Outcome Indicators and Policy Considerations. On June 18<sup>th</sup>, they also presented an overview of the Welcoming Communities Initiative in a session entitled, "New Horizontal Policy-Research Capacity about Integration Issues."

#### **Additional Funding**

We are pleased to announce that we were successful in our bid for funding in response to OCASI's Call for Proposals entitled "Making Ontario Home. A Study of Newcomer Settlement Services Use and Needs." The proposal was a joint effort between members of the WCI, CERIS and CCBR.

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#### **Spotlight on Student Research**

We would like to highlight the important work being done by student members of the WCI. Our first spotlight is on PhD candidate Ronald J. Roy at Queen's University in Kingston. He can be reached at [ronald.roy@queensu.ca](mailto:ronald.roy@queensu.ca).

As governments focus on issues of attraction, integration and retention of Francophone immigrants to Francophone minority communities in Canada, there is a need to reflect critically on the tensions between Francophone identities and new forms of diversity and what the implications are for social justice and citizenship. The research by Ronald Roy focuses on the everyday 'negotiations of identity' where ethnocultural diversity is challenging how Francophone minority communities imagine themselves and the world around them. Tensions exist between traditional ideas concerning legitimacy, authenticity and collective identity and cosmopolitan visions of French as a form of global linguistic capital (asset). More specifically, Ronald Roy is investigating how existing Francophone identities – *Acadien(ne) et Franco-Ontarien(ne)* – might be reshaped and how pluralistic ideas of inclusion can be encouraged in Canada.

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**The Role of Psychology in the Provision of Mental Health Services to Immigrants and Multicultural Communities: Potential University-Community Partnerships**

May 7, 2010 marked the first meeting between members of the University of Western Ontario's Clinical Psychology area, and representatives from 15 agencies serving London's immigrant and multi-cultural communities. The session was facilitated by the Welcoming Communities Initiative. As implied in the title of the day-long retreat: "The role of

psychology in the provision of mental health services to London's immigrant and multi-cultural communities: Potential university-community partnerships", the primary goals were to discuss the mental health needs and access barriers of London's immigrant populations, and to forge a community-university partnership aimed at meeting these needs.

**Mental Health Needs and Barriers to Service Access.**

In a series of engaging talks, speakers from various community agencies and cultural groups highlighted the unique experiences and challenges encountered by immigrants and First Nations people seeking mental health services. One barrier that was identified concerned the disconnect between agencies most commonly supporting immigrant and multi-cultural individuals and agencies where psychologists provide services. Recommendations specific to this issue and others were generated throughout the retreat. These included suggestions for community-university partnerships aimed at mental health promotion and early intervention; capacity-building efforts to assist cultural leaders and service providers to recognize mental health concerns; and bi-directional (community-academic) consultation opportunities and frameworks.

**Forging a New Community-University Partnership.**

The significant interest of both the Clinical Psychology area and community participants in pursuing new partnerships was cemented. Immediately following the retreat, Dr. Leora Swartzman, Clinical Practicum Coordinator and retreat organizer, Dr. Victoria Esses,

Director of the Centre for Research on Migration and Ethnic Relations, and a group of Clinical Psychology graduate students met to discuss ways that clinical psychology graduate students could provide supervised clinical services. These would take the form of consultation within community settings. As a final outcome of the day, the process of forging this partnership will be documented, examination of funding models and opportunities will be examined, and a more formal evaluation of this fruitful retreat and its outcomes is planned.

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**Health Service Use of Immigrant Families Raising a Child with a Physical Disability**

The WCI project titled "Barriers to Health Service Utilization by Immigrant Families Raising a Child with a Disability: Unmet Needs and the Role of Discrimination" will assess attitudinal, policy, and practice barriers to health services used by first generation immigrant families from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean who are raising a child with a physical disability such as spina bifida or cerebral palsy. The study, funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Region, consists of two phases. In the first phase, focus groups will be held with service providers and representatives of community service organizations, and individual interviews will be held with parents. These focus groups and interviews will provide information about service-related issues, perceptions of care, and helpful practices of health service organizations. Phase two is a quantitative phase that will involve a total of 90 Asian,

African, and Caribbean parents who live in the Toronto or Hamilton areas and have a child with a physical disability. This phase will assess barriers in access to services, unmet needs, and the extent to which services are culturally sensitive and family-centred.

The project is being conducted by Gillian King and Sally Lindsay (Bloorview Research Institute), Anne Klassen and Ronit Mesterman (McMaster University), and Victoria Esses (The University of Western Ontario), with the assistance of Cortleigh Teolis (Project Coordinator). To date, extensive background work has taken place to prepare study materials, liaise with community and health service organizations, and obtain ethics approvals. We are excited to be starting the Phase 1 focus groups and interviews.

Since little is known in Canada about health service access, service use, and the health service experiences of immigrant families, the project will provide important information for policy and practice. Being able to compare the experiences of different immigrant populations is a novel aspect of this work. The project will provide information that will increase awareness of the unmet needs, challenges, and also strengths of immigrant families raising a child with a disability. The data will be shared in ways that will encourage service providers to improve their capacity to offer culturally competent health services and to implement strategies that will enhance families' health care.

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### **Progress on Immigration Research in Northern Ontario**

On Tuesday May 25<sup>th</sup>, more than 40 people in Sudbury gathered for a visioning exercise on governance and priorities of the Local Immigration Partnership. Project manager Scott Fisher presented several governance models based on presentations at the WCI's London LIP conference.

On March 27<sup>th</sup>, the third forum of the Northern Ontario Planning Network for Francophone Immigration took place in Sudbury. More than 60 people attended, coming from Timmins, North Bay, Thunder Bay and Sault Ste. Marie. Citizenship and Immigration Canada representative, Irena Nikolova, announced the creation of a one-stop kiosk operated by the Contact Interculturel Francophone de Sudbury (CIFS). Now equipped with stable funding, the CIFS will be able to hire qualified staff members to deliver settlement services, including measures to promote community welcome and to support the economic integration of francophone immigrants. CIFS was pleased to have its pivotal role in the development of the planning network recognized. CIFS will now have the means to attract, welcome and integrate francophone immigrants. The official recognition by CIC is the result of five years of hard work, a record of successful performance and successful lobbying. WCI support has also played an important role. Aurelie Lacassagne, Laurentian University's representative on the WCI worked with a 4<sup>th</sup>-year student intern in public administration, Mariama Ndiaye, to help develop statistical tools

to allow the CIFS to track the number of clients served and the number and types of services delivered. The next phase of the project will see the implementation of evaluation tools. Mariama Ndiaye and Aurelie Lacassagne are currently developing governance policies for the CIFS to assist the organization in its transition. This is a good example of the type of partnership that can exist between university researchers and community organizations.

Aurelie Lacassagne has also supervised a 4<sup>th</sup>-year thesis on the role of francophone postsecondary institutions in bringing francophone immigrants to Sudbury. The thesis examines the strategies adopted by universities, colleges, the city and service providers in dealing with the attraction, integration and retention of students in the region. A questionnaire was administered to more than 80 students in order to find out about their life trajectory: Why did they come to Sudbury? Did they experience discrimination? Have they felt welcomed? How do they envision their integration in the Sudbury job market? Do they plan to stay? If not, why? The thesis, written by Tibila Sandiwidi, contains recommendations for postsecondary institutions, the City and the CIFS.

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#### **Thank you**

We would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Region for their continued financial support.

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