



WELCOMING
COMMUNITIES
INITIATIVE

Opinion Leader Interviews: Views on Cultural Diversity and Immigration



INITIATIVE DES
COMMUNAUTÉS
ACCUEILLANTES

Objectives

- To assess the “warmth of the welcome” in 14 Census Metropolitan Areas outside Toronto
- To identify targets and strategies for change, with a view to assessing policy directions and helping shape anti-racism and welcoming community program interventions

Method

- Comparative case studies of 14 second and third tier communities across Ontario
- Environics Research Group, a leading public affairs research firm, was hired to conduct confidential telephone interviews with 10 “local notables” who are opinion setters in each community
- Sample size and composition: 5 representatives from the governmental sector and 5 from the non-governmental sector in each community, for a total sample size of 140 opinion leaders
- How are the opinion leaders chosen?
 - Interviewees are randomly selected from lists of 40-50 local notables in each community. These lists were compiled by the PIs and RAs, in consultation with local university representatives.

Method

- Qualitative and quantitative information from the interview transcripts will be interpreted and reported in order to fulfill the study's objectives
- Analyses of the transcripts will be subject to inter-rater reliability tests in order to measure consistency in the interpretation of the results

Interview Agenda Themes

- Probe interviewees' perceptions of:
 - local government interest in immigration
 - community leader views on the contribution of immigration to the community's economic, social/cultural, political/civic life, and identity
 - community member interest in immigration
 - The advantages and disadvantages of immigration, and whether the community welcomes newcomers and visible minorities
 - community capacity to serve newcomers, refugees

Interview Agenda Themes

- Elicit informed policy advice on:
 - improving the warmth of welcome
 - helping immigrants find meaningful work
- Collect demographic information on the background of community elites:
 - Immigrant status, ethno-racial background, gender, age, length of residency

Importance of the Study and Anticipated Benefits

- Local opinion leaders play a seminal role in shaping the “climate” of the community and setting the social and economic context that newcomers face
- They are knowledgeable about local attitudes and organizational capacity
- Comparative case study research design furnishes insight into the factors that account for similarities and variations in the warmth of welcome across communities
- Confidential interviews allow for the expression of candid opinions that will help policymakers identify targets and strategies for program interventions

Project Update as of June 14, 2010

- Confidential interviews completed in St. Catharines-Niagara, London, and Greater Sudbury CMAs. Interview stage commenced in Ottawa in early June.
- Opinion leader lists for remaining ten communities have been compiled
- Research Assistants have completed the qualitative coding of the St. Catharines-Niagara transcripts. The coding sheet is being fine-tuned.
- Quantitative data obtained from the St. Catharines-Niagara, London and Greater Sudbury transcripts have been recorded for eventual statistical analysis