

WESTERN NEWS

Providing a 'Pathway' for immigrants

By Communications Staff

May 28, 2012

In 2001, more than three quarters of immigrants to Canada settled in one of only three cities: Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal. A decade later, an ever-increasing number of newcomers are finding homes in smaller communities across the country.



Now, a new community-university research partnership will help facilitate this transition.

Awarded \$2.5 million over seven years by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC), the *Pathways to Prosperity Partnership* will bring together researchers, government departments, and community partners from coast to coast to improve policies and practices that help attract, settle and integrate newcomers in communities across Canada – particularly in medium-sized and small cities and towns.

“We plan to equip community organizations and governments, including municipal governments, with the tools they need to devise and implement evidence-based strategies that promote inclusion, local development and economic and social sustainability,” says project founder Victoria Esses, who is

ESSES

Professor of Psychology and Director of the Centre for Research on Migration and Ethnic Relations at Western University.

The network of researchers, policymakers and practitioners will involve itself in analyses of promising and effective practices as well as evaluative studies of policies and programs, with a view to driving innovation in the integration field. The network will also focus on the sustainability of Francophone minority communities and the particular challenges of Northern and remote communities.

The Partnership has obtained solid commitments of support from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and partnering provincial immigration ministries. Its work will complement the efforts of federal, provincial and territorial governments working to improve the settlement and integration outcomes of newcomers to Canada. As part of this effort, the network will contribute research expertise to the development of Local Immigration Partnerships as they are established across the country.

“As an increasing number of newcomers to Canada choose to settle in small and remote communities, this national network will focus on improving the policies and practices to help attract and integrate newcomers in these under-studied communities,” says Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Minister Jason Kenney. “It will also contribute to Canada’s ability to avoid a patchwork approach to the important work of settling newcomers, as we strive to create a faster, more flexible and balanced immigration system.”

The Initiative is deeply committed to training the next generation of researchers, practitioners and policy-makers. This will be achieved through the provision of education and training opportunities, including a proposed joint Master’s program in migration and settlement featuring distance education, student exchange programs offered by participating Canadian universities, and field placements.

The partnership will be supported by a strong secretariat led by Meyer Burstein, former Director-General responsible for strategic planning, research and analysis at Citizenship and Immigration Canada and former head and co-founder of Metropolis.

Additional financial and in-kind support from more than 100 partners, and the participation of over 180 collaborators from more than 50 universities, will help foster research and policy development across five regional nodes: Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies and British Columbia.

An important partner is the *Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance / Alliance canadienne du secteur de l’établissement des immigrants (CISSA- ACSEI)*. “CISSA-ACSEI’s goal of ensuring the full participation of immigrants and refugees in all aspects of Canadian life while building more welcoming and inclusive communities is fully captured in the objectives of the *Pathways to Prosperity* Initiative,” said Chris Friesen, CISSA-ACSEI’s chair. “Members of the Initiative have, in the past, conducted important studies on behalf of CISSA-ACSEI and we are excited about the prospect of being able to expand our working relationship.”

Picture:

Dr Victoria Esses, Principal Investigator – Pathways to Prosperity

Source URL:

http://communications.uwo.ca/western_news/stories/2012/May/providing_a_pathway_to_immigrants_across_canada_.html