

## SHARING SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION PRACTICES THAT WORK KNOWLEDGE INTO ACTION

Sexuality Education Resource Centre  
Winnipeg, MB

### **Area of Practice:**

Settlement Services and Supports that Contribute to the Physical and  
Mental Well-being of Newcomer Individuals and Families

### **Video:**

<https://youtu.be/q05qe-Q4HS8>

A Pathways to  
Prosperity Project

March 2020



Funded by:

Immigration, Refugees  
and Citizenship Canada

Financé par :

Immigration, Réfugiés  
et Citoyenneté Canada



**PATHWAYS TO  
PROSPERITY**  
Promoting Welcoming Communities in Canada



**VOIES VERS LA  
PROSPÉRITÉ**  
Promouvoir des communautés accueillantes au Canada

## **BACKGROUND ON THE ORGANIZATION AND IMPETUS FOR THE PROGRAM**

---

Sexuality Education Resource Centre (SERC) is a non-profit organization based in Winnipeg, MB. Founded in 1934, it is dedicated to promoting sexual health through education. It provides inclusive, non-judgmental education about sexuality with a view that people have the right to accurate information on all of their choices. Through a history of engaging with immigrant and refugee communities, SERC has learned how certain notions about the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), sex and sexuality, gender, and sexual orientation relate to the way racialized migrants are positioned in Canadian society, including their resettlement experiences and their economic options and opportunities.

In 2016, SERC conducted a qualitative research project using an ethnographic participatory approach to learn about the experiences of immigrant women of African heritage living with HIV in Winnipeg and their social supports in Canada. As a result, Knowledge into Action (KiA) was launched in 2017 to build capacity, increase knowledge, and reduce the risks of HIV and sexually transmitted blood borne infections (STBBIs) among African newcomers in Winnipeg, a community disproportionately affected by both.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAM**

---

**Name:**

Knowledge into Action

**Description:**

Knowledge into Action (KiA) has three main components: capacity building, knowledge exchange / raising awareness, and information sharing. Workshop sessions, tools, and resources have been developed for community leaders and newcomers of African heritage, including youth, on human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and sexually transmitted blood borne infections (STBBI) testing, prevention, and treatment, and reducing HIV stigma within their networks. Once a year, Sexuality Education Resource Centre (SERC) facilitates a half-day event for community leaders of African heritage, which includes a combination of presentations, videos, case studies, and resources on HIV/STBBIs and their impact on the community. Workshop sessions and events are delivered in participants' first language or in English with interpretation. Training workshops have also been developed for health and social service providers to share learnings through facilitated discussions on topics impacting newcomers of African heritage, such as barriers in accessing health and social services, HIV non-disclosure criminalization, intersections of racism and/or sexism, and HIV stigma. Special emphasis is given to human rights and the importance of creating a culturally-responsible environment for effective, non-judgmental, respectful, client-centred service, as well as how unconscious aspects of their own personal bias could affect delivery of services to clients.

**Goal(s):**

The goals of KiA are to promote HIV / STBBI testing, prevention, and treatment; and to work toward reduction of HIV/STBBI-related stigma among African newcomer communities in Winnipeg.

**Target Client Group(s):**

Newcomers of African heritage living in Winnipeg, as well as healthcare and social service providers who work with this population.

**Delivery Partner(s):**

KiA works closely with local settlement, religious, and ethno-cultural organizations for client recruitment and referral support. It also works closely with the following partners to develop workshop content, resources, and delivery: Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Interagency Coalition on AIDS and Development, Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, Canadian Association for HIV Research, CATIE, Health Sciences Centre, University of Manitoba, University of Winnipeg, University of British Columbia, Good Seed Church, IRCOM, Ka Ni Kanichihk, ArtsJunktion MB Inc., Manitoba HIV Collective Impact Network, HIV and Aging Coalition, Canadian Public Health Association, Calgary Sexual Health, Nine Circles Community Health Centre, Manitoba Harm Reduction Network, Mount Carmel Clinic, Klinik Community Health, Aurora Family Therapy Centre, Canadian HIV/AIDS Black, African and Caribbean Network, and Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations.

**Human Resource(s):**

KiA is delivered by a team of three staff, including one project coordinator, one sexual and reproductive health facilitator, and one program evaluation and research analyst. It is also supported by 35-50 community resource people, recruiters, interpreters, and volunteers.

**Funding:**

KiA is funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

## **KEY FEATURES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THIS BEING A PROMISING PRACTICE**

---

**Effective:**

KiA actively engages local ethnocultural, religious, and community organizations and leaders in all aspects of the program, including planning, design, development, recruitment, interpretation, facilitation, and more. It uses a client-centred approach, offering flexibility with time, space, and dynamics according to the needs of different communities. Staff make a continuous effort to build and maintain trust with participants, and participants' knowledge, experiences, and perspectives are acknowledged, valued, and incorporated into the program. Workshops are delivered in participants' first language or in English with interpretation.

**Efficient:**

KiA builds on the strengths of the community. It is delivered in partnership with a broad range of settlement, religious, and ethno-cultural organizations, as well as community leaders who are able

to use their influence to engage and support participants from their communities. It was designed using an evidence-based approach, and evaluation findings are used to inform program activities.

**Relevant:**

KiA was developed in consultation with community members. Feedback is collected from participants and other stakeholders on an ongoing basis and activities are adjusted, as much as possible, to ensure their needs continue to be met. Although the program's topics are considered taboo, workshops often exceed the target number of participants.

**Sustainable:**

KiA aligns with SERC's mandate, values, and priorities, which include programs and services that build capacity of newcomers of African heritage in Winnipeg, and thus receives support at the organizational level. It has also received financial and other supports from the community.

**Transferable:**

KiA could be replicated in other communities across Canada and/or a similar model could be used to develop educational initiatives that focus on sensitive topics among different communities. It is important to build and maintain relationships and trust with community members, organizations, and other stakeholders, and engage them from the beginning to ensure the program meets their needs and expectations. This process takes time, and considerable investment will be needed before the program is ready to launch. It is important to hire staff who are passionate about the work, sensitive to the needs and experiences of participants, and willing to learn from the communities they are serving, as relationships are key to the success of the program. Employee turnover could mean loss of knowledge, relationships, and expertise.

**Innovative and Forward Thinking:**

KiA was created in partnership with the African newcomer community in Winnipeg, with the goal of building capacity and effectively supporting community members. It utilizes an anti-racist, non-judgmental approach that is focused on human rights, which is especially important since it engages communities that are often stigmatized and addresses topics that are considered taboo.

**Differs in Definable Ways from Other Similar Practices:**

KiA provides a safe and culturally appropriate space that values the strengths, knowledge, and experiences of the communities being served. Workshops are facilitated in a way that allows participants to feel comfortable sharing their own perspectives. Participants receive evidence-based information on different topics and are encouraged / empowered to act for change in their communities.

**High Client Uptake:**

KiA has high client uptake and regularly exceeds its targets, in part because of the trust, relationships, and reputation established in the community. Participants are often referred by community members involved in the program. Activities are advertised in ways that do not stigmatize participants. For example, participants are invited to attend a workshop to discuss STBBI prevention and stigma, rather than targeting workshops to participants living with HIV or STBBIs.

**High Client Retention:**

KiA has high client retention. Participants become more interested and engaged as the series progresses, often bringing family members and friends. Community guidelines, flexible arrangements, and food are also used to create safe and welcoming space.

**Strong Evidence of Successful Outcomes:**

KiA continuously monitors and tracks progress using different assessment and measurement tools. Findings are shared with staff, community members, and funders on an ongoing basis. In 2018/19, KiA delivered 28 community workshops to 149 unique individuals (367 contacts), as well as online / onsite workshops to 75 service providers. Close to 91% of participants in the community workshops reported an increase in knowledge about STBBI prevention, risk factors, and stigma (comparing scores obtained in a knowledge test before and right after the sessions). After 3-6 months, 100% of participants in the community workshops reported the application of information from the workshop of STBBI-related stigma in their lives

**PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION STRATEGY**

---

SERC has a dedicated research and evaluation team that monitors and tracks progress and measures achievements of its different programs / projects. The KiA evaluation plan is based on S.M.A.R.T. objectives (i.e., Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely). Input is collected using pre- and post-workshop evaluation forms to measure the short-term outcomes of participants. Input is also collected using evaluation surveys and interviews at 3-12 months after the last workshop session to measure the medium-term outcomes of participants. In-depth debrief meetings are also conducted with program staff and facilitators in order to identify challenges and lessons learned that emerged from the planning and delivery process.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

---

**Sexuality Education Resource Centre**

<https://serc.mb.ca>

**Knowledge into Action**

<https://serc.mb.ca/knowledge-into-action-program/>