

New Funding to Support Immigrant Settlement in Small and Medium-Sized Communities across Canada

June 5, 2012

The University of Victoria's Centre for Studies in Religion and Society will form part of an ambitious new community-university network aimed at supporting the integration of immigrants in small and medium-sized cities and towns across Canada.

The Pathways to Prosperity Partnership "will equip communities and governments, including municipal governments, with the tools they need to promote inclusion and local, sustainable development," said project leader Victoria Esses during an announcement of the project last week in London, Ontario.

Esses, a professor of psychology and director of the Centre for Research on Migration and Ethnic Relations at Western University, said the project will bring together researchers, government departments and community partners from coast to coast to improve policies that help attract, settle, integrate newcomers.

The project is supported with a \$2.5 million grant over seven years from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, with additional support from Citizenship and Immigration Canada and partnering provincial immigration ministries.

"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."

UVic's Paul Bramadat, director of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society, and Julie Drolet from the Faculty of Human Social and Educational Development at Thompson Rivers University will lead the British Columbia node of the project. The BC node will work with similar nodes in the Prairies, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic regions to foster research and policy development on immigration to medium-sized and small communities.

"The vast majority of research on immigration has examined newcomers to Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. This has created a gap in our understanding of the way people integrate – or do not integrate – into other communities. The academic and social issues addressed by this project are quite urgent, and I'm pleased that we are able to play a role in this network," Bramadat says.

The project will involve collaborators from 50 universities and over 100 partner organizations across the five regional nodes.

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

For more information please contact:

Victoria Esses, Department of Psychology and Centre for Research on Migration and Ethnic Relations, Western University, 519-661-2111 ext. 84650

Douglas Keddy, Research Communications Manager, Western University, 519-661-2111 ext. 87485

Paul Bramadat, Centre for Studies in Religion and Society, University of Victoria, 250-721-6325

URL: http://csrs.uvic.ca/home/news.php