



*Reaching Out
and
Learning Together*

**NETWORKING TO SERVE
ISOLATED IMMIGRANT &
REFUGEE SENIORS**



The Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative

Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton

Action for Healthy Communities

Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council

**REACHING OUT AND LEARNING TOGETHER: NETWORKING TO SERVE ISOLATED
IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE SENIORS
FEBRUARY 16, 2006**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of the Reaching Out and Learning Together participatory research study was to identify isolated seniors within four immigrant and refugee communities in Edmonton – Former Yugoslavia, Kurdish, Spanish-speaking, and Korean communities - and to learn about their needs, circumstances and aspirations. Once the assessment stage was completed, the research partners hoped to build relationships with senior serving organizations and respond to such needs by determining long-term culturally and linguistically support strategies. Over the course of twelve months, two networking sessions were held with senior serving agencies in Edmonton. The current report outlines the proceedings of the second networking meeting held on February 16, 2006.

Over 45 participants from various community-based immigrant and senior serving organizations attended the second session. The goal of this session was to discuss and develop collective strategies to improve immigrant seniors' access to programs and services. At this meeting, participants learned about the needs and circumstances of immigrant and refugee seniors, mapped immigrant and senior serving organizations to the respective communities, and discussed strategies to address core issues facing those communities. Core issues identified through this study included: 1) language barriers, 2) complex health issues, 3) poverty and income insecurity, 4) social isolation, 5) lack of housing/homelessness, and 6) transportation issues. The language barrier was the most discussed issue at this meeting as it was perceived to be a causal factor for many other concerns identified in the study.

Discussions centered on:

1. causes of core issues (e.g. lack of English as a Second language programs for seniors and shortsighted policies),
2. the shortage of existing efforts to address these issue in the respective communities,
3. additional efforts required to address core issues (i.e. conducting formal needs assessments, increased funding for culturally and linguistically relevant programs and services, lack of volunteers and outreach workers, etc.)
4. potential future collaborative actions (i.e. developing joint funding proposals, making programs available in various languages, hiring more outreach workers, educating immigrant/refugee communities and mainstream serving agencies about one another, etc).
5. support and resources needed to take action on these issues.

The model tested in this study for reaching out to isolated seniors proved to be effective, but participants recognized that many more resources (human and financial) are needed to make this model reach its maximum potential. Participants were committed to continue working together to address issues facing immigrant and

refugee seniors. However, it was recognized that that more funding and communications is required.

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MEETING SUMMARY**

Welcoming Remarks

In his welcoming remarks, Valdemar Larsen, Executive Director of the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC), recounted to participants how the current participatory action research study had taken him through an extraordinary learning journey. Through this journey he learned that immigrant and refugee seniors living in Edmonton face similar issues as Canadian born seniors. However, these issues are intensified primarily by pre-migration experiences as well as linguistic, cultural and policy barriers. The intent of this meeting, he continued, was to bring together a cross-section of mainstream senior serving organizations, ethnocultural groups, and immigrant and refugee serving agencies and to develop strategies that would address these issues in a comprehensive and systemic manner. Valdemar stressed that the issues immigrant and refugee seniors face in our communities are complex and require the multiple perspectives represented by these organizations. He expressed the hope that at the end of this meeting, the partners of this participatory action research study would establish links between the needs of immigrant and refugee seniors and the resources available in our communities.

Yvonne Chiu, Co-Executive Director of the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative, also welcomed and thanked participants for coming to this meeting. The representation of organizations at this meeting goes to show the community's concern and willingness to take action towards improving the quality of life of all seniors in Edmonton. Please refer to Appendix A for a list of meeting participants.

Following roundtable introductions, Yvonne Chiu, introduced the discussions by providing a broad overview of the changing demographics in Edmonton. Since, Edmonton is a very culturally diverse city, it is essential that policies reflect the needs of all our citizens. Today, immigrant and refugee seniors are one of the most invisible of all the minority groups in Edmonton.

Meeting Objective and Agenda

The objective of this meeting was to start building relationships between immigrant and refugee senior communities and senior serving organizations in Edmonton. The ultimate goal of this networking session was to develop collective strategies to improve seniors' access to programs and services.

Agenda of the Day

Item	Outcome
1) Community Mapping Exercise – Part I	<p>The purpose of this exercise was to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Which immigrant/refugee community resides in each city ward?
2) Findings from the Research Study	<p>Health brokers from each participating community reported their research findings to date.</p> <p>Core themes/issues facing immigrant and refugee seniors in Edmonton were identified.</p>
3) Community Mapping Exercise – Part II	<p>The purpose of this exercise was to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Which community organizations offer programs and services for seniors in each ward?
4) Cultural Responsiveness Assessment Tool	<p>The purpose of this exercise was to provide participating organizations a tool that will help them determine their current level of cultural competence (Appendix B)</p>
5) Discussion of Core Themes/Issues	<p>Participants discussed themes/issues identified in the research study and developed strategies for addressing them.</p>
6) Model for Collaborative Work and Resource Inventory for Collaboration	<p>This model was presented as a potential framework for collaboration between participating organizations (Appendix C).</p>
7) Recognition of Immigrant and Refugee Guest Seniors	<p>Guest immigrant and refugee seniors were recognized for their participation in this meeting.</p>

Community Mapping Exercise – Part I

To start the day's program, Yvonne showed a map of the City of Edmonton and pointed out where most immigrants and refugees live. Yvonne informed participants that accurate demographic data is scarce. The city of Edmonton needs to improve access to such data by conducting more thorough census studies that take into account the diversity of our population.

One by one, each health broker who worked in this study identified the location of their respective immigrant and refugee senior communities. The communities involved in this particular research study were: 1) Former Yugoslavia, 2) Spanish-speaking, 3) Kurdish, and 4) Korean. Yvonne explained that there are many more immigrant and refugee communities not represented in the current study. However, due to limited resources, this study has only concentrated on these four communities. In the future, it will be very important to track the issues facing other ethnic seniors in Edmonton.

Research Findings

Community 1: Former Yugoslavia

Over the last year, Zdravka Brnada, health broker with the MCHB Co-operative, has worked extensively to identify isolated seniors from the former Yugoslavia. She explained that in her community, seniors are spread all over the city. Initially, she thought she would make contact with approximately 20 immigrant and refugee seniors in her community. However, to date she has identified about 80 isolated seniors in this community. Due to limited time and financial resources, she has not been able to assist all of them. She hopes to be able to reach these seniors in the future, but emphasized that she needs more support to accomplish this task.

Shortly after initiating her work in this community, Zdravka realized that her job needed to focus on developing or building her community. Many seniors from the former Yugoslavia don't know of each other because they live in many different areas of the city. Today, she can report that she has been able to bring together 15 seniors in two separate seniors' residences. These seniors are now able to connect with one another and a social network is starting to develop. A leader has risen from this group of seniors and it is through her that other seniors are communicating their issues and concerns to Zdravka. This leader is a retired teacher who owns an old type writer. She uses this type writer to send letters to Zdravka in which she outlines seniors' concerns.

The most pressing issues in this particular community are: **mental and physical health** problems, access to essential health care services such as home care and dialysis, and extreme levels of poverty. Many seniors in this community have experienced war trauma in their countries. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a huge health problem for these seniors. Many seniors in this community need home care services. However, there are many barriers to accessing these services. For example, due to cultural issues, seniors who live with their children frequently cannot access home care services because their children do not want strangers in their home while they are at work. Another barrier is the fact that home care workers have seldom received any training to work with culturally diverse populations.

Access to **transportation** is also a barrier for seniors to access essential health care services such as dialysis and chemo and radiotherapy. Although, Zdravka has tried to connect seniors with volunteer driving services, her attempts have not been successful mainly because seniors cannot afford to pay even the minimum service fees. Many seniors from the former Yugoslavia live in extreme **poverty**. This is a direct result of immigration policies. For example, seniors who are brought to Canada by their families under the family re-unification program, cannot access any social security programs and services for a period of 10 years. During these 10 years, their families bear complete financial responsibility for seniors. As a result, seniors feel they are a huge burden to their children/families.

Zdravka told the group a story of one particular senior whose son moved to Red Deer. This senior decided to stay in Edmonton and now lives on \$125 a month. His son pays his rent. Needless to say, this person who cannot afford basic needs such as food would not have the ability to pay the \$5 fee for transportation services. Zdravka explained that she could tell the group many more stories such as this one, but due to limited time she ended her presentation. She then introduced the group to two seniors from her community that attended this meeting. Mr. Milutin Dokic, whose son now lives in Red Deer, nervously greeted the group. Mrs. Amelia Dudas who has taken the role of a leader in her community also greeted the group kindly.

Participants then had a chance to ask questions. The first inquirer wished to know what the Multicultural Health Brokers' Co-operative does. Yvonne Chiu provided a brief history of how the co-op started and explained the three levels of work the brokers engage in (i.e. work with individuals, small groups and communities, and policy makers). The second question was directed to the two seniors from the former Yugoslavia. Zdravka translated the questions.

Question: “What do you like to do for fun”?

Mrs. Amalija Dudas: “I used to be a teacher and I like to write on my typewriter. I also like to knit blankets for children at the Cross-Cancer Institute”.

Mr. Milutin Dokic: “I feel like a burden to this society because I can’t speak English. I can’t do much without speaking English. I like to read and sometimes, when I can afford it, I like to buy magazines from my country so I can read in my own language”.

The final question was also about the MCHB. A participant wondered where the co-op receives its funding from. Yvonne explained that the co-op receives funding from several organizations, but mainly from Capital Health and Child Services. She explained that they have no formal funding source for seniors’ programs and services.

Community 2: Kurdish

Jalal Abbas, Health Broker with the MCHB co-operative has worked with the Kurdish community. He explained that Kurdish seniors reside mostly on the north side of the city. To set the context for meeting participants, Jalal provided a brief overview of the history of Kurdistan. Kurdistan is an invaded country that has been divided by Iran and Irak, Turkey and Syria. Due to the war in Kurdistan, many Kurdish people have had to seek shelter in various refugee camps. Many people have lived in refugee camps for decades. This means they had no access to work opportunities or schools. There are approximately, 50 Kurdish seniors living in Edmonton, many of whom arrived after 1991. Due to pre-migration experiences, Kurdish seniors face issues of illiteracy and mental health problems (post-traumatic stress disorder). In addition to these issues, Kurdish seniors also face poverty and lack of access to essential social and health services.

Community 3: Spanish-Speaking

Similarly to seniors from the former Yugoslavia, **Susana Runge**, Health Broker with the MCHB cooperative, explained that Spanish-speaking seniors live all around the city of Edmonton. Many new families with seniors are settling in the north side of the city. The issues faced by Spanish-speaking seniors are similar to those explained by Zdravka. Access to essential social and health services is a major issue because of language barriers. Susana introduced two seniors from the Spanish community. Mrs. Jacoba Figueroa and Mr. Livio Raneiglio belong to a group named Latin American Seniors Association (LASCA).

Community 4: Korean

Soonil Kwon, a Health Broker with the MCHB co-operative has worked with the Korean community. She explained to participants that most Korean seniors reside in the south side of the city. There are approximately 8,000-10,000 Korean immigrants in Edmonton. As a well established immigrant group, this community has ten different associations and twelve churches. There are over 500 Korean seniors in Edmonton, of which 200 are actively involved in their communities. This means that there are over 300 seniors at home with their families. Poverty is not a huge issue for Korean seniors as children often support their elderly parents. There are two different groups of Korean seniors:

1. First generation Koreans who are retiring: These seniors have lived and worked in Canada for many years. This group speaks English well.
2. Family-sponsored seniors: This group is highly dependent on their families and do not speak English. This group is very isolated and in urgent need of programs and services from the community.

The first generation seniors are now starting to look after the newly arrived ones. Soonil introduced Dr. Beung So, a representative of one of the many Korean associations in Edmonton, Korean Seniors College.

Discussion

Following Soonil's presentation, the floor was opened for questions. Participants asked for clarification of the various immigration categories. Yvonne provided a brief overview of these categories, (i.e. family class, economic class, and convention refugee. Please refer to Appendix B for specific definitions of immigration classes and programs.

Community Mapping Exercise – Part II

Valdemar explained to participants that geographic location definitely matters for immigrant and refugee seniors. Many seniors identified through this research study are isolated and do not have access to essential services and programs. In order to make the link between seniors and available services and programs, he asked participating organizations to begin by identifying the city ward in which they conducted the majority of their work.

In the end, this exercise produced various maps in which the organizations represented at this meeting could see which immigrant and refugee senior community or communities lived within reach of their programs and services. Participants were asked sit around a table representing a particular ward and discuss how their organizations and resources can serve immigrant and refugee

seniors. Yvonne encouraged participants to share with the research group other issues they thought would be important to address within their communities.

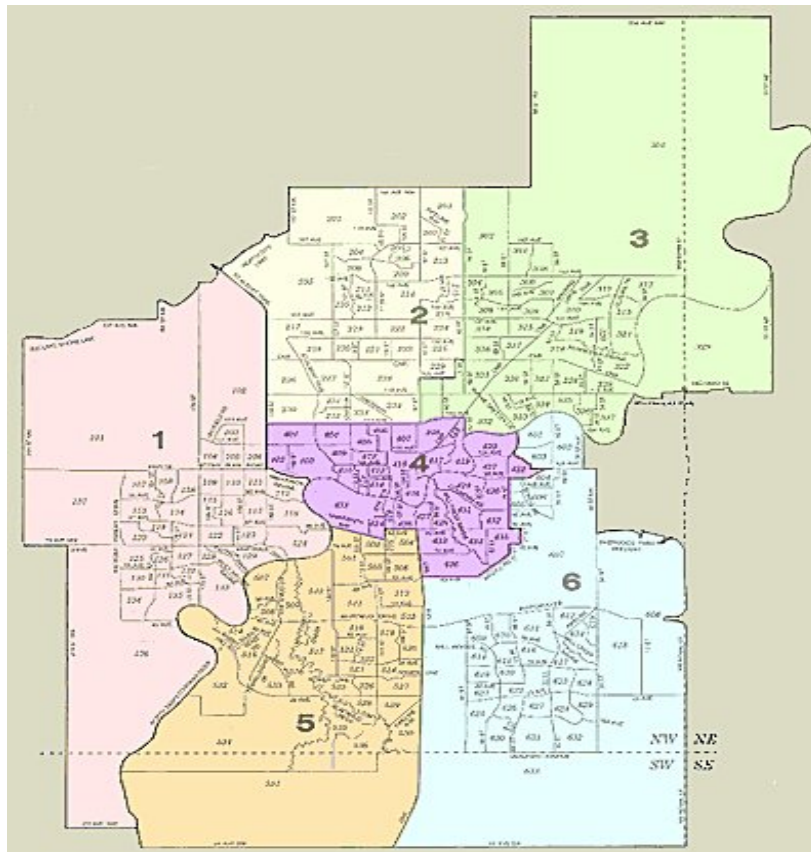
Groups were then asked to pick one core theme/issue for their discussions and then present their discussions to the broader group.

Cultural Responsiveness Tool

Yvonne shared an example of a cultural responsiveness tool that participants could review and comment on during their group discussions. Yvonne asked participants to take this tool home and test it within their organizations. She encouraged participants to provide feedback about this tool. A copy can be found in Appendix C.

Summary of Community Mapping Exercise: Linking Immigrant/Refugee Seniors with Community Organizations

NOTE: This community map ONLY represents the location of those immigrant and senior serving organizations that attended this networking session.



Ward 1:

Communities: Aboriginal, Kurdish, Somali, Afghanistan, and Spanish

Organizations: West End Seniors Centre, Canadian Kurdish Association, Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative

Ward 2:

Communities: Spanish, others.

Organizations: Drop-in centre, Northgate Lions Seniors Recreation Centre, Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative

Ward 3:

Communities: Various newcomers*

Organizations: Northgate seniors centre, Catholic Social Services, Northgate Lions Seniors Recreation Centre

Ward 4:

Communities: Various newcomers, Chinese, Italian, Vietnamese
Organizations: Multicultural Health Brokers Co-operative, Catholic Social Services, Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, EISA, Chinese Associations, OFSS, SAGE, WESA Seniors' Driving Services, Central Lions Seniors Centre, Changing Together

Ward 5:

Communities: Various newcomers, Chinese, Italian, Vietnamese
Organizations: Indo Canadian Women's Association, Korean Association, Changing Together, Strathcona Seniors Centre, LASCA

Ward 6:

Communities: 27% of Edmonton's ethnic minorities
Organizations: Indo Canadian Women's Association, Millwoods Society for the Retired & Semi-retired, Multicultural Handcrafts, etc.

*** Many participants were not – or did not think of themselves as - informed about the specific immigrant and refugee seniors in their wards.**

Discussions of Core Themes/Issues

Ward 1	Core Theme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language barriers (ESL & Illiteracy Issues)
	What is the nature and extent of this core issues among the immigrant/refugee seniors in your geographic area?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The immigrant/refugee seniors in this ward are very invisible. They do not ask for help because they live with their children. Communities are: Aboriginal, Kurdish, Somali, Afghanistan, and Spanish. ▪ Housing and transportation are also huge issues in this ward. ▪ All the services are far away. ▪ Seniors are very shy and do not know their rights. ▪ Difficulties attracting volunteers.
	Why does this issue exist? (Causal factors)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Many seniors are illiterate in their mother tongue ▪ High poverty levels ▪ Lack of transportation ▪ Lack of translation services ▪ No support for ethnic communities ▪ Seniors don't know of each other ▪ No ESL for those that can read and write
	What are we currently doing about it? (Existing efforts)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ West end area – Misericordia, Capital Health ▪ Outreach at West end Seniors center ▪ 1 year funding of Mennonite Centre for seniors' programs
	What else should be done? (Additional efforts- individually or collectively)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We need to go out and offer support to seniors ▪ Written information needs to be available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Information needs to be in mother tongue ○ We need to advertise to more churches, temples, mosques ○ We need to offer interpretation services ▪ We need to identify more frail, isolated seniors ▪ We need to ask these seniors what they need and wish for ▪ Have more pictures/signage available for seniors to understand services/programs ▪ Translate Alberta Seniors Benefits pamphlet
	What can we do together? (Potential collaborative efforts)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host programs in various languages ▪ Host social gatherings (games, art, dancing) ▪ Explain benefits (educate) (interaction with newcomers) to English speaking seniors ▪ Provide work experience for seniors through Alberta Education 	
What support and resources would we need to take further actions on this issue?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More forums – meet steadily ▪ Focus on Kurdish, Spanish, etc. communities ▪ Make it work ---Action plans ▪ More community workshops ▪ More funds 	

Ward 2	Core Theme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language barriers (ESL & Illiteracy Issues) <p>This issue causes many other problems in immigrant/refugee communities</p>
	What is the nature and extent of this core issues among the immigrant/refugee seniors in your geographic area?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is area is fairly new and it is growing fast because real estate is cheaper. Many newcomers are settling in this area.
	Why does this issue exist? (Causal factors)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large immigrant/refugee communities settling in wards 2 and 3. No new programs are being offered to immigrant and refugee seniors Existing programs and services are not accessible to immigrant/refugee seniors because they are only offered in English Immigrant and refugee seniors cannot access these program because they are too busy providing childcare to their grandchildren Immigrant/refugee seniors don't have access to transportation Immigrant/refugee seniors cannot afford to pay for programs/services
	What are we currently doing about it? (Existing efforts)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing!
	What else should be done? (Additional efforts- individually or collectively)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could ask Spanish teacher (for example), working with English speaking communities (at community centers), to develop a curriculum to teach English to immigrant/refugee seniors Need to recruit teachers that speak the mother tongue of seniors Need to conduct a formal needs assessment to determine how many people would need and use such ESL programs Need to prepare funding proposals to request financial support for such programs
	What can we do together? (Potential collaborative efforts)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We could train community members who speak the mother tongue of various senior groups to teach English 	
What support and resources would we need to take further actions on this issue?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More funds 	

Ward 3	Core Theme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Social isolation (need for social and recreational support) ▪ Reading materials in first language is a huge need
	What is the nature and extent of this core issues among the immigrant/refugee seniors in your geographic area?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seniors are alone 24 hours a day ▪ Seniors cannot attend programs at the seniors centres ▪ Need someone to bridge language barrier
	Why does this issue exist? (Causal factors)
	What are we currently doing about it? (Existing efforts)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Northgate Lions Seniors Recreation Centre: “Knitting for the Needy” – provides material for knitting ▪ Northgate Lions Seniors Recreation Centre: In-reach program” for fitness ▪ CSS: “Saturday forums for ESL” ▪ CSS: “Thursday group for knitting and sewing”
	What else should be done? (Additional efforts- individually or collectively)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Immigrant senior group programs can become “mobile”. For example, CSS seniors’ group can go to seniors’ centers where there are other immigrants and refugee seniors.
What can we do together? (Potential collaborative efforts)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Combine Northgate’s resources with CSS staff (or Central Lion’s Seniors Centre) ▪ Recruit volunteers to help bridge language barriers (ensure that volunteers get recognized for their efforts) ▪ Need to seek “extra-funding” or other strategies to address issues ▪ Work with library to access more multicultural materials ▪ Organize senior social recreation programs 	
What support and resources would we need to take further actions on this issue?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seek funding for ESL at the Northgate Seniors Centre ▪ Transportation is an issue for Northgate and CSS ▪ Need material for knitting seniors ▪ “How do we communicate across language barriers?” ▪ Funding from ECALA for seniors ESL programs 	

Ward 4	Core Theme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language barriers (ESL & illiteracy issues) ▪ Poverty and Income insecurity issues
	What is the nature and extent of this core issues among the immigrant/refugee seniors in your geographic area?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ So many ethnic communities present – it is difficult to put the resources in from organizations that are able to provide services ▪ Limited availability ▪ Difficult to learn a new language ▪ Racism ▪ Lack of opportunities and support
	Why does this issue exist? (Causal factors)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poverty ▪ Younger members of these communities are busy working multiple jobs – seniors are alone at home without opportunity to learn English ▪ Sponsorship programs breakdown ▪ How do you reach isolated seniors? How do you get by family and privacy issues? ▪ Immigrant seniors do not declare their poverty for fear of losing immigration status ▪ No recreation center in Ward 4
	What are we currently doing about it? (Existing efforts)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Holding more sessions like this one
	What else should be done? (Additional efforts- individually or collectively)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Try to understand the cultural barriers (e.g. lack of trust in authenticity) ▪ Offer ESL in the community ▪ Increase to time period and change eligibility to access government sponsored ESL programs
	What can we do together? (Potential collaborative efforts)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify services ▪ Design a model to provide services unique for North America
What support and resources would we need to take further actions on this issue?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase outreach workers (cultural) ▪ Make more information available to immigrants once in Canada (sponsorship process) ▪ Model multi-cultural awareness, resources and collectively better serve the immigrant/refugee seniors 	

	▪ Include cultural groups
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Ward 5	Core Theme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language barriers (ESL & Illiteracy issues) ▪ Social isolation (need for social and recreational support)
	What is the nature and extent of this core issues among the immigrant/refugee seniors in your geographic area?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language barriers lead to social isolation
	Why does this issue exist? (Causal factors)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language barriers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of government support (funding); Lack of community support; Programs are designed for seniors; Isolation; Cultural barriers ▪ Social isolation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Limited information; Limited access to services; Limited transportation; Racial exclusiveness; Language barriers; Aging factors; Cultural barriers; Unfamiliarity with the system <p>Not all immigrant seniors are living in poverty.</p>
	What are we currently doing about it? (Existing efforts)
	<p>Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indo Canadian Women's Association – ESL classes twice a week ▪ Korean Association- No ESL at all ▪ Changing Together offers conversation classes and computer classes for seniors ▪ Strathcona Seniors Centre – provides space for people who need ESL classes, provide opportunity to use/connect other services ▪ LASCA – ESL classes twice a week <p>Social Isolation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Seniors Centres provide various services for mainstream seniors ▪ Indo-Canadian Association has held conference for seniors where they can share experiences ▪ Mental Health Outreach for seniors ▪ Changing Together: outreach service (hospital visits, fitness) ▪ LASCA – social activities ▪ Korean Association- seniors' college
	What else should be done? (Additional efforts- individually or collectively)
	<p>Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Religious organizations should provide language services ▪ Exchange information among senior serving organizations (should have more meetings like this one – Agency visits); encourage more collaboration between agencies/organizations; <p>Isolation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More communication/interaction among ethnic communities/seniors ▪ Party (ethnic pot luck, international day event); Seniors helping seniors
	What can we do together? (Potential collaborative efforts)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to offer the above programs ▪ Strathcona: Invite immigrant women to the centre and show available services ▪ Make isolated seniors come out of their homes; encourage them to meet people ▪ Provide more joint services 	
What support and resources would we need to take further actions on this issue?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funding; volunteers (drivers and teachers); information about existing services in different languages; recruit cultural brokers; should include all the important information in settlement information packages. 	

Ward 6	Core Themes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language barriers (ESL & Illiteracy issues) ▪ Complex health issues (physical & mental health) ▪ Poverty & Income security issues ▪ Social isolation (need for social and recreational support) – Community centres, libraries, etc. ▪ Housing issues ▪ Transportation issues ▪ Diversity/ Cultural barriers
	What is the nature and extent of this core issues among the immigrant/refugee seniors in your geographic area?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 27% of Edmonton’s ethnic minorities reside in Ward 6 ▪ Different ethnic groups, different languages and cultures ▪ Social isolation
	Why does this issue exist? (Causal factors)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language barriers isolate seniors ▪ Cultural barriers ▪ Diversity – language, customs, family customs, food choices, ▪ Gender issues ▪ Lack of funding
	What are we currently doing about it? (Existing efforts)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Some programming exists
	What else should be done? (Additional efforts- individually or collectively)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multicultural Seniors centre is needed/ Women Senior Centre also needed ▪ Reduce discrimination ▪ Go to politicians ▪ ESCC work with coalitions to develop grant proposals ▪ More long term care centres
	What can we do together? (Potential collaborative efforts)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lobby ▪ Share resources and facilities, Share information 	
What support and resources would we need to take further actions on this issue?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funding ▪ Volunteers (care and feeding) 	

City of Edmonton	Core Theme
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Housing issues ▪ Elder Abuse
	What is the nature and extent of this core issues among the immigrant/refugee seniors in your geographic area?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited housing support for abused seniors ▪ Families forced to live together, overcrowding ▪ Isolated people and afraid ▪ Hundreds of immigrant seniors are affected (based on anecdotal information – need accurate data)
	Why does this issue exist? (Causal factors)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Affordability of housing is a problem ▪ Antagonistic rel. between federal and provincial government regarding policy, programming, and funding ▪ Cost of support services ▪ Not enough housing ▪ Affordable housing rules forbid families co-habiting ▪ Lack of appropriate housing for family size ▪ No supports attached to housing ▪ Housing left to market for delivery – impossible to organize data ▪ Seniors don't want to live in areas that are closed to public transportation ▪ Seniors housing (GEF) not in places that are familiar to immigrant seniors
	What are we currently doing about it? (Existing efforts)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Six suites available for abused seniors ▪ EMCN – Trinity Manor – adjacent to EMCN – has housing and supports ▪ Edmonton Joint Planning Committee on housing is trying to organize data on demographics
	What else should be done? (Additional efforts- individually or collectively)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Need translators to work with other languages at advised serving points so they know what is available ▪ City planners/training developers in the needs of immigrant families ▪ Need more housing and supports attached for immigrant seniors ▪ Need to create ways of counting the number of immigrant seniors, the number of immigrant seniors who are homeless, and number of seniors inadequately housed ▪ Need more housing that is appropriate for family size
What can we do together? (Potential collaborative efforts)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ECOHH – priority census takers to collect data specific to age and ethnicity ▪ Advocacy for the needs of immigrant seniors ▪ Help put the developers, funders, seniors together to plan housing that is appropriate to immigrants and their families 	
What support and resources would we need to take further actions on this issue?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provincial funding to fix/upgrade/transform housing to make it more appropriate ▪ People who can speak other languages/translators and organizations to coordinate lists to connect persons needing help and someone who can help ▪ Print materials in different languages ▪ The land in “Jasper East”! ▪ Trainers/training programs 	

Brief Analysis on Discussion of Core Themes/Issues

In the final analysis of the above group discussions, it is apparent linguistic and cultural barriers are at the core of all the issues facing isolated immigrant and refugee seniors. Many felt that language barriers lead to all the other issues identified in the research study, such as: social isolation, poverty, homelessness, and inadequate access to transportation. Language barriers and lack of understanding about other cultures were identified by many senior serving agencies as the major barrier to them reaching out to isolated immigrant and refugee seniors. As such, most groups chose to discuss issues and develop strategies to reach out to isolated seniors against the backdrop of language and illiteracy barriers in their communities.

The discussion of language barriers was centered on the unique needs of seniors. Many groups discussed the need for a different type English as a Second Language (ESL) curriculum for immigrant and refugee seniors. Such curriculum needs to take into consideration the unique learning styles of seniors in general, but more importantly, it needs to take into account the needs of illiterate immigrant and refugee seniors. Some groups discussed the possibility of developing a "*Frierian-model ESL Curriculum*" for immigrant and refugee seniors.

Although, participants understood and experienced directly or indirectly the changing demographics in their communities, most felt they did not have the appropriate resources to offer linguistically and culturally relevant services and programs. For many, this meeting represented the first opportunity to discuss their concerns about inequitable access to their programs and services. For example, as noted in the community mapping exercise, many participants recognized that their knowledge about demographics was inadequate.

Represented mainstream organizations were eager to make initial contact with ethnocultural organizations and immigrant/refugee serving agencies. This meeting gave them a chance to do that. Participants traded phone numbers, email addresses, business cards and program materials hoping to establish more communications and collaborations after this meeting.

Having even a few immigrant and refugee seniors participating in this meeting brought a sense of connection at a very human and personal level. Many representatives from senior serving agencies wished to have further interaction with immigrant and refugee seniors in order to be able to understand their concerns more deeply. Connecting with immigrant and refugee seniors through the brokers was deeply appreciated by the participants. Moreover, hearing about immigrant and refugee seniors' experiences from the health brokers' report also

raised the level of concern among participants. Many participants asked to have more meetings or opportunities like this one so that together we can disassemble the “us” and “them” attitudes.

For ethnocultural organizations and immigrant/refugee serving agencies, this meeting represented an opportunity to make the voices of the most invisible groups in our communities heard and reflected upon. The meeting also gave them an opportunity to learn more about available resources and to meet people that can help them connect isolated seniors with those resources.

At the macro level, participants also discussed that more work needs to be done in the area of policies. It is clear that federal, provincial and city level policies have a major influence on the current state of isolation for immigrant and refugee seniors. For example, the consequences of the breakdown of family class immigration policies were a topic of discussion in many groups. In addition, many groups discussed the discriminative and racist policies that prevent seniors from having equitable access to essential services. Many of such policies are based on lack of awareness about each others’ cultures and traditions. Many participants emphasized that education needs to happen in both the mainstream and the ethnocultural communities.

Lack of funding, shortage of volunteers (for example drivers and English teachers) and outreach workers, lack of information about existing services in different languages, shortage of cultural brokers to work with ethnocultural and mainstream communities were also discussed by many groups. In fact, one of the major barriers identified by senior serving agencies was that they did not know how to reach isolated immigrant and refugee seniors. They were eager to get help from ethnocultural and immigrant serving agencies in this regard. Interestingly, the premise of the current research study was to do that – to reach out to isolated immigrant and refugee seniors in Edmonton. This study has validated one model for reaching out to isolated seniors. However, many more resources (human and financial) are needed to make this model reach its maximum potential.

Participants were committed to continue working together to address issues facing immigrant and refugee seniors. However, it was recognized that that more funding is required.

Model for Collaborative Work

Following the group discussions, Yvonne shared a potential model for collaboration to enhance equitable access among immigrant and refugee seniors. She asked participants to consider whether this model could help us move forward and continue collaborating outside of this meeting. See Appendix D.

Recognition of Immigrant and Refugee Guest Seniors & Closing Remarks

Yvonne and Valdemar recognized and thanked the immigrant and refugee seniors that could participate in the meeting. A round of applause was given to Mrs. Amalija Dudas, Mr. Milutin Dokic, Mrs. Jacoba Figueroa and Mr. Livio Raneiglio, and Dr. Beung So.

Roger Laing, Executing Director of the Seniors Association of Greater Edmonton (SAGE) (former Society for the Retired and the Semi-retired) and co-Chair of the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council Board of Directors, provided the closing remarks for this meeting. The impressive energy and diversity of this group left a strong impression with him. This meeting has created the beginning of new relationships and opportunities. The findings from the current research study outline general and unique issues facing immigrant and refugee seniors in Edmonton. He hoped that the energy he felt at this meeting would lead to changes in how we work. The biggest challenge for today's participants will be to sustain the relationships and collaborations. It is easy to say: "let's collaborate more", but it is difficult to implement such plans because of competing agendas. Now that the funding for this research study has ended, our challenge will be to determine how we can best make a significant change in the lives of immigrant and refugee seniors.

Appendix A – Workshop Participants

Name	Organization	Email	Phone
Jehan Wasset	Changing Together	jehan@changingtogether.com	421-0175
Irene Fleming	United Way	ifleming@uway.ab.ca	990-1000
Beung So	Korean Seniors College	beungso@telusplanet.net	
Gita Das	FCWA		490-0477
Soonil Kwon	Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op (MCHB)	soonil@telus.net	
Bharat Agnihotri	MLA, (Millwoods)	Bharat@telus.net	966-3536
John Reslly	City of Edmonton – Office of Diversity & Inclusion	John.reilly@edmonton.ca	496-9997
Sofia Yaqub	Multicultural Handicraft I. Friendships Society	-	461-1691
Bev A. Olsen	Consultant, member of the ESCC transition team	barbaraannolised@shaw.ca	437-2461
Jolanta Slaska	EMCN	jslaska@emcn.ab.ca	945-2282
Milutin Dokic	Former Yugoslavia Community members		
Amalija Dudas			
Irl Miller	Edmonton Once Voice	imiller@oanet.com	455-3866 x 315
Sandy Sherman	SAGE	ssherman@mysage.com	423-5510
Paul Kalsi	Millwoods Welcome Centre	pkalsi@mwci.ca	462-6924
Teresa Johnson	City of Edmonton	Teresa.johnson@edmonton.ca	496-7846
Carol Aubee-Girard	ECALA	ceo@ecala.org	415-5520
Jalal Barzanji	MCHB	ckfa_barzanji@hotmail.com	619-7693
Vi Presley	ESCC	vipresley@shaw.ca	476-0940
Roger Laing	SAGE	rlaing@srsr-seniors.com	
Pat Macdonald	Strathcona Senior Centre	hpmac@shaw.ca	433-1784
David Loper	ESCC	decondor@shaw.ca	951-9864
Dulari Prilhipaw	EISA	newneighbours@interbaum.com	474-8445
Anne McIlwaine	Elder Abuse Intervention Team	-	471-1122
P. Haydih	AADSP	executivedirector@aadsp.com	434-4742
Celine D'Aoust	Seniors Volunteer Driving	seniorsdriving@ocii.com	732-1221
Anna Der	Seniors Volunteer Driving	seniorsdriving@ocii.com	732-1221

Name	Organization	Email	Phone
Jane Smith	Norquest	Jane.smith@norquest.ca	644-6359
Susan Prosser	City of Edmonton	Susan.prosser@edmonton.ca	952-2088
Trina Firth	City of Edmonton	Trina.firth@edmonton.ca	944-5790
Zdravka Brnada	MCHB	zdravko@shaw.ca	749-5751
Lucia Tcixeina	Catholic Social Services	luciateixeira@catholicsocialservices.ab.ca	424-3545
Alba Valderrama	City of Edmonton, FCSS	Alba.valderrama@edmonton.ca	496-4677
Kathryn Horton	EJPCOH	Kathryn.horton@moresafehomes.net	496-7290
Edna Bohaclyk	Northgate Senior Centre	-	475-3726
Josie Leiter	Northgate Senior Centre	Josie.leiter@edmonton.ca	496-7355
Susana Runge	MCHB	Srunge@shaw.ca	423-1973
Jacoba Figueroa	Latin American Seniors Association (LASCA)	-	426-0343
Livio Raneiglio	Latin American Seniors Association (LASCA)	-	426-0343
Noelle Jones	Calder Seniors	-	451-1925
Brian Staples	SALT	brianstaples@shaw.ca	466-8042
Sandy Reid	ACA	Sandy.reid.aca@interbaun.com	
Valdemar Larsen	Salient Research & Development	Vlarsen1@telus.net	951-0388
Yvonne Chiu	MCHB	yvonnechiu@shaw.ca	
Ximena Ramos Salas	MCHB, University of Alberta Canadian Institutes of Health Research	ximena@cihr.ualberta.ca	492-2425

Appendix B- Immigrant Classes and Programs

Family Class	Immigrants who have close relatives or family members of Canadian citizens or permanent residents. Sponsors must promise to support the relative or family member and their accompanying family members for a period of three to 10 years to help them settle in Canada.
Economic Class Immigrants	<p>Programs: Skilled Worker, Business Class, Live-in-caregivers, and Provincial nominees</p> <p>Includes immigrants who have education, work experience, knowledge of English and/or French and other abilities that will help them to establish themselves successfully as permanent residents in Canada.</p>
Convention Refugee	A person who is outside of their country of nationality or habitual residence and who is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, political opinion, nationality or membership in a particular social group. Refugees are sponsored to immigrate to Canada by the Federal Government, sponsorship agreement holders and their constituent groups, groups of five individuals, and community sponsorship groups. Sponsorship groups commit to providing settlement assistance to refugees for one year from the date the refugee arrives in Canada.
Refugee Claimant	A person in Canada whose removal to their country of nationality or former habitual residence would subject them to the possibility of torture, risk to life, or risk of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada Website – www.cic.gc.ca

Appendix C – Cultural Responsiveness Assessment Tool

Supporting Organizations to be Culturally Competent

This tool can be used to assess your organization. We are looking for your insights and feedback. We ask for your suggestions and comments. Please leave on the table after you are done.

What is Cultural Competence?

- Cultural competence is the ability to work effectively within the cultural orientation values of others
- Cultural competency focuses on all people in an organization and is proactive and performance oriented.

Leadership

Questions	Comments
How is the leadership of our organization developing cultural competence?	
How do we seek the enhancement of our knowledge and understanding of the diverse cultural, racial and ethnic groups in the Edmonton community?	
Do we have organizational policies and procedures in place that reflect cultural competency?	
Do we include immigrant seniors and their families as the primary voice in the development of a culturally competent organization?	

Human Resources

Questions	Comments
Does our organization recruit, retain and develop a culturally diverse workforce at all levels of the organization that reflects the community that we serve?	
Does our organization have a training program that promotes cultural competence?	
Do the job descriptions include skill sets related t cultural competence?	

Services

Questions	Comments
Does our organization offer services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate?	
Does our organization promote and support the involvement of advocacy groups, immigrant seniors and their families in the planning, development and implementation of our system of services?	
Does our agency have a plan to reduce disparities in care for the under served population in the communities?	

Appendix D- Potential Model for Collaboration to Enhance Equitable Access for Immigrant & Refugee Seniors

