



# Settlement Services for Immigrant Women, Youth, and Seniors in Canada: Who Is Falling Through the Cracks?



A Community Panel Discussion



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WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES IN  
**PEEL, TORONTO  
& YORK REGION**

# Immigrant Women: Knowledge Synthesis Report

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IDENTIFYING STRUCTURAL BARRIERS TO IMPROVE SETTLEMENT  
OUTCOMES FOR VULNERABLE GROUPS OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN

RUPALEEM BHUYAN AND CATHERINE SCHMIDT

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

# Research Goals and Framework

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- Review of recent academic literature to:
  - 1) Identify the settlement needs and settlement outcomes for immigrant women in Canada
  - 2) Identify the role that settlement services play in immigrant women's settlement
- Intersectional gender-based analysis approach, recognizing the heterogeneity of immigrant women's experiences

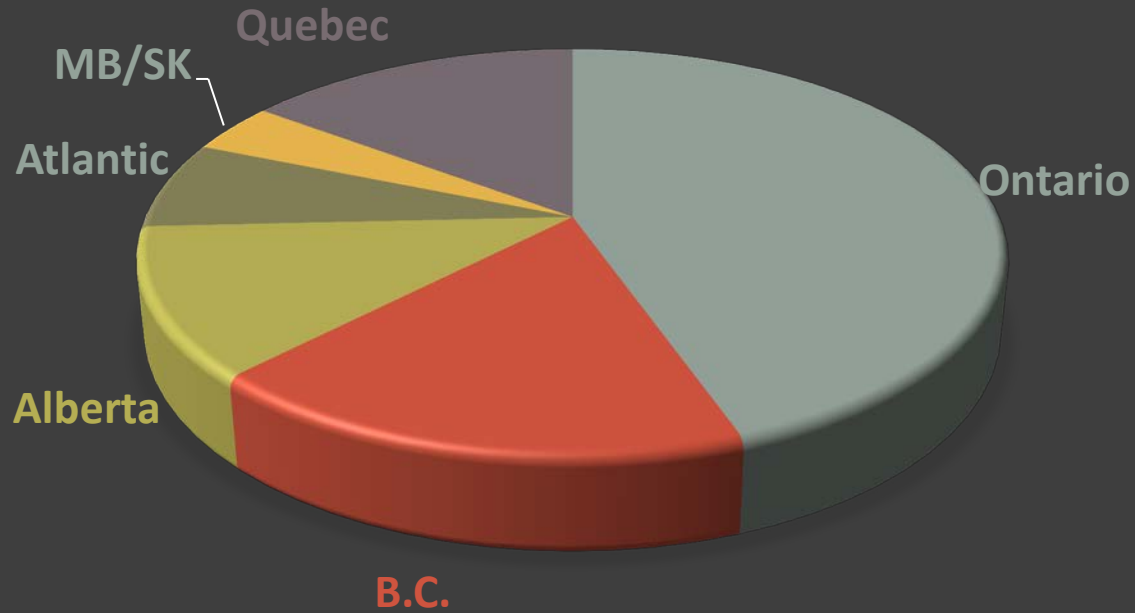
# Methods

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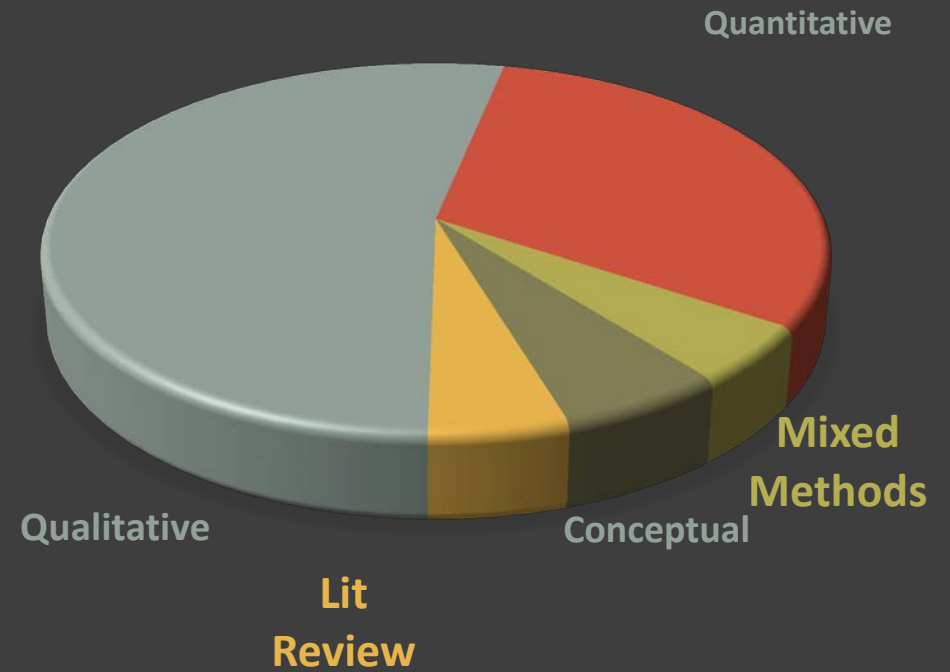
- Systematic review of academic literature (adapted from Arksey and O'Malley, 2005)
- Inclusion criteria:
  - English-language peer reviewed articles
  - Published between 2008 and 2017
  - Focus on settlement experiences, needs, or outcomes
  - First-generation immigrant women in Canada
- Initial sample of **1060** articles; after screening, **171** articles included in review
- Targeted sample of grey literature

# Overview of Literature Sample

REGION OF RESEARCH

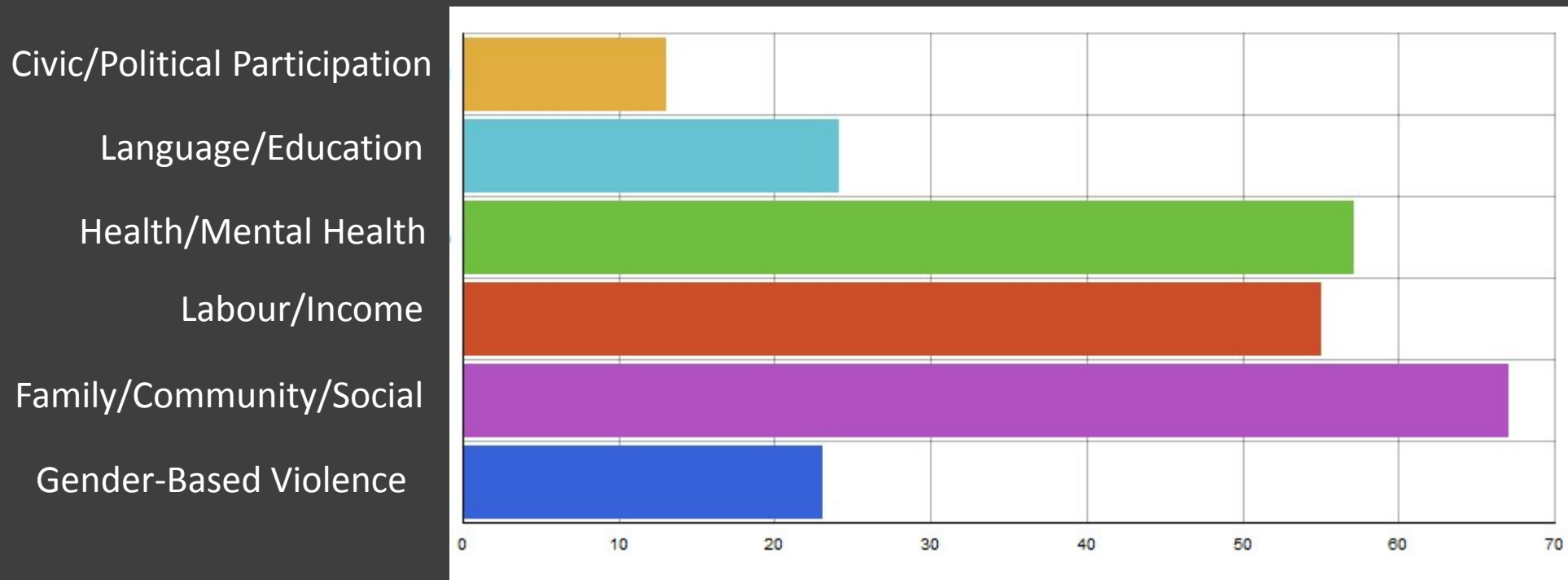


TYPE OF RESEARCH



# Organization of Report: Six Inter-related Areas Impacting Women's Settlement

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# Findings: Settlement is a Family Process

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- Family context of settlement
- Family roles and caregiving responsibilities
- Transnational families
- Parenting young children
- Parent and grandparent sponsorship



# Findings: Labour Market Participation

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- Unemployment and underemployment
- Precarious work
- Deskilling
- Barriers to labour market integration:
  - Systemic racism: Non-recognition of foreign credentials and experience
  - Language and discrimination based on accent
  - Loss of social networks
  - Caregiving responsibilities





# Findings: Health and Mental Health

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- Higher rates of poor health and chronic mental health problems
- Intersecting structural inequalities and social determinants of health
- Mental health vulnerability during pregnancy, post-partum, and children's early years



# Findings: Vulnerability of Women with Precarious Immigration Status

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- Increase in temporary migration and people with precarious status
- Multiple vulnerabilities of women with precarious status
- Limited access to health care and social services
- Risk of workplace abuse, poverty, housing insecurity, and violence
- Exclusion from most settlement services

# Vulnerable Groups of Immigrant Women

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1. Low-Income women and families
2. Women with precarious immigration status
3. Refugee women and women who have experienced pre-migration trauma
4. LGBTQ women
5. Seniors

# Critical Transition Periods

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1. Parenting: Pregnancy, post-partum, children's early years; children with chronic illness/disability
2. Women seeking safety from domestic violence
3. Family status transitions (divorce or death of spouse/partner)



# Next Phase: Primary Research Areas

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1. Settlement needs of immigrants with precarious status
2. Settlement services during critical transitional periods
3. Promising practices in settlement organizations that support women

# References

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Arksey, H., and O'Malley, L. (2005). Scoping studies: Towards a methodological framework. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Theory & Practice* no. 8 (1):19-32. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1364557032000119616>

Bhuyan, R. & Schmidt, C. (2018). *Identifying structural barriers to improve settlement outcomes for vulnerable groups of immigrant women: Knowledge synthesis report*. Toronto: CERIS. Retrieved from: <http://ceris.ca/IWYS/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/IWYS-Knowledge-Synthesis-Report-Womens-report-Sept-2018.pdf>

# Immigrant Youth: Knowledge Synthesis Report

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A LITERATURE REVIEW OF MIGRANT YOUTH SETTLEMENT AND SERVICE  
ISSUES

JOHN SHIELDS AND OMAR LUJAN

RYERSON UNIVERSITY

# Introduction

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- Based on a critical literature review and experiences working in the field with immigration issues
- Who are immigrant youth?
- Literature quite uneven on topics researched; little work on impact of settlement programming
- Age at time of arrival very important for youth outcomes



# Major Themes

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## 1. Labour Market / Employment

- Key issue but relatively few academic studies
- Immigrant youth have high levels of unemployment and precarious employment rates, and low levels of labour market attachment compared to Canadian-born youth
- Place-based job discrimination; example Jane-Finch
- There are significant race and country of origin outcome differences (especially notable for those of African, Jamaican, and Latin American backgrounds)

## Labour Market / Employment

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- Gender also important (males do better with respect to wages, job security, and labour market participation)
- Youth overall face barriers, unemployment rates double that of adults (11% in October 2018, immigrant youth's stands at about 3% higher – overall unemployment rate 5.8%)
- Common challenges faced by immigrant youth (transportation; ethnic and racial barriers; workplace interview clothing)
- Job search strategies (heavy use of friendship networks; want ads; cold calls; volunteering; employment agencies). How effective?
- We know very little about how immigrant youth manage their labour market marginalization and exclusion

## 2. Education

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- Stronger primary, secondary, and post-secondary performance and completion rates than non-immigrant youth
- Youth achievement linked to parents' own education, involvement with youth, and their social inclusion in society (strong family connection)
- Many immigrants come to Canada for educational opportunities for children
- Immigrant girls have higher achievement than boys, but both do well
- Still problems with Euro-centric curriculum, instances of racism (cases of marginalization), language exclusion of Francophone immigrants in English Canada, etc.

### 3. Health, Mental Health and Well-Being

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- Immigrant youth's cultural practices help them avoid many health risks (smoking, drinking, drugs, healthy eating, active in sports)
- Immigrant youth tend to be highly resilient and have good self-esteem
- However, there are also mental health issues and high levels of stress
- Less use of sexual health and sex education resources (need for more culturally sensitive programs)

## 4. Social and Civic Participation

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- Immigrant youth are frequently engaged in volunteering (hospitals with children, local events, via religious institutions, settlement agencies)
- 'Radicalization' among 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation youth subject of emerging literature
- Overall low crime rates and gang activity

## Social and Civic Participation

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- However, immigrant youth with pre-migration trauma at risk of gangs and other anti-social activity
- Isolation identified as a risk factor, hence programs that promote relationship building and connections with peers and others
- Muslim populations often targeted and viewed with suspicion

## 5. Immigrant Youth and Adult Responsibilities

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- Adult responsibilities include: income earning; providing care for family members including younger siblings; family language translation roles; etc.
- Reinforces that we must view youth within a larger family context
- The extent of such responsibilities can create barriers to educational and personal development

## 6. Lack of Awareness About Services and Language Barriers

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- Difficulties in finding information and guidance about the educational system
- Parents of children often lack language skills to navigate the educational system and other services



## 7. Lack of Adequate Housing and Transportation Services

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- Housing discrimination, affordability, homelessness, and 'hidden homelessness'
- Lack of public transit (especially outside major cities, including suburbs)

## Some Policies and Programming Considerations

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- 1) Involve immigrant youth in the development of policies and programs
- 2) Develop more culturally appropriate services, especially in health and education
- 3) Adopt family-centered approach to immigrant youth programming
- 4) Broaden settlement service eligibility
- 5) Target services to most vulnerable immigrant youth

# Immigrant Seniors: Knowledge Synthesis Report

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RECENT CANADIAN IMMIGRANT SENIORS:

A LITERATURE REVIEW OF SETTLEMENT EXPERIENCES AND SERVICES

NANCY MANDELL, JANA BORRAS, JULIA HEMPHILL, AND JANICE PHONEPRASEUTH

YORK UNIVERSITY

# PHASE 1: Knowledge Synthesis Report

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## Questions addressed in Literature Review

1. What settlement experiences and challenges facing recent immigrant seniors are outlined in the Canadian academic and grey literature?
2. What is the impact of settlement services on the settlement experiences of recent immigrant seniors?
3. What gaps and policy recommendations are suggested?

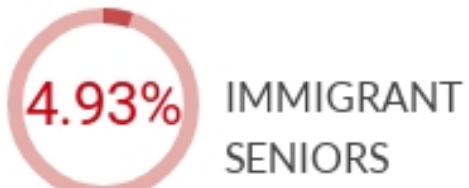
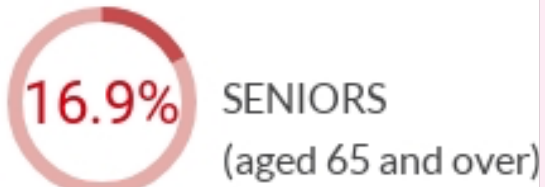
## Defining Canadian Immigrant Seniors

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- Aged 65+
- Have arrived within past 5 five years
- Immigrant seniors a smaller proportion of total immigrants
- Majority arrive in the Family Class immigrant category
- Between 2011 and 2016, most newcomers aged 65+ came from Asia and Pacific (i.e. China, India, and the Philippines)

# 35,151,728

## CANADIAN POPULATION



## WHO ARE SENIOR NEWCOMERS?



Between 2011 to 2016

# 4.63%

### Of Newcomer Immigrants are aged 65 and over



86% FAMILY  
SPONSORED

8% REFUGEE

3% ECONOMIC  
MIGRANT

3% OTHER

14.2% Of Canadians aged 65 and over  
live below the Low- Income  
Measure (LIM-AT)

22.2% Of Senior Newcomers live below  
the Low-Income Measure (LIM-  
AT)

### SOURCE COUNTRY

CHINA

INDIA

PHILIPPINES

### TOP DESTINATION

TORONTO

VANCOUVER

MONTREAL

# Challenges and Contributions

## CHALLENGES

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Economic Security

Education and Language Training

Health and Well-Being

Identity and Belonging

Accessing Information and Support

Transportation and Outdoor Spaces

## CONTRIBUTIONS

Cultural Transmission

Multigenerational Living Arrangements

Care work: family, friends, transnational

Social and Civic Participation

Economic Assistance

Promote integration through community involvement

# Gaps and Recommendations: 1

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- Income Security

- Access to government income programs: remove restrictions on OAS
- Job information and employment training for younger seniors (55-70)

- Housing

- Core housing subsidies required for those who wish to live independently

- Language Classes

- Tailored to seniors' needs, provide linguistic mentors in communities, provide child/senior care, make programs practical



## Gaps and Recommendations: 2

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- Health and Social Services
  - Linguistically and culturally appropriate programs
  - Adequate staff
  - Flexible programming
- Funding for Community Agencies
  - Significant source of informal support
  - Provides settlement information
  - Facilitates immigrant sense of belonging and integration

## Gaps and Recommendations: 3

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- Transportation
  - Access to public transportation increased through reduced senior fares
  - Develop network of volunteer drivers
- Age-friendly Communities
  - Improve accessibility of public space: benches, wider sidewalks, signage
- National Information Sharing
  - Among informal and formal service providers, provinces, municipalities, LIPs and NGOs

# Sharpening our Focus on Seniors

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## Redefine Settlement

- Extend definition of newcomer settlement to 15 years
- Distinguish between young, middle, and frail seniors
- Take account of migration status: sponsored, economic class, refugees, Super Visa age at arrival

## Benchmark Settlement Outcomes for Seniors

- Economic, cultural, and social process

# NEXT STEPS: You Tell Us!

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## Thoughts about our research questions?

- Do they address your needs and views as service providers?
- What did we miss?

## Whom should we talk to?

# Discussion

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Stephanie Miller – Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship  
Canada

Moy Wong-Tam – Centre for Immigrant and Community Services

# Q&A

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# Closing

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Thank you!