**Healthy Aging Provincial Working Group**

**Interfaith/Intercultural Communities**

**Background:**

The **Community-Based Seniors Services Leadership Council (CBSSLC),** formerly the Raising the Profile Project **(**[**http://www.seniorsraisingtheprofile.ca/**](http://www.seniorsraisingtheprofile.ca/)**)** has created 5 working groups. The overall objective of the CBSSLC is to demonstrate the value and raise the profile of this sector, outline its current contribution to healthy aging, and explore the potential of the sector to do much more

**Overview of Working Group:**

This group will explore innovative ways in which Ethnic Older British Columbians keep physically active, socially connected, and independent in their communities for longer. By ethnic older British Columbians we mean older people who come from different cultural backgrounds, religious backgrounds, ethnic backgrounds, newcomers, Indigenous Elders and others as determined to be in scope by the working group members. Increasingly, community based programs and services are being seen as an integral, upstream, preventative approach in keeping Older persons healthier for longer; we have also seen there are certain variables which influence participation in community based programs and supports for older people that belong to a diverse set of cultures, faiths and ethnic communities.

**Co-Leads:** Tazul Ali – co-chair

**Group Composition:** Request for membership made in Healthy Aging Newsletter – Oct 15 and intentional outreach. The group will be co-chaired by 2 members of the Leadership Council

Members as of November 19 2018:

* Kahir Lalji (UWLM)
* Daisy Au (MOSAIC)
* Eva Touzard (PICS)
* Asmina Hirji (CfTE – Ismaili Community)
* Beth Kish (Peace Arch Hospice – Hospice Rep) -confirmed
* Gloria Roque (Kiwassa) – Kahir to approach
* JFSA Rep – Tazul to approach
* Japanese Community – Tazul to approach
* Loralei (Indigenous Rep) – Tazul to approach
* Eliza or Mary (SUCCESS) – Khim to approach
* Gulalai Habib - Kiwassa

**Mandate:** The purpose of this group is to explore and recommend innovative and inclusive approaches to support older adults from diverse communities, cultures and faith groups, including Indigenous Elders. This group will champion and advocate for approaches to better include Ethnic Older Adults into community based programming and will initiate demonstration projects/initiatives to promote learning and sharing, encouraging, older adults to better understand one another

**Guiding document**: Learning from Lived Experiences of Aging Immigrants (S. Koehn, 2018)

As taken from above document:

The proportion of immigrants in Vancouver (40.8%) is well above that of Canada generally (21.9%) and

Vancouver's proportion of immigrant older adults (at 21.5%) is higher than the proportion of all older adults in the general population (15.9%) reflecting the aging of immigrants in the city. (Statistics · Canada, 2016). There exists extreme variations in the recognition, public policy and service delivery options for older ethnic people across Canada. We believe that the development of cross-sectoral and cross-regional collaboration, networking and information-sharing can result in new and innovative approaches to action both within and across sites.

Immigrant and ethnocultural minority older adults have demonstrated strength and resilience in the

face of many challenges throughout their lives (Turcotte & Schellenberg, 2006). The process of immigration shapes their experiences over the life course and into old age (Daatland & Biggs, 2004). This is true whether they immigrated in the past as young adults or more recently, and whether they came to Canada as independent class immigrants, refugees, as temporary workers, through the live.in caregiver program or as sponsored members of families. Unfortunately, most research on immigration and aging does not leave room for people to relate what is meaningful to them (Novek, Morris-Oswald

& Menec, 2012).

Health, social and community care providers need to grapple with the complexities of providing

culturally competent' supports to diverse older adults (Brotman et al., 2015; Shemirani, 2006).For example, to date, only *5%* of social workersundergo gerontological training and sustained effort is needed to build capacity in this area (Choi, 2014; Rozario & Chadiha, 2014).Poorly defined and inconsistent use of social constructions such as race, culture and ethnicity obscures their complexity and results in essentialist explanations of health and social outcomes among minority older adults (Koehn & Kobayashi, 2011). *As* a resul4 within-group differences are overlooked, cultural dynamism is ignored, and attention is deflected from the structural inequities that underlie apparent cultural/racial differences.

Cultural and racist explanations of inequities experienced by immigrant older adults fail to

account for the heterogeneity among them that arises from unique configurations of determinants of health and aging. These include the influence of income and poverty, education, stress associated with minority status, social capital, neighbourhood characteristics and service access, and immigration status and experiences (e.g. refugee and sponsored immigrants status render older adults especially vulnerable to economic insecurity, abuse and isolation) (Ajrouch & Abulrahim, 2014; Koehn & Kobayashi, 2011). Inadvertently, such explanations shift the burden of responsibility for inequitable treatment to minority older adults and their families. Alternatively, the effects of culture and other factors, such as socioeconomic disadvantage and discrimination based on race and disability, are conflated. Understanding how disadvantage is intensified as each affects the other over time is more important.

**Activities:**

* Shine the light on challenges/gaps/successful programs that may exist in engaging older adults to engage in intercultural/interfaith communities (Lit review and Inventory of programs)
* Develop Calendar of cultural events
* Build library of resources that promote/advocate for intercultural/interfaith engagement (CORE Resources / Webinars/Trainings)
* Create opportunities to engage older adults to celebrate and learn from different cultures and different faith groups (Lunches, cultural events)
* Lead/Champion projects/initiatives/activities (social media, face-to-face, online) that promote intercultural/interfaith engagement for older adults (6 Tasty Videos)
* Information Sharing (Lived Experiences Exhibit; workshop logistics)
* Determine a suite of recommendations (Policy, funding or other) that Highlight engagement strategies for ethnically diverse communities. This will include building and supporting local capacity of individuals as well as organizations; also look at volunteer recruitment, training and retention (Working Group white paper)

Practicum Student:

We are looking for a student interested in the area of immigrants, ethnicity, culture and faith and Aging. The student will support the execution of the above mentioned activities and will ideally meet a satisfactory level of the below:

**Typical Duties:**

* Research and collects data through structured interviews; telephone calls.
* Creating surveys and compiling data
* Interprets, synthesizes and analyzes data.
* Writes and edits materials for publication and presentation.
* Meets with Committee members on regular basis to maintain ongoing communication regarding development of the project.
* Plan, execute and officiate community meetings and events
* Curate social media platforms and material
* Literature review and white paper creation

**Qualifications:**

* Current enrolment in the undergraduate or graduate studies programs with experience and authority Social Services, Gerontology, Public Policy, human geography, sociology / anthropology etc.
* Subject knowledge and oral/written communication skills
* Ability to work independently, accurately and to problem solves technical and methodological issues that arise during the course of the research.
* Ability to apply sound research techniques, methodology and logical critical analysis.
* Strong organization and interpersonal skills.
* Sensitive to different cultures and versatility in communication approaches
* Experience with communications and social media development and platforms

**Duration:**  A one year commitment will be required. Meetings will be held once a month which one in person meeting in Metro Vancouver every quarter. After the year, it will be assessed whether the group should continue or dismantle depending on what the group feels they have accomplished or if there is more work to be done.

**Budget:** Funding for identified activities. (Student to develop)