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News and Updates. April 2024 - Issue # 54

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Migration and resilience in urban Canada-Immigration et résilience en milieu urbain



Hello Everyone,

This newsletter highlights the value of community-based and sustained research partnerships. Partners' research about international students and municipal and provincial governance of immigration and settlement is featured. In addition, the KM Report indicates that a video for every panel from the Ottawa Immigration Forum is now available along with the presentations from the virtual panel entitled Going Hybrid: Lessons from Quebec and Ontario Immigrant-Serving Agencies During the Pandemic at the P2P Conference. We have also added links to an open-access article evaluating immigrant-serving agencies' pandemic responses with recommendations for the future of the sector. BMRC-IRMU partners have been key to ensuring that these research projects are relevant to service providers, policymakers, and migrants themselves.

In March, SSHRC extended the use of the partnership funds. The extension will allow us to complete key knowledge mobilization activities including moving the website to a new 'theme.' Although completely unexpected, moving the website will help ensure that partnership materials are available in the future. I am very grateful to the Secretariat staff who have taken on this unexpected task with enthusiasm. Please let Patricia know if you have additional KM outputs that can be completed and posted **before September 1, 2024**.

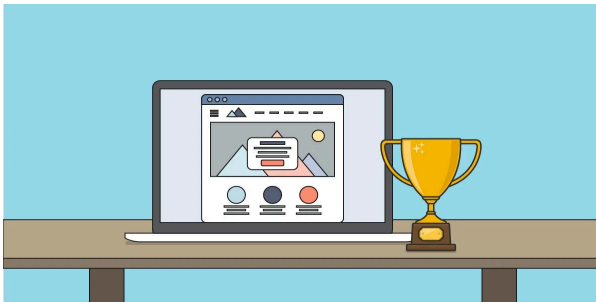
The partnership continues to evolve. It is my pleasure to welcome Chantal Goyette, who replaces Chris Hamilton, as the new Senior Director of Research and Knowledge Mobilization within the Research and Data Branch of IRCC. As the Senior Director, Chantal spearheads the strategic direction of research initiatives, driving evidence-based policymaking at the highest levels. I would also like to welcome Rodel Ramos from York Region whom many of you met in Gatineau and Ottawa. Moyo Aderemi and Nyamulola Kambanji are now sharing responsibility for representing the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership. Welcome to both of you. With the arrival of new people, I also want to acknowledge their predecessors' valuable contributions. Lisa Alfieri-Sladen strengthened our collaboration with York Region by her steadfast commitment to the BMRC-IRMU partnership. Hindia Mohamoud made exceptional contributions to the partnership on behalf of the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership. Chris Hamilton's commitment to evidence-informed policymaking

This is a gentle reminder that some of you have received a request for information about contributions. Let Camila know if you have any questions. We look forward to hearing from you. I also want to remind everyone that we are happy to add presentations, media activities, and publications to the Achievements Report. Just send a note to bmrcirmu@yorku.ca.

All the best,

Valerie

Knowledge Mobilization News



Policy Previews:

1. [Lessons in Partnering: Three BMRC-IRMU Case Studies on the Challenges and Benefits of Community-Academic Research Partnerships](#) by Patricia F. Walker, Valerie Preston, Trisha Scantlebury, Michaela Hynie, Janice Phonepraseuth, Jana Borrás, and Chedly

Belkhodja

2. [Toronto's Housing Crisis: When Immigration and Housing Policies Don't Align](#) by Brian Ray and Valerie Preston. Also available [in French](#).

Research Digests:

1. [Resettled Syrian Refugees' Housing Transitions: The Early Years in Canada](#) by Damaris Rose, Oula Hajjar, and Jill Hanley.
2. [Les transitions dans le logement des réfugiés syriens réinstallés : Les premières années au Canada](#) par Damaris Rose, Oula Hajjar et Jill Hanley.

Research Report:

1. [Le rôle de la Ville de Gatineau en matière de l'accueil, de l'établissement et de l'intégration des personnes immigrantes](#) par Luisa Veronis, Virginie Mesana et Daniel Boutin.
2. [The role of the city of Ottawa in immigrant settlement and integration](#) by Luisa Veronis, Daniel Boutin, and Virginie Mesana.

Presentations:

1. The video recordings of the [7th Biennial Ottawa Immigration Forum](#) are now available on [OLIP's YouTube channel](#).
2. [A social resilience lens to universities' contradictory role in international students' experiences](#) by Luisa Veronis and Christina Gabriel presented at the CERC Migration Working Group meeting.
3. [Les expériences linguistiques des immigrants qualifiés sur le marché du travail à Ottawa-Gatineau : capital linguistique et bilinguisme asymétrique](#). Webinaire avec Luisa Veronis - 27 mars : CAMH Le

Open Access Journal Articles:

1. [Transforming settlement and integration services during a pandemic](#) by Valerie Preston, John Shields, and Jayesh D'Souza. Published by *International Migration* on March 11, 2024.

Committees



Steering Committee

At its meeting on April 9, 2024, the Steering Committee underscored the importance of updating the website by approving the financial decision to extend the Secretariat until September 30, 2024. It also approved earmarking additional funds, up to \$5,000 per book, to ensure open access versions of the books being published by McGill-Queen's University Press and University of British Columbia Press. The availability of these funds will be confirmed once the new website is operating successfully.

Knowledge Mobilization Committee

The KM Committee met on March 8, 2024 to discuss the Partnerships Achievement Report. In addition, the Committee discussed the development of the new BMRC website, including its design, function, and other technical aspects of the website migration (from an outdated theme to York's new website theme).

City Reports



Prepared by Dr. Luisa Veronis and Dr. John Shields.

Partnership, research teams across various City Networks developed a series of reports that describe the structures of governance relating to immigration, settlement, integration, and diversity at the three levels of government, including: the federal government ([Cockram et al. 2021](#)), the provinces of Ontario ([Praznik & Shields 2018a](#)) and Quebec ([Bachelerie et al. 2020](#); [Charette 2021a](#); [Charette 2021b](#)), and the cities of Toronto ([Praznik & Shields 2018a](#)), Ottawa ([Veronis et al. 2024a](#)), Gatineau ([Veronis et al. 2024b](#)), and Montreal (forthcoming).

Adopting a “social resilience” approach ([Preston et al. 2022](#)) requires paying attention to the institutions, structures, policies, and services available to newcomers and immigrants as they aim to rebuild their lives in a new society. Thus, the main purpose of these reports is to provide an overview of the broader policy and institutional context that shapes immigrants’ lives and experiences at different stages of (im)migration (from the time of application to arrival, settlement, etc.) and in different locations, and thus their resilience in the complex process of settlement and integration.

While in Canada the settlement of immigrants is a shared federal and provincial responsibility ([Cockram et al. 2021](#); [Praznik & Shields, 2018b](#)), municipalities have also been involved in processes of immigrant settlement and integration in various capacities ([Praznik & Shields, 2018a](#)). Each report offers a detailed examination of the main structures of governance for the respective jurisdiction and stakeholders involved in decision-making and managing public policy, initiatives, services, and programming that target immigrant populations – primarily focusing on permanent residents, including newcomers (i.e., immigrants and sponsored refugees who have settled in Canada for five years or less), refugees (i.e., sponsored refugees, asylum claimants, and those recognized as refugees), and to a lesser extent other groups with varied status (e.g., temporary migrants, international students, and those without status, among others).

In terms of methodology, the reports follow the approach Praznik and Shields ([2018a](#)) developed for the City of Toronto report. In each case, a variety of policy documents, reports, and information available on websites produced by each government and other relevant stakeholders – e.g., Immigrant Serving Agencies (ISAs), Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs), community organizations, immigrant associations, etc. – were collected and analyzed. In each case, the reports provide useful visualizations (e.g., tables, graphs, figures.) such as timelines with key events and organigrams to highlight the characteristics and features that distinguish each government/jurisdiction – including most notable actors and stakeholders, significant policies, funding sources, initiatives, and more – along with links to resources for further information. As such, the series of reports provides a broad synthesis of key events and significant institutional and policy changes for the period going from about 2005-2020.

It is important to note that many of the reports were written/prepared before 2020 – in the early stages of the BMRC-IRMU Partnership. As such, they do not necessarily capture more recent policy changes in the post-pandemic period. Nevertheless, the information presented in the reports can serve as a baseline to assess the changes and initiatives put in place with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 and more broadly in the post-pandemic context – given the significant societal impacts related to the implementation of public health measures, along with a many other institutional and policy changes. For example, during the brunt of the pandemic lockdowns, service providers rapidly pivoted to online service provision ([Preston, Shields & D’Souza 2024](#)). Moreover, the federal and provincial governments increased immigration targets (both for permanent residents and temporary migrants) to adjust for the dip in arrivals due to border closures at the height of the pandemic, with important repercussions for a variety of sectors (e.g., labour market, health care, housing, education).

In addition to and to complement these reports, Praznik and Shields (2018c) wrote a guide describing the structures of settlement services across Canada, entitled *An Anatomy of Settlement Services in Canada*.

These reports are part of the SSHRC-funded partnership Building Migrant Resilience in Cities-Immigration et résilience en milieu urbain (BMRC-IRMU). For more information see: <https://bmc-irmu.info.yorku.ca/>.

International Students



Researching, Understanding, and Supporting International Student Resilience

Written by: Dr. Luisa Veronis (University of Ottawa) in collaboration with Dr. Christina Gabriel (Carleton University), Dr. Sutama Ghosh (Toronto Metropolitan University), Dr. Francine Schlosser (University of Windsor), and Dr. Margaret Walton-Roberts (Wilfrid Laurier University).

When the BMRC-IRMU Partnership started in 2016, our focus was primarily on addressing issues of resilience among immigrants and various groups of permanent citizens in Canadian cities – including newcomers, sponsored refugees, economic migrants, family reunification, etc. But by 2018, we became aware of the growing number of international students – there were [approximately 700,000 international students in 2018](#) up from [about 142,000 in 2010](#) – and the urgent need to examine the challenges they face and their resilience.

Among other things, increasing numbers of international students were seeking permanent residence through the so called ‘two-step migration’ process. Nevertheless, there were significant gaps in policy and available supports for their settlement and labour market integration. The transition from study permit to temporary work permit, and then to permanent residence is complex and filled with challenges that needed to be understood. These issues became even more complex when the COVID-19 pandemic struck in March 2020.

Several members of the BMRC-IRMU partnership conducted studies on the experiences of international students in different city-networks – Windsor, Kitchener-Waterloo, Toronto, Sudbury, Ottawa and Montreal. Their aim was to understand how they managed their temporary status, interactions with post-secondary institutions, segmented labour markets and the broader Canadian society. In each instance, the concern was with probing students’ ability to adapt to their circumstances, succeed at their studies, secure affordable housing, and manage a ‘two-step migration’ process.

From the BMRC-IRMU projects and initiatives, we learned that social resilience ([Preston et al. 2022](#)) proves to be a useful concept to understand the ways international students cope with, negotiate, and challenge the circumstances in which they find themselves. Our projects and various Partnership initiatives – including a forum held in Windsor in January 2020 and multiple webinars since then – revealed that shifting constellations of immigration policies and practices, post-secondary sector needs, and the availability of local infrastructures and resources (housing, employment, services, ethnic communities, civil society groups) all play a key role in shaping international students’ lives at different times. Importantly, while these factors and stakeholders shape international students’ resilience, their own resilience is also dependent on their ability to respond and adapt to changing circumstances (e.g., the pandemic) – that is, the resilience of the system as a

It is important to recognize that international student resilience is deeply entangled in the broader institutional and political context. Our projects and Partnership initiatives have documented the adverse experiences international students face, such as financial hardship and challenges accessing appropriate employment and affordable housing, and how their capacity to manage these experiences is shaped by the state, educational institutions, and the cities and neighbourhoods where they live.

We have prepared a list of resources produced through the BMRC-IRMU Partnership, including policy briefs, publications, reports, and research digests, which we hope will be useful to various stakeholders and others working with international students. We are also excited to announce an upcoming edited volume, "Leaving to Learn: Mapping the place of resilience in the journeys of international students to Canada," co-edited by Sutama Ghosh (Toronto Metropolitan University), Luisa Veronis (University of Ottawa) and Margaret Walton-Roberts (Wilfrid Laurier University) and to be published in 2025 with UBC Press. This collection will feature 12 chapters that provide a comprehensive examination of international student experiences in Canada from a social resilience perspective by mapping their journeys from pre-departure to arrival, study, work, and potentially gaining permanent residence on the way to citizenship.

To learn more, please [click here](#). For a complete list of all BMRC-IRMU publications on International Students, please [click here](#).

Partners and Partnering

In a new BMRC-IRMU Policy Preview entitled "Lessons in Partnering", Patricia F. Walker, Valerie Preston, Trish Scantlebury, Michaela Hynie, Janice Phonepraseuth, Jana Borrás, and Chedly Belkhodja discuss the challenges and benefits of community-academic research partnerships. These are assessed from the perspectives of community partners, academic researchers, and student research assistants.

Three case studies of migrant settlement and integration in Canadian cities illustrate the challenges and benefits of community-academic partnerships. Collaboration can serve to generate new knowledge, inform policy, enhance service provision for migrants and provide training and knowledge transfer opportunities for students, scholars, and practitioners. The case studies articulate the views of a service provider, an academic researcher, and two student research assistants who were involved in the Building Migrant Resilience in Cities/ Immigration et resilience en milieu urbain (BMRC-IRMU) partnership.

To read the Policy Preview, [click here](#).

Announcements

- BMRC is pleased to announce a new open access publication, entitled "The Limits of Community Nonprofit Sector Resilience: Evidence from Canadian Nonprofit Sector Surveys During the Pandemic" coming out in the next issue of the [Canadian Journal of Nonprofit and Social Economy Research/Revue canadienne de recherche sur les OBSL et l'économie sociale](#). This publication was co-authored by BMRC

- Honouring Debbie Douglas: Celebrate Debbie Douglas being named to The Order of Canada. **Saturday, May 4, 7-11 p.m.**, Fort York Visitors' Centre (250 Fort York Blvd). Light refreshments and cash bar will be available. To register, [click here](#).
- Ted Richmond and John Shields are delighted to announce the upcoming launch of their book entitled "The Canadian Non-profit Sector: The Neoliberal Assault on Community" with Fernwood Publishing. The book will be published **this September**. [Click here](#) to pre-order. **Preorder ships September 12.**
- Call for abstracts for Special Issue: The gendered migrant body: Embodied experiences and bodily strategies in South-South migration. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies - Special Issue. **Deadline for Abstract Submission: May 1, 2024.** For more information, [click here](#).
- Western University researchers, including BMRC member, Michael Haan, launched a new web mapping portal to explore how neighbourhoods change. The UNI-CEN Canadian Neighbourhood Change Explorer 1951-2021 enables Canadians to visually explore historical data from the 15 censuses taken over the seven decades spanning 1951 and 2021. People can access the portal at <https://edumaps.esri.ca/census/>.

In Case Your Missed It...

- The video recording of *Ups and downs in immigration status: Factors influencing transitions for precarious status migrants*, a BMRC-IRMU webinar which took place on December 7, 2023 is now available on the BMRC-IRMU [YouTube channel](#) and [website](#).
- The video recordings of the [7th Biennial Ottawa Immigration Forum](#) are now available on [OLIP's YouTube channel](#).

Other Important Information-Autre Information Importante

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