



PROJECT COLLABORATORS



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Immigration Initiative Overview

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

In recent years, immigration has emerged as a transformative force in the Brandon and Westman regions of Canada. With notable increases in newcomers choosing rural Canada as their new home, the region has witnessed significant demographic shifts. As the face of these communities evolves, the Rural Development Institute (RDI) has taken a proactive stance in engaging with newcomers and immigrant service organizations. The collective objective is to ensure that rural Canada remains not only a welcoming destination but also an inclusive and thriving community for all.

The influx of newcomers has brought diversity and new opportunities to the area, transforming it into a dynamic and multicultural landscape. However, with this growth come unique challenges for newcomers, such as accessing essential services, finding employment, bridging language barriers, and navigating cultural integration in rural settings. Addressing these challenges is paramount to ensuring the successful settlement and integration of newcomers. And RDI is committed ensure the well-being and prosperity of newcomers and their host communities. Through collaborative research projects and community engagement initiatives, RDI actively supports immigrant service organizations in identifying gaps and enhancing the overall welcoming environment for newcomers in rural Canada.

RDI's vision is to foster inclusive and thriving communities by:

- Measuring immigration priorities through community engagement and collaboration
- Finding innovative solutions to the challenges faced by immigrants
- Aligning the needs of local communities with those of immigrant communities, ensuring a harmonious integration, enriching society
- Leveraging our existing collaborations with service organizations, academia and research institutes to have a collective impact

IMMIGRATION RESEARCH PARTNERS

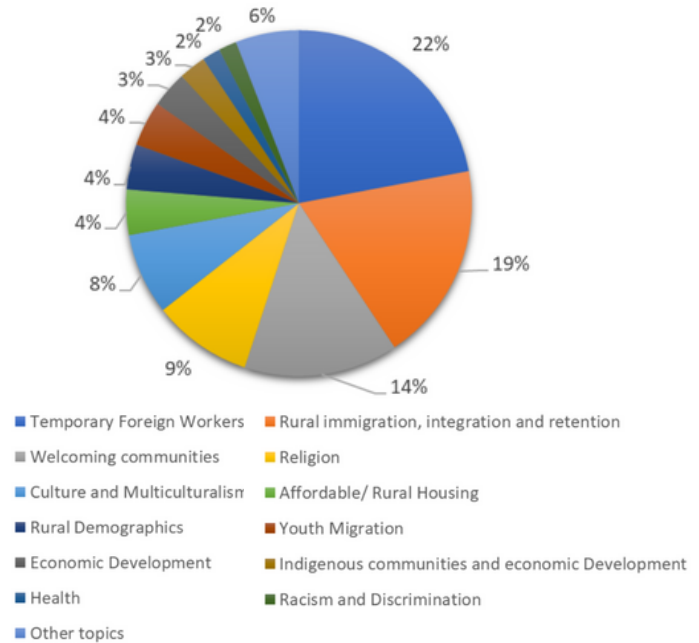
Currently, RDI is collaborating on different projects and activities with Brandon Local Immigration Partnership (BLIP), Westman Immigration Services (WIS), Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organization (MANSO), and Migration in Remote and Rural Areas Network (MIRRA).

RDI ACTIVITIES

1. RDI has recently initiated an analysis of the repository on immigration publications and research findings. 118 research articles and journals were analyzed to understand the key issues and challenges related to immigrants in rural Manitoba. This analysis has opened new avenues for collaboration with service organizations and has led to the inception of new research projects. The Brandon Labor Immigration Partnerships (BLIP) has expressed a keen interest in RDI's findings through repository analysis. The initial findings were shared with Labor Immigration Partnerships in the Westman Region. RDI is currently collaborating with Brandon Labor Immigration Partnerships, MANSO and Westman Immigration Services in immigration-related research.

2 A total of 3.5 million entrepreneurs are spread across Canada, but only 28% are women entrepreneurs (Entrepreneur Statistics in Canada for 2023 - Made in CA, 2022). The repository analysis has revealed a significant gap in research about gender issues within immigration, particularly the specific concerns of immigrant women. Although there is a substantial body of literature addressing the challenges faced by existing rural women, such as employment, childcare, gender-based violence, education and their efforts to maintain a work-life balance, the needs and obstacles encountered by immigrant women settling in rural Manitoba remained notably underexplored. Informal discussions conducted by RDI with immigrant women have confirmed that these challenges exist among this demographic in rural Manitoba.

IMMIGRATION PUBLICATION REPOSITORY



Shirlyn Kunaratnam, a researcher at RDI, has taken the initiative to focus her Master's thesis on the topic of "Exploring Entrepreneurship Among Immigrant Women in Brandon, Manitoba." This research will focus on identifying specific challenges and requirements of immigrant women, with a particular emphasis on entrepreneurship as a viable avenue for these women to gain financial independence and better manage their work-life balance.

3. As a crucial component of its strategic plan, BLIP has requested RDI to conduct a baseline survey within newcomer communities. The objective is to comprehensively understand the needs and services the newcomer community requires. The insights derived from this survey will enable BLIP to align its strategic plan with the community's specific needs. Furthermore, RDI will collaborate with BLIP to develop a demographic data collection tool, which will facilitate the systematic annual collection of data and enable effective data analysis.

