

Newcomer Social Programs

Developing Best Practices for Volunteers Supporting Newcomer Social Programs

1) Background:

This project is being conducted in collaboration with the New Canadians Centre (NCC) in Peterborough.

2) Purpose and Research Question:

The purpose of our project is to provide the New Canadians Centre with well-researched, realistic and practical recommendations for best practices for volunteer-run social programs that can support newcomers to Peterborough.

Research Question: What are the best practices for volunteer-run social programs for newcomers?

3) Methodology:

1. Literature Review

Conducted a comprehensive literature review of academic and non-academic sources to gather best practices for volunteer-run social programming of cities with similar size and demographics to Peterborough, Ontario.

2. Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to develop common themes from recurrent patterns and ideas. We drew from Trent databases and grey literature such as policy briefs and the NCC website.

4) Findings:

1. The Implementation of *Cultural Humility*:

Programs with comprehensive volunteer training on *Cultural Humility* and the organization's mandates had the best results for newcomer engagement, social connectedness and success for community engagement. *Cultural Humility* fosters institutional accountability, reduces power imbalances and encourages lifelong learning and self-reflection on personal prejudices.¹

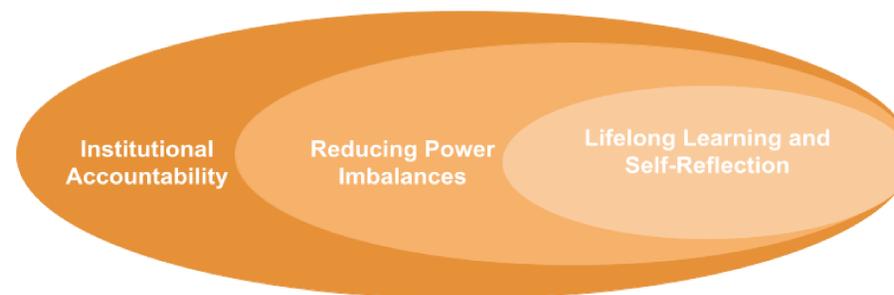
2. Incorporating Settled Newcomers as Volunteers:

Programs that recruited settled newcomers as volunteers had greater success for newcomers continuing to access organization services as newcomers felt more familiar with the community.²

3. Deep Cultural Engagement:

Programs with a focus on deep cultural engagement for newcomers and volunteers had high success rates with newcomers feeling welcome and like part of the community as they engaged past shallow levels of culture, such as food and dress, and into deeper levels such as norms and values.³

Cultural Humility:



Self-Determination Theory:



According to Albers et. al, research indicates significant improvements in a newcomer's well-being when the principles of Self-Determination Theory are met.

5) Preliminary Recommendations:

1. *Cultural Humility* Training

Including the principles of *Cultural Humility* in volunteer training by teaching institutional accountability and power systems while encouraging continuous self-reflection and learning to address the constantly evolving needs of a diverse newcomer and volunteer community.

2. Fostering *Self-Determination*

Implement *Self-Determination Theory* by working with the newcomers to develop and assess the programs offered at NCC.⁴

3. Hosting *Happenstance* Events

Break down formalities and host informal *happenstance* volunteer events.³

6) Bibliography:

¹ Marcie Fisher-Borne, Jessie Montana Cain, and Suzanne L Martin, "From Mastery to Accountability: Cultural Humility as an Alternative to Cultural Competence," *Social Work Education* 34, no. 2 (2015).

² Silje Sveen, Kirsti Sarheim Anthun, Kari Bjerke Batt-Rawden, and Laila Tingvold, "Volunteering: A Tool for Social Inclusion and Promoting the Well-Being of Refugees? A Qualitative Study," *Societies (Basel, Switzerland)* 13, no. 1 (2023).

³ Amber Kale, "Building Attachments to Places of Settlement: A Holistic Approach to Refugee Wellbeing in Nelson, Aotearoa New Zealand," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 65 (2019).

⁴ Thomas, Albers, Silvia Ariccio, Laura A Weiss, Federica Dessi, and Marino Bonaiuto, "The Role of Place Attachment in Promoting Refugees' Well-being and Resettlement: A Literature Review," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18, no. 21 (2021).