

Social Planning Council of Ottawa: Creating Community for Isolated Ethno-Cultural Seniors

Creating Community for Isolated Ethno-Cultural Seniors is a collaborative project aiming to reduce social isolation for immigrant and ethno-cultural minority seniors, many of whom are also living on low income, have poor official language skills, and have disabilities. The Social Planning Council of Ottawa provides core organizational capacity to the groups, and the groups bring their expertise on the needs of their community members and in program delivery. In year two, 22 ethno-cultural seniors groups participated in the program. The volunteer-led grassroots groups have extensive contacts with members of their respective ethno-cultural communities and are ideally suited to identify and engage isolated seniors in their community in culturally appropriate social, recreation, volunteering and community events. In addition to such activities, the groups provide their members with information and individual service navigation support to connect senior community members with available supports and services.



How much did the program achieve by the end of Year Two?



24 third party agreements signed

22 ethno-cultural seniors groups participated



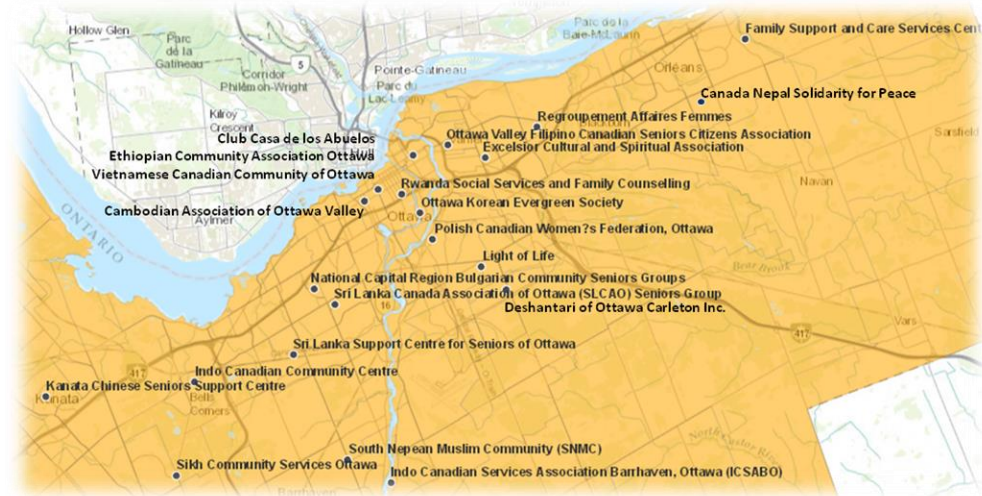
2,602 individual seniors participated

34,675 total encounters

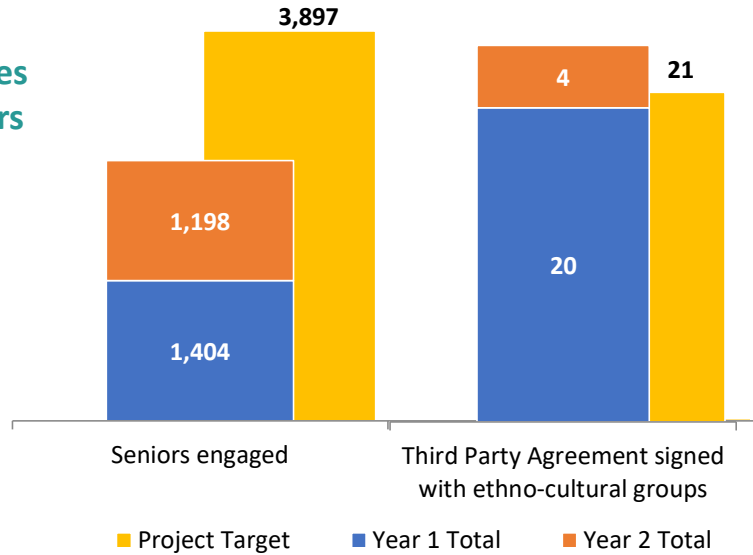


1,716 program & activities

593 senior volunteers



SPCO Deliverables over 3 Years



Benefits for Seniors

Seniors reported numerous benefits of participating in the ethno-cultural seniors groups, including:

- Being able to connect with others who share the same culture and language;
- Exercising, socializing, and sharing meals, music, jokes, stories, problems, news, etc. with each other;
- Giving seniors something to look forward to;
- Making new friends and building a support network;
- Providing an opportunity to go on outings they would not have a chance to go to otherwise;
- Meeting people & socializing without having to host at their own home
- Gaining knowledge of how to maintain health, and access services and supports in the community;
- Providing opportunities to volunteer; and
- Celebrating cultural and religious events with each other.

Examples of Impact

The following anecdotes are direct quotes and stories from seniors that demonstrate the impact of participating in the groups.

A member's spouse of over 50 years passed away in early 2018 and during an interview he talked about how much he relied on the group to provide him with support in helping him deal with his grief and trauma. He was so appreciative of their support. – member of Indo-Canadian Community Centre

"This group fills me with so much positivity since I have joined." – member of Sikh Community Services Ottawa

A member's spouse has dementia and does not want to go out very often, but the group's activities provide both of them with a comfortable place to socialize and get out of the house. It is good for both of their health. – member of South Nepean Muslim Centre

Feedback from one member who has been battling cancer: "I am sick at home, but not when I go out to the activities. Seeing people makes me feel less sick. The committee members do a wonderful job of helping by providing food and transportation to appointments." – member of Sri Lanka Canada Association of Ottawa

"At home you have smaller circles, so coming here [to the activities] it is nice to expand them." – member of Sikh Community Services Ottawa

