



Year Two Evaluation Report: Creating Community for Isolated Ethno-Cultural Seniors

SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL OF OTTAWA

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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; these were:

- Cambodian Association of Ottawa Valley
- Canada Nepal Solidarity for Peace
- Club Casa de los Abuelos
- Deshantari of Ottawa Carleton
- Excelsior Cultural and Spiritual Association
- Family Support and Care Services
- Indo-Canadian Community Centre Seniors
- Indo-Canadian Services Association Barrhaven, Ottawa
- Kanata Chinese Seniors Support Centre
- Light of Life
- Lotus Multicultural Friends – Ottawa
- National Capital Region Bulgarian Community
- Nord-Sud Développement Racines et Cultures
- Ottawa Korean Evergreen Society
- Ottawa Valley Filipino Canadian Seniors Citizen Association
- Polish Canadian Women's Federation
- Regroupement Affaires Femmes
- Rwanda Social Services and Family Counselling
- Sikh Community Services Ottawa
- South Nepean Muslim Centre
- Sri Lanka Canada Association of Ottawa
- Vietnamese Canadian Community of Ottawa

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.

The SPCO supports the groups by:

- Supporting participating groups with existing Third Party Agreements to continue their activities
- Holding monthly meetings to facilitate peer learning, and sharing of promising practices
- Monitoring the progress of participating groups, and renegotiate or replace agreements with underperforming groups
- Supporting groups to foster and build cross-cultural understanding

Overall, with the support of the SPCO, the groups:

- Inform seniors of available services and provide supports in navigating and accessing them
- Connect and engage isolated seniors in knowledge-building activities
- Develop opportunities for isolated seniors to socialize and engage them in recreational activities
- Empower isolated seniors to contribute their knowledge and skills
- Expand awareness about dementia and dementia supports among seniors and volunteers
- Train seniors and volunteers to recognize elder abuse and identify appropriate supports
- Increase the capacity of ethno-cultural minority groups to serve their communities
- In so doing, the program aims to build strong social networks for sustainable peer support in order to improve the connectedness and wellbeing of their senior community members.



How much did Creating Community for Isolated Ethno-Cultural Seniors accomplish in years one and 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

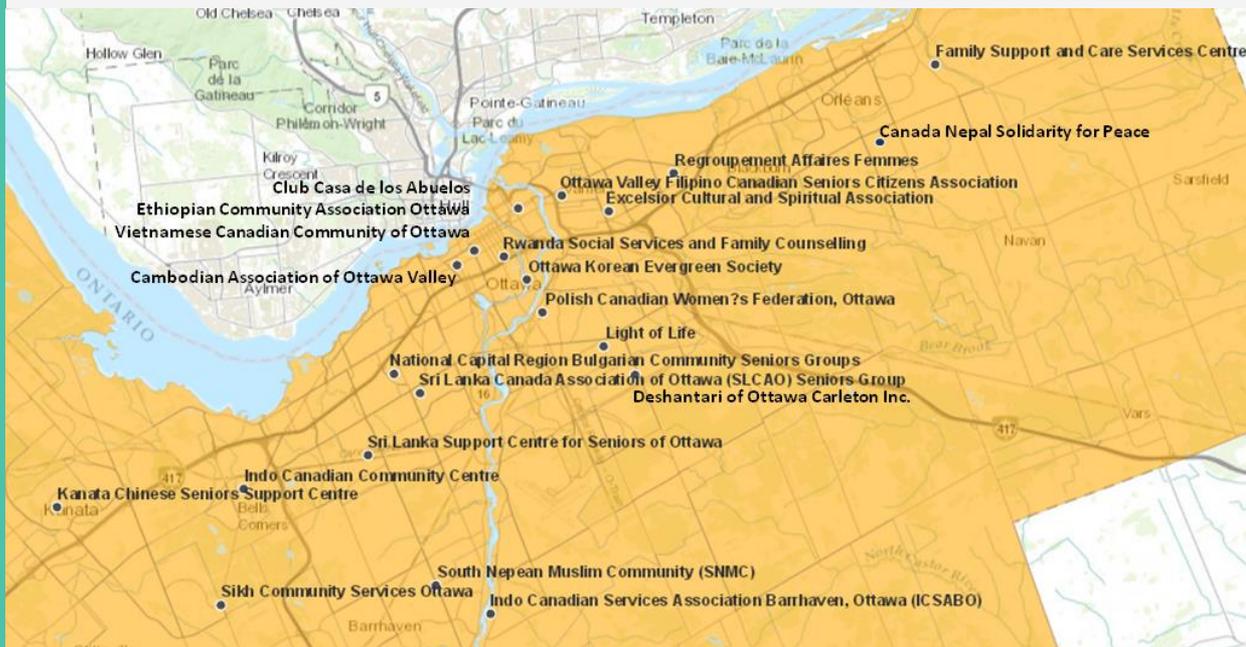
The numbers reveal that the program is making excellent progress toward meeting its target numbers. It has already exceeded its target of signing more than 21 groups over three years and reached more than two thirds of its participant target.

Seniors participated in a wide variety of activities:

- 31 types of different activities
- 31 topics of lectures, seminars and information sessions
- 81 special outings

In addition to these planned outputs, the SPCO organized the Collective Impact Learning Forum, **“Aging in your Community: Addressing the Needs of Ethno-cultural Seniors,”** which was attended by over 200 seniors, service providers, and other community members. The forum was organized in partnership with ethno-cultural senior groups, The City of Ottawa, and the Champlain Local Health Integration Network.

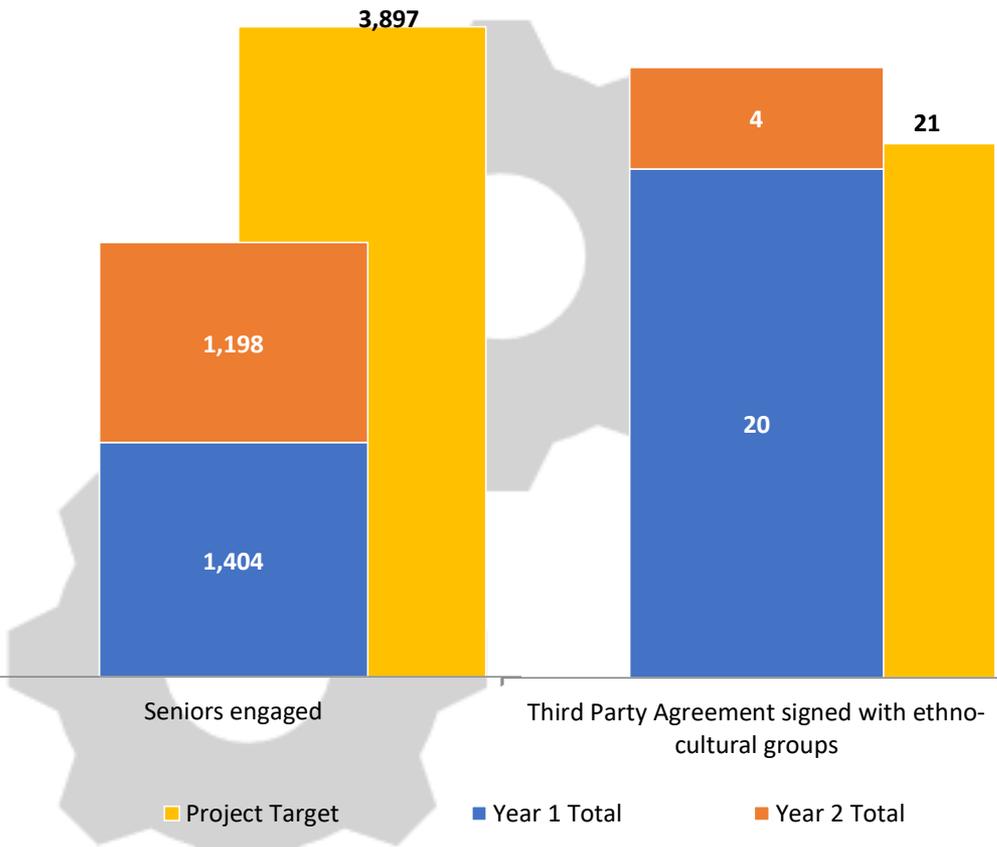
... it has already exceeded its target of signing more than 21 groups over three years and reached more than two thirds of its participant target.



Progress toward Project Level Objectives

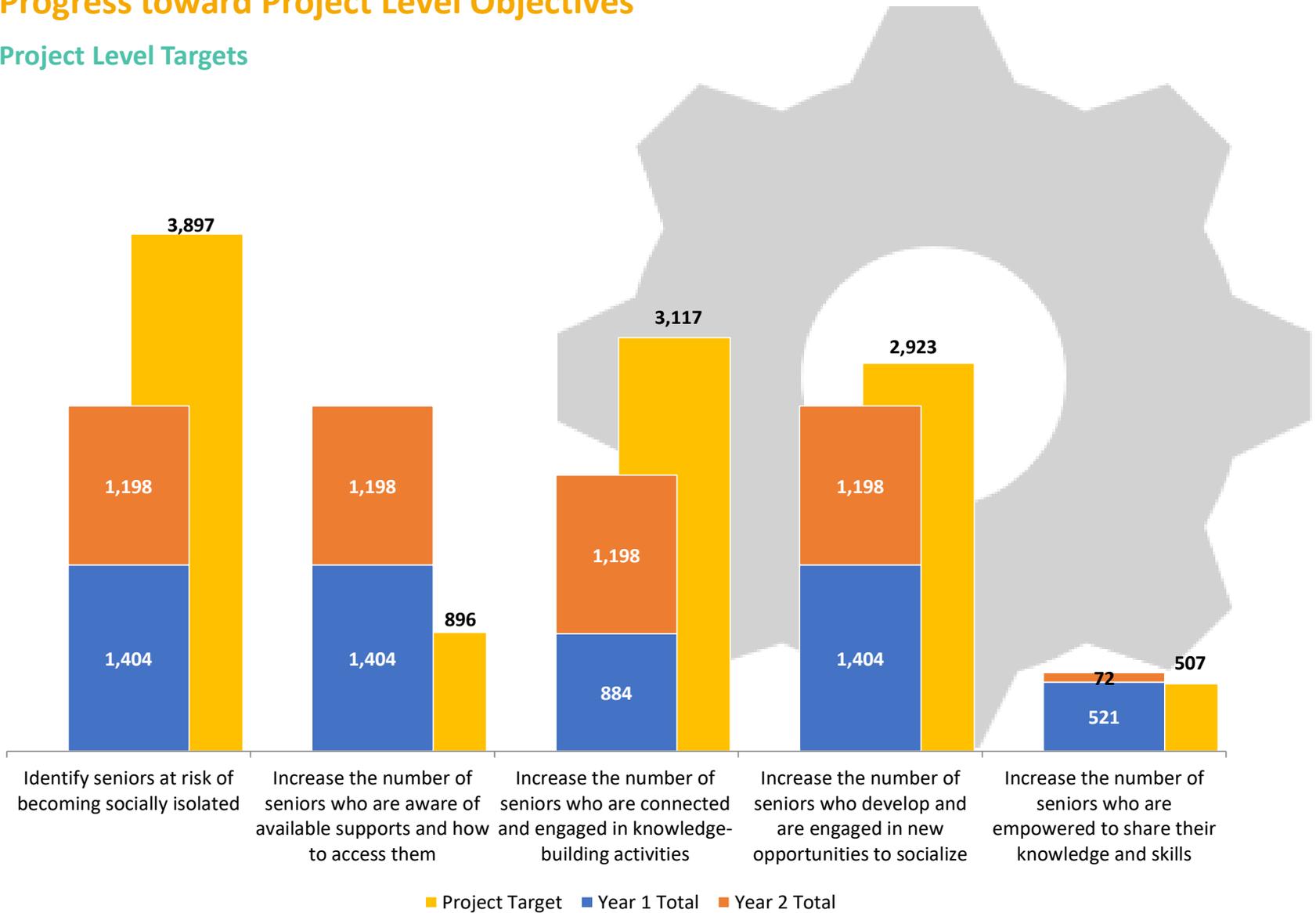
Deliverables over 3 years

Through these activities, the program progressed toward its KOSC program level objectives:



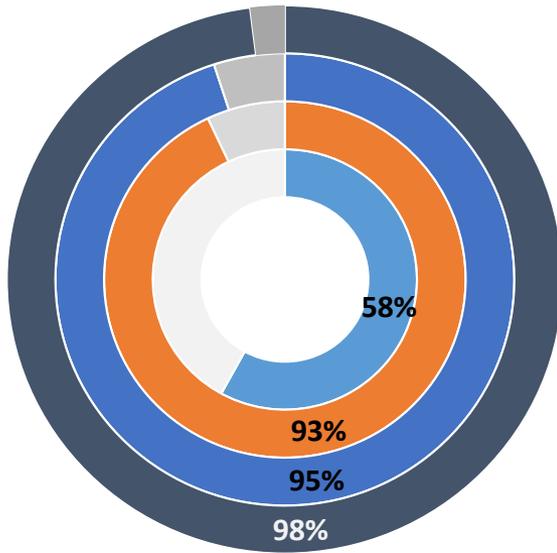
Progress toward Project Level Objectives

Project Level Targets



Helping Seniors

The program is effective in helping seniors to be more active, and to feel more supported, more connected, and more valued.



98% feel more valued
95% feel more supported
93% feel more connected
58% increase socializing

“At home you have smaller circles, so coming here it is nice to expand them.”

- Senior, Sikh Community Services Ottawa



In-Kind Support



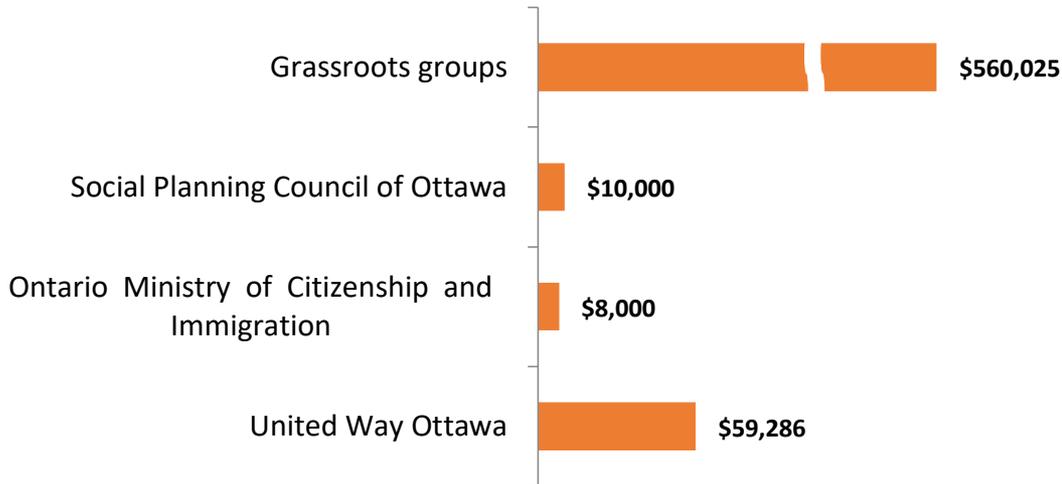
\$570,025

of in-kind support was received from April 2017 to March 2018



\$67,286

of cash support was received from April 2017 to March 2018



In Year Two, the project also produced two offshoot initiatives:

- ✓ One in collaboration with the Champlain Local Health Integration Network to develop a strategy around dementia among ethnocultural minority seniors.
- ✓ Another in collaboration with NROCRC and the Ottawa Elder Abuse Response Committee – Education and Awareness Sub-Committee to develop resources and improve awareness about elder abuse in ethnocultural minority communities

Highlight:

The Kanata Chinese Seniors Support Centre hosted a play, “Enjoy your Life Every Moment”. The play depicted a senior couple who have come from China to settle with their children and highlights the struggles they encounter. The idea behind the story is how the Chinese seniors mobilize together to support this couple. The play was written, directed and acted by seniors (many of whom had no experience acting) with the help of professionals. 150 seniors attended the play in March, 2018.

How Well Has it Been Done?

The program is progressing well toward meeting its program level objectives and making its contribution to KOSC. It is maintaining high program quality while working to collaborate with KOSC partners. Data was collected through site visits, pre-post participation questionnaires, informal conversations, semi-guided interviews and focus groups with seniors; year-end questionnaires, semi-guided interviews and informal check-ins with group leaders; and semi-guided interviews and informal check-ins with the project team.

Reaching Isolated Seniors

The groups are succeeding in reaching seniors who are isolated or at heightened risk of becoming isolated, particularly those who live on a low income, have a disability, and have a language barrier. The only target group that is underrepresented are those who live in a rural area, and this is to be expected given that members of ethno-cultural minorities are more likely to live in urban areas.

The program is reaching isolated seniors through both the collective and individual efforts of the groups. If they did not participate in the ethno-cultural seniors groups' activities, many of the group members would have limited opportunities to socialize with others, especially with others who share the same language and culture. Seniors indicated that being at home could be very isolating, and that they joined the group to give them a reason to get out of their house, and to give them something to look forward to on a regular basis. As one senior from Sikh Community Services Ottawa said, "at home you have smaller circles, so coming here it is nice to expand them." For many of the seniors, it provides them with social, educational, and health-benefiting opportunities without having the burden of hosting people in their own homes. This was a common reason for participation provided by many seniors.

Awards:

- ✓ Six of the ethnocultural minorities seniors groups received awards in the categories of Social Connectivity; Leadership; Grassroots; Advocacy and Community for the Council on Aging as part of their March 2018 "Celebrating Seniors Awards"
- ✓ Two leaders were awarded medals by MPP Chandra Arya for outstanding volunteer work.
- ✓ Regroupement Affaires Femmes presented a gold medal to one of their members for her volunteer involvement in the Haitian community.



54%

of the participants report English is not a mother tongue



21%

of the participants are self-identified as having disabilities



61%

of the participants have a household income less than \$30,000

Most of the participants were women. This makes sense given that there is a higher proportion of women among seniors than in the general population.



61%

of the participants are women

While the majority of participants lived with at least one other person, many of the participants lived alone.



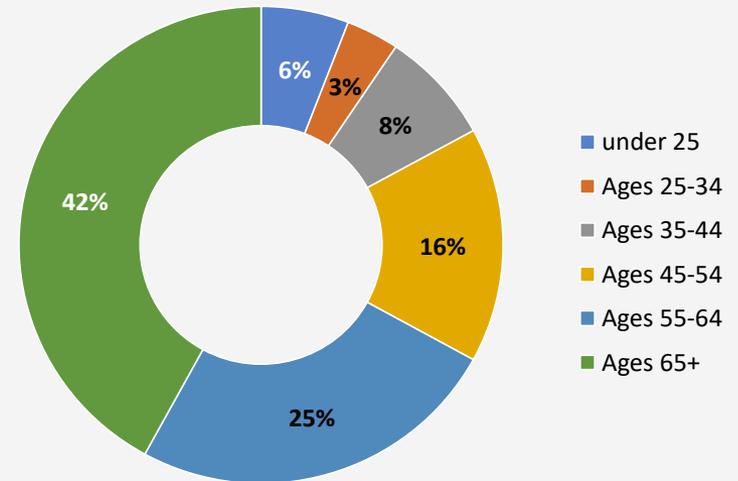
38%

of the participants live alone

In addition to reaching isolated seniors through social activities, the groups make sustained efforts to reach seniors who are particularly isolated as a result of health conditions, care requirements, hospital stays, or being in a long-term care facility. The group leaders and other volunteers organize home, hospital, and long-term care facility visits for their members; coordinate transportation; and conduct telephone reassurance for their members when necessary. In Year Two, the groups made 3019 interactions through visits and telephone reassurance, thereby reaching and supporting some of the most isolated and vulnerable seniors in their communities.

The program is also succeeding in providing meaningful volunteering opportunities to the seniors engaged as part of the program.

Age of Volunteers

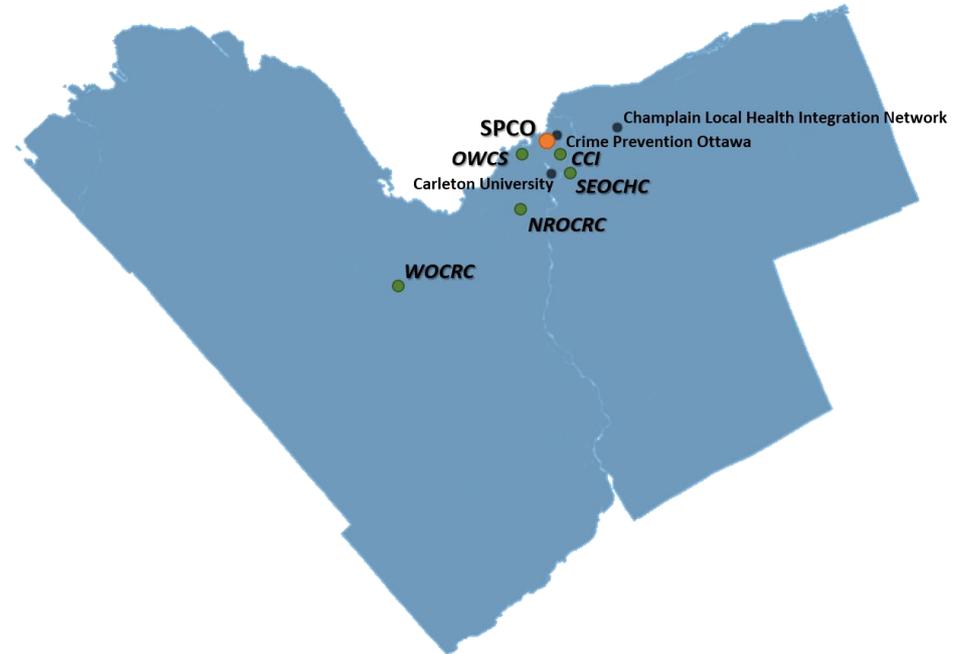


67%

of the volunteers are seniors ages over 55

KOSC Vitality

Being part of the collaborative has provided the groups opportunities to work with new organizations across the city and to deliver training to community members throughout Ottawa. The coordinator meetings are particularly helpful because they provide regular opportunities for collective information sharing and problem solving. This enables interagency crosspollination of promising practices and knowledge on how to solve complex problems related to seniors' social isolation. This is significant because front line staff tend to have fewer opportunities to meet with staff from other agencies than managers do.



While there was relatively little collaborative or mutually reinforcing work in Year One, being part of KOSC has contributed to the program's success and collaborations have improved in Year Two. For example:

- **The Catholic Centre for Immigration** has worked with the SPCO to deliver their English Conversation Circles to some of the groups, including Club Casa de los Abuelos and the Vietnamese Canadian Community of Ottawa.
- Thanks to the collaborative, **Ottawa West Community Support** is able to offer their activities and workshops to the ethno-cultural group members who live in the buildings it serves.
- **Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre** and the SPCO were able to offer the Train-the-Trainer program to the leaders of the groups. This not only enabled the training to reach more isolated seniors, but also led to an improvement to the training itself, as the group leaders provided feedback to WOCRC enabling the Community Helpers program to strengthen its module on diversity.
- **Nepean Rideau Osgoode Community Resource Centre** and the SPCO collaborated to provide an elder abuse education session to the leaders of local ethnocultural seniors group leaders. Again, this collaboration not only helped the training to reach more seniors, but opened an opportunity to build on the general training and to customize it to the needs of different ethnocultural seniors in Year Three, through an offshoot SPCO initiative to develop resources and increase awareness about elder abuse in ethno-cultural minority communities.

The collaborative has fostered more connectivity and crosspollination between ethnocultural minority leaders and mainstream services, which has enabled the leaders and other KOSC partners to identify opportunities to make mainstream services and programs more inclusive and responsive to the needs of ethno-cultural minority seniors.

The project coordinator believes that while the collaborative has led to fruitful collaboration between the partners and made additional learning opportunities available for the group leaders and members, additional efforts must be made to think about how the projects can move forward together at a higher level of collaboration. Two ethnocultural seniors groups' leaders are currently participating in the collective planning process set in motion by the Backbone Organization, and she is looking forward to the results of the process. The collective planning processes set in motion by the SPCO will also lead to increase strategic intersectoral collaboration.

The SPCO has also engaged in extensive collaboration with non-KOSC partners, which includes the following:

- With the support of a \$7000 Multicultural Grant from the Government of Ontario, SPCO organized a Collective Impact Learning Forum, "Aging in your Community: Addressing the Needs of Ethno-cultural Seniors" (March 2018) in collaboration with ethno-cultural senior groups, the City of Ottawa, and the Champlain Local Health Integration Network. The event was attended by over 200 seniors and service providers at the RA Centre. Recommendations from the Forum will be addressed through the City's Healthy Aging framework. The SPCO project has two seats at that table, and will be able to support and monitor implementation of the recommendations, which is expected to increase access over time.
- In March, 2018 Champlain Local Health Integration Network, dementia health care practice approached SPCO to develop a model of practice on culturally responsive dementia care for ethno-cultural seniors and requested that the SPCO develop a pilot project with one ethno-cultural group. In collaboration with three South Asian ethnocultural seniors' groups the SPCO will develop and pilot a model which will be used to educate and assist members of the South Asian community and to enhance the practice of health and social service providers. If successful, the model could then be expanded to other communities.
- The SPCO collaborated with Sharing Dance on a dance project for Canada 150 in 2017 and are continuing to collaborate in 2018 with many of the seniors involved.
- Led by Dr. Susan Braedley, researchers from Carleton University partnered with the SPCO and the ethno-cultural minority seniors groups SPCO to conduct community-based research on caregiving in ethno-cultural minority communities.

Through the many community partnerships, the SPCO, group leaders, and group members are contributing in valuable ways to ensure that ethno-cultural seniors' voices are included and heard in the community.

A look at 5 Ethnocultural Seniors Groups

Creating Community for Isolated Ethno-Cultural Seniors brings together the work of 22 different organizations. Each year the work of 5 different groups is explored in greater detail as part of the evaluation process. The groups selected for Year Two are:

- ✓ Ottawa Valley Filipino Canadian Senior Citizens Association (pg. 15)
- ✓ Sikh Community Services Ottawa (pg. 16)
- ✓ South Nepean Muslim Centre (pg. 17)
- ✓ Sri Lanka Canada Association of Ottawa (Seniors Group) (pg. 18)
- ✓ Vietnamese Canadian Community of Ottawa (pg. 19)



Ottawa Valley Filipino Canadian Senior Citizens Association

The Ottawa Valley Filipino Canadian Senior Citizens Association was formed in 1995 by 15 Filipino seniors who felt that seniors in their community needed an opportunity to socialize with each other and participate in meaningful activities. Currently, the group has about 200 members, including about 25 members who volunteer with the group. The activities offered by the group include chair exercise held twice per week, birthday celebrations held once per month, yoga, workshops, and outings to locations such as Long Sault and Quebec City. The group leaders and volunteers also provide support to the members through home, hospital, and long-term care facility visits and telephone assurance. The group leaders and other volunteers contribute approximately \$65,000 worth of in-kind contributions through their volunteer work with the group, and the group requires roughly \$5000 in cash resources to operate per year.

Data collected through site visits, surveys, semi-guided interviews, and focus groups shows that the group members experience numerous benefits through their participation in the group. As one senior said, “the group is fun and brings me joy and it gives me something to look forward to.” Some of the other benefits include the opportunities to:

- ✓ **Connect to Filipino culture and language**
- ✓ **Make new friends and connect with old friends**
- ✓ **Celebrate their birthdays with the group**
- ✓ **Increase their knowledge on aging and health topics (e.g., dementia, funeral co-op, income tax, seniors’ benefits, etc.)**
- ✓ **Volunteer with the group and in the community**
- ✓ **Go on outings that some could not otherwise afford**
- ✓ **Have something to look forward to**
- ✓ **Build social support networks**

By having a strong group of dedicated volunteers who foster respect and appreciation for each other, the group is able to support Filipino seniors in the community and provide them with a way to increase their health-related knowledge, to feel empowered by volunteering and contributing to the group, to be physically active, and to socialize with other seniors in the Filipino community, to access supports and services in the community.

The in-kind contributions related to volunteer time differs across the 5 groups for multiple reasons. First, some groups serve a significantly higher number of seniors, resulting in more time needed to support group members and organize activities. Second, some group leaders do not record their time one-on-one supporting group members because they just see that as part of their role as a friend and/or neighbour. Third, some groups provide much more support to their members outside of the activities, including transportation, cooking meals, connecting them with healthcare providers. Fourth, the groups differ significantly in terms of the size of their leadership committees (some have one main group leader, while others have leadership committees with 10 people on them).

Sikh Community Services Ottawa

Sikh Community Services Ottawa was formed in 2005 by 10 retirees who wanted to use their time to help others and who felt that seniors in their community had limited opportunities to participate in wellness activities outside of the Gurdwara. Currently, the group has about 165 members, including about 20 members who volunteer with the group. The activities offered by the group include biweekly gatherings with exercise, socializing, workshops, and sharing a meal; health seminars; cultural celebrations; picnics at Andrew Hayden Park; and outings to locations such as Long Sault, Mosaic Canada, Gatineau Park, and 1000 Islands. The group leaders and volunteers also provide support to the members through home, hospital, and long-term care facility visits and telephone assurance. The group leaders and other volunteers contribute approximately \$62,500 worth of in-kind contributions through their volunteer work with the group, and the group requires approximately \$50,000 in cash resources to operate per year. In addition to the support provided by the SPCO, the group has been able to obtain financial support from Jewish Family Services.

Data collected through site visits, surveys, informal conversations, semi-guided interviews, and focus groups shows that the group members experience numerous benefits and are less lonely as a result of their participation in the group. As one newer senior member said, “this group fills me with so much positivity since I have joined.” Some of the other benefits include the opportunities to:

- ✓ **Build friendships that carry on outside of the group, especially for those who live alone**
- ✓ **Share stories and jokes, sing songs, dance**
- ✓ **Socialize with others who share their culture and language**
- ✓ **Celebrate their birthdays and anniversaries with the group**
- ✓ **Increase their knowledge on aging and health topics (e.g., elder abuse, hepatitis C, diabetes, cardiovascular health, nutrition, addictions, etc.)**
- ✓ **Use their skills and help others by volunteering with the group and in the community**
- ✓ **Exercise in an enjoyable and comfortable setting**
- ✓ **Have something to look forward to**
- ✓ **Build social support networks**

Group leaders and volunteers have also been recognized in the community for their dedication to volunteering with the group. One group leader, Mrs. Bhandari, received an award from the Council on Aging in March 2018 and was honoured by Chandra Arya, MP, for her 30+ years of voluntary community service. Another group volunteer, Mr. Jaswal, was awarded a Canada 150 Anniversary Medal by Chandra Arya, MP in December 2017 for his long time voluntary community service.

South Nepean Muslim Centre

The South Nepean Muslim Centre (SNMC) seniors' group was formed in 2012 by Safia Rasheed in response to the social isolation faced by many seniors in her community. The group started with only 12-13 members, but currently has over 100 members, including about 10 who volunteer with the group. The activities offered by the group include weekly yoga and Tai Chi sessions; monthly gatherings with exercise, information sessions, socializing, and dinner; special activities (e.g., gardening, picnics); health workshops; and outings to locations such as Canadian Museum of History, Mosaic Canada, and 1000 Islands. The group leaders and volunteers also provide support to the members through home, hospital, and long-term care facility visits and telephone assurance. The group leaders and other volunteers contribute approximately \$4500 worth of in-kind contributions through their volunteer work with the group, and the group requires approximately \$2800 in cash resources per year to operate.

Data collected through site visits, surveys, informal conversations, semi-guided interviews, and focus groups shows that the group members experience numerous benefits, are less lonely, and are becoming more involved in the community and at SNMC as a result of their participation in the group. As one senior member said in response to why she enjoyed the activities held at SNMC, "I am comfortable here and the people here are like us," demonstrating the importance of having linguistically and culturally-based activities in a space that seniors are familiar with. Some of the other benefits include the opportunities to:

- ✓ **Build friendships that carry on outside of the group, especially for those who live alone**
- ✓ **Participate in activities just for them**
- ✓ **Share a meal with others**
- ✓ **Have respite from caregiving responsibilities**
- ✓ **Have meaningful and personal conversations with each other**
- ✓ **Learn about community supports and services**
- ✓ **Have a sense of purpose by volunteering with the group**
- ✓ **Socialize with others who share their culture and language**
- ✓ **Increase their knowledge on aging and health topics (e.g., physiotherapy, fraud prevention, diabetes, dementia, caregiving, fire protection in the home, etc.)**
- ✓ **Exercise in a familiar setting**
- ✓ **Have something to look forward to**
- ✓ **Build social support network**

Group volunteers have also been recognized in the community for their dedication to volunteering with the group. One group volunteer, Mrs. Rasheed was awarded the Leading Women, Leading Girls Building Communities Award by Bob Chiarelli, MPP, in April 2012.

Sri Lanka Canada Association of Ottawa (Seniors Group)

The Sri Lanka Canada Association of Ottawa (SLCAO) seniors' group was formed in 2016 by SLCAO committee members who wanted to address a gap in the community by providing social opportunities for Sri Lankan seniors. Currently, the group has about 125 members, including about 65 members who volunteer with the group in various capacities. The activities offered by the group include weekly meditation sessions, twice monthly social gatherings, seminars, cultural celebrations and events, and outings to locations such as Montreal, musical events at Carleton University, etc. The group leaders and volunteers also provide significant support to the members through home, hospital, and long-term care facility visits; transportation to medical appointments; providing home-cooked meals; and telephone assurance. The group leaders and other volunteers contribute approximately \$75,000 worth of in-kind contributions through their volunteer work with the group, and the group requires approximately \$8500 in cash resources to operate per year.

Data collected through site visits, surveys, semi-guided interviews, and focus groups shows that the group members experience numerous benefits through their participation in the group. As one senior who is battling a health condition said, "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." Some of the other benefits include the opportunities to:

- ✓ **Connect to Sri Lankan culture and language**
- ✓ **Make new friends and connect with old friends**
- ✓ **Enjoy traditional Sri Lankan food**
- ✓ **Celebrate cultural events**
- ✓ **Socialize with others without the responsibility of hosting them at home**
- ✓ **Increase their knowledge on aging and health topics (e.g., ParaTranspo, City of Ottawa seniors' benefits, physiotherapy, diabetes, dementia, arthritis, exercise, etc.)**
- ✓ **Have meaningful and personal conversations with each other**
- ✓ **Use their skills and help others by volunteering with the group and in the community**
- ✓ **Have something to look forward to**
- ✓ **Build social support networks**

By having a transparent, strong group of committee members who can bring the community together, the group leaders have been able to build relationships with isolated seniors, connect them with group activities, and use members' feedback to plan for future outreach, events, and activities.

Vietnamese Canadian Community of Ottawa

The Vietnamese Canadian Community of Ottawa seniors' group was formed in 2016 by the current group leader, Le Phan, who wanted to give back to seniors in the community who he felt were isolated with limited opportunities for socializing with other Vietnamese seniors. Currently, the group has about 65 members, including about 8 members who volunteer with the group in various capacities. The activities offered by the group include monthly healthy cooking and nutrition activities, monthly or twice monthly seminars, English Conversation Circles (offered in partnership with the Catholic Centre for Immigrants), periodic special celebrations, and outings to locations such as Mosaic Canada, Botanical Gardens in Montreal, Rockport, and sugar bushes. The group leaders and volunteers also provide support to the members through home, hospital, and long-term care facility visits and telephone assurance. While the total cost of running the group is about \$12,000 per year, the group leaders and other volunteers contribute approximately \$24,000 worth of in-kind contributions through their volunteer work with the group. The group has also worked very closely with Somerset West Community Health Centre (SWCHC), who has a large Vietnamese clientele and wanted to be able to better support their needs. SWCHC now provides the group with access to space, a kitchen, and health professionals and resources. This partnership has made a significant contribution to the group's success.

Data collected through site visits, surveys, semi-guided interviews, and focus groups shows that the group members experience numerous benefits through their participation in the group. As one senior discussed, "I feel happy to talk to the other seniors." This senior told us that without the group he would be very lonely and have limited social interactions where he could speak his own language. Some of the other benefits include the opportunities to:

- ✓ **Connect to Vietnamese community in Ottawa through language, music, and food**
- ✓ **Build friendships that carry on outside of the group, especially for those who live alone**
- ✓ **Celebrate cultural events**
- ✓ **Connect with health services at SWCHC**
- ✓ **Increase confidence by learning new skills and meeting new people**
- ✓ **Learn and practice English language skills in a comfortable setting through English Conversation Circles**
- ✓ **Increase their knowledge on aging and health topics (e.g., nutrition, oral health, healthy aging, exercise, diabetes, mindfulness, shingles, etc.)**
- ✓ **Have something to look forward to**
- ✓ **Build social support networks**

By having a dedicated volunteer who has taken the time to build trust with many Vietnamese seniors in Ottawa and identify needs in the community, the group has been able to support a very isolated population of seniors in Ottawa who are now connected to community supports and services and who have social support networks made up of other seniors in the community.

Is it making a difference? What have we learned?

Data collected for Year Two suggests that the program is making a positive difference in the community. Having the opportunity to socialize with those who share the same culture and language is very important for ethno-cultural minority seniors. The group leaders work tirelessly to support their members and often face many barriers in carrying out their activities, such as high costs for rented space, complicated funding applications, lack of recognition of their volunteer contributions, lack of transportation for members to get to activities, and challenges in finding and keeping dedicated volunteers. Through semi-guided interviews with the SPCO Coordinator and group leaders, the main barriers to reducing social isolation among ethno-cultural minority seniors include seniors' limited knowledge of community supports and services; limited services and information available in languages other than English and French, which can be particularly challenging for those who came to Canada as a senior; the lack of research on the needs of ethno-cultural minority seniors in Ottawa; and funding opportunities for grassroots volunteer-led groups that primarily provide grants based on innovation and creativity, rather than ongoing support for existing models.

Promising Practices

Multiple promising practices that have the potential to directly and indirectly contribute to the reduction of social isolation among ethno-cultural minority seniors in Ottawa are emerging from the groups.

1. Service Navigation

Group leaders have been able to use their knowledge and experience to connect seniors with appropriate services and supports in the community based on the seniors' specific needs. One of the group leaders from the Ottawa Valley Filipino Canadian Senior Citizens Association described how the group leaders will share information that they learn from helping others about how to navigate the health system. For example, they have helped seniors get connected to ParaTranspo by using information learned from previous experiences. The group leaders are often an important bridge between community services and supports and seniors in their community, especially because they have worked hard to develop trusting relationships with their members.

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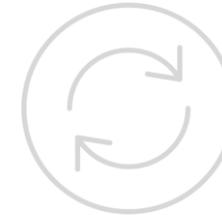
2. Consistency

Many group leaders discussed how the success of their groups and high attendance and group membership are a result of seniors always knowing where and when the activities are held. For example, the gatherings for the Sikh Community Services Ottawa are held twice each month on Wednesdays (also the free OC Transpo day for seniors) at the Nepean Sportsplex from 12:30pm to 4:00pm. This consistency takes out the guess work for the seniors and is less time-consuming for the group leaders since they do not have to spend as much time scheduling activities, booking space, and reminding seniors of upcoming activities.

3. Celebration

Many of the groups make sure to celebrate birthdays and special events with the seniors. Many of the groups will organize specific seniors' celebrations for special holidays, such as the Lunar New Year seniors' event organized by the Vietnamese Canadian Community of Ottawa. The group leaders from the Indo-Canadian Community Centre and Sikh Community Services Ottawa will announce recent birthdays and anniversaries during their gatherings. The Ottawa Valley Filipino Canadian Senior Citizens Association also organizes monthly birthday celebrations where seniors who are celebrating birthdays that month are treated to a birthday cake, sitting at the table of honour, and a big event with their family and friends from the Filipino community. These types of celebrations and events motivate seniors to attend, are fun for the seniors, and help to make them feel more valued, especially for those who may not otherwise be able to celebrate with their family and friends.

This consistency takes out the guess work for the seniors and is less time-consuming for the group leaders



Celebrations and events motivate seniors to attend, are fun for the seniors, and help to make them feel more valued, especially for those who may not otherwise be able to celebrate.



4. Volunteering and Getting Involved

Leaders encourage members to volunteer with the group and in the community. Member volunteers support the group leaders in various ways and help to reduce the demands placed on group leaders. For example, the group leader for the Vietnamese Canadian Community of Ottawa has a network of volunteers that he shares pertinent group information with, who then call their assigned group members to disseminate the information. The members are encouraged to use their skills to support the group and it also helps to increase the sustainability of the group over the long term by supporting other members to move into leadership positions. For example, in both Sikh Community Services Ottawa and Deshantari of Ottawa-Carleton, group members who have professional experience in grant and proposal writing use their skills to help the groups apply for funding. They have contributed to the groups' successes in acquiring grants, such as those through the New Horizons for Seniors Program and the City of Ottawa.

5. Welcoming and Integrating Feedback

An important promising practice that many group leaders discussed was listening to members' feedback and actually following up and implementing it if possible. For example, members of the Ottawa Korean Evergreen Society were not enjoying the line dancing activity and suggested doing lighter aerobic exercises, so the group leader worked with the exercise instructor to modify the activities and also started a walking club, both of which elicited a lot of positive feedback from members. The group leaders talked about how listening to their members builds trust and makes the activities more appealing, resulting in higher attendance, increased membership, greater social inclusion and more opportunities to socialize and connect with others.

Members are encouraged to use their skills to support the group and it also helps to increase the sustainability of the group over the long term



The group leaders talked about how listening to their members builds trust and makes the activities more appealing



Recommendations

Based on the evaluation for Year Two, the following are recommendations to improve the project for Year Three.

- ❖ Provide opportunities for group leaders to learn about grant-writing and applying for other sources of funding, and work with experts from groups to use their skills related to grant applications.
- ❖ Work with group leaders and seniors to explore ways to improve navigation of health and community support services for ethnocultural minority seniors.
- ❖ Increase cross-cultural opportunities between groups and improve participation among seniors in these events.
- ❖ Help the groups develop plans for sustainability.
- ❖ Develop a strategy for adapting and/or creating resources to address elder abuse in ethno-cultural minority communities.
- ❖ Work with the project partners (e.g., NROCRC, WOCRC, and CCI) to offer their programs to individual groups.



Appendices

Appendix 1 – Keeping Ottawa Seniors Connected (KOSC)

KOSC is a Collective Impact Initiative designed to measurably reduce the rate of social isolation in Ottawa’s pre-senior (ages 55 to 64) and senior (ages 65 and over) populations. Grounded in the knowledge of local community leaders and service providers and in the most up-to-date research and statistical data about the risk factors that make seniors vulnerable to becoming socially isolated, KOSC focuses its efforts on those who face barriers to participation due to: low income, mental, physical, or cognitive disability, elder abuse, poor official language skills and rural residency.

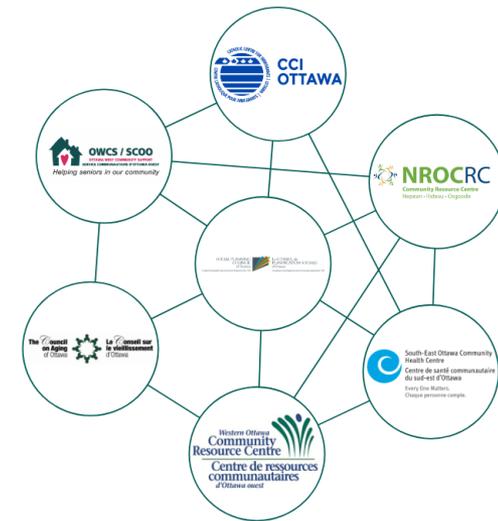
- As a Collective Impact Initiative, KOSC rests on five interconnected components:
- A shared understanding of the issues surrounding senior social isolation and a shared agenda and vision about how to address the issues.
- A shared measurement system to assess the progress of KOSC towards its stated objectives.
- Mutually reinforcing activities that address different main factors that increase vulnerability to senior social isolation – low income, disability, poor official language skills, elder abuse and rural residency.
- Continual communication between the partners and the broader community of stakeholders to build mutual trust, facilitate intersectoral learning and cross-fertilisation of promising approaches and practices, improve and refine shared understanding and vision and sustain mutually reinforcing activities.
- Backbone support provided by the Council on Aging of Ottawa, through the KOSC team, composed of the KOSC Director, the KOSC Lead Evaluator and the KOSC Co-Evaluator. The Director provides ongoing administrative and communication support and works closely with the Evaluators to: guide and refine KOSC programs, processes, practices, visions and strategies; better align the activities of partners and other stakeholders; mobilize the will of the broader community, including that of different levels of government and the private sector; address the issue of senior social isolation; mobilize additional resources to advance KOSC objectives; and facilitate continual evaluation processes.

KOSC is composed of seven funded partners and of a Social Inclusion Stakeholder Table:

- The **Council on Aging of Ottawa (COA)** serves as the **Backbone Organization** providing administration, communication and evaluation support organization for the collective.
- The **Catholic Centre for Immigrants (CCI)**, a local immigrant settlement agency, provides an innovative **Senior Centred English as a Second Language Program**.
- The **Nepean Rideau Osgoode Community Resource Centre (NROCRC)** program, **Elder Abuse Response and Referral Service (EARRS)** provides awareness, education and training sessions to seniors and service providers to raise awareness about elder abuse and provides intake and referral services for abused seniors.
- The **Ottawa West Community Support (OWCS)** program, **Healthy Connections, Healthy Communities (HCHC)** engages seniors living in Ottawa Community Housing buildings in activities and programming that provide them with opportunities to socialize and to connect with other seniors, community members and volunteers, and connects them with appropriate supports and services.

- The **South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre (SEOCHC)** program, **Strengthening Senior Neighbourhood Networks**, works in more than 15 neighbourhoods to identify low-income, isolated seniors, to connect them with existing supports and to set up social networks that connect seniors and empowers them to share their skills and knowledge.
- The **Social Planning Council of Ottawa (SPCO)** program, **Creating Community for Ethno-Cultural Seniors** works with more than 18 different ethno-cultural seniors groups to support them in offering activities that will help to reduce isolation among seniors in their communities.
- The **Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre (WOCRC)** program, **Reducing Rural Isolation** trains volunteer community helpers to support seniors in rural areas.
- The **Social Inclusion Stakeholder Table** brings together a growing network of stakeholders who are committed to reducing senior social isolation in Ottawa and to ensuring the sustainability of this effort after the ESDC funding for KOSC expires.

KOSC internal partners & their collaborative relationships



Through the work of the Backbone organization, the programs of the six funded partners and the work of the Social Inclusion Stakeholder Table, KOSC:

- ✓ connects seniors with the supports they need to overcome barriers to participation and connection
- ✓ provides seniors with opportunities to socialize with their friends, families and communities and
- ✓ empowers seniors to share their considerable knowledge and skills
- ✓ identifies barriers to social inclusion, connection and participation
- ✓ identifies promising practices to help seniors to overcome these barriers
- ✓ identifies ways of mitigating of dismantling systemic barriers to social inclusion, connection and participation
- ✓ develops strategies to enable KOSC to reach its goal of significantly reducing senior social isolation in Ottawa

KOSC Population Level Change Goals

From June 2016 to May 2019, KOSC has committed to achieving four outcomes:

1 Increase the proportion of seniors who have support and help when they need it by 8% (3,541 individuals).

This is based on 2011 baseline data taken from the Canadian Community Health Survey in which 19.2% (43,147) of people who were 55 years of age or older in the Ottawa Census Metropolitan Area indicated that they had someone to help them with daily chores some, little or none of the time. Our rationale is that KOSC will serve 10,159 seniors over three years, of which we estimate that roughly 50% (5,080 individuals) will have adequate supports and we commit to connecting roughly 70% of the remaining half with the support they need.

2 Increase the proportion of seniors who participate regularly in activities by 20% (5,871 individuals).

This is based on 2011 baseline data taken from the Canadian Community Health Survey in which 12.9% (28,990) of people who were 55 years of age or older in the Ottawa Census Metropolitan Area indicated that they participated in activities with friends and family less than once per month. Our rationale is that KOSC will serve 10,159 seniors over three years, of which most will not have been participating in regular activities and that half of those reached will become engaged in regular activities.

3 Increase the proportion of seniors who feel connected by 16% (4,696 individuals).

This is based on 2011 baseline data** taken from the Canadian Community Health Survey in which 13.2% (4,696) of people who were 55 years of age or older in the Ottawa Census Metropolitan Area indicated that they had someone to listen to them some, little or none of the time. Our rationale is that 10,159 seniors will be served by the project over three years, of which most will not feel connected and that half will feel connected thanks to their participation in KOSC activities.

4 We committed to increase the proportion of seniors who feel valued by 10%. BUT:

We did not have an initial benchmark for this outcome. Based on the year one KOSC Pre-Participation Survey of 210 seniors, we were able to determine that roughly 26% did not agree or strongly agree that they felt valued by their friends and family. Applied to the number of individuals that will be served by KOSC over three years (26% of 10,159 individuals) this represents a total of 2,641 individuals who do not feel valued. Applied to the population total used in the 2011 benchmark (26% of 224,724 individuals), this would mean that 58,428 individuals do not feel valued. In order to increase that number by 10%, KOSC would have to help 5,843 seniors feel more valued, which is more than the total number of people who are likely not to feel valued among those who will be engaged in the three years of KOSC. Therefore, this outcome is not realistic. If we aim high and say that we will help half of those who do not feel valued to feel valued, the most we can hope to achieve is a 2.3% (1,321 individuals) increase in Ottawa seniors who feel valued.

Appendix 2 – KOSC Theory of Change

IMPACT PLAN OUTCOMES



Reduce the proportion of seniors at risk of being or becoming socially isolated by increasing the proportion of seniors who:

1. Have support and help when they need it by 8%
2. Participate regularly in activities by 20%
3. Feel connected by 16%
4. Feel valued by 2.3%

PROJECT LEVEL OUTCOMES

Seniors who are isolated or at risk of becoming isolated are identified.

Identified seniors are aware of available supports and know how to access them.

Identified seniors are connected to and engage in knowledge-building activities.

Identified seniors develop and engage in new opportunities to socialize.

Identified seniors are empowered to contribute their knowledge and skills.

TARGETED BARRIERS TO SOCIAL INCLUSION

Low Income

Poor Official Language Skills

Disability

Abuse

Rural Living

ENABLING PROJECTS

Backbone Support - COA

CCI

English Conversation Circles for Seniors

NROCRC

Elder Abuse Response and Referral Service

OWCS

Healthy Connections
Healthy Communities

SEOCHC

Strengthening Senior Neighbourhood Networks

SPCO

Creating Community for Ethnocultural Minority Seniors

WOCRC

Community Helpers Program