

Building Community Through Immigration



Immigration Partnership Annual Report
2020-2021





Immigration is essential to getting us through the pandemic, but also to our short-term economic recovery and our long-term economic growth. Canadians have seen how newcomers are playing an outsized role in our hospitals and care homes, and helping us to keep food on the table. As we look to recovery, newcomers create jobs not just by giving our businesses the skills they need to thrive, but also by starting businesses themselves. Our plan [\[2021-2023 Immigration Levels Plan\]](#) will help to address some of our most acute labour shortages and to grow our population to keep Canada competitive on the world stage.

- Marco E. L. Mendicino, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, October 2020

Nineteen immigrants across Canada became citizens in an online ceremony on Canada day, July 1, 2020. This is the first time in history that people would take the oath of citizenship from coast to coast at the same time. Photo credit: [CIC News](#)



About Immigration Partnership

Waterloo Region has been built on and benefited from the strengths, talents and contributions of immigrants. Since 2009, the Immigration Partnership has been a platform for community leaders to work collaboratively to maximize the benefits of immigration for Waterloo Region by creating conditions for immigrants to succeed. We do this through a leadership Council and three Steering Groups - Settle, Work, Belong.



Immigration Partnership staff and community partners at the Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce's Business Excellence Awards Gala, February 2020

Our mission: We work together to create the conditions for immigrants to succeed and help build a welcoming, dynamic community.

Building Community Through Immigration

The Immigration Partnership is a collaboration of over 120 immigrant and Canadian-born allies from immigrant and community service, business, municipal and post-secondary organizations. Together, we work to make Waterloo Region a community where immigrants reach their full potential and contribute to creating and sustaining a thriving, prosperous community for everyone.

We do this work because it matters. Immigration presents incredible challenges and opportunities for communities like Waterloo Region. In the 2016 census, immigrants made up roughly one quarter of our population – we are watching to see how that changes in the 2021 census. Most population growth and all labour force growth in Canada now comes from immigration. Immigrants come from around the world. They contribute to our community vibrancy through arts, culture, philanthropy, volunteering and more. The linguistic, ethnic, racial and other demographics of our region's urban and rural communities are changing through immigration. All of this will hold true as we grow into the future.

In a year like no other, immigrants cared for this community through the pandemic in many health and other essential roles. Our incredible partners and the dynamic team that provides strategic and operational support to their work showed up every day to find solutions to evolving community challenges. They supported pandemic response and recovery, adapted to changing needs, committed to making anti-racist change, and worked together to create the conditions for immigrants to succeed.

Welcome to our 2020-2021 Interactive Annual Report.

Through this report you will meet our partners and learn some of the ways we are building community through immigration together. If you are one of our amazing partners, this report is a love song for all what you do. If you are a newcomer in Waterloo Region, this work is dedicated to you.

- Tara Bedard, Executive Director



COVID and Permanent Immigration Levels in Canada

Pre-COVID target of **1,053,000 New Permanent Residents** 2020-2022 (IRCC)

COVID impact of **50% decrease in Permanent Resident** arrivals in 2020 (RBC, 2021)

New Target of **1,233,000 New Permanent Residents** planned 2021-2023 (IRCC, 2020)



How we made a difference
Supported collective community responses
to evolving COVID-19 challenges

Partnership-wide

The Immigration Partnership Council champions the Partnership's work in the community, enabling system and strategic planning, advocating and overseeing governance. It fosters shared leadership for collective action in Waterloo Region and beyond, and amplifies the work of the Steering Groups.

Immigration Partnership Council:

Pari Karem (Chair), YMCA of Three Rivers Immigrant Services

Tracey Hare Connell (Vice Chair), The Coaching Co

Karen Spencer (Past Chair), Family and Children's Services of the Waterloo Region

Laura Stoutenburg (SSG Chair), Conestoga College LINC Program

Ian McLean (WSG Chair), Greater KW Chamber of Commerce

Brittney Emslie (BSG Chair), KW Multicultural Centre

Brian Kamm, United Way Waterloo Region Communities

Chief Bryan Larkin, Waterloo Region Police Services

Douglas Bartholomew Saunders, Region of Waterloo, Community Services

Elaine Ranney (alternate James Bond), Waterloo Region District School Board

Lucia Harrison, KW Multicultural Centre

Margaret Walton Roberts, Wilfrid Laurier University

Sonja Erstic, Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration

Conal Vaughan, Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada (ex officio)

Community member: Dr Ernest Osei

Alumni:

Dianne Boston-Nyp (former BSG Chair), Volunteer Action Centre Waterloo Region

Thusany Puvanendran, Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network

Community Members: Eliseo Martell (former SSG Chair) and Yasir Dildar

Strategic and operational staff leadership: Tara Bedard, Pauline Peng and Alejandra Amezcuita Gutierrez



Municipal leaders and Immigration Partnership partners and staff share local immigration priorities with the Hon. Marco Mendicino, Canada's Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Feb 12, 2021

I believe the Immigration Partnership is doing an excellent job. I really like the public messaging that highlights the value of immigration from both an economic and cultural perspective. I believe that this will help change the narrative from immigration is a drain on the system and is a good thing to do for benevolent or humanitarian reasons –to one where we all benefit from immigration and as a community we need to increase immigration.

- 2020 Partner Survey Respondent

Priority actions:

1. Champion advocacy and engage elected officials, systems and policy leaders
2. Build awareness of the Immigration Partnership and beneficial impact of immigration
3. Lead collaborative learning and community education
4. Break down silos within the Partnership and the community for immigrant and community success



How we make a difference

Built awareness of the Immigration Partnership and beneficial impact of immigration

How we made a difference

Engaged elected officials, systems and policy leaders in immigrant and refugee settlement

- Approved and began implementing the new Community Action Plan 2020-2025: Building Community Through Immigration (CAP). Presented the CAP to Regional and area City Councils, securing their endorsement and commitment to advocating on behalf of immigrants.
- Through collective written submissions and participation in budget consultations and other roundtables, urged the federal and provincial governments to make investments to support Waterloo Region's immigrant communities.
- Advised and provided input to the Regional Chair and Kitchener Mayor's Task Force on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion on anti-racism, disaggregated data strategies, equitable hiring and retention strategies and the development of community funds to support racialized groups.

Built awareness of the Immigration Partnership and beneficial impact of immigration

- Engaged extensively with local residents and organizations on social media platforms Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, highlighting the important contributions of immigrants to Canada, local programs and services, with over 3,700 followers, 1,830 posts and 885,169 impressions.

Strengthened focus on partnership, collaborative learning and community education

- Formalized an Anti-Racism Commitment in July 2020. Undertook an anti-racist governance review and updated governance practices. Deepened knowledge of community representation among partners and staff through demographic information collection and analysis. With the Children and Youth Planning Table, built capacity for making anti-racist organizational change through a series of anti-racism trainings for partners and staff.
- Conducted the 2020 Survey on Perceptions of Immigration in Waterloo Region with the University of Waterloo and released results, showing that perceptions of immigration were steady prior to and during the pandemic and informing community education approaches.
- Through the Immigration Weekly and Immigration Waterloo Region website, increased community knowledge and capacity to support immigrants by providing nearly 550 subscribers and 28,100 visitors with curated content each week, focused on the pandemic, public health guidelines, government and business supports and multilingual resources.

- Collaborated with Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council, Children and Youth Planning Table, Wellbeing Waterloo Region peers and other local Immigration Partnerships across Ontario and Canada to align work on anti-racism and equity in governance, data and evaluation, public education, and more.
- Deepened partnerships with academic and other research partners to develop evaluation, research and knowledge on local immigration experiences and a stronger focus on anti-racism.

Supported collective response during the COVID-19 crisis

- Partners and staff participated across regional pandemic response structures. Flagged challenges for immigrants, advocating strongly for and supporting immigrant-responsiveness, contributing to evolving health equity approaches, disaggregated data collection and dissemination, attention to specific challenges such as labour force attachment, language accessibility and culturally appropriate responses.
- Supported the Region of Waterloo's development of community outreach to diverse communities, multilingual resources and accessibility of information on prevention measures, COVID-19 vaccine and more.

How we made a difference
Strengthened focus on partnership, collaborative learning and community education

Building community through immigration in Waterloo Region: By the numbers

PRIOR TO COVID-19

119,335
PERMANENT
immigrants in 2016¹

4,590 NEW PERMANENT
immigrant arrivals in 2019²

34,360
NEW
TEMPORARY
RESIDENT
PERMITS
issued in 2018³

22% increase in ANNUAL PERMANENT
resident arrivals 2016-2019⁴

32% of all
population growth
in 2017/2018⁵

550% increase in new
TEMPORARY RESIDENT PERMITS
issued annually 2012-2018⁶

Greater diversity through
increased immigration from
Asia, the **Middle East** and **Africa**

1 Immigration Partnership/Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services, 2019 2 IRCC 3 Immigration Partnership, 2019 4 IRCC 5 Immigration Partnership/Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services, 2019 6 Immigration Partnership, 2019

DURING COVID-19

34% decrease in **NEW PERMANENT RESIDENTS** in Waterloo Region in **2020** compared to **2019**¹

50% decrease in **PERMANENT RESIDENT IMMIGRATION LEVELS** in Waterloo Region in the second quarter of 2020 (**590 individuals**) compared to 2019 (**1,230 individuals**)²

10,000 new study permits were processed in Canada, down from **107,000** in **2019**³

50% decrease in **TEMPORARY WORK PERMITS** in Canada from April - June **2020** compared to **2019**⁴

62% of **COVID cases** were **non-English/French** speakers, **63.7%** were **visible minorities**, **16.7%** were **Black** in Waterloo Region⁵

24% of **PERMANENT RESIDENTS** had difficulty affording rent, mortgage, or utility payments, **26%** of **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS** lost their primary source of income in Canada⁶

26% of **Black people**, **26%** of **Koreans**, **25%** of **Chinese** and **22%** of **Filipinos** reported regular discriminatory incidents in Canada⁷



How we made a difference

Strengthened collaboration and innovation
within the settlement sector

Settle

The Settle Steering Group works together to support the community integration of immigrants by addressing transitional hurdles faced by some when arriving in Waterloo Region.

Settle Group Partners:

Laura Stoutenburg (Chair), Conestoga College
Stephanie Schreuders (Vice Chair), Mennonite Central Committee Ontario
Eliseo Martell (Past Chair), Community Member
Ana Luz Martinez, KW Multicultural Centre
Anna Schwarz and Marian Rozman, YMCA of Three Rivers Immigrant Services
Barb Van Giessen and Sarah Badran, The Working Centre
Debbie Engel, Carizon Family and Community Services
Diane McGregor, KW Counselling
Eda Dede, Sanctuary Refugee Health Centre
Gael Gilbert, Supportive Housing of Waterloo
Hoda Ghonim, SHORE Centre
Janet Waito and Pauleen Payne, St Louis Adult Learning Centres
Jarvis Sparks, Kitchener Public Library
Kaylee Perez, Mennonite Central Committee Ontario
Kristine Marchetti, Crystal Swinton and Jennifer Staples, Region of Waterloo Public Health
Linda Terry, Age Friendly Network of Waterloo Region
Lynne Griffiths-Fulton, Reception House Waterloo Region
Nermin Ozdemir, House of Friendship
Priscilla Muzira, Aids Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener Waterloo and Area
Rachael Lake, Waterloo Region Community Legal Services
Rana Shami, KidsAbility
Sarah Harjee, Centre for Family Medicine
Sheri Follett, Big Brothers Big Sisters Waterloo Region



December 2020 marked the fifth anniversary of the commencement of Operation Syrian Refugees. This operation was Canada's response to the humanitarian crisis in Syria aimed to resettle more than 25,000 Syrians in just 100 days, between November 4, 2015 and February 29, 2016. Waterloo Region participated in this operation by welcoming over 1,800 of them. In this picture, Waterloo Region Welcomes Syrian Refugees at a community celebration, Kitchener City Hall, March 2017. Photo courtesy of Tomasz Adamski

“ Being involved with the Immigration Partnership has allowed me to connect with other service agencies and people with lived experience to better understand how to create a meaningful mental health trauma program for immigrants and refugees. Immigration Partnership was a vehicle to share information, engage people and move the conversation and planning forward.

- 2020 Partner Survey Respondent ”

Sherry White and Sanjay Govindaraj, Region of Waterloo (Housing and Citizen's Service)

Siba Al-Khadour, Levant Canada

Community Member: Lilliana Araujo

Corresponding Members:

Ed Kaut and Roger Gilbert, Region of Waterloo (Income Support and Children's Services)

Jennifer Ardon, Lutheran World Relief

Sakina Kirefu-Khan, Grand River Hospital

Shannon Down, Waterloo Region Community Legal Services

Shelley Campagnola, Compass Refugee Centre

Action Group Members:

Brittney Emslie, KW Multicultural Centre

Crystal Cormier, Sanderson Management Inc.

Emma Jennings, Reception House Waterloo Region

Erin Forde, Compass Refugee Centre

Sarah Farwell, Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network

Community member: Farida Allie

Alumni:

Crystal Brown, Conestoga College

Lynn Macaulay, Lutherwood (deceased, rest in peace)

Thusany Puvanendran, Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network

Strategic and operational staff leadership:

Dan Vandebelt

Priority actions:

1. Develop communication tools and strategies to simplify service systems and pathways for immigrants
2. Brand "settlement" and drive collaboration and innovation within the sector
3. Leverage service providers and planning tables as effective immigrant supports through strong relationships and collaboration
4. Activate networks of private stakeholders in serving immigrants



How we made a difference
Encouraged landlords and organizations
to provide housing for immigrants

How we made a difference

Developed communication tools and strategies to simplify service systems and pathways for immigrants

- Partners and staff collaborated with the KW4 Ontario Health Team and Local Health Integration Network to assess critical needs in refugee and newcomer health, focusing on mental health, interpretation, and pandemic related needs. Co-chaired an interpretation services working group which developed a collective **interpretation commitment statement**, built formal commitment to interpretation among KW4 partners, outreached to primary health care providers to use free LHIN-funded interpretation service and worked to integrate interpretation within Emergency Department internal referral systems to streamline interpretation usage.
- Connected with local immigration partnerships from across Southwest Ontario to share experiences on language interpretation like the WRs regional medical interpretation model and the WeSpeak medical interpretation initiative in Windsor Essex.



- Supported language learning providers to meet regularly and problem solve. Developed an Interpretation Options in Waterloo Region Overview to highlight formal and informal learning pathways.
- Developed relationships with an international student advisors group – bridging gaps between supports for international students and settlement services.

How we made a difference

Developed communication tools and strategies to simplify service systems and pathways for immigrants

Strengthened collaboration and innovation within the settlement sector

- Supported YMCA, K-W Multicultural Centre and Reception House in service coordination and integration initiatives. Convened weekly executive leadership meetings to address emerging issues, collaboration and alignment. Developed shared language-based staff lists and a list of programs to enhance inter-organization knowledge and referrals. Worked to establish a collaborative Microsoft Teams space for sharing documents, discussions and building relationships.
- Worked to develop a coordinated pathway for government assisted refugees moving to the Region from other communities.
- Hosted 50 partners in shared learning events to enhance their ability to effectively serve immigrants, i.e., an OW/ODSP information session for frontline staff, a francophone settlement services discussion, and a session on affordable refurbished computers for non-profits and individuals on low income.
- Connected many organizations supporting immigrants to nurture collaboration on specific topics and population groups.
- Advised provincial and national research projects like Allies in Refugee Integration and Virtual Mental Health Access on considerations in Waterloo Region.

Encouraged landlords and organizations to provide housing for immigrants

- With the 2020 Newcomer Landlord Award recognized the efforts of landlords like Park Property Management and Mr. Kebreab Ashame in helping new immigrants find home during pandemic times as part of National Housing Day celebrations.
- Created and disseminated a video series featuring previous Landlord Award recipients sharing experiences, encouraging other landlords to house immigrants and promoting the 2020 award, with more than 1,000 views and over 7,000 impressions.
- Connected with Leadership Waterloo Region, Wellbeing Waterloo Region and others to collectively support the development of innovative affordable housing solution ideas for community consideration at the Regional Council, the City of Kitchener Affordable Housing Strategy consultation and the KW Community Foundation housing discussions.

Joined the collective effort during the COVID-19 crisis

- Encouraged and supported the Region of Waterloo, Public Health and other partners to review COVID-19 public information with a language equity lens resulting in the integration and promotion of virtual interpretation, website translation tools and key pandemic information in multiple languages.
- With Reception House and Compass Refugee Centre participated in the Pandemic Psychosocial Supports Working Group and Housing and Homelessness Working Group to bring forward immigrant perspectives, support provision of effective virtual services, disseminate critical information about COVID-19 and available supports and address emerging issues.

How we are making an impact and what we need to focus on

2020 partner survey findings

This infographic outlines findings from the Immigration Partnership (IP) Partner Survey conducted in October 2020.

87 respondents;
37% born outside of Canada
23% racialized

Top 3 challenges for serving immigrants:

Serving clients virtually during the pandemic **58%**

Language barriers **48%**

Being able to reach clients when in-person connections were not possible **46%**

Top challenges of immigrants in 2020:

Finding work **71%**

Finding affordable housing **62%**

Being socially isolated **29%**

Learning English **29%**

Discrimination/racism **21%**

99% "committed to the success of the Immigration Partnership." They feel that the Immigration Partnership is:

focused on the **critical issues** for immigrants in Waterloo Region: **100%**

a catalyst for **effective change**: **99%**

a **valuable** source of **information** in respect to immigrants: **100%**

achieving its **mission**: **100%**

Partners were **taking action** to **address racism**:

47% had an anti-racism policy

41% were developing or updating an anti-racism policy

14% did not have an anti-racism policy



How we made a difference
Promoted employer and immigrant job
seeker connections

Work

The Work Steering Group works together to maximize the economic contributions of immigrants by equipping employers with resources to hire and retain immigrant talent and to address the challenges of some immigrants to finding meaningful employment or starting a business.

Work Group Partners:

Ian McLean (Chair), Greater KW Chamber of Commerce
Sheila McIntosh (Vice Chair), Region of Waterloo (Human Resources)
Charlene Hofbauer, Workforce Planning Board Waterloo Wellington Dufferin
Chloe Howell, City of Kitchener Economic Development
Eltag Elkhailifa, KW Multicultural Centre
Elizabeth Arcila, Orange Sky Enterprises
Isabel Vankuik, Scotiabank
Janet Lehman, JD Sweid Foods (Human Resources)
Julie Newman, Carizon Family and Community Services (Human Resources)
Katherine Peterson and Marsha Schlueter, YMCA of Three Rivers
Kristin Sainsbury, City of Waterloo Economic Development
Ksenia Zverev, Waterloo Region Small Business Centre
Michelle Hollis, University of Waterloo (Human Resources)
Michelle Yutzi, Wilfrid Laurier University (Human Resources)
Sue Benoit, Vidyard (Talent Recruitment)
Tim Callan, Agilec
Tina Baksh, Conestoga College
Community member: Roberto Villamar

Action group members:
Ela Cekanovic, Human Resource/Community Member
Omar Hussein, Magnet (Ryerson University)
Sohrab Rahmaty, Workforce Planning Board Waterloo Wellington Dufferin



Internationally trained immigrants networking with employers at the 12th Global Skills Conference, March 2020. Photo courtesy of Eliseo Martell and Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre

Immigration expands Waterloo Region's labour market by increasing the diversity of experiences and talent available. In a shifting world, businesses who hire newcomers can find different ways to look at problems and build their companies with the international experiences and languages that newcomers bring with them.

- Charlene Hofbauer, Executive Director Workforce Planning Board of Waterloo Wellington Dufferin

Alumni:

Chris Farrell, Waterloo Region Small Business Centre

John Rose, Resourceful

Sandy Little, City of Waterloo Economic Development

Valerie Bradford, City of Kitchener Economic Development

Strategic and operational staff leadership: Nora Whittington

Priority actions:

1. Develop campaigns and tools to market the value proposition and economic contribution of immigrants to employers
2. Foster cohesive service to employers and immigrant job-seekers across sectors and talent
3. Engage networks of employers to hire and retain immigrants
4. Collaborate with leaders and organizations (public, private and not-for-profit) leaders to foster immigrant attraction, employment and entrepreneurship



How we made a difference

Employers became more aware and open to hiring immigrant talent and to importance of anti-racist policies in the workplace

- Through the #HireImmigrantsWR campaign, strategic ads, articles in industry magazines and virtual job fairs, promoted the advantages of hiring immigrants as a key driver of Waterloo region's economy recovery. Also promoted anti-racist organizational change.

“

Through the connection with the Immigration Partnership, I have become a partner and a founding participant in the Reception House Working Together Project. For the past three years, we have been hiring refugees with significant community support, including the pre and post employment support of our new hires. This relationship has allowed us to hire close to 100 refugees. While the benefit to our company is clear, one of the highlights this year was to provide a post secondary scholarship award to the child of one of our employee couples hired through the program. It was the poignant connection between the benefit of employment and the opportunities it can afford.

- 2020 Partner Survey Respondent

”

- Worked closely with the Greater KW Chamber of Commerce, BestWR Pandemic Workforce Group and Southwest Ontario Local Immigration Partnerships to organize more than 15 educational events for more than 1,000 employers. These events built capacity and understanding of the legalities of hiring immigrants, the business benefit of hiring immigrants and international students, anti-racism in the workplace, immigrant worker expectations on the future of work and more.

Conceptualized employer-focused solutions to hiring challenges

- Employer partners and staff developed a business plan for a one-stop immigrant talent hub to help employers easily access immigrant talent and enable more immigrants and refugees to get into work. Explored potential platforms and engaged expertise and collaboration with sectors leaders including Immploy, Magnet and FindYourJob.ca.
- Entered an agreement with the World Education Service Immigrant Work program to enhance employer engagement and develop a playbook to further support immigrant hiring locally.
- Promoted the Workforce Planning Board's new Findyourjob.ca as an excellent tool for employers and job seekers to build connections and potential employment relationships.

Promoted employer and immigrant job seeker connections

- Partnered with the Workforce Planning Board on three virtual job fairs and the virtual Manufacturing Day event where 60 employers were able to explore employment relationships with 370 immigrant job-seekers.
- Supported organization of the KW Multicultural Centre's 12th Annual Global Skills Conference, providing over 200 internationally training individuals with professional development and networking opportunities.
- Supported Reception House's Working Together Program, ensuring employer engagement which resulted in jobs for hundreds of refugees.

Joined the collective effort during the COVID-19 crisis

- Worked closely with area Chambers of Commerce, regional and urban municipal economic development and other community leaders to assist local employers in navigating COVID-19 restrictions and supports and accessing immigrant talent with a focus on most impacted sectors.

How we made a difference

Employers became more aware and open to hiring immigrant talent and to importance of anti-racist policies in the workplace



How we made a difference

Built connections, capacity and civic engagement among ethno-cultural groups to increase immigrant influence and social connectedness

Belong

The Belong Steering Group works together to unleash the vibrant and diverse community contributions of immigrants by addressing long-term challenges to developing a strong sense of belonging in Waterloo Region.

Belong Group Partners:

Brittney Emslie (Chair), KW Multicultural Centre
Vanessa Lopak (Vice-Chair), City of Cambridge
Dianne Boston-Nyp (Past Chair), Volunteer Action Centre Waterloo Region
Aisha Wovenu and Jessica Their, Carizon Family and Community Services
Ajirioghene Evi-Cobbinah, Kind Minds Family Wellness
Aleksandra Petrovic, Social Development Centre
Brice Balmer, Interfaith Grand River
Chaitali Maybhate, Cambridge Self-Help Food Bank
Dianne Boston-Nyp, Volunteer Action Centre Waterloo Region
Fadhilah Balogun, CCORIC member, African Women Alliance of Waterloo Region
Fauzia Wafai, Islamic Circle of North America-Canada and Muslim Women of Cambridge
Gabrielle Laurin, Conseil Scolaire Viamonde
Jaskirat Gill, Waterloo Region Police Service
Jim Bowman and Pamela Albrecht, City of Waterloo
Katie Hill, Sustainable Waterloo Region
Kelly Kipfer, Waterloo Public Libraries
Kelly Steiss, Marla Pender and Rebecca Florence, City of Kitchener
Kristen Bustamante, Sanjay Govindaraj and Sophia Stanberry, Region of Waterloo
Marie-Pierre Daoust, Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir
Marwa Gebeil and Rihanat El-Alawa, Kinbridge Community Association
Nazy Pazoki Zadeh, House of Friendship
Renu Bhandari, Focus for Ethnic: Women Waterloo Region Inc.
Rozina Shaheen, Muslim Social Services KW



"All colours are beautiful" image of the #RacialEquityWR campaign, 2020. Painting by Pamela Rojas, local artist and member of the Belong Steering Group

The diversity of languages that exist in our region is important because it is an essential component of the cultural identities of many ethno-cultural groups that call Waterloo Region home. Linguistic diversity has brought our community opportunities to learn new languages; multi-level courses throughout the region are offered in languages such as Italian, Japanese, Romanian, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Portuguese, Rohingya, Tigrigna, Chinese, Polish and more. These classes allow newcomers to preserve their linguistic and cultural traditions while extending their reach to new communities through education and participation.

- Brittney Emslie, Operations Manager, K-W Multicultural Centre

Sarah Shafiq, Interfaith Grand River & Coalition of Muslim Women

Shannon Markle, Idea Exchange

Stephen Lavigne, KW Art Gallery

Community Members: Asha Abubaker and Pamela Rojas

Action group members:

Dina Ayad, community member

Alumni:

Chris Hussey, Reception House

Hoda Ghonim, SHORE Centre

Jonathan Moyer, House of Friendship

Julie Sudds, Waterloo Region Police Service

Lee Ann Wetzel, Region of Waterloo

Marina Dotzert, City of Kitchener

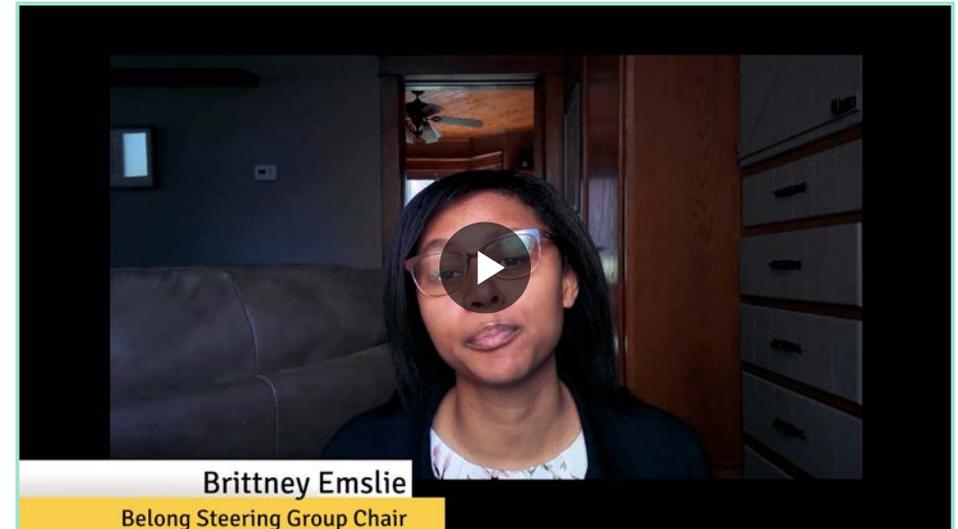
Melissa Strachan, Carizon Family and Community Services

Muriel Vandepol, Region of Waterloo

Sue Weare, City of Cambridge

Community members: Anna Barth, Asha Abubaker, Dina Ayad, Elba Martinez and Janet Howitt

Strategic and operational staff leadership: Abiha Syed



Priority actions:

1. Build connections, capacity and civic engagement among ethno-cultural groups to increase immigrant influence in policy making and social connectedness
2. Work with municipalities and other public sector partners as leaders and advocates to strengthen immigrant welcoming, inclusion and engagement
3. Increase public support for immigration, and action to address racism, discrimination and foster immigrant belonging through campaigns and initiatives
4. Collaborate with systems and community tables and leaders

How we made a difference

Worked with municipalities and other public sector partners as leaders and advocates to strengthen immigrant welcoming, inclusion and engagement

How we made a difference

Built connections, capacity and civic engagement among ethno-cultural groups to increase immigrant influence and social connectedness

- Recruited new membership from among Waterloo Region's ethno-cultural communities to the Steering Group to help lead and act.
- Connected with ethno-cultural leaders and formal and informal organizations to strengthen relationships, share resources and tools to address social isolation and provide help and support during the pandemic.
- Built awareness and capacity to act among 20 female ethno-cultural group leaders on the importance of mental health and self-care in the pandemic.

Worked with municipalities and other public sector partners as leaders and advocates to strengthen immigrant welcoming, inclusion and engagement

- Worked closely with the City of Waterloo to ensure cultural-responsiveness in development its Social Inclusion Recognition Toolkit for senior and older adults.
- Supported planning and participated in the City of Cambridge's second annual Virtual Welcome Event for new immigrants. Recruited 12 ethno-cultural leaders to provide personalized videos as part of the event.

Increased public support for immigration, and action to address racism, discrimination and foster immigrant belonging through campaigns and initiatives

- Launched the [Anti-Racism Resources for Waterloo Region webpage](#) as part of #RacialEquityWR public education work to provide residents with resources, literature and educational material to address racism and discrimination.
- Engaged hundreds of residents in initiatives like the [2020 Virtual Global Migration Film Festival](#), the [International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination \(March 21\) #RacialEquityWR campaign](#) and more to foster empathy and strengthen inclusion for immigrants.
- Built capacity to address hate crimes, hate incidents and racism at the individual, organizational and community level through participation in workshops and trainings.

Supported collective responses to evolving COVID-19 challenges

- Through participation in the Pandemic Psychosocial and Spiritual Supports Working Group and Cambridge Mobilization Team, helped update lists of culturally-adapted services and translated COVID-19 resources, identified vulnerable populations to help connect with community, psychosocial and spiritual supports and supported the safe in-person opening of services and faith organizations.
- Collaborated with the Children and Youth Planning Table, Waterloo Region Crime Prevention Council, Wellbeing Waterloo Region and other community partners in solidarity campaigns to share messages of hope, connection and awareness to #KeepFamiliesSafe by addressing the spread of social isolation and family violence during the pandemic.

Waterloo Region
GLOBAL MIGRATION FILM FESTIVAL
 Nov 24-Dec 18, 2020 #WRMigFest

Free Online Event
www.migrationswaterlooregion.ca/#mifest
 Contact: Abiyot@ingramwaterlooregion.ca



#StrongerTogetherWR



KEEP FAMILIES SAFE
 PREVENT FAMILY VIOLENCE IN WATERLOO REGION

PreventingCrime.ca/KeepFamiliesSafe



#RacialEquityWR

Ewomazino Ojogbo
 Board Member
 Kind Minds Family Wellness



Working together to be a thriving and prosperous community for everyone



For information or an alternative format:

Phone: 519-575-4757 ext. 3172

Deaf and hard of hearing (TTY): 519-575-4608

Email: ImmigrationPartnership@regionofwaterloo.ca

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