



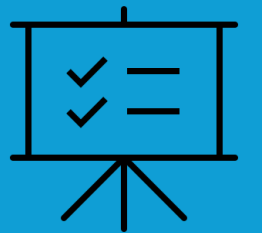
Photo: Strength in Unity Calgary Symposium Calgary, 2017

# Reflections on Engaging in Research with Immigrant & Refugee Men

Presented by  
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# Presentation Outline

- Introduction: Who am I?
- Overview of selected research projects
- Lessons learned
- Q&A





# Purpose of the Presentation

- To share my insights regarding research with immigrant and refugee men in Canada.
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# Overview of Select Research Projects



2020  
COVID-19 and the  
impact on ACB  
communities in Canada,  
funded by PHAC



2019-2021  
Promoting mental health  
equity for Canada's Black  
refugees: A pilot  
intervention with Rwandan  
and South Sudanese  
refugees in Calgary &  
Edmonton, funded by PHAC



2013-2018  
Reducing stigma of mental  
illness among boys and  
men in Asian communities  
in Canada: An innovative  
intervention study, funded  
by Movember



2006-2007  
Engaging people from HIV  
endemic countries (sub-  
Saharan African) in Calgary,  
funded by CIHR

# Overview of Select Research Projects



2006-2007

Meeting multilevel challenges of Sudanese well-being and integration in Canada, funded by SSHRC



2003-2008

Sudanese and Russian refugee men in the Canadian context, funded by SSHRC-CURA



2003

Paternal engagement in immigrant and refugee families, funded by Health Canada



2002-2006

Racism, Violence, & Health Study, funded by CIHR

# Source Country of Immigrant/Refugee Men In Research Studies

- Rwanda
- Philippines
- Hong Kong
- Former Yugoslavia
- South Sudan
- Russia
- Caribbean (Barbados, Guyana, Trinidad)
- Vietnam
- Punjabi
- India(other regions)
- Latin America (Columbia, Chile)
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- China
- United States (African American)
- Nigeria



# Areas of Focus

Settlement &  
adaptation  
experiences

HIV

Racism &  
discrimination

Mental health

Service  
delivery

Child-rearing

I&R men as  
fathers

Family  
dynamics

# Program Development

- Drumbeat program (HIV community link)
- Program for immigrant and refugee men (ISC)
- Intergenerational youth project (ISC)
- Mosaic family centre (ISC)





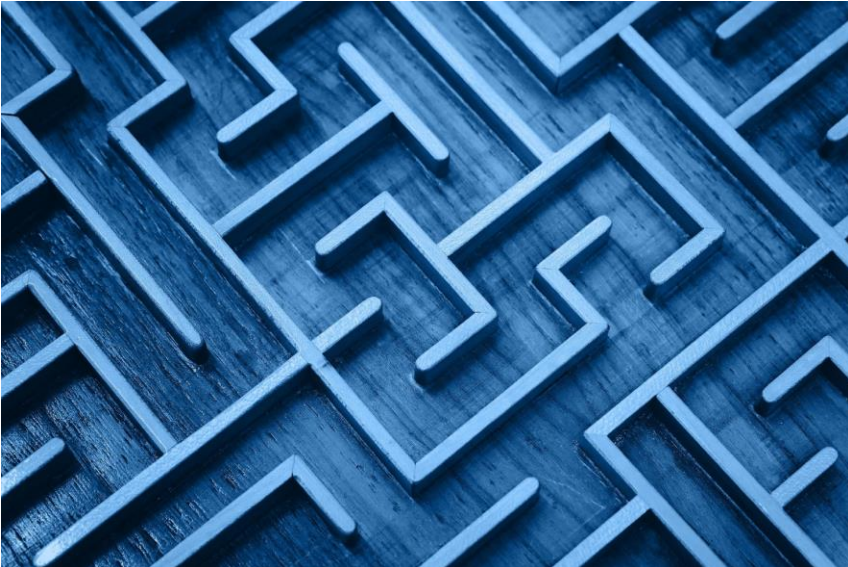
So, what have I learned about engaging with immigrant and refugee men?



## Ongoing Challenges Experienced by I&R Men

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- The presence of racism and discrimination and its impact on the health and wellbeing of immigrant and refugee men (negative impact).
- The ongoing experiences of being underemployed and the devastating impact at both the individual/community levels.
- Closely related is the lack of financial security experienced by immigrant and refugee men and their families.
- Frustration with the lack of recognition of their international credentials.
- Adapting to new gender roles and expectations in Canadian society.



## Ongoing Challenges Experienced by I&R Men

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- Refugee men experience several losses as a result of the need to flee their countries – they may have been victims of violence or witnessed horrific forms of violence and terror, which results in mental health problems such as PTSD.
- For both immigrant and refugee men dealing with a series of losses (e.g., friends, culture, familiar geography) as a result of leaving their home country.
- When employed, immigrant and refugee men lack occupational mobility opportunities.
- Immigrant and refugee men experience negative interactions with a number of Canadian systems such as the police/criminal justice and child welfare system. In particular, Sudanese refugee men view the child welfare system as being intrusive and destructive to their communities.



## Attributes of Immigrant and Refugee Men

- Adaptability – the men were quite receptive to learning about new gender roles that they had to take on while residing in Canada.
  - Greater role in domestic tasks
  - Increasing parenting role
- Virtually all the men saw themselves as being “providers for their family.”



Photo: Anti-Stigma Research Intervention Training

## Attributes of Immigrant and Refugee Men

- All the men wanted to contribute in meaningful ways to Canadian society.
- All of the men were quite determined and tenacious in becoming successful in Canadian society.
- For refugee men, they expressed sincere appreciation of living in Canada where armed violence and conflict was not present.
- All of the men expressed deep appreciation despite the challenges they encountered for the opportunity to live in Canada.



## Immigrant and Refugee Men as Research Participants

1. As research participants, I found the men to be very engaged.
2. Role reversal – during the research process, we regarded the men to be “the experts” while members of the research team including myself became their students. This reversal provided the opportunity for the men to share their stories openly.
3. They demonstrated a strong interest in learning about the issues under study. For example, in the RVH study, examples of issues explored included racism/discrimination, the lack of recognition of international credentials.



## RACE & WELL-BEING

The Lives, Hopes and Activism of African Canadians

Carl James, David Este, Wanda Thomas Bernard,  
Akua Benjamin, Bethan Lloyd & Tana Turner

# Immigrant and Refugee Men as Research Participants

4. For racialized immigrant and refugee men, they were extremely interested on the impact of racism on their health and well-being (e.g., SIU, RVH, and Paternal Engagement Study).
5. Immigrant and refugee men viewed research as a meaningful way to contribute to Canadian society.
6. In the studies where we provided educational/behavioural sessions, the men exhibited a keen desire to learn new knowledge in gaining new skills (e.g., SIU).



Photo: SIU Knowledge Translation Planning Committee

## Benefits of Engaging in Research with I&R Men

- We learned about the experiences of immigrant/refugee men from their perspectives, which includes both negative and positive experiences. This fills an important gap in the research literature focused on the settlement of newcomers.
- Hearing the words from immigrant and refugee men helped in the development of programs designed specifically for these men and their families.
- By participating in research studies, it provides confidence to I&R men to take on or enhance leadership roles within their communities.
- We can celebrate the contributions these men make to Canadian society.



# Strategies Utilized to Ensure the Success of Research With I&R Men



Photo: Presentation of Certificates

1. Reducing the power dynamics between the immigrant/refugee men and the researchers.
2. Building nurturing and sustaining relationships with I&R men (the importance of trust and being authentic).

# Strategies Utilized to Ensure the Success of Research With I&R Men



3. Being very clear about the nature of the research project or study.
4. Making sure that the men are very clear about their role and expectations of them as participants in the research process.
5. Continually informing I&R men about the timelines associated with the research study.

Photo: Community Engagement Genesis Centre Calgary

# Strategies Utilized to Ensure the Success of Research With I&R Men



6. Wherever possible, informing the men's partners about the nature of the research project.
7. Informing the men of the potential benefits of their participation in the project or study.
8. Sharing the results of the study with I&R men and their communities.



# Additional Readings

- Tachble, A. (2010). *Fathering perceptions and experiences of Ethiopian immigrant/refugee men in a Canadian urban centre*. [PhD thesis, University of Calgary].
  - Lorenzetti, L., Mancey, A., Walsh, C., & Lantion, V. (2023). Immigrant men and racism in Canada: Impacts of wellbeing and family violence. *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 55, 1(1–23).
  - Al Mhanied, A., Bogossian, A., Hanley, J. (2023). Fathering here, fathering there: A phenomenological study of the impact of forced migration and resettlement of Syrian refugee fathers in Canada. *Journal of Men's Studies*, 31(3), 396–418.
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**Q&A**

**THANK YOU!!**

David Este

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