

March 2010

Research News

There's a lot of great new research publications and resources coming out in the nonprofit and social research sectors. Check out our the Research News blog on the library section of our website to stay up-to-date.

Are you starting a new project and unsure of where to begin? Do you need a few examples of similar initiatives to guide you on your way? Check out the [Promising Practices Catalogue](#) from Imagine Canada.



Search the Promising Practices Catalogue to learn about successful projects by nonprofit organizations and community groups in Canada. Discover models of practice, solutions to real world problems and new approaches to delivering services, building community and doing good work.

 **National Council of Welfare** If you're doing any research on the cost of poverty and the value of investment, check out the [Comprehensive Bibliography on the Cost of Poverty and the Value of Investment](#). This comprehensive bibliography from the National Council of Welfare (NCW) is the place to start. It collects reports and articles related to this topic on an ongoing basis, and is divided into theme areas including Policies and Programs, Housing, Education and Health.

211 Edmonton has released it's [Unmet Needs Report](#) from the fourth quarter of 2009. According to the report, housing continues to be the highest priority, with one in five calls relaying unmet needs dealing with this issue. Material goods and transportation ranked next on the list.



Top researchers from across Canada have collaborated to give us the [Canadian Homelessness Research Network](#) (CHRN). Working in collaboration with a range of key stakeholders and institutions (in the non-profit sector and in government), this group is committed to enhancing the impact of research on the homelessness crisis. Their focus is on establishing effective mechanisms for knowledge exchange and mobilization in the area of homelessness research in Canada. Among other projects, CHRN is now administering the Homeless Hub.



CRRU (Childcare Resource and Research Unit) has created the [CRRU Child-care Privatization Project website](#) to provide information and encourage discussion on the privatization of child care in Canada. Read the latest news and research about this issue, or link to related websites or relevant case studies. The website will be updated as information becomes available.

The Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada has announced the new "[Child Care is a Right](#)" project. The project will explore Canada's international treaty obligations to women, children and families as they pertain to child care.

Most publications listed here are also available in PDF format by searching in the online catalogue. The catalogue is available 24/7, and can be accessed by going to: socialresearchlibrary.ca

Or, drop by our Library to read materials or make copies during business hours.

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Do you have news, information, or new research to share? Let us know and we'll include it in our next Research Update.

Reviews

Review: Room for change: The Champion's Centre's Progressive Approach to Alberta's Homelessness Crisis.

Book by Rush, Halbauer & Hopchin, The Champion's Centre, 2006.

I've always admired people who aren't afraid of dreaming big, and Klaas Klooster fits that profile well. Recognizing the need for long-term housing solutions for those who are chronically without a home, especially those suffering from mental illnesses, Klooster dreamt of The Champion's Centre. Room for Change recounts the journey of bringing that dream to reality, and it is an inspiring and eye-opening tale.

The Champion's Centre was founded in Ponoka in 2002. It "combines ecologically and financially valid concepts of compressed housing for the disabled, those that are homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless." The Centre houses over a dozen men in individual units, and provides them with services such as a hot meal, cleaning, and personal encouragement. The Centre also incorporates small businesses into its premises; this model provides funding for the organization and gives part-time work opportunities to residents who are capable of taking on the responsibility.

A second Champion's Centre was founded in Medicine Hat in 2006. Since this book was published a location was opened in Brooks and plans for an Edmonton Centre have been set in motion.

The Champion's Centre model is unique with respect to other group homes. The Centre receives some of its funding from the

government and other community organizations, but it also generates its own support through its on-site businesses. As a result, tenants are able to live for substantially less than if they maintained an independent residence.

This book is an engaging read, providing narrative accounts from staff, volunteers and residents at The Champion's Centre, as well as from staff at other temporary shelters. They discuss some of the obstacles and rewards they meet in their day-to-day work, and they reflect on the necessity of having many types of people involved in this kind of project. While visionaries like Klaas Klooster provide a dream for new initiatives, others bring forward practical know-how related to maintenance and support raising. Klooster reflects on the value of having community support for a project like this and relays some advice on how to garner it.

The book also provides a discussion of the ties between homelessness and mental illness, giving a brief summary of several of the mental illnesses that contribute to homelessness. The point is made that "while humanity may still lack the power to eradicate mental illness, it certainly has the power to eradicate homelessness." The Champion's Centre has focused on providing housing for those with mental illnesses because of the high prevalence of mental illness among people who are without a home.

Read this book if you work with the homeless or recently housed; if you are interested in the link between mental health and housing; if you need inspiration for bringing your dreams to fruition.

Review by Jennifer Hoyer

"While humanity may still lack the power to eradicate mental illness, it certainly has the power to eradicate homelessness."

Valorizing Immigrant's Non-Canadian Work Experience. Report from Canadian Council on Learning, 2009.

As a result of Canada's low birth rate, and the retirement of an aging population, immigrant workers are becoming increasingly important in Canada's labour force. This report explores foreign work experience and its role in the assessment and recognition of immigrants' qualifications for Canadian jobs.

The identified barriers that immigrants face when searching for work in Canada include (1) lack of recognition for foreign credentials, (2) language barrier, and (3) the lack of valorization of foreign work experience. Unfortunately, most programs and initiatives today are only designed to address the first two.

This becomes a major problem, placing immigrants in a Catch 22 situation where they are unable to get a job without Canadian experience, and are unable to get Canadian experience without a job.

This report further examines foreign work experience through innovative practices, challenges, and government support.

Innovative Practices to Valorizing Foreign Work Experience

One innovative practice includes the preparation, organization, and conduct of interviews. Organizations such as RBC, Assiniboine Credit Union, and Manulife train or coach immigrant applicants in cross cultural communication techniques to explain and understand how foreign experience relates to the Canadian labour market. This approach requires that

- immigrants learn about the cultural context of the Canadian workplace, the Canadian labour market, and the operations and informal culture of the industry sector; and
- recruiters and managers learn about the different effects of cultural differences on communication.

Innovative practices also include bridging programs that integrate immigrants' foreign experience into the assessment of their knowledge and skills, the demonstration of competencies, resume preparation and job searches, and customized internships and placements. These bridging programs are evident in a few organizations including The Immigrant Skilled Trades Employment Program (ISTEP), Workplace Integration of

Newcomers (WIN), and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW).

Challenges

One of the prevailing challenges is the lack of recognition by employers of the value of work experience acquired outside Canada. This is often due to the inability of employers to understand how foreign work experience may relate to the Canadian workplace and contribute to it. This causes many employers to simply refuse foreign work experience as valid experience for employment.

This report also argues that the "diversity advantage" that immigrants with foreign experience can bring to our economy to enhance our international competitiveness is utilized by few employers; some who may even argue that it does not exist.

Addressing this problem will require investments of time, effort, and money to provide effective communication and well-designed education and training.

Government Support

Many innovative practices for valorizing foreign work experience have been exercised by the Immigrant Settlement Agencies (ISAs), with support from Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Immi-

grant Settlement and Adaptation Program and some provincial governments. As well the federal government's Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) program in late 2003 with a budget of \$68 million stimulated a variety of initiatives.

These initiatives have resulted in an increased openness among employers to understand the experience and needs of immigrants, and to take unaccustomed risks in recruitment, hiring, and workplace integration practices.

Promising Developments

Although there are many promising developments surrounding the issue of valorizing foreign work experience, it is evident that Canada's employers and governments still face many challenges in creating a

smooth transition for immigrants looking for work in Canada. Organizations must begin to recognize and value immigrant experience to not only address the trending worker shortage in Canada, but to also identify the opportunity of hiring immigrants as a 'diversity advantage' where they are gaining new skills and experience that will further drive organizations to new strengths and economic competitiveness.

Read this report if you are an organization interested in valorizing foreign work experience, or are an individual interested in immigration work related issues.

Review by Darlene Paranaque

Organizations must begin to recognize and value immigrant experience to not only address the trending worker shortage in Canada, but to also identify the opportunity of...gaining new skills and experience that will further drive organizations to new strengths and economic competitiveness.

Book Club

Our March book club will discuss Marina Endicott's *Good to a Fault*. Join us on March 18 from 12 to 1 pm in the ESPC Resource Library. For more information email [library\[at\]edmontonsocialplanning\[dot\]ca](mailto:library[at]edmontonsocialplanning[dot]ca).

New Resources

Nonprofits

The Sacred Heart Collective: An Effective Use of a Closed School? Report by the Edmonton Social Planning Council, 2005.

The Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector in Alberta: regional highlights of the national survey of non-profit and voluntary organizations. Report by Robert Roach, Imagine Canada, 2006.

Children, Women and Families

Tackling Children's and Women's Poverty: Early Learning and Care Services are Part of the Solution. Report by Susan Prentice, 2009.

Impact of School Breakfast on Children's Health and Learning: an analysis of the scientific research. Report from the Sodexo Foundation, November 2008.

No Action: No Progress. Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action Report on Canada's Progress in Implementing Priority Recommendations made by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2008. Report from the Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action, February 2010.

The Current State of Canadian Family Finances, 2009 Report. Roger Sauvé, Vanier Institute of the Family.

Health

A Foundation for Alberta's Health System. Report of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Health, 2010.

Recreation: a best buy in Public Health. Report from Alberta Recreation & Parks Association, 2004.

Mentally healthy Communities: a collection of papers. Report from the Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2008.

Mentally Healthy Communities: Aboriginal Perspectives. Report from the Canadian Institute for Health Information, 2009.

A Bitter Pill: how the medical system is failing the elderly. Book by John Sloan, MD, 2009.

Inclusion: Societies That Foster Belonging Improve Health. Report by Peggy Schultz and Subha Sankaran, 2006.

Youth

Drugs, Homelessness & Health: Homeless Youth Speak Out About Harm Reduction. The Shout Clinic Harm Reduction Report, 2010. From the Wellesley Institute.

More New Resources

Program and Service Evaluation

Considering Evaluation: Thoughts for Social Change and Movement-Building Groups. Report from ActKnowledge, 2009.

Evaluation of the Social Determinants of Health Project (Health Disparities Working Group of the Alberta Healthy Living Network). Report by Tammy Horne and Diane McLaren, 2007.

Seniors

Report of the National Seniors Council on Low Income Among Seniors. Report from Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, 2009.

A Stronger Foundation: Pension Reform and Old Age Security. Policy brief by Monica Townson, 2009.

Housing

Involving Homeless People in Decision-making affecting the services that they use: an overview of participation practices among service providers in Europe. Report from the European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless, 2005.

Winter Homeless Services: Bringing Our Neighbors in from the Cold. Report from the National Coalition for the Homeless, January 2010.

Room for Change: The Champion's Centre's Progressive Approach to Alberta's Homelessness Crisis. Book by Rush, Halbauer, and Hopchin, 2006.

Immigration

Adjusting the Balance: Fixing Canada's Economic Immigration Policies. Report by Naomi Alboim and Maytree, July 2009.

Unsettled: Legal and Policy Barriers for Newcomers to Canada. Report from Community Foundations of Canada and the Law Commission of Canada, 2006.

Making the Connections: Ottawa's Role in Immigrant Unemployment. Report by Naomi Alboim and Elizabeth McIsaac, 2007.

Fast, Fair and Final: Reforming Canada's Refugee System. Report by Peter Showler and Maytree, 2009.

Valorizing Immigrants' Non-Canadian Work Experience. Gail Larose and George Tillman, the Canadian Council on Learning, 2009.

Other

From Insecurity to Prosperity: Practical Ideas for a Stronger Canada. Report from Maytree, 2010.

HungerCount 2009. Report from Food Banks Canada, 2009.

Where Poverty Prevails: A profile of urban poverty in Alberta. Presentation for the Inter-City Forum on Social Policy, September 2009.

A guide to Social Return on Investment. Report from the Cabinet Office, 2009.

Getting the Balance Right: The Oil Sands, Exporting and Sustainability. Report from the Conference Board of Canada, 2010.

Of Interest...

City of Edmonton Archives Display

Visit the City of Edmonton Archives to see a great display on the 70 year history of the Edmonton Social Planning Council. The exhibit includes publications, photos, and newspaper clippings from the last seven decades.



Lunch and Learn at Stanley Milner Library

Next up in our Lunch and Learn series: Housing and Homelessness in Edmonton.

Join us on April 28 at 12 pm on the main floor of Stanley Milner Library.

Call 780.423.2031x354 for more information.



We want your input! How can this Research Update be more useful for you? Contact us:

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