

# **Immigrant Services Society of BC + LFS 350 Asset Mapping Project Proposal**

## **Introduction:**

The Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISS of BC) is a not-for-profit organization which assists new immigrants in adjusting to life in Canada. Some of the services provided by the ISS of BC include employment assistance, housing and educational support. Currently, a group of Arabic-speaking immigrant seniors who live in Guildford are in the process of creating a cultural recipe book in hopes of providing a resource to ease the transition to living in Canada for newcomers. Our role in this project is to establish an asset map to locate stores where the ingredients for the recipes can be found so as to assist our target population of immigrants. The aim of this project is to map culturally appropriate food resources for newcomers to Guildford in Surrey. According to the City of Surrey (2014), 11.9% of the Surrey population were not Canadian citizens as of 2011. In particular, 13.6 % of the population of Guildford were not Canadian citizens in 2011 (City of Surrey, 2014). What is more, “between 2000 and 2010 [...] Metro Vancouver saw 10,600 new senior immigrants of which Surrey received the second highest, 2,105, next to Vancouver with 3,345” (Reid, 2014). Out of 465,005 residents of Surrey surveyed in 2011 as to each resident’s detailed mother tongue (language learned first and still understood by the resident), the mother tongue of 2,930 residents was Arabic (Statistics Canada, 2011). For comparison to BC-wide demographics, the percentage of Surrey residents with Arabic as mother tongue relative to the total sample of Surrey residents surveyed was approximately twice the percentage of BC residents with Arabic as mother tongue relative to the total sample of BC residents surveyed (Statistics Canada, 2011). Additionally, in 2011 “9,680 of Surrey's seniors lived alone” and “the 2011 Census found that 6,505 - or 12 per cent - of Surrey's seniors were considered to be low income” (Reid, 2014). These statistics demonstrate the fact that our target population of immigrants living in Surrey shares attributes with Metro Vancouver in terms of

immigration demographics, showing that the results of this project may be applicable to other immigrant populations within Metro Vancouver. In turn, the relatively high rate of Arabic-speaking residents who live in Surrey coupled with the challenges facing seniors and immigrant seniors who do not speak English shows the applicability of our work with Arabic-speaking senior immigrants living in Guildford to Surrey-specific populations. We will collaborate with the seniors to understand the seniors' needs and to support the seniors via creating an asset map. This project will take into consideration key factors of cultural appropriateness, accessibility and affordability of food resources. Working with ISS of BC will allow us to provide immigrants living in Surrey with a food and cultural resource which will combat problems of food insecurity as well as comfort newcomers.

#### **Significance:**

The most complete and widely accepted definition of community food security is when “all community residents obtain a safe, culturally acceptable, nutritionally adequate diet through a sustainable food system that maximizes community self-reliance and social justice” (Hamm & Bellows, 2003). Community food security is a fundamental element in ensuring communities' health and well-being. Indicators of food security vary from different perspectives (Leroy et al., 2015), and any indicators that affect a household's quality and level of available resources could result in potential consequences of food insecurity including hunger, malnutrition and direct or indirect negative effects on health and quality of life on community (Campbell, 1991). Our food asset map addresses accessibility & affordability, cultural appropriateness and nutrition on a community-based level in the city of Surrey with a focus on Guildford, aiming to create an easy-to-visualize tool for community members to locate local food assets. We hope that by the end of our project, our team will have contributed to ISS of BC's mission of “Helping immigrants build

a future in Canada” by relieving the struggle of immigrants finding nutritious and culturally suitable food to satisfy their diverse tastes and their unique needs (such as halal foods) and more.

Assisting immigrants in locating affordable and culturally-appropriate food is valuable because immigrant populations have been documented with displaying high levels of stress and health problems related to immigration and acculturation (Baker, 2016, Li, 2015, Walsh, Shulman, Maurer, 2008). Immigrants are often isolated and face food insecurity due to lack of knowledge of where to buy affordable and appropriate foods. According to Vahabi and Damba (2013), recent immigrants in Canada experience higher levels of food insecurity as compared to the general population. In particular, Vahabi and Damba (2013) documented “structural and socio-economic barriers to food acquisition” of “limited financial resources, limited/poor language proficiency, limited access to culturally preferred food, and poor knowledge of community-based food resources and services.” Vahabi and Damba (2013) showed that food insecurity manifested itself in physical and psychological health problems for immigrants in Canada, demonstrating the need for programs to address the issues of food insecurity faced by immigrants to Canada. Participants in the study that were able to find familiar foods in stores maintained that this helped the participants stay “connected to home type food” (Vahabi and Damba, 2013). Thus, this project seeks to address the documented needs of immigrant populations to access affordable, nutritious and culturally appropriate food to attempt to alleviate the challenges and hardships faced by immigrants and refugees in Canada.

### **Objectives:**

Our first goal is to determine the most essential ingredients to include in the asset map. Due to scale restrictions we cannot consider every ingredient, so we will consult the seniors as well as the draft recipe book in order to determine the most important ingredients to include in

the map.

Our second objective is to collect information from the seniors as well as local data to assess the cultural appropriateness, accessibility and affordability of the shops in the Guildford neighbourhood that sell the ingredients on our list.

Thirdly, we will create an asset map using the information collected from the seniors as well as the local data from the shops. The asset map will be placed at the end of the recipe book and will reflect the level of cultural appropriateness, accessibility and affordability of each shop.

Finally, we will assess the efficacy of our asset map by consulting the seniors when we cook with them at the end of the course. Getting the seniors' feedback on the quality and utility of the resource will be informative and could help us revamp newer versions of the map that are more reflective of their needs.

### **Inquiry Questions:**

What are the key ingredients that should be featured in the asset map?

Which shops are the most culturally appropriate, accessible and affordable for the seniors?

How do we create a map that can incorporate the location of the ingredients as well as a ranking system for each shop based on cultural appropriateness, accessibility and affordability?

How well did our asset map address the needs of the seniors and where can we improve?

### **Methods:**

We plan to meet with the seniors on Feb 14th at the seniors' weekly meeting to ask the

seniors our inquiry questions. We will ask the seniors where they purchase food, why the seniors choose these locations and what challenges the seniors face when grocery shopping. We will also inquire as to any desires the seniors have for the asset map: we will ask which ingredients in the recipe book are most essential, which bus routes are most convenient and which map formats would be most easily interpreted and useful for shopping. We will then conduct a web search of all bus routes and shops listed by the seniors as well as shops within the Guildford area that fall along the desired transit routes and may sell the desired ingredients. From this web search and/or phone calls to the stores we will identify potential mapping sites (eg, we may eliminate stores that do not sell halal products from our search). We will then perform site visits to the identified shops to assess the suitability of each shop as a cultural food resource: we will assess cost, accessibility and product availability for each shop. Finally we will rate each store on a 5-point scale for each of the three components as well as any additional criteria provided by the seniors.

#### **Analysis and interpretation:**

From our field results we can create a map with online mapping software such as Google Maps or eSpatial that includes bus routes and our rating scale with a key at the bottom in both Arabic and English. If this map is created before we cook with the seniors we will ask the seniors in person for feedback regarding the map. Alternatively, we can send the map to the coordinator of the seniors' meeting group to share the map with the seniors. We can then incorporate feedback from the seniors in the creation of a final asset map. This approach will help us answer our inquiry question by mapping out the best shops for seniors and newcomers in the Guildford area. This map will allow us to assess the relative availability and spatial distribution of affordable, nutritious and culturally-appropriate foods as provided by stores in Guildford.

#### **Ethical considerations:**

With ethical considerations, we will integrate the information provided from the seniors and work to prioritize their needs before our own goals for the project. This asset map is to serve the seniors as well as new immigrants in making their transition to living in Canada smoother. We do not want to detract from that specific goal by saturating the map with assets that suit our needs.

**Budget:**

We will cook a meal with the seniors at the end of this project. We estimate a budget of \$150-200.

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