

COMMUNITY PARTNER DESCRIPTION:

ACICC is a social enterprise cooperative with a 50-person membership that was formed in 2013 to create economic opportunities for persons and groups with established economic barriers through skill enhancement, business incubation, and community building. The need for the establishment of ACiCC and consequent skill enhancement and business incubation programs was established through a 12-month, community-wide consultation, and during the economic empowerment conference organized by ACICC. Feedback from the consultations and conferences revealed that persons of African descent, newcomers; immigrants, seniors, women, youth, and persons with disabilities have rich knowledge, skills, and abilities that could be used as building blocks for their own financial and socio-economic well-being, and to achieve broader socio-economic justice. The ACICC now operates a 2,900-square foot skill enhancement and business incubation center set up with industrial and domestic sewing machines, commercial kitchen equipment, training and audio-visual equipment, and a food vending, display and cafeteria space.

** During the course of this project, ACICC was disbanded and the Common Roots Urban Farm joined the project as community partner.*

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Food is central to cultural health and survival, the lack of access to cultural foods and food practices has negative consequences beyond the more familiar forms of individual, household, or community food insecurity caused by financial insufficiency (Power, 2008). The Halifax Regional Municipality has recently experienced a large influx of newcomers, and though many bring with them knowledge, skills, and aspirations to start a new food business, the challenges associated with being a newcomer often prevent them from doing so. The proposed project seeks to engage migrant and refugee newcomers living in NS's Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) in business skills training and hands-on food product development sessions with the aim of supporting newcomers in starting a new, small food business. A research component of the project will gather participants' experiences through interviews and focus groups to shed light on newcomers' experiences of cultural food insecurity.

PROJECTED BENEFITS:

This project will serve our short-term research needs by generating knowledge about the experiences of cultural food insecurity, as well as the existing skill sets and needs for skills training among newcomers living in the HRM who are interested in starting a small food business to sell country or traditional foods (i.e. ethnic foods). The long-term goal serviced by this project and the future work that will build upon it is to support newcomers and service providers in developing capacity and collaborative networks to provide newcomers with skills, training, and certifications needed to start small food businesses.

NB: These are excerpts from the Community Partner's original proposal from 2018.