

COMMUNITY PARTNER DESCRIPTION*:

Iranian Cultural Society of Nova Scotia (ICS) is a registered not-for-profit, non-political and non-religious organization established and incorporated in 2002. Our mission is to preserve and promote the Iranian culture, custom, art, literature and official language. Since its establishment, and with the help of hundreds of Iranian and non-Iranian volunteers, ICS has performed numerous cultural activities, including the founding of the Farsi school for children, youth, and adults in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

ICS Farsi School provides Farsi (Persian) language classes for all ages. Classes are offered in pre-school, elementary, intermediate, advance levels and conversation classes. The Iranian-Canadian families recognize the efforts put into providing such services and continuously support our endeavors to teach the Language of the Motherland to our children and those who are interested

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Researchers have found that between all the age groups, those who migrated before the age of 12 experience more mood disorders compared to those who migrate in adolescence or adulthood. Cultural identity has been found to protect immigrants' mental health in foreign countries; however, as child immigrants spend less time in their home countries, their sense of cultural identity has not fully developed. ICS established the Farsi school in 2002 to support Iranian immigrant children's sense of belonging and cultural identity. In the Farsi school, children practice their mother tongue and connect with children and educators from their own cultural backgrounds. As the number of Iranian families is increasing in Atlantic Canada, we believe it is time for us to understand how our program can enhance the Iranian immigrant children's sense of cultural identity and belonging through language learning in the Farsi school.

The aim of the proposed project is to better understand how effectively the Farsi school can support the development of cultural identity among Iranian immigrant children in Nova Scotia. We would like to interview five to six caregivers and four Farsi educators. Semi-structured virtual/in-person interviews (each around 30-40 minutes) will be scheduled with caregivers and adults. We will also invite three to four children (aged between 6 to 12) to engage in a 10-to 15-minute drawing session where they draw their experiences with the Farsi school; an interviewer will facilitate this drawing session by using guiding questions to promote critical conversation about children's experiences.

Our faculty partner at Mount Saint Vincent University, Dr. Jessie-Lee McIsaac, and a doctoral student (Dalhousie University), Nahal Fakhari, will support us through data collection and data analysis. The interviews and children's conversations will be audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Then, the transcripts will be imported into a qualitative data analysis software, MAX QDA, for the coding. We will share the findings with our community members during a meeting where we invite all the Farsi school knowledge users. We will also summarize the findings into infographics to share with the Iranian communities across Atlantic Canada.

PROJECTED BENEFITS:

Our organization will be directly impacted by the findings of the project. The perspectives of participants will directly impact the Farsi school curriculum planning; based on the findings, the curriculum will be revised to meet the needs of our community members. Further, through participation in this project, our community members will feel valued and involved in the decision-making process, which consequently enhances our relationships with our clients.

* [These are excerpts from the Community Partner's original proposal]