

2015

Hamilton Urban Core  
Community Health Centre



**NEIGHBOURS, FRIENDS AND FAMILIES IMMIGRANT AND  
REFUGEE COMMUNITIES CAMPAIGN IN HAMILTON:  
EVALUATION REPORT**



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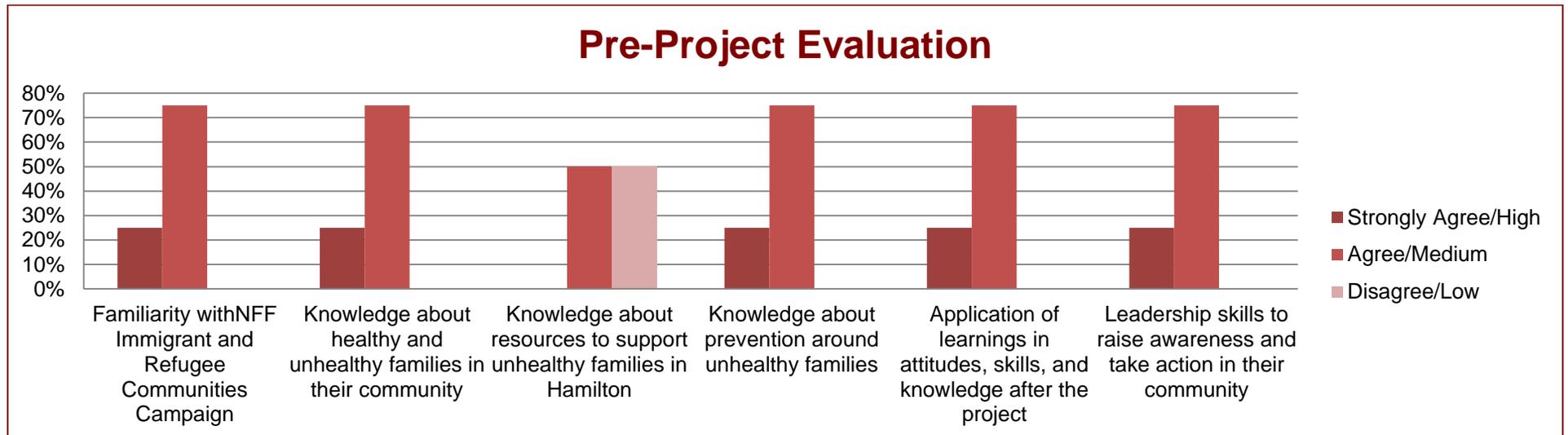
# NFF Immigrant and Refugee Communities Campaign: Evaluation Report

## 1. Introduction

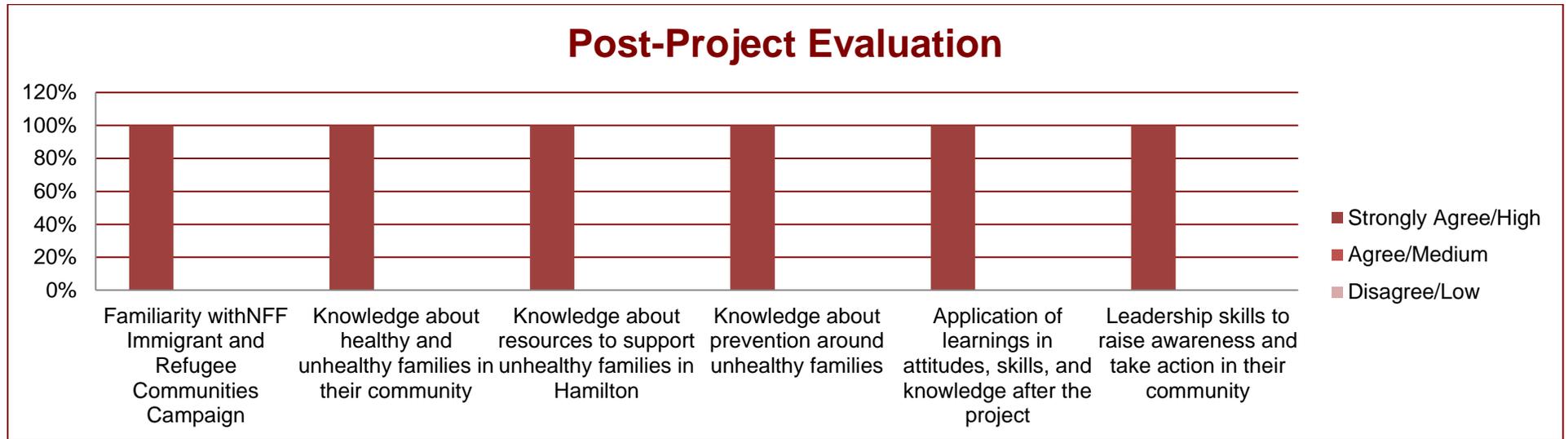
Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre ('Hamilton Urban Core') implemented the Neighbours, Friends and Families (NFF) Immigrant and Refugee Communities Campaign in Hamilton in 2014-2015. The project was evaluated through four methods: pre- and post- project evaluations, workshop evaluations, a focus group, and indicators of cultural unsafety. The following report provides the results of the evaluations and recommendations for future NFF Immigrant and Refugee Communities Campaigns using Hamilton Urban Core's model.

## 2. Pre- and Post- Project Evaluations

To measure change over the course of the NFF Immigrant and Refugee Communities Campaign in Hamilton, Hamilton Urban Core identified a number of areas to measure using a pre- and post- project evaluation survey method. On the first day of the six-module training, the Community and Cultural Facilitator with support from a Mandarin speaking translator provided Community Action Leaders with the pre-project evaluation. The results are as follows:



Hamilton Urban Core then provided Community Action Leaders with a post-project evaluation on the last day of the six-module training. The results are as follows:



There was evidently significant change among participants over the course of the six module NFF training for Community Action Leaders. In all areas of the survey, participants felt that there was improvement and scored themselves as the highest rating in the scale (either Strongly Agree or High). Participants felt they were highly familiar with the NFF Campaign; highly knowledgeable about healthy/unhealthy families in their communities; highly aware of resources available in Hamilton, highly knowledgeable about prevention of unhealthy families; strongly agreed to being able to apply project learning in their attitudes, skills, and knowledge to promote healthy families following the project; and strongly agreed that they possessed leadership skills to take action in their community.

### 3. Workshop Evaluations

At the end of each training session, the Community and Cultural Facilitator with support from a Mandarin speaking translator evaluated the workshop using a variety of evaluation techniques (see NFF Immigrant and Refugee Communities Campaign in Hamilton: Community Action Leader Training for evaluation techniques). The following are major themes that emerged from the workshop evaluations:

- Participants enjoyed the popular education approach
- Participants felt they learned a lot from each other
- Participants found the workshops helped them learn about how to help others and contribute to their community

## 4. Focus Group Discussion

On December 10, 2015, the Community Action Leaders participated in a 45 minute focus group facilitated by the Community and Cultural Facilitator with support from a Mandarin speaking translator. The results of the discussion are as follows:

### Question 1: What did we do over the course of the project?

- Learned about harmonious families, how to solve conflicts and make families happy, the laws in Canada, and different kinds of abuse (not just physical)
- Learned about the importance of focusing on particular demographic groups, for example Chinese seniors because after they retired couples spend more time together and conflicts arise
- Identified family issues in our community
- Gained clarity about our roles in addressing healthy family issues in the community
- Became motivated and guided to promote healthy families
- Learned about conflict resolution approaches that we can use in our work
- Learned about how to connect with more people from our community to address healthy families
- Learned about how to take action to promote healthy families in our community
- Learned how to design and organize community initiatives

### Question 2: What would you say were highlights from the project?

- “This group was totally different.” It was different than any other program [the participant has joined] in Canada because it related to me [a participant], provided opportunities to discuss relevant issues, and can be taken back to our communities
- It was practical and had an effective facilitation approach [i.e. popular education/cultural safety]; it was flexible, allowing people to easily join the group
- We [the participants] built close relationships because of the project’s design and facilitation; we connected with each other and explored/learned from each others’ experiences; and the Community and Cultural Facilitator and translator selected were a great team well suited for the project
- It brought together leaders from different communities, which allowed unique opportunities for us [the participants] to work together and learn about different cultures/communities; “it was inspiring to learn from each other” and it started a dialogue between the different communities
- The group was able to have in-depth conversations about issues/stories/topics; “there was no small-talk or superficial conversations”; we [the participants] were able to share with each other providing harmony in the group
- Everyone shared their ideas and were able to solve community problems together; I [a participant] will bring home what we learned because there are lots of family issues that are unaddressed or not discussed in my country and community [China/Chinese community]

**Question 3: What would you describe as low points of the project?**

- Nothing mentioned as a low point
- Instead, participants added that the trainings were happy times, there was good food that responded to the tastes of participants, and the group's entry qualifications were important

**Question 4: How efficient was the Community Action Leader approach?**

- It only works for people who are leaders and respected in their community; anyone else would not succeed; the project is demanding, meaning it requires participants to already be leaders and have time; it also "assumes participants are strong enough to do projects"
- The project should have more follow-up on the Community Action Leader projects [because funding was ending and there were no longer going to be staff/agency supports]
- The project should ensure that there are strong supports for the Community Action Projects provided by the organization
- The Community Action Leader selection process is very important to make sure the right people join the group

**Questions 5: How impactful do you feel the project was on promoting healthy families in immigrant and refugee communities?**

- The project's impacts happen slowly/over time – "it is like when you plant a seed and watch it grow", or "when you drip ink into a glass of water and watch it spread"
- Community members are eager to participate and get involved with the Community Action Projects

**Question 6: If there was another round of the project, what would you do differently?**

- The project is tough and demanding, so not many people can make it through; to attract more people, divide the project up into parts or phases
- It might be good to involve volunteers because they can be committed and passionate about doing something for the community
- Keep the same facilitation approach [i.e. popular education/cultural safety]

**Summary of Key Findings**

- Popular Education was an effective approach for training leaders to promote healthy families and mitigating indicators of cultural unsafety
- Community Action Leaders were most successful when possessing leadership skills and respected positions in their community, and the selection process for participants is very important
- The training for Community Action Leaders did not only give participants an increased ability to implement community initiatives, but also guided and built on work already happening in the community
- Community Action Leaders from marginalized immigrant and refugee communities felt they were able to spread the NFF Campaign message in their communities after participating in the NFF Immigrant and Refugee Communities Campaign in Hamilton
- There remains a need to provide community development support to Community Action Leaders over time

## 5. Indicators of Cultural Un-safety

Throughout the NFF Immigrant and Refugee Communities Campaign in Hamilton, the Community and Cultural Facilitator measured the project's ability to be culturally safe by looking at the indicators of cultural un-safety. The project achieved success related to all indicators. Outlined below are the indicators of cultural un-safety with the project outcomes and indicators of cultural safety that were subsequently identified by Hamilton Urban Core.

Indicators of Cultural Un-safety (Ball, n.d.)	Project Outcomes	Indicators of Cultural Safety (identified by Hamilton Urban Core)
'Denial' of suggestions that there is a problem or community issue	All participants were able to identify, acknowledge, and take action on issues to promote healthy families in their community	Identification and acknowledgement of suggestions that there is a problem or community issue
Low utilization of available programs and services	Participants were keen to attend workshops and planning meetings; two workshops were added to the Community Action Leader training by participant request	High utilization of available programs
Low 'compliance' with service referrals or prescribed interventions	Participants developed and implemented projects to promote healthy families in ways that were in accordance with their values, preferences and lifestyles (see description of Community Action Projects below); participants regularly attended Community Action Project planning meetings with the Community and Cultural Facilitator and followed through on action items	Agreement and follow-through on prescribed interventions
Reticence in interactions with service providers	Participants were happy to attend trainings and meetings, and discussed personal experiences and community-level issues with the Community and Cultural Facilitator and other Community Action Leaders	Open communication with service providers
Anger	High participation and attendance; keen and active participation in the project	Calm, motivated, and keen
Feelings of low self-worth, disrespect, exclusion, and unprotected sense of identity	High level of participation in conversations within the group around individual and community issues relate to healthy/unhealthy families	Feelings of high self-worth, respect, inclusion, and protected sense of identity

## 6. Community Action Leader Projects

Five Community Action Leaders worked alongside their communities to promote healthy families in culturally safe ways. The Community Action Projects were rooted within their communities and were designed to be sustainable beyond NFF funding. A description of each project is below.

### ★ Hamilton's Chinese Seniors Using Technology

#### **Background Information:**

A group of Chinese seniors in Hamilton formed a “chat room” using WeChat (a messaging and calling App widely used by the Mandarin speaking community). Group members post and discuss a variety of health, social, and “funny” articles/topics. There were approximately 50 individuals in the chat room at the start of the project. All communication is done in Mandarin as English is not generally spoken by the seniors. One of the Community Action Leaders working on the project is a long-time leader in the community who organizes the Chinese Senior's Dance Group and chat room. The other Community Action Leader is new to Canada and Hamilton, and was very interested in getting more active in the community.

#### **Community Action Project Goal:**

Two Community Action Leaders worked together to increase access to information and encourage discussions around healthy families in the Hamilton Chinese seniors' community using the online platform of WeChat. With increased communication around healthy families, the community will be more accountable to promoting healthy families.

#### **Community Action Project Description:**

To start, one Community Action Leader was trained on how to use WeChat. The two Community Action Leaders are now working together to find articles and other resources related to healthy families and post them for discussion in the chat room

#### **Community Action Group:**

Due to the nature of the chat room, Community Action Group members are all the participants actively participating in the effort. They are guided by the two Community Action Leaders.

#### **Community Action Project Outcomes/Progress to Date:**

Hundreds of items are posted weekly in the chat room where the Chinese seniors discuss information related to healthy families. The group has had 50 new members join since the project started, therefore reaching more people across the community. Language and culturally specific information is communicated with a marginalized demographic unable to access mainstream information due to language and cultural barriers.

## ☆ **Conflict Mediation in the Chinese Community**

### **Background Information:**

For years, the Community Action Leader has been identified by her community as the mediator they go to for family conflicts. This generally involves working with couples to resolve marital conflicts; however she's also identified cases of abuse calling the police to increase the safety of women in her community.

### **Community Action Project Goal:**

Strengthen the Community Action Leader's mediator role in the Chinese community.

### **Community Action Project Description:**

Continuing in her role as Mediator, she increased her connections with other leaders in the Chinese community and learned skills to working with families to resolve conflicts.

### **Community Action Group:**

The Chinese Seniors' Dance Group and others refer or connect with the Community Action Leader; she has respect and relationships with the community allowing her work to safely support others.

### **Community Action Project Outcomes/Progress to Date:**

Clarified her role as mediator in the community; gained skills in conflict mediation and identifying challenges arising in families

## ☆ **Sudanese Women's Empowerment at the Mosque**

### **Background Information:**

Sudanese women often experience limited power in marital relationships, their community, and Canadian society. They are often restricted due to language barriers, economic factors, and mobility. Many married women are one of up to four wives, however if they have access to resources then they have more power and respect in their marriages and communities.

### **Community Action Project Goal:**

Empower Muslim Sudanese women by supporting them develop the skills they need to be safer and more respected in their communities.

### **Community Action Project Description:**

The project is divided into three components: 1) English language group learning through song and reciting the Qur'an in English; 2) G1 study group to enable women to drive increasing their independence (many women have access to family cars, but no licenses); 3) entrepreneurship training and the establishment of a women's bazaar to increase economic potential of otherwise unemployed women with support from Global Hamilton, City of Hamilton.

**Community Action Group:**

A partnership was developed with the Hamilton Downtown Mosque which is regularly attended by the Sudanese community. The mosque's board members have been involved project providing space, volunteers, and other resources to support the three components of the Community Action Project. They have endorsed the project and promote the initiatives within the community. The Community Action Leader also built a partnership with Global Hamilton, a department at the City of Hamilton, interested in supporting entrepreneurship training at the mosque.

**☆ Zines for the Ethiopian Community:****An Arts-Based Approach to Raise Awareness about Violence Against Women and Children****Background Information:**

Violence against women and children is accepted in many parts of the world, including Ethiopia. Knowing that these harmful and dangerous practices continue after people move to Canada where it is not tolerated, there is a high need to educate the Ethiopian community about the issue and increase access to programs and services available in Hamilton.

**Community Action Project Goal:**

Increase access to information and resources related to violence against women and children for different generations using an engaging form of media expression: zines.

**Community Action Project Description:**

Two of the Community Action Leaders from the Ethiopian community paired up to create a zine on violence against women and children for their community. The zine was written in English and Amharic, though content had to be adapted to communicate appropriately in each language. The zines were then shared at a church attended by the Ethiopian community, at a LINC school, and online using social media.

**Community Action Group:**

Friends and family members with skills related to the project played a role in supporting the creation, translation, and distribution of the zines.

**Community Action Project Outcomes/Progress to Date:**

A church pastor promoted the project and its focus on addressing violence against women during a Sunday sermon; and 200 copies of the zines were distributed by the Community Action Leaders, and were posted online.

## ☆ Promoting Healthy Mother-Daughter Relationships in Challenging Times

### **Background Information:**

Adolescence is a difficult transition time for many families. Arriving in Canada one year ago alone with her daughter from Hong Kong, the Community Action Leader quickly faced mental-health related issues among her daughter's teenage friends that she did not know how to address. She was single with no social connections/community, and did not yet have established relationships with other mothers in her community for support.

### **Community Action Project Goal:**

Isolated mothers come together to support their daughters and each other through adolescence.

### **Community Action Project Description:**

To increase the connectedness of isolated mothers to support their daughters during adolescence, the project started from the beginning: organizing social gatherings among mothers to build relationships and a community of support.

### **Community Action Group:**

Mothers from her daughter's school who also have teenage adolescent daughters come together over lunch to meet each other.

### **Community Action Project Outcomes/Progress to Date:**

One lunch hosted and a plan in place for developing a supportive community network of mothers.

## **8. Recommendations**

Ensure there is time and staff resources built in for longer-term support of Community Action Leaders and their Community Action projects. This is because we know that not only is training, but ongoing mentorship and established relationships with the centre are needed to support Community Action Leaders grow and develop.

Not all community members are well suited to become Community Action Leaders. For this reason, be clear about who is selected for the project. This supports the "plant a seed and watch it grow" metaphor for effectiveness of the project stated by one of the Community Action Leaders when explaining the impact of the project on immigrant and refugee communities (focus group question 5).

The training for Community Action Leaders did not only give participants an increased ability to implement community initiatives, but also guided and built on work already happening in the community. Be flexible and let Community Action Leaders guide the focus of their project whether it is a big idea or works within existing systems in the community.

## 9. Conclusion

The NFF Immigrant and Refugee Communities Campaign in Hamilton is an efficient model for creating sustainable change with individuals and communities otherwise unable to access violence against women programs and services. Evaluations show that it was a highly successful project at engaging leaders from marginalized immigrant and refugee communities to increase community accountability around promoting healthy families. Hamilton Urban Core implemented pre- and post- project evaluations, workshop evaluations, a focus group, and looked at indicators of cultural unsafety which all revealed significant change among participants over the course of the project. By working with leaders from marginalized immigrant and refugee communities, Hamilton Urban Core planted seeds at the grassroots engaging immigrant and refugee community members in dialogues and activities that promote healthy families. However, knowing that community development is a process that happens along a continuum, the seeds planted through the project must be nurtured to reach their full potential. It is recommended that longer term supports are provided to Community Action Leaders and their communities to grow community accountability.

## References

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Ball, J. (n.d.). Cultural safety in practice with children, families, and communities. University of Victoria. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.ecdip.org/culturalsafety/>