

Immigrant Idea and Innovation Center

Project: Investigating the need for and impact of a business acceleration centre for immigrants and newcomers to Canada

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About the Organization:

The Immigrant Idea and Innovation Centre (IIIC) is a service currently in the ideation and development phase that will aim to help immigrant entrepreneurs bring their ideas to the market. The IIIC will provide business incubation services focused for immigrants to Canada, and may include access to financial capital, institutions, markets, expert knowledge, and a social network of other immigrant entrepreneurs. Prince Penie, the Co-Founder, was inspired to develop this service from his own experience as an immigrant entrepreneur and the shared challenges that immigrants experience trying to bring their Start-Up business ideas to fruition in a new market.

About the Initiative:

IIIC is looking to build its credibility and research the need and value of its proposed services. To achieve these goals, the community partner has requested support from the McMaster Research Shop to help build a case for the service, including its need and value.

Research Question:

The research is guided by the following questions:

1. What economic opportunities do immigrant entrepreneurs provide to local (Canadian) economies?
 - a. E.g., job creation, GDP/other growth or quality of life indicators
2. What challenges and barriers do immigrant entrepreneurs face in starting and accelerating a business?
3. How can an immigrant business incubator help overcome these challenges?
 - a. What are business incubators, and what's their value proposition?
 - b. What evidence exists to support their value proposition (e.g., what % of businesses succeed in a business incubator vs. without an incubator, and why?)
 - c. What evidence exists, if at all, to support immigrant business incubators to overcome the challenges immigrants face in starting a business?

Research Activities:

This research will primarily involve a review and synthesis of research answering the above question. It may also involve a scan of major Canadian municipalities for the existence of immigrant-focused business incubators and interviews with select stakeholders.

Audience:

The research will be used by the community partner to:

1. Build a case for the need and value of the service to support funding applications,
2. Inform program development, and
3. Raise awareness on the importance of immigrant inclusion and their contributions to the start-up ecosystem in Canada.

Deliverable:

Plain language report with context, methods, findings, and discussion/conclusion.

Timeline:

Aim for a draft early January with possibility for extension into the Winter semester.

Community Partner Role:

The community partner will help to refine the project scope, be available for consultation when needed, make connections to potential interviewees, and suggest potential literature to review.

Interest for Students:

This project will be of interest to students who are interested in local economic development, immigration, and business incubation.