



For immediate release — Tuesday, March 7, 2017

New book by University of Lethbridge professor focuses on immigration experiences in small cities

A new book co-edited by Dr. Glenda Tibe Bonifacio digs into immigration and immigrants' experiences in small cities in Canada.

Canadian Perspectives on Immigration in Small Cities is a collection of essays by scholars who study immigration in smaller communities across the country. The idea grew out of a workshop Bonifacio organized for the National Metropolis Conference held five years ago. Bonifacio, a University of Lethbridge professor in Women and Gender Studies, and Dr. Julie Drolet, a professor in the Faculty of Social Work at the University of Calgary who co-edited the book with Bonifacio, put out a call for papers. The essays they received in response eventually became the 14 chapters of the book.

The book provides a pan-Canadian, multi-disciplinary perspective on the realities of immigration to cities with a population of less than 100,000. Bonifacio wrote about Filipina immigrants to Lethbridge, acknowledging the role that Lethbridge Family Services - Immigrant Services plays. Another author wrote about youth perspectives in the Niagara region and another looked at the role of social networks in attracting and retaining immigrants. The book is divided into themes that explore how immigrants to small cities find ways to belong and the community programs offered.

"Programs vary because of the level of receptivity and involvement of the various stakeholders in each community, for example, business, local government and service providers," says Bonifacio.

Immigration is a federal responsibility but service delivery occurs in the community and the degree of collaboration between the federal, provincial and local governments can affect the type of programming offered.

"This book highlights some of those examples where you have the resources, the resilience and the different kinds of programs in small cities at the time of writing," she says. "Through this edited collection we're able to showcase the diversity of responses toward immigration."

By touching on topics like acceptance, resistance and discrimination, Bonifacio says the book makes the point that smaller cities provide a good lens to look at the level of integration of immigrants. The lack of connections between organizations is often more visible and the solutions found in smaller cities can often be applied in big cities.

“There is nothing to fear from newcomers or immigrants coming to small cities or smaller areas,” says Bonifacio. “The lesson learned from the small-city project is that small cities count. Lethbridge is an example of a small city doing good in immigration.”

The book took several years to come to fruition. When it was in the final round of editing, Bonifacio learned one of the authors, Dr. Ottilia Chareka, a professor in the Faculty of Education at St. Francis Xavier University and mother of five girls, had died tragically.

“We were emotionally devastated. After some time, we decided to continue and put some annotations in her work,” says Bonifacio. “We dedicated the book to her and all of the proceeds will go the fund for Ottilia Chareka’s children.”

Despite the delay, the remaining authors all remained committed to the book project and it was recently published. Bonifacio will launch the book on March 8, International Women’s Day, at the Dr. Foster James Penny Building, located at 324 5 St. S., from 1:30 to 4 p.m.

The book is available through [Amazon.ca](https://www.amazon.ca) or through [Springer](https://www.springer.com).

To view online:

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Contact:

Trevor Kenney, News & Information Manager
403-329-2710
403-360-7639 (cell)
trevor.kenney@uleth.ca

Dr. Glenda Bonifacio, Women & Gender Studies
403-380-1897
glenda.bonifacio@uleth.ca