
SIIP Isolation to Inclusion Case Competition

Summary Report

May 2023





SUPPORTING INCLUSION *through* **INTERGENERATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

Introduction

Supporting Inclusion through Intergenerational Partnerships project

The Supporting Inclusion through Intergenerational Partnership (SIIP) project is a 5-year (2019-2024) project at the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging (RIA) to promote social inclusion among community-dwelling older adults living with dementia, and their care partners, in Waterloo Region, Ontario.

One of the SIIP project's objectives is to spark innovation through the "Isolation to Inclusion (I2I)" annual case competition event designed to raise community awareness and engage youth and community members to identify barriers and co-create solutions.

Funding for SIIP is provided by the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program.

Purpose of the case competition

The Isolation to Inclusion case competition brought community organizations and post-secondary students across Waterloo Region together to understand and create solutions to challenges organizations are experiencing when trying to engage older adults, particularly those living with dementia and from racialized groups, in community programming.

Event overview

The Isolation to Inclusion case competition was a two day event, which took place April 15 and 22, 2023 at the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging (RIA) in Waterloo, Ontario.

Attendees

Representatives from five local organizations participated in the event:

- African Women's Alliance of Waterloo Region
- City of Cambridge
- ComForCare Home Care
- Engage Rural
- Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery

Twenty-two post-secondary students from the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid Laurier University and McMaster University's Waterloo Regional Campus participated.

Guest speaker panel

Guest speakers - Navjot Gill, Ph.D candidate, University of Waterloo, Sarah Jones, Minds in Motion Coordinator, Alzheimer Society of Waterloo Wellington, and Dorcas Ndiangui, Registered Nurse, and board member for African Family Revival Organization - participated in a one-hour panel discussion about how dementia is impacting racialized older adults and why older adults from these communities may experience unique barriers when accessing community programming and supports.

The panel was very impactful on attendees and set the context for the teams as they developed their solutions.

"Panelists were well thought out and very insightful. Especially having them from different walks of life and backgrounds."

- I2I Student participant

Attendees also had the opportunity to participate in an activity break, led by a Minds in Motion coordinator, to get a better understanding of what community programming for older adults living with dementia looks like.

Design thinking process

Community organizations submitted the challenges they are experiencing when engaging older adults living with dementia from racialized groups. Some of the challenges included: how to engage older adults as facilitators in art-based activities, improving communication among rural communities, aging well at home , and increasing awareness about age-friendly programs and events.

Student teams were matched with one of the organizations to create a product or solution that would address the organization's unique challenge.

Over the two days, facilitators Mairin Scannell and Heather Thompson walked students through the process of brainstorming, developing ideas, prototyping, receiving feedback, and how to successfully prepare for a pitch presentation.

"The design thinking was fun and loved the tools that were given out."

- I2I Student participant

At the end of the second day, each team pitched their idea to a panel of judges for the opportunity to secure financial funding to develop the product or solution.

Outcome

Based on event feedback, the case competition met its objectives of:

- teaching students about the challenges that people living with dementia face when trying to engage in community programming
- teaching students design thinking skills
- and creating ideas for how the community can be more inclusive of people living with dementia.

Overall the competition was very well received by attendees.

"Loved every bit of it. We need more of these events more often."

- I2I Student participant

Team Scorpion Grass, working with ComForCare Home Care, secured first prize for their pitch to develop an educational campaign focused on aging at home, and how ComForCare Home Care can make that a reality.

Team Catalysts, working with the African Women's Alliance of Waterloo Region, came in second with their pitch to host intergenerational Afrocentric classes for older adults.

Team Art Crawlers, working with the Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, placed third with their pitch to conduct community consultations to better understand why the Senior Volunteer Artist

Educators for the “Senior Supporting Seniors” program are not from a diverse population. This will inform future program development at the Gallery.


Team Engage Rural was selected as the team with the most engaging presentation.

Next steps

The top three teams have secured funding to develop their product or solution for the community organization they worked with and will have three months to finalize it.

After that, the teams will share their final product during a virtual webinar with competition attendees.

The SIIP Backbone team will incorporate lessons learned from this case competition into the planning for the next competition to be held in the fall of 2023.



Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging

250 Laurelwood Drive, Waterloo ON

info@the-ria.ca | www.the-ria.ca | 519.904.0660

