

# PATHWAYS TO INCLUSION

 Mujtama



## About Pathways to Inclusion

The purpose of this project report is to (1) provide information and data about the barriers and challenges to social engagement and volunteerism amongst Arab seniors in Canada, and (2) suggest ways that groups and organizations can engage them.

Who are Arab seniors? When we refer to 'Arab countries' or 'Arab seniors in Canada' we are referring to citizens who emigrated, or are descendants of immigrants from the 22 countries of the Arab League.

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### Acknowledging Partners and Collaborators



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Centre in Toronto (ACCT), and support of community partners such as ARGANA Moroccan-Canadian Women's Association, LoveArabic, our friends from the Arab Cultural Club of Ontario (ACCO) and active community organizers.

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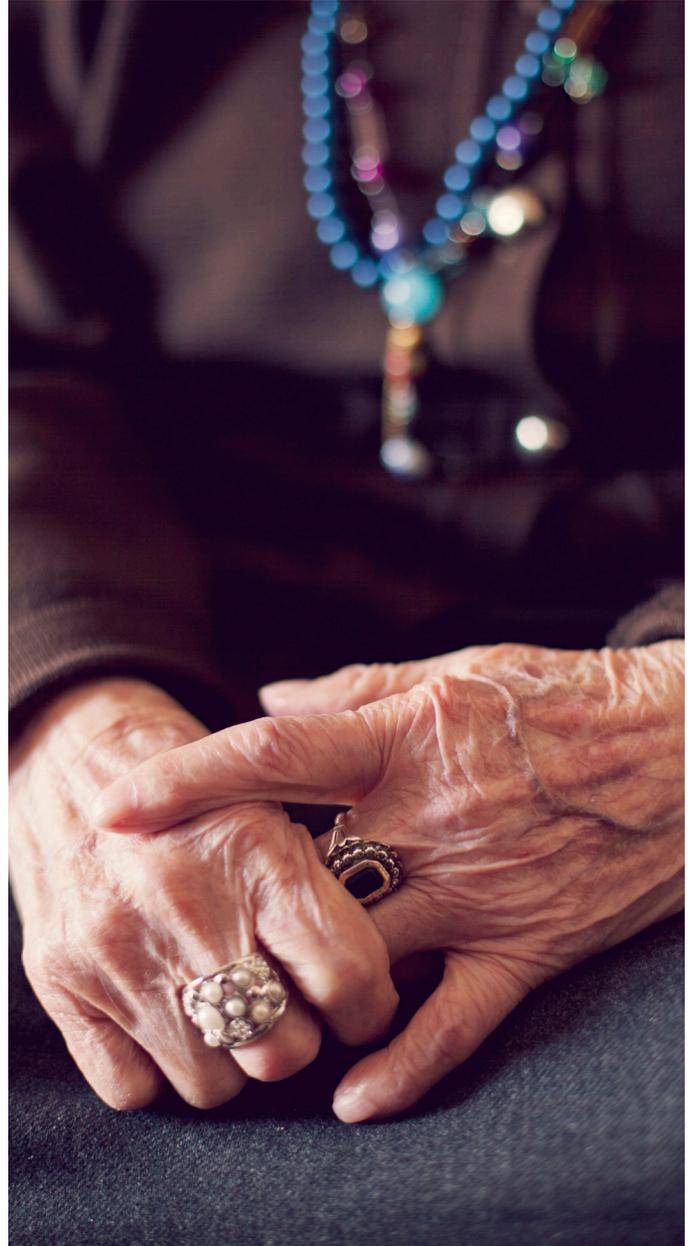


## Forward: by Rania Younes

The Canadian Arab Institute runs various youth development and leadership programs, and we never fall short of challenges trying to find new and innovative ways to engage them. Pathways to Inclusion was the ultimate engagement challenge, as we attempted to bring together senior and youth participants to work together in identifying barriers to social inclusion. Working together through generation gaps, cultural perceptions and world apart outlooks, this experiment turned out to be one of the most dynamic and highly engaging projects initiated.

We had to overcome many coordination challenges, think, rethink and creatively address blocks that came along the way. And in our final wrap-up sessions building this guide, one of our senior mentors described it as the most rewarding program he participated in, and that said it all.

Many thanks to our senior mentors who dedicated their time, shared their wisdom, passion and enthusiasm to make this possible. And many thanks to our youth fellows and volunteers who listened patiently, contributed kindly and showed their commitment to address social isolation among Arab seniors in our community. The conversation we started will be continued.





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## Executive Summary

This report intends to study and address social isolation specifically among Arab seniors. It defines social isolation as limited social contact and interaction with others. The report is a result of a study, funded by the Federal Government's New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP). The study lasted eight months, included focus discussion groups, surveys and interviews.

The study found that, although social isolation is more common among seniors than youth, it was specifically

more prevalent among Arab seniors. Some of the barriers identified included; language and cultural barriers, accessibility and mobility issues, mindset and lack of interest, economic and financial obligations, and family obligations. We conclude by recommending that, for successful social inclusion of seniors, programs need to be socially conscious, accessible, age and status appropriate, and accommodating of the varied needs of Arab seniors.





## Introduction



This report was born out of a project funded by the Federal Government's New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP). The NHSP is a federal initiative to address the needs of Canada's increasingly aging population, as well as to devise programs that support seniors in our community. Our project, Pathways to Inclusion, is specifically focused on studying Arab Seniors in Canada, recognizing their unique needs, as well as how to meet

those needs.

The Canadian Arab community is the second-fastest growing immigrant community in Canada. Between 2006 and 2011 the number of Arabs hailing from Arab countries went up by 33% to 750,952 [1]. About a fifth of these immigrants were mostly sponsored refugees from developing, or war torn countries, an example of which is Iraq. [2]



Immigrant and refugee seniors generally face unique challenges which make them a vulnerable population to social isolation. [3] A study of social isolation among immigrant and refugee seniors, found that 30% of those that express social isolation were foreign-born, compared to 21% of the total population. [4] Statistics Canada found that recent immigrant seniors are less likely to be involved in voluntary organizations. [5] In 2003, the data indicated that only 12% of recent immigrant seniors felt that they had a very strong sense of belonging to their local community. [6] There is no recent data to specifically indicate the rate of isolation of Arab seniors in Canada.

## Project Overview

The primary objective of Pathways to Inclusion is to study and subsequently increase social participation specifically among Arab seniors. It begins by identifying barriers to social entry, motivations towards social participation, and concludes with recommendations for organizations working with seniors. It aims to serve as a guidebook based on evidence collected over eight months of primary action-based research and data collection.

This was done as a close collaboration between The Canadian Arab Institute (CAI), the Arab Community





Centre of Toronto (ACCT) and delivered by the Mujtama youth fellows. [7]

In order to study social isolation, we must define it. For the purpose of this project, we have defined social isolation as limited social contact and interaction which may lead to significant negative risks and impacts such as depression, emotional distress, and poor health.

## Scope of Project

Over a period of eight months, the participating senior mentors, youth fellows and project team organized discussion groups. The discussion topics were identified and led by the senior mentors. Discussions explored and captured cultural perceptions and attitudes towards social engagement and volunteerism, and expanded as they met more often, to address social isolation and other key topics of concern, such as physical and mental health, accessibility and navigation of senior services and community connections. The discussion groups then led to the development of a survey to measurably identify barriers, challenges and motivations to volunteerism and engagement among senior Arabs living in Canada.

The project team collected 200 surveys across the GTA, mostly through one-on-one interviews. In order to collect sound data, the project team first had to explain social isolation through measurable and collectible indicators, as such through this process the team was also able to raise awareness on the indicators of social isolation [8] and promote volunteerism and its positive impact on health and wellbeing among senior's groups. [9]

The project was led by nine senior mentors, eight youth fellows and involved over thirty volunteers that helped collect survey responses.

The majority of participants live in Mississauga, Etobicoke,

Toronto and Scarborough, Ontario. We had an equal balance of male (49%) and female (50%) participants, mostly married (76%) and relatively proportional age group brackets 55-60 (40%), 61-65 (17%), 65-70 (20%) and 70+ (22%). Three-quarters of participants are currently not working. Twenty-nine percent of participants have been living in Canada for less than five years, thirty percent between five and ten years and forty one percent have been living in Canada for over 10 years.





## Key Findings



### Barriers to Social Inclusion

As a result of the discussion groups, and interviews, we were able to detect the barriers to social inclusion that seniors faced. These included health complications, language barriers, accessibility issues, economic and family limitations and obligations, as well as mindset and unawareness of opportunities.

The top three reasons identified as barriers to participation and volunteerism were (i) health issues, (ii) language barriers, and (iii) mobility or accessibility related reasons (including transportation methods, transportation costs, weather etc.) [10] Among other reasons, women expressed higher challenges in accessibility than men, and higher fear of not being accepted by the wider community.



### *Health*

Comparable to most studies conducted with seniors in Canada on the barriers to social inclusion, health issues or complications represent the number one barrier to participation and volunteerism for both men and women. We had a few conversations dedicated to the healthcare system gaps and needs, and facilitated information sessions and knowledge exchange conversations to address their healthcare concerns. Faced with a different reality of life than their countries of origin and with the change in family structure, a vast majority of the Arab seniors expressed feelings of loneliness, depression and loss of interest in socializing and leaving the house. Some seniors suggested that, at times, the only reason they would leave their homes is to visit the doctor, health clinic or for medication renewal and refills.

### *Language Barriers*

Many of the seniors we interacted with, were not confident of their language and expression skill. This became a barrier to their inclusion in society or to accessing certain programs, services or activities, even when they are designed for seniors. For those with good command of language, they expressed preference that as they grow older they tend to regress to mother tongue language (dialect), which then contributed to their isolation. They yearn for interactions with people who speak their language, as they feel more welcomed and at ease engaging in a longer conversation. Language is also strongly interconnected with culture, and those with good command of the language, would still have a tough

time grasping the cultural nuances that are expressed in a language, and would further contribute to their alienation from a culture.

### *Accessibility, mobility and disability*

Seniors are required to depend on themselves to find their own means of transportation that would get them to places where they would be participating in social programs or volunteering. For those that have come from developing countries with no sophisticated public transport systems, the idea of using the bus or public transportation becomes daunting and challenging to familiarize themselves with routes and schedules. Also, transportation options may be limited in suburban cities. Those with mobility/disability issues are not able to access places that have stairs and no elevators. For this study, we relied considerably on volunteers for pick-up and drop-off to encourage senior participation and engagement in the program.

### *Mindset and awareness of opportunities*

Some of the participants noted that they were not aware of any participation or volunteering opportunities that would be accessible for them, while others believed that cultural perceptions and stigmas from back home can play a part as well. Many participants indicated a lack of interest or finding it difficult to get out of their comfort zone. Fear of not being accepted by the wider community also fuels the lack of interest and hesitation to pursue or commit to participating in activities or volunteering. Most importantly, the culture of volunteering is not prevalent in the countries where many of our seniors grew up, they are thus not aware



of the opportunities that arise out of it. It becomes a self-fulfilling cycle, the lack of involvement leads to social isolation which then leads to not being aware of opportunities that exist in society and would also lead to fear of not being accepted in the community.

#### *Other factors; including time, technology and economic limitations*

Lack of time was also identified as a common barrier with our survey participants. Many of our Arab seniors came to Canada through family reunification and as such, would have grandchildren duties. While these are important contributors to family inclusion and family well-being, and while grandparents take pride and satisfaction in their roles as grandparents, lifestyles in Canada are different than those in their countries of origin. Work hours are longer, more fast paced, and shorter days (particularly in winter). This means that the involvement of grandparents in their children's and grandchildren's lives is limited as compared to what they were accustomed to. The family structure and dynamic is different and strange to them. This necessitates a life outside of the family, and activities outside of child bearing to keep them involved and active, and for them to be able to express their individuality independent from their roles as grandparents.

Additionally, the world today is changing quickly, and moving towards a high tech scene. Many volunteer activities would require use of technology, phone apps or laptops that not many Arab seniors have expressed comfort with, some have expressed outright intimidation of technology as a barrier.

## Motivations to social participation and volunteerism

Addressing cultural barriers and the fear of not being accepted in the larger Canadian society was a recurring hot topic during the group discussions and survey interactions. Thirty Two Percent of survey participants indicated they have volunteered in the past, while 18% indicated they currently volunteer. Of those who volunteered, believing in a cause is the leading motivating factor. Beyond the physical health barriers and/or accessibility challenges that keep them from seeking volunteering opportunities, most expressed they would prefer to give back to the community through charitable donation (when they have the means to) or sharing knowledge and expertise.

#### *Social Inclusion: A cultural norm*

In Arab countries the elderly are usually regarded with the highest degree of love, respect and wisdom, and are looked upon as a source of inspiration in the family. Social events and activities revolve around their physical space to make it accessible for them to participate and take part. When an elder person walks into a room, younger family members will stand up to greet them as a sign of respect. Elders are addressed in a respectable manner that reflect their age, using gentle gestures and using common age titles or words before their name. Having the blessing of an elder family member is very important, no matter how young or old you may be.

It is expected of their children and younger family members to serve them, accompany them if they run any errands, and visit them regularly if they are not already



living in an extended family home or unit. They have an active grand-parenting role, and provision of care to grandchildren is considered an extension of family support and obligation. Many Arab seniors in Canada have hands on involvement in raising their grandchildren and consider their grandchildren's contribution invaluable to their ageing care needs. The degree to which children and grandchildren are involved with elders, varies from family to family and you

Many Arab elders in Canada experience a loss of this status. Cultural change in the family may not uphold the reverence traditionally bestowed on the elderly; their skills and opinions may not be valued in the family as they were in the home country, which often leads to depression, anxiety or conflict in the family.

As accustomed as they are to social inclusion in their countries, they are not able to find it in Canada, and are eager to resume to a socially active lifestyle.

### *Family dynamics and obligations*

Arab Communities prioritize the family unit and there is a strong sense of duty and responsibility among younger generations to care for their elderly. It is a duty and an honor to care for one's parents' physical, mental and emotional comfort. For some elders who do not have family support in Canada, this becomes a bigger problem of isolation. The elderly remain fairly integrated in their families until their final days, due to traditional family arrangement structures as multiple generations will mostly live under one roof and/or in close proximity, where the elderly usually relied on to assist with childminding and supervision.

These values are slowly changing in Canada, as the means and capacity of family members become limited in caring and providing assistance to their elders. In many cases, families struggle to meet their own economic needs and this reality, coupled with an associated stigma about senior's homes and residential aged care, increases the burden and put stress on Arab immigrant families. Therefore, having a support system outside of their family and having the means to care for themselves serves as a motivation for seniors to seek independence, as well as inclusion in society.





## Recommendations: Engaging Arab Seniors in Canada



During the study, it became evident, that although social isolation is not uncommon among seniors, it is more prevalent among Arab seniors and the unique challenges they face require unique solutions, more catered to the Arab seniors' specific needs. To actively engage seniors, it is important to acknowledge and respect diversity, recognize barriers to inclusion, and work on actively meeting the needs of seniors with varied and diverse

backgrounds. The concept of volunteerism along with its benefits, does not exist in a similar context in the Middle East, and needs to be explained clearly to Arab seniors before seeking their involvement in volunteer activities.

### *Culturally conscious programs*

The cultural norms, the family dynamics, the status of elders in Arab societies, are all factors that need to be



considered when engaging seniors. Providing culturally sensitive programs and services is crucial in the inclusion and engagement of Arab seniors, especially in healthcare and for general service and care providers.

The Arab Community in Canada is diverse in cultural and religious beliefs. Arab seniors we interacted with expressed solid religious beliefs in that God has direct and ultimate control of all that happens. It is embedded in traditional Arab culture, irrespective of their religious backgrounds.

If you are working with Arab elders in planning for future events, activities and/or goal setting, the will of God or "Insha'Allah" will be expressed by Arab elders as one of the key determinants of their health as they age. Adherence to religion and the observation of religious customs is a cultural consideration for you to determine with your client.

Conduct a cultural and needs assessment and let them identify their strengths, weaknesses and challenges and what they would be good at doing as every person has a talent and/or skill that does not require a language. It is important for aged care service providers who work with elders of Arabic speaking backgrounds to be aware of key issues for effective and responsive service. There is a diversity of beliefs and experiences both within and across Arabic speaking communities, which requires a thorough cultural assessment with elders. Person centered care which allows for optimal service delivery and the Arabic elder's family - cultural and religious perspectives are an integral part of this. Arabic speaking elders and their families, by and large, will only seek help in a crisis and may not always understand early

intervention. Access to bilingual workers across all stages and in all types of aged care service provision strengthens the engagement of Arabic speaking elders and their responsiveness to care and treatment options.

### *Recognizing their social status as elders*

In recognizing the importance of respect for the elderly and what status they hold in society, you are able to avoid socially isolating pitfalls. For instance, when speaking to them, it is important to ensure that they do not feel patronized, but revered and respected.

Seniors rightly expect to be respected as elders. As such, as an organization you can consider providing them with an advisory role to make them feel that they are being sought after and that their knowledge and expertise is required and appreciated. You could attract seniors to volunteer within their comfort zone where their subject matter expertise comes from and where they would feel that they add value. For example, a retired doctor would be attracted to volunteer in hospitals and health sector. A professor would be attracted to volunteer in universities and get involved in helping students. Seniors may lead due to their extensive acquired experience and would therefore require little supervision. Make sure to provide a reference to their back home by asking about similarities and differences to what is being required of them. Create an open, non-judgmental dialogue to allow seniors to identify their capacities and request accommodation.

Furthermore, when providing a service, consider who is providing it, ask questions like are they junior staff or senior staff? Are they experts in the profession or



volunteers? Particularly important when providing medical services, doctors and qualified medical people are highly regarded, well accepted and respected by Arab seniors. However the advice of a friend or a relative back home about the type of medicine they should be taking is also very common, especially that prescriptions are much more accessible and affordable from their home countries. For these reasons, it is important to review medication and determine sources of advice for treatment options with Arab speaking patients, in order to ensure better quality service.

#### *Accessibility in mind*

Work around their time and space. When planning an event and to encourage seniors' participation, avoid early mornings and late afternoons because of rush hour. Plan programs with the knowledge that seniors are more active during warmer months than winter. Be very clear about time and place of an activity because changes can be disruptive to their systems and cause them stress. Be very sensitive to frustrations that come from having to adjust to new limitations as a person ages. Offer flexibility in workload and scheduling of activities. Get a volunteer to accompany the seniors to work the first couple of times in order to provide them with a level of comfort that would allow them to later do the trip on their own. Don't cut them off if they miss appointments because of health issues, medical appointments or simple mood swings. Think creatively about how to involve people with disabilities (creating accessible spaces, wheel-chair access and non-slip mats, etc...)





1. Ghina Dajani, "750,925 Canadians Hail from Arab Lands," Canadian Arab Institute, June 2014, accessed November 2018, <http://www.canadianarabinstitute.org/publications/reports/750925-canadians-hail-arab-lands/>
2. *Ibid*
3. Johnson, C.S., Bacsu, J., McIntosh, T., Jeffery, B., & Novik, N. (2017). *Addressing social isolation among immigrant and refugee seniors: Environmental scan of programs and services in Canada*. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit, University of Regina and University of Saskatchewan.
4. *Ibid*.
5. Statistics Canada – Catalogue no. 89-652-X2015006. 2015.
6. Statistics Canada – Catalogue no. 89-652-X2015006. 2015.
7. The Mujtama Youth Fellows is a group of young community organizers looking to make contributions to the Canadian Arab community. For info: <http://www.canadianarabinstitute.org/programs/mujtama-fellowship-program/mujtama-fellows-2017/>
8. "Social isolation defined as less social contact than an individual wishes, that may lead to negative outcomes" - *Working Together for Seniors: Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors*. 2007.
9. *The Centre on Aging. Report on Social Participation and its Benefits*. 2013.
10. Table 1 - Appendix

## Thank You

### Mujtama Project Mentors and Team

This project would not have been possible without the guidance and active involvement of our **Mujtama project mentors:** Imam Abdul Hai Patel, Abdel Khalek Alrammahy, Hassan Saffarini, Izaldin Elsaddig, Mohamed Younes, Mohammad Abdel Rahman Ahmed, Maysoun Alrawy, Sinaa Fakherddin and Raya Samra.

**Mujtama project fellows:** Amira Hassan, Asim Osman, Ebti Nabag, Hala Eltom, Mary Kozak, Mohamad Hussein, Mohammad Nasser Hajali and Rasha Mehyar.

We would also like to acknowledge the support and guidance provided to the Mujtama fellows along the way by our Irshad mentors (Irshad is a Canadian Arab Institute run mentoring program with the purpose of facilitating the exchange of knowledge and perspective from an experienced Canadian-Arab professional in any given field to a less experienced Canadian-Arab professional).

### **Mujtama project team:**

Rania Younes, Director of Programs, CAI  
Nermine Zohdi, Community Liaison, ACCT  
Mira El-Sayed, Project Coordinator, CAI



## A message from our Senior Mentors to the community





## اعزائي كبار السن من الجالية العربية الكرام

كثيرة لأشغال انفسكم تختارون منها حسب ولعكم ورغبتكم  
يمكنكم التعرف عليها من المعهد العربي الكندي ومكانه مركز  
الجالية العربية في تورونتو ( Burnhamthorp Road 000 )  
واذكر منها \*المساعدة حسب الخبرة والكفاءة ، \*تدريس الاطفال  
، \* مشاريع البيئة كالتشجير، \*مساعدة كبار السن.... لان بقاءهم  
على كسلهم وعزلتهم سيؤدي وكما أثبتت الدراسات العلمية  
الكندية والأمريكية الى المخاطر الكبيرة لهؤلاء المسنين والتي  
تزيد كلما زاد العمر ( +00) اذكر بعضا منها : زيادة نسبة الوفيات ،  
التأثير على الصحة الجسدية والعقلية ، انخفاض الوعي الإدراكي  
وزيادة احتمالية الخرف ، تفاقم الأمراض المزمنة ، الكآبة ، ارتفاع  
الضغط ، زيادة تشاؤم الفرد تجاه المستقبل واللجوء إلى تصرفات  
غير صحية كزيادة التدخين والأكل غير الصحي... وغيرها . لقد ورد  
تكريم الله للإنسان في كل الاديان فكيف نهمل ونعاقب أنفسنا  
التي كرمها الله. لذا علينا جميعا العمل بجدية من أجل فهم  
هذه المساوئ المذكورة أعلاه لتقليل معاناتنا الصحية والعيش  
الصحي السليم والبقاء نشيطين بدنياوعقليا ونكون بذلك قد  
ساهمنا إيجابيا في بناء مجتمعنا الجديد.

رسالة من د. عبد الخالق

لقد شاء قدرنا أن نترك بلداننا ولكل سببه الذي أجبره على اتخاذ  
هذا القرار ولكننا محظوظين باختيارنا العيش في كندا ، هذا البلد  
الجميل المعطاء المتطور بقوانينه الإنسانية و انتماء مواطنيه  
الوثيق لبلدهم كندا وتطبيقهم هذه القوانين جعل من كندا،  
من الدول الاولى عالميا بالأمن والخدمات الصحية والاجتماعية  
وما دعوتنا لكبار السن العرب هنا وانتشالهم من العزلة وتوضيح  
اضرارها الا دليلا على حرص المؤسسات الحكومية الرسمية  
والجمعيات التي تخص جاليتنا الكريمة.

انني من خلال مقابلي عددا لا بأس به من كبار السن العرب  
وجدتهم يشكون من الوحدة والعزلة لاختلاف الظروف البيئية  
والمجتمعية هنا عن التي كانوا يعيشون فيها بفقدانهم كثيرا  
من المشاهد ، العادات والتقاليد الموروثة هناك إضافة إلى حاجز  
اللغة لدى الكثير منهم.

هل هناك طولا لاستعادة السعادة والخروج من العزلة والبده  
بنمط حياة جديد..؟ نعم هنالك وسنأتي عليها.

اود ان اذكر هنا أن تقارير الإحصائيات الكندية تشير إلى أن ٨٠٪  
من كبار السن الكنديين يشاركون في واحدة أو أكثر من النشاطات  
المجتمعية مرة شهريا في الأقل ويبقى ٢٠٪ من كبار السن  
الكنديين في عزلة وانكماش وبعثادي أن أغلب كبار

السن العرب يدخلون في هذه النسبة ولا بدّ من البحث في  
أسباب ذلك وإيجاد مايشجع كبار السن العرب من ان يساهموا  
في نشاطات مجتمعية سواء كانت داخل الجالية العربية في  
تورونتو أو على مستوى المجتمع المدني الكندي .هناك مجالات



## Love Arabic Sheet

Courtesy of our friends at LoveArabic, this table outlines key Arabic phrases you can use to invite and engage Arab seniors in your programs and activities.

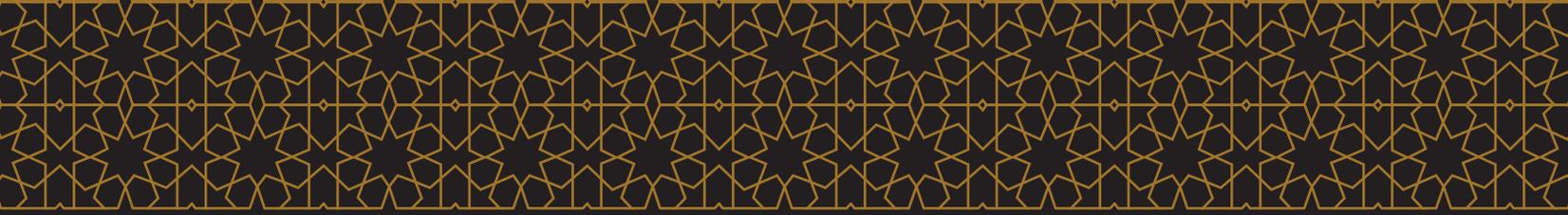
Basic Phrases and Greetings	Palestine	Palestine	Iraq	Iraq	Egypt	Egypt	Syria	Syria
Hello! (m+f)	مرحباً	Marhaba	مرحباً	Marhaba	مرحباً	Marhaba	مرحباً	Marhaba
How are you? (m)	كيف حالّك؟	Keef halak?	شلونك؟ شلون صحتك	Shlonak? Shlon sahtak?	ازيك	Ezzayak?	كيفك	Keefak?
How are you? (f)	كيف حالك؟	Keef halek?	شلونج؟ شلون صحتج؟	Shlonek? Shlon sehtej?	ازيك	Ezzayek?	كيفك	Keefek?
How are you? (p)	كيفكم؟	Keefkom?	شلونكم؟ شلون صحتكم؟	Shlonkom? Shlon sahtekom?	ازيكم	Ezzayokom?	كيفكن	Keefkon?
I'm fine. And you? (m)	أنا بخير. وأنت؟	Ana bkheir. W enta?	انى زين. انت شلونك؟	Anee zen. Ent shloonek?	أنا كويس	Ana kwayyes	أنا منيح. وانت؟	Ana mneeh. W enta?
I'm fine. And you? (f)	أنا بخير. وأنت؟	Ana bkheir. E enti?	انى زينه. انتى شلونج؟	Anee zeene. Enti shloonej?	أنا كويسه	Ana kwayyse	أنا منيحه. وانت؟	Ana mneeha. W enti?
Please (m)	أرجوك	Arjook	رجاء...اتفضل	Raja'. Etfaddal.	لو سمحت	Law samaht	إذا بتريد	Eza betreed
Please (f)	أرجوك	Arjooki	رجاء...اتفضلي	Raja'. Etfaddaley.	لو سمحتي	Law samahti	إذا بتريدي	Eza betreede
Thank you	شكراً	Shokran	شكراً	Shokran	شكراً	Shokran	شكراً	Shokran
You're welcome	العفو	El'afo	العفو	Elafoo	عفوآ	'afwan	عفوآ	'afwan
Goodbye (n)	مع السلامة	Ma' al salama	مع السلامة	Ma' al salama	مع السلامة	Ma' el salama	مع السلامة	Ma' el salame
Good Morning (n)	صباح الخير	Sabah el kheir	صباح الخير	Sabah el kheir	صباح الخير	Sabah el kheir	صباح الخير	Sabah el kheir
Good Afternoon (n)	مساء الخير	Masa el kheir	مساء الخير	Masa' el kheir	مساء الخير	Masa' el kheir	مساء الخير	Masa' el kheir
Good Evening (n)	مساء الخير	Masa el kheir	مساء الخير	Masa' el kheir	مساء الخير	Masa' el kheir	مساء الخير	Masa' el kheir
Cheers! (m)	فصحتك	Fsehtak	بالعافيه	Bel afyeh	في صحتك	Fee sehetak	بصحتك	Bsehtak
Cheers! (f)	فصحتك	Fsehtek	بالعافيه	Bel afyeh	في صحتك	Fee sehetek	بصحتك	Bsehtek
Excuse me (m)	إذا سمحت	Etha samahet	بلا زحمه	Bala zahma	بعد إذتلك	Ba'd eznak	عفوآ	'afwan
Excuse me (f)	إذا سمحت	Etha samahti	بلا زحمه	Bala zahma	بعد إذنيك	Ba'd eznek	عفوآ	'afwan

n= neutral | f= female | m= male | p= plural



Basic Phrases and Greetings	Palestine	Palestine	Iraq	Iraq	Egypt	Egypt	Syria	Syria
I'm sorry (m)	أنا آسف	Ana asef	آني آسف	Ani asef	أنا آسف	Ana asef	أنا آسف	Ana asef
I'm sorry (f)	أنا آسفة	Ana asfeh	آني آسفه	Ani asfah	أنا آسفه	Ana asfe	أنا آسفه	Ana asfeh
What's your name? (m)	ايش اسمك؟	Esh esmak?	شسمك؟	Shesmek?	اسمك إيه؟	Esmak eh?	إش اسمك؟	Esh esmak?
What's your name? (f)	ايش اسمك؟	Esh esmek?	شسم حضرتك؟	Shesm hadrdek?	إسمك إيه؟	Esmek eh?	إش اسمك؟	Esh esmek?
My name is.. (n)	أنا إسمي	Ana esmi..	آني اسمي	Ani esmi..	أنا إسمي ..	Ana esmi..	أنا إسمي ..	Ana esmi..
Nice to meet you (n)	اتشرفنا	Etsharrafna	اتشرفت	Etsharraft	تشرفنا	Tasharrafna	تشرفنا	Tsharrafna
Where are you from? (m)	انت من وين؟	Enta men wein?	انت من وين؟	Ent men wein?	إنت من فين	Enta men fen?	انت من وين	Enta men wein?
Where are you from? (f)	انت من وين؟	Enti men wein?	انت من وين؟	Enti men wein?	إنت من فين	Enti men fen?	انت من وين	Enti men wein?
I'm from.. (n)	أنا من ...	Ana men...	آني من...	Ani men..	أنا من ...	Ana men..	أنا من ...	Ana men..
How old are you? (m)	قديش عمرك؟	Adeish omrak?	شكد عمرك؟	Shkad 'omrak?	عندك كم سنه؟	'andak kam sana?	شقد عمرك؟	Sh'ad 'omrek
How old are you? (f)	قديش عمرك؟	Adeih omrek?	شكد عمرج	Shkad 'omrej?	عندك كم سنه؟	'andek kam sana?	شقد عمرك؟	Sha'd 'omrek?
I'm .. years old.	أنا عمري ... سنة	Ana omri.. saneh	عمري .. سنه	'omri.. sana	انا عندي .. سنه	Ana andi.. sana	عمري ... سنة	'omri.. sene
What do you do for a living? (m)	ايش بتشتغل؟	Esh bteshtghel?	ش تشتغل؟	Shteshteghel?	بتشتغل في إيه؟	Bteshtaghal fi eh?	اش بتشتغل؟	Esh bteshteghel?
What do you do for a living? (f)	ايش بتشتغلي؟	Esh bteshteghli?	ش تشتغلي؟	shteshteghli?	بتشتغلي في إيه؟	Bteshtaghali fi eh?	اش بتشتغلي؟	Esh bteshteghli?
I'm a..	أنا بشتغل...	Ana bashtghel..	آني اشتغل..	Ani ashtghel..	أنا ...	Ana..	أنا ...	Ana..
What are your hobbies? (m)	ايش هواياتك؟	Esh hewayatak?	شنو هواياتك؟	Sheno hewayatak?	هواياتك إيه؟	Hewayatak eh?	اش هواياتك؟	Esh hewayatak?
What are your hobbies? (f)	ايش هواياتك؟	Esh hewayatek?	شنو هوايتج	Sheno hewayatej?	هواياتك إيه؟	Hewayatek eh?	اش هواياتك؟	Esh hewayatek?
I like..	أنا بحب...	Ana baheb...	آني احب	Ani aheb..	انا بحب	Ana baheb..	بحب...	Bheb..
I don't like..	أنا ما بحب...	Ana ma baheb...	آني ما احب	Ani ma aheb..	انا محبش	Ana ma bahebbesh	ما بحب...	Ma bheb
Yes	نعم	Na'am	اي نعم	Ee na'am	أيوا	Aywa	نعم	Na'am
No	لا	La'	لا	La	لا	La'	لا	La'

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ACCT

ARAB COMMUNITY CENTRE OF TORONTO  
مركز الجالية العربية في تورنتو  
Every service is as unique as the communities we serve.