

Foreign bride study underway

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Abstract (Summary)

"Right now we're trying to find out more information about the services here," said research associate Anisa Zehtab-Martin. "We will be returning in the fall to conduct interviews with anyone that is willing to share their story with us."

"There's lots of other ways that women have come over - there are different programs. For example, a number of women from the Philippines have come in through the live-in caregiver program to work as nannies or caregivers for kids and the elderly and met their husband that way," [Catherine Nolin] said.

Nolin added that IMSS had stated that the women they work with prefer the terms "foreign bride" or "correspondence bride."

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Full Text

A University of Northern British Columbia study that will look at how prevalent foreign brides are in northern B.C. is in its preliminary stages in Fort St. John.

Researchers are currently investigating what sort of resources exist for immigrants and foreign brides who choose to settle in the city.

"Right now we're trying to find out more information about the services here," said research associate Anisa Zehtab-Martin. "We will be returning in the fall to conduct interviews with anyone that is willing to share their story with us."

Working with the Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society of Prince George, primary investigator Catherine Nolin wants to get an updated picture of what the situation is like for women who migrate to northern B.C. with, or for, Canadian husbands.

"There has been a very small number of studies and the most recent one was probably done about seven or eight years ago, so we decided that we would pursue this together," said Nolin, who is an associate professor of geography at UNBC.

The study will look at how the women met their husbands, be it through online correspondence, travelling abroad, arranged marriages or any other means in which the relationship was established outside Canada.

"There's lots of other ways that women have come over - there are different programs. For example, a number of women from the Philippines have come in through the live-in caregiver program to work as nannies or caregivers for kids and the elderly and met their husband that way," Nolin said.

The subject can be a delicate one for some women, but Nolin said she was impressed that researchers have already been able to talk to between 15 and 20 women. However, there have been some women who said they would not participate in the study if the term "mail-order bride" was used.

"There's a lot of negative connotations with the idea of a mail-order bride, so we try to steer clear of using that specific term if we can," said Nolin.

Nolin added that IMSS had stated that the women they work with prefer the terms "foreign bride" or "correspondence bride."

Other communities involved in the project are Dawson Creek, Kitimat, Prince George, Smithers and Terrace.

Women who are interested in confidentially sharing their stories are invited to Zehtab-Martin at zehtab@unbc.ca.

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