

ACB Food in LTC: Co-designing roadmaps for promoting culturally relevant food in long-term care homes in partnership with community food programs to address modifiable risk factors for poor health in the African, Caribbean, and Black population in Canada

Aim: To promote food security and sovereignty in long-term care homes by working towards food sourcing, preparation, and delivery aligned with African, Caribbean and Black cultures as part of person-centered care.



AT A GLANCE

- An invigorating site visit to our third food program partner, CANAVUA.
- Our first publication for the research study!
- We are gearing up for Objective 4 of our research study and have secured our first partnership with a long-term care home in Quebec.
- We have wrapped up our policy analyses and are writing up manuscripts with the findings.
- Putting our project on the map with 2 well-received conference presentations.



Our April Site Visit

This spring, our research team had an exciting visit at a Francophone community food program – CANAVUA in Edmonton. CANAVUA is our only Francophone community food program and it was invigorating to see the intersection of culture, language and food in new ways.

We had an incredible visit, filled with lots of learning, and a chance to gain some insights into cultural food access and provision for the ACB Francophone community.

Progress in Action

As of April, we officially entered Year 2 of the study! Our first year was a whirlwind of activity, and it's hard to believe how much progress has been made since our gathering last year. We are nearing completion of our community food program site visits and are now looking ahead to long-term care visits and strategic engagement with policymakers.





SITE VISIT HIGHLIGHTS

During our site visit to CANAVUA in Edmonton, AB we highlighted 4 key takeaways:

Food Service, Integration, and Belonging

At CANAVUA, we observed the innovative intertwining of food programming and newcomer settlement. The food program provides newcomers with opportunities to gain their first Canadian experience through volunteering, food service training, and workforce preparation. Beyond skill-building, the program fosters social connection, cultural exchange, and a sense of belonging. This was especially meaningful given that many of the program's staff and volunteers are from Edmonton's African Francophone community and have experienced being minorities within a minority (both Black and Francophone in Canada).

Food Customization and Making the Most of Available Ingredients

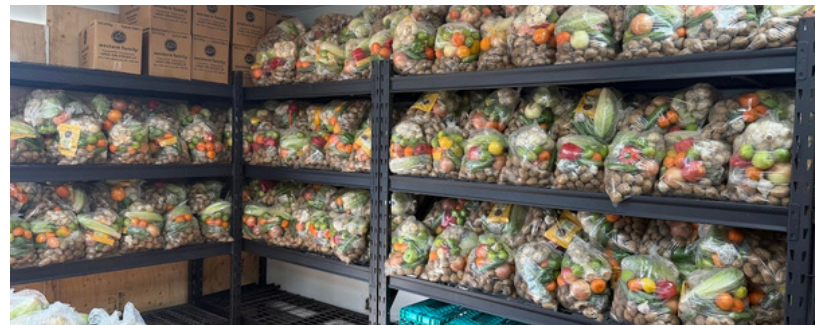
Through CANAVUA's Hot Meals Program and weekly food truck, we saw how staff thoughtfully use available ingredients to create meals that are culturally familiar to African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) clients while remaining appealing to a broader community. This ability to adapt ingredients without losing cultural relevance is a promising practice that long-term care homes may be able to learn from.

Learning From Elders

CANAVUA supports older adults living in retirement homes in Edmonton. In our discussions with some residents, we were able to gain some insight into their realities of procuring culturally relevant foods. A number of the suggestions that were brought forward for facilitating cultural food preferences would be fairly easy to implement within the LTC setting.

Leveraging Staff and Volunteer Strengths

One of the clearest lessons from our visit was the importance of recognizing and leveraging the diverse skills, experiences, and expertise of staff and volunteers. Team members brought backgrounds in areas such as law, advocacy, engineering, and social work, united by a shared commitment to community service and justice. CANAVUA's success reflects its ability to harness these unique strengths, creating a passionate and engaged workforce. This observation reinforces discussions from our gathering last year, as well as findings from our policy analyses, suggesting that empowering staff and volunteers to contribute their knowledge and lived experience can strengthen organizational capacity and support the successful delivery of culturally relevant food programs. Like the other sites we visited, CANAVUA benefits from dedicated "change champions" who help the organization grow, innovate, and thrive.



OTHER THINGS WE'VE BEEN DOING

- We're excited to celebrate the project's first published paper! Our protocol paper has now been published in BMC Nutrition: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40795-026-01331-2>.
- We have officially completed both policy analyses, applying the Intersectionality Framework and SHIFT Framework to examine opportunities for advancing culturally relevant food in long-term care.
- We shared findings from the project at two conferences this spring: the **Congrès de L'Association Canadienne-Française pour L'Avancement des Sciences (ACFAS)** and the **National Black Mental Health Conference**.
- We have also developed a plan for analyzing the rich data collected through our community food program site visits. Look out for the data analysis plan and let us know if you would like to get involved. 😊

NEXT STEPS

Following the events from this spring, our next steps are to:

- Analyze the data from the site visits: July–August
- Montreal Site Visit to Desta and WIBCA: October 18–22
- Objective 4 LTC interview guide co-production: Summer 2026
- Complete drafts of policy analyses papers: Fall 2026



Thank you

We say a special thank you to **Dicky, Brenna** and the incredible team at CANAVUA for their wonderful hospitality – and to **Patrick, Junio and Camilia** for the perspectives they brought to the April site visit and for their contributions to data collection and reflection.

We look forward to visiting the remaining community food programs in Montreal this Fall!

Looking to the Future

We are excited to continue this learning journey and thank you, our incredible team, for your support of this research study.



Scan the QR code for more information about the ACB Food in LTC Project.