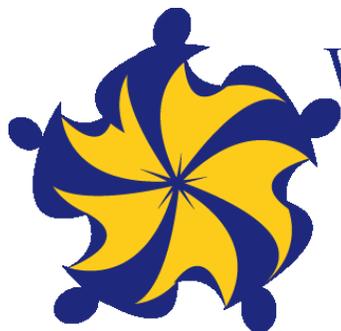


2011
June



WELCOMING
COMMUNITIES
INITIATIVE

ebulletin

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Welcoming Communities Conference Announcement

The Welcoming Communities Initiative (WCI) will be holding its annual conference in Ottawa from November 16 to 18, 2011, with November 16th reserved for a governing council meeting and domain meetings. Please mark the dates in your calendar and plan to attend. The conference will be of keen interest to Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) representatives and participants, WCI university researchers and graduate students, community representatives, and government officials, including municipal officers.

As in previous years, the LIPs program will feature prominently in the conference. We expect senior officials from Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), Ontario Region, CIC National Headquarters, and the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to play an active role. The conference will also feature reports on major research projects, and workshops that tackle issues of cross-cutting concern to the LIPs. The aim will be to help the LIPs with their transition from strategic planning to action and to equip the LIPs with information about promising practices, how to replicate them and how to assess whether the process is contributing to the emergence of a more welcoming community.

Other themes that the conference may highlight include the attraction and retention of newcomers by Northern and small communities, as well as the increasing role of international students and temporary foreign workers.

Financing for conference attendees may prove more of a challenge this year; as a result, attendees may be required to shoulder a somewhat bigger share of the conference costs than in previous years. We will provide updates on the financial situation as they become available. (See the announcement on financial requests elsewhere in this issue.) We will provide additional details regarding conference location and themes in our next e-bulletin.

Possible Funding Support to Attend the WCI Fall Conference

For previous WCI conferences, we have been able to provide financial support to LIP representatives, representatives from community partner organizations, university researchers, and graduate students. This support helped offset travel and accommodation costs. It is our hope that we can extend similar assistance this year notwithstanding the uncertain fiscal outlook.

If you are interested in attending the November conference and will require financial assistance, please write to the WCI at wci@uwo.ca providing the following information:

- ◆ Name
- ◆ Address - email and postal
- ◆ Your position and affiliation
- ◆ Please indicate briefly how your work relates to the interests of the WCI and how participation in the conference would help you in this work
- ◆ Would you be able to attend if only 50% of your costs were covered: yes/no

The deadline for receipt of applications is October 3, 2011. Once funding has been secured, support will be allocated with a view to representation and need.

News from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Region

Local Immigration Partnerships expand to more than 30 communities in North western Ontario

Located along Secondary Highway 599 in North western Ontario, Savant Lake is a small community with a population of approximately 350 people. It is well-known for its fishing and hunting — but like many remote communities in the North, transportation is limited (your best option is to arrive by float plane).

Now, imagine you are a newcomer in a remote community like Savant Lake. Imagine settling in Savant Lake after having previously lived in bustling cities like Mumbai or Beijing with populations of more than 10 million people with easy access to restaurants, buses and hospitals.

“When newcomers arrive in small communities, there is very little support or services to help them,” says Cathy Woodbeck, Executive Director of the Thunder Bay Multicultural Association. “Many North western Ontario municipalities don’t have the resources to provide broad-scale services on their own.”

In response to this need, 32 municipalities in North western Ontario joined together to create a Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) with the support of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) this past year. LIPs engage a broad range of stakeholders, including settlement organizations, businesses, the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, healthcare organizations, educational institutions, police and social services. The partnership councils work together to develop holistic solutions to barriers that newcomers face in their day-to-day lives.

“By working together we can access services and also train staff in each municipality to properly welcome and assist newcomers,” Woodbeck says. “It’s the first time that this many communities in Ontario, spread across such a large geography, have collaborated on a strategy to not only attract but retain and support newcomers.”

Kingston Multicultural Roundtable supports multicultural library

On March 30th, 2011, 50 local leaders of diverse communities came together at the Islamic Centre of Kingston to launch a new collaborative initiative: the Kingston Multicultural Roundtable. Participants shared more than just a meal — they hoped to build a shared vision for intercultural cooperation within their community where newcomers will have access to multilingual resources and programming. Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), the Kingston Immigration Partnership facilitated the roundtable to encourage collaboration among the organizations represented. During the meeting, members committed to working with a local library and settlement agencies to launch the Multicultural Library project in September 2011. The Multicultural Library will be located at the Calvin Park Branch at 88 Wright Crescent, Kingston, ON K7L 4T9. Telephone: (613) 546-2582. Websites: www.kfpl.ca and www.kingstonmulticultural.ca

WCI to Provide Seed Funding for Pilot Projects

In order to help and encourage members to secure funding (through grants, contracts, etc) and to expand their research, the WCI has initiated a seed funding program of up to \$5,000 for pilot projects that lead to full research proposals. Applications for funding will require a 3-5 page proposal, plus bibliography. The proposal will need to describe:

- ◆ the aims and justification for the project (both a policy rationale and a scientific rationale)
- ◆ the potential for expansion to province-wide comparative research on the theme of welcoming communities
- ◆ a list of university researchers, community partners, government officials and other stakeholders who would be involved both in the seed project and in the larger project should it be funded (the seed proposal MUST involve researchers from WCI member universities in more than one city)
- ◆ an explanation of potential funding source(s) and planned scope of the full research project
- ◆ a detailed budget for the pilot project, including explanation of costs: funds may be used for hiring research assistants, travel to collect data and hold planning meetings, and other aspects of data acquisition.

When preparing the seed funding proposal and the subsequent full research proposal, the lead researchers will be expected to consult the WCI and its domain leaders for recommendations for partnerships and collaboration that would enhance the value of the research for Ontario communities.

Proposals will be judged on their potential to advance the objectives of the WCI and to secure support for the full proposal. The selection committee will be interdisciplinary and will include university and community representatives.

The deadline for receipt of proposals is August 31, 2011. Additional details about the program will be available on the WCI website at the beginning of July.

“Local Immigration Partnerships: Systems Planning to Help People” Workshop

On June 8th, Laureen Rennie, Elisabeth White, and Victoria Esses presented a workshop on the Local Immigration Partnerships initiative at the annual conference of the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA). The workshop attracted over 30 participants and included presentations describing the LIPs, two case examples - the London and Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership and the Peel Newcomer Strategy Group - and an overview of the Welcoming Communities Initiative’s partnership with the LIPs. Interesting discussion ensued, and feedback on the workshop suggested that it provided lots of useful information for those who are not yet familiar with the LIPs and the WCI.

Health Service Use of Immigrant Families Raising a Child with a Physical Disability

Very little is known about health service access, service utilization, and service experiences of immigrant and refugee families raising a child with a disability. To address this gap, a two-part, mixed methods study was conducted to examine attitudinal, policy, and practice barriers to health service utilization by immigrant parents from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean who are raising a disabled child or youth in the Greater Toronto or Hamilton areas. The project assessed perceptions regarding barriers in service delivery; unmet needs; and the extent to which services are culturally sensitive and family-centred.

The first research phase assessed perceptions of barriers and supports to service for recent immigrants raising a disabled child or youth. Nine focus groups and individual interviews were conducted to obtain a variety of perspectives (pediatric service providers, immigrant group leaders, and immigrant parents). The research focused on service access, utilization, service experiences, and helpful practices. The emerging qualitative themes included language, knowledge, and financial barriers; the nature of unmet needs; and the extent to which services are culturally sensitive and family-centered.

The second phase of research focused on the needs and experiences of immigrant families who have a child with a physical disability and who receive paediatric rehabilitation services in the Toronto or Hamilton areas. Over 130 organizations were approached and 42 agreed to help with recruitment. Unfortunately, due to organizations' resource constraints, a lack of eligible families, and language barriers, only fifteen parents ultimately responded to the survey; as a result the findings are preliminary and will be useful in providing insights into important areas for future research.

The survey findings suggest that immigrants with disabled children have higher levels of unmet needs than non-immigrant parents of children with disabilities (from published UK research), particularly with respect to needing help finding available services, advocacy, and day to day support for their child. Parents also reported significantly lower levels of family-centred care compared with published data for non-immigrant parents of children with disabilities in Ontario. Further research will be needed to establish the validity of these conclusions.

The qualitative findings provide important information for service organizations and policy makers regarding health service barriers experienced by immigrant families raising a disabled child. Articles are currently being prepared on the qualitative findings and on methodological issues involving quantitative research with immigrant families.

Exploring the Links: Housing and Homelessness amongst Newcomers to Hamilton, Ontario

Existing research indicates that for most immigrant arrivals, housing and the housing experience in Canada is not an issue. Many new arrivals move into long-term, suitable housing. However, a small subset of new arrivals is at greater risk of experiencing precarious housing and difficulty in securing safe and adequate shelter, particularly refugees in the period immediately following arrival in Canada. It is this sub-group that the report has focused upon.

Homelessness ranges from absolute homelessness, including living in shelters, to hidden homelessness which includes living in unsafe or over-crowded conditions or paying too much for rent (Hiebert

et al. 2005). In terms of homelessness, newcomers to Canada represent a potentially vulnerable population that faces housing (amongst other) challenges. Although the balance of evidence suggests that newcomers are relatively under-represented amongst the homeless, their potentially precarious situation vis-à-vis declining health (i.e., Newbold 2009), housing affordability, and poor economic status suggests that housing options may be limited and/or unacceptable. Indeed, recent immigrants are more likely to be living in unacceptable housing conditions as compared to non-immigrants (Wayland 2007). Likewise, analysis based on the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC) found that nearly 40% of respondents had difficulties finding housing immediately after arrival, with refugees more likely to experience difficulties as compared to economic or family class immigrants (Schellenberg and Maheux 2007). Affordability, availability, and suitability were common reasons why appropriate housing was not found, along with lack of credit, insufficient knowledge, and language issues, particularly amongst the most recent arrivals.

Existing literature has only partially explored the links between immigration, settlement, health, and homelessness. Particular gaps exist with respect to housing and homelessness in smaller cities and to understanding differences associated with immigrant class (i.e., refugees versus other immigrant classes). The purpose of this research was therefore to obtain a better understanding of housing and homelessness among newcomers to Hamilton, Ontario.

Key results included:

1. Newcomer housing experiences reflect the barriers and issues they face as they adjust to life in Canada. Barriers include language, discrimination, knowledge of the housing market, income, and lack of credit history.
2. Although newcomers were not identified as a population that typically experiences homelessness, their housing situation was often precarious as they moved between a series of locations. Most fragile was the housing progression of refugees and refugee claimants after arrival in Hamilton.
3. Differences associated with immigration class and status among immigrants shape housing experiences and access to housing. Research results suggest that refugees and refugee claimants are more vulnerable given their legal status and employment opportunities.
4. In many cases, local non-profit service providers are forced to cobble together responses to the needs of newcomers. Examples were found of innovative collaboration between providers, but this is not necessarily the norm. Local service providers appear to be better able to provide support than upper levels of government, although this speaks to policy jurisdiction.
5. It is important to recognize that housing needs do not end when clients find accommodation. Instead, accommodation often remains inappropriate (with respect to size, location and safety) and precarious, reflecting the precarious legal or financial position of newcomers.
6. The supply of low-cost or subsidized housing is limited. Housing providers and key informants noted that the supply of units was small in comparison to demand, and wait lists were long.

The research was conducted by Bruce Newbold, Sarah V. Wayland, Robert Wilton, Kathy Georgiades, Olive Wahoush, and Kathi Wilson and received funding from the Homelessness Partnering Secretariat, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). The research and recommendations are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Homelessness Partnering Secretariat. The authors would also like to acknowledge the assistance and participation of Andrew Clutton, Kelly M. Vondervoort, Lauren Tingey, and Carolyn Abbot, all of whom are from McMaster's School of Nursing.

Recent and Upcoming Conference Presentations

Atanackovic, J., & Bourgeault, I.L. (2011, August). *Migration and Recruitment of Immigrant Health Workers to Canada*, American Sociology Association Conference, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA.

Birjandian, F. (2011, April). *The Importance of Integrating Highly Skilled Immigrants into Canada's Environmental Sector*. Keynote speech at the Eco Canada & CCIS joint initiative for the Environmental Immigrant Bridging Program Graduation Event, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Birjandian, F. (2011, May). *Integrating International Talent into the Alberta Labour Market*. Keynote speech at the Economic Integration Symposium, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Birjandian, F. (2011, June). *Becoming and Belonging: The Challenges and Lessons of Multiculturalism: A Look at Multiculturalism in Both Alberta and Canada at Large, and the Role of Media*. Public Panel presentation at the United Nations Association in Canada's Annual General Meeting, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Birjandian, F. (2011, June). *The Significance and Contributions of Immigrant Seniors within Calgary*. Keynote speech at the 12th Annual CCIS Immigrant Seniors Award Ceremony and Multicultural Fiesta, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Bourgeault, I.L. (2011, May). *An Overview of Health Human Resource Policy and International Migration in Canada*. New England Research Institutes, Inc., Watertown, Massachusetts, USA.

Da, W.W. (2011, May). *Reconstructing Gender Discourse in Religion: The Case of Recent Chinese Immigrants in Canada*. Paper presented at the Canadian Sociological Association Conference, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada.

Esses, V.M., & White, E. (2011, June). *Working Together to Strengthen Our Community: Welcoming Communities Initiative and Local Immigration Partnerships*. Presented to the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology and National University of Rwanda visit to the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, Canada.

Esses, V.M., Medianu S., Sutter A. & Lawson A. (2011, August). *The Dehumanization of Immigrants and Refugees: Potential Causes and Consequences*. Paper presented at the American Psychological Association Convention, Washington, DC, USA.

Estrella, D. (2011, March). *A Critical Conversation: Examining Integration and Newcomer Settlement in Relation to Crime Prevention*. Presentation at the National John Howard Annual Conference, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Estrella, D. (2011, April). *Connecting with Immigrants and Refugees by Enhancing Cultural Competency*. Workshop at the Speaking Truth to Power: Alberta College of Social Worker's Annual Conference, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Estrella, D. (2011, April). *Creating Connections: Exploring, Communicating, and Enhancing Cultural Competency in a Diverse World*. Three part public workshop series for community stakeholders, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Estrella, D. (2011, June). *Creating Welcoming, Inclusive and Culturally Competent Services*. Workshop at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

Gould, D. D., & Oxenbury, J. M. (2011, June). *Refugee Trauma: Children & Adolescents*. Workshop for Service Providers, Teachers, and Professionals. Presented in collaboration with Calgary Catholic Immigration Society's SOT Youth & Family Project, High River, Alberta, Canada.

Haan, M., & Yu, Z. (2011, March). *Cohort Progress toward Household Formation and Homeownership: A Comparison of Immigrant Ethno-racial Groups in Canada and the United States*. Presented at the Population Association of America's Annual General Meeting, Washington, DC, USA.

Haan, M., & Yu, Z. (2011, March). *Household Formation and Homeownership in Canada and the United States*. Presented at the Social Science Association Annual General Meeting, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA.

Haan, M. & Yu, Z. (2011, April). *Household Formation and Homeownership in Canada and the United States*. Presented at the British Sociological Association's Annual General Meeting, London, England.

McManus, K. & White, E. (2011, May). *London & Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership*. Presentation to City of London Community & Neighbourhoods Committee, London, Ontario, Canada.

Newbold K.B. (2011, June). *The Health of Canada's Immigrants: An Overview*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Nutrition Society, Guelph, Ontario, Canada.

Oxenbury, J. M. (2011, February). *Survivors of Torture Intervention: Best Practices*. Workshop for service providers, and professionals, presented in collaboration with Calgary Catholic Immigration Society's Community Support Program for Survivors of Torture, High River, Alberta, Canada.

Rennie, L., White, E., & Esses, V.M. (2011, June). *Local Immigration Partnerships: Systems Planning to Help People*. Workshop presented at the annual conference of the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, London, Ontario, Canada.

Richmond, T., for Katherine Hewson, Assistant Deputy Minister MCI. (2011, May). *Improving Immigrant Settlement Outcomes*. Funders' Panel Presentation by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration at the CERIS Community Research Symposium, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Seo, B., & Wilkinson, L. (2011, May). *Education Attainment and the Gender & Language Proficiency Earnings Gap Among Immigrants: Evidence from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants To Canada (LSIC)*. Accepted for presentation at Statistics Canada Socio-economic Conference, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Siemiatycki, M. (2011, March). *Toronto: A Multicultural Success Story?*. The Maturing of the Multicultural Experiment Conference, York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Taylor, S. (2011, June). *Creating Spaces for Plurilingual Learners' Out-Of-School Linguistic Repertoires in the French Language Classroom*. International Conference on the New Dynamics of Language Learning: Spaces and Places - Intentions and Opportunities. University of Jyväskylä, Finland.

Tolley, E. (2011, August). *Racial Mediation and the Framing of Minority Candidates in Politics*. Paper to be presented at the European Consortium for Political Research, Reykjavik, Iceland.

Wilkinson, L. (2011, February). *Economic Integration in Communities of Immigrants-A Perspective of Youth*. Summons to appear at the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. Senate of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

Wilkinson, L. (2011, April). *The School-to-Work Transitions of War Affected Youth in Canada*. Invited for presentation at the Refugee Research Network Workshop, York University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Wilkinson, L. (2011, May). *From China to Canada-Understanding the Labour Market Experiences of Chinese Youth in Canada*. Invited presentation at Integration and Diversity in Multicultural Societies Conference, School of Ethnology and Sociology, Northwest University for Nationalities, Lanzhou, China.

Wilkinson, L., Anchan, J.P., Blum, E., Cabigting-Fernandes, J., & Kim, B.H. (2011, May). *Immigrant Youth and Victimization from Bullying: Experiences in Canadian Schools*. Accepted for presentation at Education in Diversity: Unleashing the Power and Potential of Newcomer Youth in Manitoba Conference, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

Wilkinson, L. (2011, June). *The Challenges of Credential Recognition in High School among Newcomer Youth to Canada*. Accepted for presentation at Canadian Sociological Association Annual Conference, Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada.

If you have any recent or upcoming presentations that you would like to have included in future issues of the WCI E-bulletin, please email the information to wci@uwo.ca. For the next issue you may submit any presentation which occurred between April 1st and September 30th 2011.

Durham Region LIP: Community Leadership

Durham Region was fortunate to develop its Community Strategic Plan at the same time as the immigration portal was being built. The portal - durhamimmigration.ca - reflects the collective efforts of over 60 organizations, agencies, elected officials, school boards, chambers of commerce and municipalities. Ownership was shared from the start and the creation of content for the portal provided an excellent platform for launching a community dialogue that underpinned the formation of the LIP and the development of the strategic plan. The inclusive discussion also ensured that the LIP Strategic Plan and portal complemented one another, contributed to mutual learning, and helped to leverage resources and interest.

Considerable energy and effort went into local collaboration. In Durham, executive directors, managers, elected officials, and chief executive officers were remarkably generous with their time, sitting at "multi-sectoral roundtables" and contributing to the collective process of finding better ways to work together, to leverage common assets and to develop a new vision of the community and the region. In addition to producing an excellent plan, the process has also fostered common understanding, trust and durable relationships.

Among the more important benefits attributable to Durham region's LIP is its contribution to fostering local champions and leaders. This has produced benefits that extend well beyond matters of immigration. The exercise of defining goals for working towards a welcoming community has resulted in a variety of fruitful new partnerships and new opportunities to reflect upon current practices and assumptions.

Strong community leadership has culminated in support for the idea that the creation of a more welcoming community is everyone's responsibility. This support, along with the leadership and the partnerships that developed will sustain the momentum generated by LIPs.

Spotlight on Student Research

This month's spotlight on student research is on PhD candidate, Huyen Dam, at McMaster University in Hamilton. Huyen can be reached at huyen.d.dam@gmail.com.

The relatively large Vietnamese presence in Canada is a direct outcome of the 1970's 'Boat People Crisis'. This led to multiple waves of asylum seekers leaving Vietnam after the war. Huyen's Master's thesis examines the nature of embeddedness through time in a mid-sized Canadian city amongst these former refugees. Furthermore, the study explores their notion of home in transition and resettlement.

A case study framework was used to investigate the journey and lived-experience of former Vietnamese refugees. A series of twelve in-depth interviews (6 male and 6 female) were conducted in 2008 in Hamilton with participants whose age ranged from 22 to 56 at the time of the interview. In order to understand the process of journeying and its possible implications, the interview questions explored the respondents' lived-experience starting with their accounts of life in and journey from Vietnam, to their lives in the refugee camp, and finally, to their journeys to and lives in Canada.

The experience of home for the Vietnamese refugees in Hamilton does not correspond to the definition of home as the centre of a (usually idealized) neighbourly life (see MORLEY, 2001). For these refugees, home is grounded in culture and family. Family is extremely important in Vietnamese culture and the sense of home is derived only in part from place. Home is also mediated by family, resettlement experiences, settlement memories of past places and, for some, by the potential for return to the homeland. Home for these Vietnamese refugees is embodied in family and embedded in the experience of journeying through places. The meaning of home is fluid and is negotiated through place and time.

References

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Thank You

We would like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Region for their continued financial support.

