Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: Promising Practices

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WELCOMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

LES COMMUNAUTÉS ACCUEILLANTES

Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans

The Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans, conducted in 2011 and 2012, resulted in two reports: (1) The Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: Priorities and Directions; and (2) The Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: Promising Practices.

The initial study, **_'The Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: Priorities and Directions'_**, examined the major themes and priorities identified by a sample of twenty-seven communities participating in Ontario's Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) initiative. The analysis was conducted from the perspective of the research domains employed by the Welcoming Communities Initiative (WCI). These domains focused on newcomer attraction, retention and business development; children and youth; community civic resources; education and education policy; health and healthcare; the social, cultural and political inclusion of immigrants; and workplace integration. The findings were intended to inform program and policy development, and to provide insight into best practices for local collaboration, planning and leadership engagement.

The study examined the areas for which each domain was directly responsible, along with closely related areas. The research was further bolstered by reviews of the relevant literature. The resulting analyses identified commonalities or areas of consensus across the LIPs regarding desirable initiatives (reflecting a combination of needs, service gaps, emerging program opportunities and capacities). Five key priorities were selected and described for each research domain.

In order to ascertain the validity and importance of the priorities identified by the research teams, a survey was then conducted of all Ontario LIPs, both the original twenty-seven participating organizations and the eighteen new LIPs that had been initiated since the study's inception. LIPs were asked to rate the priorities using a 7-point scale ranging from 'not at all a priority' to an 'extremely high priority'. (It is important to note that LIPs were given an opportunity to identify 'other priorities' in the event that those chosen by the WCI did not accurately reflect their perceptions.) Overall, there was considerable consensus on the importance of the selected priorities.

In the second research phase, **_'The Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: Promising Practices'_**, the WCI's research domains undertook a search of the Canadian and international literatures covering the 2005-2011 time period to identify promising practices associated with the top five priorities confirmed by the LIPs. The study offers summary descriptions of promising practices for each of the five priority topics identified by each domain.

Common templates were used in developing the summaries. Where possible, the analyses examined questions such as: what makes the practice a 'best, or promising, practice'; what combination of internal and external supports and conditions would be required for a practice to operate successfully; is the practice scalable and what would be entailed in scaling it up or down; and, could the practice be transferred and under what conditions.

Contents

Analysis of the Priorities of the Local Immigration Partnerships in Seven Areas of Focus

LIP priorities were determined in two ways. First, the WCI domain leaders went through the LIP strategic plans that were available in the fall of 2011 and, for their domain and closely related areas, identified commonalities or concentrations where a consensus existed across the LIPs regarding desirable initiatives (reflecting some combination of need, service gaps, emerging program opportunities and potentialities). Five top priorities were determined for each domain and descriptions of these areas of focus were produced. Second, the 45 current LIPs in Ontario were asked to complete a survey in which they rated each of these descriptions in terms of how much they described a priority for their specific LIP. Ratings were made on 7 point scales ranging from 1 = not at all a priority to 7 = extremely high priority. Overall, there was considerable consensus on the importance of the selected priorities as shown below.

Attraction and Recruitment of Workers and Entrepreneurs Domain

The Attraction and Recruitment of Workers and Entrepreneurs domain is concerned with the attraction and recruitment of skilled workers, entrepreneurs, students and other migrants by federal, provincial, and municipal authorities working with local organizations. The domain is especially interested in new policy designs, processing methods and efforts by municipalities and communities to re-brand themselves in order to increase their appeal to migrants.

Priorities from the Available LIP Strategic Plans (27 plans):

Newcomer attraction
A major priority for LIPS outside Toronto was to develop strategies to attract newcomers to their communities. Few of the LIPS developed precise action plans to realize this objective, apart from emphasizing enhanced overall receptivity. The lack of precise action plans was attributed to the fact that the LIPs did not have direct access to the federal and provincial policy levers responsible for recruitment and selection; it may also have resulted from a lack of information about how immigrants make their initial settlement decision. Several LIPs cited the need to obtain a better understanding of the role played by perceptions of job availability, prior experience or residence in Canada, the existence of family and friendship ties, and the presence of co-ethnics or co-religionists. Among the ideas that were advanced was to seek the help of existing newcomer communities for strategic attraction initiatives.

Branding strategies
Related to Priority 1, a number of LIPS identified the need to develop 'branding' strategies to make newcomers more aware of the opportunities their communities had to offer. Two different 'targets' were identified: The first was a strategy targeting primary migrants coming to Canada from abroad; the second was a strategy aimed at secondary migrants who were already in Canada, notably Toronto and its suburbs, but

dissatisfied with their employment prospects, commuting times, housing, congestion and so forth.

Mentoring programs and internships
The LIPS identified the need to promote newcomer retention through the use of local bridging programs (mentoring and internships) aimed at helping internationally trained professionals build networks and develop the soft skills required for successful labour market integration in second and third tier centres. The LIPs recognized that many recently arrived newcomers are unable to make full use of their educational credentials, occupational training and on-the-job experience.

Enhanced language training programs
LIPs identified the need for specialized, occupationally-specific, language training programs in their communities in order to facilitate newcomer recruitment and retention. Though federally selected skilled workers must demonstrate a basic competency in English or French, the spouses of selected workers, members of the family class and refugees are not required to speak either official language. These groups form an important part of newcomer flows to smaller cities and towns. Being able to communicate in either English or French is essential for both economic and social reasons, especially in smaller centres without the presence of a co-ethnic community.

Employment and business information services
LIPs identified the need for better information about the services that are available in smaller centres to help newcomers enter the labour market or to start their own business. This was seen as a priority linked to newcomer recruitment and retention. The LIPs noted that immigrants are more likely to be self-employed than non-immigrants and that self-employment in the new economy was an important source of job creation in Canada.

Ratings by the LIPs (all 45 LIPs were surveyed; 24 provided ratings): 1- 7 scale where 1 = not at all a priority and 7 = extremely high priority

Priority	Mean Rating 1-7 scale
1. Newcomer Attraction	4.42
2. Branding Strategies	4.74
3. Mentoring Program and Internships	6.21
4. Enhanced Language Training Programs	6.04
5. Employment and Business Information Services	5.79

Children and Youth Domain

The Children and Youth domain focus on the social and psycho-social conditions that shape the experiences of immigrant and minority children and youth; relations between immigrant and minority children/youth and long-settled non-minority children/youth; and discriminatory barriers that impede the transition from school to work for immigrant youth. The domain is also concerned with measures that promote voluntary sector participation and remove the barriers affecting particular youth groups.

Priorities from the Available LIP Strategic Plans (27 plans):

Improving information provided to newcomer parents about their children's educational opportunities and experiences
A LIP priority is to improve parental engagement and awareness of immigrant children and youth's educational needs and experiences in order to improve educational outcomes and transitions within the education system and to work. Strategies to achieve this include outreach coordinators, translation to facilitate teacher communication, and information pamphlets for immigrant parents about the Ontario education system and their children's educational options.

Improving educational services for immigrant children and youth
A second LIP priority is to improve educational services for immigrant children and youth, particularly ESL courses. In addition to ESL programs, other needs and gaps that are mentioned in the LIP reports include promoting high school completion, providing health and sex education, delivering educational services to students with learning disabilities, and integrating work language instruction into ESL classes.

Social integration through sports, recreation, and other social activities conducted by mainstream organizations
After education, LIP reports highlight the importance of sports, recreation, and other social activities as a priority for newcomer children and youth. The majority of reports perceive social activities, as well as sports and recreation, as priorities linked to health, mental health, and social integration. LIPs would like to see more work done to increase the accessibility of such activities for newcomer children and youth through cost reductions, culturally sensitive programming, and a general improvement of mainstream sports and recreation programs, as well as other social activities (involving local organizations, such as local soccer leagues and YMCAs).

Social integration through sports, recreation, and other social activities specifically designed for newcomer children and youth
The LIPs also suggest that it is important to improve social, sport, and recreation programs specifically designed for newcomer youth and children to enhance their civic, economic, and social participation and acculturation. This priority focuses on strategies

and new programs that are designed specifically for newcomer youth and children (rather than alterations to mainstream sports and activities as described above).

Employment readiness
Some LIPs identified youth employment as a significant issue. Of particular importance were issues related to labour market readiness and the transition from school to the workplace.

Ratings by the LIPs (all 45 LIPs were surveyed; 24 provided ratings): 1 - 7 scale where 1 = not at all a priority and 7 = extremely high priority

Priority	Mean Rating 1-7 scale
1. Improving Information Provided to Newcomer Parents about their Children's Educational Opportunities and Experiences	4.67
2. Improving Educational Services for Immigrant Children and Youth	4.54
3. Social Integration through Sports, Recreation, and Other Social Activities Conducted by Mainstream Organizations	4.96
4. Social Integration through Sports, Recreation, and Other Social Activities Specifically Designed for Newcomer Children and Youth	4.17
5. Employment Readiness	4.13

Community Civic Resources and Initiatives Domain

The Community Civic Resources and Initiatives domain focuses on the policies and activities of municipal governments, civil society actors, and employer associations that contribute to the formation of welcoming communities. The domain is also interested in how federal and provincial policies support and interact with local institutions and promote innovation.

Priorities from the Available LIP Strategic Plans (27 plans):

Immigrant seniors
Emerging demographic and geographical realities have pushed the "seniors" lens to the forefront of the policy agenda. Seniors often lack awareness of services and events as a result of their lower rates of technological connectedness. In addition, weaker links with families and relative distance from service centres are additional factors that can lead to loneliness, isolation and abuse for seniors. These concerns emerge in LIP strategies, which outline numerous innovations for addressing senior needs, most commonly cited in relation to problems of senior isolation and poverty. Specific programs cited in LIP strategies relate to transportation and language supports, reducing barriers via grants, fee reductions and informational awareness, as well as opportunities for socialization and instilling a deeper sense of belonging to their community.

Immigrant women
Many of the LIP plans include mention of the particular needs of immigrant women – including language classes and social and cultural activities for immigrant women who are not working outside the home. Child care is another area often mentioned in terms of needed increases in affordable services. Better access to information about specific services for immigrant women is also mentioned. Another emerging area of interest is that of nutrition and the availability of culturally relevant affordable food for immigrant families. One new area of service needs relates to recent data that suggest that for recent immigrants, the former gap in educational attainment between men and women has now largely disappeared and yet salary gaps between immigrant women and Canadian-born women, and between immigrant men and immigrant women, have not lessened. This would suggest new service needs for highly educated immigrant women in order to attain suitable employment.

Public transportation
Various LIP Plans referenced the need for better and more accessible public transportation, and noted various strategies for addressing these objectives, including better needs assessment, fee supports (or reductions), service coordination, and advocacy across upper levels of government for improvements to services. There is a rising need to consider issues of accessibility as processes of gentrification continue to push lower-income residents, including large numbers of recent immigrant families, out

of city centres. Given the central role that public transportation plays in allowing access, the issue has emerged as a central social justice issue in many cities and communities.

Sport as a focus for celebration

A number of LIP plans underline the importance of fostering integrative exchanges and creating opportunities to celebrate culture and increasing community diversity, including newcomer contributions. To operationalize these ideas, many LIPs placed importance on how public space is used and, more particularly, on the need to create more inclusive public spaces in communities. LIP strategies also emphasized the importance of sports and recreation as a mechanism for social and cultural integration, as well as diversity and cultural awareness training. The potential for sports to serve as an integrative mechanism was noted most frequently in reference to youth wellbeing and integration. This said, celebrations around sport can encompass the full community and offer a mechanism for producing wider community support and awareness. The role of municipalities and civic institutions vary here from providing funding or space through partnerships and the direct provision of services.

Housing

Communities are increasingly concerned with housing matters as demographic and geographic changes intertwine to create various housing pressures, especially in city cores. Public housing projects have increasingly diverse populations and have responded to this by offering more information in multiple languages in order to reduce barriers to accessing information on the part of recent immigrant populations. Processes of gentrification and intensification have increased the need to support adequate and affordable housing choices near employment and services. Municipalities and civic institutions can play a central role in service coordination and information dissemination.

Ratings by the LIPs (all 45 LIPs were surveyed; 24 provided ratings): 1- 7 scale where 1 = not at all a priority and 7 = extremely high priority

Priority	Mean Rating 1-7 scale
1. Immigrant Seniors	4.46
2. Immigrant Women	4.75
3. Public Transportation	5.17
4. Sport as a Focus for Celebration	4.38
5. French Language Services *	3.38*

* The low rating accorded this priority suggested that it should be replaced. Housing Services were mentioned as an alternative priority by many of the LIPs and thus Housing Services was substituted for French Language Services.

Education and Education Policy Domain

The Education and Education Policy domain focuses on elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education. The domain is concerned with: assessing diversity policies that serve the needs of newcomer students and teachers in educational settings; examining newcomer students' educational experiences, aspirations and outcomes; understanding the post-secondary choices of immigrant and minority students; and tracking the educational and practice experiences of foreign-trained teachers.

Priorities from the Available LIP Strategic Plans (27 plans):

English language training
Improving second language learning services were a top education priority amongst the LIPs. Specifically, the LIPs identified as an educational priority the provision of services that enhance language proficiency by tailoring programming for adults to meet employment and daily living needs, They also identified as a priority the tailoring of programming for students to provide language proficiency in common English and academic English. Removing barriers and diversifying course options for English language opportunities could be managed through partnerships with community agencies. Common barriers identified within the LIP reports included providing childcare for caregivers, diversifying class scheduling, and providing family-based and informal class settings.

Fostering cultural competence in schools
Educational practices that foster high levels of cultural competence were identified as a top priority by many of the LIPs. Specifically, a pressing need identified by the LIPs was changing the education system through curriculum and policy initiatives to promote cultural competence at all levels of schooling (elementary, secondary, and postsecondary). Proposals for implementation included developing programs or initiatives that recognize the value of immigrant skills; incorporating diversity, multiculturalism, human rights, and inclusion in the curriculum; implementing education policies related to rights and inclusion; and hiring more minority teachers. It was stressed that students need educational opportunities to develop and refine cultural competence skills and that schools need to create supportive environments for all students in order to enhance their cultural competence.

Improving educational supports and coordination of educational services for newcomers
Many of the LIP reports identified the need for more coordination of educational supports and programming for immigrant and racialized youth. Specifically, they identified the need to provide newcomer families with more information about the education system and available programming, as well as removing systemic barriers to the students' academic and social success. Suggestions to address these needs included creating peer-support mentorship programs; introducing outreach initiatives to provide

families with more information about educational options; and implementing culturally-sensitive assessments.

Improving teacher training
Some of the LIPs indicated that additional teacher training was a priority. These LIPs asserted that teachers need more professional development on understanding multiculturalism within the classroom and on their role in promoting cultural competency. The various LIP reports stressed the importance of addressing teacher training at multiple levels by providing diversity training for teacher candidates, in-service diversity training for teachers, and improved educational and practice experiences for foreign-trained and racialized teacher candidates. Strategies proposed for this priority focused on developing partnerships with school boards in order to develop and implement specialized in-service training for teachers; integrating mandatory diversity training into Faculties of Education for teacher candidates; partnering with school boards and Faculties of Education to provide enhanced training opportunities for foreign-trained and racialized teacher candidates; and making diversity training a mandatory requirement teachers must possess or fulfill when hired.

French language training
The provision of services that enhance French language proficiency was identified as a priority by several LIPs. This priority tended to be expressed as a need for adult education that would involve tailored programming to meet employment and daily living needs. Within this priority area, it was suggested that improving access to these services would require enhancing availability as well as the harmonizing of federal and provincial programming to provide a complementary and mutually supportive system of programming. Increasing newcomer awareness of language training options and ensuring agencies are bilingual were identified as additional needs.

Ratings by the LIPs (all 45 LIPs were surveyed; 24 provided ratings): 1- 7 scale where 1 = not at all a priority and 7 = extremely high priority

Priority	Mean Rating 1-7 scale
1. English Language Training	5.91
2. Fostering Cultural Competence in Schools	4.87
3. Improving Educational Supports and Coordination of Educational Services for Newcomers	4.95
4. Improving Teacher Training	4.35
5. French Language Training	2.96

Health and Healthcare Domain

The Health and Healthcare domain focuses on understanding how immigrant and minority health needs, including mental health and specific needs such as reproductive health, are met. The domain is interested in barriers to care and in innovative collaborative approaches between the formal health sector and immigrant serving agencies. The domain is also concerned with integrating internationally educated health professionals into the Canadian health system.

Priorities from the Available LIP Strategic Plans (27 plans):

Reducing the cost of health care
Despite the general availability of OHIP coverage and 'free' healthcare, the cost of health-related services is often a barrier. For example, the three month waiting period for OHIP coverage, coverage issues with the Interim Federal Health Program (for refugees), and the high cost of personal health insurance create barriers to care. In addition, basic dental and eye care is not covered by OHIP. Given cost issues, LIPs called for ways to reduce these costs by i) having settlement workers, health care, and social workers identify health providers or clinics willing to provide pro bono (or reduced-cost) urgent care and emergency services to newcomers on a case-by-case basis during the three month waiting period for OHIP; and (ii) eliminating the 3 month waiting period of OHIP.

Improving access to care by removing systemic barriers to care, including language barriers, and promoting cultural competency
A lack of either English or French language ability, along with cultural competency issues, were frequently cited as barriers to care. LIPs identified a need to promote the understanding of cultural differences and to enhance the ability and cultural competency of all healthcare providers to respond to the diverse health needs of newcomers through outreach/training. In addition, interpreters with medical training should be available in hospitals, health care clinics and social service agencies. LIPs also called for increased access to health care for women and refugee claimants along with culturally sensitive information in various languages and the use of simplified language in informational brochures.

Improving mental health services
LIPs identified a critical need for improved access by newcomers to a range of mental health services. Newcomers experience problems as a result of the stress of moving to a new country, isolation, and trauma associated with past torture and abuse, especially refugees. Services could be improved by (i) educating mental health service providers about newcomer needs; (ii) improving collaboration between settlement and ethnocultural organizations and health care providers in order to help refugees access mental health and ancillary health services; (iii) increasing the availability of short-term crisis counselling, long-term mental health supports and programming to promote the

mental health of newcomers; (iv) building the capacity of settlement workers to provide information and referrals for their clients; (v) partnering with residents and grassroots groups to develop culturally competent and community-based orientation and information material on mental and emotional health; and (vi) providing funding to increase the number of trauma counselors trained to work with survivors of war-related trauma.

Conducting research on the makeup of immigrant populations in each municipality (size, origins, religious affiliation, needs) and the efficacy of programs geared to immigrants
Many LIPs identified the importance of research to better understand the demographics and health of local immigrant populations and how these relate to health care needs. The LIPs were particularly concerns with sub-groups that experience greater health risks, such as refugees, as well as sub-groups that intersect, for example, immigrant seniors with low-income. Further research would enable communities to understand the ways in which multiple factors (e.g. senior and low income and immigrant) work together to influence health, and what types of interventions and delivery mechanisms might prove effective.

Enhancing health literacy among immigrants and refugees in regard to primary care, disease prevention, health protection (e.g. vaccination and immunization) and promotion (e.g. exercise, healthy food), and navigation of the health care system
LIPS identified the communication of information about the organization of the health system and how different services can be accessed as a priority. Improved health literacy will require both passive (written material) and active (outreach) communications, adapted to the understanding of clients.

Ratings by the LIPs (all 45 LIPs were surveyed; 24 provided ratings): 1- 7 scale where 1 = not at all a priority and 7 = extremely high priority

Priority	Mean Rating 1-7 scale
1. Reducing the Cost of Health Care	5.00
2. Improving Access to Care by Removing Systemic Barriers to Care, including Language Barriers, and Promoting Cultural Competency	5.35
3. Improving Mental Health Services	5.61
4. Conducting Research on the Makeup of Immigrant Populations in Each Municipality (Size, Origins, Religious Affiliation, Needs) and the Efficacy of Programs Geared to Immigrants	4.91

5. Enhancing Health Literacy among Immigrants and Refugees in regard to Primary Care, Disease Prevention, Health Protection (e.g. Vaccination and Immunization) and Promotion (e.g. Exercise, Healthy Food), and Navigation of the Health Care System	5.30

Optimizing Social, Cultural, and Political Inclusion Domain

The Optimizing Social, Cultural, and Political Inclusion domain is concerned with factors that affect the ability of Ontario cities to welcome and retain immigrants and ethnic/religious minorities. The domain is also concerned with developing strategies to promote a positive reception for these groups. Our goal is to identify policies and programs that promote a sense of belonging and attachment for immigrants and minorities, and that facilitate the mutual adaptation of immigrants, minorities, and dominant majorities.

Priorities from the Available LIP Strategic Plans (27 plans):

Reducing racism, xenophobia and lack of cultural understanding in the host community
The LIPs identified racism, xenophobia and a lack of cultural understanding in the host communities and institutions as strong priorities. They note the need for anti-racism campaigns, programs to increase cultural awareness, and diversity training. Recent immigrants frequently view racism and a lack of cultural understanding as serious problems that limit their integration into the workforce and community. Addressing the broader community's weak appreciation of new cultures and cultural diversity, and negative media coverage of immigrants and refugees, were identified as particular priorities.

Increasing newcomer civic involvement
The LIPs identified increasing newcomer political and civic involvement as a priority. They noted a dearth of newcomers in leadership roles in community organizations and newcomers' lack of awareness of volunteer and leadership positions in the community. Civic involvement is essential to building social, cultural and political inclusion for newcomers. Volunteering has community and individual-level benefits, building trust in the community and a more welcoming environment. It also bestows personal benefits for volunteers in terms of recognition, improved life satisfaction and health outcomes, and lower levels of stress.

Improving newcomer understanding of Canadian cultural norms
The LIPs identified the need to improve newcomers' understanding of Canadian cultural norms as a priority. Newcomers undergo the stressful experience of having to learn new norms, practices and accepted behavior in the host community. For example, LIP plans reported on the difficulties faced by recent immigrants and refugees in learning about Canadian employment practices, entertainment, cultural and spiritual activities, and food preferences. Recent immigrants and refugees also reported that they experience difficulties in making social connections within their communities because they are unaware of the interests or activities they can discuss with others in their communities.

Targeting social and cultural programs for immigrant youth

The LIPs identified the need to address the unique social and cultural challenges facing immigrant youth as a priority, particularly in the area of social exclusion. Actions to address youth social exclusion were deemed important because exclusion at a young age has been linked to increased drug use and gang involvement. Youth also deal with the stresses of growing up, and being 'different' compounds the stress that youth experience as recent immigrants.

Improving access to and content of information about community services and events

The LIPs referred to the tendency for recent immigrants to learn about community activities and programs primarily through informal communication channels comprising friends, family and neighbours. This reliance on informal networks for advice and information may not be optimal because at times such connections may not be available and the information received may be unreliable and outdated. Thus, developing strategies for more effectively disseminating information about community services and events was identified as a priority.

Ratings by the LIPs (all 45 LIPs were surveyed; 24 provided ratings): 1- 7 scale where 1 = not at all a priority and 7 = extremely high priority

Priority	Mean Rating 1-7 scale
1. Reducing Racism, Xenophobia and Lack of Cultural Understanding in the Host Community	5.64
2. Increasing Newcomer Civic Involvement	5.82
3. Improving Newcomer Understanding of Canadian Cultural Norms	5.64
4. Targeting Social and Cultural Programs for Immigrant Youth	4.55
5. Improving Access to and Content of Information about Community Services and Events	6.32

Workplace Integration Domain

The Workplace Integration domain focuses on policies and activities that promote inclusive and productive work settings for immigrants and minorities. Key interests include workplace inclusion; the acceptance of foreign credentials, education and experience; the role of social networks; language training methods; investment in immigrant talent management and career development; employer attitudes and information needs in regard to newcomers; and self-employment strategies.

Priorities from the Available LIP Strategic Plans (27 plans):

Communication training
The LIPs identified the need for improved communication skills in the workplace as an essential means to enhance employment outcomes. Communication skills were seen as transcending language skills alone. Potential remedies identified by the LIPs included programs aimed at creating intercultural communication skills among immigrants and employers. There are a variety of programs designed to deliver workplace communication training, including online programs and informal courses in recreational or social environments that offer broader socialization opportunities.

Recruitment and bridging programs
LIPs identified the need for increased bridging strategies, including mentoring, co-op programs, volunteering, and internships, as critical for enhanced immigrant recruitment and enhanced access to skilled work. Mentoring and other programs were seen as providing immigrants with access to social networks and workplace experience, including specific workplace practices and specialized language skills. The LIPs also felt that there was a reciprocal need for employers to improve their recruitment and hiring strategies in order to access immigrant networks and the 'hidden' talent they contain. The failure to do so was seen as partially related to a lack of information on the part of employers regarding how to access immigrant talent as well as a staid employer 'culture' in regard to hiring practices.

Recognition of international credentials, education, and competencies
The LIPs identified the need to enhance employer recognition of credentials and experience acquired abroad as a key priority in both regulated and non-regulated professions. Non-recognition of credentials results in immigrant unemployment and underemployment; at the same time, employers incur productivity losses and turnover costs, as well as shortages, in high skilled sectors. LIPs identified the need to equip employers with reliable systems for assessing international credentials and recognizing prior learning and experience. This included measures to increase awareness of cultural barriers to the recognition of international credentials and experience.

More receptive organizational culture

The need by employers for assistance in adapting workplace practices to create a more receptive and welcoming workplace environment that is more conducive to identifying and eliciting immigrant talent was identified by the LIPs as a priority. This included talent management practices that are responsive to workforce diversity and different norms pertaining to workplace behavior involving supervisors and collaborative work situations. Employer benefits from creating a more welcoming environment were judged to include higher productivity and reduced employee turnover.

Social capital and workplace networks

The LIPs identified measures that assist newcomers to better understand workplace culture, to 'fit in' more easily and to gain access to social networks both inside and outside the workplace as a priority. Being a member of rich, well-functioning on-the-job networks ensures recognition, increases the likelihood of being considered for training and promotions and contributes to enhanced employee motivation. Workplace networks are difficult for immigrant employees to access because they are not fully conversant with Canadian norms and interests. A variety of programs and broader interventions, including language instruction, recreational measures, cultural training and forms of mentoring that can be used to help establish workplace networks.

Ratings by the LIPs (all 45 LIPs were surveyed; 24 provided ratings): 1- 7 scale where 1 = not at all a priority and 7 = extremely high priority

Priority	Mean Rating 1-7 scale
1. Communication Training	5.86
2. Recruitment and Bridging Programs	6.18
3. Recognition of International Credentials, Education, and Competencies	6.14
4. More Receptive Organizational Culture	6.14
5. Social Capital and Workplace Networks	5.95

Attraction and Recruitment of Workers and Entrepreneurs: Promising Practices

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WELCOMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

LES COMMUNAUTÉS ACCUEILLANTES
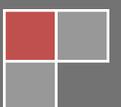
1. Newcomer Attraction: Business Immigration Attraction Plan

Description and Relevance of the Program

Until recently, Ontario received the majority of new immigrants arriving in Canada, and the country's three major centres, Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, attracted more than 70% of these new immigrants. However, the distribution of new immigrant populations in Canada is changing, and other cities and regions desire a greater share of Canada's newcomer population. Some suggest that the absorptive capabilities of these three cities are at their limit. In May 2001, Citizenship and Immigration Canada published a study titled "Towards a more balanced geographic distribution of immigrants". It details trends in immigrant settlement and encourages northern cities to implement strategies and policies that will attract newcomers to their smaller, rural regions, to help alleviate labour shortages, and reverse the trends of urbanization and depopulation.

To address the need for immigrants in Northern Ontario, the Business Immigration Attraction Plan was developed by Ontario's North Economic Development Corporation (ONEDC). The primary purpose was to stimulate business investment in Northern Ontario. For instance, one program in particular is essentially a confidential matching tool that will introduce newcomers considering investing in Canadian businesses directly with businesses for sale in Northern Ontario (http://www.investnorthernontario.com/index.aspx?l=0,1,6,83).

There is support for this and similar programs that encourage rural immigration and northern development, e.g. Ontario's Northern Prosperity Plan with the GO NORTH initiative. In the broader context, the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement is also providing an additional $920 million for the support of settlement services, with first priority to northern and smaller centres. (http://www.cityofnorthbay.ca/common/pdf/ExecutiveSummaryNewcomerSurvey.pdf)

Description of Goals and Information Used to Promote It

The main goal of this program is to introduce immigrants into the northern regions of the province to help contribute to the local economy, increase business and job retention, and stimulate the small business sector. The pilot project, initiated in 2010 as a result of a partnership between the City of North Bay and the City of Greater Sudbury, is already generating a great deal of interest from local businesses, realtors, business brokers and newcomers and has since been expanded to include the cities of Sault Ste. Marie and Timmins (http://www.investnorthernontario.com/Userfiles/file/BIAP_brochure_web.pdf).

Specific Targets and Outcomes Identified, as well as Time Frame Specified

The matching process begins when either a qualified business immigrant or a representative who is selling a business contacts the Program Lead to create a profile in a confidential database. The Program Lead will assist an entrepreneurial immigrant by performing a search of the database using their investment criteria and verify business information where possible. The Program Lead will also assist people selling businesses by loading information about their businesses into a secure database. If a match is identified, the Program Lead will contact the representative selling the business and confirm their interest in the particular investor. If there is an interest in the investor, the Program Lead coordinates a meeting between both parties.

Specific program steps and time frames are variable and depend upon the business sector, size, health, as well as the cooperation of both parties, especially in terms of meeting availability. However, since business immigrants are usually required to make an in-country investment within a 3 to 6 month period, this is the usual timeframe in which most contracts are established. International negotiations are usually more time-consuming because the immigrant must adapt to a new context and there may be scheduling difficulties. As a result, expect these investment matches to take longer to finalize.

Analysis of Key Features of the Practice

Through the confidential matching process, business immigrants who are currently residing in the Greater Toronto Area will be matched with Northern businesses based on investment criteria. As well, individuals not yet residing in Canada can take full advantage of the same program coordination. When potential matches are found, the program coordinator and local economic development offices will work with the businesses and investors to facilitate meetings between the parties involved.

Features of Success, Innovation, and Uniqueness

This program has been designed to collect information about an immigrants' investment criteria such as price, sector, location, and requirements and match it with suitable businesses for sale. This is not only advantageous to immigrants interested in investing and/or relocating to Canada, but also serves as a private resource for business owners who prefer to select potential buyers or investors outside of a public context.

Business owners often experience challenges when marketing a business for sale and will face even greater challenges if they are unsuccessful in selling the business, including closure, unemployment and/or debt. With very few resources available to aid in this area, international buyers are often seen as too difficult to reach, and the process needed to complete the transaction

with them is seen as complicated and tedious. This program is meant to make these opportunities more accessible and possible.

The majority of newcomer participants in this program are highly educated with at least 60% arriving in Canada with post-secondary education, and a genuine desire to contribute to the growth and success of the area.

2. Branding Strategies: Community Cup Program

Description and Relevance of the Program

Place Branding strategies have been implemented by countries for various purposes, including tourism, investment, and immigration. However, developing brand images at the municipal level may have less attention. While branding activities can involve traditional advertising campaigns, cities have implemented strategies that involve mega-events or hallmark events. A practical means for smaller communities to develop a place brand image may involve events that are welcoming to newcomers.

For instance, the Community Cup Program in Ottawa is a year-round series of activities and initiatives based on sports and volunteerism as a way to support integration within the community. Typical programs created to attract and retain newcomers to Canada have been established to emphasize each group's cultural identity or preferences. This program focuses on shared identity as part of the community, while maintaining a person's own cultural pride. In other words, it is more about fitting in, than making them stand out. Rather than focusing on a single event or one that is cultural-centric (potentially segregating the immigrant population), the program encourages any and all minority groups to participate as part of the whole community, contributing to a brand image that is welcoming and inclusive (http://www.communitycup.ca/).

Description of Goals and Information Used to Promote It

The Community Cup Questionnaire is used to promote the event, as well as to promote the community's interest and acceptance of such a unique initiative. There are facts about the program presented at the beginning of the document to ensure that interested individuals are aware of the program benefits; of using sports and other recreational activities to welcome, include, and build relationships with new immigrants.

Specific Targets and Outcomes Identified, as well as Time Frame Specified

In a calendar year, it is possible to start to plan for Corporate Challenges, new and unique sports, workshops, networking events, volunteer engagement initiatives as early as January or February. This should allow enough time to hold the events some time during the summer.

Analysis of Key Features of the Practice

Features of Success

The Community Cup is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and organized by the Catholic Immigration Centre Ottawa.

Over the years, the Community Cup has grown in scale and attendance. It includes live music and entertainment, an international food bazaar, cultural craft workshops, musical and artistic language workshops, kids' zone, community tent, and seniors sharing circles. This approach has potential to engage newcomer entrepreneurs as a specific target market, if they are not already part of families.

Eric Eh Gay, one of the newcomer participants in the program reflects as follows: "It has helped me a lot as it has given me the chance to communicate with other people, to meet with and listen to community leaders speak, and to build relationships with volunteers as well as players. Soccer is a fun game, a relationship game". (http://www.communitycup.ca/cultural-understanding).

Features of Innovation/Uniqueness

One of the unique features of the Community Cup program is the active engagement of the commercial sector through frequent corporate challenges. Engaging businesses involves an important outreach mechanism to newcomer entrepreneurs.

3. Employment & Business Information Services: Internationally Trained Workers Partnership

Description and Relevance of the Program

Newcomers face numerous barriers that may result in unemployment for long periods of time. Consequently, they may rely more heavily on support programs during the first few years in Canada. This situation costs the Canadian economy an estimated $5.9 billion annually according to the City of Ottawa and stated in its 20/20 growth management plan. City and municipal governments absorb a significant portion of these costs (http://www.itwp.ca/site/files/itw_brochure_eng.pdf). To address this concern, the Internationally Trained Workers Partnership (ITWP) was formed in 2002 to develop a locally coordinated approach to integrate immigrants more effectively into Ottawa's labour market (http://www.itwp.ca/site/about_01.html).

Description of Goals and Information Used to Promote It

The ITWP partnership brings together employers, business associations, labour, governments, educational institutions and immigrant serving organizations from across Ottawa who work collaboratively to:

- foster solutions to barriers which inhibit hiring immigrants,
- increase the number of employers who hire and recruit immigrants in Ottawa; and
- increase the number of immigrants hired into skills appropriate professions.

In 2006, ITWP received three years of funding from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to develop an employer engagement strategy. The project, called Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO), recognizes that employers play a key role in developing solutions for unemployment among newcomers, and establishes a structure for employer leadership (http://www.hireimmigrantsottawa.ca/English/About%20Us/initiative.php).

Specific Targets and Outcomes Identified, as well as Time Frame Specified

Evaluation within ITWP is focused on the review of its specific projects. Currently, HIO is its first and only project. Efforts are focused on the objective to increase the capacity of employers in the Ottawa region to effectively integrate skilled immigrants into the local workforce. Deliverables were established at the outset as part of the funding agreement, including the goal of having 25 immigrants hired in the public sector and 30 immigrants hired in the private sector by 2009. Information has not yet been published on whether these goals have been attained.

Analysis of Key Features of the Practice

Members

- City of Ottawa
- Ottawa Chamber of Commerce
- Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation, OCRI
- Le Regroupement des gens d'affaires de la Capitale nationale (RGA)
- LASI World Skills (8 Local Agencies Serving Immigrants)
- United Way/Centraide Ottawa

Steering Committee

ITWP is governed by a Steering Committee, whose purpose is to develop a city wide framework for the integration of skilled immigrants into the labour market; provide strategic advice and guidance in support of project development and communications planning; and identify

opportunities for alignment. It is comprised of representatives of each of the 6 founding partners, along with other community stakeholders.

Advisory Committee

ITWP is guided by an Advisory Committee. This committee provides the partnership with advice, guidance and information related to local labour market issues and trends in the Ottawa area. It contains representation from 3 orders of government, policy, labour, educational institutions, and immigrant service delivery organizations.

Features of Success

ITWP is managed as a "Community Wide Initiative" on a part-time basis by the community services department of the United Way/Centraide Ottawa's (UW/CO). The organization's accounting department administers project funds for ITWP and also provides HR support.

Features of Innovation and Uniqueness

Modeled on similar initiatives by the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC), ITWP participants expressed a preference to keep their Council small and create a structure distinct from the existing Steering and Advisory Committees. As a result, employers and executives were recommended to form the Council. The Council is augmented by management personnel and staff who work in day-to-day operational hiring practices, and who are members of multi-stakeholder working groups.

4. Mentoring/Internship Programs: Professional Mentorship Program

Description and Relevance of the Program

The Kingston Immigration Partnership (KIP) has partnered with the KEYS Community Employment Centre to provide newcomers with an innovative professional mentorship program. The central aim of this program is to establish a connection between new immigrants and professionals who are firmly established in Kingston's local labour market. The benefits of career centred mentorship programs have long been appraised by researchers. Studies have continuously highlighted the positive role of bridging and mentorship programs in the integration of immigrants into the Canadian labour market. While many research projects emphasize the role of networking with individuals outside of one's own ethnocultural community, Ngo and Este's (2006) research indicates that "...professional contacts [facilitate]...access to training and employment opportunities..." while simultaneously "...[connecting] them to volunteer or mentorship programs" (Ngo & Este, 2006, pp. 42; see also Warman, 2007; Xue, 2007).

Description

The Professional Mentorship Program (PMP) offers mentoring opportunities that give "...established professionals [a chance to] share their expertise and experiences one-on-one with an immigrant professional in the same field for 24 hours over a 4 month period. Mentoring includes face to face meetings, phone calls and emails..." (KEYS Community Employment Centre, 2011).

KIP and KEYS Community Employment Centre officially launched the PMP along with the Connector Program at the end of June, 2011. While the former emphasizes one-on-one mentoring and support, the later allows "...[established] professionals with deep business and professional contacts to help expand the professional networks of immigrants by...referring him/her to 3 additional contacts from their own network" (KEYS Community Employment Centre, 2011).

Mentoring pairs participating in the PMP and the Connector Program are supported by an assigned Mentor Coach. Mentor Coaches are further supervised by the Mentoring Partnership Coordinator at the KEYS Community Employment Centre. Together, the mentoring pairs, their coaches, and the Program Coordinator develop goals for the partnership and sign partnership agreements. The Program Coordinator also conducts monthly checks on both the mentors and the person being mentored. This is done to ensure that a healthy partnership has developed.

The final component of the PMP and the Connector Program involves the hosting of Career Speed Networking Sessions by the KEYS Community Employment Centre. The Career Speed Networking Sessions allow local employers an opportunity to network with newcomers by sharing information in a two hour session. This event gives "... newcomers exposure to the Kingston job market, provides occupation-specific information about Canadian workplace [and] job search culture" (KEYS Community Employment Centre, 2011).

Identification of Goals and Core Objectives

Although the Kingston's Professional Mentorship Program is a multipurpose program, its central aim is to facilitate the smooth transition of skilled immigrants into desired professions in Kingston. While the literature lists a large array of program goals, there are three core objectives of the PMP relevant to the issue of attraction and recruitment. These core objectives include:
   a) the introduction of new immigrants to professional networks
   b) provision of guided support as well as insight about the labour market to newcomers
   c) the facilitated transition of skilled newcomers into desired occupations and career fields

Targets and Time Frames

The PMP has been designed to facilitate a four-month mentorship process between the mentor and the person being mentored. The program expects to achieve all three of the aforementioned core objectives within this time period.

Meanwhile, the affiliated Connector Program and the Career Speed Networking Sessions have been developed to provide additional industry contacts and information to immigrant professionals during short events. The advertised program information suggests that these two initiatives take on the form of independent events that are held periodically. Furthermore, the former requires a longstanding commitment from the mentors, while the later requires a single visit from other Canadian professionals.

It is important to note that the PMP and the Connector Program, including the Career Speed Networking Sessions, provide services for newcomer professionals on a continuous basis. While these programs are subject to funding, Kingston expects a continuous intake of skilled immigrants who will require professional mentoring support and assistance.

Outcomes and Updates

As reported by the Program Coordinator of the PMP, four mentor and mentee pairs have completed the four-month program since its launch in June, 2011. The PMP team has provided the following information about the program outcomes:
- 16 mentoring pairs have been matched since June of 2011
- 13 skilled newcomers and career professional volunteers have been matched through the Connector Program
- 2 Career Speed Networking Events have been hosted;
    - The first event had a total of 45 participants with 27 skilled immigrant professionals and 18 employers;
    - The second event had a total of 92 participants which included 37 skilled immigrant professionals, 35 employers, and 20 members of the KIP Council and KIP Employer Working Group.

In the last 8 months, the PMP team has continued to establish a smooth model for program delivery. Various aspects of the current program continue to be revised. However, the core principles of the PMP are deemed very useful by clients and those administering the program. Staff administering the program are certain that it will create pathways which lead newcomers to desired occupations.

Analysis of Key Features of the Practice

Contributing Factors to the Program's Success

Anecdotal evidence from clients and mentors as well as staff administering this program suggests that the PMP is showing signs of success. The following '*Outcomes and Updates*' section outlines specific program accomplishments from the last eight months.

While reviewing the program structure, program tools, models of delivery, aims and objectives, and clients' needs, it became evident that there were three significant factors that have contributed to the program's success.

1. Career Specific Matching

Kingston's PMP ensures that the professional profiles of the skilled immigrant clients are made according to their educational background and the occupational experience from their countries of origin. After determining the newcomers' desired occupations, program staff seek volunteers who currently work in these professions. As a result, the mentoring pairs are matched on the basis of both education and professional aspirations.

This is an important element of the program that allows the mentors and mentees to communicate and refer to technical knowledge from their specific field. It also allows the pairs to inform one another of the differences and similarities between practicing in Canada or in another country. Finally, this factor ensures that the mentee is prepared for future steps (such as upgrading credentials or writing professional exams) which she/he may need to take to transition into their fields here in Canada.

2. One-on-one Partnerships

While there are many employment centres and job search programs across Ontario, Kingston's PMP is unique given the one-on-one partnership between mentor and mentee. Other employment programs which cater to newcomers tend to have a classroom structure where skilled immigrants are provided with information from a single instructor or employment counsellor. This does not allow the clients to identify their needs which are specific to their fields of occupation. The one-on-one partnership also allows the mentor and mentee to have a more balanced relationship. Furthermore, such an arrangement ensures a more equal distribution of influence. Kingston's PMP program allows both the mentor and mentee to gain skills and grow from this process.

3.   Group Setting Networking

While the one-on-one mentoring allows skilled newcomers to interact with a professional from the same field, the group networking opportunities allow employers from the community to inform skilled immigrants about employment opportunities. The mentees also have a chance to inquire about the interview process as well as discuss whether their skills are transferable to the same fields in Canada. This group setting also allows employers to explain what they look for in applicants as well as their expectations during interviews. The group setting is beneficial to all participating parties and they contribute to the overall success of the program.

Unique Features

Many unique features have contributed to the PMP's success in Kingston. While discussing the program's successful features, administering staff confirmed that the principal source of funding for this program was Citizenship and Immigration Canada. The KEYS Community Employment Centre had very little funding for the PMP program. Nonetheless, the organization was able to secure funding for the next two years. While KEYS Community Employment Centre's PMP staff are content that the program is being funded for two more years, they stressed that the key to the program's success lies in the availability of the three options. Together, the professional mentorship program, the connector program and the career speed networking sessions are able to offer a wide variety of opportunities for both mentors and the mentees. Furthermore, the combination of the three programs provides alternatives for newcomer professionals who are at different stages of their job search. As a result, the client groups have included both men and women who are recent arrivals as well as those who have been living in Kingston for a couple years.

Analysis of Purported Evidence Pertaining to the Success of the Practice

Staff members who administer this program shared insightful information as well as anecdotal feedback from program users. They reported that this mentorship opportunity enabled newcomer professionals to overcome the environmental barriers they faced in the community. Staff further explained that the difficulties associated with securing jobs in Kingston and the existence of hidden networks made it difficult to secure professional employment. As a result, the PMP was able to address this need by introducing job seekers to the right people.

Secondly, the staff were determined to highlight that both mentors and mentees gained various skills from this experience. While the skills gained by the mentees may be clear, the skills gained by mentors included, but were not limited to:
- gaining cross cultural communication skills
- networking with newcomer professionals with diverse skill sets and experiences

- accessing information about best business practices from other countries
- partaking in community development work by volunteering their time and efforts

Evaluation Practices

The Professional Mentorship Program's staff coordinator has provided this research team with the tools used to evaluate the program. These tools include, but are not limited to, quantitative measures as well as qualitative measures. The quantitative measures reflect the usability of the program. Such measures include:

- the number of participants who accessed the program
- the number of participants who completed the program
- the number of participants who completed the program and gained professional employment upon finishing
- the number of newcomer communities who have learned about the program through various outreach initiatives

In addition to the quantitative measures, the program administrators have also worked hard to develop qualitative measures of success. These evaluations are carried out at the beginning of the program, at the midpoint as well as upon completion of the program. Both mentors and mentees provide feedback and suggestions via confidential evaluations.

Internal and External Contributors of Success

Program staff have generously shared their opinions on both the internal and external factors that have contributed to the program's success. The internal mechanisms refer to organizational factors such as organizational structure and capacity. In the case of Kingston, the KEYS Community Employment Centre has an entire immigrant services team devoted to administering numerous employment related services within one organizational hub. Upon completing an intake, employment advisors refer clients to one or more programs. As a result, participants will not only benefit from the PMP but a widespread array of complimentary services.

Mentoring Program Analysis

Ongoing Need

Current research stresses the importance of bridging programs in facilitating the entry of skilled newcomers into professional occupations (Matthews et. al, 2009; see also Warman, 2007; Xue, 2007). Researchers have also identified severe earning gaps and poor labour market outcomes of

skilled immigrants compared to Canadian born individuals (Ferrer & Riddell, 2008; Wald & Fang, 2008; Oreopoulos, 2009; Girard et al., 2010). As such, KIP and the KEYS Community Employment Centre have deemed the PMP and its affiliated programs as vital for the successful integration and introduction of newcomer professionals into Kingston's local labour market. The anecdotal evidence from program users and staff as well as the qualitative and quantitative evaluations indicate that the program is indeed successful in Kingston.

Scalability

While there is evidence that this practice has been successful in Kingston, it is also a practice that is scalable. In fact, the Kingston program is a prime example of the way in which Professional Mentorship Programs can begin in medium to small sized communities in Ontario. Staff administering the program shared that most, if not all, of their program materials were provided by the ALLIES and Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC). With over 6,000 matches, Toronto's professional mentorship initiatives had been highly successful. Furthermore, in Toronto, the program helped a high proportion of those who participated transition successfully into desired occupations. While the program has been implemented using the Toronto example, the program structure and foundation have been altered to better meet the needs of newcomers in Kingston. Kingston's program highlights the importance of one-on-one mentoring as well as group based networking.

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5. Language Instruction for Newcomers: Thunder Bay's Language Instruction for Newcomers in Canada

Description and Relevance of the Program

The Thunder Bay Multicultural Association along with the North Superior Workforce Planning Board form this community's local immigration partnership which focuses on creating a 'sustainable economic framework' (TBCISP, (2012), pp. 3). As such, Thunder Bay's Community Immigration Strategic Plan, 2012, employs strategies that work towards "...enhancing cultural competency [and] working together to foster a welcoming community" (TBCISP, (2012), pp. 1). The objectives are to attract immigrants, ensure that skilled newcomers are able to transition into the labour market, and work towards building an inclusive community.

In identifying elements and characteristics of an inclusive community, this LIP emphasized the role of local language instruction programs in providing one of the most important services to immigrants. The 2006 census indicates that approximately 420 people living in Thunder Bay, which included 285 women and 130 men, did not speak English nor French (Census, 2006). Between 2001 and 2006 Thunder Bay received 660 immigrants and 300 non-permanent residents (Census, 2006). As a result, language instruction programs, specifically for Permanent Residents and Convention Refugees, was and continues to be a vital resource, necessary for their successful settlement and integration in Canada.

Description

The Language Instruction for Newcomers in Canada (hereafter referred to as LINC) program is a federally funded program which provides language instruction for Permanent Residents and Convention Refugees free of charge. In referring to Convention Refugees it is important to clarify that these are refugees who have already undergone the refugee determination process, either abroad or in Canada, and are waiting for their Permanent Resident status. The Thunder

Bay Multicultural Association offers other programs for those who are not eligible for LINC. Newcomers are required to provide proof of immigration status during the LINC assessment.

Students accessing the LINC must be 18 years of age and older. The Thunder Bay Multicultural Association offers both full time and part time classes to ensure that programs are accessible to the largest number of clients possible. This organization provides an assessment service that determines the newcomer's current level of English in areas of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Following the assessment, students are placed in LINC levels between 1-5 as well as LINC 6 and 7 which is a requirement for study and work. The assessment process takes between 2 to 3 hours to complete.

The Thunder Bay Multicultural Association offers full time, part time and home study options for students. Families are also encouraged to take advantage of child-care, available free of charge, for children aged between 6 months and 5 years. The program is also accessible to newcomers through the home study option. This option ensures that those individuals or families who are unable to attend the classroom setting are still able to learn the language. In order to qualify for the home study program, the program user may have:
- health (mental or physical) barriers preventing class attendance
- employment scheduling commitments
- lack of child care services in the specific LINC site
- children who are younger than 6 months or older than 5 years of age
- unavailability of in class programs in a region
- unavailability of transportation to classroom programs in the region

The home study program takes advantage of multimedia such as computer software, books and CD's to teach a customized version of the courses. The benefits of this practice will be explored later in the report.

Identification of Goals and Core Objectives

The following list provides an overview of LINC's goals. While this list may not be comprehensive, it does highlight the core objectives of this program and the benefits of attending this language instruction program.

- Learn to communicate effectively with peers and those living in your community
- Learn to read and write in English
- Have an opportunity to make new friends, network and interact with others in a social setting
- Learn about other programs and services available to you and your family
- Learn about the Canadian culture

- Learn about life in Canada
- Learn effectively in small classes where the instructor is able to spend more time addressing your learning needs
- Participate in field trips to interesting places in Thunder Bay
- Learn how to use a computer with the help of an instructor
- Participate in all of these activities while your child is safely taken care of

Targets and Time Frames

The LINC is made available for all Permanent Residents and Convention Refugees on an ongoing basis. Staff from the Thunder Bay Multicultural Association reported that the LINC centre began administering this program in 2005. From 2005 to 2012, the centre reported approximately 50 students on an ongoing basis. Staff also verified that since the program is continuously available, students are able to begin and complete the program at any given time. In other words, entry into the program is contingent upon accessing or requesting language support. Staff are confident that program participation will increase as more newcomers choose Thunder Bay as their home.

Outcomes and Updates

Thunder Bay Multicultural Association's LINC program continues to enable the participation of newcomers into the social life of the community. With language instruction and acquisition, newcomers are able to actively participate in the labour market and confidently manoeuvre various social systems in Thunder Bay. The importance and necessity of this program has been highlighted earlier in this report. While updates to the LINC in this site are limited, it is important to note that the program was thoroughly reviewed at the federal level prior to its current implementation in Thunder Bay. Citizenship and Immigration Canada conducted reviews of the program and its related documentation, interviewed key personnel, performed telephone surveys and focus groups with clients and graduates (CIC, 2004). The key findings of this evaluation indicated that LINC's target clients, largely Permanent Residents and Convention Refugees, had **a)** varying levels of education, ranging from post-graduate degrees to literacy challenges and **b)** those who are successful in learning one of the two official languages are able to participate in the labour force at higher rates than those who do not (CIC, 2004). Upon the completion of the review, the findings indicated that there is a "...great need for the federal government to provide the kind of assistance offered by LINC [since]...the research has demonstrated that language skills are essential for resettlement and integration" (CIC, 2004).
Pending larger movements of immigrants to Thunder Bay, the LINC is expected to serve a growing number of clients.

Analysis of Key Features of the Practice

Contributing Factors to the Program's Success

The LINC contains a number of structural and administrative mechanisms that contribute to the programs' success. In this section, we will discuss two elements that are key to its success.

1. Features of Accessibility

As described in the 'Description' section of this report, the LINC strives to be an accessible program for newcomers. The many accessibility features include, but are not limited to, the provision of childcare, options for home study as well as the availability of classes on a part time, full time and evening basis. Such features ensure that the optimal numbers of program users are able to access the LINC and benefit from it. Such accessibility features also ensure that immigrants who are new to the community have many possible options to learn the official languages. This will ease the immediate frustrations associated with the settlement experience while simultaneously enabling newcomers to actively participate in the social realm.

2. Professional Standards

While accessibility features are truly important, we would also like to make a note of the significance of the professional standards which the LINC must comply to. Although the program is administered through Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) the program materials and tools are made available on a national basis and must adhere to the various standards outlined by the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks. Furthermore, the language instructors who administer this program in Ontario must be accredited by the Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA) as well as the Teachers of English as a Second Language (TESL). Such professional standards ensure the LINC is able to maintain a high level of quality both in teaching and program content.

Unique Features

In discussing the unique features of the LINC at Thunder Bay Multicultural Association, staff reported that the provision of childcare is a practice and a unique feature. Staff shared that this aspect of language learning provides all members of the household an opportunity to take part in learning from the onset of their arrival to Canada. They also emphasized that as a result of the day care component, the instructors see large numbers of participants who happen to be Muslim immigrant women. The LINC administrators shared that with the availability of daycare, men but also women of all ages, are able to socialize and learn in a dynamic environment. Staff and LINC instructors saw this as a positive aspect of the program.

Analysis of Purported Evidence Pertaining to the Success of the Practice
Evaluation Practices

While the onsite LINC instructors administer quick surveys and questionnaires to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching methods, the program is largely evaluated on an annual basis. The annual reviews are done according to federal benchmarks set by the CIC. The SPOs partake in evaluating the program in compliance with their agreements with CIC. Undertaking annual evaluations is a requirement for the SPOs to be funded for the program. As mentioned earlier, there are also national evaluations of the program which are undertaken by CIC.

Internal and External Contributors of Success

There are many internal and external contributors to LINC's success in Thunder Bay. As indicated in feedback from staff members, the childcare component has once again been listed as the principal contributor to the program's success. Thunder Bay's Multicultural Association does not have a daycare facility. As a result, the SPO outsources the provision of daycare to the City. The City of Thunder Bay administers childcare to LINC clients through city run daycares and home daycare centres. As a result, the organization works with the City to provide these valuable services in multiple sites across the city. This provides valuable opportunities for newcomers attending LINC courses. By having multiple child care locations, newcomer families are able to save time and money on transportation costs. They have the opportunity to drop off their children at the nearest daycare or home care centre and carry on with their learning.

Mentoring Program Analysis

Ongoing Need

The LINC is a valuable program that enables newcomers to actively participate in social, political and economic aspects of life in Canada. While this large scale program is federally funded, it is administered locally by SPOs. By emphasizing elements such as accessibility and flexible learning options, the LINC is able to cater to the needs of most, if not all, immigrants to Canada. This program encourages immigration to small and medium sized communities of Northern Ontario. The continued provision of the LINC in Thunder Bay will facilitate a faster transition into the Canadian labour market. Furthermore, the LINC provides our communities with an opportunity to truly welcome immigrants to healthy and inclusive communities. This program is not only valuable but a necessary component which truly facilitates the settlement and integration process for newcomers.

Scalability

The LINC is an example of a best practice that is scalable. This program has evolved over time and operates with flexible structural and functional mechanisms that allow for seamless transfer. As a result, the program is able to sustain its professional standards, such as standardized curricula or certified instructors, while incorporating unique local features of the community it operates in. The program's in-class and out-of-class opportunities offer the flexibility to incorporate local culture and history into the language instruction.

The home study or distance education option gives newcomers an opportunity to move to communities without SPOs or the availability of settlement services. This is a crucial point to consider when thinking about skilled immigrants who may arrive and have secured work in rural or isolated communities. Distance education will provide them with an opportunity to better their linguistic aptitude while further enriching and diversifying rural communities in Canada.

While the LINC currently uses a multivariate set of tools to design and administer the program there is some room for growth. Web-based instruction is recommended to further facilitate the effectiveness of the distance education component. Currently, LINC uses CDs which have both the curricula and lessons embedded in a program. Certified instructors who interact with students through web-based portals would strengthen the distance education component of LINC. These instructors can facilitate dialogue and discussion, answer questions and communicate with newcomer students who are learning from home.

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Children and Youth:
Promising Practices

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WELCOMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

LES COMMUNAUTÉS ACCUEILLANTES

Welcoming Communities Initiative
March 2012
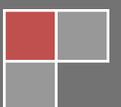
<u>Children and Youth: Promising Practices</u>

SCOPE: This report presents several promising practices that closely correspond to priorities defined in LIP reports.

Relevant LIP Priorities in Association With Their Promising Practice

I) In-depth Analysis of Two Projects

In this section, our study provides an in-depth analysis of two selected programs and their associated priorities. We conducted telephone interviews with the coordinators of the projects and analyzed program materials, such as guides, TV broadcasts, annual reports, web materials, etc.

Priority: Education

Improve the parental participation in the educational experiences of immigrant children and youth in order to facilitate students' integration. Strategies to achieve this goal include creating information pamphlets, including educational options, of the Ontario education system for immigrant parents and developing programs that address student needs.

Challenge

Research shows that there is a lack of integrated approaches in regards to newcomer children and youth issues that successfully build dialogue and cooperation between newcomer parents, newcomer youth and children, and school boards. Bearing in mind that newcomer adults are also settling alongside with their transitioning children, building cooperation among school boards and parents represents an important opportunity for newcomer families in accessing in-school and after-school services in addition to services for specific settlement needs (Anisef and Kilbride 2009).

Promising Practice: Settlement Workers in the Schools (SWIS) Program
Website: http://swisontario.ca/

1. Description of the Program

The Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program provides initial settlement services to newly arrived parents and children through systematic contact with them at their local school. SWIS connects newly arrived families to settlement services and resources in the school and the community and in doing so, fosters student achievement.

The main goal of the program is to increase the achievement of immigrant children and youth at school through parental involvement in the process of settlement and education. The program is

36

based on the principle that a student's educational success depends on her/his life outside the school and an established welcoming environment at school. The well-being and adjustment of immigrant families in Canada are believed to be associated with success in educational institutions. With this objective, the program goals include connecting newcomer families to settlement services, improving the school's inclusive environment, and supporting and guiding the newcomer youth (and their parents) through the educational system (Settlement Workers in Schools, Ontario SWIS Program Overview 2010). Given the importance of adjustment immediately after arrival in Canada, the first and second year of arrival are prioritized (Bonnell and Zizys 2005).

Settlement workers from community agencies are placed in schools on a need basis and are therefore found mainly in cities where immigrant populations are higher. According to a SWIS Brochure, as of April 2010, the program is active in eleven Ontario regions that accommodate 250 settlement workers from 22 settlement agencies in 22 school boards (New to Canada? 2010). In addition, the SWIS program has been running in ten British Columbia regions.[1] Each SWIS program is administered locally by a Steering Committee, which meets quarterly to address program issues and to plan new components to the program. The program is a partnership between the Ontario Administration of Settlement and Integration Services (OASIS), Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), the various school boards and settlement service provider organizations.

Program Components

Target populations include newcomer students, parents, school staff and other youth-serving agencies. Program services are largely composed of providing information and referring families to more specialized agencies, where necessary.

Settlement workers hold welcoming sessions for newcomer students and their parents, counseling newcomer students individually and/or through group sessions about school policies and employment in collaboration with school staff. The program also works with the school staff on questions and concerns with regard to newcomer issues in order to encourage the newcomer students' involvement in social life within the school. Finally, settlement workers play a role as a bridge between the organizations in the community, the newcomer youth, and the school. In doing so, SWIS is able to assist the community organizations in adapting their programs to the needs of newcomer youth.

Other activities include organizing outreach sessions for newcomer youth with public libraries over the summer and the production of orientation guides (in video and in print) for newcomer youth and their parents in 15 different languages, explaining the Canadian school system[2], in addition to dissemination of a guide for School Settlement Workers to increase the effectiveness of their work at schools.

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[1] Please see additional information at:
http://www.welcomebc.ca/wbc/service_providers/programs/settlement_program/stream1/swis.page

[2] Settlement workers coordinate the Newcomer Orientation Week (NOW) and Welcome and Information for Newcomers (WIN) programs, which take place in the last weeks of the summer.

Outcomes

- Newcomer families become more familiar with the Canadian school system and culture through their involvement with settlement workers. They also become more aware of other resources, like community and government agencies, that best suit their own and their children's needs. As a result, there is increased awareness and connections between the newcomer families, schools, and the community.

- More familiarity in turn increases the level of comfort with and engagement in the school system. Newcomer students who are more engaged in the school system receive more information about school programs, after school activities, future educational and employment opportunities.

- School staff, settlement staff, and the newcomer family share and collaborate about each other's needs and resources. The school staff and the school board in general gain insights into the adaptation and integration processes of the newcomer families with students and become more aware of the community resources that might meet the needs of newcomer families and their children.

- Communities have been able to make improvements in educational and recreational services for immigrant children and youth as a result of the motivation and advocacy by the SWIS program. SWIS representatives participate in meetings in a variety of local governmental and non-governmental organizations (such as the city councils) to draw attention to the needs of newcomer children, youth, and parents. For example, in Toronto SWIS workers encouraged recreational programs in YMCAs, directly targeting newcomer youth and children. Furthermore, SWIS is now an option that university social work programs have integrated into their curriculum. For example, undergraduate students studying at Ryerson University's social work program have to participate in a workshop with SWIS workers to graduate. The workshop, entitled "New teacher's trainees" focuses on newcomer needs during the settlement process.

- As a result of the SWIS program, more settlement documents have been translated, which has enhanced the access of newcomer parents and their children to resources such as ESL classes.

- The long term outcomes include faster integration of the immigrant families, enhancing the access of newcomer families and students to the variety of services available to them, and improvement of the school environment to become more inclusive of newcomer families, their cultures and problems.

2. Analysis of the Key Features

Aspects of Innovation and Uniqueness

Integrative Approach: The SWIS program is a particularly good example of an integrated approach to service delivery and referral for newcomer immigrants. The literature shows that *integrated* approaches to newcomer services and programs tend to be very effective in addressing newcomer needs. They reduce overlap (and thereby increase efficient use of resources) and bring out the concerns of related parties (such as newcomer parents, educational and settlement services staff) while increasing access to services (For more please see Anisef and Kilbride 2009). In this context,

SWIS is an exemplary program, as it targets improving parental participation and awareness of immigrant children and youth's educational experience by being a bridge between school staff and immigrant families and their children. This approach facilitates the adaptation of immigrant youth and children, and their parents, to the new educational setting while raising the awareness of school staff to the educational and social issues that newcomer youth and children face in school and beyond.

In fact, it is integrative in a number of ways. The various players (newcomer parents and settlement worker; newcomer youth and settlement workers, settlement workers and school staff), come together, which increases the opportunity for cultural sensitivity training, both formal and informal. It is integrative with respect to program delivery and development. The settlement workers have input into changing their own program and those of other organizations by providing feedback and information regarding newcomer needs. The program makes a clear attempt to bridge (integrate) the experience of the newcomer child and their parents thereby trying to help them move along at a similar pace. The more parents are involved in their children's education the more they will "keep up" with their children's level of integration/adaptation into Canadian society and avoid the isolation and gap often experienced between first generation and the second generation Canadians. It also integrates with respect to location: the school becomes a central place for the community building that goes beyond the children's education.

Bridging: The program facilitates a bridging role between the newcomer immigrants and the settlement services, which describes another innovative aspect of the program. SWIS provides an annual rate of approximately 5,000 services per ISAP agency. Furthermore, the program has built relationships with the public libraries to extend their outreach over the course of the summer, which, among other things helps newcomer youth and children to improve their language and adaptation skills to the new Canadian environment.

Schools, as Easy Access point: The program makes use of schools as easy access points for newcomer youth and children and their parents. Thus, SWIS indirectly delivers settlement services in the school environment, which is a unique key feature of the program and one of its core strengths. It helps make this a transferable program, as it can be easily tailored it to the community.

Immigrant youth and children as clients: The program welcomes newcomer youth as direct clients rather than communicating with parents regarding immigrant youth educational concerns, which is a common feature of mainstream programs. At the same time, the program recognizes that the needs of elementary school age children are best met by providing settlement services for their newcomer parents and/or guardians. Again, this is a highly innovative feature as programs often focus on one group or the other whereas SWIS is a fully integrated approach.

Extensive Online Resources: The SWIS website has a variety of resources available, categorized in relation to the areas for which these resources can be used.[3] This unique aspect increases the accessibility of the guides for teachers and parents involved with the concerns and issues of

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[3] The categories on the website are as follows: elementary school resources, secondary school resources, assessment and Reception Centre Resources, Regional Resources, settlement resources, DVDs and Books, SWIS program resources, Newcomer Orientation Week Resources, Welcome and Information for Newcomer Resources.

newcomer youth and children. The website further provides sample brochures of the program, as well as awareness raising materials (posters, brochures) that can be used in schools. These materials are especially important for the schools in smaller communities which are not visited by SWIS workers and/or do not qualify for SWIS program. These resources serve the same integrative objective as the program overall, helping the SWIS staff as well as the school staff.

3. Analysis of the Program's Success

Endogenous Factors

Quality of SWIS Workers and their efforts in initiating dialogue at schools: At the beginning of the program, SWIS workers had to overcome challenges as outsiders to the school environment. Recognition by the schools was mainly altered "over time," as SWIS workers continued their dialogue and negotiations with teachers and administrators of the schools and raised awareness regarding the needs of immigrant children and youth. The LIPs can help in this integration process of the SWIS workers in schools.

SWIS workers are mainly hired by ISAP (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program) agencies and in some cities (e.g., Peel Region) by the school boards. The selection is based on language preferences, specific demographics of the neighbourhoods served, applicants' experience with immigrants as well as a college diploma in social work.

Tracking clients: The SWIS workers enter each client visit into the *Online Tracking System (OTIS)* to examine the profile and types of services delivered to the newcomers. ISAP agencies use the OTIS database to record and examine the overall number of referrals and other services, offered to newcomers.

Re-routing already existent services through SWIS program: SWIS program's ultimate success is mainly based on its ability to draw on services already available in schools, school boards, settlement services, municipalities and a variety of non-governmental (YMCAs, youth clubs) and governmental organizations and institutions (such as the public library), as well as educational, recreational, and after-school programs. SWIS workers who pay visits to the schools help newcomer parents and their children to reach out to these services.

Exogenous Factors

Financial support from CIC: Although the program budget was reduced midway through its mandate, the initial stages of funding proved extremely helpful for the program to expand and to offer many of its services free of charge. This period also gave the program the opportunity to complete its set up and expand from Ottawa to Toronto. It is important to note that the funding process of the SWIS program in Ontario differs from that of British Columbia (BC), where school boards and a major ISAP provide the main funding.

Human resource support from ISAPs and in-kind support of school boards: The main factors that have helped the program to flourish are the human resources (i.e., SWIS workers) received through ISAP agencies and the in-kind services, such as office space, Internet, telephone lines, and potential

participants to the program from public and Catholic school boards. Furthermore, other social supports have been available to the program; from youth clubs, public libraries, and municipal support to offer after-school workshops. Again the location is a key factor: schools are already a hub for the community, and this program strategically taps into this advantage.

Transferability and Scalability

The program is currently implemented in 6 different cities in Ontario (Hamilton-Wentworth, Kitchener-Waterloo, Peel Region, York Region, Toronto, and Ottawa) and since 2007, in twenty school districts in British Columbia.[4] Winnipeg and Saskatchewan are currently working to incorporate a SWIS model in schools although these attempts have not been finalized. The expansion of the SWIS program into British Columbia illustrates that the program can be applied in different provinces. The transferability of the program is closely linked to the online availability of training materials for potential SWIS workers as well as its unique ability to reroute already existing services city and province wide.

Although the program currently only operates in the larger urban areas of Ontario and British Columbia, SWIS has published *Guiding Principles for School-Based Settlement Services in Small Communities*[5] (2008), to extend the mandate and/or operations of the program to smaller communities. With this outreach, SWIS aims to transfer its own successful principles and techniques to mainstream institutions such as settlement service providers and schools in smaller communities. As part of this expansion objective, SWIS began operating with a three-tier model since last year. According to this model, three priority levels are determined, based on a *Learning Opportunity Index* collected by school boards, that take into account the number of immigrants, demographics, and socio-economic status of the neighbourhood residents to regulate the frequency of the SWIS workers visits to schools. They are as follows: Priority 1 schools with more than 80 immigrant children qualify for a full day SWIS service, while Priority 2 schools, having 40 to 80 immigrant children qualify for twice a week service. SWIS workers visit the priority 3 schools, which have less than 40 immigrant children, on a call basis, qualifying for once or twice a month visits, as needed.

This new model serves to extend SWIS services to smaller communities where fewer numbers of immigrants live and go to school. As a result of this three-tier model, smaller communities such as Niagara Falls, St. Catharine's, Oshawa, Oakville, Windsor, and London have been incorporated into the program. This definition of tiered priorities is an essential feature that makes SWIS one of the most transferable of all newcomer integration programs.

In addition, online resource materials for teachers make it possible to adapt the SWIS concept in smaller communities. In fact, [the office of the SWIS coordinator for Ontario] has been receiving calls that show an increased interest from smaller communities to adopt the SWIS program.

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[4] The school districts that adopted SWIS in British Columbia are: Vancouver, Burnaby, Greater Victoria, New Westminster, Richmond, North Vancouver, Conseil Scolaire francophone, Abbotsford, Delta, Surrey, Central Okanagan, Chilliwack, Coquitlam, Langley, Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows, Mission, Nanaimo-Ladysmith, Prince George, Peace River North and West Vancouver.

[5] Please see the guidelines at: http://swisontario.ca/SWISAC/Download/Guideline/9

Priority: Employment Readiness

Employment is one of the priorities that are mentioned in LIP reports mainly within the context of adult newcomer un/employment but some LIP reports also specifically discuss youth un/employment. Employment is a significant problem in its own right for youth. Of particular importance seems to be the ability to increase labor market readiness of immigrant youth.

Challenge

There is a wide academic and sectoral trend which assumes that newcomer children and youth would face similar obstacles and share the same concerns as adult immigrants, with regard to employment opportunities in Canada (Anisef and Kilbride 2009; Anisef and Killbride 2003). Newcomer children and youth often have a very different understanding of immigration than their parents or other adults. Although adult immigrants' employment posits an important priority for children and youth immigrant integration, approaches to both types of employment and relevant strategies shall differ in its content (Anisef and Killbride 2003).

Research shows that newcomer youth in Canada are at a considerable disadvantage in finding work compared to Canadian born youth because of their ethnic origin, language deficiencies, family responsibilities, economic insecurity and difficulties with school. Further more, lack of adaptation programs from school to work adds to the obstacles for newcomer youth to find jobs (Anisef and Killbride 2003).

Promising Practice: YMCA Achievement Program (YMAP)
Website: http://www.ymcacalgary.org/blog/ymca-ymap-ymca-achievement-program-graduation/

1. Program Description

The program has been available in Calgary since 1991. YMAP is a stay-in-school initiative for immigrant youth, aged from 15 to 20. The main objective of the program is providing pre-employment and life skills training, summer work experience and job opportunities with support from mentors and peers, to increase chances of success at school for newcomer youth, building a career, and better integrating to a new environment.

YMAP's current funding composition is as follows: 75% of the program budget comes from the United Way and 25% of the program budget comes from various donors who contribute to *YMCA Strong Kids Campaign.*[6]

Program Components

Participant youth are selected from the ESL programs offered at the Catholic School Board and the Public School Board. The program maintains very close relations with ESL teachers, schools, and

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[6] For more on the campaign please see: http://www.ymcacalgary.org/index.php?page=donor_funded_programs

school boards, as they provide the outreach of the program to newcomer high school students. After ESL program administrators choose and refer these students to YMAP, the coordinator of the YMAP program interviews the selected youth to assess their potential level in the program. This assessment is based on the participant's level of integration, the time s/he has spent in Canada, and level of English as a second language.

The interview assessments place the student in one of three levels. Each level has its own curriculum components to ensure the needs of the newcomer groups at each level/stream of the program are met. The name and the brief composition of the levels are as follows:

- *Explorers* stream accommodates ESL-1 and ESL-2 students, mainly beginners to learning English as a second language;
- *Achievers* stream accommodates ESL-3 and ESL-4 students and;
- *Leaders* stream accommodates students who have completed the *Achiever* streams.

All of the streams include different levels of employability workshops and language skills development. *Leaders* level makes an effort to discuss tough and realistic topics. In other words, it is the depth of knowledge that is given in each stream that separates them from one another. Nevertheless, the *Explorers* and *Achievers* streams mainly focus on integration (integration to Canada, school life, and community) and the settlement needs of the newcomer youth in addition to developing employability skills whereas the *Leaders* program more often concentrates on broadening the participants' knowledge about issues of social justice, the United Nations, and more intellectual and global topics in addition to enhancing their employability skills.

Along with running workshops and organizing guest speakers to provide additional seminars as part of the program, the staff follows up on the participant's skill development and change in personality. Often, the process of providing feedback about his/her progress is maintained through face-to-face dialogue, within drop in hours, organized between the staff and the newcomer youth participants.

Workshops integrate creative aspects and physical activity, playing soccer and/or hiking, to teach life and work skills. Trips to various parts of Calgary further support intellectual and social development of the newcomer youth.[7] One of the workshop providers emphasizes the significance of such activities, as newcomer youth do not often get a chance to travel and experience different locations.[8] The workshops further foster friendship among newcomer youth, who have similar levels of education and life skills and allow them to make connections with the rest of the newcomer communities in Calgary.

There are also internship opportunities after the workshop period has ended. For example, the CIBC Youthvision Scholarship was given to at least one participant of the YMAP program in the last 10 years. This national award is a result of a partnership between CIBC, YMCA Canada, and Big

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[7] These trips further include community events such as Christmas tree lighting events and/or festivals.
[8] For extended interview, please see: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=27ah4aUjon4

Brother Big Sisters (BBBS) of Canada and it is offered to 30 students in grade 10. The award consists of two parts and lasts for six years. [9]

Another component of the program is that many of the YMAP graduates are encouraged to take the position of a mentor. Newcomer youth participants from similar or the same ethnocultural backgrounds and/or with the same first language are matched with graduates. In this way new participants feel more affinity towards the program.

Lastly, YMAP also runs a *Summer Explorers program*, which is only available to ESL-1 and ESL-2 students. The program pays for the summer fees of these students in return for volunteer work in August when the summer classes are finished. The volunteer opportunities vary from summer festivals to work in YMCA facilities. The program staff emphasized that the *Summer Explorers Program* is very important specifically for the newly arrived families with financial difficulties. YMCA is currently seeking funding to extend this particular program for *Achievers* and *Leaders* streams in the future.

Outcomes

- According to the evaluations of the program, YMAP graduates are 20% more likely to graduate from high school than other immigrant youth. In addition, approximately 90% of the YMAP graduates have solid career goals.
- Annually, 250 immigrant youth from 54 countries speaking 62 first-languages join and are impacted by the YMAP program. The statistics represent an important diversity of participants, while also explaining the approbation the program has earned in Calgary.
- The participants feel more confident upon completion of the program. For example, one of the ex-participants of the program, Mevlut Kont, who was invited to emcee a luncheon for YMCA donors, emphasizes how developing his confidence was one of the outcomes of the program:

  "A few years ago, I was asked to emcee a luncheon for YMCA donors. Looking back at the young shy boy stepping into the YMAP classroom, I never would have imagined myself standing in front of a group of influential Calgarians hosting an event. I was so nervous. Without YMCA, I never would have been able to take the chance." (YMCA 2010, 12)

- The program provides the graduates of YMAP with volunteering positions at the YMCA and with the YMAP program. As a result, the newcomer youth volunteers expand their contact with other immigrant and non-immigrant communities, and have an opportunity to give back to the whole community.

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[9] In the initial phase, students are given the opportunity to take internship positions at their local YMCA. With the help of a mentor, they practice and continue to learn employment skills. The second part of the award includes an annual scholarship of $4000 for four years.

- The participants of the YMAP program are also provided with free membership to YMCA facilities, which encourages many newcomer youth that are in need, to participate in physical and recreational activities/courses, carried out by the YMCA.

2. Analysis of Key Features

Aspects of Innovation and Uniqueness

Holistic Approach, by providing the opportunity for peer support and socialization through physical activities: The holistic approach of the program is unique as many of the other youth and immigrant youth employment programs in Calgary focus on developing employability rather than life skills (Hurlock, McCullagh, and Schissel 2004). YMAP is a unique after-school program. The program components extend beyond assisting students merely with their homework and/or teaching them how to write resumes, incorporating volunteer, community, and recreational activities to build self-esteem and friendships with the rest of the participant youth.

Learning from immigrant youth: The workshop providers and the coordinators of the program recognize the significance of 'learning from immigrant youth'. One of the coordinators of the program emphasized that often times, immigrant youth came from very harsh circumstances, such as war and/or conflict. Rather than eschewing this fact, many of those delivering workshops and the coordinators build their relationships with the immigrant youth through sharing their experiences. This is also an aspect that contributes to restoring confidence in immigrant youth. In that sense, YMAP is exemplary.

Opportunity of one-on-one career guidance: In their report about the extent of immigrant youth services where interviews with immigrant youth and service providers were analyzed, Hurlock et al. (2004) emphasize that the immigrant youth in Calgary are in need of discussing their career options with someone other than school counselors, who are often overburdened. YMAP has been addressing this need with their model of one-on-one career guidance. That participants can drop in and talk with their staff is an important and unique aspect of the program. Our interview and research indicated that these drop in hours are the most effective part of the program, which ensures its overall success.

Flexibility of the curriculum, designed to meet the needs of the young newcomer participants to YMAP: The aspect of flexibility is another unique point of the program. The weekly session topics can be changed if/when a student is going through a problem (e.g., bullying). In this way, the curriculum of the program is continuously modified to adapt to the needs of the participants.

3. Analysis of the Program's Success

Endogenous Factors

Dedicated full-time staff: All of the staff that are responsible from each level/stream (i.e. explorers, achievers and leaders) are full-time hired staff. They all have university diplomas (in relevant social

science) in addition to experience with facilitation, newcomer youth and/or youth in general. Because the staff is full-time employees, they are available to the students throughout the day. This aspect increases the access of newcomer youth participants to YMAP.

Accessibility to the Program by Immigrant youth: The full time staff serves in 3 YMCA, 3 high school and 1 elementary school location. As a result, youth participants of the program are able to drop in to any of these locations to talk about career guidance, daily life, and/or progress in school life and/or any problems.

Available space from YMCA facilities to deliver the majority of the programs: The program runs most of its activities, other than field trips and other scheduled hiking and sports activities, in the physical spaces of the YMCAs in Calgary. This is an important advantage that contributed to the innovative and unique qualities of YMAP, as finding space to carry out programs represents an important obstacle in Calgary (Hurlock, McCullagh, and Schissel 2004).

First language counseling: One of the important aspects, which kept the program accessible and attractive to immigrant youth, has been the YMAP's service with regard to first language counseling. This is a factor that has gradually impacted the program as the number of first language counselors to YMAP has increased exponentially since the start of the program in 1991. In that sense, first language counseling is both an outcome and an endogenous factor that contributed to the sustainability and success of the program.

Continuous monitoring: Every summer, the program staff conducts telephone surveys to monitor the achievements of the participants, by asking them if they are employed and/or continue with a volunteer job. These are recorded and kept for program evaluation and are an important part of the success of the program.

Exogenous Factors

Partnerships with schools and employers: The program partners with elementary and high schools in addition to school boards, which enables them to reach out to newcomer youth and inform them about the program and eligibility conditions. On the other hand, partnerships with employers are in the form of financial support and/or specific internship opportunities, offered to the YMAP graduates. Partnerships with schools ensure a newcomer youth's entrance to the program while the partnership with employers guarantees the continuity of the program's impact and the sustainability of YMAP.

Partnerships with other institutions to incorporate them in the overall process of integration of immigrant youth: As mentioned earlier, YMAP invites guest speakers to provide seminars to newcomer youth. Partnerships with other community institutions (such as the Calgary Police) play an important role in undertaking such seminars. These partnerships have not only aided in the personal development and integration of newcomer youth, but they also raise awareness in the broader community about newcomer youth and their needs and concerns.

Transferability and Scalability

Although more research is necessary with regard to the transferability of YMAP to other places, the fact that it is fundamentally run by the YMCA increases the potential of its transferability. This is mainly because YMCA already has experience with youth and their problems in Canada. The resources and the youth experience of this program can be rerouted through the facilities and funding of YMCAs for newcomer youth in a more holistic way, which is the main reason why YMAP was successful at the first place. On the other hand, however, the curriculum materials and other components of the program are largely inaccessible via the Internet. There is a staff handbook, which is not publicly available and these limitations are obstacles to its transferability. In that sense, more online materials (i.e. guides for students, staff and teacher) should be developed.

II) Examination of Other Promising Practices

This section of the report describes three projects that were examined without fully undertaking interviews and in depth analysis of internal and external factors that contributed to the success of the programs or projects.

Priority: Improving Educational Services for Immigrant Children and Youth

Improved educational services for immigrant children and youth in particular, and the improvement of ESL courses is an identified priority. In addition to discomfort with ESL programs, other needs and gaps that are mentioned in the LIP reports include sustaining high school completion, providing health and sex education, delivering educational services to students with learning disabilities, and the integration of work language instructions in ESL classes.

Challenge
Anisef (2005) suggests that ESL "can be a barrier to creating social networks outside of their ESL classes" (29). Instead, he argues that peer mentorship and English immersion allow children and youth to feel more integrated in both their schools and their greater Canadian communities. In the current educational system, immigrant youth are "more likely to experience fear of the future, loneliness, alienation, school difficulties including truancy, a sense of inferiority related to economic status, and relationship problems with native-born youth, teachers and others not sensitive to their needs"(Slonim-Nevo and Isralowitz 2002, 400).

Promising Practice: Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth
Website: http://www.calgarybridgefoundation.com/

1. Description of the Program

The Foundation aims to overcome language and cultural barriers that restrict the access and integration of newly arrived immigrant youth into the Canadian society. The target groups consist of junior high school students, with limited educational backgrounds from their home countries. Older

immigrant youth act as role models for younger immigrant youth from the same language group or ethnic background. These older youth work as mentors.

The Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth is funded by the United Way and has been operating since 1991 serving about 1,000 newcomer youth annually.

Program Components

Although the Foundation offers a multiplicity of programs for newcomer parents and youth, only those directed to newcomer youth will be presented here:

- *After School Life Skills Program:* This program helps immigrant and refugee youth engage in different activities after school hours. To achieve its goals, three sub-programs are offered: 1) The Life Skills Program, in Elementary, Junior, and Senior high schools across Calgary; 2) Homework clubs operating in three public libraries; and 3) A Summer Literacy program for elementary and junior high school students. The Life Skills program helps immigrant youth to adjust to school and Canadian life along with building leadership skills through culturally informed lessons, activities, and field trips that support curricular studies and encourage language development, community involvement, and friendships. Homework clubs offer assistance to newcomer youth and children with various school subjects such as math, ESL, science, and social studies. Both of these programs are held after school hours while the Summer Literacy Program is offered only in the summer to provide newcomer youth and children with opportunities to improve English skills though physical and art activities.

- *Immigrant Student Mentorship Program* aims to connect newcomers with older immigrant youth, who are trained as mentors and leaders. The program is open to immigrant students in elementary, junior and senior high school. The mentors guide their peers through settlement issues, new environment challenges, and academic and language development. They also act as role models for younger immigrants.

Outcomes
- The majority of students who participated in the Bridge Foundation's homework club saw their mark increase.
- For the immigrant youth and children who participated in the program since 1990, there has been a significant increase in high school completion rates, post-secondary education enrolment, and successful participation/integration in the workforce.
- The program also created a volunteer base for past participants as many of the staff and volunteers are former youth participants, either in the After School Life Skills Program and/or Immigrant Student Mentorship Program.

2. Analysis of Key Features

Aspects of Innovation and Uniqueness

Services from Immigrant Youth to Immigrant Youth: The program hires mentors who are immigrant youth from the same ethnic background, with English language abilities and they work as positive role models for younger newcomer youth and children. This aspect of the program enhances the access of immigrant youth and children to a variety of services by overcoming the language barrier through peer participation.

Learning English with a heritage language: Many studies on learning English as a second language emphasizes the importance of learning one's own heritage language as a significant contribution to learning English as a second language (CERIS). In this sense, the programs mentioned foster the use of heritage language with the mentors, as an effective step towards learning English as a second language.

Bridging between schools and parents: Mentors also work as a "conduit" between schools and parents for newcomer youth and children by providing them each with the opportunity to direct their concerns during this time of transitioning into a new environment. They further guide newcomer children and youth to cope with various issues such as racism and bullying at school.

Unique focus on newcomer immigrant youth: Many studies show that there is a fundamental lack of programs and services for immigrant youth in the public service sector. The majority of existing services, both in Calgary and across Canada, concentrate on either adult newcomers or youth in general, which ignores the distinct needs of newcomer youth and children (Van Ngo 2009). In this sense, the unique focus on newcomer immigrant youth is key to the program's success in attracting participants.

Priority: Social Integration Through Sports, Recreation, and Other Social Activities Conducted by Mainstream Organizations

LIP reports suggest the importance of sports, recreation, and other social activities as a priority for newcomer children and youth. The majority of reports perceive social activities, as well as sports and recreation, as a priority linked to physical health, mental health and social integration. LIPs would like to see more work done to increase the accessibility of such activities for newcomer children and youth through the general improvement of mainstream sports and recreation as well as other social activities (within the context of local sports organizations, such as local soccer league and/or YMCAs).

Challenge

Mainstream Canadian service providers, focusing on developing sports and recreational opportunities for newcomer youth and children are challenged by a lack of financial resources and of places to carry out such activities for free. This is also a direct outcome of ineffective coordination among potential parties, lack of knowledge with regard to newcomer cultures and

their interests in specific sports (such as football or cricket), and a lack of activity models to implement effective sports, leisure and recreational activities. There is also a shortage of volunteers, expert staff (specialized with immigrant youth and children and in issues of anti-racism), and lack of interest and knowledge on the part of the community organizations and ethnic/immigrant organizations to provide resources to develop programs for newcomer youth and children. On the part of the newcomer youth and children, some of the main issues that affect their accessing the limited number of programs available through YMCAs are limited transportation options and unstable continuity of available programs, due to lack of funding and staff with expertise about newcomer youth and children (OCASI 2006).

Promising Practice: FARE (Football Against Racism in Europe) Network
Website: http://www.farenet.org/default.asp?intPageID=6

1. Description of the Network
The network was established in 1999 as a result of a conference in Vienna, where anti-racist NGOs and ethnic community organizations came together from 14 European countries. FARE operates as an umbrella organization for those challenging racism and discrimination in Europe. The network works with sport clubs, national associations, players, unions, and public institutions to combat racism and related forms of discrimination, such as homophobia and sexism. Currently, over 300 grass-roots organizations in more than 37 European countries are linked to the FARE network. The Vienna Institute for Development and Cooperation (VIDC) acts as a central coordination office for the network. The main objectives of the network are:

- Promotion of the fight against racism at all levels of professional and amateur football across Europe (including in stadiums, in administration and sport education, and in the media).
- Raising awareness about the integrative potential of football by encouraging players, clubs, associations, supporters, coaches, journalists, and policy makers to work collaboratively against discrimination in football.
- Developing network practices and exchanging good and promising practices in the world and with a range of partners. These practices involve organizing regional and cross regional networking conferences.
- Undertaking activities for capacity building to empower marginalized and discriminated groups, in particular youth, immigrants and ethnic/racial minorities.

Network Activities
- FARE developed an annual anti-racist campaign, entitled *Action Week Against Racism and Discrimination*, which takes place in October. The objective of the campaign aims to increase public awareness about racism and racial discrimination to create a united front. FARE offers financial support for a range of grass roots activities to address local problems in football clubs at the community level. During the 2006 seasonal Action Week, 700 events took place in 37 countries in and around football grounds. For example, in Germany 750,000 cards with the slogan "Show Racism the Red Card" were distributed. All of the 32 teams of the UEFA Champions League participated in the

50

campaign, which reached more than 600,000 fans directly at the matches and through TV broadcast.

- FARE further aims to fight against institutionalized forms of racism, which include exclusion of ethnic minorities and migrants in different administrative levels of football (i.e. the limitation of the number of migrants in amateur football is common in Spain and Italy, as an open example of discrimination by governing bodies). As a result of the close partnership between UEFA and FARE network, a guide for clubs has been produced which includes practical lessons for schools, clubs, national organizations, ethnic community organizations, and fan clubs.
- FARE also runs an annual antiracism World Cup for fans and minorities in Italy, entitled *Mondiali Antirazzisti* and another program in Eastern Europe to overcome the neo-Nazi presence in Poland, challenge racist nationalism and xenophobia in the Balkans, and use football to confront the exclusion of Roma people in Slovakia. Every year 4,000 participants representing 200 teams (male, female, and mixed) attend *Mondiali Antirazzisti*. Participants include immigrant associations from around the world, antiracism organizations, youth groups, and supporter groups from many European teams.

Outcomes
- As a result of the annual anti-racist campaigns, effective partnerships between UEFA, Europe's football governing body, and the network has been established. Since 2002, UEFA supports anti-racism projects with national member associations.
- FIFA (International Football Association) established an alliance with the FARE network in 2006 and as a result, FIFA introduced a series of new penalties and a new disciplinary code (Article 58) for racist abuse. All 300,000 football clubs and 38 million registered players adopted this code.
- The network made racism, homophobia and sexism visible through effective media coverage and reports.
- FARE linked diverse fan clubs with migrant and ethnic organizations as a result of the anti-racism World Cup.

2. Analysis of Key Features

Aspects of Innovation and Uniqueness

Bridging: The network bridges the expertise and knowledge in public and non-governmental sectors with anti-racist model structures for sports and recreational programs. It documents existing programs across Europe, which provides the opportunity for various service providers with effectiveness, needs, and gap analysis. This is the unique feature of the network and key to its success.

Affecting conventional organizations' legal and guiding structures: The network managed to build effective partnerships with the main football governing bodies like FIFA and UEFA. These partnerships are key to the success of the network in disseminating and encouraging anti-racist programs and legal structures throughout both local and national mainstream agencies.

Raised money from the International Football Organization to implement projects at the local and national levels: Raising financial funds for future projects, as a result of the effective partnerships, was a key to the success of the sustainability of the network and its activities.

Priority: Social Integration Through Sports, Recreation, and Other Social Activities Specifically Designed for Newcomer Children and Youth

Increase social, sport and recreation programs specifically designed for newcomer youth and children to enhance their civic, economic and social participation and acculturation. Different than the improvement of mainstream programs, strategies for this priority would include innovative new programs only for newcomer youth and children.

Challenge

Sports and recreation programs for immigrant youth are effective means to build connections and bonds between heritage culture and the national culture (Anisef and Killbride 2003). However, there is a severe gap in the governmental and non-governmental sectors, gender and newcomer wise, which as a result prevent newcomer young women and girls from participating in sports and recreational activities (CAAWS 2006). Many of the existing programs are not gender-appropriate and fail to address the unique concerns of newcomer girls and young women (and their parents). OCASI (2006) recommends the creation of more gender-appropriate programs with effective guidelines to guarantee newcomer young women's and girl's participation in sports and recreation.

Promising Practice: Newcomer on the Move Project
Website: http://www.caaws.ca/onthemove/e/newcomer/index.htm

Description of the Program

The project was designed by a non-governmental organization, the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS) to increase capacity at the community and provincial level to address inequalities in the availability and utilization of healthy living programs for newcomer girls, and young women (ages 9-18), who have been living in Canada for five years or less. The project is currently running in Ottawa, Brampton, Hamilton, and North Bay to develop and deliver healthy living programs for young, newcomer women. It has been extended to eight more communities across Canada, including Halifax and Winnipeg.

Between 2009 and 2014, the program will have received funding from Inter-Action, the Multiculturalism Grants and Contributions Program of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care Fund, entitled Healthy Communities Fund.

Program Components

The program can be hosted by non-governmental organizations and/or community coalitions. The first year of the program encompasses co-hosting an on the move workshop, which is designed to enhance community ability to promote healthy living for newcomer girls and young women (aged 9-18). During this period, a community advisory committee is established which continues dialogue with the interested stakeholders from the community. The second year of the program involves the development and implementation of healthy living programs for newcomer girls and young women. Within this context, 8-week programs are delivered twice a year, which involve physical activity each week in a variety of sports, physical activities, healthy eating skill development, and educational content. A female program leader animates these programs. Also, information from community organizations about physical activity, healthy eating, and available programs and resources are shared with participants.

Outcomes

One of the main outcomes of the program is that it promotes gender equity by targeting newcomer girls and young women in their first five years of settlement in Canada. While introducing newcomer girls and young women to new sports and other physical activities, the program also creates an opportunity for newcomers to build friendships. These outcomes are reflected in the program statistics collected in Ontario (in all four locations), between 2009 and 2011:[10]

- 132 newcomer girls and young women participated in the programs.
- 92% of the program participants tried some or a lot of new activities.
- 90% of the participants would be back if the program were re-offered.
- 72% of the participants made new friends.

2. Analysis of Key Features

Aspects of Innovation and Uniqueness

Recognition of immigrant female youth as a disadvantaged group in sports and physical activities and the promotion of gender equity: The program is gender specific, which defines the immigrant girls as a disadvantaged group in sports and aims to foster gender equity by developing free sports and physical activity programs. With this recognition, the program fills in an important gap in the service sector in regards to newcomer young women and girls.

The need for physical and sports activities for newcomer young women and girls, which is uniquely addressed by the program, was assessed by the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS) and ultimately, was the basis of the program.[11] The recognition of the program was based on research, which later contributed to its attractiveness in newcomer communities.

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[10] For more on the stats and figures please see:
http://www.caaws.ca/onthemove/e/newcomer/newcomer_2011.htm
[11] For more on the statistical figures regarding newcomer young women's and girls` participation in sports and recreational activities, please see: http://caaws.ca/onthemove/pdfs/stats_2004.pdf.

Employing a unique concept model: The Newcomer On the Move project is built upon CAAWS' proven *On the Move Concept* model, which advocates fun-filled, female-only programs where women can improve their skills and self-confidence. In this way, the project not only creates sports and physical activity opportunities for newcomer girls and young women but also fosters a positive environment for cooperation and self-esteem, rather than competition. This innovative and unique aspect promotes gender equity.

Addressing broader sets of objectives: The participants of the project build friendships during physical activities, which ultimately increase their integration to Canadian society. Since the program can be hosted by a variety of non-governmental organizations, participants also learn more about settlement services, when and as they need.

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Community Civic Resources and Initiatives: Promising Practices

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WELCOMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

LES COMMUNAUTÉS ACCUEILLANTES
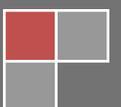
THE MUNICIPAL AND CIVIC DOMAIN

City of Ottawa Community Funding Program

Promising Practice: Seniors

1. <u>Description of Program</u>

The City of Ottawa Community Grants Program is an example of a promising practice that is transparent and clearly defined. It is a process that allows for the responsive and flexible support of community initiatives in a manner that is culturally sensitive. Seniors emerged as a central priority during the 2011 grant process.

The Community Funding Program provides project funding to respond to new and emerging needs and to build the capacity of organizations. Contributions are non-renewable, however, these contributions are considered for a period of one or three years. While many projects are viable within a one-year timeframe, the program also supports projects that require a longer investment in time and resources. It is possible for one-year projects to receive funding for a second year. As three-year project funding reduces the ability to support many one-year projects, the program limits three-year project funding to one or two groups annually that are not currently receiving renewable funding contributions. This gives new groups an opportunity to build their capacity and demonstrate their impact on an emerging need. At the end of the three-year project, organizations can be considered for unallocated renewable funding and are in a better position to apply for funding from sources other than those offered by the City.

Allocation decisions for both funding envelopes are made by an Allocation Committee formed by community members with knowledge of both community needs and the identified priority areas. Priorities for the 2011 Community Project Funding Program were adopted by City Council on February 25, 2009, and are as follows:

- Increase neighbourhood capacity to enact positive and sustainable change in planning, service delivery, improved health and/or improved safety in accordance with neighbourhood-defined goals;
- Promote the healthy development of children and youth 0-18 years through recreation, leisure, cultural and arts activities;

- Increase participation of seniors in physical activity and community life to promote successful aging;
- Support inclusion of people who are low-income, at risk, isolated or otherwise marginalized and promote quality of life for the full diversity of citizens through activities such as literacy, employment, physical activity and/or participation in cultural programs; and
- Promote conditions of equality on the basis of race, ethnicity, income, gender, official language and ability.

The Allocations Committee reviews the applications while seeking input from the community. Decisions are then based on the needs of the non-profit community as well as the policy and priority documents, which are in turn presented for public consultation. Thus the program offers a *mechanism for bottom-up and shared learning* as it encourages a number of bottom-up exchanges between community groups and the City of Ottawa. These exchanges serve to inform the *policy discourse* that ultimately translates into funding priorities and allocation decisions. During the 2011 allocation process, these bottom-up processes revealed that enhanced services to immigrant seniors were needed. This priority was ultimately addressed in the allocation outcomes.

2. <u>Analysis</u>

Emerging demographic and geographical realities have pushed the "seniors" lens to the forefront of the policy agenda. There are increasing numbers of immigrant seniors, many of whom have arrived relatively recently in Canada. Seniors often lack awareness of the services and events available to them as a result of their lower rates of technological connectedness. In addition, lack of knowledge of either official language and relative distance from service centres are factors that can lead to loneliness, isolation and abuse of immigrant seniors.

Of the 37 proposals approved for funding in 2011, 11 of these sought to "increase participation of seniors in physical activities and community life in order to promote successful aging." This relatively high percentage reflects the growing awareness among both committee members and the community of the need to support seniors, and in most cases immigrant seniors. Considering just four of the projects that were funded, we can see both variations and similarities in program activity. There is variation in terms of the target population as well as the

scale of the program supported with some programs open to seniors from across the City while others were neighbourhood based. For example, The Centretown Community Health Centre's program was organized by the LGBT Seniors and entitled "Creating Community as we age." The Club Casa de los Abuelos (The Grandparents' House) invites seniors from many different immigrant groups from across the City to bring them together for social and cultural activities. Pinecrest Queensway Community Health Centre and South East Ottawa Community Health Centre offer relatively similar programming, combining physical activity and social contacts for immigrant seniors living in the neighbourhoods served by the two Community Health Centres. The model allows for variation in terms of the kinds of programs that are supported, where seniors who come together organized some of these programs, and service deliveres organized others. The model therefore supports the experimentation of different service models. In addition, the selection process is *sensitive to both small community groups as well as larger and more experienced community groups*. Finally, variation is evidenced in the diversity of community groups supported by the funding program. Committee members attempt to support the broad range of needs in the community as outlined in policy priority documents.

The program is also unique for the *capacity building support* that the City of Ottawa offers to promising organizations, which may be just starting out. This capacity building support allows for the non-profit organization to re-apply for a different level of support in the future and is also geared to supporting the organization to be in a better position to apply for funding from other funding sources.

Finally, the Ottawa Community Funding Program is unique in its *support for core operational costs.* Recent national and local reports describe the financial instability and resulting struggle with high rates of turnover and burnout that the non-profit sector is currently facing. The reports *Funding Matters: The Impact of Canada's New Funding Regime on Non-profit and Voluntary Organizations* and *Funding our Future: A Community Consultation on the Voluntary Sector in Ottawa* document the reluctance on the part of sponsors to recognize and fund administrative or core organizational costs, such as rent, utilities, staff and volunteer training and supervision, multi-year planning and financial management. The preferred funding model in recent years is project-based and for short periods of time. As a result, organizations have struggled with high rates of staff turnover and burnout due to the inability to offer permanent positions and/or competitive wages and benefits.

The City of Ottawa Community Funding Program includes an evaluation process where City staff seek feedback from the Allocations Committee on the allocations review process. In addition, all of the funded projects produce reports at the end of the funding period, which allows the City to compare a variety of service models. While the program's framework could be easily transferred and scaled to fit the specific characteristics of other municipalities, the model does depend on municipal policy and funding support.

Expressions of Innovation
Addressing the needs of a previously underserved population.

Unique Contributing Features
Manner of implementation.

3. Analysis of Purported Evidence Relating to Success of Program
    - largely endogenous factors – flexible guidelines that permit community based innovation;
    - potential for transfer- dependant on municipal government finances and policy traditions;
    - also related to training of staff
    - applicable to wide range of situations in that it is a standard municipal program
    - the innovations are in the particular guidelines – ability to work with groups in helping them to prepare their proposals, ensuring that committee members have sufficient knowledge of the community needs and priorities

Ottawa Community Cup

Promising Practice: Integration and Celebrating Diversity through Sports

1. <u>Description of Program</u>

The Community Cup first began as an initiative of the Host Program of the Catholic Immigration Centre (CIC) in Ottawa. The Host Program initiated the Community Cup in 2005 to bring together community members and newcomers in the spirit of creating welcoming communities and facilitating friendships through the world sport of soccer. The vision of the Community Cup is to "provide an inspiring and engaging one-day multicultural, intergenerational, and inclusive event where community stakeholders, newcomers, and residents meet each other and develop new friendships". Over the years, the Community Cup has grown to combine the traditional soccer tournament with a community tent, a food tent, live music and performances, a Citizenship Ceremony, Musical Language and Art tent, a Kids Zone, Demonstration sports, and a FIFA Women's World Cup tent.

In 2011, the Community Cup included the following highlights:

*   A recreational 7-on-7 co-ed Community Cup soccer tournament hosting 24 teams made up of players aged15 and over with a focus on celebrating and connecting Ottawa's diverse communities.

*   A Community Tent where 18 different Ottawa area non-profit and community service organizations shared information about their programs and services with the community. Themes included volunteerism, sports, group activities, job opportunities, and inclusivity.

*   An International Food Bazaar where The Ottawa Mission provided quality and tasty diverse foods at discounted prices.

*   Live Multicultural and Mainstream Entertainment on a stage overlooking the soccer fields where musicians, dancers, drummers and spoken-word performers demonstrated their talent.

- A Citizenship Ceremony which provided an inspirational and pride building experience for onlookers and an unforgettable experience for the 50 newcomers who officially became Citizens of Canada at the flawless outdoor Citizenship Ceremony.

- A TD Canada Trust Kids Zone where a variety of games and activities were available to participants 14 years and under. In addition, volunteers organized a fun day full of mini-soccer games, relay races, face painting, hip hop dancing, dodgeball, an arts and crafts zone, mascots, clowns, giant bubbles and prizes.

- A Musical Language and the Art of Music "virtual village" consisting of a series of short international sing-along sessions led by volunteers from different cultural groups.

- An Interactive Art tent, introduced by the Ottawa Art Gallery (OAG), where people of all ages could go and try some very interesting visual art projects.

- A Seniors Sharing Circle, hosted by the Somali Family Services, which featured cultural tea ceremonies, story-telling, entertainment and more.

- A Demonstration Sports feature where KidSport and their volunteers provided a variety of sports demos. Participants were able to try out a new sport and learn how to get involved.

- A cultural fitness zone in the middle of the park where activities such as Tai-chi and Chinese musical instruments from the Evergreen Dance group, Acro-roping, Aikido, and more, could be enjoyed.

- A demonstration of cricket by The New Edinburgh Cricket Club in the centre of the park, and the engagement of participants in mini games.

- A FIFA Women's World Cup Soccer big screen projection of a game between team Canada and Germany, in alignment with the 2011 theme of engaging more women and girl newcomers into sport.

In addition, there were a number of activities that took place behind the scenes, including:

- The development of a "mobile app" for smart phones (iPhone, Android, Windows Mobile, or Blackberry). The interactive tool allowed people to access RSS feeds and other relevant updates posted on the website. It also provided "live" score updates for the Community Cup soccer games on game day.

- A Tie Dye T-shirts and Quilt project with the goal of connecting Youths and Seniors. In May, a group of 10 youths from the Community Connections Youth Program, and a group of Senior women from the Rwanda Social Services came together to tie-dye 200 t-shirts and to sew together a quilt for the Community Cup . The senior women and the youths, led by volunteer quilt expert Laurie Hinsperger, collaborated to make a colourful and meaningful quilt that was used as a skirt for the main stage.

- A Newcomer Women and Girls Only Basic soccer Workshop. The activity attracted some media interest and highlighted the issues faced by newcomer women in sport on CBC Morning Radio.

Apart from these specific events, the Community Cup also increases public awareness of diversity and newcomer issues with the growing media coverage it receives in the City of Ottawa and beyond. In addition to its active social media strategies on facebook and twitter, the event received publicity in 2011 from various media sources including Kick-About Magazine (Local seasonal magazine, by Alex Hughes), Due East/West (Provincial seasonal magazine by Karen Secord), Ottawa This Week (local weekly newspaper), Vision Latina (web & podcast), CHUO 89.1 fm (University of Ottawa Radio), Oldottawasouth.ca - OSCA (community website), CBC Radio 91.5 fm, All-in-a-day, Ottawa Morning, In-Town and Out, "Revista Latinomericana" Spanish program (Rogers TV interview), "Tele30" Italian program (TV interview), Commercial – PSA (created by Rogers TV), Metro – Ottawa (front page newspaper article by Joe Lafaro), The Ottawa Citizen (web gallery), Rogers TV (event program produced by Shadid Khan), Vision Latina magazine (magazine article by Felix Grande), CTV/CJOH – (TV and Web), and the catholic register (web article by Seon Park –part of "Youth Speak News")

In 2011, The Community Cup hosted a "friend-raising" event that succeeded in raising close to 60% of the funds needed through sponsorships, funding grants, and sales. The Catholic Immigration Centre Foundation is the largest supporter of the event but The Community Cup has also received funding from Heritage Canada (Celebrate Canada) and the City of Ottawa

(Civic Events). In addition, the Community Cup enjoys the support of various sponsors and partners. In 2011, this community affair involved over 40 different community organizations.

The Community Cup is evaluated through a process of surveys, interviews, evaluation forms, and feedback loops and is also analyzed and summarized in an annual report. Surveys take place every second year. While there was no survey undertaken in 2011, the following data was provided in their annual report based on "registrations, visual assessments, random questions and discussions with participants, and debrief sessions with volunteers":

> Approximately 2000 people participated in the Community Cup, including 180 volunteers. Close to 30% of these volunteers were newcomers. Most volunteers reported "experience building" as their main motivator for volunteering. Over 40% of participants were newcomers (arrived within 3 years); over 65% were immigrants from 35 different countries. Over 50% attended a previous Community Cup event and over 90% of the participants made a valuable new community contact. Equally impressive, over 95% of the volunteers reported having a great experience volunteering.

Despite its incredible growth over the past few years, the Community Cup event remains a fun and spirit-filled event.

2. <u>Analysis</u>

A fundamental Community Cup strategy is to work in *partnership* wherever possible, accounting for its success in terms of both effectiveness and sustainability. The objective is to establish and nurture long-term, "win-win" relationships that further the goals of all participants while contributing to the impact and viability of the Community Cup project. Partnership and relation-ship building takes place in many ways.

Firstly, the Community Cup encourages newcomers and established residents of all ages and backgrounds to meet one other, enjoy recreational and social activities, celebrate diverse traditions, discover opportunities, and form new connections with people and community resources. These connections create enhanced quality-of-life opportunities for newcomers and

established residents alike, raise cross-cultural awareness and increase connectivity between individuals and groups in the community.

Equally importantly, the project itself offers significant benefits to the hundreds of volunteers, many of them newcomers, who work together to plan and implement the event. For newcomers in particular, working on this project offers important opportunities to make new connections with individuals and organizations, practice language skills, gain employment experience, and feel the satisfaction of contributing to a positive, large-scale community event.

The Community Cup project generates another major benefit by bringing together a wide range of community organizations to plan and participate in the event. Each of these participating organizations has its own mandate to enrich the community through programs and services that are particularly relevant to newcomers. Bringing these organizations together within the Community Cup framework creates useful new links between the organizations themselves, generating new opportunities for long-term cooperation and synergy that benefit the organizations as well as their clients. An example of this effect is the Seniors Sharing Circle, a new feature at this year's Community Cup. The project brought together staff from several different agencies that had an interest in working with immigrant seniors, including the CIC Settlement Program, Somali Center for Family Services, and the Good Companions Centre. The inter-agency relationships, information sharing and partnership ideas that resulted from this joint project will yield positive results on an ongoing basis. Similarly, staff from several organizations that have youth-oriented programming (CIC Youth Host Program, YOCISO, Katimavik) became acquainted through their participation in Community Cup, forming the basis for coordinated activities among those organizations in the future.

As the model has become more successful and popular, other communities have become interested in organizing their own Community Cup. The transferability of this model is supported in a number of ways. Seed funding is now being provided to 6 partner organizations to hold Community Cups in the following communities: Kingston, Belleville, North York, London, St. Catharine's and Brampton. Strategies and models will be shared with these partner organizations. Finally, partner organizations will also receive training and on-site support.

Expressions of Innovation

Increasing uptake.

Unique Contributory Features
Conceptual base of program.
Manner of implementation – building on partnerships

3. Analysis of Purported Evidence Pertaining to Success of Program

    - Increasing attendance each year

    - Increasing partnerships each year

    - endogenous factors - flexibility, openness

    - exogenous factors – family celebrations are popular

    - potential for transfer is clear – it is already happening and as described above, support is being given to assist transfer.

Hamilton: St. Joseph Immigrant Women's Centre Annual Marketplace
Promising Practice: Immigrant Women

1. Description of Program

The Immigrant Women's Centre (IWC) was formed through the synergy of grassroots refugee groups and the support of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Hamilton as an informal response to the needs of hundreds of refugees arriving from Central America during the 1980s. The emphasis at that time was to assist with immediate needs including temporary shelter and provisions, orientation to the community and the search for employment. This grassroots, community-based association eventually evolved into a multi-ethnic and multi-service providing organization, focusing on the specific needs of immigrant and refugee women and their families.

According to the IWC website, in the last 25 years, self-employment has grown faster than paid employment and immigrant women are more likely to be self-employed than Canadian-born women. At the same time, women are refused financing for enterprise development 20% more often than men and are regularly charged a higher interest rate for business loans. Interestingly, despite these obstacles, the number of women entrepreneurs increased 208% between 1981 and 2001 compared with 38% for men. The Centre offers a promising practice in its delivery of enterprising and progressive solutions for women that respond to these important emerging realities.

IWC creates opportunities for women to discover their entrepreneurship and generate income through its Annual International Marketplace, an annual event organized by the Immigrant Women's Centre to give local immigrant artisans and entrepreneurs an opportunity to sell their unique and original products and gain valuable business skills, benefiting the Hamilton community and beyond. In November 2011, community members gathered for the 7th Annual International Market Place. The Marketplace has become a popular and much-anticipated event. Held at Immanuel Christian Reformed Church, the event gives local immigrant women the opportunity to gain business skills and become self-reliant by inspiring leadership and confidence among women and encouraging them to participate in Canadian culture in an economic capacity.

IWC is also in the process of developing a Micro-Lending Initiative to create training and opportunities for women in search of credit and loans for small businesses. The project is in

partnership with the Hamilton Social Enterprise Network.

In addition, the Immigrant Women's Centre will be selling products from their 'Propelle' line. 'Propelle' is dedicated to inspiring leadership among women and to encouraging emerging women leaders in our community and the world. Proceeds from the sale of Propelle products, in 2011, will go towards economic development for women, economic participation, capacity-building and independence for women, and the development of women's economic, social and political roles in our world.

2.   Analysis

The entrepreneurial experiences provided to these women through the efforts of the Immigrant Women's Centre result in a variety of positive spin-offs, which are perhaps best captured in the personal experiences of participants. One of these participants is Kayitesi, who with the support of her husband, started a business from home in February called The Thousand Hills, selling hand-woven baskets, bowls and jewellery made by women who survived the genocide in Rwanda. Kayitesi sells jewellery made from recycled magazines and baskets woven out of sisal, papyrus and banana fibre. She makes some of the crafts herself and also sends designs to a group of 800 women in Rwanda, with whom she worked as a quality controller before immigrating. Kayitesi feels inspired by the strength of these women survivors of genocide. The experience helps her to forgive as well as to develop leadership skills, but it also allows other women to make money, and at the same time, to heal through the camaraderie of sitting together while they work and trying to forget what has happened in the past.

Motivated by these success stories, the Immigrant Women's Centre in Hamilton has experienced rapid growth in the last few years, despite funding cutbacks. It's program offers promising practices in that it enables women to develop confidence and entrepreneurial capacity.

Expressions of Innovation

Addressing the needs of a previously underserved population (women with entrepreneurial interests).

Unique Contributory Features

Conceptual base of program.

Leeds: The Leeds Housing Partnership & The Housing Strategy and Action Plan

Promising Practice: Housing

1. Description of Program

The housing debate in global city centers has traditionally been about affordability and availability. However, changing demographics are beginning to shift the parameters of this discussion. Increasingly, local government authorities must ask themselves whether housing services meet the needs of all immigrant and ethnic minority communities in the city. Located in the West Yorkshire region of England, Leeds is a diverse city where 11% of the population is composed of a wide range of ethnic communities, including Black Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Irish and Jewish. With European integration and the increasing settlement of asylum seekers, the diversity of the city's population is expected to increase further.

These anticipated changes, in addition to the present need, led to the creation of The Leeds Housing Partnership, a public and private partnership of landlords, voluntary housing organizations and members of the local authorities.

As a result and as part of the overall *Leeds Housing Strategy of 2005 – 2010*, The Leeds Housing Partnership released the, "Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy and Action Plan" (BME) which was embedded in the Vision for Leeds II 2004 – 2010 (the master plan that will guide urban development in Leeds in the coming years).

2. Analysis

The impact of this plan is that it focuses exclusively on the needs and concerns of local residents specifically from the viewpoint of the most disadvantaged (BME) communities. A key aspect to achieving the goals outlined in the BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan is to ensure that language and cultural barriers do not restrict the understanding of housing options, access to social housing or the involvement in consultation processes. As it develops, the BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan proposes to address these key issues by ensuring that housing providers deliver services that are sensitive to both culture and religion. To do this, they are developing profiles of the cultural and faith needs of each community and incorporating these in

the service planning and the design of new homes. The BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan recommends increasing BME staff representation at all levels of housing providers and use outreach activities to recruit more board members from the BME community.

The BME Housing Strategy and Action Plan will improve access to housing services by providing information in a range of formats and community languages. Providing culturally appropriate information is a practical way of reducing access barriers.

Expressions of Innovation
Addressing the needs of a previously underserved population.

Unique Contributory Features
Manner of implementation.

Waterloo: Transit for Reduced Income Program

Promising Practice: Public Transportation

1. <u>Description of Program</u>

The Region of Waterloo, in southwestern Ontario, can be characterized as a combination urban–suburban–rural locale. Similar to other areas across Canada and the United States, affordable transportation, that is, transportation with reasonable financial and other costs, remains a struggle for people with low incomes that live in the region. Transportation challenges are exacerbated by the dispersed road structure that compels many people to rely heavily on cars to get around. Focusing on alternatives for low-income individuals and families is a way to support recent immigrants. Reducing transportation costs would also open up more areas of the city as a choice of residence.

The Waterloo Regional Council has a strong interest in increasing affordable transportation options for people with low incomes and has identified this objective among those listed in its current strategic planning cycle. Under the lead of the Social Services department, the intention is to identify and test strategies that would meet this goal.

To help address these challenges, the Regional government funds an innovative program to increase affordable access to public transit for people with low incomes. TRIP - the Transit for Reduced Income Program - is a program of Waterloo Region that provides the opportunity for people with low incomes to obtain a discount on Grand River Transit monthly bus passes. The program is funded by the Waterloo Regional Council through the Social Services department and is supported by Social Services, as well as Grand River Transit, and two non-government organizations: The Working Centre (Kitchener) and Lutherwood (Cambridge).

A committee that oversees TRIP also shares the interest in affordable transportation. The TRIP committee is interested in investigating and discussing strategies, through participation and consultation that directly includes people with low incomes. This has evolved from a loose group of people with general interests in affordable transit, into a committee specifically focused on providing a forum for discussion on the administration and management of TRIP.

2.   Analysis

The Transit for Reduced Incomes Program (TRIP) pass is a reduced price adult GRT pass available to people with low incomes ($24 reduction on the regular adult pass in 2008). Eligibility is based on having an income below LICO (the low-income cut-off designated by Statistics Canada). The program is available to people that are working as well as people receiving various types of social assistance (e.g. OW, ODSP). Application is made through an honour-based process managed by The Working Centre in Kitchener and Lutherwood in Cambridge. Participation in the program, which must be renewed annually, allows patrons to purchase monthly bus passes for $34 (2008). In 2007, participation was capped at approximately 1500 participants, with 800-1200 passes sold each month. While there have been continued increases in the number of passes available, there is almost always a waiting list.

Annual funding allotted to the program over the past several years has increased from $200,000 in each of 2001-2003 to $438,000 in 2007 and 2008.

The TRIP pass is quite unique, given that eligibility is based on income rather than the more common eligibility criteria of age and student status. Only three other jurisdictions in Canada were found to have similar programs, the others being Hamilton, Victoria and Calgary.

Expressions of Innovation
Increasing uptake.

Unique Contributory Features
Manner of implementation.

Education and Education Policy: Promising Practices

Dawn Zinga, Megan Gordon
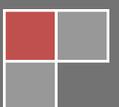
Education and Education Policy Domain: Promising Practices

Introduction

The Education and Education Policy Domain identified five priority areas that emerged from the LIP reports and continue to resonate with the LIPs. These priorities are as follows: English Language Training; Fostering Cultural Competence; Improving Educational Supports and Coordination of Educational Services for Newcomers; Improving Teacher Training; French Language Training. We have identified a promising practice for each of these priority areas. For the English Language training priority we are highlighting the Ottawa Public Library's Conversation Circle Program and including a in-depth description of the program. A brief overview of the American Excellence Association program relates to the Fostering Cultural Competence priority. The Welcoming Newcomer Students Initiative in St. Thomas More Secondary School is the promising practice for the Improving Educational Supports and Coordination of Educational Services for Newcomers priority and offers excellent transferability. A brief overview of the Alternative Teachers Accreditation Program for Teachers with International Experience addresses the Improving Teacher Training priority. The final priority, French Language Training, is represented by a brief overview of The Centre de Langues Internationales. Each of these promising practices offers insight into how a program and its approach can be designed to meet the needs identified for each of the priorities.

1. English Language Training Promising Practice: *The Ottawa Library Settlement Partnership's Conversation Circles Program*

Language has been identified as the largest barrier to integration for newcomers that impacts access to services, health care and employment opportunities, (Agrawal, Qadeer & Prasad, 2007; Bauder & Lusis, 2006; Gee, 2006; Wayland & Agrawal, 2008). An emerging promising practice that complements ESL learning is the Conversation Circle. Conversation Circles have several different formats (e.g., English Café) but generally consist of native speakers (volunteer or staff) and non-native speakers of a language. The purpose is to provide the non-native speakers with an opportunity to practice their language skills in an informal supportive social setting. Several LIP reports speak about Conversation Circles emerging informally or formally through settlement service agencies and other programs such as the Library Settlement Services offered in Ottawa and Toronto. These circles are also appearing in university and college settings (e.g. Brock University, Fanshawe College, and Berkley University). While there is limited research on Conversation Circles (Gilst, 2010), there is evidence from the LIP reports and other sources detailed below to support Conversation Circles as a promising practice.

Description of the Practice and Identification of Its Goals

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) introduced Library Settlement Partnerships (LSPs) in 2006 as a pilot initiative in Hamilton, Ottawa, and Toronto. Conversation Circles are one of many programs offered through the LSPs. Following the pilot, they were expanded so that

LSPs currently operate in 11 communities throughout Ontario. LSPs create partnerships between public libraries and settlement agencies. The overall goals of the program are as follows: to provide improved and extended settlement services; serve the initial settlement needs of new immigrants; assist with integration into the community by combining library and settlement services; encourage civic participation. Funding is provided through CIC and as such some of the program goals align with CIC's framework and funding expectations. However, it is important to note that LSP's have evolved and must also consider the missions and objectives of the various partners and these may not compare exactly with those of CIC. Specifically, settlement agencies are well versed in CIC approaches and procedures and often their mission statements and goals fit fairly closely with relevant CIC mission statements and goals. Libraries often have different mission statements and goals that are compatible with those of CIC and the settlement agencies but introduce important differences that influence the provision of programming. The mission statement of the Ottawa Public Library (OLP) is: "Building a strong Ottawa community by supporting literacy, lifelong learning, fostering inspiration and enjoyment and connecting people to each other and the world" and one of their core values is "access for all". While these are very compatible with CIC and settlement agencies, they introduce a more inclusive approach to providing services. For example, many language training programs such as LINC have eligibility criteria but the Conversation Circles offered through the LSP and delivered in the libraries do not have any eligibility criteria and are accessible to everyone.

The LSPs are housed in the Central or Main branch of each of the libraries in the participating communities. LSP services are generally not available in every library branch although branch staff can assist individuals in accessing those services. Coordination occurs at the Main branch. The Ottawa Public Library (OPL) was chosen as the highlighted promising practice over Hamilton and Toronto for a number of reasons. Toronto is a particular context and it is frequently difficult to take a model from Toronto and expand it to another location that may have a very different context. Hamilton offers a model that has more transferability but it did not experience many implementation difficulties as the Hamilton Public Library had a longstanding and well-established relationship with the primary settlement agency. In contrast, the research on the pilot study (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007) indicated that the Ottawa LSP got off to a rocky start in comparison to the other two pilot sites but the lessons learned through those early challenges have created a strong and vibrant LSP that now has transferability to other potential sites. Additionally, the OPL has a strong bilingual component that provides an interesting perspective.

How does the LSP function in Ottawa? The primary coordination takes place at the Main branch of the OPL. Within the library's organizational structure, the LSP is included with the Diversity and Accessibility Services, which provides services related to assistive devices, adult literacy, and newcomers. Reporting to the manager who oversees the department, a Community Outreach Librarian, whose position is funded by CIC, coordinates aspects of the LSP. The Community Outreach Librarian has multiple roles: promotion of library services and collections; increase circulation of world languages collection; promotion of the LSP; provide information about available services. The position often involves visits to various sites such as LINC or ESL classrooms to promote the services offered by the LSP as well as to introduce newcomers to the Canadian library environment. The Outreach Librarian seeks to inform newcomers of the library's ability to help them maintain cultural links through material available in their first language but also seeks to assist with ESL needs, promote overall literacy and integration. In addition to showcasing the library services and reaching out to newcomers in the community, the

Outreach Librarian also coordinates with the Library Settlement Workers (LSWs) at times working collaboratively to design programming and events and more frequently facilitating booking and program inclusion of library materials. Conversation circles are one of the programs that are run and organized by LSPs but operating in library spaces and listed as a library service.

LSWs have many other functions in addition to leading the Conversation Circles. Frequently, they do not act as facilitators for the conversation circles but rather organize the volunteers who facilitate the programs and work with the Outreach Librarian to develop the schedule and book the space. LSWs spend a lot of their time addressing settlement issues with newcomers and connecting them to services. LSWs are funded through CIC and are employees of specific settlement agencies. They divide their time between their home agency and the library. At the OPL, the LSPs are provided with office space as well as public spaces for accessibility and information displays. In OPL's Main branch, there is a welcoming station in the library lobby that is frequently occupied by an LSP and features flyers of all of the available programs and services for newcomers. In addition, targeted advertisements for LINC classes and other external programming are available at the welcoming station as well as being interspersed in relevant collection areas such as world languages, literacy and ESL. LSWs are also accommodated at other branches of the library. LSP services are located in library branches based on demographic statistics, accessibility of the branch, availability of necessary space within the branch, and situational factors such as the presence of adult high schools offering LINC programming and/or concentrations of newcomers within the service area. The introduction of the Outreach Librarian has enhanced coordination of LSP services, improved communication, and expanded programming.

Analysis of Key Features of the Practice

While the Conversation Circles are offered within the framework of the LSP, it is important to consider them as an independent program in terms of goals, function and key features. LSW's run the programs and they are associated with the LSW's home organization. All Conversation Circles are listed in the library's on-line and print program guides. Conversation Circles or groups are available in both official languages and offered in partnership with the following agencies: Somali Centre for family Services, Ottawa Chinese Community Services Centre, Lebanese and Arab Social Service Agency, Ottawa Community Immigration Services Organization, and Catholic Immigration Centre. The goals of the Conversation Circles are to promote literacy and provide opportunities for individuals to practice their English or French conversation skills in a relaxed and friendly setting. The LSWs recruit volunteers and follow an agreed upon protocol that involves police checks, accessibility training, and supervision of volunteers. LSWs provide the supervision and organization while the Outreach Librarian ensures the booking of spaces, coordination of other programming, and the entry of the Circles into the Library schedule and program guides.

In terms of key features, the Conversation Circles are informal opportunities to practice language skills and have no restrictions on who can attend. They operate on a drop-in basis and do not require registration. Newcomers have reported that this informal setting and ability to drop-in without feeling committed to attending every session makes the programs more accessible and better suited to their needs. Furthermore, other library programming complement the Circles and provide additional opportunities for language practice and exposure as well as addressing practical concerns such as parenting responsibilities. While there are no formal child

care provisions in place, young children may accompany their parents to the Circle and older children may be enrolled in homework clubs that are frequently offered at the same times as Conversation Circles. Additionally, the library offers a broad range of programming for different ages. Some of the Circles are specifically for seniors and some are for those with more advanced language skills. While the Conversation Circle format does not apply to other programming such as the computer tutorials, parenting groups, and community information sessions, these programs are all offered through the LSP and are other opportunities to practice language skills. Additionally, there are several storytimes held in various languages that parents can attend with their children as well as the main children's programming that provides storytimes and activities in English or French.

What is particularly striking is the level of communication and outreach that has expanded Conversation Circles. A focus on internal collaboration with other library departments has lead to new programming such as entrepreneurship for newcomers that focuses on what you need to know to get a business started and is being developed to include speakers in several different languages. The Conversation Circles exist as a stand alone program but the coordination of services to provide newcomer Homework Clubs at the same time as Circles, the inclusive nature of the Circles, and the embedding of literacy initiatives in all aspects of the library's functioning have combined to create a very supportive framework for the Circles and for the expansion of literacy skills outside these circles.

Analysis of Purported Evidence Pertaining to the Success of the Practice

In the analysis of the LSP pilot, the model was found to be an effective promising practice (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007). Conversation Circles were not evaluated as part of the pilot. However, many of the LIP reports endorsed the Conversation Circles as a promising practice and acknowledged that the Circles provide an inclusive opportunity for language learning in addition to those offered according to eligibility criteria. Another measure of success at the OPL has been the uptake of the Conversation Circes and the associated expansion of the program. In the past, a simple grid was able to list all of the Conversation Circles by time and day of the week at every participating branch. This is no longer possible due to the increased numbers of the Circles. For Conversation Circle programming that began January 2012, there are twenty-four different circles at ten participating branch locations. The Circles include: English for Beginners (2); English Group (13); English Intermediate and Advanced (2); English for Seniors (5); Mandarin-English for Seniors (1); Cantonese-English for Seniors (1).

The internal factors that have contributed to the success of this program have been the high level of coordination and communication between the LSWs, the Outreach Librarian, and the larger library community. The strong alignment between the OLP's mission statement and goals and the focus of the Conversation Circles has also contributed to the success of the program. The utilization of the branch system to provide Conversation Circles in different neighbourhoods according to need and interest has also assisted in the success of the project. Similarly, the library's responsiveness to members needs through specialized collections (more newcomer services/language materials and collections) has supported the program. The atmosphere of the library and the internal outreach that has ensured that all staff is familiar with the programming has also contributed to its success. Another interesting internal factor has been the location of the Circles. Many of them occur at tables in the open areas of the library which

reinforces that such programs are routine at the library and this broadens the understanding of what the library can offer.

The accessibility and availability of volunteers who are able to facilitate Conversation Circles are an important external factor that contribute to the success as well. Funding is also an external factor since the organization, supervision, and scheduling of the Circles are all done through CIC funded positions. The partnerships that exist within the LSP are a very important external factor that support the program by providing a range of volunteers and language options that expand beyond the Conversation Circles to other related programming. The municipal transportation system is another external factor that supports the program as it allows the scheduling team to target branches that are easily accessible via public transportation.

These internal and external factors contribute to the success of the program and also speak to transferability. OPL offers interesting insights into how to transfer this program to other locations. It has several types of branches including the main branch, district branches, community library branches, rural library branches, and the book mobiles. As such, it offers models of how services are extended to various sized branches and how members at branches that do not host services directly can be oriented to services close by or to access services on-line from the home branch or their own home. The key aspects for a successful transfer of the practice would be high levels of communication and coordination, ability to build partnerships, and encouraging program uptake among library staff, partners and clients.

2. Fostering Cultural Competence in Schools Promising Practice: *The American Excellence Association (AEA)*

While there is a substantial amount of literature on the need for enhanced cultural competence for both teachers and students, there is significantly less literature on promising programs in Canada. One program in the United States, The American Excellence Association (AEA), is a promising practice, as research on this program suggests that it builds cultural competence within the school by using a cultural relevance framework to foster academic engagement in minority youth (DeCuir-Gunby, Taliaferro, & Greenfield, 2010). The information given in this report is based on DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2010). The program was initiated in response to the achievement gaps existing between African American students and their white peers and to ensure that African American students would be well-educated. The AEA was created by the American Civil Rights Society (ACRS) in 1998, and since that time many initiatives have been developed by ACRS's affiliates. The AEA program consists of activities (e.g., tutoring, mentoring, parental involvement opportunities and cultural exposure) that have been correlated with successful student achievement (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2010). DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2010) note that while AEA was initially designed for African American students it has since been expanded to include all students of colour.

Description of the Practice and Identification of Its Goals

DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2010) explain that "The primary goals of the Whitney M. Young's AEA program are to: (a) increase the number of minority students in higher-level (honours) classes, (b) increase students' community service, (c) promote healthy social development, and (d) foster parental involvement in students' educational process" (p. 187). Several features that

are part of the program revolve around the recognition that students who maintain a 3.0 GPA or above are considered 'Excellent'. These students are involved in extracurricular activities and have regular meetings that are led by elected student officers. Parents and mentors in the community who are committed to student empowerment are also involved with the student group to provide support, guidance, and examples of future success.

Analysis of Key Features of the Practice

Educators involved in the program claim, through anecdotal evidence, that it is successful (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2010). DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2010) conducted a study that examined how different educators and advisors from different chapters (e.g., each school that has an AEA program) believed the AEA program impacted the achievement gap between African American students and their white peers. The features of the program that contribute to its success are described below: membership rules, its litany, inspire a culture of academic and cultural belonging; promotion of student autonomy, and mandatory community service. These features create opportunities for students of colour to feel a sense of belonging academically, and culturally, which researchers argue are important factors that impact academic achievement for minority students (Osterman, 2000; Taliaferro & DeCuir-Gunby, 2008; Tyson, 2002).

The program impacts school culture, plainly through its existence. Students are drawn to the program when they see peers that they admire become members. These students learn quickly that they must maintain a 3.0 GPA to become involved, which in turn impacts the achievement gap. The AEA chapter's litany is an important feature which educators believe helps develop positive academic identities:

> I am excellent. I am excellent. I am excellent. My mind is a pearl. I can do anything. Anything that my mind can conceive, I can achieve. Anything that my mind can conceive and my heart can believe, I can achieve. I am excellent. I am excellent (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2010, p. 192).

Educators describe the impact of the program as creating a 'culture of success' that students become a part of, where they are supported and surrounded by other positive successful people who look like them, and who are accomplishing things in the same ways. Notably, one guidance counsellor relayed that the AEA program is the only place in the school where coloured students are found, as well as the only place where students can find other coloured students who are excelling in school (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2010). The participation in the program also comes with special recognition that educators claim students believe is an honour.

Another feature that is considered to contribute to AEA's success is that the students elect their own officers of the program and plan activities for the group. To illustrate, DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2010) state that "These activities promote a sense of ownership of, and belonging to, the program because the participants are able to plan their own activities and lead the governance of their school's AEA chapter" (p. 187). In addition to this, the program has a 'significant cultural aspect' that addresses the cultural needs of the AEA's members, and each chapter is different and has a unique culture where membership is designated with paraphernalia (e.g., jackets, hats, etc.). This feature further contributes to the sense of belonging that educators claim has a critical relationship with academic achievement.

Last but not least, an important feature of the AEA program that contributes to its success are the various community activities students in the program participate in. Educators of this program believe that the 20 hours of community service these students are required to complete helps them to develop a critical consciousness that can influence students to become active agents in their community. In sum, the program has promoted African American academic achievement, the creation of students feeling like they belong and are culturally competent, and to the development of a students' critical consciousness through community participation (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2010).

A unique contributory feature of the program is its conceptual base. Instead of focusing on the discrepancies between the grades of minority and white students, the approach reflects a culturally relevant pedagogy perspective (Ladson-Billings, 1995) by considering all students as capable of academic success at the outset (DeCuir-Gunby et al., (2010). This approach also "…takes into account the differences in opportunity that exist related to factors such as race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and parental involvement with the students' education" (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2010, p. 187).

3. Improving Educational Supports and Coordination of Educational Services for Newcomer Promising Practice: *The Welcoming Newcomer Students Initiative – St. Thomas More Secondary School (Hamilton, Ontario)*

The idea of improved services within schools is an important consideration that frequently emerges from the LIP reports as indicated by the suggestions that several areas within the elementary and secondary school systems would benefit from improvement. Areas identified by the reports included: providing newcomers with socio-cultural orientations to education systems and how to access them; expanding human rights education in the school system; free tutoring services for youth; programs to support youth's access to post-secondary education; incorporation of diversity, multiculturalism and inclusion into the curriculum; placing youth in appropriate school settings through use of systematic and culturally-sensitive assessments based on language and scholastic achievement; encourage responsiveness of schools to newcomer students and their parents' unique needs. Several LIP reports indicate that they considered the Settlement Workers in Schools program (SWIS) as a promising practice. These reports called for the expansion of the program within their own communities and to other communities. Other research mentions the SWIS program and the benefits it offers to immigrant youth (Anisef, Brown, Phythian, Sweet & Walters, 2010).

Description of the Practice and Identification of Its Goals

St. Thomas More Catholic Secondary School (STM) in Hamilton, Ontario has a promising practice, the Welcoming Newcomer Students Initiative, that addresses many of the changes identified by the LIPs and is attracting high levels of newcomer student enrolment. The practice first came to our attention through a review of students who were attending schools outside their catchment areas. The number of newcomer youth who were choosing to attend STM, even though the school was not located in their neighbourhood and required travel, was particularly striking. The school is significantly overpopulated with 26 portable classrooms that will be partially addressed by a planned renovation of the physical building in 2012/13. It has a reputation within the community and the board as having a diverse student population, and as

such one of the attraction factors could be the school climate. However, the Welcoming Newcomer Students Initiative has been identified by many families as being an important factor in their decision to enrol their children in STM.

The Welcoming Newcomer Students Initiative is unique to STM and some of the innovations developed through this approach are being consciously replicated in other schools within the board. The initiative was created within the policies of the Hamilton Wentworth Catholic District School Board's (HWCDSB) but has developed a unique approach to realizing those policies. According to the board policies, English Language Learning (ELL) teaching releases are provided based on student ratios and allow teachers time outside of the classroom to support ELL students and conduct language assessments. According to board policies, every ELL student's language proficiency must be assessed on an annual basis so that appropriate course planning and placement can be conducted.

The initiative began in 2006 as a response to an increasing number of ELL students enrolled in STM. ELL students are considered to be at-risk students and as such, the ELL teacher is included in the Student Success department . The initiative was designed to provide high levels of student integration through involvement in extracurricular activities and integration into mainstream courses. Subject specific ESL courses have been implemented to provide bridging opportunities for students. For example, a student may be enrolled in an ESL grade nine geography class where the content of the course is the same, but the delivery model is different and taught by a subject-specific teacher with ELL qualifications or experience. The student would then be able to transition into a grade ten geography class, at an applied or academic level, following completion of their ESL grade nine geography class. While these options are available at other schools, there are a number of distinctive factors that make STM's Welcoming Newcomer Students Initiative a promising practice. In the community, there is external validation of the initiative as a promising practice, as newcomer enrolments have increased over time (see Figure 1) and this has not occurred at the same level in other high schools in the system.

Figure 1. English Language Learners (ELL) enrolled from 2006-07 to 2011-12
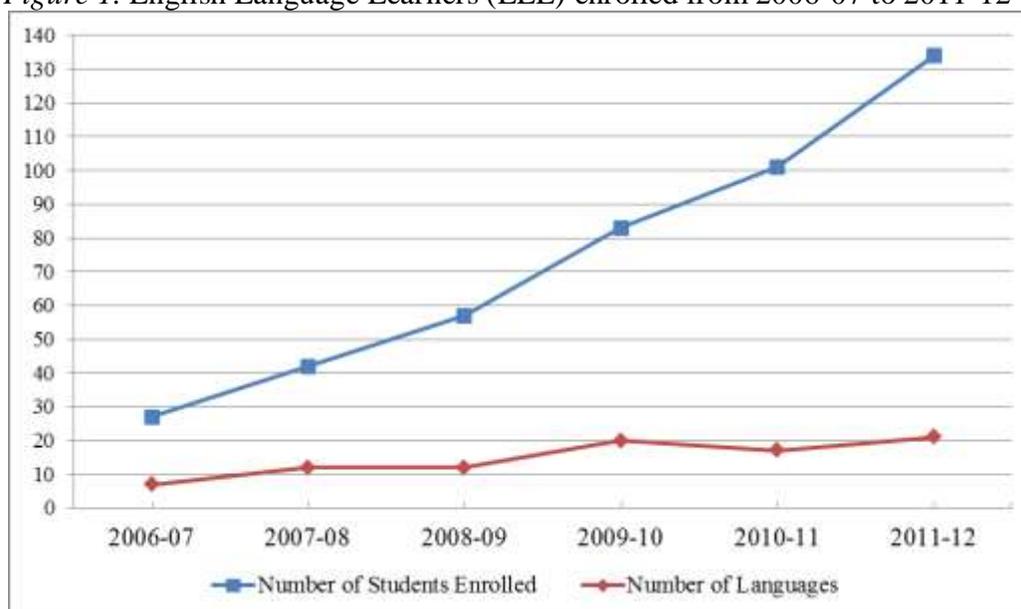
There are seven high schools within the HWCDSB and three of these high schools (St. Thomas More, Cathedral, and St. Jean de Brébeuf) qualify for a full ELL teaching position. The other four schools (St. Mary, Bishop Ryan, Cardinal Newman, and Bishop Tonnos) share a STEP teacher (ELL teacher who primarily assesses language levels) who visits each of the schools to provide support and conduct the annual language assessments. STM currently has two ELL teachers. One teaches the ESL language courses (Levels A-D) and is available outside the classroom for the equivalent of one course period each academic year. The other ELL teacher is available outside the classroom for the full academic year. While the school qualifies for an ELL teacher for two sections, which means that one teacher would be released from teaching two courses to be available outside the classroom, the principal of the school has provided the additional support by effectively managing the schools resources and overall teaching allocations. The initiative also benefits from the support of a SWIS worker who is at the school twice a week. The SWIS worker is funded through Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the school provides office space and welcomes the worker into their initiative to coordinate ELL student services with them. This provides a summary of the resources dedicated to the initiative, but to best understand the program we provide an overview of what a newcomer family would experience when enrolling in the school.

There are three main ways ELL students enrol in STM. They naturally progress to grade nine from either an elementary feeder school or from an elementary school outside STM's catchment area. For students who enter STM through feeder schools, the initiative has piloted a transition program. Students who enter from non-elementary feeder schools are required to have an intake interview with the principal, or one of the vice-principals. For students who take the former route, the transition program operates in the following way. One of the ELL teachers contacts each of the feeder schools in spring to ascertain the number of ELL students that will be coming to STM, and then visits each of the feeder schools to conduct the language assessments. Once the assessments are complete this information is used to place students in the appropriate courses. ELL students and their families attend all of the general transition evenings and activities that provides additional introduction to the ELL staff and the Student Success team and resources. The piloted transition plan was resource intensive as it required the ELL teacher to spend three weeks focused on the transition students in the feeder schools. The plan is being modified for spring 2012 to have the elementary teacher complete an ELL Transition Plan Form for all their ELL students, following a transition meeting with staff at each of the feeder schools. The ELL teacher will establish the STEP level of transitioning students by either reviewing the STEP assessment done by the elementary school teacher (that should be conducted in the winter/spring of grade eight), or by arranging for the assessment to be conducted. The annual STAGE assessment will be conducted in the fall of grade nine. This will balance the resources required and ensure that everyone who may have insight into the student's transition needs is involved in the process. Pending the pilot of the revised transition program, the board is considering implementing it system wide.

Those students who enter STM from non-feeder schools or directly following arrival into Canada without previous experience with Canadian schools are required to have an intake interview with the principal or one of the vice-principals. When discussing the intake process, the principal stressed the importance of 'the welcoming' to the school. She saw the interview with the student and the student's family as essential to orienting them to the school, and more importantly warmly welcoming them into the school community. During the interview, the

family is provided with an introduction to the school and its available resources. The school's approach of being firm, caring and committed reflects general expectations and approaches to discipline (proactive progressive discipline model). The principal will speak in French or Spanish in the interview if appropriate and arrangements are made if translation is needed (usually provided by a SWIS worker). There are frank and open discussions about religion that stress the school's expectations regarding attendance at scheduled masses and the required religion courses, as well as making connections between the student's religious background and the Catholic faith. The school's openness to respectful religious practice is stressed and the family is oriented to the school's chapel and its multi-faith availability for religious prayers and meditation. The family is also oriented to STM's tradition of getting involved and is provided with an overview of available extracurricular activities and clubs. Towards the end of the intake interview, the family is asked if the school's approach and expectations fit with what they are looking for in a school.

Following the intake interview, the family will meet with the ELL Student Success teacher and the SWIS worker. The SWIS worker generally provides settlement services for the family and translates as needed. The ELL teacher will review all of the provided documentation and then conduct the required math and language assessments which guide the course placement process. When analyzing the assessments, the ELL teacher will often consult with the English and Math departments about appropriate placement and required support. Once the assessment results are complete, the ELL teacher and the newcomer family will meet with the head of guidance to select appropriate courses and agree upon equivalency credits that may be issued based on previous transcripts. It is important to note that students are generally assigned to a guidance counsellor based on year of study, but the STM has instituted a policy that the head of guidance will work with all ELL students in order to provide them with the best support possible given their unique needs. This has been accomplished in 95% of the cases. The family is also provided with a lot of information about the school that they can take away with them, including a brochure on the connections between home, parish, and school that was developed by the parent council and printed in English, Spanish, and Tagalog.

Prior to the student's arrival in classes, the ELL teacher completes a student accommodation form, that was designed as part of the initiative, to ensure that all teachers are involved in supporting ELL students. The accommodation form provides the student's teachers with an appreciation of the student's language levels, skills, and ways that the teacher can assist the student to succeed. This opens up the opportunity for the collaboration between ELL teachers and subject-based teachers and provides the subject-based teachers with details on the type of accommodations that are needed to support the student's success. The ELL teachers and guidance counsellor work closely together throughout the year to ensure the appropriate accommodations and/or modifications are in place for the student. On-going monitoring and assessment occur throughout the year and the accommodation forms are updated for each semester, however the accommodations may be customized for specific subjects as needed. This system is followed until the student graduates, retires (leaves school due to age to transition to work or adult education programming), or achieves Stage D and fully integrates into mainstream courses.

Students who complete the ESL language courses and achieve Stage D continue to complete language assessments each year, and have accommodation forms provided to their teachers. This continued support is in keeping with research that indicates students need four to

seven years of study before they develop sufficiently high level of proficiency in academic English to be successful with minimal support. These students continue to access ELL support and programming as needed. The support and programming include: encourage getting involved in extracurricular activities, homework help, tutoring by certified teachers with ESL training, translation for parent-teacher interviews, access to ELL teacher as a resource, ESL field trips to learn about Canada, specialized guidance support through guidance office, as well as specialized programming offered by the SWIS worker. Each year, the SWIS worker organizes sessions for students and/or their families monthly or every other month. This programming focuses on settlement and education issues and has included seminars on the following: navigating the school system; post-secondary information; summer employment and recreation opportunities; report cards; EQAO and literacy tests; dental health; parenting and school engagement; legal rights and responsibilities; and government services. These sessions are offered at the school after school in the late afternoon or evening. All of this support remains available to the ELL students regardless of the students' current situations, or how well they may have integrated into the school,

Analysis of Key Features of the Practice

While many of these services and supports are available throughout the board, there are some distinctive features about how the Welcoming Newcomer Students Initiative is implemented and delivered that make it a promising practice. Specifically, the school climate is incredibly supportive of this initiative at the principal, staff, and student levels. The principal has provided an exceptional level of support for the initiative (allocating resources and encouraging staff to get ELL certification) and is extremely committed to genuinely welcoming newcomer students and their families into the school community. Teachers are supportive and work with the ELL teachers to ensure that accommodations are put in place and the subject-specific ESL courses are made available. Students take an active role in welcoming newcomer students into extracurricular activities, participating in inter-faith events, tutoring, and encouraging involvement through video-based announcements. In addition, much of the support has been designed to serve all students such as the breakfast program, the clothing locker, and the school food bank which are open to all. The program has also created and piloted the accommodation forms and the grade eight transition plans. The high level of integration and coordination of services across the school makes this initiative a promising practice.

Analysis of Purported Evidence Pertaining to the Success of the Practice

While the Welcoming Newcomer Students Initiative has not been formally evaluated, there is evidence to indicate that it is a promising practice. As previously mentioned, there have been increasing levels of newcomer student enrolments from outside the STM catchment area. Additionally, the success rates of students as evidenced by their grade averages (see Figure 2) attest to the success of the program. There are several internal and external factors that have contributed to the success of the program. Internal factors include the following: Student Success Department, an increase in newcomer students' willingness to identify needs and ask for support, the welcoming approach, the school climate, the board policies and resources, support of subject-specific teachers, and the ELL teachers. It is important to note that the school principal has been a tremendous support, and the school has been fortunate to secure an ELL teacher who has completed her MA on integrating ELL students and has spearheaded some of the innovative approaches to programming. The role of the school climate cannot be underestimated. For

example, when a group of newcomer students from Mexico requested permission to form a Salsa club they were encouraged to make it open to all students and design their own video announcement. Following the announcement, 50-90 students from the main student body showed up for Salsa dancing each week. Similarly, the external factors that strengthen the initiative are as follows: supportive community climate, word of mouth referrals, and YMCA partnership to provide SWIS worker. This school is committed to supporting the success of all students.

Figure 2. English Language Learners' (ELL) grade averages per semester of academic year 2010/11
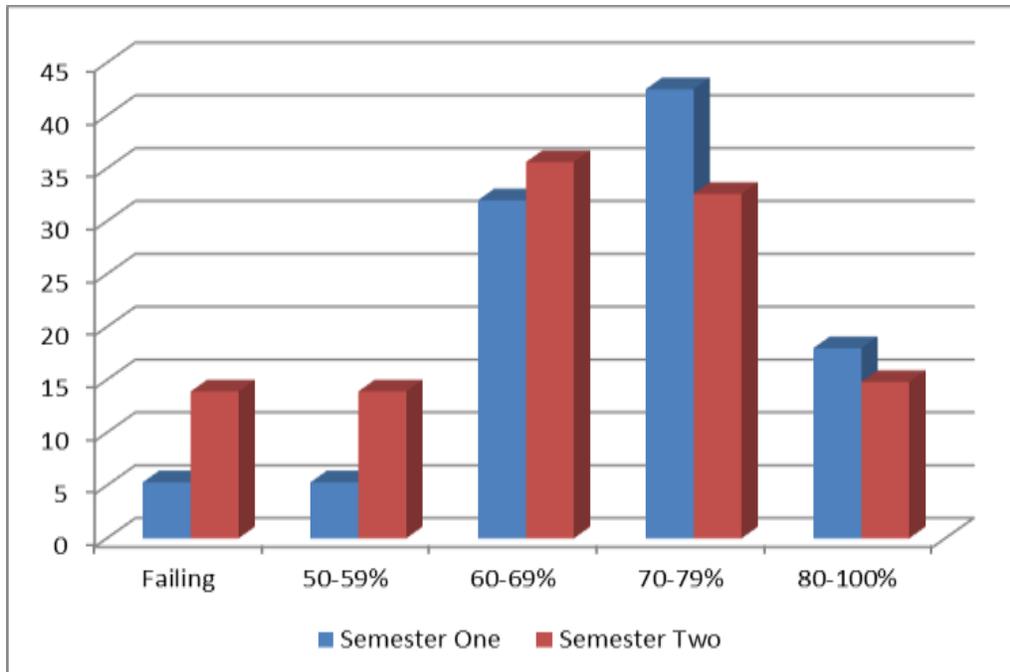
When considering the potential for transferring the practice to other locations, we identified five key elements that would have to remain incorporated when the practice was contextualized to another environment or geographic location. There has to be an element of orientation and welcoming at the entry point that provides an overview of the school system and the specific school's programming, policies, expectations, and supports. There also has to be a point person who takes the students under his/her wing, coordinates their support and accommodations, and promotes school wide collaboration for the provision of services that support students' success. There also has to be a liason, ideally a SWIS worker, who can address settlement issues, and provide translation, additional programming, and who supports coordination with the school. Equally important is encouraging ELL students to become involved in extracurricular activities and that the school climate promotes such integration. Finally, while having a point person is essential, it is just as critical that the point person is the coordinator of a broad range of services, supports and accommodations that are delivered by as many staff as possible, so that creating a network of supports is linked through regular communication and collaboration.

4. Teacher Training Promising Practice: *The Alternative Teachers Accreditation Program for Teachers With International Experience (ATAPTIE)*

Research has stressed the need for teachers to develop more cultural competence (e.g. Dunn, Kirova, Cooley & Ogilvie, 2009; Lowenstein, 2009; Thomas & Kearney, 2008; Tilley, 2006). A comprehensive review has identified the need for additional research, although it does indicate that cooperative learning shows promise as a theoretical approach to reducing prejudice and fostering cultural competence (Paluck & Green, 2009). One approach to providing culturally responsive experiences for students is to increase the number of racial and ethnocultural minority teachers in the workplace (Myles, Cheng, & Wang, 2006; Sleeter, 2001), however, many new immigrants do not have the credentials required to be certified in Ontario, nor do they have the skills and knowledge needed to teach in North America education systems (Myres et al., 2006). The Alternative Teachers Accreditation Program for Teachers with International Experience (ATAPTIE) was created as a result of this. The ATAPTIE was a pilot program that ran from 2002-2005 through a partnership between Queen's University, the Ottawa Carleton District School Board, and Local Agencies Serving Immigrants in Ottawa. It was funded by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (MTCU). Each cohort who entered the program consisted of 25-30 students. The ATAPTIE is equivalent to a Bachelor of Education program. The program involved the collaboration between the Faculty of Education at Queen's University, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, and the Local Agencies Serving Immigrants (LASI) World Skills Ottawa, a non-governmental organization. Each body was responsible for different aspects of planning and implementation of the program.

Description of the Practice and Identification of Its Goal

Myles, Cheng & Wang (2006) state that "The goal of the ATAPTIE programs is to best support the teacher candidates so that they can enter into the community of practice and ultimately find viable employment in Ontario elementary schools" (p. 244). In other words, the primary goal of the program is to provide new immigrants who have been unable to become certified teachers in Ontario with international teaching experience (e.g., skills and knowledge needed to re-certify in Ontario).

In order to achieve this goal, teacher candidates are expected to complete the following three conditions within a three-year period: (1) a degree in education (e.g., eight academic courses and workshops in specialized areas); (2) an Ontario teaching certificate (e.g., 70 days of school-based practicum scheduled for observational and teaching experiences that begins after eight weeks of summer courses); (3) employment in Ontario schools. More specifically, students develop and refine their philosophical and pedagogical statements in order to integrate the methodological and theoretical features of Canadian teacher education (Myles et al., 2006).

During the first eight weeks of summer courses (year one) teacher candidates are acquainted "…with the Ontario curriculum, teaching methodologies, subject areas, and classroom management issues" (Myres et al., 2006, p. 235). They are deemed successful if they can demonstrate their "learning to their professors, associate teachers, the Ontario College of Teachers, and potential employers" (Myles et al., 2006, p. 234). During the school-based practicum they work with principals and teachers in Ontario elementary schools. This is considered the most important feature of the program, as it contributes directly to the accomplishment of their degree in education and their employment in Ontario schools in year

three. Myres et al. (2006) stats that:

> In accordance with the philosophy of the faculty of Education to which the
> ATAPTIE program is attached, the challenge is not only to move candidates closer to
> old timer skills, sensitivity to students, and an understanding of curricula, but also to
> help them develop a critical perspective on teaching and learning through their
> practicum experiences in Ontario schools (Upitis, 2000) (p. 235)

Analysis of Key Features of the Practice

Various publications on the program provide insights into the benefits and how it can be replicated in other sites (Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2004; Cheng, Myles, & Wang, 2006; Myles et al., 2006; Zhang & Cheng, 2006). While the current lack of available positions in the teaching profession poses certain logistic issues, the lessons learned from this promising practice are relevant and transferable.

Cheng, Myles & Wang (2006) discuss the evaluation work of the Assessment and Evaluation Group (AEG) on the ATAPTIE program, more specifically, on "program implementation and successes as well as an appraisal of the program's potential for sustainability" (p. 104). The findings presented by Myles et al. (2006) consider the opportunities for ATAPTIE teacher candidates during their practicums. The features of this program that are considered to contribute to its success and innovation include positive experiences with students, associate teachers, and the school environment, as reported by participating teacher candidates. From the perspective of teacher educators, more specifically, those involved in the program, the program's success is based on the ability of the teacher candidates to possess 1) a willingness to be reflective practitioners and good observers 2) a willingness to put in time and be involved beyond the classroom 3) common sense 4) an understanding of child-centered approaches to teaching 5) an understanding of child development 5) an adequate command of English (Cheng, Myles, & Wang, 2006). Innovative features include the ability of the program to address the needs of a previously underserved population (international experienced teachers), facilitate integration with other programs (see above), and promoting ancillary objectives (such as bridging).

In support of this program as a promising practice, the Caledon Institute of Social Policy (2004) reported that of its first class of internationally trained teachers, 76% (19 out of 26) are now working in their profession. Since the beginning of the three-year initiative of the ATAPTIE program, the World Skills Organization "has spent the last two years applying the lessons from ATAPTIE to entry programs for immigrants in four additional employment streams: accounting and finance, non-information technology engineering, health care and trades" (Caledon Institute of Social Policy, 2004, p. 2).

5. French Language Training Promising Practice: *The Centre de Langues Internationales (CLIC)*

The literature on French language training and newcomer needs is particularly sparse, stressing the need to identify local promising practices and document them so that they can be shared with other regions. Nevertheless, the last major theme that emerges from the LIP reports was French language training. The key suggestion regarding French language training was to build the capacity of all newcomer service agencies to be able to function bilingually in both official languages. Three of the LIPs (e.g., Kingston, Ottawa, and London and Middlesex) identified the Centre de Langues Internationales Charpentier (CLIC) program as a promising practice. The Kingston LIP explicitly stated that the CLIC program is the best practice for improving collaboration between language and settlement service providers (this program is the same as the LINC program, but offers French language training). The Ottawa LIP encouraged the use of the CLIC program to enhance the quality and availability of French training as a strategic direction and action plan. Based on information provided on the CLIC website, this centre has specialized in the teaching of French and English as a Second Language for 28 years. In 1998, the CLIC was accredited with Public Works and Government Services Canada as a service provider of official-languages training (French and English) to the federal government, yet they also offer made-to-measure courses that meet the particular requirements of businesses as well as private individuals and a French Immersion Program. While this report focuses on the potential of the French Language training, the CLIC program also provides the same services for English and Spanish Language learning.

Description of the Practice and Identification of Its Goals

The information provided in this report has been taken from the Centre de Langues Internationales Charpentier website. Centre de Langues Internationales Charpentier (n.d.a.) states that "At 'CLIC', our purpose is to enable our students to become proficient in their second language so that they may express themselves with anyone, anywhere, anytime and about anything. The students are presented with several options: Private courses (1 student per teacher). Semi-private courses (2 students per teacher). Small workshops (3-8 students per teacher). An immersion program is also offered. " (para. 2).

Before the student enters the program, he or she is evaluated. The evaluation model is used to determine the student's 'exact level of competence in his second language' and to measure the following competencies: "level of comprehension, the quality of his oral proficiency in verbal structures, vocabulary (limited or broad), contemporary and colloquial expressions, grammar and syntax, [and] extent of linguistic reflexes, [as well as] the candidate's learning profile in academic and practical background in the second language, personality, speed of assimilation, [and whether the student is a] visual learner or listener" (para. 7-8). After the evaluation is complete, the length of the program is determined and approved by the student. The language programs are structured in levels (e.g., Beginner 1 2 3 (Level A), Intermediate 1 2 3 (Level B), Advanced 1 2 3 (Level C), and Perfecting stage 1 2 3 (autonomy) (Level E)). Likewise, the schedules and length of classes vary, but much of the time students train once a week and length of classes range from 3 hours to a full day.

Analysis of Key Features of the Practice

The program administrators consider its success stems from the unique learning strategy they employ, and that every student is thoroughly evaluated with a 'made to measure' program. This unique learning strategy is called the communicative method and was developed by Charpentier (n.d.b.) following a four year case study. It is a method based on the student, instead of an unattainable objective created in large group classes. The made to measure program is an approach which customizes each student's learning program.

The communicative method is based on an "initial diagnosis of [the student's] linguistic strengths and weaknesses and on the belief that each one [student] deserves a made to measure program taking into account a unique learning profile" (Centre de Langues Internationales Chartpentier, n.d.b., para. 1) (this process is described above). This means that the CLIC program does not continue teaching new concepts unless the student has grasped the material at hand. This is the major feature believed to contribute to the program's success. Another important distinction is that the evaluation process is conducted before the student begins the program. The program is founded on the belief that the better they know about the student, the more efficient his or her learning process will be.

In addition, the initial diagnostic evaluation "also allows us to discuss the candidate's needs, objective, availability and budget. All of these factors will be taken into account in order for the "CLIC" to custom-build a personalized language program for the candidate" (Centre de Langues Internationales Chartpentier, n.d.b., para. 11). Thus, an important component of this program is the partnership formed between CLIC and the student through both initial diagnostic evaluations.

Lastly, the CLIC is diverse in its programming in that it offers special services for employers and firms. These services include various forms of programming where employees participate to enhance their second language competency (Centre de Langues Internationales Chartpentier, n.d.c). What is notable about these services is the testimonies given by employees and employers of various firms (Centre de Langues Internationales Chartpentier, n.d.d). Many of the testimonials discuss partnerships they have developed with CLIC and praise the quality and professionalism of its instructors. Several claim that they were very surprised with their own successful achievements. To illustrate, Brigitte Dubé states:

> It is difficult to believe for people who know me well but with my teacher's help, I have finally succeeded in learning English. I must continue but my progress is constant. For my friends, I was considered a lost cause. So for them, to see me express myself so well in English is no less than a miracle! CLIC has been the best way for me to complete my learning. It is an extraordinary group of teachers. Now I feel it is fun to speak English (Centre de Langues Internationales Chartpentier, n.d.d, para. 3).

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Health and Healthcare:
Promising Practices

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WELCOMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

LES COMMUNAUTÉS ACCUEILLANTES
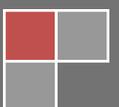
Health and Healthcare Domain: Promising Practices

Executive Summary

Health inequities are emerging in sub-groups of immigrants with various social, cultural, ethnic, demographic or economic vulnerabilities. Accessing care for which newcomers are eligible is limited by several factors including the fear of jeopardizing immigration applications by seeking care, language barriers, culturally inappropriate care, and difficulties navigating the health system (Gagnon, 2002).

Given the difficulties that immigrants face in terms of health status and the use of health care, the following report reviews Local Immigrant Partnership (LIP) Strategic Plans in order to identify health priorities described within these documents by individual LIPs, the existence of gaps and shortfalls, as well as promising practices discussed in these plans. Overall, LIP plans were inconsistent in their identification of health as a priority area. Some plans did not mention health at all. Others set health within the social determinants of the health framework and clearly identified health as a priority area for newcomers, along with clear strategies to improve health and the use of health care services. Amongst this latter group of LIPS that recognized the importance of health (Bathurst-Finch, Guelph-Wellington, Kingston, Lawrence Heights, London-Middlesex, Ottawa, Toronto Don Valley, Toronto East, and Toronto West Downtown), LIPs suggested reductions in the cost of health care (i.e., reducing or removing the cost of interim health insurance before OHIP coverage begins); removal of other systemic barriers to care (i.e., language), and improved access. Other health priorities that were commonly mentioned include:
- improve mental health services;
- improve food security;
- need for additional research on the composition of immigrant populations in each municipality (i.e., size, origins, religious affiliation, needs) and the efficacy of programs directed toward immigrants;
- improve collaboration between government levels and between service agencies;
- improve communication support and outreach between various government levels and agencies, between agencies and clients, and between government and agencies;
- ensure cultural competency of health care providers.

Scope of Part 2

Part 2 of this report will identify, document and analyze examples of promising practices of welcoming communities from across Ontario specific to health. The report is based on the review of available LIP Strategic Plans and relevant literature. The method follows the WCI tool for assessing promising practices.

Priority 1: Reduce Costs Related to Health Services

Despite the general availability of OHIP coverage and 'free' healthcare, the cost of health-related services is often a barrier. For example, the three month waiting period for OHIP coverage, coverage issues with the Interim Federal Health Program (for refugees), and the high cost of personal health insurance create barriers to care. In addition, basic dental and eye care is not covered by OHIP. Given cost issues, LIPs called for ways to reduce these costs by: i) having settlement workers, health care, and social workers identify health providers or clinics willing to provide pro bono (or reduced-cost) urgent care and emergency services to newcomers on a case-by-case basis during the three month waiting period for OHIP; and (ii) eliminating the 3 month waiting period for OHIP.

Promising Practice:
Reducing Cost and Identifying Pro Bono Services for immigrants is a community specific strategy that can be challenging. Most often, it is up to the case managers and intake workers to be aware of such services in the community. On the flip side of financial barriers that limits access, another issue with access is underutilization. As noted by Wayland (2010) "the human services that immigrants need do not differ greatly from those of the broader population…Immigrants need to access the same services that are relied upon by the rest of the population" (p.11). With the possible exception of basic and/or essential services, such as municipal services and acute health care, it is generally thought that immigrants do not access their "fair share" of services (Wayland, 2010). In spite of significant need, recent immigrants often under utilize health and social services at large. As a result, the integration of immigrants through municipal and non-governmental channels can be critical in reducing costs for specialized care.

A.   Description of the Practice and Identifications of Its Goal:

Given that the cost for specialized care is not unique to newcomers, strategies to offset cost for newcomers should consider current services available to low-income families. For example, many municipal government programs (i.e. City of Hamilton Dental Support Program) offer a wide range of services either at no cost, or reduced cost, for families of low income. Despite some restrictions on the discretionary dental program, items that are covered include:

- examinations, x-ray and treatment limitations

- fillings- both silver and white

- restorations

- root canal for front teeth only

- extractions and surgery

- general anaesthesia and sedation (with limits)

In addition to municipal government programs, non-governmental organizations also have programs in place that offer specialized care to newcomers and non-status persons as well as to low income families and the homeless. For example, the Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre, a non-profit agency primarily funded through the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant (HNHB) Local Integration Health Network (LHIN), offers an Oral Health Program that is aimed at promoting oral health among individuals and groups that are underserved and who lack access to adequate oral health care.

B.   Analysis of the Key Features of the Practice:

- integrates immigrants through Local Public Services

- increases equitable access to health and well-being, as it is free of systemic barriers

- aims to provide primary health care and services that are accessible, available and appropriate

- the provision of services address the specific issues of people who experience barriers to access

- considers the impact on the health and well-being various forms of oppression including racism, sexism, ableism, heterosexism, ageism, classism and economic oppression have on individuals and communities

C.   Expression of Innovation:

- broad focus on the marginalized groups (low-income) will benefit everyone in the community, including newcomers, without discrimination

Priority 2: Improving Access (Overcoming Language and Cultural Barriers)

A lack of either English or French language ability, along with cultural competency issues, was frequently cited as a barrier to care. LIPs identified the need to promote the understanding of cultural differences and increase the ability and cultural competency of all healthcare providers to respond to the diverse health needs of newcomers through outreach/training. In addition, interpreters with medical training language skills should be available in hospitals, health care clinics and social service agencies. LIPs also called for increased access to health care for women, non-status immigrants, and refugee claimants. They also noted that culturally sensitive information be provided in various languages and promoted language simplification for information made available in agency brochures.

Need for Interpretation Services: Each year, Canada welcomes approximately 250,000 legal permanent immigrants, an estimated 18% of which have little or no knowledge of English or French. Ample research has shown that these residents with Limited English and Limited French Proficiency (LEP/LFP) have restricted communication with primary healthcare providers. As a result, their health may be compromised as they do not have the same access to universal healthcare and do not receive the same quality of care enjoyed by other residents. Evidence demonstrates that patients who cannot communicate effectively with their healthcare providers often show delays in seeking care, seek more care in the Emergency Department, have reduced comprehension during medical encounters, are less adherent to medical instruction, and are less satisfied with the care they receive. Likewise, patient-provider language barriers make it difficult for providers to ensure confidentiality and obtain informed consent, to understand patients' symptoms, to communicate a diagnosis and treatment (which can lead to unneeded admissions and diagnostic testing, misdiagnosis and inappropriate prescription of medication), to ensure effective after-care and make successful referrals to other providers.

The provision of quality interpreting services in the delivery of healthcare can reduce patient-provider language barriers, and thus reduce the aforementioned negative effects by improving communication, access and quality of care. Many models of delivery of interpretive services exist, including in-person interpretation, remote interpretation using technology, telephone interpretive services, machine translation, and translated written materials. Several types of interpreters also exist, each with different levels of professionalism and effectiveness. Namely, the gold standard in interpretation unequivocally refers to professionally trained medical interpreters whose sole function in the healthcare setting is to interpret. Conversely, ad-hoc interpreters, individuals whose primary job function in the healthcare setting is something other than interpretation, are often a less effective alternative and include bilingual clinical and non-clinical staff, fellow patients, as well as family and friends.

The Current Situation in Ontario: In Ontario, basic interpretation funding and programs exist for hospitals but there is a paucity of such programs for community-based primary healthcare. With an increasing population of LEP/LFP residents, there is a growing need for primary healthcare, central program support in Ontario. The lack of interpretation program initiatives stems in part from the various barriers to adopting interpretive support. These include the accuracy of interpretations, absence of funding, risk management and liability to organizations, and lack of timeliness for accessing interpreters.

Moreover, no province in Canada has spoken-language interpreting as a legislated part of its healthcare system. In fact, it seems that only very few jurisdictions around the world (two states in the USA, New Zealand and parts of Australia) have passed legislation to address this issue. Currently in Ontario, healthcare providers set their own policies and procedures regarding interpreting without benefit of an external legislative or policy framework. Services are provided through a patchwork of contract/fee-for-service interpreting offered by not-for-profit and for-profit agencies, institution-based and telephone service delivery, with some community-based interpreting available through settlement agencies. In fact, it is only as of

2008 that a National Standard Guide for Community Interpreting Services, developed by the Canadian Healthcare Interpretation Network, was established, which specifies the requirements for the provision of quality community interpreting services to ensure reliability in the provision of such services nationwide.

Many policy considerations need to be addressed before implementing interpretation programs. Markedly, it is essential to determine the magnitude of the language problem, identify where the problem is most prevalent (i.e. new immigrant areas) and most dangerous (i.e. ER), identify the current approaches that are being used, determine who will pay for medical interpretative services, and address the methods that will be used to train interpreters and practitioners.

Interpretation Programs in Primary Care: Australia's Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) National, part of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, can be viewed as a best practice as it is one of the only existing government-funded national interpretation programs. The goal of TIS National is to facilitate contact between non-English speakers and interpreters, enabling access to government and community services, including primary care.

TIS National exclusively uses nationally accredited contracted interpreters to provide, on a fee-for-service basis, immediate telephone interpreting services, as well as pre-booked telephone and on-site interpreting for face-to-face assignments. TIS National's telephone interpreting services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to all persons and organizations in Australia and have access to over 1,900 interpreters who speak more than 170 languages and dialects. To access a telephone interpreter, clients call TIS National for the cost of a local call.

For use in primary care, TIS National has established free priority telephone lines and limited on-site interpreting services for emergency service organizations, private medical practitioners and pharmacies. Specifically, this free telephone interpreting service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and helps medical practitioners and pharmacists to communicate with their non-English speaking patients who are Australian citizens or permanent residents.

In Australia, it is estimated that 20 per 1000 residents speak English 'not well' or 'not at all' and this is regarded as the threshold for needing interpreters in medical encounters. Despite the availability of the Doctors Priority Line, census data show that the average rate of utilization for general practitioners is less than 2 per 1000 population (or less than 10% of the time when estimated necessary). This is believed to be a result in part from the abovementioned barriers to adopting interpretive services. The good news, however, is that the uptake of this free service has been increasing by more than 10% per year in recent years, which underlines its practicality and efficacy.

Promising Practice: Policies and Procedures: In terms of policies and procedures regarding interpretive services, the Massachusetts' program can be considered a best practice. As a result of Massachusetts's title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination against national origin (and is related to individuals with LEP), it is a legal requirement for

Massachusetts hospital emergency departments to provide medical interpreter services to individuals requiring language access services.

In 1996, the Massachusetts Division of Medical Assistance established an interpretive services quality improvement initiative allowing hospitals to establish minimum standards of practice to ensure Massachusetts Health members' access to trained medical interpreters at all key points of contact throughout the hospital.

Moreover, as of 1998, the Massachusetts Health Access Program has offered two state-wide training programs (a Comprehensive Training Program of 54 hours and an Introductory Training Program of 15 hours) whose goal is to increase the capacity of healthcare providers to meet the needs of Massachusetts residents with LEP. Then, in 2000, the Massachusetts legislature enacted Chapter 66 of the Acts of 2000 that requires the provision of competent interpretive services in conjunction with all emergency room and acute psychiatric services provided to patients with LEP in Massachusetts. Since then, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Office of Refugee and Immigrant Health has funded the Massachusetts Medical Interpreter Association to develop an advanced training program consisting of 20 three hour sessions involving role playing and discussion of case scenarios.

Based on the success of Massachusetts' current interpretive services initiatives, a report was created to identify and describe the components of an optimal interpretive services program for primary care settings. The underlying assumption is that given the differing needs and resources of each institution and the various populations and communities it serves, flexibility is important in designing a program that provides meaningful access to individuals with LEP.

Key Characteristics Common to Successful Interpretation Programs Include:

• The program is structured with comprehensive written policies and procedures.

• The program includes regular, systematic assessment of the language needs of people in the service area.

• The program uses the community needs assessment and an assessment of its own resources in determining the types of language assistance to include in its delivery system.

• The program establishes specific training and competency protocols for both interpreters and providers.

• The program has a monitoring and evaluation system in place.

Promising Practice in Ontario: Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services

A.   Description of the Practice and Identifications of Its Goal:

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services is a non-profit charitable organization that aims to improve health outcomes for the most vulnerable immigrants, refugees, and their communities by facilitating access to services and addressing systemic inequities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Under its umbrella, Access Alliance Language Services (AALS) is an independent fee-for-service program committed to developing standards for interpreter training and practice, and providing interpretation and translation services to individuals with LEP/LFP seeking the delivery of services. AALS is a team of coordination staff and freelance language professionals who provide a range of services such as interpretation, translation, audio/video language recordings, cultural competency training, organizational capacity-building, and consulting services to respond to language access needs of individuals, organizations, families, and communities. AALS was put into place to address the growing need within the GTA – where almost 50% of Canadian newcomers settle – for a community-based interpretation program for individuals with LEP/LFP.

B.   Analysis of the Key Features of the Practice:

Specific interpretation services offered by AALS include face-to-face interpretations (at home or at work; for one-on-one or group interpretation) using consecutive and/or simultaneous interpreting. Telephone interpretation services are also available in the form of message relays or conference calls. Furthermore, in 2012, AALS launched Remote Interpretation Ontario (RIO), a service that provides high quality, immediate, over-the-phone interpretation that is delivered affordably through a consortium of not-for-profit interpreting agencies. They also developed a strategic alliance with Language Line Services© to supply additional languages and to cover any overflow that they have in their language portfolio. Language Line Services is the largest over-the-phone interpretation provider in North America, with a network of professionally tested, trained, and monitored interpreters. Together, RIO and Language Line Services is accessible from anywhere within North America with their toll-free number. Services offered include immediate, over-the-phone interpretive assistance available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, by highly qualified and trained interpreters in over 175 languages.

Acknowledging the importance of providing services from trained professional interpreters, each of AALS's interpreters is screened for suitability and tested for language proficiency and aptitude for interpreting using provincially accepted language and interpretation skills assessment tools. In addition, each interpreter is a graduate of a 70-hour community interpretation training program or of an interpretation degree from an accredited college or university, and has followed a minimum of a 30-hour college-level course in Medical Terminology. To ensure continuous quality service, each interpreter participates in ongoing professional development opportunities at Access Alliance and elsewhere and ongoing quality assurance initiatives.

C. Expression of Innovation:

Ontario residents with LEF/LFP have reduced access to primary healthcare services and receive sub optimal quality of care because they have restricted communication with their care providers. A viable way to address this issue would be to establish primary healthcare central program support for interpretive services. Currently in Ontario, Access Alliance Language Services can be considered a promising practice in this regard as it meets many of the requirements needed for an effective program.

D. Unique Contributory Features:

The implementation of a language assistance program is most likely to succeed where there is an organization-wide commitment to develop and staff competent interpreter services, and to include a variety of interpretation support depending on the context, as is the case with Access Alliance. Additionally, a successful interpretation program should involve high level organization endorsement and develop comprehensive written policies on language access. Therefore, we have selected AALS – a program that is already up and running in Ontario – as a promising practice for a community-based interpretive services initiative. With more research and reform in virtue of key characteristics from the abovementioned Australian and Massachusetts initiatives, it may prove a useful model for other jurisdictions.

Promising Practice:
New Routes to Community Health (http://newroutes.org/) was a four year collaborative media project with organizations in eight American cities: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis-St Paul, Oakland, Philadelphia and San Francisco. In each case, immigrant groups, media makers, and community institutions (i.e., colleges, universities, television and radio stations, and advertising agencies) jointly produced original health-related media content. Media included television and radio features, radio novellas, first person narratives, live theater, print materials, and Internet and social marketing campaigns.

A. Description of the Practice and Identifications of Its Goal:

A recent grant program, "New Routes to Community Health", funded eight community media partnerships designed to encourage innovative use of locally produced media for health improvement in immigrant communities. The projects took place in vulnerable immigrant communities with limited English proficiency and low-wage jobs. A national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, directed by the Benton Foundation and MasComm Associates, "New Routes to Community Health" included immigrant community organizations, local media organizations, and a "managing partner" organization. As the New Routes projects unfolded, lessons emerged that were salient for community health improvement. First, unanticipated project leaders emerged during the media-making process. Second, communities often chose to focus on issues related to mental well-being and social functioning in their media-making efforts. Third, youth and young adults often played critical roles as "brokers," navigating cultures, languages, generations, systems, and new technologies.

Based on the idea that more people will continue to use easily accessible media the projects indicated that in-language media can clearly offer value for health improvement efforts in immigrant communities. Local media, with its affordable production and distribution capabilities, can shape new networks on an expanding range of platforms.

Shift of Focus to Voice of Immigrants:
New Routes to Community Health was grounded in the belief that everyone in society benefits when immigrants live healthy, productive lives. Integrating immigrants into work and social life is key to building healthy communities. Through New Routes, immigrants also built partnerships within the larger community, giving voice to their needs and enhancing their leadership and communication skills.

Various Health Medium:
The use of media to increase access offers value for health improvement initiatives in communities experiencing significant health disparities.

The critical aspect of community members' involvement is provided in the following ways:
- Generating priorities for health improvement

- Contributing to how the message is framed

- Guiding the choice of media and how it is disseminated

- Offering opportunities for leadership and risk taking

- Envisioning a different future

- Participating in evaluation, constructing the questions that are important and determining how the evaluation proceeds

Research and findings from New Routes suggest that media making in the community can boost the impact of community health improvement and social change initiatives.

B. Analysis of the Key Features of the Practice:

- Use storytelling to motivate action for social change

- Engage community members in all aspects of the media-making process

- Build on strengths that already exist within the communities

- Combine local media making with other strategies to improve community health

- Clearly define the message and the community you intend to engage

- Leave community organizations better equipped for community health improvement than when the project started

- Overcome informational, linguistic, cultural and systemic barriers

C. Expression of Innovation:

Leadership Development Through Media Making
The process of collaborative media production and storytelling provided a powerful opportunity to develop authentic, community-based leadership within immigrant communities. Youth and young adults in immigrant communities are assets in many communities. The use of media to build relationships and help reallocate power in the interest of community health can attract young people at many levels of the process. It's a natural fit: youth live in a media saturated world. Tools are readily accessible to them and often easy to use, and creating their own media is both fun and popular, as evidenced by websites like YouTube.

Bridging Divides
Community leaders who emerged through the media-making process used media making to bridge generations, cultures, legal status, newcomer and receiving groups, languages, and in some cases, national boundaries.

Addressing Mental Health Concerns as Integral to Improving Overall Health
This point was true across all program sites. The name New Routes to Community Health describes a journey. This report represents its final step. Our purpose was to look outside the New Routes experience to offer a broader set of recommendations from the field that can be used by funders, media makers, and immigrant organizations as they devise new media-making collaborations.

D. Unique Contributory:

Funding Method
Grants were given to collaborations in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis/St Paul, Oakland, Philadelphia and San Francisco. In these communities, immigrant groups, media makers and prominent community institutions worked together to produce original content in English as well as in immigrants' first languages, including Amharic, Chinese, Creole, French, Lao, Somali, Spanish, Swahili and Vietnamese. Grant recipients created a wide range of media, including television and radio features, tele-novellas, first person narratives, live theater, print, the Internet and social marketing campaigns. Partners included community institutions such as major colleges and universities, television and radio stations, an advertising agency and a museum.

Recommendations for Funding and Evaluation

Many media initiatives to reduce health disparities have centered on "health education". The underlying theory is that knowledge will motivate action. Results from inquiry, along with other research evidence, suggest that efforts should center on community engagement. In fact, there is good evidence that because of their engagement, immigrants who are active in their communities become more motivated to learn about opportunities to improve their lives and overall well-being (Lai & Hynie, 2010). Those interviewed for this report indicate that the process of media making engenders engagement and builds leadership within communities. These outcomes suggest that the media-making process is often as useful in improving community well-being as the media product itself. Our recommendations for funders include the following:

- Structure funding and support to spur innovation.

- Leverage the insights, experience, and interests of local funders.

- Encourage communities to define results important to them.

- Allow time for organizations to build trust, establish partnerships, engage communities, support positive youth development, and make media.

- Support research and evaluation driven by community voices and priorities.

Meaningful Community Engagement

Success happens when community members have genuine power to identify the health challenges most important to them and create solutions for them. This report describes the powerful role community media can play in making those solutions possible through innovative funding, engagement, and partnership models.

Hub for Information Exchange and Support

New Routes to Community Health was funded through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Vulnerable Populations portfolio. The Benton Foundation and MasComm Associates, acting as the National Program Office, provided direction and technical assistance. This included national training conferences, site visits and on-going advice for grant recipients via phone, e-mail and the New Routes Web site. The NPO acted as a hub for information exchange, connecting New Routes grant recipients to others who are doing similar work.

Priority 3: Improve Mental Health Services

LIPs identified the need for increased access to a range of mental health services as being critical for newcomers, including issues associated with the stress of moving to a new country with its accompanying isolation, and assistance with post-traumatic stress and/or victims of torture or abuse, especially amongst refugees. Mental health services could be improved through:

(i)   education of mental health service providers about the needs of newcomers;

(ii)   improved collaboration between settlement and ethno-cultural organizations and health care providers in order to help refugees access mental health services and ancillary health services;

(iii)   increased availability of short-term crisis counselling, long-term mental health supports and ongoing programming that promotes the mental health of newcomers;

(iv)   building the capacity of settlement workers to provide mental and emotional health information and referrals to their clients;

(v)   partnering with residents and grassroots groups to develop culturally competent and community-based orientation and information material on mental and emotional health, and

(vi)   providing funding for ongoing training for trauma counselors and increasing the number of counselors educated and trained in working with survivors of war/trauma and support for them.

Promising Practice:

Across Boundaries (http://www.acrossboundaries.ca/) (AB) is a community mental health centre that focuses on mental health issues by recognizing the spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, social, cultural, linguistic, economic and broader environmental aspects of health. Across Boundaries provides a range of support and services in the Toronto area for individuals experiencing mental health difficulties and mental illness. Across Boundaries provides a range of support and services in many languages including Urdu, Hindi, Tamil, Farsi (Dari and Pashto) Somali, Swahili, Amharic, English, Mandarin, Pilipino, Sinhalese, Arabic, Antawi, Yoruba, and Punjabi.

A. Description of the Practice and Identifications of Its Goal:

Service provided at AB is based on an anti-racism/anti-oppression conceptual framework that links together *three interrelated components:*

a.   Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression education and training which goes beyond cultural sensitivity and includes a critical analysis of power relations, personal values, beliefs and attitudes

b.   Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression organizational change which involves;

   i.   identifying what practices and structures need to be changed

   ii. determining what supports are needed to make changes

   iii. planning and implementing the required changes and

   iv. evaluating, monitoring and implementing the changes

104

c. Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression service delivery i.e. ensuring that service providers are reflective of ethno-racial communities and knowledgeable about issues of race, gender, power. Providers should also ensure that people of color are involved in planning, implementing and evaluating services that are appropriate to the needs of communities of color.

d. A community development approach that will promote the active participation of people of different races in every component of the mental health system.

e. Operating within an anti-racism/anti-oppression framework to promote equity and access for people of color by challenging systematic racism/oppression in mental health service delivery.

f. The anti-racism/anti-oppression education and training to assist other health service providers in addressing inequities in service development and delivery.

In keeping with the above mandate and principles, *Across Boundaries* provides programs and new initiatives that integrate skills building, social and recreational activities, support groups, alternative and complementary therapies, art therapy, creative expressions, community kitchen, individual supports and community outreach. The majority of these programs are offered in-house with the exception of individual support/case management services, family support and outreach programs which mainly take place in the community.

The Role of Community Based Research
Across Boundaries acknowledges and recognizes the importance of community based research as it applies to generating knowledge of and from the community, in order to create positive change. Community based research is an integral part of *Across Boundaries*' anti-racism framework, and plays an important role in the development of appropriate service.

Alternative Healing
Communities of color have been using many forms of traditional healing but they usually don't have access to these under the health system in Ontario. The centre provides a holistic approach to mental health care which addresses body, mind and spirit. Creative expressions and art therapy programs provide participants the opportunity to express inherent practices including the expression of their heritage:
- Traditional Chinese Medicine
- Ayurveda
- Art Therapy
- Musical Expression
- Creative Expression
- Theatre Empowerment Workshops
- Yoga

Anti Racism/Anti-Oppression Training

The Training and Workshops Series are most informative, participatory, creative, innovative, interesting and dynamic and provide a world view on mental health and addiction issues. They definitely provide new approaches to issues of race, racism and oppression in Mental Health and can help to provide services that are more accessible to a diverse client population. The aim of this training is to empower agencies with the tools necessary to be truly culturally competent while understanding the disparities created through racism and other forms of oppression. Mental health agencies and organizations consult with *Across Boundaries* when planning an organizational change to improve access and to develop appropriate services for communities of color.

Family Support

Family support is identified by *Across Boundaries* as a priority given the fact that families are very much part of the network of the communities served, and do require information and support themselves in order to be a support to their loved one. The case manager, often in collaboration with the family, provides intensive, portable and client-directed supports; assists the client in defining his/her needs and goals and works with the client to achieve these goals. The case manager also links the client to appropriate resources in the community and advocates when necessary with the family.

B. Analysis of the Key Features of the Practice:

- guide the development of community-specific, community-led prevention, referral and support programs;

- improve the cultural and linguistic appropriateness of mainstream services

- define the role and place of ethno-specific services in a comprehensive concurrent disorders system;

- advocate with and for marginalized groups;

- consider the experiences of specific groups that are underrepresented in the data in the planning

- bring an anti-racist/anti-oppression framework to mental health service planning.

C. Expression of Innovation:

Incorporates Community Based Research Into the Program Design and Service Delivery:

As noted above, *Across Boundaries* acknowledges and recognizes the importance of community based research.

Holistic Therapies
We believe in addressing the interdependence of the spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, social, cultural, linguistic, economic and broader environmental aspects of health that affect the well being of people of different races. *Across Boundaries*, is responsive to ever-changing realities. They include a variety of therapies to help support wellness in ways that are meaningful and relevant to the lived experiences, and cultures of their clients.

Priority 4: Need for Additional Research on the Makeup of Immigrant Populations in Each Municipality (i.e., Size, Origins, Religious Affiliation, Needs) and the Efficacy of Programs Geared Toward Immigrants

Many LIPs realized that there is a need for further research in their community in order to understand demographics of their immigrant populations and how this relates to health care, along with research about the health of newcomers. The LIPs acknowledge that the healthy immigrant effect varies across different subgroups of immigrants and suggest that more research is needed to determine which sub-groups are experiencing higher risks of becoming unhealthier as they continue to live in Canada. For example, not only is it important to consider sub-groups (e.g. refugees), but also how different sub-groups intersect with each other (e.g. immigrant seniors with low-income). Further research would enable communities to understand the ways in which multiple factors (e.g. senior and low income and immigrant) work together to influence health, and such research would enable more efficient or suitable/appropriate programs (including health delivery). In addition, research related to the efficacy of particular interventions is needed to consider where to effectively target programs and provide support.

Promising Practice:
Community Profiles and the Efficacy of the Programs Geared to Immigrants is premised in sound community research and data gathering. As completed by many of the LIPs, community profiles used census data and other sources of information to generate maps and charts that highlighted key social and demographic trends at the neighborhood level. Information on immigrant and minority ethnocultural communities can then provide a baseline for an accurate understanding of the communities to help the LIP to focus on certain neighbourhoods and develop programs and services based on location and needs of residents.

A. Description of the Practice and Identifications of Its Goal:

An accurate understanding of the community profile enables the design of effective programs that meet the need of a diverse community by addressing concerns and issues with locally relevant solutions. However, given the uniqueness of each community and their immigrant profiles, each community will need to understand the makeup of its local population, demographic measures such as population size, origin, immigrant status, and age, along with socioeconomic indicators that include educational profile and income. In addition, measures of

immigrant adjustment and incorporation within the local community may be able to provide evidence of integration.

B. Analysis of the Key Features of the Practice:

Not only does the efficacy of programs reflect strategies and plans that are based in local realities (i.e. what the immigrant population looks like) but it is dependent on the knowledge and awareness of what services are available and which are missing. In order to promote development initiatives that will help advance conditions that are conducive to healthy communities, the Hamilton LIP and others have partnered with local organizations to develop a service inventory that is accurate, up-to-date and comprehensive.

Priority 5: Enhance Health Literacy Among Immigrants and Refugees in Regard to Primary Care, Disease Prevention, Health Protection (e.g. Vaccination and Immunization) and Promotion (e.g. Exercise, Healthy Food), and Navigation of the Health Care System

LIPS identified that information needs to be communicated about the organization of the health system and how different services can be accessed. This will require both passive (written material) and active (outreach) communications, adapted to the understanding of clients.

Promising Practice:
Photonovel as a health literacy tool (Nimmon, 2007) is a participatory tool that can be used to educate and raise awareness. In this specific case, it was used to promote healthy nutrition among immigrant women. Findings from this particular study demonstrate that it could be an effective health literacy tool for immigrant ESL-speaking women, that it created community among the women, and that it helped to shift perceptions about nutrition.

A. Description of the Practice and Identifications of Its Goal:

At the Catholic Immigration Centre in Ottawa the photonovel method has been used to develop nutrition health literacy for newly arriving Congolese women: La Nutrition et les femmes Congolaises au Canada. The project engaged 10 Congolese women in a series of discussions on nutrition and challenges for newcomers, visits to supermarkets and photos of healthy food selections.

B. Analysis of the Key Features of the Practice:

- Engagement with women regarding a priority health issue: nutrition of families

- Discussion about their challenges and perspectives of nutrition

- Group visits to supermarkets and related discussions

- Participatory development of a photonovela to document learning and their experiences

C. Expression of Innovation:

This approach provided refugee women with an engaged, participatory method to learn about food selection and shopping in Canada. It created a unique photonovela that each of the women kept as part of the project.

D. Unique Contributory Features:

The project was considered a success by participants. It did require a large investment of time from a nurse educator, bus tickets and funding to print the photonovelas.

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The Social, Cultural and Political Inclusion of Immigrants: Promising Practices

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WELCOMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

LES COMMUNAUTÉS ACCUEILLANTES

Optimizing Social, Cultural, and Political Inclusion:

Promising Practices in Five Areas Highlighted as Priorities by the LIPs

Increasing Newcomer Civic Involvement: DiverseCity Toronto

Description of the Practice and Identification of Its Goals

DiverseCity Toronto was developed in 2009 by the Maytree Foundation and the Greater Toronto CivicAction Alliance with the goal of increasing racial and ethnic diversity in civic and political leadership positions in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). DiverseCity operates with three main guiding principles for program development:

1. Strengthen our political and civic institutions
2. Expand local networks to include more diverse perspectives
3. Advance our knowledge and track our progress

DiverseCity has developed an impressive suite of programs to achieve the first two goals. In 2011, the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the BMW Group awarded DiverseCity's onBoard program second place in the Intercultural Innovation Awards competition. The program connects qualified candidates from visible minority groups with governance positions in agencies, boards, commissions and non-profit organizations. Using an online database, program officials identify and publicize vacancies in community leadership positions, and link potential candidates from diverse cultural and professional backgrounds with these organizations. The database allows individuals to search for opportunities at their convenience and to identify positions based on their skills and organizational type (e.g. arts & culture, environment, etc). It also permits organizations to search for individuals based on the skills they require. Community members interested in serving on boards submit online resumes outlining their skills and interests. DiverseCity interviews the applicants and will train inexperienced board members on the basics of board governance, finance, strategic resource development, planning, and the duties and responsibilities of directors. DiverseCity has also partnered with the Centre of Excellence and Charity Village to offer a course tailored to service on public sector boards.

The DiverseCity School4Civics program offers potential civic leaders basic training and mentorship in order to help them run for public office and manage political campaigns. It also provides information to potential campaign volunteers about electoral processes and government

116

operations. The program has progressed from a municipal focus to include training for provincial and federal campaigns.

DiverseCity Fellows is a one-year program for individuals from diverse ethnocultural groups with the objective of developing the "next generation of city builders" through seminars, networking and action-based projects. Fellows in 2012 include individuals in leadership roles in non-profit and government agencies, in private industry, the financial sector and cultural organizations. The program offers networking for current and aspiring entrepreneurs from diverse groups and action-based projects such as StreetSport, which promotes participation in activities such as yoga, street hockey, wheelchair basketball, and bhangra dancing. DiverseCity Fellows has also developed Civico, an online hub of civic engagement organizations that features organizational profiles, engagement opportunities and discussion about diversity and local issues. During elections, Civico presents information about candidates, parties and electoral processes.

DiverseCity has adopted several strategies to achieve the third program goal. It identifies and collects data on the benefits of diversity in leadership positions in local organizations, and encourages dialogue about the different perspectives regarding diversity and pathways to leadership. The program works with Ryerson University's Diversity Institute to track progress in the number of visible minorities holding political and civic leadership positions in the GTA. Reviews of the progress achieved by its programs, using quantitative and qualitative performance indicators, are published annually.

Analysis of Key Features of the Practice

Evidence of its success is supported by the measurable popularity of its programs. The onBoard program has already surpassed its goal of attracting 1,000 applicants by 2011, as more than 1,500 applications have been received to date and 500 organizations have joined the program. By year-end 2011, it had secured 600 appointments to boards, 100 more than its target of 500 appointments. After just two years in operation, 215 diverse spokespeople are already on the roster of the DiverseCity Voices program and it is approaching its goal of 300 spokespeople. The School4Civics program, which recruits experienced campaign managers, political strategists and communications professionals to train aspiring politicians and campaign volunteers, has seen every one of its 2009-2011 cohort volunteer in an election, by-election or nomination process. Twelve graduates from this program ran for municipal office and one participant won election as a school board trustee. All of the municipal election candidates received high-profile endorsements and significant media coverage.

The features that have contributed to the success of DiverseCity are the involvement of a large number of local organizations and political and civic experts from a variety of backgrounds, its broad conceptualization of civic participation, and its attention to community outreach. The DiverseCity onBoard program has attracted more than 500 different local organizations and a large pool of diverse perspectives to add to boards and agencies. The School4Civics program has

persuaded experienced professionals to train and mentor newcomers interested in becoming politically involved as candidates, campaign managers, or volunteers. The program has also created a multi-dimensional political training course that even resident Canadians who are knowledgeable about the political process would be delighted to attend. The success of the DiverseCity program may also be attributed to a broad understanding of civic participation that extends beyond the act of voting, and includes political and civic leadership, participation in public and non-profit boards, and volunteerism. Another strength of DiverseCity is that its educational initiatives promoting the importance and benefits of diverse perspectives in the civic and political arenas reach beyond program participants and into the community.

In addition to the multi-dimensional approach, the unique and innovative features of DiverseCity programs lie in their currency, flexibility and potential for uptake in other communities. The focus on ongoing research and program evaluation ensures that new challenges and trends will be identified and shape program development. This improves public awareness and creates an important source of information that other organizations can use when formulating their own programs. The flexible implementation of the program encourages participation from a broad range of immigrants with diverse career goals. For example, the Civico program has made good use of the web to communicate candidate and issue information, while the School4Civics program utilizes classroom-based training methods.

DiverseCity is distinguished for the attention it devotes to monitoring progress in the representation of diversity, and to evaluating the impact of its programs on the community and on participants. Working with Ryerson University's Diversity Institute, it tracks and researches local civic and political representation issues and produces annual reports on diversity in local leadership positions. DiverseCity also tracks the progress of its program participants. It has monitored the number of participants in its School4Civics program who have run for office or volunteered in local political campaigns, and is currently conducting a survey about the onBoard program, in which board volunteers are asked to reflect on their experiences, accomplishments and levels of satisfaction, and to identify any challenges they encountered in adapting to their boards. The survey will also ask organizations to comment on changing board dynamics and their experiences with greater diversity on their boards.

Analysis of Purported Evidence Pertaining to the Success of the Practice

The following section discusses purported evidence related to DiverseCity's success and evaluates the potential for transferring the practice to other locations. DiverseCity and the Diversity Institute publish annual reports on the representation of diversity in the GTA's political and civic organizations, and on the effectiveness of its programs in increasing ethnocultural diversity in community leadership positions. Although just under half (49.5 percent) of the population in the Greater Toronto Area is from a diverse ethnocultural group, the level of diversity in community leadership positions is significantly lower than the population

benchmark.[1] Nevertheless, overall levels of diversity in leadership positions in the GTA grew by 8 percent between 2009 and 2011, demonstrating that DiverseCity has made progress in achieving its main objectives.[2] The representation of diverse elected officials increased from 16.1 percent in 2009, to 19 percent in 2011, while their inclusion on agencies, boards and commissions increased from 18.6 percent to 22 percent over the same time period.[3] Comparatively less or no growth was observed in the education, voluntary and public sectors.

The endogenous factors that have contributed to the success of DiverseCity are the internal expertise and resources provided by the founding organizations, the Maytree Foundation and CivicAction. Both boast extensive community networks that can easily communicate information about the component programs. The School4Civics program has attracted numerous experts with practical knowledge of political campaigns. The modest resources required for the onBoard program is another key ingredient of success. While program developers devoted a significant amount of time recruiting organizations and individuals in the early stages, once that hurdle was overcome, it was relatively easy to maintain a database of vacant positions and match them with individuals.

The exogenous factors that have contributed to the success of DiverseCity include positive public attitudes, the partnership with Ryerson University, and resource savings for individuals and organizations through the onBoard program. The community's positive reception of the onBoard program is demonstrated by the participation of more than 500 community organizations. Organizations clearly understand the benefits of diversity in leadership positions. The School4Civics program is successful because it has attracted individuals with political campaign experience who are willing to mentor participants. When the program was launched, DiverseCity officials had to recruit potential instructors, but with the program's growing popularity, potential instructors are now contacting DiverseCity. The link with Ryerson's Diversity Institute allows DiverseCity to draw on the expertise of academic specialists when developing and evaluating their programs. Another factor that has contributed to the success of the program is the resource savings for organizations participating in the onBoard program. Voluntary organizations are able to avoid advertising vacant positions and conducting initial evaluations of applicants as DiverseCity is responsible for those functions. Organizations benefit by gaining access to a database of qualified applicants, and individuals benefit by saving time searching for vacant positions. Individuals also have access to a database of vacant positions that they can easily search based on their interests.

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[1] Wendy Cukier, Margaret Yap, Kristen Aspevig & Lennie Lejasisaks. (2011). "DiverseCity Counts 3 in brief: a summary of key findings—the third annual research report measuring diversity at the top of the GTA's corporate, public and nonprofit organizations." *DiverseCity.* Toronto: The Diversity Institute, Ryerson University.
[2] Ibid.
[3] ibid.

The transfer potential for the DiverseCity program to communities of all sizes, including Northern communities, is high. Both the School4Civics and onBoard programs utilize local assets and can be easily tailored to address the challenges and opportunities unique to each community. That said, communities that are in a position to recruit participating organizations with large networks will find it easier to implement these programs.

Community size and organizational network density are some of the factors that would influence the transferability of these programs. Larger communities would likely require at least one full-time staff person to manage the onBoard network and continue to meet with local organizations to encourage participation. Smaller communities may be able to operate the program with a part-time staff person. The program could be operated by local governments or within an existing mainstream non-profit organization. Before developing the School4Civics or onBoard program in another community, it would be important for local research organizations to establish baseline information about the representation of diversity in the community's political and civic organizations, so that the appropriate sector(s) may be considered and progress tracked.

Targeting Social & Cultural Programs for Immigrant Youth: Youth Empowering Parents (YEP) – Regent Park, Toronto

Description of the Practice and Identification of Its Goals

The Youth Empowering Parents (YEP) program[4] was created in 2010 in order to enhance the quality of life of newcomers by developing their English language and computer skills, encouraging their cultural integration, and fostering youth leadership. The program was awarded tenth place in the 2011 Intercultural Innovation Awards competition from the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and the BMW Group. Mohammed Shafique, a local resident, proposed and developed the idea after teaching his mother English at home and observing the growing number of non-English speaking immigrants who were moving to the Regent Park area with limited English language skills and/or no familiarity with computers . The part-time program helps recent immigrants acquire language and practical computer skills, ranging from basic to more advanced Microsoft Excel, Word and Internet skills, so that they can enter the workforce or pursue advanced education.

Analysis of Key Features of the Practice

The program teaches newcomers English language and computer skills but does not use typical lecture-based instruction. Instead, youth aged 11 to 18 years teach newcomers aged 28 to 71 years language and computer skills on a one-on-one basis. The youth instructors are matched with newcomers that have a similar language background and are encouraged to develop their own creative teaching plans. The youths are encouraged to develop their own pedagogical methods because they rarely followed textbooks when teaching their own parents English language and computer skills at home. The focus is on practical skills that can facilitate the settlement process by teaching recent immigrants about the Canadian banking and health care system, and how to read and complete official documents. Shafique explains that the program mirrors what is "already happening in homes, i.e. youth have to tell their parents what the bill means, how to read the signs in the grocery store, etc. , so why not create a formalized setting where students are trained to teach their parents English and computers."[5]

It was noted that some YEP participants had already enrolled in traditional ESL programs or had work or other commitments that limited their ability to enrol in traditional language classes. YEP is different from existing ESL programs because participants are learning from a friend rather

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[4] Youth Empowering Parents website: http://www.yepeducation.com
[5] From Lam, Valerie. "YEP, It's ESL" Torontoist. January 12, 2011. Accessed January 2012 from http://torontoist.com/2011/01/in_any_other_classroom_this/

than from a teacher who they do not know well.[6] Participants who are shy were much more comfortable asking questions in a one-on-one setting and were able to learn at their own pace. The program has provided youth instructors with a sense of pride in helping other members of the community and an opportunity to develop their teaching skills. One youth participant, Hoore, a grade 8 student, spoke of her positive experience: "This semester, I taught Johura, a Bengali-speaking mother, how to use the internet to chat for free with her family back home instead of buying calling cards."[7] In addition to her personal satisfaction with her experience in YEP, Hoore also said that she had recruited several friends to participate in the program in the following semester and looked forward to her continuing involvement.

Developing an effective measure of teaching success has been a challenge due to the personalized nature of the program, and is something that the organizers are trying to address.[8] Nevertheless, the growth in the program's popularity is one measurable indicator of its success. The pilot program was launched in September 2010 with nine adult students who were paired with nine youth instructors. In order to continue the pilot project, YEP obtained funding and support from the Regent Park Community Health Centre and the Toronto Centre of Community Learning. The program quickly doubled the number of participants to 18 by January 2010. The YEP program then obtained more funding and support from the Toronto Community Housing Program and was able to expand the program. By July 2011, less than one year after it was launched, YEP had more than 100 participants.

The YEP program addresses the needs of a previously underserved population, recent immigrants who do not feel comfortable or who find it challenging to learn in traditional classroom-based settings. According to YEP, seventy percent of adult participants do not attend other English or computer programs and almost 50 percent of adult participants are not involved in any other community program. The personalized, individual teaching style allows for learning at one's own pace which is helpful to a segment of the recent immigrant and refugee population. This approach is unique in that it addresses somewhat different objectives than most ESL programs. It fosters youth leadership skills and inter-generational connections, and it is flexible because it allows instructors the freedom to develop their own teaching methods and styles. There is no doubt that it creates a heightened sense of ownership and pride in participation.

Analysis of Purported Evidence Pertaining to the Success of the Practice

The following section presents existing evidence related to the success of the practice and evaluates the potential for transferring the practice to other locations. First, the program's high retention rates (above 80 percent) and per semester growth rate of 160 percent since its launch

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[6] "A twist on mother tongues." Metro News. February 7, 2011.
http://www.metronews.ca/toronto/local/article/764923--a-twist-on-mother-tongues
[7] Ibid.
[8] According to Jahangir Batta (aka John), YEP team analyst. Ibid.

show that it offers a unique service that is valued and required by the community. According to adults who completed a semester of YEP, the program improved their computer literacy, English-language speaking skills and intergenerational and intercultural understanding.

For example, adult participants learned new communication technologies such as email, Facebook, Skype and other instant messaging systems to help them communicate with others in their communities and with their families in their countries of origin. YEP organizers point to the simplicity of the program's concept and execution as one reason for its popularity. It has formalized a naturally-occurring process whereby youths help their older relatives navigate life in a new setting. The program has also been effective in encouraging youth leadership and participation. Sixty-five percent of the youth instructors who returned to volunteer in the program have already completed their mandatory 40-hours of volunteer work required for secondary school graduation in Ontario. Their decision to return illustrates satisfaction with their experiences. In addition to the inter-generational connections embedded in the YEP approach, program organizers noted that intercultural exchanges, which are rare in some communities, were also fostered. Youth and adults sharing the same language of interaction did not always come from the same country of origin and were able to share their cultural differences. Participants came from an astounding array of countries including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guyana, India, Iran, Jamaica, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Somalia, Spain, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam.

The endogenous factors that have contributed to the success of the program are its responsiveness to individual needs given the personalized teaching format and the flexible guidelines that encourage youth creativity and ownership when teaching adults. The one-on-one format allows youth to tailor each experience to the needs of each adult. Adults who are interested in how to use Skype rather than word processing can focus on Skype and other online communication platforms. Each moment of classroom time positively contributes to the adult's needs in a way that is not possible in group or classroom-based programs. The flexible guidelines also encourage youth to be creative in the way that they teach adults computer and language skills. Youth can develop their own exercises and examples. Developing their own style of teaching positively contributes to their communication and leadership skills.

The exogenous factors that have contributed to the success of the program include having the support and involvement of other community organizations as well as public support. YEP uses existing youth organizations to create awareness of the program and help recruit new youth participants. One of the programs that YEP has partnered with is Pathways to Education in the Regent Park neighbourhood. Pathways to Education provides youth in low-income neighbourhoods with academic and social supports as well as scholarships and individual mentoring. YEP has been able to recruit participants from Pathways to Education and other local youth community groups and organizations. Public support has also been a factor in the success of YEP. Referrals and word-of-mouth are the main sources of recruitment. YEP uses very little

advertising (mostly due to a lack of stable funding and low resources), but has been able to maintain a steady stream of participants through referrals from adults who have completed the program and from youth who have encouraged their friends to participate following their program experiences.

The YEP program has the potential to be transferable to large, small and Northern communities. In fact, program organizers said that it was developed with the express purpose of transferability to other communities across Canada and around the world. YEP can be developed within an existing youth organization or non-profit with space where youth and adults can meet one-on-one and have access to computers and an internet connection. The program is easily scaled to fit the size of the community based on demand and ethnocultural composition. Nevertheless, smaller communities may require more time searching for potential youth participants for adults from small language groups than larger communities. Success in developing the program in other communities depends heavily on the support of local youth organizations, youth groups and school boards. Communities with larger and established youth organizations will find it easier to develop a YEP program due to the increased potential for instructor recruitment. Small and emerging communities with no or few youth organizations will need to devote more resources to advertising and marketing of the program.

Reducing Racism, Xenophobia and Lack of Cultural Understanding in the Host Community: Barcelona Rumour Network

Description of the Practice and Identification of Its Goals

The Barcelona Anti-Rumour Network was developed in 2010 by the Barcelona City Council in order to dispel myths and stereotypes about immigrants, and improve public awareness of their neighboring immigrant groups. It is based on a creative, multi-pronged strategy involving 'anti-rumour agents' who challenge discrimination at the street-level, public debates, and the production of comedic videos and a comic book series. The Network is comprised of the Barcelona city council and more than 240 organizations, associations and individuals. It has two executive groups, an action group and a communication group, with representatives from 30 entities who train anti-rumour agents, coordinate and organize community roundtables, discussions, conferences, and produce videos, documentaries and educational materials. The Network also partners with local media to accurately frame the portrayal of immigrants. Its activities are supported by an annual commitment from city council of €200,000 for community-led anti-discrimination projects. The Barcelona Anti-Rumour Network's success has prompted several other European cities to investigate the creation of similar initiatives.

The Anti-Rumour Network has identified five prevailing stereotypes about immigrants in Barcelona:

1. Misinformation on the 'invasion' of new immigrants
2. They abuse social and health care services
3. They fail to declare income or pay taxes
4. They engage in anti-social behaviour in public spaces
5. They take jobs from locals

Between May and October 2011, the network's executive trained more than 436 anti-rumour agents in 250 non-profit organizations, as well as teachers, nurses, the elderly, child care workers, the unemployed, and students, to address common misconceptions about immigrants that are encountered at work, at home or on the street. The approach is founded on the premise that individual contact can play a critical role in challenging stereotypes and incorrect information. Anti-rumour agents are educated on how to deal with encounters with discrimination in the community. If the agent meets a community member who claims that 'immigrants are stealing jobs from local people' or 'immigrants don't want to integrate or learn our language', the agent will explain why that view is incorrect and present some positive contributions of immigrants in the community.

One anti-rumour agent, Cesca, works to dispel rumours in her daily home and work life. She says that she has constantly received emails full of xenophobic stereotypes. Through her anti-rumour training, she is now able to combat these stereotypes:

> I reply to them one-by-one and reason with them because I believe that the things that they come up with are not true. When you reason and challenge them that there is no substance to their remarks, they finally take notice and say: the story did seem odd to me.[9]

Cesca and other anti-rumour agents are trained on how to confront stereotypes in their daily routines without becoming angry. Anti-rumour agents participate in training programs and information sessions offered by the city and are given the *Anti-Rumour Officer's Practical Guide*, which offers them updated information, scenarios and ways to deal with the main immigrant stereotypes they are likely to encounter in Barcelona. The guide addresses each rumour with a dialogue of a typical conversation that one is likely to encounter and is written using two characters: Rosita and Blanca. The guide is mainly written for public service professionals and civic organizations and is available online through the Barcelona Anti-Rumour Network website.[10] It is continuously updated with new information and anti-rumour agents are able to access and download the updated guides regularly. Anti-rumour agents may also contribute to the online resources bank to share their experiences or other materials that can help develop new programs for the network.

Analysis of Key Features of the Practice

The features that contribute to the success of this program are the unique ways in which it engages the community. The use of anti-rumour agents to challenge stereotypes on-the-ground is differentiated from a traditional media campaign that cannot insert itself into daily life and address the contexts in which stereotypes are repeated. Its success has also been enhanced by the creative use of humour to address a serious topic. By using a variety of communications mediums, the program reaches a larger audience. The use of humour makes the content more entertaining and encourages individuals to discuss and share it with others.

The program is innovative because of its ability to leverage local assets in creative ways. It also encourages individual ownership in dealing with these issues. Anti-rumour agents are responsible for confronting uninformed attitudes about immigrants on a one-on-one basis, and contribute to the network and database of materials. Community organizations are also encouraged to develop their own programs with the support of the council's annual fund. The campaign supports ground-level action in a way that a traditional media campaign, which relies primarily on print advertisements, would be unable to do. A local illustrator developed the comics, local creative groups produced the videos, and local organizations were enlisted to spread the word about the campaign.

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[9] Translated from Spanish quote in Meritxell Doncel. "An anti-rumour agent by vocation". *City of Barcelona News*. June 16, 2011. Accessed Jan 23, 2012.

[10] Barcelona Anti-Rumour Network website: http://www.bcnantirumours.cat/

Improving Newcomer Understanding of Host Community Cultural Norms: Au Pairs Language and Cultural Orientation Program – Spring Institute, Denver, Colorado

Description of the Practice and Identification of Its Goals

The Spring Institute in Denver, Colorado is a non-profit organization that focuses on cross-cultural communication and understanding. The Institute works with community groups, organizations, and businesses to provide cross-cultural training to non-profit organizations, individuals and businesses. It offers several cultural orientation courses to help recent immigrants and refugees learn about local culture, customs, and daily life. One course highlighted in this report is the American Culture and Language Training program for au pairs.[11] Au pairs are domestic workers from foreign countries who live with local host families. The program was developed ten years ago by Sharron Toulouse, a part-time refugee instructor, who saw the need to develop an American Culture program. Au pairs are between the ages of 18-26, and as part of the J-1 visa requirement, may remain in the United States for two years where they are required to earn six credits through an accredited educational institution.

The Culture and Language Training program offers 36 hours of classroom time and teaches English verbal, oral, writing, and reading skills, but the course's main focus is on culture. Day trips are organized to local points of interest. Participants learn about Colorado's history, local geography, American culture, values and customs. American food and eating habits are also explored, an essential subject for au pairs living with their host families. Small group learning and experiential programming provide an alternative to more formal academic options for au pairs who desire different experiences and learning styles.

Instructors focus on different themes each session. In the 2008 presidential election year, the course theme was elections, government mechanics, and institutions. In another semester, the theme was 'immigrants to Colorado,' where students researched and developed presentations about successful local immigrants such as Adolph Coors who founded Coors Brewery. The history of local indigenous peoples has also been a course theme, students learned about indigenous groups and visited an annual Pow-Wow in Denver. Regularly changing the focus theme each semester has encouraged many students to re-take the course a number of times during their employment as au pairs in the United States. Some classroom time is devoted to teaching students about the culture shock curve and strategies to deal with it. One course instructor observed that by having students regularly re-taking the course and working in small groups, new au pairs were able to learn how to deal with culture shock and other issues from their more experienced counterparts.

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[11] Spring Institute Au Pairs website: http://www.springinstitute.org/?action=aupair

Analysis of Key Features of the Practice

The program is unique in its focus on a previously underserved population, au pairs. Au pairs face unique challenges related to integration that other immigrants do not typically face when relocating to a host community. Rarely do most immigrants have to integrate their life at home to the same extent as au pairs. Au pairs usually live with their host families where they are instantly and deeply immersed into the host culture. They travel with host families to the children's schools, churches and other daily activities. Furthermore, since au pairs are temporary workers, learning about settlement and employment services and agencies that are essential for permanent immigrants would be less relevant to them. This program has been tailored to address the challenge of culture shock as well as to provide this segment with recreational and cultural experiences they can enjoy with other au pairs. Exposing au pairs to American and Colorado history, culture and values is another unique aspect to this program. Integration into host communities requires more than an understanding of the host society's official language(s); it requires deep knowledge of attitudes and behavioural patterns in the host community.

Analysis of Purported Evidence Pertaining to the Success of This Practise

A good indicator of the program's success is the fact that students take the class three to four times during their au pair experience. Local au pair agencies have also embraced the program. They provide most of the program advertising and have become the primary source of referrals of new students to the program. The Spring Institute has had to spend very little on program advertising, thus freeing up more resources for other activities.

Improving Access to and the Content of Information About Community Services and Events: Calgary Ethnocultural Council

Description of the Practice and Identification of Its Goals

The Building Bridges with Ethnocultural Communities (BBEC) and Leadership, Engagement, Action and Development (LEAD) programs developed by the Ethnocultural Council of Calgary are excellent examples of improving access to community services and events for recent immigrant and ethnocultural groups. By 2010, the Ethnocultural Council of Calgary had developed both programs. The BBEC project is directed at disseminating information about immigrant services, programs and issues, encouraging collaboration between ethnocultural communities, service providers and other community resources, and improving newcomer settlement programs, policies and services. The BBEC project organizes community resource fairs that showcase newcomer services and programs, as well as community forums that promote dialogue between ethnocultural leaders and government officials about programs affecting newcomers. It develops and trains 'ethnocultural brokers' who provide information about services and programs to their ethnocultural communities, and who provide feedback about those programs to the staff at government and non-profit service agencies. Ethnocultural brokers participate in orientation and training sessions, receive a resource toolkit with guidelines for newcomer support services, and regularly visit local newcomer service agencies in order to learn how their programs operate.

The LEAD program aims to promote community leadership, civic engagement and volunteerism in ethnocultural communities, to build connections between ethnocultural organizations for information and issue sharing, and to provide input to different levels of government. Interactive workshops, cross-cultural leadership forums, mentorship and coaching, and dialogue with local government and institutions about issues, policies and programs affecting newcomers are part of its suite of activities. Workshop participants learn how to engage in effective community mobilization and to work with civil servants. The leadership forums bring ethnocultural organizations and their members together to discuss common issues and initiatives and to develop recommendations on how various policies, programs and services affect the communities they serve.

Analysis of Key Features of the Practice

The BBEC program is unique because it encourages three-way dialogue between governments, newcomer service organizations, and newcomer and ethnocultural groups, and it creates a mechanism whereby new perspectives can be reflected in the policies and programs of the municipal government and service providing organizations. Another unique feature of the program is the way that it connects various ethnocultural and newcomer organizations. Leaders

from different organizations are members of the board of directors of the Ethnocultural Council of Calgary and help steer the overall direction of the organization. The cross-cultural leadership forums allow various organizations to discuss common issues and develop collaborative partnerships. The regular cross-cultural leadership meetings also mean the organizations present are kept up-to-date on the challenges, successes and changes occurring in other programs and organizations.

Workplace Integration: Promising Practices

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WELCOMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

LES COMMUNAUTÉS ACCUEILLANTES

WORKPLACE INTEGRATION DOMAIN

Kingston Employment and Youth Services (KEYS) Professional Mentoring Partnership

PRIORITY AREA: Recruitment and Bridging Program
Community: Kingston

Description of Program

Founded in 1983, The KEYS Job Centre in Kingston is a community-based centre with expertise in employment and employment related services. One of these services is the KEYS Professional Mentoring Partnership. This partnership was arguably the top priority for the Kingston Immigration Partnership (KIP) during their first year of implementation.

The KEYS Professional Mentoring Partnership offers three different mentoring options to fit the availability and interests of immigrant and volunteer participants.

- The Professional Mentoring Program is for established professionals to share their expertise and experience with an immigrant professional in the same field in one-on-one sessions for a total of 24 hours over a 4-month period. Mentoring includes face-to-face meetings, phone calls and emails, and is supported by a Mentor Coach.

- The Connector Program is for established professionals with deep business and professional contacts to help expand the professional networks of immigrants by committing to one face-to-face meeting with a newcomer in the same field and by referring him/her to 3 additional contacts from their network.

- The Career Speed Networking Session is for local employers to network with new talent in Kingston, sharing information about their occupation while participating in a 2-hour career speed networking session designed to give newcomers exposure to the Kingston job market, provide occupation-specific information about Canadian workplace and job search culture, and to expand their professional networks.

Analysis

The demand for mentoring of new immigrants became apparent during the KIP consultation process. Research has highlighted the value of mentoring as a cost-effective way to overcome some of the barriers skilled immigrants encounter when trying to find employment in their area of expertise. The three biggest barriers commonly noted are lack of an effective professional network, lack of understanding of the Canadian workplace culture and employer expectations, and lack of recognition of international qualifications and experience. Mentoring programs help to

connect recent skilled immigrants to established Canadian professionals in the same or related occupations or industries. Immigrants entering a mentoring program possess the education, experience and language skills needed to excel in the workforce. Mentoring builds social capital by opening networks and building relationships, leading to successful employment outcomes.

In November 2010, KIP arranged a preliminary meeting with local partner agencies to begin planning for a professional mentoring program. At the national level, professional mentoring programs such as those developed by Assisting Local Leaders with Immigrant Employment Strategies (ALLIES) had proven to be quite successful in cities across Canada, and the plan was to model the KIP mentoring program after such successful programs. After CIC cuts, announced in December 2010, the program was put on hold temporarily; however, KEYS Job Centre was able to respond to this clear need and dedicate a staff position to create the Professional Mentoring Partnership with the support of KIP. In May 2011, KIP and KEYS participated in the ALLIES Mentoring Conference in Calgary, which provided training and information on the design and set-up of a mentoring program.

ALLIES is a national mentoring initiative that aims to promote mentoring as a proven strategy for skilled immigrants. They support local efforts in Canadian cities to successfully adapt and implement programs that further the suitable employment of skilled immigrants. Jointly funded by Maytree and The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, the initiative provides resources and funding to immigrant employment councils. These employer led councils also include community organizations, post-secondary institutions, assessment service providers, labour, immigrant professional associations and all three levels of government. In June 2011, the KEYS Mentorship Program was launched in Kingston at a networking session that brought together business representatives with job-seeking immigrants.

The Allies model has proven successful by emphasizing the following components:

- Firstly, the model is based on robust partnerships with employers whose interests were closely aligned with the ALLIES objectives of having access to the most qualified person for any given job.
- Another key element of success is that ALLIES brought forward well-formed, actionable ideas, ensuring efficient uptake and application. Many of these were rooted in the experiences of Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC).
- Equally important for ALLIES was the engagement of real employers – not employer associations or other industry groups. Prominent business leaders are often the best "face and voice" of an initiative. Partners should be chosen on the basis of their involvement and familiarity with local labour market demands and supply gaps.

The ALLIES model appreciates that businesses tend to learn most effectively when they learn from each other. By respecting and supporting the priorities of its business partners, ALLIES has helped position employers as agents of social change.

Similarly, the ALLIES model appreciates that all levels of government are important in achieving changes in attitude, not simply because they influence policy and funding, but because they are significant employers in their own right.

In general therefore, an abiding ALLIES value is that both immigrants and their potential employers share the need to learn about and with each other. Just as the skilled immigrant may need to improve their workplace communication, the employer may need to adapt and modernize some of the ways they access talent. While a great deal of attention has already been paid to the deficits of immigrants, ALLIES' greatest contribution is in addressing the deficits of employers and helping build their capacity.[1]

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[1] Successful components for the Allies program outlined in the following document: Makhoul, A. (2001) *ALLIES: A Network of Support, A Movement for Change.* Ottawa, ON: Caledon Institute of Social Policy.

Sign Post ©

PRIORITY AREA: Recognition of International Credentials, Education, and Competencies
Communities: Ontario

<u>Description of Program</u>

The International Accounting and Finance Professionals Program (IAFP) at The G. Raymond Chang School, Ryerson University has collaborated with The Conference Board of Canada (CBoC) to develop *Sign Post* with funding from the Ministry of Citizenship & Immigration, Ontario. The vision of the *Sign Post* project is to facilitate the process of attracting, integrating and retaining the best global immigrant professional talent in Canada's financial services sector. *Sign Post* is a collaborative project involving organizations interested in the talent management process in the Canadian financial services labour market (government, employers, internationally educated professionals (IEP), recruitment firms, immigrant service organizations, learning providers, professional/regulatory bodies etc.).

The goal of *Sign Post* is to facilitate a competency based assessment in the accounting and finance, banking, securities/investment, insurance and advisory/retail wealth management sectors for a variety of talent management functions, including orientation, mentoring, recruitment, development and retention.

Sign Post consists of a set of web-based resources and tools for internationally educated professionals (IEP[2]) and has been designed to help employers, immigrant service agencies, learning services providers and professional and regulatory bodies. The tools utilize the competencies required to perform in the financial services sector and outline the performance indicators for each competency.

   Sign Post web-based resources include the following:

- needs assessment, guidance, orientation & career development resources & tools
- competency based benchmarking, portfolio building & self-assessment tool for IEP
- on-line competency based talent management tool for employers that use professional competency profile matching with employer needs
- prior learning principle based portfolios for professional development & learning assessment

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[2] Though immigrant, internationally educated professionals are developing these tools primarily for their use, they could potentially be utilized for all professionals in the accounting & financial services sector.

The *individual*, through an online process, can self-identify the performance levels required in the occupation of his/her interest, and assess and document his/her own match to those requirements. The tool can also be made available to *employers* for their use in shaping competency based job descriptions, advertisements, interviews, talent development strategies and human resources activities within their organizations.

In addition, the tool could also be an effective resource for *mentors*, who have the responsibility for learning and the development of their mentees. It could be used as a realistic basis for providing feedback and guidance. Finally, the tool will automatically connect individuals and organizations based on matched competency profiles.

Learning providers will be able to utilize employer-validated competencies to design programs, courses and learning interventions, as well as to map competencies to existing learning outcomes and identify learning gaps and learning paths.

Sign Post tools were primarily developed to improve the recruitment, selection, integration and professional development of Internationally Educated Professionals in the financial services sector (in Canada or planning to come to Canada). Another goal was to support employers, learning providers and immigrant service agencies with tools and resources they need throughout the talent management cycle. These tools are also designed to address labour supply and demand challenges, critical shortages of talent and to facilitate labour mobility and diversity in Canada's financial services sector.

Competency Profiles are at the heart of *Sign Post* online competency assessment and talent management tools. The *Competency Profiles* are behavioural indicators (typical baseline job descriptions, key activities and tasks performed) in a variety of functions and work streams in financial services (accounting, banking, investment/securities, insurance and wealth management). The indicators cover technical, professional as well as interpersonal competencies.

A unique feature is a process of self-paced learning and reflection to ensure that the self-assessment process is honest, realistic and firmly embedded in the Canadian workplace culture and standards of practice.

The content of the Competency Assessment & Talent Management Tools includes Orientation & Information Modules (Occupational Information, Labour market intelligence, Resume and interview preparation guides, and Learning and certification resources and links) as well as Human Resources Modules (Competency Benchmarking and Assessment, Competency Portfolio

Development, Mentoring, Job Search, Talent Search, Match & Screening, Competency Profiles and Reports, and Gap Analysis).

Analysis

The *Sign Post* program provides the following benefits for employers:

1. Ability to clearly define/adapt competency based job descriptions
2. Improving role clarity and ensuring that employees are aware of the fundamental competencies required to advance their career ladders
3. Focusing their efforts on the competencies that have the greatest impact on organizational productivity
4. Improving their recruitment, selection and employee integration practices
5. Increasing their return on training and development efforts by helping to clearly identify the skill gaps and the training required to upgrade skills
6. Improving succession planning by identifying transferable skills of potential and existing employees and helping to determine gaps where training programs may help
7. Access to a diverse group of qualified and job ready IEPs who are familiar with the Canadian competency framework and culture[3]

In addition, the program benefits IEP candidates, employees or potential employees in the following ways:

1. Ability to market oneself confidently to employers in Canada through competency based resumes and portfolios
2. Provide a better understanding of the work culture and the competencies required to work and grow in Canadian organizations
3. Ability to identify areas of strengths and areas requiring improvement, with links to learning resources
4. Orientation to the accounting and financial services industry in Canada
5. Clear job descriptions and other role clarity tools ensure that employees and prospective employees understand the key job requirements and how their contributions link to the goals of the organization. In this way, they can focus their efforts on the competencies that have the greatest impact on organizational productivity
6. Professionals enter the workforce as quickly as possible, at the most appropriate level to their own personal experience, education and level of competence

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[3] For IEP who have successfully completed bridging programs offered by immigrant service agencies and post-secondary institutions in Canada, IEP will have the option of connecting directly to employers. In such cases their job readiness would have to be validated by employers.

LASI WorldSkills Ottawa

PRIORITY AREA: Communication Training
Communities: Ottawa

<u>Description of Program</u>

LASI WorldSkills was established in 1997 by the Local Agencies Serving Immigrants (LASI) coalition as a way to simplify, coordinate and facilitate the delivery of employment services for newcomers in the Ottawa area.   The objective of LASI WorldSkills is to enhance the economic integration of immigrants, refugees and newcomers by developing and offering programs and services that assist them in increasing their employability in the Canadian job market, creating employment opportunities for them through increasing public awareness of their employability, and by forming partnerships with employers in the region. Through these programs and services, LASI WorldSkills addresses the barriers and challenges that new Canadians face in their efforts to become fully integrated in the local economy. LASI WorldSkills is a recognized leader in responding to the needs of the local labor market while promoting the skills and talents of new Canadians. In 2004, the United Way honoured LASI WorldSkills and the LASI Coalition with an Outstanding Partnership of the Year Award.

LASI WorldSkills offers several services to enhance the employer's capacity to integrate Internationally Trained Individuals (ITIs) into the organization at each stage of the HR life cycle and has various programs to help Ottawa employers reduce their HR costs for recruitment, retention and training, raise their organization's visibility and appeal for ITIs, and reach new markets at home and abroad with a more diverse workforce. The organization is proud to offer: pre-employment programs, one-on-one counseling, assessment, coaching and referrals, workplace (enhanced) language training, sector specific and bridge programming, job matching, cross-cultural training, and research.

One of the most well known programs offered by LASI WorldSkills is the Ottawa Job Match Network (OJMN). The OJMN program, in partnership with the YMCA-YWCA and OCISO (Ottawa Community Immigration Services Organization), focuses on helping employers access qualified internationally trained candidates as well as providing post-hiring support for managers and employees. Pre-hire, the program allows employers to save time and resources by accessing an employee database with over 1000 pre-screened candidates. Once the candidates are hired, the OJMN offers post-hiring services for managers including customized cross-cultural training and coaching and post-recruitment support for newly hired candidates and managers/supervisors. In addition, LASI also offers a number of cross-cultural training programs addressing various stages of the employment cycle. Pre-hire, there is a program for HR personnel and hiring

managers that focuses on interview and communication skills when interviewing internationally trained individuals. Post-hire, the programs include cross-cultural competency training or orientation for workplace staff, including training in inclusive workplace practices, cross-cultural communication strategies, intercultural problem-solving strategies, cross-cultural differences in workplace practices (e.g., team work, giving and receiving feedback, socializing at work), negotiation, and conflict resolution.

Analysis

LASI's programs are notable and unique for their cross-cultural training component. Increasingly, successful businesses and organizations recognize the value of cross-cultural awareness. WorldSkills offers customized cross-cultural training for both internationally trained individuals and employers. These programs provide participants with a foundation for cultural understanding along with the necessary tools for improving cross-cultural communication and success in the workplace. The training is interactive and creatively fosters changes in attitudes and behaviour through learner-centered activities, small group discussions, readings, custom-designed case studies and communication exercises.

The LASI WorldSkills organization has experienced unprecedented growth both organizationally and in programming. In addition to the programs and services described above, a number of new programs and services have been implemented to meet the growing and diversified needs of clients. These include a range of sector specific bridging programs, increased outreach and enhanced support for francophone clients, a resume clinic for follow-up support, a volunteer program that provides workplace experience for newcomers as well as increased support for clients and staff, and two programs dedicated to serving the needs of employers as they strive to diversify their hiring practices. In 2009, revenue from services increased by 28% and net surplus through fee for service activities increased by 73%. As a result of this growth, the organization was in constant "recruitment mode" as the number of staff grew to 53 with 30 volunteers, more than double the personnel from the previous year.

The success of WorldSkills is partly related to its systematic approach. Through the Ottawa Job Match Network and the newly created Immigrant - Employer Learning Partnerships project, World Skills is at the forefront of organizations helping to contribute to a systemic change in the sector. WorldSkills was the only organization awarded the maximum funds from the Ontario Trillium Foundation Future Fund program dedicated to supporting systemic change through innovative programming.

Success can also be attributed to the organization's commitment to internal capacity building. LASI has taken several steps towards the goal of service integration including developing an integrated client management database. As they transitioned from a small to medium-sized agency, they recognized a need to review, update and draft additional policies and procedures. Mechanisms were put in place to both support and encourage staff engagement through retreats, committees and other staff-led initiatives.

Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO)

PRIORITY AREA: More Receptive Organizational Culture
Communities: Ottawa

Description of Program

Concerned about the challenges of the economic integration of skilled immigrants, a group of community partners in Ottawa came together in 2002 to develop a locally coordinated approach to facilitate the integration of internationally trained immigrants into the labour market. The Internationally Trained Workers Partnership (ITWP) was formed in 2002 to integrate skilled immigrants more effectively into Ottawa's labour market. ITWP began as a grassroots initiative by community partners who recognized the importance of addressing these challenges .The founding partners of ITWP were United Way Ottawa, LASI WorldSkills Inc., and the Canadian Labour and Business Centre. As ITWP's research and employer engagement activities expanded, other community stakeholders became involved, including the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce, the City of Ottawa, the Ottawa Centre for Research and Innovation (OCRI) and Le Regroupement des gens d'affaires de la Capitale nationale (RGA).

Following extensive research and stakeholder consultation, project funding for an initial three-year-period was secured from the Government of Ontario in April 2006 for the Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO) initiative. The initiative brings together employers, immigrant-serving agencies and stakeholders to enhance an employers' ability to access the talents of skilled immigrants in the Ottawa area. HIO's goal is to help employers effectively tap into the local pool of skilled immigrants and enable employers to consider these candidates for skills-appropriate positions on an even playing field with other candidates. In order to accomplish this, HIO facilitates and promotes systemic change in the practices and processes that Ottawa employers use to recruit, hire and retain the best available talent.

HIO activities are anchored in a multi-pronged approach that includes an Employer Council of Champions (ECC), sector working groups that address systemic barriers in their respective sectors, and a local awareness campaign that promotes greater understanding of the social and economic value that immigrants bring to Ottawa.

The ECC, launched in 2007, is a cross-sector council of senior executives, influential business associations and labour groups. It gives employers a collective voice to enable them to promote the successful integration of skilled immigrants into the workforce. The ECC's stated objectives are to create an environment of cross-sector collaboration for the delivery of effective and innovative programs, stimulate strategic investments and partnerships, build capacity to

encourage and enable more of Ottawa's employers to hire immigrants, and act as a catalyst, initiating action on new ideas, innovation, excellence and improvement.

At the annual ECC Summit, business and community leaders gather to celebrate successes, highlight promising practices, and recognize employer achievements. The Summit is also an opportunity for ECC members to introduce their peers to the work being done by HIO and its stakeholders. The Employer Excellence Awards are presented at the Summit to recognize local employers for promising practices in the areas of recruitment, retention, and the integration of skilled immigrants in their organization.

The ECC achieves its objectives primarily through its operational arm — HIO's sector-specific working groups. Four sector-specific working groups representing employers and stakeholders were established in May 2007: health care, information technology, finance and the public sector. A bio-technology working group was established in 2009. Working 'on the ground', each group deals with issues and challenges that their sector faces in hiring and retaining the best available talent. Participants include HR professionals representing employers, immigrant agencies, labour groups, government, educational institutions and professional associations. The objectives of the working groups are to recommend and implement solutions to common barriers faced by employers when hiring immigrants and integrating them into the workplace, identify service/process gaps that affect an employers' ability to hire and retain immigrants, share information about these gaps, identify areas for improvement, implement action plans to reduce the gaps; and create hiring opportunities by linking qualified immigrants with local employers.

An ongoing communications campaign creates community awareness of the facts and issues concerning the effective integration of skilled immigrants into the local labour market, and promotes greater understanding of the social and economic value that immigrants bring to the city. Elements of the awareness campaign include quarterly HIO Communiqués that are distributed to stakeholders and interested individuals, print media and online advertisements, periodic media advisories and press releases, local media coverage of events, articles contributed to industry publications, presentations at conferences, workshops, business meetings with association and employers.

The HIO also develops and maintains an online repository of tools and resources to ensure that employers are equipped with current knowledge, research programs, resources and events. The tools and resources consist of materials developed by HIO and other organizations. Various materials have been developed by the HIO including an Employer's Guide to Integrating Immigrants into the Workplace which is a quick reference resource that provides information

about and insight into the most common challenges faced by employers when hiring and integrating skilled immigrants into the workplace. Another resource is the Working Groups Action Plan, which is a document that outlines the preliminary activities, and action plans of the working groups after their first year. An update to this document, Employers in Action, helps employers enhance their efforts to hire and integrate skilled immigrants. An implementation template helps employers measure the outcomes of these activities. Employer Success Stories provide examples of successful and innovative initiatives undertaken by local employers, and Labour Market Fact Sheets highlight employer workforce needs, demographic trends and labour market developments.

HIO also periodically hosts information sessions where employers are presented with the business case for integrating skilled immigrants into the workplace (with a focus on the implications of the changing demographics of Ottawa's labour force), as well as with an overview of resources, such as the services of the Ottawa Job Match Network (OJMN), various networking and coaching events, and the resources available on the HIO website. HIO also provides cross-cultural training seminars and workshops to employers, aimed at improving their employees' cultural competency in the workplace. These workshops help employers better prepare themselves and their organizations for a more culturally diverse workplace.

Analysis

The success of HIO is well documented by the organization. Online documents highlight that employers engaged with HIO have hired over 900 skilled immigrants (between May 2007 and October 2010) into positions appropriate to their skills. Furthermore, over 70 of these employers are making changes to their HR practices and policies. Seeking to increase employer and public awareness about the advantages of integrating immigrants into the labour force, the organization has also featured over 125 articles in local and national media, and industry publications, over 180 participants have attended Cross Cultural Competency workshops for hiring managers/staff with HR responsibilities and 9 employers to date have been awarded with an HIO Employer Excellence Award. The HIO has also introduced over 200 skilled immigrants to employers by enabling their participation in networking and coaching events in collaboration with the Ottawa Job Match Network.

The success of HIO has been well acknowledged in the community. HIO was awarded the Arthur Kroeger Award in Citizenship and Community Affairs in April 2010. The award is presented by Carleton University to an individual or organization that has shown creativity, persistence and overall leadership in demonstrating the value of a locally based initiative dealing with a problem or

challenge. The HIO model was also profiled by United Way America in 2008 as a Best Practice for labour market integration of skilled immigrants.

The success of the HIO model is related to a number of factors. Firstly, the model is based on a *cooperative relationship-building* strategy and has served as a catalyst for strengthening relationships among local employers, immigrant-serving agencies and educational institutions. For example, in response to a need expressed by employers, HIO facilitated the creation of the Ottawa Job Match Network (OJMN) to provide an innovative centralized candidate screening and matching service. As a partnership led by LASI WorldSkills Inc. and including the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization (OCISO) and the National Capital YMCA-YWCA, the OJMN is an example of building community capacity to address the economic integration of immigrants into the local workforce. Through its ongoing work with HIO, the OJMN has developed a strong relationship with employers and has adapted and enhanced its services. HIO's engagement with the Ottawa Chamber of Commerce has also expanded the range of employers that are becoming aware of the opportunity, the resources available to them and the promising practices being implemented by other employers.

This multi-stakeholder approach has been highly effective for HIO, which now includes a number of important partners in the Ottawa region, including the municipal government, business associations, educational institutions, immigrant-serving agencies and employers. The process of planning together, forming partnerships, and sharing information and resources in order to achieve a common goal resulted in a clear understanding of the complementary, rather than competing, roles that each stakeholder plays.

Secondly, this multi-stakeholder approach allows for *leveraging* the existing resources and enhances progress. A substantial array of resources has been developed locally and in other jurisdictions. By leveraging these, stakeholders can allocate their limited resources to addressing their most pressing challenges rather than creating parallel or competing programs and services. This enables stakeholders to make progress more quickly while reducing cost and effort. In addition to local resources, numerous other resources, including research information and online services and tools, exist at the provincial and national levels.

In establishing HIO, United Way Ottawa capitalized on its well-established history of running workplace campaigns during its annual fundraising cycle. The existing strong relationships between United Way Ottawa and local employers facilitated employer engagement in the research and stakeholder consultations that took place in the ITWP's early years.

Significantly, the HIO model has also allowed *employers to play a leadership role*. Employer involvement is absolutely critical to the successful integration of skilled immigrants into the labour force. Leading employers in the community need to champion immigrant employment solutions, articulating the business case to their peers and promoting effective strategies and programs in workplaces. Employers' input and feedback can also provide valuable information for shaping program design and identifying solutions to their challenges. Employers must be kept aware of the current and future demographic challenges as well as available resources to support their ability to effectively access the skilled immigrant talent pool. These are all significant reasons for placing employers at the centre of workplace integration objectives. In this way, the HIO plays an important role by giving employers the tools, resources and networks necessary to respond to and capitalize on demographic shifts.

The HIO model is also significant in that the *municipality plays a key role*. In 2000, the City of Ottawa recognized and highlighted immigration as an economic and social priority. As a partner in the ITWP/HIO initiatives, the City has remained involved from the outset, and has produced several relevant research reports. In 2007, City Council passed a motion to endorse the establishment of an Immigration Ottawa Initiative (IOI). The objective of the IOI is to develop a citywide strategy, linked to local economic development priorities, that improves the social inclusion and labour market integration of Ottawa residents, including immigrants.

Finally the HIO model is commendable for the *flexibility* it offers to employers. The issue of integrating skilled immigrants into the workforce is complex and involves many challenges. No single strategy will address all needs. Challenges differ among employers, and this calls for a range of strategies that can be adopted and adapted in order to generate meaningful results. Also, employers are in different states of readiness in their ability and capacity to address the issue. For this reason, it is counterproductive to try to move them all at once through a progressive series of lock-step activities and plans. Having a basket of resources, strategies and programs available provides employers with the flexibility to choose which ones best suit their particular situation.

The HIO model is interesting from a LIPs perspective because it offers another model of collaborative community governance. However, while HIO offers programs and services, there is also a clear emphasis on awareness building and communication strategies. There may be valuable lessons here for local immigration partnerships in terms of how to develop and evaluate these "process-oriented" objectives. The potential for transferring these practices to other locations would depend on a deeper analysis, as well as having stakeholders with research, networking, and organizational capacity, as was present in this model.

Social Capital Opportunities Regarding Employment (SCORE)

PRIORITY AREA: Social Capital and Workplace Networks
Communities: Hamilton and Toronto

<u>Description of the Program</u>

The SCORE program was introduced as a pilot in 3 offices of the Toronto Social Services during 2007-2008 and is currently operating as part of the Ontario Works programs in the cities of Hamilton and Toronto. The program is intended to mediate social capital from an individual's network to that of another. Increased levels of social capital have been linked to improved levels of job attainment, explicit and effective job maintenance as well as increased promotion rates. The SCORE program does not target immigrants specifically, but instead focuses on the diversity of connections within a network to make the transition to the labour market. Most importantly, it offers a promising practice of the effectiveness and potential of social capital as a means of enabling workplace integration.

The SCORE program seeks to utilize the social resources that exist within the key contacts of participants to accomplish an individual's goals. A critical factor to accessing another individual's social resources is to have clear and concise goals (e.g., job search, academic, personal). By establishing goals, the utility of social resources becomes more focused and the act of accessing those resources within the network is specifically structured for relationship development. Through the SCORE program, participants are taught how to identify resources in their own network by using set goals which provide structure to making connections and ultimately the transition back in to the labour market.

The purpose of SCORE is threefold:

(1) Assist participants in the development of efficient and effective goal setting techniques to improve all aspects of their lives with special emphasis placed on the development of realistic and sustainable career goals.

(2) Train participants to develop their personal networks to accomplish specific goals (e.g., job search, career advancement).

(3) Increase participant motivation to re-enter the labour market though enhancement of their existing social support networks.

The program pilot was for one-year –August 2007—August 2008. Recipients were encouraged to keep attending SCORE sessions after employment for support purposes. The Community and Labour Market Managers and the Employment Assistance Supervisors provided support and

146

monitored issues. Materials developed to implement the SCORE program included a Facilitator's Guide, Participant's Guide, Social Exploration Learning Form (SELF), PowerPoint Presentation, Facilitator's Guide on CD, and Job Search Management System. This training introduced the staff to the SCORE model and prepared the staff as SCORE facilitators.

The SCORE process began with a mandatory orientation session for clients to assess their current networking skill level and develop action plans for any areas that need improvement. Clients who were most job-ready and motivated were selected. Group diversity was an important part of the session as a diverse group can learn and motivate each other.

After the orientation session, the clients participated in a two-day workshop that helped to identify employment needs and introduced the job search management system. The sessions were structured but informal and provided the opportunity to share resources with other members. Structure was created through goal setting. The ideal number of participants for each session was 15 maximum. A rotating facilitator ensured control of the group discussions. A staff member attended the sessions to ensure program content. Guest speakers were invited at the discretion of the group.

The program has continuous intake, meaning that the initial workshops (social capital development and strategic job search management) are offered once a month and networking groups run bi-weekly. Should attendance fall below a certain level (participants find employment) additional workshops are offered to add more participants to the group.

In addition to those seeking employment, other participants including guest speakers, educators, community leaders, and government officials can also attend the SCORES.

Opportunities for participants to make the transition to employment are provided in addition to the SCORE sessions. These opportunities are organized in three phases of Preparation, Active and Maintenance. The Preparation Phase involves preparing the participants for the development of social capital. The Active Phase occurs when the participant is prepared to conduct the job search. Support and opportunities are provided through their own opportunity development as well as their involvement in the SCORES. The Maintenance Phase ensures that the participants and employers are prepared for the job. Resources to support this aspect are continuously provided to the participants. Examples of workshops for each theme include building rapport, resume and cover letter writing, and what to expect on the job.

Analysis

The SCORE program includes the following stated outcomes for participants and employers:

Participants:

(1) Decrease the time it takes to get a job and the number of placements
(2) Improve employment retention rate
(3) Increase number of contacts
(4) Improve networking competencies

Employers:

(1) Increase satisfaction with employees
(2) Reduce turnover

The SCORE program is easily transferable to employers and employment organizations. By linking organizational goals to targeted skill set requirements, the organization is better able to hire the most appropriate individual. Leveraging the access to diverse applicants to hire allows the organization to reflect the community in which they are situated. This in turn helps to create a stronger connection between the available human resources and the strategic direction of the organization. Most importantly, SCORE prepares immigrants to recognize the important of using social resources to improve their job search success, which can be easily transferred to the job, ultimately making them more competitive.

The SCORE program emerges from research that indicates that the majority of people have a difficult time connecting with others, especially individuals that they are not familiar with. Simple verbal instructions through traditional networking activities have had limited impact on these individuals' behavior, and these activities don't encourage an individual to explore the resources that exist within the social network itself. Furthermore, research indicates that there is a defined process that occurs to transform the potential that exists in networks into usable social capital. For this to occur, social capital includes knowledge of the network resources, access to the resources, and utility or ability to use the resources.

Evidence of Success

To determine whether the program was meeting its stated objectives, staff were required to provide updates and feedback on a continuous basis. The on-going evaluations of this program came from both facilitators and participants including a six-month bi-weekly session, held in March 2008 and a focus group, held in June 2008. A post-training facilitator's meeting was held in December 2007 to discuss progress and program concerns. This discussion also contributed to the program's evaluation.

In addition to the surveys, evaluations, meetings and focus groups, the researcher completed a field visit to a participating office and had several discussions (meetings and teleconferences).

This information helped to further evaluate the SCORE pilot and provide program guidelines and recommendations for improvements.

The first stage of the evaluation was the Facilitator's Feedback Survey and post-training facilitator's meeting. All facilitators at the pilot offices were required to provide their feedback on the program in the fall of 2007. Using indicators of satisfaction levels, the facilitators gave their opinions on the SCORE materials, concept of social capital, and the use of supporting materials to deliver the program effectively. The facilitators were also asked to comment on what they liked, disliked and areas that needed improvement.

Facilitators reported, following post-training, that SCORE offered new techniques to job searching within a structured program that made participants more likely to accomplish tasks; staff developed career-coaching skills and an understanding of the power of social capital; and participants developed career competencies. The key to the program was the group interaction, participants were becoming motivated and 'infused'. Facilitators felt they needed more training on the social capital theory, more training on how to facilitate this program, more tools to explain program components, and they would like to see the PowerPoint presentation materials improved. They reported challenges with referrals to this program—that is they really needed to 'promote' the program and felt that they lacked a 'good' assessment procedure.

Six facilitators responded to the SCORE Facilitator Feedback Survey. Fifty percent of respondents believed the concept of social capital was applicable to our clients but were dissatisfied with the Facilitator's guide and CD. Sixty-seven percent wanted more supporting material to deliver the SCORE workshops. In general, they liked the concept of SCORE, the Job Search Management System (Job Board and Opportunities Card) and the success of the bi-weekly sessions.

The second stage of the evaluation was a Two Day Workshop Client Evaluation. Using satisfaction levels, program participants gave their opinions about understanding social networking, their own ability to network and recommending this program to others. They were asked to comment on their favourite part of the program, their least favourite part, and any suggestions to make the program better. Ninety-eight percent (out of 38) were either very satisfied (61%) or satisfied (37%) with how the program improved their understanding of social networking. Eighty-nine percent said they were better networkers after the workshop and ninety-two percent said they were either very satisfied (34%) or satisfied (58%) regarding recommending this program to others. Fifty-five percent said they were either very satisfied (18%) or satisfied (37%) with the contacts they have made to accomplish their goals.

Participants stated that their favourite parts of the program were learning and developing new job search techniques, the Job Search Management System, meeting new people, and feeling motivated again. Their least favourite parts were social exploration and the social capital theory (too confusing), and the general flow of the program. Further suggestions for improvement were to make content more understandable, have target groups (newcomers, sector specific), improve logistics (smaller room size, larger group size and keep to timeframes), and add more program components (resume writing). Outcomes of the Two Day Workshop Evaluation do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the project as a whole given that the data was collected from only one pilot office.

The third stage of the evaluation was the Six Month Bi-Weekly Session Evaluation. Participants responded to questions about how the program supported and enhanced their job search activities. Participants reported that the session met their expectations (73%); they were satisfied with the job search support and the Job Search Management System (91%).

Participants were asked to comment on new job opportunities gained from the session, what type of guest speakers they would like to see, and how the session could have been improved. They reported new job opportunities (73%). Ninety-two participants would encourage other job seekers to attend sessions. Participants wanted the following type of guest speakers – sector specific, human resources and employment specialist, motivational speaker, nutritionist/financial advisor, and they stated that the session could be improved by making it group specific (newcomers, employment sectors), adding more structure and more group activities.

The final stage of the evaluation was the participant feedback from the Focus Group held in June 2008. Twenty participants were invited from the three pilot offices and sixteen participants attended.

Based on the outcomes of the SCORE pilot, revisions were made to the program to address the challenges the staff faced and their recommendations for improvement.