

# **STUDY OF INNOVATIVE AND PROMISING PRACTICES WITHIN THE IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT SECTOR**

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## FOREWORD

This study was commissioned by CISSA-ACSEI: the Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance - Alliance canadienne du secteur de l'établissement des immigrants. CISSA/ACSEI was formed in March 2005 to represent the immigrant settlement sector and to bring the sector's expertise to bear on public policies and programs for enhancing the settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees. In April 2012 CISSA-ACSEI was incorporated as a national body whose membership consists of provincial and regional umbrella associations whose primary mandate is supporting the settlement and integration of newcomers to Canada. Its stated purpose is to harness the expertise of the immigrant settlement sector and to act as the sector's national voice to help build a Canadian society in which all immigrants and refugees are able to participate fully.

CISSA-ACSEI is grateful for the financial assistance from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada to undertake this study. As well, thanks is owed to the many service provider representatives, federal and provincial officials and others who brought forward possible innovative, promising practices for further analysis and documentation.

CISSA-ACSEI commends the study to interested parties to highlight and learn from the tremendous innovation taking place across Canada within the immigrant serving sector. These innovative and promising practices help to enhance the ability of immigrants and refugees to fully participate and contribute in all aspects of Canadian society.

**Chris Friesen, Chair  
CISSA-ACSEI  
June 11, 2012**

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## Executive Summary

The settlement sector, across much of Canada, delivers programs on a fee-for-service basis financed by government. This arrangement has resulted in chronic underinvestment by the sector in intellectual activities such as program research, analysis and evaluation. Service provider agencies generally lack the fiscal room to conduct detailed analyses of their actions, much less to compare those actions to those of other agencies across the country. The result is that excellent local initiatives suffer from ‘locked-in syndrome,’ and the sector as a whole lacks an effective strategy for sharing information efficiently and for learning from each other. Both this study and an earlier companion piece maintain that there exists a shared interest by governments and by settlement organizations in strengthening the sector through investments in its capacity to analyze and innovate. The present study develops a methodology for achieving this goal and for creating a sector-led innovation strategy.

The core of this report is based on a detailed analysis of nineteen case studies of settlement initiatives from across Canada. The aim was to identify excellent practices and a process for replicating them. The nineteen initiatives, which span a range of service areas and client groups, were chosen in consultation with provincial umbrella settlement associations; regional and national federal officials; and provincial representatives. Detailed face-to-face interviews were then conducted with senior agency officials responsible for the initiatives using a specially developed interview guide that focused on the underlying features that contributed to the effectiveness of these initiatives. The study sought to determine whether those features could be replicated in other locations, for different target groups, different areas of service and at different operational scales. A sharp distinction exists between this approach and the more usual methods that merely seek to identify promising practices without regard to the internal (within the organization) and external (environmental) factors that ‘explain’ their success.

A key part of the study had to do with developing and confirming the effectiveness of a methodology for eliciting information about key features of promising practices. These are the practices that would need to be transferred to other organizations or locales in order to replicate success. Consequently, assessing the effectiveness of the case study interview guide and interview process were vital to the study’s aims. Both were found to be highly effective in allowing projects to be disaggregated into their essential components so that judgments could be made about the transferability of key features.

The study also confirmed a second, essential premise. To develop a sector-led innovation strategy, the reserve of promising initiatives within the sector must be sufficiently large to support a process of continual intake and examination of case studies by an appropriate research body. On this point, the study concluded that the range, geographic spread, quality, and quantity of promising practices are sufficiently large to guarantee an adequate ‘supply’ of cases to feed the proposed innovation model. The study team was impressed not only by the quality of projects and practices, but also by the quality of leadership within the sector. Ultimately, it is the quality of this leadership that generates the ideas that the innovation engine needs in order to function.

In addition to examining specific practices associated with individual initiatives, the study also identified a number of pervasive themes that were repeatedly found at the core of innovative cases. These themes can be characterized as: Developing and benefiting from social capital; Forming effective partnerships; Developing spin-offs based on experience and experimentation; Integrating service delivery and programs so they appear seamless to clients; Combining and repurposing programs; Creating flexibility through relations with multiple funders; Developing new institutional markets for settlement services; and Investing in initial research and planning. The themes are reflective of the primary dimensions – forms of organization, assets and opportunities – that were associated with inventiveness and success.

To promote inventiveness and to drive innovation within the settlement sector, the study proposes an annual innovation cycle. This cycle is eminently achievable and well within the capacities of the four stakeholder groups that need to be engaged. These are: CISSA-ACSEI and the provincial or regional settlement umbrella organizations; immigrant service provider organizations (as individual entities); governments; and an independent research body. The innovation cycle would involve the following stages:

- Priority setting by CISSA-ACSEI and governments (e.g., based on areas that are rapidly expanding or are particularly in need of improvement)
- Nomination of promising practices by settlement organizations, service providers, and governments
- Analysis of promising practices by the independent research body
- Selection and targeting of service providers wanting to expand into a new area or wishing to improve their practices
- Dissemination of knowledge in the form of workshops for settlement agencies (taught by members of the research body and the agencies that developed the practices); detailed primers providing step-by-step instructions for best practice implementation; and audio-visual and other materials suitable for computer-supported learning.

The creation of an innovation cycle would equip the settlement sector with a machinery for capitalizing on its ingenuity and leadership. This would, over time, improve newcomer integration outcomes and host community receptivity.

A key idea underpinning this study and the recommendation to institutionalize innovation is the premise of shared interest by the settlement sector and by government agencies in developing the sector's capacity. Based on this, in addition to supporting the creation of an innovation cycle, the study also recommends government action to create the 'winning conditions' that are needed to foster creativity and continual improvement within the settlement sector. These 'conditions' include:

- Streamlined accountability that focuses on outcomes and encourages experimentation in field operations, especially synergies arising from novel ways of assembling services
- Incentives for partnerships that build social capital and promote connections between settlement and mainstream community organizations
- More support for professional development training and knowledge dissemination

- Creation of policy tables to facilitate the engagement of settlement agencies in policy and program discussions (e.g., around health, education and housing)
- Strengthening CIC's local and regional capacity to assess innovative practices and creating an incentive system that channels resources in support of innovation and improved outcomes

# *STUDY OF INNOVATIVE AND PROMISING PRACTICES*

## *Establishing the Context and Goals of the Study*

This paper reports on a pan-Canadian study to examine innovative and promising practices by settlement service provider organizations. The importance of studying these practices has received considerable attention from important sources, including the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (Best Practices in Settlement Services, 2010) and the Government in its Response to the Standing Committee report (2010).

Two factors differentiate this study from other promising practice studies: The first has to do with the methodology that the study employs; the second has to do with the overall system that the research is intended to support. The goal of the present study is **not** to identify individual meritorious service examples, but instead to test a methodology for identifying the key features of promising practices that lead to successful outcomes. In this way, we can begin to extract the essential ingredients that would need to be replicated in order to transfer a successful practice to other locations and to related areas of practice. Thus, our goal is to test an assessment methodology and to confirm the viability of a ‘machinery’ for strengthening the settlement sector’s competitiveness by making better use of its members’ ingenuity.

In 2010, CISSA-ACSEI commissioned a report, *Reconfiguring Settlement and Integration: A Service Provider Strategy for Innovation and Results* (Burstein, 2010), that examined the sector’s preparedness to address emerging policy challenges and new competitors. The report concluded that the settlement sector enjoyed a strategic advantage over competing organizations in the form of expertise that could not be easily acquired or replicated; to maintain this advantage, however, the settlement sector would need to invest in knowledge creation and dissemination. The need for such investment formed a central recommendation of the 2010 CISSA-ACSEI report. Specifically, what the report advocated was that CISSA-ACSEI invest in building up the intellectual capacity of settlement organizations through a partnership with a research body. It further proposed that the first investment undertaken by this partnership be a study of promising practices in respect of newcomer settlement and integration. CISSA-ACSEI supported this recommendation and commissioned the present study to test the propositions that had been advanced, including the partnership with a research consortium - the Welcoming Communities Initiative. This research represents a logical evolution of this aspect of the first strategic report.

The current study, commissioned by CISSA-ACSEI, with the support of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, has two major goals:

- I. To test a methodology for analyzing promising practices and the conditions that nurture them and contribute to their effectiveness in order to allow replication and transfer of key elements both within and across areas of practice.

- II. To establish the feasibility of institutionalizing innovation in the settlement sector based on the systematic analysis of promising practices, and methods for sharing the resultant knowledge with targeted agencies and service areas.

We begin our discussion with the second of the two goals. Starting in this way does put the system cart before the analysis horse, but it has the advantage of displaying the entire ‘machine’ that is being proposed. This machine has a number of ‘moving parts’: a process, not unlike the one instituted for this project, in which a stream of promising practices is identified, vetted by an expert selection committee and submitted to rigorous analysis; a proactive process for directing promising practice analyses to potentially receptive settlement practitioners; and a process for training practitioners and supporting organizations in the implementation of promising practices and associated methods.

The viability of the proposed ‘machine’ is based on three assumptions. The first is that there exists a sufficient and replenishable reservoir of ingenuity and ideas within the settlement sector to regularly refresh the pool of projects available for analysis; the second is that an effective methodology is available for analyzing projects and determining whether they can be replicated and transferred elsewhere; and the third is that a partnership can be developed between the settlement sector and a research body to conduct the analyses, mount training programs, and disseminate information to the settlement sector through seminars, training modules, primers, webinars and other methods. There are good reasons to believe that all three assumptions are viable. We begin with the reservoir of ideas.

In forming an opinion about the adequacy of the settlement sector’s idea pool, we make an important distinction between the character of the ‘industry’ and that of individual ‘firms’. At the firm level, our case studies have confirmed the existence of significant numbers of excellent projects. The practices that were nominated for analysis for the current study demonstrated vision, ingenious program configurations, inventive financing, risk taking and entrepreneurship. Typically, these are all qualities associated with innovation and productivity in the private sector. And, just as in the private sector, the quality of the projects we examined can be attributed not only to the quality of ideas but also the qualities of the individuals and teams who crafted the projects. Not to put too fine a point on this, we were impressed by the practices we examined and the individuals we interviewed. On the crucial question of the prevalence of talent within the sector, the following factors provide evidence for the existence of a robust store of talent that is available to be mined: (i) a high proportion of the projects (and the practices they embodied) that were nominated for analysis are demonstrably of high quality; (ii) excellence was distributed across the country and was not confined to a particular region or government jurisdiction and program regime; (iii) excellence was distributed across different types of service; and (iv) the modest selection process we relied on produced a store of well over one hundred projects for consideration. Based on the combined weight of these factors, we conclude that an adequate supply of projects exists to feed the analytic machinery.

We now go back to the distinction between the character of individual firms and that of the sector. The fact that the sector contains examples of excellence does not inevitably lead to the sector as a whole exhibiting excellence. This may be why program evaluations conducted by Citizenship and Immigration Canada have shown weak outputs and low program uptake in a number of areas. This leads us to the

inference that the sector does not have an effective means of sharing the ideas and experiences of its members. Thus, individual examples of excellence remain just that: individual examples.

A key argument in the report on *Reconfiguring Settlement and Integration* was that the settlement sector faced a significant problem arising from the fact that most of its financial support originates with government under some form of fee-for-service arrangement. Under such arrangements, governments pay agencies to deliver settlement services. They do not, however, pay them to conduct introspective analyses of those services. Nor do they pay them to compare their services to those offered by fellow settlement agencies. The result is that individual firms rarely invest in introspective analyses of their programs to establish transferability; and there are no effective, systematic, pan-Canadian mechanisms for evaluating and sharing promising ideas and excellent practices. In the course of our analysis for the current project, we were repeatedly confronted by the fact that agencies were not aware of relevant projects beyond provincial boundaries. The absence of a transfer mechanism acts as a significant brake on innovation at the industry level. To use a mechanical analogy, the sector already has an innovation engine in the form of individuals with skills and creativity; what it lacks is a transmission for linking this creativity to a learning and dissemination strategy that would lead to enhanced **sector-wide** performance.

In the final section of this report, we offer ideas for creating a stable ‘mechanical’ relationship that would couple analyses of promising practices to a machinery for disseminating information and training agencies in its use. Our contention is that this system of analysis, dissemination and training would fulfill the requirements of the settlement sector for a robust, industry-led innovation capacity. This would, in turn, preserve and reinforce the sector’s strategic advantages in respect of fostering newcomer integration and community receptivity. Before we make this argument, however, we must return to the core of our work which focuses on the analysis of promising practices and the purpose-built methodology we employed.

We define promising practices as practices that are particularly effective in achieving their stated aims. Thus, we are defining promising practices in terms of their effectiveness, which can be empirically measured as outcomes of the practice. Promising practices can be assessed in comparison to practices with similar goals or utilizing related techniques, taking into account the endogenous (internal) and exogenous (external) conditions that may promote their success. It is important to note that although client satisfaction with a program or practice may contribute to its success, satisfaction and effectiveness are not interchangeable and our focus is on the latter. According to the Compassion Capital Fund of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2009), a promising practice is “a program, activity or strategy that has worked within one organization and shows promise during its early stages for becoming a best practice with long term sustainable impact. A promising practice must have some objective basis for claiming effectiveness and must have the potential for replication among other organizations.” It is on the issue of lessons to be learned and potential for replication that we focus our attention.

In the sections that follow we describe the methodology that we have developed for analyzing promising practices, with the goal of extracting features or configurations that lead to success. To date we have applied this methodology to 19 specific programs within five areas of practice. The resultant case studies have yielded a number of overarching lessons regarding the development and implementation of effective practices. Our recommendations focus on a strategy for replicating and transferring such practices in order to build an innovation capacity within the settlement sector based on sharing and collaboration. The components of this strategy include ongoing analysis, knowledge dissemination, and support for the implementation of lessons derived from promising practice research.

## *Methodology*

The first step of the project was to develop a process for analyzing promising practices and identifying the areas of practice to be studied. Based on the project's goals and intended outcomes, the study team developed a methodology which was presented to, and approved by, a special panel convened by CISSA-ACSEI in Ottawa on March 29, 2011 (see Appendix A). The key features of this methodology are:

- 1) **A formalization of the definition of promising practices based on their effectiveness in achieving stated aims.** This allows promising practices to be assessed in comparison to practices having similar goals or utilizing related techniques. The step-wise process explicitly requires that assessments take into account the endogenous and exogenous conditions that contribute to the success of the promising practice.
- 2) **A protocol for documenting promising practices and operationalizing the assessment process.** Documentation includes an examination of the reasons why the practice was put into place; an identification of the goals of the practice, as set out in government and agency literature; and a description of specific targets, outcomes and, where available, timelines for achieving results.
- 3) **An analysis that considers key features of the practice** in terms of:
  - i. How the practice differs from other similar practices
  - ii. What features of the practice contribute to its success and innovation, as identified by those who use it or have experience with it
  - iii. What features are innovative and unique as determined by the team conducting the analysis
- 4) **An analysis of purported evidence pertaining to the success of the practice:**
  - i. Why are people saying it is a best practice: anecdotal evidence
  - ii. What research or evaluation of the practice is available; how reliable and valid are the research and evaluation
  - iii. What are the specific endogenous factors that promote its effectiveness: endogenous factors are factors internal to the organization delivering the service, such as research capacity, or internal to the specific program, such as flexible guidelines that permit experimentation

- iv. What are the specific exogenous factors that promote its effectiveness: exogenous factors are factors external to the organization, such as the state of the economy or the prevailing public mood and public attitudes
  - v. How does the evidence relate to the goals of the practice as identified earlier
  - vi. What can be concluded from the evidence
- 5) **An evaluation of the potential for transferring the practice** to other locations (such as larger, smaller or Northern communities), different client populations, different goals, and whether the practice can be scaled (made larger or smaller)

To assess each of these features in a systematic fashion, an interview guide was developed for use in conducting structured interviews of agency and program heads (see Appendix B).

### Areas of practice

The study team and special panel put together by CISSA-ACSEI decided the potential areas of practice to be examined in the current study. Several considerations went into the selection of these areas: breadth of interest and utility within the sector, fit with Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Modernized Approach to Settlement Programming, and fit with the federal and provincial governments' interest in the regionalization of immigration. The final areas were chosen with a degree of precision in order to permit meaningful comparisons and evaluative conclusions. Although six areas of practice were initially proposed, the lack of recommended practices within one of the areas resulted in a final list of five areas of practice:

- **Civic and social engagement programs for immigrants**  
Civic and social engagement programs refer to practices that seek to make a difference in the civic and social lives of communities by encouraging immigrant participation and attachment, and developing the knowledge, skills, values and motivation in immigrants to support these outcomes. Included are practices that encourage voting, volunteering, joining associations and clubs, participating in sports and recreation, and holding leadership positions.
- **Integrated needs assessment and 'one stop shops'**  
One-stop shops and integrated needs assessment refers to holistic, front-end evaluations of client needs coupled with a coordinated multi-service operation providing integrated services so that clients (individuals or families) do not need to 'shop around' on their own but are provided with, or directed to, different services in a coordinated fashion. The practices should be designed to enhance sector efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Building relationships with employers**  
The focus is on measures used by settlement organizations, individually or cooperatively, to cultivate and maintain relations with local employers and employer networks. Included are practices that engage employer interest; persuade employers to adopt different practices; tailor programs and interventions to employer needs; provide support and training to employers; and

induce employers to support newcomer integration. Practices that engage employer networks in creating a positive employment climate for newcomers are also included.

- The delivery of settlement services to smaller and more isolated cities and towns and rural regions  
The focus is on practices for extending the reach of organizations that currently offer services in larger centres so that services can be exported to smaller and more isolated cities and towns, and to rural agricultural and resource industry regions. Of particular interest are new technologies, distance education techniques (involving modified curricula and course materials), peer networks, video conferencing, the use of discussion boards, the use of social media and other emerging technologies.
- Transitioning immigrants to general community service organizations  
The focus is on practices that transition newcomer clients from specialized newcomer services to community services intended for the general population. Included are practices aimed at preparing clients for the transition, as well as institutional arrangements aimed at preparing general community service agencies to receive and serve newcomers. These incorporate cultural sensitivity training for general community service agency staff, service modification, and staff support.

### *Selection of promising practices for the case studies*

Having defined five areas of practice, the study sought to identify 3-5 promising examples from each area for in-depth analysis. To select these initiatives, the following groups were consulted:

- i. Provincial and regional umbrella organizations, plus a small number of settlement agency heads across the country;
- ii. Officials of Citizenship and Immigration Canada, NHQ, as well as regional CIC officials responsible for operations, and field officers directly involved in project and program assessments
- iii. Provincial officials from immigration ministries

Consultations were conducted by e-mail and telephone, as well as through an online survey sent out to umbrella organizations for dissemination to member settlement agencies, and to federal and provincial officials. In all cases, a template describing the targeted areas of practice was provided, and participants were asked to complete a nomination form for each recommendation. The form included a checklist of key features that might be used to tentatively identify a promising practice (see Appendix C). This process yielded a total of 109 submissions.

From the 109 submissions, the study team developed a list of initiatives for further consideration, with a view to showcasing the settlement sector's strategic advantages and addressing federal policy and program concerns. Final selections were then based on further consultations, on information gleaned from key documents, and on advice provided by CISSA-ACSEI. This produced a final list of 19 practices funded by both the federal and provincial governments and spread across five practice areas (see Appendix D). The chosen practices spanned 14 cities, representing every region of the country.

The following considerations, vetted by the CISSA-ACSEI special panel, informed the study team's final selections:

Emphasis on value-for-money, efficiency and innovation

- Projects that are managed based on outcomes and indicators of success
- Projects that demonstrate efficiency
- Projects with high client uptake and client retention
- Projects that offer evidence of vertical or horizontal integration of services

Emphasis on long-term integration, including employment, labour mobility and belonging

- Place-based projects which target neighborhoods
- Projects or activities that feature bridging across social groups
- Projects that improve labour market success through employer engagement
- Projects involving partnerships with general community service agencies
- Projects that bridge general community service agencies and ethnocultural groups

Emphasis on regionalization objectives

- Projects that can be scaled up or down
- Projects that lend themselves to distance learning techniques
- Projects adapted to the needs of newcomers in smaller cities, including Northern sites

Emphasis on the settlement sector's comparative advantages

- Projects that synergistically combine the services of multiple ministries or governments
- Projects that leverage resources for newcomers
- Projects that illustrate family-centred services

Emphasis on sector independence

- Projects that demonstrate the successful marketing or monetizing of sector knowledge
- Projects that demonstrate innovative financing arrangements

Emphasis on particular client groups

- Visible minorities, religious minorities, ethnocultural minorities
- Youth, seniors, women
- Multi-barriered clients

### *Interview procedure*

Once the final list of practices was approved, the study team contacted responsible agency heads to set up interviews. The first of the nineteen interviews was conducted by both members of the study team working together to ensure consistency. Subsequent interviews were conducted by team members operating independently. Prior to visiting each practice, the responsible team member examined the available literature on the practice, including background materials, and any research or evaluation conducted to date. The team member then visited the practice to conduct in-person interviews and to learn, first-hand, how it operates. Interviews lasted 2-3 hours and, with the permission of the interviewee, were audio-taped for later use by the study team. The goal of the interviews was to

thoroughly document each practice and the features deemed to be particularly innovative and effective. In only one case was it not possible to arrange an in-person meeting, and a telephone interview was substituted. The procedures used in conducting the interviews received approval from the Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects of the University of Western Ontario, and all REB guidelines were followed.

## *Evaluation of the Methodology*

In order to solicit a pool of truly promising practices for analysis, we structured our call for nominations to include particular requirements. In addition, we directed our nomination call to provincial and regional settlement umbrella organizations, and to federal and provincial government representatives (particularly those directly involved in project and program assessments), rather than to the agencies that deliver the (potentially) promising practices. These steps were intended to exclude or minimize self-interest bias.

-We received 109 nominations. Careful examination of these nominations suggested that the solicitation procedures induced respondents to be relatively discriminating and yielded a list of practices that could, for the most part, be defined as truly promising. From this pool, we were then able to select 19 practices for analysis.

Once the practices had been identified, we employed a structured and systematic procedure for analyzing their promising features: It included an examination of key documents, and individual interviews with agency heads and program leads. The interview guide used to direct the discussions with agency heads and program leads was found to be efficient and thorough in eliciting information and allowing us to work through the key steps in an orderly fashion. This resulted in a structured and comprehensive analysis of projects containing essential detail with respect to endogenous and exogenous factors that could 'explain' project success. The interviews allowed us to disaggregate projects into their essential components, producing analytic insights into the core ideas that would need to be replicated and transferred in order to reap the benefits elsewhere.

In general, both the interviewers and those interviewed found the discussions to be illuminating, and they often continued well past the completion of the formal interviews. Indeed, several agency heads spontaneously commented that they had benefited from being forced to think about and articulate what makes specific practices effective, and that the questions were enlightening in that regard.

In the next section, we describe important common features and qualities that we were able to extract or to associate with many of the promising practices. The structured interview format and array of questions contributed significantly to our ability to identify these commonalities.

## *Emerging Patterns*

While there is a degree of uniqueness, inherent in the idea of promising practices – the practices have, after all, been singled out from their peers – there are also patterns and qualities that can be discerned.

These patterns have to do with particular features and components of the practices, with the manner in which program elements are assembled, and with enabling features of the environment, some of which can be manipulated by service provider agencies to produce more favourable configurations. An important consideration in thinking about replication and transferability of promising practices is the fact that such practices must be viewed dynamically rather than as butterflies pinned for exhibit. Actions have consequences and many of the promising practices we examined reshaped the context in which the agencies worked, changing their opportunity structure. Below we discuss some of the commonalities that impressed themselves upon us in the course of our work.

### *Developing and benefitting from social capital*

The role of social capital emerged as one of the more important features associated with many of the promising practices examined by our study. Social capital can be thought of as the physical and financial resources, services, and influence that reside in a (formal or informal) network and are available to members of that network. Thus, social capital and network membership represent important assets that can be used by individuals or groups to gain access to resources or to achieve desired ends.

Governments and other stakeholders interested in facilitating those same ends have an interest in promoting social capital formation. An important consequence or result of social capital formation is the development or reinforcement of trust and reciprocity, accompanied by improved access to information and better social and economic outcomes. These include greater social and civic influence, and enhanced economic and political power. Social capital researchers have argued that such benefits are especially prevalent for immigrants and immigrant organizations in respect of bridging social capital (consisting of relations between immigrant groups and broader mainstream institutions) as distinct from bonding social capital (characterized by networks restricted to immigrants and ethnocultural groups).

Four aspects of social capital formation and its role in the construction of promising practices struck us as being noteworthy: The first is that the development and use of social capital featured in a wide range of projects, cutting across quite different spheres of service; the second is that social capital accretion required long periods of time and (typically) extensive interactions, much of it at senior agency staff levels; the third is that social capital formed in one set of circumstances could be transferred effectively to other programs and other circumstances; and the fourth is that the social capital featured in most of our examples involved bridging social capital or connections across heterogeneous groups. This fourth point is significant in that it coincides with the interests of agencies and governments in effecting a transition by immigrants and refugees from specialized settlement services to general community services. In addition, bridging relationships between settlement agencies and general community service institutions provide the latter set of organizations with access to the links that settlement agencies have forged with ethnocultural communities. The following examples illustrate these points:

Service Intégration Travail Outaouais (SITO) in Gatineau, Quebec operated a ‘traditional’ immigrant job placement service that prepared immigrants to go out and look for jobs. Results were poor. This led to a change in agency management accompanied by a change in philosophy: instead of immigrants being the clients, this role was assigned to employers. Under this construction, immigrants were recast as the

'products' that employers needed and the courses and training that immigrants were offered were regarded as enhancements to their marketability. The change in philosophy was also accompanied by an important change in agency behaviour, notably, the investment that SITO began to make in employer relations. The agency's Director-General and a senior staff member began to attend meetings of a number of employer networks. The membership of these networks consists, by and large, of owner-operators whose businesses are too small to have dedicated human resource staff. The key to doing business with network members was to ensure SITO's visibility and to create positive placement examples that would be disseminated by word of mouth. Building effective relations took between three and four years of SITO regularly participating in meetings and network forums; delivering frequent presentations; explaining SITO's philosophy; and building relations – in effect, investing in the network and contributing to its effectiveness. The agency insisted on complete employer satisfaction and backed this up by having staff participate, alongside immigrants and employers, in candidate interviews. Referrals were monitored and unsatisfactory job matches were quickly dissolved (current retention rates stand at 99% at six months). The result has been a steady expansion in employer referrals - employers at network meetings tell SITO about existing and prospective job vacancies, either within their own firms or those of their friends. Through these methods, SITO has successfully inserted itself into employer networks and is able to reap a continual flow of benefits.

Another example of the utilization and broadening of social capital is demonstrated by the Southern Alberta Settlement Services for Rural Communities. The project has gradually built broad collaborative networks, not unlike the Local Immigration Partnerships initiative, that focus on settlement, integration and bridging in three Southern Alberta towns. In each case, large local advisory committees were formed consisting of local funders, service providers, schools, employers, municipal representatives and others. Local participants were recruited for their role and influence in the community as well as their interest in immigration and understanding of its importance for local sustainability. Community engagement was conceived of as facilitating and extending relationships among local stakeholders, reducing barriers to institutional change and supporting the emergence of a community vision (of what the town might achieve). In other words, community engagement has been closely linked to the strengthening and improved functioning of local networks. The result has been an improvement in local receptivity, an expansion in the number of local institutions undertaking concrete initiatives to adjust to newcomers, and a gradual evolution of stakeholder relationships into productive service arrangements whereby committee members and other local actors implement new practices that facilitate integration. This transformation is expected to continue.

### *Partnership formation*

A reliance on partnerships – peer to peer relationships among organizations – to gain access to expertise, to hard-to-reach client groups, or to protected jurisdictions was an important feature of many promising practices. The value to be derived from spanning barriers and gaps meant that many of the promising practice partnerships involved bridging relations among different institutions and groups. In many, but not all situations, the development of partnerships benefitted from prior working relationships among the agencies or prior involvement in common advisory structures and networks.

Where such relations existed, the development of social capital and trust paved the way for partnership development. One of the noteworthy features of the partnerships that were examined for this project was their considerable span in terms of agency involvement and impact. Various examples of partnerships are provided below.

The Immigrant Public Legal Education and Information Consortium (IPC), led by the Justice Education Society (a non-governmental justice advocacy and resource body) in BC, was designed to operate as a collaborative venture partnering twelve Lower Mainland justice agencies with immigrant service providers. The project's goal was to provide legal education and information directly to immigrants and refugees as well as to settlement agencies and legal service providers by means of community and cross-sectoral workshops organized around priority themes. This knowledge dissemination strategy was augmented by the creation of community asset maps that identified legal and community agencies offering legal services in the geographical areas covered by the project. Funding for the IPC project was provided by B.C.'s Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation through a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of the Attorney General for the purpose of capacity building in the area of justice services.

An evaluation of IPC revealed that the project effectively melded justice and immigrant settlement resources in the service of legal education. In particular, there was widespread agreement among survey respondents (including service providers) that communication among frontline organizations had improved markedly and that agencies were providing more consistent legal information and had a better understanding of where to refer newcomers with legal issues.

The second example of effective partnerships underpinning a promising practice comes from the Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSofBC) My Circle Program which operates in the Metro Vancouver Area. The program is supported by a wide range of institutions including local school boards, the City of Vancouver and Surrey, the Vancouver Foundation and the Ministry for Jobs, Tourism and Innovation. ISSofBC's My Circle program recruits immigrant and refugee youth, ages 14 to 24, and puts them through an intensive twelve week – 80 hour - leadership and facilitation training program. The strategic goals of this program are to foster civic engagement, promote citizenship and build local communities. The youth who receive the training offer peer support to other immigrant and refugee youth while also promoting inclusiveness, anti-racism and cultural sensitivity. These goals are addressed through educational presentations to the immigrant community at large and to immigrant and refugee youth, using workshops and focus groups, and peer interaction. The activities take place within schools as well as within communities. Local youth service agencies are also involved in the program and benefit from the connections they form with immigrant youth and the insights this provides them. ISSofBC's My Circle 'graduates' have also formed a permanent body that seeks to address youth interests and influence youth issues. The effectiveness and reach of the program are a direct function of the reach of the sponsoring institutions.

Key to the success of the program and its expansion has been the trust that has developed over a ten year period between the Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISSofBC) and local school boards. This has provided ISSofBC with access to students, school resources, and school sanctioned

activities in support of the program. The schools, in turn, have benefitted from the peer counseling that the program offers, the positive influence it exerts on the student body, as well as student and community interest in the program and its results. The relationship has further evolved since the introduction of the Settlement Workers in Schools program (SWIS). Each year, ISSofBC, SWIS coordinators and school board representatives sign an agreement setting out the scope of that year's activities and the expectations regarding partner contributions. ISSofBC also works closely with schools and teachers to get buy-in. Consideration is being given to expanding the program to other communities, subject to available resources, providing student numbers are adequate. Furthermore, ISSofBC MY Circle staff have compiled and will be testing, in the Fall of 2012, a higher level, advanced, 60 hour leadership training program.

### *Spin-offs and building on strengths*

A feature that is evident in a number of promising practices we analyzed is the prevalence of spin-offs – suites of related programs - that extend an organization's basic strengths, expertise, and contacts to create and open up new possibilities and identify new funding sources. Spin-offs are offshoots and adaptations of initial programs that extend services to related program areas linked to the original domain. These spin-offs take advantage of the expertise and social capital that develops over the course of operating the initial program, manifesting as additional mechanisms to address similar or related needs associated with the area of practice. Through spin-offs, an organization can build on its success in delivering an initial program, broadening its scope by using the foundation that has been established and 'externalities' – unappropriated possibilities – that have been generated. Spin-offs enhance success within the area of practice and promote holistic approaches to meeting needs. As such, spin-offs have played an important role in the evolution of settlement organizations, allowing the organizations to expand to meet newcomer needs, as those needs reveal themselves, all the while building expertise and extending partnerships in variegated fields.

Two examples that highlight the features and benefits of spin-offs may be found in the Association for New Canadians in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the North Bay Newcomer Employers' Council in North Bay, Ontario.

The Association for New Canadians serves a large number of refugees, particularly government assisted refugees, with extensive needs in the area of health and wellness. Recognizing these needs, the Medical Gateway project was formed in 2006 in partnership with Memorial University's School of Medicine. The project utilized medical students to develop medical histories for clients, making it easier to match newcomers with family doctors and, in turn, providing students with experience in working with diverse populations. This project expanded in 2011 with an important spin-off: a screening program for the early identification, referral, and treatment of health-related issues in refugees during the first year of settlement (e.g., visual, hearing, dental, prenatal). Additional off-shoots have involved the creation of a settlement worker position specifically focused on the health needs of refugees, the establishment of an on-site clinic staffed by a public health nurse four days a week, and an annual health fair at the Centre that now involves over 30 community health and wellness agencies. Thus, from a single program to

meet the health needs of newcomers, the Association for New Canadians has built on its acquired strengths and expertise, and on the relationships it has established over time, to develop an expansive set of health and wellness programs and partnerships that meet the needs of newcomers to St. John's and the surrounding areas.

In a very different sphere of activity, the North Bay Newcomer Employers' Council has built up a system of programs and services for assisting employers in the recruitment, settlement, and integration of newcomers in North Bay and other Northern communities. The Council's first step involved the establishment of workshops for employers and the publication of an Employer's Guide in 2011. Since then, off-shoots have included diversity training for employers, establishment of a mentorship program for newcomers, and establishment of a connector program that matches professional newcomers with local professionals in the same field. The Council has also developed a system for advertising difficult-to-fill positions in North Bay in Southern Ontario and other regions, and has recently initiated HR North, a program to create human resource services for small and medium-sized Northern Ontario enterprises interested in accessing internationally-trained individuals. Thus, in a relatively short period of time, the North Bay Newcomer Employers' Council has developed a variety of related programs for assisting employers in recruiting and retaining newcomers. It would have been impossible for the Council to construct this entire tapestry of programs at the outset. However, the growing receptivity of employers, the trust that developed among Council members, and the deeper understanding of what was needed produced 'environmental changes' that opened up new opportunities. The purposeful positioning of the Employers' Council allowed it to capitalize on these altered conditions.

### *Integrated, seamless delivery of services*

Newcomers to Canada tend to have a wide variety of needs and, thus, programs that offer an aggregation of services in a seamless manner are likely to prove especially efficient in meeting their needs. From the client's perspective, seamless service delivery involves no clear breaks or distinctions between services, irrespective of whether the services are being offered using a variety of funding mechanisms or different providers. Seamless services are often offered at a single location and require that service providers work together and collaborate in delivering a set of services to a client. Clients, for their part, perceive these services as easy to access and they benefit from not having to contact multiple service providers, repeatedly providing basic background information. Several organizations may be involved in such delivery and multiple programs may be delivered, without the client being aware of the distinctions.

The most obvious example of organizations that provide integrated, seamless services are, by definition, one-stop shops, such as the Welcome Centres in York Region, Ontario and the Regina Open Door Society Newcomer Welcome Centre in Regina, Saskatchewan. The York Welcome Centres specifically focus on providing coordinated services to newcomers and on facilitating newcomers' access to, and use of, a variety of services that meet their needs. Two types of partners are included: lead partners who are joint tenants of the Centre and deliver core services to newcomers, and associate partners who rent space at the Centre and provide additional services to those being offered by the lead partners. Key to

the seamless delivery of services is a coordinated case management system and a database used for sharing and exchanging information on clients. In addition, the Centres are set up as neutral spaces with a single brand that does not favor one agency over another. Staff are encouraged to identify primarily as members of the Welcome Centre and only secondarily as members of their specific agencies. An important aspect of the Centres is that, irrespective of what services are utilized, each client is assigned a single “trusted person” who keeps track of them and ensures that their needs are being met.

Though less extensive in the services offered, the Regina Open Door Society Newcomer Welcome Centre aims to provide a variety of assessment, information, and referral services to new immigrants to Regina and the region. The Centre participates in and offers in-house booking of appointments with school board representatives to assess educational needs, with language assessors, with settlement support workers in schools, with youth workers, with settlement information advisors, and with providers of orientation services for newcomers. These programs are variously funded or co-funded by the province and the federal government, yet to clients, the distinctions are not obvious. The database and the use of a single initial assessment for multiple referrals were identified as key to promoting the integrated delivery of services.

Although one-stop shops and welcome centres are in the business of delivering integrated, seamless services, the goal of providing integrated services to newcomers extends beyond agencies that have specifically defined themselves as one-stop shops and welcome centres. For example, since its inception over 30 years ago, the Association for New Canadians in St. John’s has expanded not only in terms of providing a variety of health and wellness services to newcomers (as described in the section on Spin-offs), but also in terms of providing a variety of other services, including language training and employment-related services, all offered under one roof. This facilitates the opportunities for newcomers to access an array of programs in an efficient and effective manner. Interestingly, the integration and close physical association of multiple services has also been adopted as a ‘best practice’ to induce innovation within the private sector under the rubric of industrial clustering and technology parks.

### *Combining and repurposing programs*

One of the more important findings of the *Reconfiguring Settlement and Integration* study was that service provider organizations were especially adept at combining multiple programs and services to achieve synergies where the value of the combined service outweighs the value of its individual components. The synergies are the result of efficiencies arising from service integration or from learning produced by interactions among a wider set of program participants or from interactions among participants and external stakeholders. Service provider organizations acquire their integrative skills on-the-job, by virtue of attempting to solve problems encountered by newcomers and their families. This ability to combine and coordinate different programs is not something that government ministries do well. Individual ministries know a great deal about their own programs, but less about those offered by other ministries, and far less about those offered by other jurisdictions. As a result, the

ability to combine programs – a point which we introduced in the section on the seamless delivery of services - constitutes a strategic advantage of the settlement sector.

Not surprisingly, our review of promising practices offered quite a few examples of agency ingenuity in combining programs and making full use of agency skill sets to create new, holistic ‘packages’. This integration of programs reinforces the strategic advantage enjoyed by immigrant service provider organizations. Several examples follow.

One of the clearest examples of how agencies are able to combine and repurpose programs is provided by the Integrated Immigrant Senior Program run by the Intercultural Association of Victoria (ICA), in Victoria, BC. This program transitions immigrant seniors from specialized immigrant service provider organizations to general community service agencies.

ICA’s program has two distinct, but complementary, objectives: The first targets immigrant seniors, building their awareness of general community service agencies and encouraging them to access recreational, health, social and informational services. The second objective targets the general community service institutions themselves (and other local organizations) rather than the seniors, encouraging the institutions to become more welcoming and to work more closely with immigrant communities.

Three separate programs were combined by ICA to create the Integrated Senior Program. These were: (i) B.C.’s Settlement and Integration Program which is used to support counseling, orientation, education and assisted access to services; (ii) B.C.’s WICWP Program (Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program) which supports the Diversity Audit that ICA conducts of general community senior agencies to determine the inclusivity of their programs, the quality of related training and research, and the extent to which staff and volunteers reflect immigrant composition; and (iii) the Community Partnership Network, initiated by the United Way, and used to acquaint general community service institutions with immigrant communities. The key points to be drawn out from this example concern creativity and synergy: The Integrated Senior Program is not simply an amalgam of other programs but a new program in its own right, fashioned not by government but by ICA; and the value of the bundled program far exceeds the value of its components by virtue of their mutually reinforcing nature. Also adding to the value of the arrangement is the specialized staff expertise that has been acquired through administration of the individual programs but is deployed and managed by ICA in the service of the integrated package.

A somewhat different example, at a macro level, of combining and repurposing services is provided by the Southern Alberta Settlement Services for Rural Communities project. To engage stakeholders and to respond to plans devised by local advisory committees, the project makes use of a range of Citizenship and Immigration Canada programs. These include: SWIS (settlement workers in schools), employed as an outreach component to support inter-agency meetings; the Community Connections program to encourage volunteering in support of building cultural awareness and facilitating newcomer reception; ‘ISAP’-type (immigrant settlement and adaptation program) measures to assist newcomer clients in areas that are congruent with locally developed plans; and the use of program coordinators to provide

diversity training to local partners and to assist with tasks such as community needs assessments and plan development. By taking discrete program elements and placing them in the service of community development and local planning, the Rural Communities project achieves synergies in the form of a greater capacity to receive newcomers, a greater capacity to develop locally appropriate solutions, and a stronger ability to leverage local support for newcomer integration.

### *Multi-funder flexibility*

Innovation requires experimentation and an ability to test ideas and combine program features in novel ways that may incur a degree of risk. Innovative programs are thus especially likely to arise when funding is not so constraining as to limit opportunities for testing new ideas and developing new programs that do not strictly fit narrow interpretations of funding criteria. It is noteworthy, then, that across the interviews we conducted, a comment repeated by many agency heads and program leads was that they were able to test promising practices because of good relationships with funders who let them take risks and interpreted funding criteria broadly. Respondents also indicated that multiple sources of funding allowed more options for combined activities and provided more ‘fiscal room’ to build more complex and better integrated programs. This strongly suggests that relationships with funders built on trust, and the availability of blended funding from multiple sources, are facilitative conditions that allow promising practices to be established and to flourish.

Two examples that highlight the facilitative nature of funding flexibility are the Immigrant Centre in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and the Settlement Workers in Schools Program in London, Ontario.

The Immigrant Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba has developed relationships with multiple funders resulting in fewer restrictions on the types of clients that can be served and services that can be offered. The variety of funding sources also means that staff enjoy more job security than would otherwise be the case because the organization is not dependent on one funder for all of its support. This creates stability and allows agencies to retain their expertise. The Centre’s primary source of funding, targeted at core costs, has been Manitoba Labour and Immigration. The United Way also funds some front line programs, as well as the strategic planning exercise that the Immigrant Centre conducts each year. And a variety of other groups and businesses, including other provincial and federal departments, the Investors Group, the Royal Bank, and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority then fill gaps by funding various specific activities of the Centre (e.g., nutrition workshops, computer lending). These multiple sources of funding have allowed the Centre to broaden its scope and to fill gaps that were evident in its programming. For example, because there are multiple sources of funding for the Access English Centre, there are few restrictions on who can participate in the program. The Centre enjoys a close relationship with its funders which contributes to its willingness to bring new ideas to the table for discussion and eventual implementation.

The Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program in London, Ontario involves a partnership between three service provider organizations and two school boards. Though the SWIS program is primarily funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada - so its activities must target newcomers - the

partnership with the school boards (who provide, among other things, meeting space, supplies, and photocopying) has increased flexibility, broadening the types of participants who are involved in SWIS activities. As a result, in-school activities, such as parent workshops, can include both newcomers and members of the host society. These joint activities provide opportunities for newcomers to forge connections with members of the host society, building social capital and promoting a sense of belonging to the local community. Participation in joint activities with newcomers also promotes more positive attitudes toward newcomers among members of the host society. Thus, joint funding expands the opportunities and potential benefits that can be extracted from the activities in question.

### *Developing new institutional markets*

As the number of immigrants, international students and temporary foreign workers grows and the composition of the population shifts away from persons of European origin, an increasing number of general community service institutions are realizing that their markets are eroding, their staff no longer understand or reflect the composition of their client base, and they lack the expertise to effect the necessary corrections. This affects a broad range of institutions in the private, public and quasi-public sectors (schools, libraries, police and so forth). Seen from the 'other side', of course, these institutions do not present a welcoming face and newcomers are reluctant to access their services.

Until recently, the majority of service provider organizations have viewed themselves primarily as purveyors of services to newcomers. Chiefly, these services involve the provision of information or training to newcomers, most of it paid for by federal and provincial agencies on a fee for service basis, loosely tied to client numbers and throughput. Somewhat overlooked, however, has been the potential to market services, not to newcomers directly, but to general community service organizations that need to transform themselves in order to better serve their shifting client base.

Interestingly, a significant proportion of the promising practices identified for this study featured knowledge exchanges among institutions rather than direct exchanges between institutions and newcomers. The institutional exchanges centred on the marketing and sale by immigrant serving agencies of specialized knowledge, expertise and client access. In many cases, prior relations between the immigrant service providers and general community service agencies were an important contributing factor to the commercial arrangements that ensued.

While numerous arrangements have evolved for monetizing transactions between immigrant service providers and general community service organizations – including direct purchase of services (by the general community service organizations) and joint applications to third parties asking for support – an important feature of these arrangements has been the unassailable market position occupied by immigrant service providers.. This position derives from their specialized expertise and privileged access to newcomers, acquired by virtue of their work and the trust this engenders. By tapping into these assets, immigrant service provider organizations have been able to access a relatively new set of market opportunities with few competitors. Several examples follow.

The Authentic Canada program for newcomers operates as a joint venture between Parks Canada and the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS). The goal of the program, from the point of view of Parks Canada, is to build an appetite among newcomers for Canada's natural environment; to increase park utilization; and to educate immigrants about the environment. Internal evaluations have confirmed that all three goals are being met. From CCIS's perspective, the goal is to foster belonging and civic engagement through the use of recreational services, as well as assisting public institutions to attract wider audiences from a diversifying population. Under the arrangement between CCIS and Parks Canada, the Ministry has agreed to finance the salary and overhead of a CCIS coordinator tasked with promoting the program to newcomer communities, recruiting immigrants, and ensuring their participation. Confirming the value of CCIS's involvement, a provincial program that focused on inner city parks in Calgary attempted to operate without service provider assistance but found that its uptake by newcomers was too low.

A second example concerns a program administered by the Intercultural Association of Victoria (ICA) that aims to transition immigrant seniors from ICA to general community senior organizations in Greater Victoria. Funding for the program initially came from the United Way but what really made the program possible was the relationships that had previously developed under the provincially funded Community Partnership Networks (CPN) initiative. CPN built the necessary interagency trust that allowed ICA to develop an innovative program that not only transformed newcomer attitudes to mainstream organizations but also reshaped those organizations to better accommodate newcomers. Specifically, the program involved arrangements under which general community service organizations hosted events for newcomer seniors in their own facilities, encouraging contact with native-born seniors. At the same time, diversity audits of the general community organizations were conducted by ICA and they were presented with recommendations for how to make their agencies more appealing to newcomers.

A third example that we develop in the case studies concerns the Cultural Competency Training for the Workplace program administered by the Multicultural Association of Fredericton (MCAF) which has a fair number of institutional clients. The service that MCAF sells to general community service organizations primarily involves cultural competency and diversity training for the workplace. The training uses regular Association staff with expertise in settlement and employment as facilitators, as well as presentations by immigrant panels put together by the Association. Clients have included the police force, organizations serving women, social workers, mental health service providers, and private employers.

### **Initial research and planning**

Promising practices tend to build on not only the expertise of in-house designers but also on knowledge gained through researching similar or related practices in other locations. As one agency head succinctly stated, "Why re-invent the wheel when I can borrow promising ideas that have already been tested elsewhere." A number of the promising practices we investigated did not start from scratch but instead build on practices that had been implemented in other locations and other areas of service. This has a variety of obvious advantages, including an ability to replicate positive features that enhance the

chances of success, and learning about pitfalls to be avoided when putting into place a new program or service. Indeed, the idea of learning from the experiences of others is the basis of the model for research and dissemination that is at the heart of the current project. This learning may occur through focused discussions with program leads at agencies that have similar practices or features, as well as through examination of the research literature in Canada and internationally. Initial research and planning may also include basic research in the intended practice locale to determine potential needs and preferences, an important part of business planning to ensure that goals are achievable.

A number of the agencies we visited had implemented front-end, systematic research and planning prior to establishing their own practices. For example, prior to the establishment of the Regina Open Door Society Newcomer Welcome Centre in Regina, Saskatchewan and the Welcome Centres in York Region, Ontario, the program designers spent a considerable amount of time examining the literature and visiting similar or related practices in other locations to learn from their experiences. In the case of the Regina Open Door Society Newcomer Welcome Centre, this included embarking on a “best practices whirlwind fact-finding mission,” visiting similar or related centres in Winnipeg, Toronto, and Ottawa. In the case of the York Region Welcome Centres, program design was preceded by research on the Welcome Centres of the 1970s, and consultations with key informants across the province, including visits to seven collaborative groups that showed promise and to several groups that were not faring well, in both cases to learn from their experiences. Similarly, prior to initiating a pilot project to promote newcomers’ participation in sports and physical activity as a means of facilitating social engagement and a sense of belonging to the local community, the designer of the Active Living Program at the YMCA Centre for Immigrants in Halifax, Nova Scotia conducted an extensive review of the literature. This review focused on strategies for promoting and reaping the benefits of immigrants’ participation in sports and physical activity. The literature from Australia was found to be particularly useful in this regard.

As well as looking outwards, a number of the agencies we visited conducted primary, local research prior to launching new or revised programs. This research tended to focus on the needs and preferences of newcomers in the vicinity, possible constraints on participation that would have to be addressed (e.g., transportation, childcare), and preferred locations and times for delivery of the program. Some of the agencies also conducted focus groups, surveys, or public forums to obtain this information.

## *Implementing an Annual Innovation Cycle*

This section presents a model for institutionalizing innovation within the settlement sector. Innovation is a key driver of greater efficiency, improved outputs and superior program and service outcomes. The process that we describe looks to the settlement sector for creativity and leadership; it is essential to point out, however, that governments have a key role to play in nurturing and facilitating the expression of creativity.

The model we describe is based on relationships among four sets of actors: (i) immigrant service provider organizations; (ii) national and provincial immigrant umbrella associations; (iii) an independent research body; and (iv) government agencies. The role of government will be discussed separately.

The proposed annual innovation cycle would be led by the settlement sector. A pan-Canadian body - presumably CISSA-ACSEI in collaboration with provincial and regional settlement umbrella associations - would initiate the process by establishing priorities for service improvement. These priorities could focus on particular target groups and services, for example, immigrant seniors transitioning to general community service organizations, methods for promoting newcomer access to jobs in small and mid-sized firms, or one-stop, integrated, needs assessment facilities. Alternatively, they could focus on functional aspects of program development and delivery, for example, professional development training for staff, the use of on-line media to aid the delivery of settlement services, or improved planning techniques. The priorities could be further refined through additional criteria such as geographic location (e.g., northern communities), scale (e.g., community size) and local infrastructure (e.g., existence of a Local Immigration Partnership). And, the priorities could be tested with government organizations using structures such as the existing Settlement and Integration Joint Policy and Program Council (SIJPPC) or a purpose-built, sector-government subcommittee charged with keeping an eye on innovation. This would allow government priorities to be factored in and would ensure a stronger and more supportive government response to sector changes.

The establishment of annual priorities by CISSA-ACSEI and its partners would set in motion a process of data collection, analysis and dissemination, beginning with a pan-Canadian process aimed at identifying promising practices in the priority areas. The proposed model calls for 2-3 new priorities to be chosen each year with five promising practices to be selected for analysis under each priority.

The process of identifying promising practices for analysis would be initiated by the settlement sector following a similar procedure to that used by the present study. This would entail the involvement of regional and provincial umbrella settlement associations to help elicit interesting practice examples. The final winnowing and selection of promising practices for in-depth analysis would be made by a joint committee comprising sector representatives and members of the independent research body that would analyze the practices and work hand-in-hand with the settlement sector to disseminate information and provide training.

The in-depth analysis of promising practices would be conducted by the independent research body using the proven methodology developed for the current study. This methodology entails a combination of documentary analysis and face-to-face site interviews with executives and managers from the chosen practices. It is essential that the independent research body have the capacity, expertise, interest and reach to conduct coast-to-coast project analyses and knowledge dissemination (See Appendix E: Pathways to Prosperity Initiative, regarding a proposed partnership.) The site interviews and analyses would follow a fixed schedule linked to a national dissemination and training plan. This plan would be jointly executed by the settlement sector and the independent research body.

The training and dissemination machinery that is integral to the annual innovation cycle would involve a mix of active instruction coupled with dissemination strategies that employ a variety of formats and techniques. These are elaborated below starting with active instruction in the form of workshops, a summer institute, and distance instructional resources.

The proposal envisages a key role for CISSA-ACSEI and provincial immigrant umbrella associations in respect of the active instructional component. Under the proposal, the associations would assume responsibility for putting out a call for expressions of interest and identifying target agencies that would, potentially, benefit from participating in learning events, notably the workshops and training institute. The target agencies would include organizations that operate, or are considering operating, projects in the same areas as those selected for analysis. They might also include agencies with interesting perspectives and practices to share. The 'nomination' process would not need to be exhaustive, so long as an adequate number of agencies was identified across the country to participate in the learning activities. These agencies would be contacted by the independent research body, in collaboration with settlement organizations, to determine their interest in participating in workshops and other events.

The workshops and the other forms of training that are being proposed would be jointly led by the independent research body and the agencies whose practices had been evaluated. The research body would be responsible for the overall management of the instructional program, including curriculum design, analysis to support the workshops, and the production of ancillary material. The agencies would be responsible for presenting their programs and promising practices, which would be discussed (using the analysis that had been conducted) as case studies with a focus on verification, on the relevance of internal and external conditions in target regions, and on the possibility of transferring and scaling the promising practices in different contexts. The discussion would seek to break down the steps required for transfer and implementation.

For optimal effectiveness, the workshops and in-person training would need to be offered regionally. The workshops could also be supplemented by a summer institute and by a program of distance education derived from filming promising practice workshops and instructional sessions in order to create webinars and video repositories. These should, in turn, be available on a website with a dedicated capacity for hosting promising practice information. All activities should operate on a cost recovery basis and every effort should be made to keep costs as low as possible. (See Appendix E for a proposal to partner with the Pathways to Prosperity Initiative on this dissemination)

Complementing the workshops, the proposal also advocates the creation of an instructional book series – short primers of approximately one to two hundred pages each – that would facilitate a wider distribution of the information gleaned from the analyses of promising practices and their key features. The primers would be detailed guides on how to institute an effective practice, describing important steps in the process. Each primer would focus on a particular area of practice and would start with a review of the literature in the area. Next, the primer would describe the key features that contribute to good practices in the area, and include a discussion of how these features can be put into place. The final section of the primer would set out a guide to research that should be conducted before instituting the practice in a particular locale. This would include topics that should be addressed and sample

questions that would go into surveys and focus groups with newcomers, agency staff, and other stakeholders. Ideally, these books would be produced in paperback and would be relatively inexpensive to purchase. A number of publishers, such as SAGE, are in the business of publishing practical book series, and should be approached for this purpose.

The entire process starting with the establishment of priorities and ending with the delivery of training and publication of accompanying primers would recur annually, and would constitute an innovation cycle. Periodic evaluations should be undertaken to assess the validity of the promising practice analyses, the rate at which information is being diffused within the settlement sector, and the overall returns on the collective investment in innovation. The design of these evaluations would be developed by the independent research body in collaboration with CISSA-ACSEI and its partners and with government representatives.

## *Conclusions and Implications for Government*

In summarizing the Study of Innovative and Promising Practices, four things stand out:

- (1) The methodology that was developed for the project proved its mettle. On the crucial matter of analyzing promising practices and discerning the internal and external factors that make a practice successful, the structured interview guide and comprehensive face-to-face, on-site interviews proved effective. Furthermore, the evidence that was gathered allowed projects to be disaggregated into their essential components and permitted judgments regarding the possibility of transferring or scaling the practices, or using them in different contexts. Validating the methodology was a key analytic objective of the project and a critical piece of ‘machinery’ needed to institutionalize an innovation process.
- (2) The range, geographic distribution, quality and quantity of promising practice submissions and the quality of subsequent in-person interviews confirmed the essential, underlying premise of the proposed innovation model: that there exists sufficient creativity, dedication, and entrepreneurship within the settlement sector to feed the proposed innovation engine. The study team was impressed not only by the quality of projects and practices but also by the quality of leadership within the sector. Ultimately, it is the quality of this leadership that ‘guarantees’ the continual replenishment of the ‘good ideas’ that are needed for the innovation cycle to function.
- (3) The major cross-cutting themes identified in the promising practices analyzed as part of the current study strongly supported the findings of earlier research that concluded that the settlement sector enjoys durable, strategic advantages over other agencies and organizations that are attempting to deliver settlement and integration services. The durability of the strategic advantages arises from the different manner in which the settlement sector works and the expertise and trust that result from these work differences. The major themes associated with promising practices embodied and expressed these work patterns, suggesting that measures to

reinforce and broaden the application of promising practices would also contribute to a reinforcement of the sector's strategic strengths. The cross-cutting themes were: Developing and benefiting from social capital; Partnership formation; Spin-offs and building on strengths; Integrated seamless delivery of services; Combining and repurposing programs; Multi-funder flexibility; Developing new institutional markets; and Initial research and planning.

- (4) The annual innovation cycle that has been proposed is eminently achievable and well within the capacities of the four stakeholder groups that need to be engaged: CISSA-ACSEI and provincial-regional settlement umbrella organizations; individual immigrant service provider organizations; government(s); and an independent research body. The participation of an independent research body is required because the settlement sector draws most of its financing from government under some form of fee-for-service arrangement. This method of financing does not provide adequate support for introspective (own services) and comparative (services operated by others) analyses. The creation of an innovation cycle would equip the settlement sector with a machinery for capitalizing on its resident ingenuity and leadership. This would, over time, produce improvements in newcomer integration outcomes and receptivity by host communities. It would also reshape and professionalize the sector, shifting it from a collection of agencies sharing common interests into a meta-organization capable of establishing and acting on strategic decisions.

The central idea underpinning the present research study and the recommendation to institutionalize innovation arises from a premise of shared interest by the settlement sector and government in developing the sector's capacity. In respect of innovation and the creation and dissemination of promising practices, government generally, and CIC in particular, has an important enabling role to play. The following recommendations identify broad areas of interaction with the settlement sector where CIC needs to create the necessary preconditions that will foster creativity, experimentation, investment in core capacities, transactional efficiency and, ultimately, innovation. Collectively, these may be thought of as the 'winning conditions'.

- Accountability regimes need to be tweaked to provide sufficient room for program innovation and novel ways of combining discrete services from multiple sources. In particular, CIC needs to find a way to shift from detailed itemized accounting directly linked to expenses to a broader system of outcome-based management. This would bring CIC more in line with the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Grants and Contributions, already adopted by many federal departments. A key objective of modifying accountability arrangements would be to promote flexibility in order to allow settlement agencies to "colour outside the lines" and to assemble programs from different ministries and governments in a manner that creates synergies.
- Explicit consideration should be given to promoting partnership development and social capital formation by creating incentives for settlement organizations to build connections with mainstream organizations, including general community service organizations, as well as with ethno-cultural groups.

- Additional support should be directed to enhance professional development training and knowledge dissemination by settlement agencies. Such investments are needed to reduce and stabilize staff mobility, to establish leadership succession plans, and to instill an appetite for risk taking and entrepreneurship.
- CIC, in collaboration with other ministries, needs to create enabling structures to facilitate policy discussions on cross-cutting issues involving settlement agencies and other government ministries. For example, policy tables could be created with ministries responsible for health, education and housing. These policy areas are frequently engaged by settlement organizations in the course of developing integrated solutions for families and communities.
- CIC may wish to invest in an internal regional or local capacity to assess innovative practices and to channel departmental resources in support of such measures. This capacity could be developed in collaboration with the independent research body that will be engaged to conduct in-depth analyses of promising practices.
- Finally, direct investment is required by CIC to support the creation of an annual innovation cycle within the settlement sector. The returns to this investment will accrue to both newcomers and host societies and will improve the business case underpinning CICs policy and program deployments.

## Appendix A

### Special Panel Convened by CISSA-ACSEI, March 2011

- Meyer Burstein  
Welcoming Communities Initiative – Senior Policy and Planning Fellow and member of the research team
- Ashley Crocke  
Association of New Canadians – St. John’s
- Victoria Esses  
Welcoming Communities Initiative – Project Co-Chair and member of the research team
- Martha Mason  
First Steps in Canada – Fort Erie
- Ryhan Mansour (apologies)  
Citizenship and Immigration Canada – Ottawa
- Tim Welsh  
Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of B.C. – Vancouver
- Getachew Woldyesus  
Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISA)

## Appendix B Interview Guide

Name of Agency

Name of Program

Materials we would like to obtain, preferably prior to the site visit:

- Link to website that describes the program
- Pamphlets, including current and any earlier ones (e.g., from time of inception)
- Reports (including policy, operational and activity reports that describe program structure, program administration and throughput)
- Other materials that describe the program and its goals (current and earlier materials)
- Any evaluations or assessments that have been done on the program
- Any measures or data that are being kept that may relate to outcomes of the program

Interview Script: Agency Heads and/or Senior Staff		
General Research Questions	Interview Questions	Probes
① Background and Goals of the Program		
General Introduction	Can you please describe the program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are its key features (including program size)?</li> <li>• How long has this program been operating – year it was initiated?</li> <li>• Has it changed over time and if so, how?</li> <li>• Would you describe the practice as a ‘new’ practice or as a refinement of existing practices? Please explain</li> <li>• What role did other agencies play in developing the program? If other agencies played a part in the development, are they still involved?</li> </ul>

Background on the Program	Can you please tell us a bit about the background of this program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why was this program initially put into place?</li> <li>• What were the conditions that suggested that it was needed?</li> <li>• Was it put into place to respond to a particular problem or issue?</li> <li>• Have these conditions changed over time?</li> </ul>
Goals of the program	<p>What are the goals of this program?</p> <p>(include both primary and secondary goals)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What were the initial goals of this program?</li> <li>• Have these goals changed at all over time and if so, how?</li> <li>• What would you say are the current goals of this program?</li> </ul>
Program “mechanics”	How does the program function?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the level and nature of staff involvement in the program?</li> <li>• What other ‘resources’ does the program rely on?</li> <li>• How does the program fit with other programs? Does it have any impact on the way in which programs are combined?</li> </ul>
Targets	Who are the intended clients of this program and who are the actual clients?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is this flexible?</li> <li>• Do other groups utilize the program?</li> </ul>
Outcomes	What are the intended outcomes of this program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do these outcomes relate to CIC’s priorities (or to provincial or other funder priorities)?</li> <li>• Over what time period are you expecting to achieve these outcomes?</li> <li>• Have there been any unintended outcomes?</li> </ul>
Costs	What are the costs of running the program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are both ongoing and start-up costs associated with the program (cash and in-kind)?</li> <li>• Who funds the program?</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is it funded by contract, grant or contribution agreement?</li> <li>• Have these arrangements changed since the program's inception?</li> </ul>
<b>② How Does the Program Differ from Other Similar Programs</b>		
Inputs	Are there competing or similar programs in existence (in other policy areas, for other clients, other cities, provinces or countries)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could you give some examples</li> </ul>
	How does this program differ mechanically or operationally from 'competing' or similar programs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the program involve new practices and methods or does it use existing methods in new ways? (explain)</li> <li>• Are different pedagogical (teaching or instructional) methods used?</li> <li>• Does the program use technology in a different way?</li> <li>• Is the program delivered at a different or more flexible time or location?</li> </ul>
	How does the program differ (if at all) in the number or type of staff involved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there differences in the training that is required for staff to administer the program?</li> <li>• Does the program require the same level of staff skills?</li> </ul>
	How does the program differ (if at all) in the type of support that is required?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the program more or less intensive in terms of its 'draw' on management time and on other resources?</li> <li>• Does the program make better use of outside resources, including help from other agencies?</li> </ul>
	Does the program require the construction of new partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What differences are required in the links with</li> </ul>

	or other complementary arrangements?	other SPOs or with general community service agencies?
	Are program financing arrangements more flexible?	
	Are different monitoring or management techniques employed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What feedback is available to staff who administer the program?</li> </ul>
Outcomes	What are the unique outcomes of this program? What makes it different?	
	Does the program permit greater flexibility in terms of how it is packaged/combined with other programs?	
	Does the program result in or does it require different relations with funders?	
<b>③ What Features and Factors Contribute to the Program's Success and Innovation</b>		
Overall perceptions	Why are people saying the program constitutes a best practice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can you give some examples</li> </ul>
What is seen to contribute to the program's success	What are the three most important features that most people think contribute to the program's success?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you personally agree that these are the key features, and is there anything else you would add?</li> </ul>
Internal factors (endogenous) contributing to success	What are the specific features or assets (that the agency is able to manage) that account for the greater effectiveness and positive reception accorded the promising practice?	<p>Probe for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differences in staff, management and staff training</li> <li>• Differences in leadership</li> <li>• Differences in resources used (amounts and type)</li> <li>• Differences in technology</li> <li>• Differences in program structure and implementation</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differences in time of delivery</li> <li>• Different funding arrangements</li> <li>• Different partnering arrangements</li> <li>• Anything else</li> </ul>
External factors (exogenous) contributing to success	What features in the environment, external to the agency, contribute to the effectiveness and positive reception accorded to the promising practice?	<p>Probe for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Particular client population</li> <li>• Prevailing economic or other external factors</li> <li>• Particular government management, including different funding guidelines</li> <li>• Particular partner behavior</li> <li>• Use made of social capital</li> <li>• Prevailing public attitudes</li> <li>• Anything else</li> </ul>
<b>④ Evidence Pertaining to the Success of the Practice (results)</b>		
General evidence that the practice is an innovative, promising practice	What evidence backs up the claim that the practice is an innovative promising practice?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please be as specific as possible</li> </ul>
Evidence for other objectives served by the program	Is there evidence that the program has also served other objectives?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are these objectives and what is the evidence?</li> </ul>
Evaluation, analytic or research studies	Have there been any evaluations or other analytic studies of the program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How reliable and valid do you think these evaluations have been? (obtain a copy)</li> <li>• Who conducted the studies?</li> <li>• What have the studies revealed about client outcomes (success, speed)?</li> <li>• Has the agency conducted analyses to support its funding applications? (obtain a copy)</li> </ul>
Financial reports	Has the agency or funder conducted a financial assessment or audit of the program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the financial analyses support claims regarding the innovative nature of the program? (obtain a copy)</li> <li>• Is there evidence that the program is cheaper to</li> </ul>

		deliver?
Client perceptions	What types of evidence are available from clients?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How exactly have you obtained clients' views – anecdotal; focus groups; surveys; other methods?</li> <li>• What are the successful features that clients cite?</li> <li>• Is there evidence of increased client uptake?</li> <li>• Has the program expanded the range of clients that are served (including previously underserved clients)?</li> </ul>
SPO and counselor perceptions	Are there high levels of counselor and SPO support for the program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the agency (and are staff) unanimously in favour of the program?</li> <li>• What are the successful features that staff cite?</li> </ul>
Funder perceptions/actions	Are there high levels of funder support for the program?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have funders been receptive to increasing support for the program?</li> <li>• Have funders sought changes in program structure or scale?</li> </ul>
Partner or stakeholder perceptions/actions	Is there evidence of support from partners and other stakeholders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have other agencies or partners implemented similar or complementary programs or measures?</li> <li>• What, if anything, have partners had to say about the program?</li> </ul>
<b>⑤ Transferability</b>		
Geographic and scalability	Do you think the program could operate in communities of different size or proximity to metropolitan centres?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall, how difficult do you think this would be?</li> <li>• Could it operate in Northern, rural and remote settings?</li> <li>• Could the program be delivered by general community service organizations?</li> <li>• Could the program be adapted for delivery in a range of institutional settings?</li> <li>• Does the program depend</li> </ul>

		<p>on access to other organizations or institutions? What kind?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a minimum client threshold below which the program would not work?</li> </ul>
	<p>Could some of the program’s basic ‘technology’ or strategy be used to improve other programs with similar objectives or structures?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effective would this be? How difficult?</li> </ul>
Client population	<p>Do you think the program could be used for a variety of client groups?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there groups for which the program would not work well? (e.g. language challenged)</li> </ul>
Technological	<p>What skills are required to deliver the program?</p> <p>Could the program be delivered through distance learning or otherwise supported electronically?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How easily could staff be trained to deliver the program? Would they require specialized immigration knowledge or experience, including language skills?</li> <li>• Are trainers available? What about training material for trainers?</li> <li>• Could the program be delivered by means of itinerant service supported by distance techniques?</li> </ul>
Unique features	<p>Are there unique features or circumstances that would limit the transferability of the program?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the program depend on unique provincial or municipal programs or funding arrangements?</li> <li>• Does the program require a unique or specialized</li> </ul>

		<p>research base or client information profiles?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the program depend on special partnering arrangements or other institutional relationships or supports?</li> </ul>
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Information about interviewee:

- Name
- Position within the organization
- Length of time in this position
- Length of time in this organization
- Contact information

## Appendix C Nomination Form

### Innovative and Promising Practices for Settlement Service Provider Organizations

**1. Area of practice:**

- Civic engagement program for immigrants
- Integrated needs assessment and one-stop shop
- Building relationships with employers
- Delivery of settlement services to smaller / isolated cities and towns, and to rural regions
- Professional development training for staff (excluded due to lack of range of submissions in this area)
- Transitioning immigrants to general community service organizations

**2. Name of program:**

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**3. Source(s) of financial support (ministry/program):**

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**4. Location (where the practice is delivered):**

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**5. Approximate length of time that the practice has been in existence: \_\_\_\_\_ years**

**6. Website of the host organization (if available):**

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**7. Name of host organization:**

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**8. Contact person (if available):**

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**9. Why do you consider this to be a promising practice?**

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**10. Does the practice have the following features?**

	Yes	No
<b>a. Considered to be especially effective</b>		
<b>b. Considered to be especially efficient</b>		
<b>c. Considered to be especially innovative and forward thinking</b>		
<b>d. Differs in definable ways from other similar practices</b>		
<b>e. Has unique, novel features that are thought to contribute to its success</b>		
<b>f. Strong evidence of successful outcomes</b>		

g. High client uptake and retention		
h. Managed based on outcomes and indicators of success		
i. Has not previously received extensive attention		

**11. Have there been any previous assessments or reviews of the practice?**

- Yes
- No

**12. If yes, details as to where they might be available or who might be interviewed in this regard:**

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**13. Your name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**14. Your contact information for possible follow-up (email, phone):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**15. Comments by provincial association (optional):**

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## **Appendix D**

### **List of Practices Chosen for Analysis**

#### **Civic and Social Engagement of Immigrants**

1. Active Living Program, YMCA Centre for Immigrants, Halifax
2. Authentic Canada, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, Calgary
3. My Circle Program, Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia (ISS BC), Vancouver

#### **Integrated Needs Assessment and One Stop Shop**

4. Regina Open Door Society Newcomer Welcome Centre, Regina
5. Immigrant Centre Manitoba Inc, Winnipeg
6. Welcome Centres, York Region

#### **Transitioning Immigrants to General Community Service Organizations**

7. Easing the Transition, Association for New Canadians, St. John's
8. Settlement Workers in Schools, Cross Cultural Learner Centre, London
9. Program of three-year funding to other ministries for capacity building, Welcome BC, Ministry of Jobs, Tourism & Innovation, Vancouver
10. Integrated Immigrant Seniors Program, Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria, Victoria
11. Immigrant Public Education and Information Consortium Project, Justice Education Society, Vancouver

#### **Delivery of Settlement Services to Smaller and More Isolated Cities and Towns, and to Rural Regions**

12. Regional Programming in Manitoba, Government of Manitoba, Winnipeg
13. Southern Alberta Settlement Services for Rural Communities, Calgary Catholic immigration Society, Calgary
14. Connection between Services, South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services, Penticton

### **Building Relationships with Employers**

15. Cultural Competency Training for the Workplace, Multicultural Association of Fredericton, Fredericton
16. Employer services, Service Intégration Travail Outaouais, Gatineau, March 5
17. North Bay Network Employers' Council, North Bay and District Multicultural Centre, North Bay, March 6
18. Immigrant-Employer Learning Partnership, Ottawa World Skills, Ottawa, March 7
19. Safeway Project, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, Calgary

## Appendix E

### Proposed Contributions of the Pathways to Prosperity Partnership to the Innovation Cycle

The Pathways to Prosperity Partnership [<http://p2pcanada.ca/>] proposes to partner with CISSA-ACSEI on the Innovation Cycle. We have both the experience and the capacity to do so. Furthermore, the analysis of promising practices, the evaluation of integration policies and programs, and the development of performance indicators and outcome measures are areas in which the Partnership intends to specialize.

The Pathways to Prosperity Partnership is an international network of 200 researchers from over 50 universities across Canada as well as community partners in cities and towns across the country. The Partnership seeks to address critical challenges related to migration, integration, local development, and economic and social sustainability. Our pan-Canadian reach and ability to harness both academic and tacit knowledge equips us to conduct practical research, on site, with the goal of promoting the settlement and integration of newcomers in both established and new destination communities.

Partners include federal and provincial governments, including Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) National Headquarters and Regional Divisions; all provincial governments; municipal governments; settlement umbrella organizations and service providers; francophone, ethnocultural and economic organizations; and research and historical associations. We have extensive experience in the analysis of promising practices and in knowledge dissemination.

We propose to partner on, and would be willing to contribute resources to, the research and dissemination activities as follows:

- The Pathways to Prosperity Partnership would put together a team of researchers, led by the current researchers, to assist CISSA-ACSEI in establishing its yearly priorities, soliciting nominations of projects for analysis, and selecting the projects for full-scale evaluation. This would include researchers from across the country with expertise in settlement and integration, and particularly in the areas selected as the yearly priorities.
- The research team would then be responsible for conducting the data collection and analyses of these projects using the methodology described in this report.
- The Pathways to Prosperity Partnership would be willing to take on overall responsibility for managing the instructional program and disseminating the analytic findings. This would include curriculum development for the regional workshops and in-person training sessions; curriculum development for a program of distance education using videos and webinars; and curriculum development for the proposed summer institute on promising practices. Training sessions, regardless of medium, would be co-led by the promising practice agencies whose innovations were analyzed and by the researchers who conducted the analyses. The Pathways to Prosperity Partnership has the capacity to produce professional-quality videos, and to host material on its website in an area expressly dedicated to promising practices.

- The Pathways to Prosperity Partnership would also be interested in managing the process of developing the primer handbook series that would complement the workshops and online dissemination of information.

## Appendix F Case Studies

### Active Living Program

YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs

YMCA of Greater Halifax/Dartmouth

Halifax, Nova Scotia

<http://www.ymcahrm.ns.ca/Locations/YMCACentreforImmigrantPrograms/YMCAActiveLiving.aspx>

Category: Civic and Social Engagement of Immigrants

### Overview

The goal of the Active Living Program is to use physical activity, and activities promoting healthy lifestyle choices as tools for facilitating the social integration of newcomers into Canadian society. The program was initiated as a pilot in 2009, funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, with the idea being that engaging newcomers in physical activity and healthy lifestyle programs could be used to promote their social confidence and engagement with the larger society, as well as improving their physical and emotional health. It has now expanded to serving more than 200 clients a year. Though the program initially focused primarily on adults, it has now expanded to programming for a variety of age groups, including children and seniors.

There are two components to the program. First, classes and workshops are offered specifically to newcomers – including adults, youth, children, and seniors - to address their stated interests. Examples include exercise classes for women, a walking club, soccer for children and men, and healthy eating/wellness workshops. In addition to on-site programs at the YMCA Centre for Immigrants, programs are offered in partnership with community organizations such as the language school and the family resource centre so that the programs are easily accessible, and clients are able to take advantage of on-site services such as interpretation and childcare. Clients are also able to enjoy other services and interact with mainstream Canadians, while being supported by YMCA staff. Second, immigrants are referred to mainstream physical activity programs and healthy living workshops within the community and are escorted to initial sessions in order to ensure that they are comfortable and supported in using mainstream services. For example, a number of referrals have occurred to learn-to-swim programs in the community, soccer clubs, gyms, curling, skating, and winter safety programs. These activities provide opportunities for newcomers to connect with members of the host community in a relaxed environment, and promote a sense of belonging to Canadian society.

The program is relatively inexpensive to operate, with the main cost being staff salaries. The program currently involves 2 full time and 1 part time staff members, as well as several volunteers from the community. Sufficient space for running in-house physical activity programs is also required. In addition to funding from Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the program is supported by Sobey's, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, Canadian Tire, and the Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness.

### **Outcomes, key contributing factors and transferability**

The frequent evaluations conducted by the Program indicate high client satisfaction. In addition, clients almost uniformly report that the Program has helped them to get to know their community better, has helped to reduce their stress levels, has encouraged them to adopt a healthier lifestyle, and that they intend to continue to stay physically active. Other evidence of success includes the rapid expansion of the program based on the reputation that it has built.

There is also evidence to suggest that the program has provided social opportunities for immigrants both to connect with other newcomers within the program and to connect with members of the host society. This includes intergenerational activities that link grandparents, parents, children, and grandchildren, and the establishment of new interethnic connections. It also includes positive interactions between immigrant and Canadian-born children, and positive interactions among parents who are standing on the sidelines to watch their children engage in physical activity.

Finally, an important outcome of the program is that mainstream organizations have become more aware of the needs and barriers facing newcomers, and are more sensitive to their concerns. As a result, they have taken steps to adapt programming to be more welcoming, inclusive and reflective of the diverse community. This is important not only for newcomers within the program who are taking part in services offered by these organizations, but also for immigrants who are attempting to access these services directly.

The success of the program is to a large extent attributable to the connections and partnerships with community organizations that YMCA staff members have developed over time. This social capital has been prioritized by the YMCA as a community development organization, and was established through participation on committees within the community, and building of trust. These connections have allowed the program to take advantage of small pockets of money available within the community that are needed to provide particular services, as well as increasing the ability of the staff to facilitate the connection of clients with mainstream programs in the community. The success of the program is also attributable to the extensive research that was conducted early on to determine clients' preferences and priorities, and that continues to be conducted in order to track progress. Finally, the program could not have been

established if Citizenship and Immigration Canada had not been willing to be flexible in fitting the program within its mandate and allowing creativity in its early development.

In terms of transferability, It would be preferable for this program to be offered by an immigrant-serving agency because it seems to operate most effectively when clients start off utilizing services within the immigrant-serving agency, thereby developing confidence and building their comfort level, prior to moving out to mainstream organizations. Transferability of the program then depends centrally on the ability of program staff to form needed connections and partnerships with mainstream organizations in order to facilitate referrals of clients to the services offered by these organizations. In order to transfer this program to other locales, it would be necessary to retain the key idea of using sports and recreation to promote newcomer social engagement, but implementation could take a variety of forms, depending on the resources and programs available within the community on which to build.

**Interviewees:**

- Inhae Park, Program Coordinator

**Supporting documentation:**

- Active Living Program Brochure
- Active Living Summer Camp Brochure
- Excerpts from the Proposal to Launch the Active Living Program
- Active Living Program Monthly Report, December 2011
- Active Living Program Quarterly Report, September 2011
- Active Living Program Monthly Report, March 2011
- Active Living Program Final Report, April 2010
- Sample Active Living Program Survey Questionnaire
- Flyers for Various Active Living Program Activities

## **Authentic Canada Program**

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS)

Calgary, Alberta

<http://www.ccis-calgary.ab.ca/>

Category: Social and Civic Engagement of Immigrants

### **Overview**

The Authentic Canada program has operated for two years as a partnership between Parks Canada and the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS). The objectives of the two agencies are complementary: Parks Canada seeks to promote awareness and understanding of national parks and historic sites among newcomers. This reflects the Department's broader efforts to increase park visitation by targeting urban regions and particular sub-populations within those regions. (Insofar as immigrants are concerned, the Department plans to integrate Parks Canada experiences into new-citizen programs.) Adding urgency to these efforts is the fact that visitor numbers have been falling (though not in Banff), Subsidiary objectives for Parks Canada include building support among Canadians for conservation and promoting interest in nature and history.

For its part, the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) has a long-standing interest in developing recreational activities for immigrants. The 'umbrella program' under which the agency promotes recreational activities is the '4 Seasons Recreation Program'. According to CCIS, the cost of such programs is modest and the experiences resonate well with both newcomers and sponsors. The agency views the Authentic Canada program as a citizenship initiative and argues that recreation should receive more attention from federal and provincial funders interested in fostering belonging and supporting long-term integration. (The LIP initiatives across Ontario hold similar views!) In working with Parks Canada, CCIS is seeking to build an appetite among newcomers for Canada's natural heritage – an important component of citizenship - which would increase park visitor numbers and utilization by immigrants of all ages and both genders.

In its initial year, Authentic Canada served roughly 250 newcomers, though more than 1,000 persons expressed an interest in participating. This resulted in a significant backlog. Ideally, CCIS would have expanded the program, however, Citizenship and Immigration Canada took a narrow view of citizenship promotion and community connections, arguing that Authentic Canada falls outside CIC's mandate. (Note: CIC argues that the program falls within the mandate of Parks Canada and the provincial government.) This led to a withdrawal of financial support for key program components, such as transportation to park sites. To make up the funding shortfall, CCIS is hoping to get support from local businesses and provincial sources which have, to date, been a source of in-kind contributions.

Notwithstanding the withdrawal of CIC support, the 2011 recruitment target was raised to 450 persons. A brief review of visitor demographics indicates that the majority of participants were female (families made up roughly forty percent of attendees), between 35 and 54 years of age, and had been in Canada

for between two and three years. Newcomers of Chinese origin appear to have dominated participant numbers.

Responsibility for the program is divided between Parks Canada and the CCIS which is wholly responsible for advertising, newcomer recruitment, screening according to parameters agreed with Parks Canada, management of visitor numbers (to ensure that programs are fully subscribed), and data gathering. The screens stipulate that newcomers must have been in Canada for less than five years and cannot have previously participated in the program. Understanding of English is an implicit criterion.

Programs cover various activities. These include information and orientation sessions (volunteers on the bus talk about upcoming events); learning modules about camping and hiking; bear and hike safety; skating and snowshoeing; and nature photography. Until recently, bus transport was an integral part of the program but, as a result of fiscal austerity, self-drive events were introduced. To date, the shift to self-drive has not produced a fall in participation, though it required CCIS to introduce and manage car pooling.

The overall Authentic Canada program is not expensive and costs CCIS in the neighbourhood of \$80,000 per year. Of this amount, Parks Canada provides \$50,000 annually, which pays part of the program coordinator's salary. The balance of has come from CCIS itself, with in-kind support from the provincial Ministry of Tourism. CCIS regards the corporate sector and, possibly, the City of Calgary as potential future contributors.

In addition to supporting the coordinator, Parks Canada also waives park entrance and camping fees, pays the salaries of instructors and staff who deliver program modules, and participates jointly with CCIS in planning and communications. Both Parks Canada and CCIS have assigned senior officials to oversee the program and manage its logistics. These officials communicate bi-monthly to review progress. Interestingly, CCIS has also participated in Parks Canada's annual planning meetings (attendance was paid by Parks Canada) in order to provide feedback and input into Parks Canada programs. This has led to program changes intended to better serve special client groups.

### **Outcomes, contributing factors, evidence and transferability**

Several sources attest to the success of the 4 Seasons Recreation Program and the Authentic Canada component. These include: (1) An evaluation of the 4 Seasons Program by the Faculty of Environmental Design at the University of Calgary; (2) a survey by Parks Canada; (3) an internal assessment by CCIS that included participant and staff responses; and (4) participant feedback collected by CCIS' coordinator. While none of these sources, individually, meet formal evaluation standards, the fact that all four conclude that the program is valuable and that it offers high quality experiences to newcomers confirms its importance. Especially noteworthy were the positive reactions by participants who expressed gratitude for the experiences they were offered, gave high marks to what they learned about the environment and about national parks and historic sites, and expressed an interest in participating in further excursions and in accessing national parks on their own. The final bit of evidence for success is that (according to CCIS) Parks Canada is considering extending the program to other parts of Canada.

Two kinds of outcomes can be distinguished: The first concerns learning and attitudes. Immigrants who have attended the sessions feel they are more knowledgeable and better able to protect themselves and the environment; they also show greater interest in recreational and environmental activities associated with the national parks. There are no follow-ups to determine if behaviours change or if the favourable reaction to recreational activities transfers into more favourable views of Canada or a greater sense of belonging. The second outcome is a greater capacity by Parks Canada to engage newcomer communities. This results from staff interactions with immigrants and the partnership with CCIS. (Parks Canada staff felt they had benefited and learned from the interactions.)

Chief among the factors that account for the program's success have been the enthusiasm of CCIS's coordinator and Parks Canada's willingness to learn and adapt programs and eligibility criteria (e.g. the expansion of the eligibility limit from 3 years in Canada to 5, advocated by CCIS). As well, a number of innovative partnerships have developed, contributing to the sustainability and quality of the program. These include the involvement of the Mountain Equipment Co-operative (MEC) – MEC supplies equipment to newcomers for camping and hiking. The Alberta Ministry of Tourism has also collaborated in the program providing staff and access to provincial facilities.

The central dynamic driving Parks Canada is that the service must tap new 'markets' in order to maintain or expand visitor numbers and immigrants constitute a key demographic. To access immigrants, however, Parks Canada must obtain the help of immigrant service provided organizations. (An effort by the Alberta Ministry of Tourism to operate a similar program without agency assistance failed.) This same dynamic is occurring across a wide range of commercial and public services suggesting that a considerable market exists for service provider agencies to partner with or market themselves to other institutions. In this regard, the model provided by Authentic Canada would appear to be fairly complete and could be replicated in its essential details and relationships. The fact that Parks Canada is considering extending Authentic Canada to other locales offers solid evidence that the program can be transferred geographically and can be scaled (made larger or smaller), though few locations will be as compelling as Banff.

Other applications for the Authentic Canada model could be found in similar circumstances. These would include provincial and municipal agencies involved in recreation, culture, the arts and sports. Equally, commercial operations ranging from climbing gyms through professional sports associations seeking to extend their audiences.

### **Interviewees:**

- Amanda Koyama, Manager Family and Children Services, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
- Fariborz Birjandian, Executive Director, Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

### **Supporting documentation:**

- 4 Seasons Statistics (4 Seasons Stats.xlsx)
- Bulletin\_albertnatureasasecond.pdf
- 4seasons\_SupportLetter\_2011.pdf

- Program Questionnaire Preliminary Results from 4\_questionnaire sets Jan 2012.doc
- Authentic Canada 2011 Programs.docx
- Parks Final Report.doc
- CCIS and Parks Canada Partnering Agreement 2011 2012.doc
- Nature as a Second Language: Towards the Inclusion of New Canadians in Alberta's Provincial Parks:  
[http://www.albertaparks.ca/media/3236/NSLReport\\_Final.pdf](http://www.albertaparks.ca/media/3236/NSLReport_Final.pdf)

## Canada Safeway

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

Calgary Alberta

<http://www.ccis-calgary.ab.ca/>

Category: Building Relationships with Employers

### Overview

The relationship between the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) and Canada Safeway has evolved over a period of seven years. The significance of the relationship derives from the fact that Safeway is the largest employer in Alberta, after the provincial government. CCIS has invested a considerable amount of time and effort into building and maintaining its links with Safeway. This would seem to be reciprocated as Safeway's CEO strongly supports the connections with CCIS as do senior Safeway executives with whom a close and mutually supportive relationship exists.

The relationship between the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society and Safeway started at a point in time when labour was extremely scarce in Calgary and many companies were electing to hire temporary foreign workers. This route was not supported by CCIS which, in collaboration with Safeway, devised an alternative job matching strategy that addressed both the pressures of the labour market and the strategic interests of the two organizations. In the case of the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, the key focus was on quickly finding jobs for new arrivals in order to provide them with a means of earning a living and obtaining Canadian experience. Fifty percent of the new hires by Safeway had been in Canada for less than six months. From Safeway's point of view, the program produced a steady supply of pre-screened applicants many of whom came from diverse backgrounds. Safeway was looking for ways to enhance its diversity both at the level of its staffing as well as its client base. The program with CCIS was seen as a way to advance this objective.

The nature of the work offered by Safeway is not easy and, for the most part, not full-time. Many of the jobs require applicants to work on weekends and evenings at periods of high demand. In exchange, applicants earn reasonable wages, acquire Canadian work experience and, given the size of the organization, have a reasonable prospect of advancement. A good deal of the work is located within stores at the community level though Safeway also employs a considerable number of professionals, some of whom are immigrants.

CCIS views employment with Safeway as integral to the resettlement process, offering a bridge for the majority of immigrants (who are placed with Safeway) prior to obtaining full-time work. Employment is seen to give new arrivals a feeling of confidence in their ability to earn a living and avoids exhausting their limited savings. CCIS also regards the early placement of newcomers in jobs as critical to both economic and social integration. Having a job provides immigrants with a network of contacts, improves their language skills and prevents isolation. Roughly seventy percent of immigrant referrals work for Safeway for only a short time before moving on. This is not unusual in the industry. Safeway, because

of the nature of its jobs, experiences high staff turnover. For the remaining thirty percent of immigrant referrals, employment with Safeway will constitute a career. According to CCIS, Safeway treats its employees well, offers training and provides excellent benefits. CCIS also underlines that there is considerable scope for mobility within Safeway for workers who prove themselves quickly and obtain positive feedback from their managers.

The program operated by CCIS has been tailor-made for Safeway. It consists of a dedicated (to Safeway) full-time recruiter who is an employee of the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society. Safeway reimburses CCIS for the recruiter's salary and pays a portion of the related overhead. As well, the company pays a small fee to CCIS for each person hired from the referrals that CCIS provides. Operationally, the recruiter receives job postings on a daily basis and is in regular (daily) contact with Safeway's thirty-three local stores. The recruiter is also personally acquainted with every Safeway hiring manager and maintains contact with Safeway's network of store managers and on-boarding specialists.

CCIS generates its inventory of applicants through a variety of means, including word of mouth. Individual applicants are also referred to CCIS by local employment counselors and youth program officers looking for a 'quick fix' to an unemployment situation or to provide after-school jobs. More systematically, to develop an inventory of applicants, CCIS, in collaboration with Safeway, regularly mounts job fairs to look for distribution clerks, nightshift crews and people to fill a variety of other tasks. In response to these events, CCIS's recruiter will interview several hundred job applicants from which a short-list of candidates will be referred to Safeway. This will produce in the neighbourhood of ten to twenty new hires, depending on the month. According to the recruiter, CCIS has managed to fill one hundred per cent of the job openings that have been referred to the agency.

In addition to hiring newcomers, Safeway has also provided financial support for specialized training (for example, funding for deli-clerks and meat cutters) as well as work experience placements. Additionally, in a small but not insignificant number of cases, Safeway has also hired graduates to work in technical, engineering, marketing and trade positions and to serve as management trainees. Professional applicants are referred by CCIS to Safeway's human resources department. To encourage this relationship, the recruiter meets regularly with Safeway's HR personnel. These regular contacts encourage the human resources department to come back for additional services and to access multiple programs at CCIS.

### **Outcomes, key contributing factors, evidence and transferability**

Since its inception, the relationship between the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society and Canada Safeway has resulted in 1,600 immigrant hires. Recently, this has slowed somewhat in response to a tightening in the hiring standards by Safeway. Specifically, the firm has raised its language requirements to a Canadian Language Benchmark level of five. This has produced a decline in referrals over 2011 which has proved frustrating for both CCIS and Safeway store managers.

In addition to securing a large number of placements over a seven year period, CCIS has had an influence on Safeway's hiring process and has had success in persuading store managers to hire more immigrants. CCIS has also helped Safeway to build its links with the local immigrant community; in one instance, CCIS helped Safeway to organize and run a series of focus groups on an agricultural issue that Safeway wished to explore.

The key to the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society's relationship with Canada Safeway is the trust that has developed between the two organizations, a by-product of social capital. This is a direct result of CCIS's deliberative and extensive efforts to nurture and expand the relationship by building and maintaining links with Canada Safeway at multiple levels of the organization. These encompass connections at the senior executive level (including the CEO and members of the Safeway executive), with store managers, with the human resources department, and with hiring managers and on-boarding specialties. Other techniques that CCIS has employed include participating in corporate events and giving regular talks that refer to the positive relationship that exists with the Company. To express its appreciation, CCIS hosts an annual dinner for Safeway managers.

In terms of being able to replicate CCIS's program in its entirety in other geographic locales and for other services, it would depend on the size of the city or region in which the activities would take place. The Safeway 'model' could not be scaled down too much before the logic of a dedicated recruitment officer starts to break down. The 'model' is most apt for major cities that are home to large employers with an extensive demand for workers to fill low to mid-level jobs. Potential employers might include large stores selling food (like Safeway), clothing, and household items that require stocking, organizing, moving, labeling and displaying. In respect of these situations, the innovative features of CCIS's operation include the marketing of a recruiter position to Safeway as well as the careful development of social capital in the form of close relations with the company.

### **Interviewees:**

- Fariborz Birjandian, Executive Director of the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS)
- Carmen Goussous, Safeway Recruitment Specialist Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

### **Supporting documentation:**

- CCIS internal statistical reports

## **Cultural Competency Training for the Workplace**

Multicultural Association of Fredericton

Fredericton, New Brunswick

<http://www.mcaf.nb.ca/index.php/about/overview>

Category: Building Relationships with Employers

### **Overview**

The Multicultural Association of Fredericton provides cultural competency training for both public and private mainstream organizations and companies that are seeking to make their services more inclusive and welcoming of diversity. The program originated at the provincial level, stemming from an awareness by the larger community that there was a need to adapt to a changing population and that most organizations were not equipped or ready to do so. The program did not gain traction in other cities, however, though it did in Fredericton and continues to be delivered by the Multicultural Association of Fredericton.

The goal of the program is to help members of mainstream organizations become more culturally aware, and to increase the ability of these organizations to serve and work with diverse cultures. Clients have included private employers, the police force, most organizations serving women, social workers, and mental health professionals. The program involves a full day training session, and includes an initial assessment for participants, a formal training package, discussions of topics such as communication style and how to change the organizational culture, and presentations of personal stories and a question and answer session with a panel of up to four newcomers. It is intended to involve a learning process in which participants consider how the stories and information they obtain are applicable to their own lives. Training sessions typically include 15-20 individuals, allowing fulsome discussion and participation. Of importance is that the sessions are held in a location away from the workplace in order to reduce distraction, and participants are kept together for the full day, promoting discussion and the development of a positive group dynamic.

There are no staff specifically dedicated to this program. Instead, it is staffed by 3 individuals who spend their time outside of this program working in the area of settlement and employment, so that they can bring their continuing expertise and experience to the program. The program also utilizes a panel of newcomers selected for their relevance to the target audience. The program works on a fee for service basis so that the cost of the program is paid by the organization who is using it.

### **Outcomes, key contributing factors and transferability**

Though the program has not undergone a formal evaluation, specific evaluations are conducted at the end of each session. These indicate that participants find the program extremely informative, and are particularly affected by the personal stories relayed by the newcomer panel members. Of importance, participants also report increased confidence in their ability to work with diverse populations and

increased cultural sensitivity. The training sessions also assist in establishing relationships with mainstream organizations. As a result of the program, members of mainstream organizations have increased knowledge of the services and resources available at the Multicultural Association, and are subsequently more likely to make use of these services and resources.

The success of the program is largely attributable to the method of delivery and to the tailoring of each session to those who are receiving it. The use of facilitators who spend the majority of their time working with newcomers means that they bring considerable expertise and experience to the sessions, providing real life information rather than just theory. This is further reinforced by the newcomer panels who present personal stories relevant to the target group and are available to answer questions about their experiences. These panels are specifically selected to be applicable for the group for whom the session is targeted. For example, training sessions for police officers may include people who have had a variety of experiences with the police, and individuals from differing cultural backgrounds. Thus, sessions are not merely based on a cookie cutter package of standard information, but are each tailored to those who are receiving it.

In terms of transferability, the program could quite easily be replicated elsewhere, with key ingredients including the use of facilitators who work on a regular basis with newcomer clients and the panels of immigrants who can present real world stories of what it is like to be a newcomer in the community. This suggests that such a program is most effectively offered by a settlement organization with ready access to such facilitators and to newcomers, and requires sufficient numbers of newcomers so that there is frequent turnover in panel members and burnout is avoided. The fact that costs are covered on a fee for service basis means that the program does not require searching for new sources of funding in order to operate, but instead can be used to generate additional revenue for the organization.

#### **Interviewees:**

- Lisa Bamford de Gante, Executive Director

#### **Supporting documentation:**

- Multicultural Association of Fredericton 2011 Annual Report
- Chart of Multiculturalism Association of Fredericton Community Connections 2011-2012

## Easing the Transition: Health and Wellness Supports in Newfoundland and Labrador

Association for New Canadians

St. John's, Newfoundland

[http://www.ancnl.ca/?Content=Settlement\\_Orientation/Health\\_and\\_Wellness](http://www.ancnl.ca/?Content=Settlement_Orientation/Health_and_Wellness)

Category: Transitioning Immigrants to General Community Service Organizations

### Overview

The Association for New Canadians serves 300-400 clients per year, approximately 90% of whom are Government Assisted Refugees, with extensive needs in the area of health and wellness. Recognizing these needs, the Gateway Project was formed in 2006 in partnership with Memorial University's School of Medicine. The project utilizes first- and second-year medical students supervised by an MD to interview and develop medical histories for clients, making it easier to match newcomers with family doctors, and in turn providing students with experience in working with diverse populations. The interviews take place on site at the Association for New Canadians' ESL Training Centre, so that clients have easy access to this program and the Association can provide interpretation where needed. In 2010-2011, 90 interviews were conducted. In 2010-2011, the program was also made a permanent part of undergraduate medical education at the university, rather than an ad hoc program, and the Gateway Project Coordinator position was made a permanent part-time position. In 2012, a second interview with clients was added to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in meeting clients' needs, including ability to navigate the Canadian health care system, understanding of medical recommendations, and ability to access other medical services such as laboratory services and referrals to specialists.

In 2011, the health and wellness services for newcomers at the Association for New Canadians expanded to include a screening program for the early identification, referral, and treatment of health-related issues in refugees during the first year of settlement (e.g., visual, hearing, dental, prenatal). Additional aspects of the health and wellness supports include: a Settlement Health Worker - a position specifically focused on the health needs of refugees, who coordinates and supports the components of the health and wellness program; the establishment of an on-site clinic staffed by a Public Health Nurse, currently four days a week; health-related workshops (e.g., dental hygiene, diabetes awareness); and an annual health fair at the Centre that now involves over 30 community health and wellness agencies. Thus, from a single program to meet the health needs of newcomers, the Association for New Canadians has built on its strengths and expertise, and on the relationships it has established over time, to develop an expansive set of health and wellness services and partnerships that meet the needs of newcomers to St. John's and the surrounding areas.

The health and wellness program involves approximately 3 staff members of the Association for New Canadians (including 1 full time Settlement Worker position focusing on health), the Public Health Nurse who staffs the on-site clinic 4 days a week (and is an employee of Eastern Health), the Gateway Project

Coordinator at the university, interpreters from the Association for New Canadians, and MDs who supervise students. Volunteers include the medical students who conduct the interviews, and student nurses and social workers who support the program. Funding for the program comes from the medical school, Eastern Health, the United Way, and Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

### **Outcomes, key contributing factors, and transferability**

With the interviews, screening, and clinic on-site at the Association for New Canadians, uptake has been excellent, with enthusiastic participation by clients and few appointments missed. The outcomes of the program are clear. Newcomers who go through the medical interviews are matched with family doctors in the community in a timely fashion, which was not previously the case, and health concerns are systematically addressed, including referrals to additional services where needed (e.g., mental health services, prenatal services). The screening program has also led to prompt referrals to services in the community (e.g., dental, visual). As a result, medical problems are detected much earlier than would otherwise be the case, and early interventions occur. Outcomes include improved child development and school readiness for school-aged children, as well as improved health and wellness for adults. The risks from communicable diseases are also minimized.

The Gateway Project trains approximately 100 medical students per year, equipping them to work with diverse populations in a culturally sensitive way. It is also the case that through the partnerships and links that have been formed, many community organizations now know about the Association for New Canadians and send clients to them, as well as being willing to take on their clients. MDs working in the community who participated in the Gateway Project as students report that they are more comfortable taking on refugee clients and more able to serve their needs.

Providing health and wellness services in a convenient location for clients at the Association for New Canadians' ESL Training Centre has facilitated the success of the program due to easy access, on site childcare, and readily available interpretation services. The Settlement Health Worker, whose position is dedicated to health and wellness programming, provides needed advocacy on behalf of clients, ensures that services are coordinated, and provides the essential linkage with other players. Other contributing factors include the willingness of Eastern Health to support and contribute to the program, and the recognition by the medical school of the benefits to their students of participation in the program. Of importance is also the strong reputation and esteem that the Association for New Canadians holds among members of the community, and the strong partnerships that have formed as a result.

Transferability of the program would depend perhaps most importantly on infrastructure within the community and on strong relations with the local medical community in order to tap into their resources and enable referral of clients to a variety of services. Also essential is the presence of a medical school in the locale of the program that sees the benefits of participation, and the willingness of the local health authority to fund components of the program. A physician who champions the program and encourages others to participate is also key.

The program at the Association for New Canadians grew and expanded over time, building on the social capital that was developed by the Association as the program became known within the community and new connections were formed. As a result, it is not clear that the complete program could be transferred elsewhere. Instead, it would be most feasible to start with one or two of the basic components, and expand over time as resources and new connections allow, using the current model as a guide.

**Interviewees:**

- Barbara Albrechtsons, Public Health Nurse
- Ashley Crocker, Settlement Social Worker
- Bridget Foster, Executive Director
- Megan Morris, Director of Programs

**Supporting documentation:**

- MUN Medical Gateway Project Annual Report, 2010-2011
- MUN Medical Gateway Project Annual Report, 2009-2010
- MUN Medical Gateway Project Annual Report, 2008-2009
- Health Fair Evaluations, 2011
- Health Fair Report, 2011
- Health Fair Report, 2010
- Powerpoint Presentation from Vickie Kaminski, President and CEO of Eastern Health, F/P/T Principal Nurses Meeting Knowledge Transfer Day, 2011
- Powerpoint Presentation from Barbara Albrechtsons, Immunizations in New Immigrants and Refugee Populations, 2011

## Employment Training and Employer Networking

Service Intégration Travail Outaouais (SITO)

Gatineau Quebec

<http://sito.qc.ca/>

Category: Building Relationships with Employers

### Overview

The Service Intégration Travail Outaouais (SITO) focuses on finding employment for immigrants in the Outaouais region which encompasses both small and mid-sized communities adjacent to Ottawa, on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River, and numbers some 250,000 residents. The agency has attempted to conduct work in Ontario but has encountered funding obstacles at both the federal and provincial levels. Some forty percent of the agency's support is derived from federal sources, chiefly Service Canada, while sixty percent is drawn from a variety of provincial sources, principally Emploi Quebec but also MICC (ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles) and CSPO (Commission scolaire des Portages-de-l'Outaouais). As well, SITO also receives financing from the La Conférence régionale des élus de l'Outaouais (CRÉ-O) in support of Quebec's regionalization program (RIO) which encourages immigrants to relocate from Montréal to the Outaouais region.

Funding from the various sources is frequently combined by SITO in order to construct a holistic program and a set of integrated, seamless services that are presented to both the employers and immigrants with whom SITO does business.

More than fifty percent of SITO's caseload consists of immigrants who are recipients of either welfare or employment insurance. Notwithstanding the difficulty of finding jobs for this population, SITO achieves an extremely high placement rate for both immigrants who are resident in the Outaouais region as well as secondary migrants from other parts of Quebec, chiefly Montreal. Funding for these activities is based on negotiated targets for training delivery and projected placement rates that are renegotiated annually. In this regard, SITO is convinced that it could increase its placements were it to be allocated a larger number of clients (including regional transfers) and were its funding base to be increased proportionally.

SITO's modus operandi involves two distinct sets of activities that are mutually supportive. These target immigrants and employers, respectively. Immigrants are provided with either a standard training program or special, modularized instruction that has been developed by SITO in collaboration with Emploi Québec and CPSO (PFPE: programme de formation préparatoire à l'emploi). The latter program, consisting of thirty workshops, including self-instruction sessions, extends over six weeks of training followed by five weeks of activities directed to securing employment. Communication plays a central role throughout the program. (The success rates for the two programs – measured in terms of job placement - are vastly different.) Nearly all of SITO's trainers, who are by and large immigrants and speak multiple languages, have a communications background involving studies in marketing or

advertising. This emphasis on communications is an integral part of SITO's training philosophy and its understanding of the skill set required to navigate in the labour market and engage employers.

SITO's second set of activities is directed to employer engagement which SITO credits with much of its success. In fact, SITO defines itself as an employer 'marketing' immigrants and ensuring a 'quality product' (immigrants are told how they are marketed). The agency meets about 500 employers per month through its participation in six business networks in the Outaouais region. SITO regularly attends the meetings of these associations and, from time to time, makes presentations explaining SITO's services or commenting more generally on economic and political matters affecting local employers. The task of employer liaison is shared between a Québécoise liaison officer and the agency's Director General. The choice of a Québécoise representative was made deliberately to ensure that the individual would be fully conversant with the employers' culture and would gain their acceptance. The networks in question are largely made up of small to mid-sized owner-operators, most too small to have distinct human resource arms, and a good deal of the job referrals are transmitted by word-of-mouth shared among business owners who know if someone is looking to fill a position or if a position will soon become vacant. It is noteworthy that Emploi Québec does not support activities related to employer networking but confines its funding to immigrant training. In order to network with employers – which SITO regards as critical to its success (and has the data to support the position) – the agency must combine a variety of programs originating with different Quebec ministries that operate under distinct (but, at times, conflicting) mandates.

In order to match immigrant trainees with jobs that SITO identifies, the agency selects a number of resumes that it considers appropriate and sit down with employers, generally small business owners, to conduct interviews with immigrants who are being referred. The SITO counselor is very much part of the interview process and will provide the employer with advice (including counsel not to hire the immigrant if the match is unlikely to prove successful). In the event that job matches are not successful SITO participates in terminating the employment, a step that it regards as necessary in order to ensure employer confidence. SITO also participates in job fairs and job finding 'salons'. These events bring together employers from across the Outaouais in support of Quebec's regionalization program which promotes mobility. SITO bring people to these fairs (under a contractual arrangement with the Province) based on a detailed analysis of employer needs and prior contact with employers.

In addition to its involvement in local employer networks, SITO – through its Director-General - is also involved in various provincial level government networks and other associations. These include an advisory body formed by Emploi Québec (Les conseils régionaux des partenaires du marches du travail), the Conférence régionale des élus (which is concerned with the distribution of immigration) and the TCRI (Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes). Participation in these bodies provides SITO with a broader perspective on employment matters, adds to the agencies credibility with employers and allows SITO to influence the larger public agenda.

## Outcomes, key contributing factors, evidence and transferability

As an agency, SITO has consistently outperformed the expectations of the government ministries and organizations which fund its operations. These include Emploi Québec (SAE – Service aux entreprises), Service Canada, MICC (ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles), Industry Canada, and CSPO (Commission scolaire des Portages-de-l'Outaouais). Notwithstanding the fact that a significant proportion of SITO's immigrant clients are employment insurance recipients, the agency has achieved a placement rate that is more than double the existing norm. In 2011, the organization found jobs for 240 people in Gatineau, removing 60 people from the welfare rolls. SITO also does extensive follow-ups to its placements calling both employers and employees. (These are required by Emploi Québec.) Retention rates stand at 99% at six months after placement.

The success rates for SITO's placements vary considerably depending on the program through which trainees have passed. Of particular significance is the fact that the placement rate for former welfare recipients after taking PFPE training exceeds that of non-welfare recipients in the regular program (66% versus 57%). In fact, success rates for welfare recipients are nearly double under PFPE training (66% versus 35%) and more than a third higher for non-recipients (80% versus 57%).

Three key factors would appear to account for SITO's overall success: (i) The agencies 'philosophical' approach; (ii) the emphasis on communications; and (iii) extensive investments in social capital formation. As these factors all represent decisions that are internal to the 'firm' and SITO operates in a market comprised of communities and employers that vary widely in size, it would appear that SITO's approach could be replicated across a broad range of communities and under varied labour market circumstances (subject to certain caveats). Outside of employment, the general principles followed by SITO would also hold, though they would take the form of generalized advice on how to conceive and execute a sound design. The three factors are elaborated below.

Philosophical approach: SITO's 'philosophical approach' expresses itself in two fundamental orientations: the first involves the conceptualization of the agency as an employer that markets immigrants – put differently, SITO understands that its ultimate clients are, of necessity, other employers who must be persuaded to accept SITO's 'products'; the second concerns the agency's commitment to a holistic approach that focuses on total quality management and systematically works through all SITO's activities and structures – including staffing, partnering and counseling - to ensure they are directed to achieving SITO's strategic directions.

Communications: SITO views communications as fundamental to labour market transactions involving employers and immigrants. This view is incorporated in the PFPE training program through a varied of modules and practical workshops. The program's success speaks to the efficacy of SITO's position and accords well with current academic and policy thinking on how to increase the labour market success of newcomers. SITO has followed through on this convictions hiring counselors whose background is in communications, in marketing, advertising or some related discipline. The agency's director general has taught communications at the university and community college level. Communications also underpin

SITO's efforts to develop its relations with employers. This is expressed in terms of the decision to rely on a Québécoise counselor and the director general to deliver SITO's message.

Social capital formation: SITO, as noted above, is a member of multiple employer networks and participates in a range of advisory bodies and voluntary associations. This represents a substantial commitment of agency time (calculated at approximately one-third of the time devoted by counselors to direct immigrant training). As a result of this investment, SITO - and, in particular, its head – has earned the trust of area employers as well as the ministries concerned. This is reinforced by policies that refuse to accept a bad job match-up and insist on mutual (employer-immigrant) satisfaction. The result has been an increased flow of relevant labour market information and a willingness by small and mid-sized employers to move outside their comfort zone and hire newcomers.

The chief caveats around the transferability of SITO's approach concern the need for commitment to the overall philosophy and a willingness to execute and support the design in a holistic manner. To be effective, a program such as SITO's has to be executed with intelligence and a spirit of experimentation and learning if it is to prove persuasive.

#### **Interviewees:**

- Robert Mayrand Director-General of Service Intégration Travail Outaouais

#### **Supporting documentation:**

- Program de formation préparatoire à l'emploi (PFPE)
- Un regard empirique: La compétence interculturelle
- Cahier des ateliers PFPE
- Rapport d'étape Emploi Québec 2011-12
- SITO: Mission-Vision-Aptitudes génériques
- Auto-évaluation: Communication interculturelle
- Admission et placement en emploi des prestataires en SAE et PFPE 2010-2011
- SITO: charte d'organisation
- SITO: charte des partenaires, bailleurs de fonds et réseaux
- SITO: table admissions, prestataires, placements et cibles
- Rapport d'activités trimestriel
- PFPE: Répartition du temps de travail des intervenants par groupe

## Immigrant Centre, Manitoba

Winnipeg, Manitoba

<http://www.icmanitoba.com/>

Category: Integrated Needs Assessment and One Stop Shop

### Overview

The Immigrant Centre is a one-stop shop providing a variety of services for immigrants in Winnipeg and surrounding areas. Upon arrival clients are triaged for the services they require so that their needs are addressed in a smooth and timely manner. In particular, an intake facilitator creates an individualized road map for the client which refers the client to services relevant to his or her needs both within the Centre and in the larger community. The goal of the intake and triage model is to provide immediate needs assessments and structured referrals so that clients don't miss out on needed services. It also is designed to promote efficiency in providing these referrals. The holistic model ensures that clients receive the same message throughout the Centre and has enabled the Centre to better identify gaps in services that may arise. The model was initiated in 2007, and became a central component of the Centre in 2009 when the Centre moved to its new location in a specially renovated building centrally located in Winnipeg. The process of serving clients' needs in an integrated manner is further facilitated by a comprehensive database that is used to track the progress of new and returning clients, and stores critical information about the client so that it does not need to be gathered on multiple occasions. In 2010-2011, over 15,000 clients received services from the Immigrant Centre, a 33% increase over the previous year.

The Centre follows a business delivery model with a business plan established in the first year of a cycle, and strategic planning and review conducted each subsequent year. New programs considered for development at the Centre are evaluated based on their fit with the business plan and with the triage model. Board members play a critical role in this process, and are specifically selected based on the needs of the Centre and the match with candidates' areas of expertise. Staff members receive significant training in their positions, with the intake facilitators trained for approximately six months. The database not only smoothes the referral process for clients, but also supports the business model in providing accurate information about program use, clients served, and client outcomes.

The Centre offers a wide variety of services on-site, including settlement services, adult education services, employment services, workplace entry program, language bank and translation services, computer lending library, nutrition services, citizenship classes, access English centre, and Manitoba nominee application centre. Although the chief funder of the Centre is Manitoba Labour and Immigration, it receives support from a variety of other sources, including the United Way of Winnipeg, Government of Canada programs (e.g., Youth Employment Strategy), Manitoba Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade, and other foundations and groups. As a result of the blended funding, the Centre is able to provide services to a broad spectrum of clients, including permanent residents, temporary

foreign workers, students, visitors, and citizens. The Centre includes approximately 32 staff members, with two intake facilitators who have primary responsibility for initial triaging of services.

### **Outcomes, key contributing factors and transferability**

The comprehensive database and an exit survey administered to clients have provided substantial evidence of the success of the Centre. For example, in 2010-2011, 491 clients who had received employment services were successful in obtaining employment, and 40 workplace entry program students obtained employment. Similarly, 59% of applications through the Centre to the tap-in program – a program in partnership with local colleges and universities designed to provide Centre clients with access to continuing education courses at a greatly reduced cost – were successful in 2010-2011. It is also the case that clients report increased knowledge of the services available to them, and refer their family and friends to the Centre (with 76% of new clients referred by family and friends).

The success of the Centre is attributable to a number of factors. Chief among these is the use of intake facilitators for the triaging of services, and the co-location of multiple services within one centre. This has helped to ensure that clients don't miss out on needed services, and has made services more easily accessible, while increasing clients' knowledge of the services and resources available to them. The integrated database has also contributed to the effectiveness of the Centre, allowing the tracking of clients and the services they are utilizing, as well as efficient use of information that clients provide.

The business delivery model that is used to operate the centre also contributes to its success, promoting effective decision-making and accountability, as well as facilitating staff development and commitment to the enterprise. Also important is the close relationship the Centre enjoys with its primary funder, Manitoba Labour and Immigration, who collaborated in the design of the triage model, and allow flexibility in developing new programs.

A final set of factors contributing to the success of the Centre is the strong reputation it has built in the community, the relationships it has established with external partners, and staff knowledge of community resources and services. These factors promote smooth referrals to services in the community, including those provided by mainstream agencies.

In terms of transferability, critical features of the Centre that would be important to replicate are the triage and intake model, and the comprehensive database of clients and the services they are utilizing. Also essential is the co-location of services in one location. Other key contributing factors that would be important to replicate in order to transfer the practice are the establishment of strong relationships with community partners, and staff who are knowledgeable about services and resources available in the community. These are essential for ensuring smooth and timely referrals to community resources. It was also suggested that the location of a Centre is crucial, with a centralized, easily accessed location most likely to promote use.

**Interviewees:**

- Linda Lalande, Executive Director

**Supporting documentation:**

- 2010 Immigrant Centre Annual Report
- Various Services Brochures

## Immigrant Employer Learning Partnership (IELP)

LASI World Skills (Local Agencies Serving Immigrants)

Ottawa, Ontario

<http://www.ottawa-worldskills.org/>

Category: Building Relationships with Employers

### Overview

The Immigrant Employer Learning Partnership (IELP) is designed to link employers with internationally trained individuals. The goal of the program is to increase the appetite of employers for immigrant workers; to improve employers' promotional, recruitment and retention strategies; and to enhance their ability to create welcoming and productive work environments. To achieve this, the IELP program operates a one-stop shop, offering employers a comprehensive training and service menu, including diversity management, cross cultural sensitivity training, counseling and retention measures, as well as job matching, recruitment and mentoring. Specific activities are delivered either at the employer's workplace or in LASI's offices (Local Agencies Serving Immigrants).

The IELP targets the private and public sectors, including crown corporations, and the not-for-profit sector. Clients have included the banks, MBNA, the education sector, Canada Post, government crown corporations, and numerous other mid to large employers. The specific communities that the IELP seeks to engage are human resource professionals, corporate executives, managers, supervisors, trainers and facilitators. The resulting interaction is framed as a partnership because of the on-going nature of LASI's support and its emphasis on building relationships.

The IELP deploys a range of purpose built services as well as making other LASI programs available to employers. This latter category includes the Ottawa Job Match Network (OJMN) which gives employers access to qualified, trained, and pre-screened candidates and provides post-hire support to both managers and employees; employers are also given access to LASI's suite of diversity management programs, including recruitment, retention and cross-cultural training services.

The partnership with employers is initiated either by employers or by LASI, especially if the OJMN program suggests that an employer may be receptive to working with the agency. Receptivity is important for the program to be effective. The aim is to acquaint employers with promising practices and to help them learn from their own experience. The focus of IELP is on small practical changes in procedures that can be shown to have positive results. The methods employed by the program include:

- **Workshops and roundtables:** The workshops, organized by the IELP, provide structured opportunities for employers in a sector to interact and to learn from each and from employers in other sectors. The topics or activities that are covered include recruitment, cross-cultural interviewing, foreign credential recognition, mentorship, workplace culture, performance evaluation and retention strategies.

- **Focus groups with employees from the organization:** The focus groups are used to identify challenges and possible solutions associated with hiring, retention and workplace culture.
- **Policy and practice reviews:** The IELP offers assessments of the human resource policies and practices of participating employers, including audits of on-line hiring procedures which often pose difficulties for newcomers. Based on the audits, the IELP offers to create HR toolkits and materials to help organizations recruit and retain internationally trained workers.
- **Panels involving employer representatives and newcomers:** The goal of the panels is employer sensitization, providing employers with insights in newcomer experiences with the aim of encouraging newcomer involvement in the 'audit' of corporate policies and procedures.
- **Do-it-yourself tools:** The primary tool has been a mentorship program which the IELP supports and for which it has developed a do-it-yourself toolkit.

The IELP program is delivered by three part-time employees.

### **Outcomes, key contributing factors, evidence and transferability**

The IELP is still at a formative stage. Program staff have indicated that they are getting better at learning to talk to employers and picking enterprises where progress can be made. Outputs are still uncertain, however, and there have not been any formal evaluations of the overall project or its components. The main evidence for success comes from employer and employee feedback, which has been positive, along with IELP staff impressions. These are supported by circumstantial evidence, including the fact that requests for webinars and workshops have been increasing; as well, there has been a certain amount of 'repeat business' in the form of employers adapting their approaches and seeking feedback from LASI and the IELP. This would suggest a positive evaluation of the program and staff competencies.

The IELP coordinator indicates that the key factor accounting for the project's success centres on the consultations that are undertaken and the interactive manner in which the project disseminates information. This is supported by the skill sets of LASI employees who possess the research and practical business knowledge that is required to lead workshops and speak with employers.

Other contributing factors that were identified included the importance of developing networks and acquiring contacts within the business community. As well, to be credible as a one-stop service, a broad range of services must be available to employers. The value of the IELP program to employers is related to the range of programs and services that LASI is able to deploy. Along this line, the IELP would like to expand the number of specialized, cross-cultural workshops that it is able to offer.

On the question of transferability and scalability, in the absence of outcomes, it is still too early to provide firm answers. Certainly, the key principle involving a one-stop experience for employers can be transferred across the country. Experience suggests that the methods and programs deployed by the IELP work best with medium size enterprises with about fifty employees, large enough to have a human resource department.

On the agency side, there are likely to be thresholds in terms of a minimum range of services that would need to be available for a similar project to be credible and to hold employer interest. That said, some of the do-it-yourself toolkits, such as the IELP's approach to mentoring, could appeal to a broad audience, including agencies and employers in smaller centres. Finally, the project's techniques may be applicable to larger employers providing the methods – workshops and exchanges – are used in dealings with discrete sectors of the larger company. This would, indeed, appear to be the approach taken by the IELP with employers such as Canada Post and MBNA.

### **Interviewees:**

- Maria Rasouli Manager Immigrant Employer Learning Partnerships LASI World Skills
- Magdalene Maxwell Manager Ottawa Job Match Network LASI World Skills

### **Supporting documentation:**

- Barrier brochure August 2011
- Overqualification Fact Sheet Final
- Overqualification Article
- FCR Fact Sheet Final
- World Skills MBNA Mentorship Article
- World Skills MBNA Mentorship Program Evaluation Report Final
- DIY Final – March 2012 (do-it-yourself mentorship)
- Barrier Brochure final – August 2011

## Immigrant Public Legal Education and Information Project

Justice Education Society (lead agency)

Ministry of the Attorney General - Government of British Columbia

Vancouver, British Columbia

<http://www.justiceeducation.ca/programs/collaborative-consortium>

Category: Transitioning immigrants to general community service organizations

### Overview

The Immigrant Public Legal Education and Information Project (originally called the Collaborative Consortium Project) was initiated by the Ministry of the Attorney General in collaboration with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development. The aim of the project was to improve newcomer access to legal expertise and legal advice. New immigrants need information about legal matters but language and literacy barriers, inter-country differences in the operation of legal systems, and weak connections between immigrant service providers and legal advocacy organizations have resulted in a 'system' that produces scattered and inconsistent legal advice and referrals.

To correct systemic weaknesses in newcomer access to legal help, the Immigrant PLEI Project sought to bring together front line agencies (settlement agencies, legal service providers, PLEI providers, community service agencies) with PLEI developers, government services and local justice personnel. The core idea was to get legal expertise, which resides primarily with legal advocacy organizations and other legal institutions, to newcomer communities with the assistance of settlement service providers. Settlement agencies were already offering some counseling but a more effective and integrated approach to public legal education and information delivery was needed. To achieve this, the Project pursued two interrelated organizational strategies: The first sought to increase the utility, relevance and access of legal advocacy agencies to newcomer communities; the second sought to improve the capacity of settlement service organizations to provide basic counseling and referrals on legal matters.

The Project consisted of a twelve member consortium headed by the Justice Education Society (JES). The consortium combined justice, public advocacy, and immigrant settlement agencies, including SUCCESS, MOSAIC, ISS, JES, Legal Services Society and People's Law School. The area covered by the Project spanned Surrey, Richmond, Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster, North Shore, Coquitlam, Port Moody and Port Coquitlam.

Structurally, the Immigrant PLEI consisted of the following elements:

- A *Consortium Working Group (CWG)* with representatives from each of the 12 partnering agencies. The CWG provided overall project direction
- A *lead agency* – the Justice Education Society – which managed and oversaw the project
- An *executive committee* to conduct day to day operations
- A *project manager/coordinator* (an employee of the Justice Education Society)
- *Immigrant Plea Workers (IPWs)* situated with immigrant service provider organizations.

The unique organizational elements of the Project centred on the IPWs and the project manager or coordinator. IPWs were employed by immigrant service provider organizations but received functional (i.e. technical) direction from the project coordinator. The role of the IPWs was to identify the needs of settlement workers in regard to legal matters and to transfer this information, via the project coordinator, to legal content developers. To do this, they needed to understand the requirements, capacities and uses of legal information by settlement counselors. Typically, counselors are expected to deal with simple matters by themselves and, for more complicated issues, to refer clients to legal agencies. IPWs were also assigned the role of ‘educating’ immigrant service providers by imparting legal information directly and assisting in the matter of referrals. With regard to this latter point, IPWs had defined territories for which they were responsible. Within those territories, they were supposed to assemble legal resources and facilitate connections between legal agencies and the settlement sector.

At the start of the Project, the consortium identified a number of priority themes. These centred on: housing and residential concerns; employment related issues; family law; and domestic violence. Housing and employment were chosen as the initial themes. The key activities to address each thematic area included:

- An assessment of existing PLE resources and the development of new material in multiple languages.
- Cross-sectoral workshops designed to bring together representatives from settlement agencies, PLEI providers, legal service providers and other community agencies. The workshops served to educate immigrant service providers, to forge connections and to identify content requirements.
- Development training workshops aimed at educating settlement and community workers who were in contact with immigrants and refugees.
- Communication activities centred on community workshops and media campaigns.
- The creation of community asset maps identifying the PLEI providers and community agencies in each geographical area that offer legal services in each of the thematic areas.

### **Outcomes, key contributing factors, evidence and transferability**

The Immigrant PLEI Project is credited with building capacity and legal expertise in both immigrant settlement agencies and legal institutions. This was achieved through improved coordination and better communication between front line legal and settlement agencies, as well as better training and support for settlement workers. Improved training resulted in more timely and accurate referrals and more consistent advice. Other project-induced improvements included better referral protocols, improved familiarity of settlement counselors with area resources and expertise, improved teaching and professional instruction, better resource material (including web-based resources), and greater inter-agency trust.

The main factors accounting for the success of the Immigrant PLEI Project can be grouped under structural supports, activities to build connectivity and facilitate information exchange, and knowledge products and resources. The evidence for this comes from a series of interviews and surveys conducted with workshop participants, front line staff and Immigrant Plea Workers. This is summarized below:

### Structural supports:

A critical aspect of the project concerns the role of the coordinator and the eight Immigrant Plea Workers. This investment in core capacity provided the glue that bound together the front line agencies from different sectors. As a team, the coordinator and Plea Workers undertook the planning and analysis that underpinned most project activities; they provided a promotional capacity; and they served as the project's institutional memory and primary site of learning to which questions could be directed and where knowledge and learning was converted into project improvements.

Some questions were raised about the need to streamline the management model and the efficiency of decision-making. Issues also arose in connection with IPW reporting relationships and difficulties linked to matrix management and the siting of functional guidance (with the coordinator and the Justice Education Society). In both instances, these are second order concerns. There is likely some fine tuning required but on the fundamental matter of adding and deploying capacity, the project appears to have gotten matters right.

### Activities to build connectivity and facilitate information exchange

The use of cross-sectoral meetings, intermediary workshops, community sessions, and information webinars was felt by a majority of respondents to be an effective method for building durable relations among immigrant service providers and legal advocacy and service organizations. These relationships underpinned positive changes in referrals and advice by immigrant serving organizations. The workshops also provided an effective machinery for eliciting information about legal needs, for sharing information, and for training intermediaries. This was reinforced following feedback that led to issues being dealt with in greater depth and more emphasis being placed on the needs of front line workers and managers. More specifically:

- Cross-sectoral workshops were judged particularly effective for networking and for motivating participants to improve service coordination. Follow-up surveys, twelve months after the workshops, indicated an increase in relevant referrals, better coordination, and faster, more reliable service in the client's language at a site located close to the client.
- Intermediary workshops produced substantial improvements among service providers in their understanding legal issues, in their ability to address client needs, and in their knowledge of where to refer clients.
- Community Workshops were found to have successfully conveyed information to immigrants about their legal rights and responsibilities and about where to go to get help with particular legal problems. Respondents also indicated that they were more likely to seek help. These activities and improvements were linked to improved settlement worker referrals and advice.

### Knowledge products and resources

Improvements in the quality of advice and referrals were associated with improvements in legal resource material (including making information available in more languages) and methods for accessing this information. The improvements were achieved by means of scoping reviews that identified areas of legal concern and vulnerable populations, leading to the development of new, better tailored legal

resources; as well, tasking IPWs to identify the information needs of settlement workers so appropriate legal resource material could be generated, proved valuable; and, finally, attention to the accessibility of information in the form of web-based material and translations contributed to the project's success.

On the core issue of transferability, there are still uncertainties associated with the project that would need to be resolved. In terms of transferring the lessons to other policy fields, the only area where a similar project might be constructed is in regards to mental health, though even here, the parallels are not compelling. The ubiquity of legal concerns and the technical nature of legal advice create a fairly unique situation that calls for distinct remedies, such as the Immigrant PLEI. Another limitation on transferability (of the project as a whole) arises with respect to the requirement for a rich network of legal advocates and experts who can be tapped and melded with immigrant service providers. This suggests that the project would fit more comfortably in larger cities, though it may be possible to organize support using university based and pro bono legal resources. Finally, the project – as constructed - is resource intensive.

Still on the question of transferability, consideration might be given to expanding the cross-sectoral workshops and intermediary workshops to include immigrant service providers from locations that cannot, on their own, support a project of this nature. The relations that are constructed could, perhaps, be supported through distance exchanges and periodic travel. As well, the scoping reviews, development of new resources, and translation of material could be extended to cover a wider range of situations.

In summary, while cloning of the Immigration PLEI is unlikely to attract many takers outside the major metropolitan areas, hybrids of the British Columbia pilot might produce beneficial results that could serve a wider community.

### **Interviewees:**

- Sandra Wilking

### **Supporting documentation:**

- Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI) for Immigrant Youth
- Best Practices in the Dissemination of Integral Information to New Immigrants
- Online Dispute Resolution and New Immigrants
- The Internet as an Effective Mechanism for Distribution of Integral Information to New Immigrants
- Immigrant PLEI Consortium Final Service Report
- Public Legal Education and Information for Immigrants Pilot Project: Logic Table for Evaluation Framework
- An Evaluation of the Immigrant PLEI Consortium (IPC) Project – February 2011

## **Integrated Client Services**

South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services

Penticton, British Columbia

<http://www.soics.ca/>

Category: Delivery of Settlement Services to Smaller and More Isolated Cities and Towns, and to Rural Regions

### **Overview**

The South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services agency (SOICS) provides services to immigrants, refugees and temporary entrants (including students, temporary foreign workers and agricultural workers) as well as to employers over an extensive geographic range. Services include settlement services, language training, employment services, community bridging and learning and technology assistance. Approximately eighty percent of SOICS' activity involves Penticton and Oliver. Twenty percent of the agency's activity centres on one of the smaller communities in the Okanagan or is not tied to a particular site. The smaller communities whose needs fall under SOICS' umbrella include Summerland, Osoyoos, Princeton and Keremeos. Funding for SOICS is obtained primarily from provincial sources but Service Canada also provides support and, like other service providers, SOICS relies on volunteer services.

To address the wide ranging needs of the region, the South Okanagan Immigrant Community Services agency is configured to offer newcomers an integrated, client-centred approach to services and to service delivery. The agency focuses on providing both newcomers and employers with a one-stop shop for services. Clients are seen immediately and SOICS emphasizes a team approach to addressing client needs. The requisite expertise to execute such an approach is supported through staff training and an emphasis by the agency on individual initiative.

SOICS' efforts to provide client-centred, comprehensive services is augmented by partnerships with local institutions such as schools, libraries and health institutions. These partnerships have been helpful in providing SOICS with a 'base of operations' in areas where the agency does not have offices. SOICS' ability to provide integrated services is also supported by a considerable investment (not just financial but also intellectual) and a commitment to employing new technology in the form of smart boards, video chatting, on-line training, webinars and, especially, the use of freely available web resources. The investment in technology has been especially valuable in supporting the agency's itinerant and outreach services to both immigrant and employer clients.

The use of technology has allowed the agency to expand its connections with potential clients. This includes making contact with immigrants prior to their arrival with a view to accelerating the process of foreign credential recognition. The agency has utilized Skype for this purpose. Smart board technology has also allowed the agency to create highly interactive workshops and to import specialized knowledge and materials from agencies and organizations in larger centres, including AMSSA. The use of social media has also helped SOICS establish and maintain contact with younger people.

In order to extend its reach and enlist the support of local communities and employers, SOICS maintains an extensive educational and outreach program. Agency personnel speak at numerous public forums, such as meetings of the chamber of commerce, meetings of human resources managers, and community roundtables. This participation yields benefits in terms of access and credibility with area employers and with mainstream institutions.

### **Outcomes, key contributing factors, evidence and transferability**

There are no formal evaluations or other metrics testifying to the agency's success and to the merits of SOICS comprehensive, client-centred approach. The sole study available is an in-house evaluation conducted by a student intern under the MITACS program in collaboration with Metropolis. This study did not provide a strong empirical base from which to gauge the agency's actions. Notwithstanding the lack of empirical evidence, it should be noted that SOICS' approach and the manner in which it executes its mandate have received a fair amount of positive media attention.

- Several practices adopted by the agency merit further examination and could serve as promising practices in respect of delivering settlement and integration services in smaller centres. These include: The commitment to providing comprehensive services and to supporting this objective by encouraging teamwork and initiative within the agency. This leads to a broadening of skill sets and to knowledge mobilization and transfer.
- The use of technology in order to extend the agency's reach, both geographically and intellectually. The extension of geographic reach is attained by allowing agency staff to fully connect to the full suite of agency resources, expertise and knowledge in Penticton, regardless of their physical location; the extension of intellectual reach is realized by accessing expertise that resides in the service provider network across Canada (staff cited initiatives in Quebec and British Columbia) as well as free tools and knowledge resources available on the internet. The agency makes use of this knowledge by undertaking extensive research to shape its programs and actions. In this regard, SOICS views itself as highly autonomous in its willingness to adapt existing programs to extant needs. The free resources identified by SOICS could constitute a valuable resource to be shared with other agencies in similar situations.
- The final point concerns the integration of SOICS client-centred approach with its technological investments. The agency's overall orientation and the manner in which it delivers its programs appears to be well thought out and strategically positioned.

### **Interviewees:**

- Cherry Fernandez Counselor South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services
- Karina Chambers Counselor South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services
- Tahira Saeed Counselor South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services

### **Supporting documentation:**

- Rapport de stage Julien Geremie intern at South Okanagan Immigrant and Community Services
- SOICS website

## Integrated Immigrant Seniors Program

Inter-Cultural Association (ICA) Case Study

Victoria, British Columbia

<http://www.icavictoria.org/>

Category: Transitioning immigrants to general community service organizations

### Overview

The ICA Senior's Program was introduced as a two-year demonstration project funded by British Columbia's Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development (BC Settlement and Adaptation Program). The Program operates in Greater Victoria as a collaborative effort between the Inter-Cultural Association and a consortium of five regional senior service agencies and the Parks and Recreation Department of the Saanich Municipality.

ICA's program originated in the consortium's observation that immigrant seniors in ICA's programs were not availing themselves of services offered by mainstream senior organizations. This despite the fact that immigrant seniors form over 40 percent of Victoria's large senior population. Instead, their interactions with ICA tended to be 'sticky': rather than ICA being a means to an end - integrating into the mainstream community and accessing mainstream services - immigrant seniors tended to remain attached to ICA. Not only did this slow their integration and clog ICA's capacity to engage more recent arrivals but it created two tiers of clients: longstanding clients who were comfortable with ICA services (a sort of inner club) and recent arrivals who felt themselves to be excluded. This same problem has been encountered by ICA in other areas, such as women's services, and led the agency to shift from a continuing intake model to one structured around distinct entry and graduation points.

ICA's Senior's program has two distinct, complementary objectives. The first targets immigrant seniors. The goals include helping clients to function, reducing their isolation, making them aware of general community services and opportunities, and encouraging them to access these services (recreational, health, social and informational). The second objective targets institutions rather than individuals. The associated goals are to increase the capability of mainstream organizations in Victoria – ICA's partners – to respond to the needs of immigrant seniors, to help these organizations become more welcoming, especially with respect to visible minorities, and to increase the penetration rate of mainstream senior organizations into immigrant communities. Over time, the program has evolved so it targets all immigrant seniors without regard to citizenship status or length of stay in Canada. Initially, funders had sought to limit eligibility to non-citizens and persons in Canada for fewer than five years.

Mechanically, the program operates as follows: Immigrant seniors are recruited using various means, including referrals from ICA and other agencies and drawing on cultural and religious organizations. Potential applicants are assessed and entered into program. Once entered, applicants are assessed and receive individualized language training; they are also enrolled in various social, cultural and educational activities. Crucially, these take place at the premises of ICAs mainstream partners. Partner staff attend the sessions and help facilitate the activities, providing site tours and giving program information. ICA's

program coordinator works with the immigrant seniors to encourage them to attend the events and, at the same time, works with seniors in mainstream organizations to build rapport for the newcomers.

Paralleling the work with newcomers is the work with institutions. General community agencies are approached at the Executive Director level by ICA's Multiculturalism Program Manager, an experienced, high level representative. Following an initial interview and discussion, agencies are asked to complete a Diversity Audit questionnaire. This probes the degree to which diversity is reflected in agency staff and staffing procedures, methods and sources of volunteer recruitment, cultural sensitivity training, choice of programming and communication methods. The responses to the questionnaire – a form of audit - are analyzed by ICA and a report containing advice on becoming more receptive and welcoming to newcomers is provided to the mainstream organizations. The advice is straightforward and practical. Reports counsel agencies to analyze their client populations (to see who is not being served), to examine and improve hiring and volunteer recruitment strategies, to increase multicultural programming, to expand the range of community contacts and to offer cultural training for staff and volunteers. Written reports are followed by site visits by the Multiculturalism Program Manager to discuss findings and recommendations. Support is offered to assist the transformation and a tool kit has been developed.

### **Outcomes, key contributing factors, evidence and transferability**

The Seniors Program is a complex, well-conceived, well-executed, resource-intensive initiative that produces a range of direct and indirect benefits. The project consumes the half-time services of a facilitator, roughly a day of other staff time and volunteer support. Evidence of program outcomes comes from observations by ICA and informal reports by partner agencies and staff.

The most direct outcome measure involves client numbers and comportment. Program throughput was small, roughly 20 individuals; modest success was achieved in getting these seniors to interact with and use the services of other agencies on their own. That said, both ICA's clients and seniors at mainstream agencies enjoyed joint activities and meeting each other. This supported the goal of reducing seniors' sense of isolation. It is important to remember that seniors are a difficult client group, averse to change and not always open to new experiences and new challenges.

Greater success was achieved at an institutional level. According to ICA, the Diversity Audit and Resource Toolkit, used to get baseline information, has proved effective in eliciting pertinent information about agency practices and planning. It was very well received by partner agencies along with follow-up visits and six-month reviews to assess improvements in response to audit findings.

Another outcome worth noting is the training and knowledge exchanges that ICA's program induced among agencies serving seniors. ICA's facilitator and other ICA staff have reached out to organizations and businesses serving older adults in Victoria. Particularly useful were meetings with staff at senior centres to answer questions about immigrant needs, available services and capacities. These have raised inter-agency awareness and should improve cross-agency referrals.

Knowledge transfer also took the form of cultural diversity training, utilizing B.C.'s Safe Harbour Program. Training was conducted at partner sites for staff, Board members and key volunteers.

According to ICA, partner organizations responded positively, producing higher levels of cross-cultural awareness within partner agencies. This is expected to translate into more effective services by general community organizations, higher uptake by immigrant seniors and higher client retention rates.

The final outcome attributable to ICA's senior program centres on connections between mainstream senior agencies and the Community Partnership Network to which ICA belongs. The resultant links that have been forged between mainstream agencies and ethno-cultural organizations and faith groups, represent social capital that will facilitate access by mainstream organizations to newcomers.

In addition to sound design and execution, the Seniors Program owes its success to a confluence of internal and external factors. Among the more important are the following:

- The situation was ripe for change. An eroding client base for mainstream agencies coupled with ICA's need to free up its capacity to serve seniors, produced a strong impetus for reform.
- A supportive funding and program environment under the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program led to the formation of the Community Partnership Network. ICA's membership in the network equipped the agency to connect ethno-cultural and faith groups with mainstream senior agencies. The Program's public education component helped fund the development of the audit toolbox which is crucial for ICA's program.
- A prior history of engagement and collaboration among the agencies provided the essential element of inter-agency trust which permitted ICA to conduct diversity audits and produced a receptive environment for audit findings and recommendations.
- ICA's ability to deploy experienced, credible staff with broad expertise was vital for securing uptake by mainstream agencies and ethno-cultural communities. The expertise allowed ICA to obtain synergies by combining multiple programs, including Safe Harbour training, the Welcoming and Inclusive Communities and Workplaces Program and the Seniors Program pilot (using the Settlement and Adaptation Program).
- Flexibility by funders, permitting naturalized citizens to participate in the program, and flexibility in program delivery – notably accommodating different needs in language classes – broadened the client base and allowed ICA to recruit sufficient participants to operate the pilot program.

The Seniors Program is transferable both with respect to locale – anywhere in the country - and target group. Potential target populations, other than seniors, would include immigrant women and youth. Arguably, these groups would be easier to entice and integrate into mainstream services than seniors. ICA indicated that certain immigrant women in its caseload presented similar challenges to seniors, such as failing to move on from ICA's services to mainstream women's groups. The fact that both women and youth would be more adventuresome than seniors would make it easier to replicate the program.

Geographically, this program should be transferable across a wide range of city sizes and locations. In fact, the smaller the community, the more value would be attached to quickly transferring newcomers to general community service providers and to sensitizing those providers to immigrant needs.

An effective, existing relationship with mainstream organizations is likely an important, though not absolute, requirement for mounting an effective program. The issue would be the speed with which a

program could be implemented and whether extensive, prior relationship-building is essential. As well, the willingness of mainstream agencies to submit to an audit and respond to critical recommendations would depend on the degree of trust that exists.

Another factor affecting transferability is the quality and credibility of immigrant service provider staff. This is important for interactions with senior officials of mainstream agencies, both at the initial design and enrollment stage, as well as at the debriefing and recommendations stage.

The particular audit instruments and methodology developed and used by ICA would be easily adaptable to other client groups and locales. Similarly, the analytic frame on which ICA bases its advice should be fairly straightforward to recreate for the designated locations and target groups. Some of the more precise community measures being developed by the Welcoming Communities Initiative could also prove useful for this purpose.

For any of the target groups cited above and for most geographic locations, there is a strong likelihood that the basic programmatic blocks from which to assemble a program such as ICA's Seniors Program already exist. The crucial ingredient needed to cement the distinct program elements into a 'best practice' is flexibility on the part of funders and program managers. This information will be held locally. There is, however, a case to be made for engaging the relevant ministries in order to explain and secure their support for flexible treatment.

The final point concerning transferability involves the importance of prior networks and the social capital that is embedded in these relations. It suggests that settlement agencies may benefit from the construction of specific networks that can be activated for particular goals. The construction and use of these networks should be examined more closely by CISSA-ACSEI.

### **Interviewees:**

- Steven Baileys, Multicultural Program Coordinator
- Jean McCrae, Executive Director

### **Supporting documentation:**

- Diversity Audit Feedback James Bay New Horizons FINAL July 7, 2011.pdf
- MFW Blended Year-end report 2011.pdf
- Senior Support Pilot Final Report July 10-June 11 Project July
- Interim Report: 2010–2011 BC Settlement and Adaptation Program (BCSAP): Demonstration Projects for Seniors
- Interim Report: Demonstration Projects for Seniors: July 1, 2009 – December 31, 2009

## **MY Circle Program (Multicultural Youth Circle Program)**

Immigrant Service Society of British Columbia (ISSofBC)

Vancouver, British Columbia

<http://www.issbc.org/>

Category: Social and Civic Engagement of Immigrants

### **Overview**

The ISSofBC MY Circle Program is an innovative, collaborative initiative that promotes civic engagement. The Program focuses on immigrant and refugee youth in the Metro Vancouver area, including Vancouver, Surrey, Burnaby, New Westminster, Delta/Langley and Coquitlam. Stripped down to its basics, ISSofBC MY Circle trains newcomer youth through a highly interactive program to provide peer support - in the form of public presentations, discussion groups and individual counseling – to fellow students between the ages of 14-24, though the bulk of participants are 14-19 years of age. Presentations and outreach activities take place in schools, community centres and other organizations such as youth service agencies. They are directed to newcomer youth but also implicate parents and newcomer communities. The goals of the program, apart from direct benefits to participants, include advocacy for improvements in youth services, broad peer support and the formation of a more inclusive and welcoming environment.

The ISSofBC MY Circle Program has been in existence for over ten years. Its origins can be traced back to a Vancouver Coastal Health Authority grant (SMART fund) aimed at providing leadership and facilitation training for immigrant and refugee women to operate peer led support groups for newcomer women. ISSofBC saw an opportunity to adapt this model and to go beyond the agency's adult programming in order to engage immigrant and refugee youth directly. Since its inception, the program has evolved a firm institutional base and an extensive set of partners who participate in its delivery. These include various school boards, the Settlement Workers in Schools initiative, the Vancouver Foundation and municipal agencies from a number of cities, Vancouver and Surrey in particular, as well as private sector contributions, including support from TELUS and Coast Capital. Three years ago, the Girls' Action Foundation provided a grant to test an all-girls training and support group model. And, most recently, funding was obtained from the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation (part of the federal transfer of funds under the soon-to-be-terminated BC-Canada Agreement on Immigration)

Newcomer youth who participate in the ISSofBC MY Circle program are drawn from high school 'English as an Additional Language' classes, community centres and partnering agencies. Youth trainees are taught new leadership skills and are given opportunities to expand their knowledge in areas such as cross-cultural communication, group facilitation, conflict resolution, anti-oppression and anti-bullying training, and integration in general. Once training is complete, ISSofBC MY Circle youth workers help graduates connect with community allies who are able to assist them in creating peer support groups and peer-led activities at their schools or local community centres aimed at helping immigrant and refugee youth who are experiencing integration and other challenges. Peer support activities take place

in schools, youth serving agencies and community centres during lunch hours, after school and on weekends. ISSofBC youth workers also help program graduates make connections to resources in the community.

Participants in the training program are identified by the schools – by teachers and SWIS staff – by ISSofBC staff and through self-referral as a result of social media and word of mouth. As well, annual, formal agreements are signed with schools regarding program scope and deployment. An effort is made to ensure a good mix of newcomer participants in terms of gender and ethnicity.

The ISSofBC MY Circle Training is delivered during the school year on twelve successive Saturdays – a total of 80 hours of training (which is often recognized by local school boards towards volunteer or prescribed Career and Personal Planning hours). Recently, ISSofBC has also experimented with an alternative model that operates during the summer in two, four-week blocks. The training is broken into twelve modules: two are offered by PeerNet/Kinex (a firm specializing in peer-led initiatives); community partners then offer a module; and nine modules of leadership training are delivered by ISSofBC staff in conjunction with two former youth graduates who are hired in the capacity of lead and intern facilitators. As well, guest speakers from community partner organizations and voluntary agencies are invited to share their knowledge with participants. ISSofBC MY Circle Youth workers continue to support and advise youth facilitators after their training is complete.

ISSofBC MY Circle program currently occupies the time of a part time manager, two part-time staff and one administrative support person. The ISSofBC MY Circle Program also hosts an Advisory Committee consisting of former youth graduates and has established active partnerships and an outreach function with a range of youth service providers – both mainstream and ethno-specific - in the geographic areas served by the program. The aim of these partnerships is to improve youth services and enhance their relevance for newcomer youth and young adults.

### **Outcomes, key contributing factors, evidence and transferability**

A positive evaluation of the ISSofBC MY Circle program was conducted in 2006 (but was not available for review by this study) and a measurement framework has been built. As well, there is strong observational and anecdotal evidence of the program's success. This is supported by the program's longevity and the fact that consideration is being given to extending the program to cities outside Metro Vancouver.

Over its ten year existence, the ISSofBC MY Circle program has graduated over six hundred participants: each training cohort (currently three or four per year) graduates between 15 and 25 peer support facilitators who engage in various activities with schools and with the broader community, including both mainstream and immigrant-specific initiatives. Supported by ISSofBC, MY Circle has also spawned the formation of a permanent 'action group' (called the Action Team) of program alumni, providing direct evidence of the program's success in promoting civic participation. This entirely youth-led group obtained independent funding in 2010 to examine the delivery of ESL services in Vancouver, Burnaby

and Surrey schools. The group has also undertaken many special projects over the years, including participating on the advisory committee of the first ever immigrant and refugee youth provincial summit, focusing on public education and child protection. Members of the Action Team, through their participation on the Summit's advisory committee, were involved in drafting a number of the Summit's recommendations which led to some Team members being given the opportunity to address the Ministry of Education's senior management cadre in Victoria and to meet with the Minister. Following the meeting, the Minister announced that the education policy framework for non-English speaking learners would be renamed English Language Learners (ELL), rather than English as a Second Language (ESL), to recognize that youth who migrate to Canada often speak more than one language.

Other evidence of positive outcomes comes from participant responses. Youth who went through the program are nearly unanimous in their praise. Among the many benefits they identify are: improvements in their English language skills; improved public speaking and social skills; facilitation skills; confidence; friendships; knowledge about anti-discrimination and anti-oppression tools; and learning how to respond to bullying.

Four elements, apart from sustained financing, would appear to be critical for program replication with respect to youth. The first is institutional. To be viable, the ISSofBC MY Circle program requires the active support of local school boards; in Metro Vancouver, program expansion has been made possible by the partnership that has evolved between school boards and ISSofBC. A second essential element is critical mass (of newcomers). ISSofBC believes that the main program elements could be transferred to both large and small centres across the country (consideration is being given to Vernon and Prince George) as long as there exists a sufficiently large immigrant and refugee youth population to serve as facilitators. The third element concerns representation. To be effective, sponsoring agency staff (who provide the training) should be reflective of the youth they are seeking to engage in order to create a 'safe' environment. Where this is not available, trainers could be brought in from other regions. ISSofBC has, in the past, augmented its capacity through the use of former participants as co-facilitators in the training programs. The fourth element is the curriculum which is well developed and could serve as a model for other locales, though it would need to be tweaked for particular circumstances.

In respect of transferability to other areas of service, a similar program employing ISSofBC MY Circle staff (supported by multi-year funding from the Vancouver Foundation) is being launched to provide enhanced leadership training to First Nations and the LGBTQ community. The training will involve active partnerships and will draw on trainers from specialized agencies. The program has also been gauged as a useful preventative measure to counter peer pressure and gang involvement.

### **Interviewees:**

- Chris Friesen, Director of Settlement Services, Immigrant Service Society of British Columbia

### **Supporting documentation:**

- Immigrant Service Society of BC – My Circle Program Outcomes Measurement Framework

- MY-Program Logic Model
- MY Circle Report to VSB Summer 2011
- Vancouver Foundation 2011
- MY Circle Brochure
- MY Circle Application General
- Participant Final Evaluation 1
- MY Circle Resource Booklet 2012 in Britannia Fall Update for Printing
- Selected Peer Support Groups Supported by MY Circle

## **Newcomer Welcome Centre**

Regina Open Door Society

Regina, Saskatchewan

<http://reginaneewcomercentre.ca>

Category: Integrated Needs Assessment and One Stop Shop

### **Overview**

The Regina Open Door Society (RODS) Newcomer Welcome Centre has been operating for close to three years. The idea for the Centre was first discussed in 2007 at a partnership committee meeting between RODS and three Regina school boards. Funding was then secured for a community consultation to determine whether there was a need for and an interest in developing a newcomer welcome centre on account of increasing numbers of immigrant families arriving through the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP). Interest levels were high and, thus, in 2008 the Regina partners went on a fact-finding mission, visiting and talking to assessment, reception, welcome, information and referral centres in Manitoba, Alberta, and Ontario in order to learn from their experiences. By late 2008, the partners had committed to establishing a one-stop/first-stop, collaborative service centre to welcome newcomers to Regina and surrounding areas, provide information, assessments, and referrals to resources and services in the community, and promote informed educational choices for newcomers and their children. The Newcomer Welcome Centre was launched in August 2009, and since that time has provided services to over 5000 newcomers to Regina.

The Newcomer Welcome Centre is a partnership between the Regina Open Door Society, the Regina Public School Board, the Regina Catholic School Board, and the Conseil des écoles fransaskoises. It is jointly funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Saskatchewan Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration, allowing flexibility in the clients who can be served. Clients include immigrants and refugees who are permanent residents or new Canadian citizens, as well as temporary foreign workers, international students, visitors and refugee claimants. Services available at the Centre include basic needs assessment, school assessment, language assessment, provision of information and referrals to agencies and services that can best meet an individual's needs (e.g., additional settlement, orientation, language, and employment services).

The Centre is staffed by the Newcomer Welcome Centre Manager, three Settlement Information Advisors who conduct basic needs assessments and provide quick information and referrals, and a Regional Partnerships Coordinator, bridging the Newcomer Welcome Centre services to more than 70 communities surrounding Regina within a radius of 150 kms. In

addition, the Centre hosts partners on-site with whom appointments are booked by the Centre staff, including school board representatives, federal and provincial English language assessors, Orientation Services for Newcomers workers, a Settlement Worker In Schools intake representative, and a Youth Coordinator. In this way, services are provided in a seamless manner and clients can easily access a variety of services in a short amount of time, in one location. An important feature of the Centre is also the client database that helps track clients and the services they are utilizing, and allows one basic needs assessment to provide information for a variety of services and programs. Another interesting and creative feature of the Newcomer Welcome Centre is the use of telephone interpretation services in over 170 languages, which complements the cultural and language diversity of the Centre staff.

Upon entering the Centre, beyond the reception area is an information niche with brochures, tables, computers and a children's play area. This provides clients and their families a comfortable space to access information while waiting for appointments or services. In addition, eight rooms, including a large classroom-sized space, are available to be booked for meetings, assessments, and orientations.

### **Outcomes, key contributing factors and transferability**

Though a formal evaluation has not yet been conducted and the Welcome Centre is still in its infancy, there is evidence that it has achieved positive outcomes. Over the past 2.5 years, the number of clients served, referrals provided, and assessments conducted suggest that the easy access to services provided by the Centre facilitates client uptake and the use of a variety of services. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that clients find the seamless delivery of services under one roof to be useful and that they return to the Centre when they need to search for new information or are looking for additional referrals. Centre staff and partners are also pleased with the efficiency of having a centralized basic needs assessment that can serve as the basis for multiple referrals, and report a greater understanding of client needs, gaps in services, and opportunities for improved service delivery.

The success of the program is to a large extent attributable to the creative use of the Centre to not only provide in-house services, but to also allow partners to provide services and assessments in a single location. For example, the use of Centre space by the three local school boards results in children and youth receiving full school assessments and in parents receiving assistance with school registration and orientation, resulting in a smooth transition to education. The co-location of services also makes it easier for clients to access services (whether funded by the federal or provincial governments), allows improved information-sharing among service providers, and provides a known location to which clients can return when new issues or questions arise. The single database used to track clients and the services

they are utilizing further facilitates this coordination of services and clients' access to services. Relatedly, the fact that the Centre is co-funded by the federal and provincial governments means that a broad range of clients can be served.

The success of the Newcomer Welcome Centre is also attributable to the strong partnerships that have been formed among the service providers involved, allowing cooperation and improved referrals. These partnerships are built on a strong foundation formed during the initial consultations and discussions in the early stages of planning, so that there is joint buy-in and a sense of ownership of the Centre model. The partners also conducted extensive research prior to launching the Centre, learning from the experiences of those who had established somewhat similar programs in other locations. The partnership is strengthened through on-going meetings with Centre partners, community settlement advisors and a recently formed Regional Advisory Committee.

In terms of transferability, a critical feature of the Centre that would be important to replicate is the common basic needs assessment, and booking of appointments with a variety of partner services within the same location. The co-funding of the Centre by the federal and provincial governments, and the provision of federal and provincial services within the same location, is also extremely useful, allowing a variety of clients to be served and services to be provided. The link with the school boards and availability of orientation to the Saskatchewan education system and school assessments is extremely beneficial and is a feature that would be valuable to replicate. Also critical is the ability to provide a variety of referrals to other services and resources in the community, requiring knowledgeable staff with a wide array of connections in the community.

### **Interviewees:**

- Darcy Dietrich, RODS Executive Director
- Gratta Nimbeshaho, Newcomer Welcome Centre Manager

### **Supporting documentation**

- Regina Open Door Society 2010-2011 Annual Report
- Excerpts from CIC Proposal
- Excerpts from Saskatchewan Ministry of Advance Education Employment and Immigration Proposal
- Regina Open Door Society Organizational Chart, 2011
- Newcomer Welcome Centre Launch – Executive Director Speaking Notes

## North Bay Newcomer Employer' Council

North Bay and District Multicultural Association

North Bay, Ontario

<http://www.northbayimmigration.ca/Employers/Pages/default.aspx>

Category: Building Relationships with Employers

### Overview

The North Bay Newcomer Network Employers' Council (NNN Employers' Council) brings together North Bay and area employers and other partners to develop strategies for the recruitment, retention, and integration of immigrants into the local work force. The plan to develop an employers' council began in 2009 when four members of the North Bay Newcomer Network attended the ALLIES conference in Vancouver, which was focused on attracting and integrating skilled immigrants into the local labour market. One of the topics discussed at this meeting was how to establish and utilize an employers' council.

Given the demographics of North Bay, and the current and anticipated future labour shortages in the area, a council that developed employer-driven strategies to improve immigrant recruitment and retention was seen as a useful asset for the region. This was confirmed through interviews with four major employers in the region in early 2010, and an initial Employers' Breakfast was organized to explore the viability of the plan more broadly. This meeting, held in March 2010, attracted approximately 60 attendees, and given the level of interest and enthusiasm, it was decided to sunset the North Bay Newcomer Network Employment Committee, which primarily comprised service-provider organizations, and reconstitute as an employers' council. In order to develop plans for activities in which the Council could engage and to learn from employment councils elsewhere, visits were then made to WRIEN, TRIEC, and LMIEC.

The first meeting of the NNN Employers' Council occurred in April 2010, with subsequent meetings occurring once per month in the first year and now approximately 10 meetings per year. In addition to 10 employers who represent their sectors, partners in the NNN Employers' Council include the City of North Bay - Economic Development, the North Bay and District Multicultural Centre, Yes!Employment Services, the Labour Market Group, and the North Bay District Chamber of Commerce.

Though it has only been in place for two years, the NNN Employers' Council has engaged in a wide variety of activities. Its first product was an Employers' Guide, launched in March 2011 and designed to provide basic information to employers on the advantages of hiring internationally trained individuals, and how to attract, recruit, and retain immigrants within one's company. Other activities include regular workshops with invited speakers and moderated panels; piloting of a Workplace Communication in Canada program; activities to promote the effectiveness of the Connector Program; a proposal to develop an HR Services Centre to meet the needs of small and medium-sized employers; and development of diversity training for employers. In the planning stages are an employment preparation

program that culminates in a Certificate of Recognition indicating to local employers that an individual is job ready; and a mentoring program.

There are not a lot of costs associated with the running of the Council itself. The coordinator of the Local Immigration Partnership (funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada) devotes approximately 50% of her time to the NNN Employment Council. She is assisted by two interns funded by FedNor and the Northern Ontario Heritage fund. FedNor also paid for production of the Employer Guides, and additional support for council activities has come from ALLIES.

### **Outcomes, key contributing factors, and transferability**

Although the NNN Employers' Council is a relatively recent initiative, positive outcomes are already evident. These include, importantly, employers' increased knowledge of a variety of tools for recruitment of immigrant workers, and successful recruitment of skilled immigrants to work in North Bay. In addition, it is reported that employers are now more aware of diversity issues and are seeking additional information in this area, and that they are more aware of the supports and services available through the North Bay and District Multicultural Centre so that more referrals to the Centre are occurring for new employees and their families. An additional outcome is that there are now more links and collaboration among small employers.

The success of the council is attributable in the first part to the interest and engagement of employers, and the support provided by the North Bay and District Multicultural Centre. The support of the City and the Chamber of Commerce are also extremely important contributors to the council's success, adding credibility and increasing the probability of employer engagement. The ability of the LIP Coordinator to establish and maintain partnerships, and to instill enthusiasm in those involved, are also essential factors in promoting success. A huge benefit for the council has also been the ability to obtain interns to support the council activities.

The council has also been successful because it developed a vision with all partners involved, thus promoting full buy-in. A process that is now being used to maintain momentum is the focus groups and surveys conducted on a regular basis in order to solicit new ideas and strategies.

In terms of transferability, a council of this type is most likely to be useful for smaller, more remote locations that are experiencing declines in their workforce and are looking for strategies for renewal. Areas that are closer to big cities might also be able to borrow some of the strategies being used by the NNN Employers' Council if their aim is to attract and retain newcomers. Key features that would be important to replicate include the participation and leadership of employers, and participation of both the City and the Chamber of Commerce. In order to be successful, it would be important to also have the support of a settlement agency with a strong reputation in the community, and a coordinator who has the skills necessary to build and support partnerships, to manage stakeholders, and to keep players energized and engaged.

**Interviewees:**

- Don Curry, Executive Director, North Bay and District Multicultural Association
- Laura-Jane Coté, North Bay Local Immigration Partnership Coordinator

**Supporting documentation:**

- NNN Employers' Council FAQs
- NNN Employers' Council Terms of Reference, Revised April 2011
- Minutes of the May 3, 2011 NNN Employers' Council meeting
- NNN Employers' Council Gap Analysis Chart
- Membership of NNN Employers' Council
- Employers' Breakfast Feedback Summary, March 2010
- Summary of Employer Interviews, February 2010
- Employers' Guide produced by the NNN Employers' Council

## Regional Programming in Manitoba

Manitoba Immigration and Multiculturalism

Winnipeg, Manitoba

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/immigration/about.html>

Category: Delivery of Settlement Services to Smaller and More Isolated Cities and Towns, and to Rural Regions

### Overview

Since the early 2000s, Manitoba has experienced markedly increased inflows of immigrants through the Provincial Nominee Program, with smaller centres keen to recruit new immigrants in order to meet labour needs. Smaller centres may experience challenges, however, in providing services to immigrants due to issues of scale, resources, and expertise. As a result, in addition to developing strategies for attracting immigrants to smaller centres, it became clear that it was important to establish the capacity of regions to meet the needs of newcomers, particularly in relation to settlement services and adult language training (English as an additional language –EAL) . Communities also needed to be ready to meet the needs of newcomers in areas such as housing, education, and health services.

Municipalities, Community Futures, and Chambers of Commerce played leadership roles in mobilizing communities and ensuring that they were ready to welcome and integrate newcomers. Depending on the number of immigrants arriving in a new community, in some cases it was possible to establish new service-provider organizations in communities outside of Winnipeg, funded through Manitoba Immigration and Multiculturalism. New strategies for delivering services were also developed. For example, in order to provide services to smaller communities, language instructors and some settlement workers travel among sites, rather than being assigned to a single site, and community volunteers are used for some language programs. As well, EAL courses are offered online. Of note, the contribution of provincial funding to regionalization supports has provided some flexibility in who can utilize these services and receive settlement assistance, including individuals who are Canadian citizens.

In order to support these efforts, Manitoba Immigration and Multiculturalism has developed a number of guides for communities, including a guide for developing immigrant settlement services, and a guide for developing English as an Additional Language services, both focusing on building capacity and engaging stakeholders. The department's program officers play an important role in providing support to emerging settlement communities, providing coordination and outreach, as well as connections to other provincial departments (e.g., Manitoba Agriculture, Food, and Rural Initiatives Department) and professional development. Representatives of the regions also meet regularly to share information.

### Outcomes, key contributing factors, and transferability

Given that the majority of permanent residents settling in centres in Manitoba outside of Winnipeg have entered Canada through the provincial nominee program, the 2009 evaluation of this program is useful for determining whether the supports that the province has put into place to promote regionalization

have been successful. Overall, the report indicates that there are high levels of satisfaction with the type, nature, and quality of services available, with these positive assessments relatively uniform across the province. Other evidence of the success of services to support the regionalization of immigrants in Manitoba include good uptake of services in smaller centres, and retention rates as high as 85% throughout the province.

A key factor contributing to the success of regional programming in Manitoba is the support provided by the Manitoba government and its ability to work closely with new destination communities to ensure that they are ready to receive newcomers. Success is also attributable to communities planning ahead so that they are well prepared for the arrival of newcomers, positive and engaged stakeholders, and efforts to increase service capacity prior to the arrival of large numbers of newcomers. A final contributing factor is the networking established among regions who communicate regularly through monthly meetings and teleconferences, thus facilitating the sharing of information and ability to learn from others' experiences.

Transferability of the Manitoba model would depend to a large extent on employers and communities seeking to attract newcomers to fill labour needs. This is essential in order to have jobs available for immigrants upon their arrival, and so that employers and those involved in economic development will take a leadership role in preparing their communities. It is also important to have some infrastructure available within a community on which to build settlement supports, and community buy-in so that newcomers are seen as a desired asset, rather than a threat.

**Interviewees:**

- Margot Morrish, Director, Strategic Policy and Program Support
- Liz Robinson, Director, Integration Services

**Supporting documentation:**

- Manitoba Guide – Settlement
- Manitoba Guide – English as an Additional Language
- Manitoba Guide – Attracting Immigrants
- Manitoba Evaluation of the Provincial Nominee Program, 2009

## Settlement Workers in Schools

Cross Cultural Learner Centre

London, Ontario

<http://www.lcclc.org/swis.html>

Category: Transitioning Immigrants to General Community Service Organizations

### Overview

The goal of the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program is to provide support to newcomer families in the community. Schools are used as a point of contact to reach newcomer families and to situate settlement workers in the communities in which newcomers live. The London SWIS program was launched in 2010 in response to awareness of increased need for settlement support by newcomers in London. Rather than being delivered by a single agency, in London the SWIS program is a collaboration among 3 agencies – London Cross Cultural Learner Centre, LUSO Community Services, and South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre – each of which serves a specific area of the city, as well as two regional school boards. Representatives of the partners and of Citizenship and Immigration Canada serve on a steering committee that meets 3-4 times a year to discuss issues that have arisen and to plan new services. In its first year the steering committee also developed an operational guide, which is reviewed each year. In addition to the steering committee, the SWIS supervisors of each agency and representatives of the school board meet monthly to discuss promising practices, and new ideas and strategies. Thus, the SWIS-London program is built on a strong partnership and collaboration among the London agencies and school boards.

SWIS workers are often the first point of contact with the London community for newcomer families. They provide information and settlement services to families within schools, and referrals to school and community resources. Of importance, they work to increase newcomers' understanding of the Canadian education system and connections with their children's school. For example, they may facilitate parent-teacher interviews and ensure that students are receiving the supports they require within the school. They may also offer workshops at schools on issues such as nutrition and parenting, which attract both newcomers and established members of the community, thus not only providing information, but allowing newcomers to connect with members of the host community. In this way, SWIS workers promote the civic and community engagement of newcomers. SWIS workers also organize school-based events for newcomer children and youth in collaboration with school staff, such as ambassador clubs and intercultural conversation clubs, providing support to these newcomers as they are integrating into the school system.

The Cross Cultural Learner Centre SWIS team provides full time services to two high schools in London, and provides part time or itinerant services to 16 elementary schools in the area. Staff include 1 SWIS supervisor and 8 SWIS workers. In 2010-2011, close to 3000 clients were served. The SWIS program is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, but the school boards also provide in-kind support and resources.

## **Outcomes, key contributing factors, and transferability**

Though a formal assessment of the SWIS-London program has not yet been conducted, it is clear that it has been successful in providing information and settlement support to newcomers who might not otherwise gain access to these services, and in promoting the civic and community engagement of newcomers. In addition to receiving settlement services at schools, through the SWIS program newcomers have become more aware of the service-provider organizations in the community and services available to them through these agencies. The engagement of parents, particularly mothers, has been high, with events well attended and evaluations of these events very positive. Newcomer parents and youth have become willing volunteers in the community and in their schools. School staff are generally very pleased with the ability of the SWIS workers to provide a bridge between newcomers and the school system, and to facilitate the smooth transition for newcomer children and youth. Additional evidence of the success of the program is the increasing number of new clients who are using the service, and the number of repeat clients who seek out the SWIS workers to obtain new information and supports.

The success of the program is facilitated by the strong partnership between the 3 agencies and 2 school boards who are part of the SWIS-London program and work cooperatively to ensure its success. By sharing information and working together to launch new activities and events, efficiencies are achieved. The use of schools as a mechanism for reaching out to parents is also a major factor contributing to the program's success, allowing delivery of settlement services in the community, rather than requiring that newcomers find and access agencies.

The success of the SWIS-London program is also attributable to the strength of the participating agencies and their staff. Collaboration among the partnering agencies has allowed new ideas to be tested and shared, contributing to continual improvement and growth. In order to be successful, SWIS workers must have support from their agency, and must be trained so that they are knowledgeable about the full range of services available in the community so that they can make appropriate referrals. Partnerships with other community services are also essential to facilitate smooth and timely referrals of clients.

In terms of transferability, a critical feature of the London model that would be important to replicate is the strong partnership among agencies and school boards so that they are working in concert to meet the needs of newcomers. The program would simply not be viable if the school boards were not supportive and willing to house and collaborate with the SWIS workers. In addition, the partnership and sharing of information among the participating agencies contributes significantly to its effectiveness. Thus, mutual commitment and trust are essential ingredients. In order to transfer the program, it is also essential that staff are knowledgeable and well-trained so that they can answer questions, provide immediate supports to newcomers, and make appropriate referrals to other services in the community.

### **Interviewees:**

- Mahin Ghasemiyani, Supervisor, Cross Cultural Learner Centre SWIS Program

**Supporting documentation:**

- Statistical Reports from the CCLC SWIS Program
- SWIS – London Brochure
- CCLC SWIS Monthly Activity Reports

## Southern Alberta Services for Rural Communities

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

Calgary, Alberta

[http://www.ccis-calgary.ab.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=121&Itemid=125](http://www.ccis-calgary.ab.ca/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=121&Itemid=125)

Category: Delivery of Settlement Services to Smaller and More Isolated Cities and Towns, and to Rural Regions

### Overview

The Southern Alberta Settlement Services for Rural Communities project - originally called the Foothills Community Immigrant Services project (FCIS) - offers settlement and integration services throughout the Municipal District of Foothills and Southern Alberta. The project operates under the umbrella of the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) with FCIS offices in High River and Okotoks. Smaller centres are served by means of outreach and itinerant services.

The Services for Rural Communities project was initiated by CCIS in 2007 in collaboration with residents of High River, Alberta, and Cargill Foods, a major local employer. The impetus for the project came from a serious labour shortfall and a corresponding need by High River to expand the local workforce through immigration and temporary foreign workers. At the time, High River and the surrounding region saw an emerging need to attract, receive and integrate newcomers. To respond to this situation, a mapping exercise was conducted to forecast newcomer settlement needs and to analyze the community's assets and capacity to promote integration. This provided the impetus for a local strategy aimed at boosting receptive capacity and making High River a more attractive destination for newcomers wishing to settle and raise families.

The planning process was conducted by a community committee composed of representatives from the local education and health sectors, community service providers, the library, the municipality, CCIS, Cargill and the RCMP. (Fundors were included in all aspects of the process.) The reliance on local expertise ensured the project's legitimacy – a key goal - and helped develop local leadership capacity around matters of immigration and diversity. The aim was to build on local strengths and networks while avoiding duplication of existing initiatives. The process concentrated on public education, enlisting local groups and networks, recruiting volunteers and fostering discussion and engagement through cultural and social events. Among the community committee's main recommendations was the creation of CCIS office in High River offering immigrant and community development services. This led to the hiring of a full-time coordinator followed, soon after, by the addition of a part-time assistant. All staff are local residents with the exception of the program Manager.

Currently, the project provides a broad range of services and supports to immigrants, refugees and the receiving communities. Services include counseling, orientation services, citizenship preparation, health services, outreach, and community integration support. The project also employs the Settlement Workers in Schools program (SWIS) to help schools deal with integration matters, linking immigrant

families with schools and encouraging community connections. Other supports take the form of a volunteer matching program, entitled the Connections Program (originally the HOST program), to help newcomers with English and to foster community links; and the project operates an intercultural trainers network that promotes cross cultural competency in communities across Southern Alberta. Financial support is drawn from multiple sources: mainly CIC, with some support from FCSS, United Way and Alberta Human Services.

Since its inception in 2007, the original project has expanded, utilizing the same community development model that proved successful in High River. In 2009, the FCIS office significantly extended its reach through a 'train the trainer' program that equipped 14 representatives from across Southern Alberta to act as diversity leaders in their communities and to facilitate partnerships among service providers to help meet newcomer needs. As well, in 2010, the Foothills community engagement process was replicated in Okotoks, leading to the establishment of a second Foothills Community Immigrant Services office. The Settlement Worker in Schools Program was integrated into the project in 2009/10. It has one and a half full-time staff and supports partnerships with both the public and Catholic school divisions. As a result of this work, newcomer settlement outreach extends to all schools in the Foothills Municipality as well as to many smaller centres throughout southern Alberta.

### **Outcomes, key contributing factors, evidence and transferability**

The principal outcome of the Southern Alberta Settlement Services for Rural Communities project has been an increase in the capacity of southern Alberta communities to integrate new arrivals and to mobilize support from local, mainstream organizations. This represents an impressive achievement given the limited resources available to the project for core organizational activities related to community development, including strategic planning and local engagement. By way of contrast, the Local Immigration Partnership program in Ontario was initiated by means of contribution agreements that enabled as many as three full-time employees along with funding for research and planning.

Insofar as newcomers are concerned, the Settlement Services for Rural Communities project has been instrumental in augmenting the volume and range of services available to immigrants, refugees and temporary workers in the Foothills district and Okotoks. Arguably more important, however, has been the project's positive impact on the receptive capacity of the region. This capacity is embodied in local advisory and planning committees that meet regularly to promote integration and in a network of local 'trainers' or champions that address diversity issues in communities that do not have an FCIS office. The outreach capability was achieved by relying on the SWIS Program as well as the creation of a Southern Alberta Intercultural Trainers Network (SAITN) aimed at developing leadership and providing diversity learning tools and other resources to small communities in southern Alberta. The diversity trainers help school boards, libraries, and businesses by providing advice and helping to make connections to available resources. A Diversity Symposium was held in rural southern Alberta in September 2011 to further educate and provide networking links within and across communities.

Four main factors have contributed to the project's success: (i) Widespread appreciation across southern Alberta that the demands of the labour market require an enhanced capacity, at the local level, to integrate new arrivals; (ii) A decision by CCIS to adopt a community development approach. This decision led to the formation of local committees with a broad mandate to conduct needs assessments and to devise local integration plans. The reliance on local volunteers demonstrated support for local values and local residents and helped legitimize planning outcomes. The formation of solid partnerships, like the one with Cargill, also contributed to legitimacy and effectiveness; (iii) The knowledge, dedication and hard work of CCIS staff, in particular, the project coordinator. Dedication and hard work earned respect while knowledge allowed staff to access and assemble government programs; and (iv) The development of trust among project staff, members of local advisory committees and newcomer populations. Trust allowed project staff to reach out to both mainstream organizations and newcomers and to promote collaborative relations that enhanced planning, integration and newcomer retention.

Claims regarding the project's success are supported by a series of soft evaluations and reviews conducted by the project team and by a consultant hired by the project. The assessments are primarily of a qualitative nature, focusing on inputs, outputs, reports by committee members and staff, and feedback from participants and service recipients. In addition to providing summative information about the project and about particular interventions, the evaluations have also served a formative purpose, helping participants to set future project directions.

Overall, the evaluations suggest that the project has achieved considerable local prominence and has led to the formation of robust partnerships. Respondents cited the strength of the relationships that had been forged and the trust that developed with immigrants and local partners. Especially noteworthy are reports by service providers indicating that before the project, they experienced difficulty reaching out and accessing immigrant populations and were at a loss as to where to get information. This was rectified by the opening of the Foothills project office. According to staff and committee members, the office and the public education activities that were undertaken created a "snowball effect", generating extensive requests for information about services and the impact of immigrant populations on local businesses and groups. The evaluations also point to examples of adaptations in local social and cultural events designed to increase participation by immigrants. The final evidence of success comes from the fact that the project has consistently exceeded the activity commitments required by funders.

On the seminal matter of whether the initiative constitutes a promising practice and is the best source of ideas for enhancing community receptivity, the 'analytic playing field' has been considerably enlarged by the presence of the Ontario LIPs which are similarly engaged in local development with somewhat similar mandates, but with far more resources. In this context, what is particularly interesting about the Southern Alberta Settlement Services for Rural Communities project is how lean it is. This merits closer examination insofar as transferability is concerned, extending the potential array of communities that might benefit from a local development approach. The communities involved are also generally smaller which may result in ideas for how smaller centres might enhance their receptivity, building primarily on local capacities. The use of a 'train the trainer' model to extend outreach services to mainstream rural organizations may also be transferable as an adjunct service in circumstances similar to those prevailing

in southern Alberta. Finally, the leveraging *by an immigrant service provider organization* (SPOs) of local resources and local expertise to map community assets and devise better integration plans has implications for an enhanced 'spatial role' for SPOs in rural regions.

### **Interviewees:**

- Diane Fisher Manager Community Development & Integration Services Division of the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

### **Supporting documentation:**

- Goals
- Goals indicators
- Southern Alberta Settlement Services for Rural Communities
- Southern Alberta Settlement Services for Rural Communities1
- FCIS brochure
- Print Short High River Report
- Okotoks Community Settlement Needs Assessment Report Final
- FCIS Evaluation Report March 31\_ Final
- Foothills Community Immigrant Services Report 2010
- Foothills Community Immigrant Services Project Evaluation April 4 Final
- Foothills Community Immigrant Services Report
- DOC
- DOC 2011
- High River Advisory Meeting Minutes June 21 2011
- Okotoks Advisory Minutes September 2011
- Southern Alberta Rural Intercultural Learning Network – Report Dec 2011
- Evaluation Report Final Draft Oct 25
- Inclusion Project Charter
- Advanced Education Workshop proof
- CCIS letter of endorsement June 1 2009
- FCIS 09
- Letter of support FCIS
- Letter of support for FCIS
- Letter to Diane Fisher – diversity leader of the diversity team
- Lynn Campbell letter of support
- SWIS letter
- May 10 residential tenancy act
- March 16 Immigration II
- March 19 Landlord and Tenant Rights and Immigration Law
- October 22 Open work permit and PR
- Immigrant sponsorship and visitor visa

## Welcome Centres, Immigrant Services

York Region, Ontario

[http://www.welcomecentre.ca/york/index\\_e.html](http://www.welcomecentre.ca/york/index_e.html)

Category: Integrated Needs Assessment and one Stop Shop

### Overview

The Welcome Centres in York Region serve as coordinated one-stop shops for assessing the needs of immigrants in the region and providing services to meet these needs, all under one roof in convenient locations throughout the region. There are currently five Welcome Centres in the York system, located in Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Newmarket, Markham South, and Markham North, plus a mobile unit providing services to outreach locations. Recently Durham Region has opened two additional Welcome Centre sites. The Centres are strategically located across the region, situated based on population density and accessible transportation.

The idea of establishing Welcome Centres in York Region originated in 2005 at the regional Inclusivity Summit of the York Region Human Services Planning Coalition. As part of the action plan coming out of this summit, a working group involving 26 agencies was established to explore the concept of Welcome/Resource Centres and their utility for York Region. Considerable background research was conducted by this working group over a two-year period, including a scan of provincial models, key informant consultations regarding Canadian welcome centres of the 1970s, consultations with selected settlement service agencies and coalitions across the province in order to learn from their experiences, and focus groups and key informant interviews in the local community. The conclusion was that Welcome Centres would be an asset for York Region, increasing the standard and environment for serving newcomers, and efficiently connecting immigrants to services that would promote their integration into the larger community.

The model and plan was endorsed by Regional Council, and five lead agencies were charged to move the Welcome Centres model forward. COSTI Immigrant Services, Catholic Community Services of York Region, Centre for Information and Community Services, Job Skills, and Social Enterprise for Canada worked to advance the plan, structured a formal memorandum of agreement, and began the process of establishing the Centres. The first Centre was launched in Vaughan in 2007, with the four other Centres opening their doors in 2010. The five lead organizations are jointly responsible for management, infrastructure, and marketing, and jointly submit applications for funding, rather than operating individually. Each lead agency serves as the primary manager for one Centre (with primary responsibility for upkeep, leasing space, management of common resources, and coordination of services), and each specializes in one core service area, delivering that service to all Centres. The five Welcome Centres house a range of services that combined represent a budget of approximately \$23 million per year. Staff from each partner agency work in more than one centre, with approximately 20-25 staff members per centre. It is anticipated that once all five centres and the mobile unit have been in operation for several years, they will jointly serve approximately 15,000 clients per year.

The primary funder of the Welcome Centres is Citizenship and Immigration Canada, but the Centres also receive funding from a number of other sources, including the the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, United Way, and York Region. The blended funding means that there is more flexibility in how services can be delivered and in the clients that can be served.

Several key concepts characterize the York Welcome Centre model. First, the Centres provide seamless delivery of services, with core immigrant services provided by the lead agencies at all Centres including settlement and integration services; language training; accreditation and qualifications assistance; youth, seniors, and women supports; and employment support. In addition, the Centres promote tenancy by other agencies who provide other needed and specialized secondary services such as legal services, mental health services, and health and family services, with these secondary services not necessarily common across the Centres. Other services are offered on occasion, depending on the community's need (e.g., immunization clinic). Irrespective of service, however, the Centres present a single brand and clients access services in a seamless manner. Indeed, to promote consistency across the Centres, all five centres have a single brand, layout, and similar primary staffing. Staff are encouraged to identify primarily as members of the Welcome Centres, and only secondarily as members of a particular agency.

Second, the Centres follow a coordinated case management system with a case manager assigned to each client and a database that is used for sharing information so that clients are not required to “tell their story” more than once. The coordinated case management system ensures that clients receive the services they need in a timely and efficient manner. The assignment of “one trusted person” who helps clients to navigate through the Welcome Centre network promotes efficient and coordinated use of services. This person acts as a personal point of contact and guide for the client irrespective of services utilized, and assists the client in accessing and coordinating services.

### **Outcomes, key contributing factors and transferability**

The Vaughan Welcome Centre has undergone two evaluations, one in 2009 and the other in early 2011. Both point to the success of the Centre in serving clients' needs and promoting access to services. At both points in time, clients reported high levels of satisfaction with the Centre and indicated that it met most or all of their needs. Clients also reported that the Centre was easy to get to; that the co-location of services facilitated their use; and that they were able to receive the services they needed, and have questions and issues addressed, in a timely manner. Staff also reported many benefits of the Centre model for both themselves and for clients, including rapid consultation, referral, and follow-up with other staff; and facilitation of teamwork through face to face interactions with other staff.

Anecdotally, other outcomes of the Welcome Centre model include the improved ability to move quickly to meet new needs of clients, and new models of care based on exposure to and blending of the expertise of multiple agencies. In addition, because of their welcome atmosphere and facilities, the Centres have become community centres for the larger community, promoting community connections for newcomers.

Several features of the Welcome Centre model contribute to its success. The success of the model is to a large extent attributable to the strong leadership and management skills shown by the five lead agencies, and their willingness to collaborate to a greater extent than is usually the case. Also key is the support provided by the Region and by Citizenship and Immigration Canada's regional office, who advocated for the Centres early on, and feel ownership for the collaborative model. The continuing success of the Welcome Centres is attributable to the co-location of a variety of services under one roof, the placement of the Centres in convenient locations for the client base, the sharing of resources within and across Centres, the personalized customer service provided through the assignment of "one trusted person," and the teamwork across agency staff.

Transferability of the model would depend on a desire for collaboration among agencies in an area, who see the benefit of working together to provide coordinated delivery of services to clients. This requires that there not be too many silos in existence, no one agency feel ownership for immigration services in the area, and agencies not feel that they are competing for resources. Transferability would also depend on the community being relatively welcoming of newcomers so that there is not excessive resentment of the resources being obviously targeted at newcomers. Once these favorable conditions are in place, critical features of the Welcome Centre model that would need to be replicated include lead agencies willing to take on the management of a centre, a facility to house multiple services in an easily accessible location, the coordinated case management system with a "trusted person" assigned to clients and an integrated database, and the common branding of the Centre agencies to promote teamwork and seamless delivery of services.

The York Region Welcome Centre model seems best suited to communities with large numbers of newcomers, and multiple agencies serving immigrants. Such conditions most easily justify the establishment of a centre that houses multiple services and staff serving newcomers, and assigns a "trusted person" to help an individual navigate through the network of available services. It would be difficult (and likely unnecessary) to scale down this model to an area with few immigrants and a single immigrant-serving agency.

**Interviewees:**

- Patricia Cousins, CEO of Social Enterprise for Canada

**Supporting documentation:**

- Update of the Inclusivity Action Plan and Support for the Welcome Resource Centre, Regional Municipality of York, February 2007
- Key Concepts of York Region Welcome Centres, nd
- PPT of Welcome Centre for Immigrant Services Presentation, nd
- Implementation Evaluation Report, March 2011
- Interim Evaluation Report, December 2009

## WelcomeBC Cross-Ministry Integration Program

Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation British Columbia

<http://www.gov.bc.ca/jti/>

Category: Transitioning Immigrants to General Community Service Organizations (Note: While the category did not align perfectly, the general notion of transitioning to mainstream services held.)

### Overview

The WelcomeBC Cross-Ministry program was developed after an increase in the federal settlement funding transfer to British Columbia created an opportunity for the Province to extend funding (under prescribed circumstances) to ministries *other* than the ministry responsible for immigrant integration. The intent of the program was to collaborate with other ministries to improve mainstream government services to new immigrants. While there were some initial hurdles, e.g. other ministries' lack of understanding of eligibility requirements, the Program created opportunities to raise awareness, transfer knowledge, and build capacity of all ministries to better meet the settlement and integration needs of new immigrant clients in BC.

The overall goal of the WelcomeBC Cross-Ministry program is to improve service delivery across government (provincial) by helping ministries to adapt their programs to better serve newcomers and promote their integration. Subsidiary goals include increasing awareness and understanding within other ministries of the specific settlement and integration needs of new immigrants; the formation of networks and robust links with other provincial services; the leveraging of resources and programs, including assistance in identifying and formulating approaches to address service gaps; and the development of a durable consultative, communications and research infrastructure.

The goals of the program are reflected in the nature and scope of the projects funded under the initiative. The projects, by design, involved experimentation, capacity building and knowledge generation. The institutional advantages – a deeper understanding of the issues that needed to be addressed and the development of a cross-government machinery for pursuing the discussions related to these issues – were not apparent at the outset of the program but grew in importance as the program matured and Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation (JTI) staff acquired hands-on experience with the program.

The primary instrument that is used by JTI to manage the program and guide partnering ministries is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOUs spell out WelcomeBC's goals, strategies and targets and commit the signatory ministries to serve only federally eligible clients and to provide federally eligible services. The MOUs also set out monitoring and evaluation commitments to ensure learning and accountability and they contain the budgetary allocations. To date (as of 2011/2012), thirteen separate projects of varying size have been undertaken with other ministries based on MOUs. These projects have not been without challenges. In particular, difficulties were encountered in ensuring only federally eligible clients were served; reporting burdens, in some cases, were considered onerous; and it

has been challenging for the ministries concerned and for WelcomeBC to straddle the line between capacity building and introducing new services that cannot be sustained in the long run.

Financially, the program operates at the discretion of the ministry and no specific funds are budgeted annually. This is possible because expenditures, to date, have been modest. The table below details the ministries that have received support along with the amounts involved.

BC Ministry Partners’ Funding Expended (millions of dollars) – Completed (most MOUs were 3 years)

Advanced Education – ESL Settlement Assistance Program	\$4.3 <sup>1</sup>
Attorney General – Public Legal Education and Information for Immigrants	\$3.0
Education – Immigrant Parents as Literacy Supporter (iPALS)	\$0.6 <sup>1</sup>
Education – UBC Learning Exchange	\$0.3
Housing and Social Development – Immigrant Employment Supports	\$2.7
Public Safety and Solicitor General – Enhanced Immigrant Victim Supports	<u>\$1.2</u>
<b>PARTNERSHIPS TOTAL</b>	<b>\$12.1</b>

<sup>1</sup>After 3 year pilot, became part of regular WelcomeBC programming and JTI assumed administration of program

BC Ministry Partners’ Funding (millions of dollars) – New or Ongoing

Justice - Public Legal Education and Information (2011-2014)	\$2.3
Children & Family Development - Refugee Trauma Training Project (2009-2012)	\$0.6
Education – Urban Libraries Settlement Partnership (2011-2014)	<u>\$1.5</u>
<b>PARTNERSHIPS TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4.4</b>

An example of the program in operation can be seen in the Refugee Trauma Support project which was developed to better meet the trauma needs of newly arrived refugee children and youth through the redeployment and adaptation of existing mental health services. Since 2008, the project, which provides trauma counseling training (specifically for refugees) for Ministry of Children and Family Development staff along with health services staff, has expanded from the Vancouver-Burnaby area to include Surrey. In this sense, the Cross-Ministry Program has produced a sustainable improvement in services (enabling staff to better address their responsibilities), consistent with the program’s goals of leveraging support and improving mainstream services to immigrants.

Ministries participating in the program may use the funds they receive to contract with third parties. For example, the Public Legal Education and Information program (which is the subject of a separate case study in this paper) engaged a range of settlement service provider organizations and legal advocacy groups to improve legal education and the delivery of legal services to newcomers.

**Outcomes, key contributing factors, evidence and transferability**

As noted in the section above, individual cross-ministry projects have been evaluated independently. The case studies provide an example of one such evaluation in connection with the PLEI for Immigrants project, which is regarded as a promising practice. To the extent that British Columbia is able to

replicate this success (and others) and pick ‘winning projects’ that produce durable improvements in the delivery of mainstream services for immigrants, the Cross-Ministry Program can, obviously, be associated with positive returns on investment. Moreover, Ministry staff have indicated that they would like to be more strategic in the development of new partnerships. The current slate of projects is, largely, reactive, reflecting requests that originated with other ministries. JTI staff were hoping to shift the program over to focus on priorities identified through the new Settlement and Integration Program, including the WelcomeBC Guided Pathways Model and the Vulnerable Immigrant Populations Program, as well as through more formalized cross-ministry policy and program tables. This shift would have further enhanced the benefits of the program. (Note: The federal government’s decision to repatriate the settlement program within a two year transition period for BC when the current agreement expires will likely terminate many, if not most, provincial aspirations in the settlement area. It is hoped that good ideas survive.)

In addition to the individual evaluations, the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation has also conducted a review of the program as a whole. The main conclusions of this review regarding the intended and unintended benefits of the Cross-Ministry Program are as follows:

- The Cross-Ministry Program provides ministries with a better understanding of program and policy intersections and how different ministries are implicated in each other’s work.
- The Program has successfully raised awareness among participating ministries of immigrant needs and service gaps. More specifically, the WelcomeBC Program has raised awareness of the role that these ministries play in regard to settlement and the fact that they must adapt their services if they are to meet their own service objectives.
- The Cross-Ministry program has brought an awareness of immigrant and refugee issues to internal policy and program discussions within ministries. This has heightened awareness of immigration at the deputy-minister level and among senior management in other departments.
- The Program has allowed WelcomeBC to exert greater influence across the whole of government, providing staff with opportunities to comment on strategic activities by other ministries.
- The services that were leveraged by the Program were incremental to what ministries were otherwise able to provide.
- The Program serves as an important research tool, revealing the many areas in which progress is needed in order to fully integrate new arrivals and foster a sense of belonging.
- Challenges were reported in respect of burdensome reporting requirements and having to limit services to federally eligible clients.

There do not appear to be impediments to other ministries or other levels of government utilizing the WelcomeBC Cross-Ministry Program model in a variety of circumstances. The model would appear to yield superior results to other collaborative machinery aimed at identifying policy and program intersections – including such measures as the federal requirement that ministries (other than the authoring ministry) be provided with the opportunity to identify the financial and program implications (for their own ministry) of legislative or policy proposals by other departments. A key difference is that

the B.C. model does not assume that the required knowledge to assess intersections already exists: instead, it must be created tacitly (hands-on) and often through working partnerships between ministries. Moreover, building collaboration by working together on shared enterprises builds trust and produces shared strategic platforms for policy and program development.

The same set of arguments also holds for the ability to leverage support. Again, collaboration on projects of mutual interest increases the likelihood that incremental expenditures financed by one ministry will produce a sustained change in the activities of the partnering organization. In this regard, the B.C. experience holds practical lessons for other potential actors in terms of how program investments need to be structured and what demands need to be made of partners for evaluations of the 'experimental' programs.

The fact that program costs for the WelcomeBC Cross-Ministry Program are so modest suggests that similar investments by other departments or other levels of government could play an important and positive role in federal-provincial, federal-municipal, and provincial-municipal efforts to leverage resources and design shared policies and policy frameworks.

#### **Interviewees:**

- Alison Dudley, Director Sector Relations, Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation
- Ben Pollard, Director Performance Management, Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation
- Catherine Poole, Director Policy and Planning, Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation

#### **Supporting documentation:**

- WelcomeBC Cross-Ministry Memoranda of Understanding Projects Review
- Refugee Trauma Project Steering Committee Terms of Reference
- An Evaluation of the Immigrant PLEI Consortium (IPC) Project – February 2011
- 2010-11 Annual Report WelcomeBC Settlement and Integration Services