

**Toward Healthy Welcoming Communities:  
Newcomer Youth and Parents Speak Out**

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## **Acknowledgments**

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## **Preface**

This study was undertaken as a partnership between South London Neighborhood Resource Centre and Western University, Faculty of Education. Our partnership is based on mutual respect as well as combined areas of expertise with a commitment to joint action as advocates for the interests of community members in south London. We are also very aware of the tremendous strengths that local communities, families and individuals possess and take great care to build on those in our work. SLNRC directs a significant portion of its service to the needs of immigrants in South London. The focus of our joint efforts has been on the needs of immigrant adults and youth. Our partnership led to the joint-proposal for the study we describe in this report as well as community-based program development projects on mental health within a course in Cross-Cultural Counselling for Master of Education students during the winter of 2013.

This report is divided into five sections. The first section describes the neighborhood context for the study as well as key themes from the recent published literature on factors that contribute to wellness by newcomers, who arrived within the past 5 years, and immigrants, who were foreign-born but in Canada for more than 5 years, in the areas of home, school and community. In section two we describe the process and results of data collection with newcomer youth. In section three, we describe the process and results of data collection with parents of newcomer youth. The fourth section provides results from a discussion with youth and parents together reflecting priority areas as well as their relative importance. The fifth section is a conclusion with implications for future research and program development.

## **Table of Contents**

Section One: Review of Literature

Section Two: Group Interviews with Youth

Section Three: Group Interviews with Parents

Section Four: Group Interviews with Youth and Parents Together

Section Five: Discussion and Conclusion

References

Appendix

## **Section 1: Review of Literature**

According to the latest national data (Statistics Canada, 2006), 28% of residents in Ontario are foreign-born. In London, 22% of residents are foreign-born. Within the neighborhoods primarily served by our partner agency, South London Neighborhood Resource Centre including Highland, Westminster and White Oaks, the immigrant population is slightly higher than the city's average, at 24%, 24% and 30% respectively. A majority of the immigrant population of London has moved to Canada from Europe (53%), Asia (15%) and the Middle East (10%). However, they were born in Asia (25%), the Middle East (20%), South America (18%), Europe (15%) and Africa (12%). There are rich histories and traditions specific to ethnicity as well as experiences in one's country of birth as well as migration and settlement experiences in a new country. However, there are also some commonalities in perspectives of wellbeing in the areas of home, family and community that are suggested in the recent literature on newcomer youth. We begin this review knowing that there are significant challenges as well as strengths possessed by newcomer and immigrant youth and their families, which we will highlight throughout. We view the "solutions" to these issues as part of a broad-scale community effort where all residents of the community join an effort to make theirs a welcoming place for everyone.

The focus in this review is post-migration contributors and challenges to wellness for youth, from the perspectives of youth, their families and others in their broader communities. We assume that there is diversity within both newcomer and immigrant youth, insofar as some were forced to leave, others chose to leave and many had extremely traumatic experiences before leaving. However, they all left behind familiarity and possessions, relationships and expectations, family and friends. Some left with their immediate families, and many left members behind. In a recent review (Salehi, 2010), it was noted that there was only a modest amount of research on the wellbeing of newcomers and virtually none on the experiences of youth, by youth themselves. Our study is an attempt to identify, based on the experiences of youth in a mid-sized Canadian city, the positive aspects as well as challenging aspects for youth from the perspectives of both the youth and their parents, as well as the solutions that they see to those difficulties.

We reviewed the published psychology and social work literatures from 2010- present on the search topics "newcomer" or "immigrant" and "child(ren)" or "adolescent" or "youth" and finally, on one of: "family", "school" or "community". The literature review is organized into three main sections within which we identify factors associated with wellbeing – broadly defined to include problems, issues, concerns as well as strengths, resiliencies, and successes – in relation to home, school and community.

### **Family Factors Affecting Wellness**

Family includes the people the newcomer and immigrant youth live with as well as those they include as family members who do not live with them, their relationships with those members and the impact of different qualities of the relationship on youth wellbeing. The factors include: family composition, family expectations, parent adjustment, parent-youth relationship and discrimination.

## **Family Composition**

- “Family” is a broad and inclusive term that refers to social networks between immediate and extended as well as important others in the lives of newcomer youth (Enriquez, 2011).
- Siblings play a significant role in the wellbeing of youth and extended kinship relationships are very important at different stages of development (Tingvold, Middelthon, Allen, & Hauff, 2012).
- In particular, the grandparent role can be a very powerful one for youth (Xie & Xia, 2011).
- While composition remains intact following migration, the relationships between members who are separated or reunited as a result are changed (Adserà & Tienda, 2012).
- Separation from family – parents in particular – is very stressful for youth (Suárez-Orozco, Bang, & Kim, 2011).

## **Family Expectations**

- Youth are faced with idealized messages about what it means to be their culture, race as well as host culture and race (Awokoya, 2012).
- The “model minority” stereotype creates high expectations for schooling by parents and family, which comes at the youths expense through high stress (Costigan, Hua, & Su, 2010).
- Expectations of having a family, respectable job and respectable success financially and socially put pressure on newcomer youth (Goldblatt & Rosenblum, 2011).
- Gendered differences in values contribute to different communication patterns and topics between mixed-sex parenting dyads (Meschke & Dettmer, 2012).
- There can be significantly different gender expectations between male and female youths by parents and other family members (Kiang, Supple, Stein, & Gonzalez, 2012).
- Strong family obligations can be a protective factor for newcomer youth (van Geel & Vedder, 2011).
- In some cases, youth are becoming more responsible for family matters than typically expected in traditional culture, but demanded of them in host culture to help parents and other family members (Titzmann, 2012).
- Youth who know their heritage language as well as language spoken in host community helps parents navigate systems as well as preserve youth’s own sense of ethnic identity (Chhuon, 2011).
- Youth who speak two languages can help the family a great deal, but it also created great pressure for them in formal settings, such as doctor visits (Corona et al., 2012).
- Being a translator for parents is quite stressful for youth and challenges the way they view relationship with parents as controlling (Hua & Costigan, 2012).
- New expectations for helping out with family, if different between youth and parents, create stress and potential for conflict as well as poor relations (Leu, Schroth, Obradovic, & Cruz, 2012).
- Often, older children are expected to help raise younger siblings (Hafford, 2010).

- Self-care for youth and youth as caregivers for younger siblings commonplace in many families (Greene, Hynes, & Doyle, 2011).

### **Parent Adjustment**

- Parents drive socialization even within new culture and its influences (Umaña-Taylor, Zeiders, & Updegraff, 2013).
- Parents who found their migration journey more or less difficult had implications for youth wellness in new country (Tucker, Torres-Pereda, Minnis, & Bautista-Arredondo, 2013).
- Resettlement stress and language of host culture affect adjustment as well as perception of prejudice and parent coping (Beiser et al., 2010).
- How long one is in the new country is associated with adjustment by parents to that change and how they consequently parent, had significant effects on youth wellbeing (Martinez, McClure, Eddy, & Wilson, 2011).
- Parents who feel more in control of their circumstances are more able to parent openly and see value in what schools were teaching their children (Rousseau & Jamil, 2010).
- Feelings of control and influence give parents greater parenting confidence (Seegan, Welsh, Plunkett, Merten, & Sands, 2012).
- Social support helps mothers and also promotes positive relationships between youth and mothers in newcomer families (Aroian, Templin, Hough, Ramaswamy, & Katz, 2011).
- Role models in the family who are positive have important and protective effect on youth adjustment (Roosa et al., 2012).
- Parent support and home structure are positively related to youth adjustment (Stansfield, 2012).

### **Parent-Youth Relationship**

- There can be significant intergenerational differences between youth and parents (Wu & Chao, 2011).
- There are four types of acculturation: child more acculturated than parent in host, child less acculturated than parent in host, child more acculturated than parent in traditional culture, child less acculturated than parent in traditional culture (Telzer, 2011).
- Differences between parent and youth in relation to acculturation have an impact on their relationship (Wang, Kim, Anderson, Chen, & Yan, 2012).
- Differences in cultural adjustment between youth and parents as well as sense of alienation by both parties affect their relationships (S. Y. Kim, Chen, Wang, Shen, & Orozco-Lapray, 2013).
- Ethnic identity for youth is associated with ethnic community cohesion and participation as well as family solidarity (Stuart & Ward, 2011).
- Families benefit from finding ways to deal with value differences associated with culture differences as well as generational differences (Hwang, Wood, & Fujimoto, 2010).
- Family involvement in the youths life is associated positively with youth wellbeing (Dawson, Perez, & Suárez-Orozco, 2012).
- Family closeness is a protective measure against peer-related risk behavior for youth

(Bacio, Mays, & Lau, 2013).

- Parent warmth and acceptance as well as monitoring over youth are all influential on youth wellbeing (Chen, Gance-Cleveland, Kopak, Haas, & Gillmore, 2010).
- Youth autonomy is also important for healthy family relationships (Estrada-Martínez, Padilla, Caldwell, & Schulz, 2011).
- Parent-youth communication is very important (M. Kim & Park, 2011).
- Cooperation between youth and parents contributes to sense of security in their relationships (Kuperminc, Wilkins, Jurkovic, & Perilla, 2013).
- Supportive parenting differs from aggressive or excessive parenting (Maldonado-Molina, Reingle, Jennings, & Prado, 2011).
- There is sometimes more frequently excessive or heavy discipline for newcomer youth by parents (Johnson-Motoyama, Dettlaff, & Finno, 2012).

### **Discrimination**

- Discrimination has a powerful effect and is apparent through the way newcomers are treated by mainstream systems (Brenick, Titzmann, Michel, & Silbereisen, 2012).
- Conflicts about traditional values retention between parents and youth are exacerbated by experiences of discrimination in the community (Beiser et al., 2012).
- Families living in lower income neighborhoods, with greater frequency of family poverty have more reliance on children and youth as caregivers (Liu & Anderson, 2012).
- Newcomer youth less likely, even in same neighborhood and family factors as non-newcomers, to engage in violent behavior (MacDonald & Saunders, 2012).

### **School Factors Affecting Wellness**

We defined school factors broadly to include the school climate and those characteristics that have been found to influence social inclusion, academic success as well as school engagement. The factors identified in the literature include: teachers, relationships with peers, parental involvement, personal qualities, socioeconomic class, exclusion-inclusion and specialized supports for newcomers.

#### **Teachers**

- Teachers have a great deal of influence on how well newcomer youth adjust to a new school (Gutierrez, 2011).
- Supportive teachers help newcomer youth a great deal (Potochnick & Perreira, 2010).
- Teacher attitudes about particular ethnic groups influenced those youths' sense of ability to achieve (Brown & Chu, 2012).
- Good relationships with teachers and positive classroom climate facilitate sense of belonging for newcomer students (Chiu, Pong, Mori, & Chow, 2012).
- Culturally-relevant teaching methods are helpful (Lozenski & Smith, 2012).
- Teachers can assist students by teaching in ways that help them translate and adapt to the language of delivery (Cummins, 2012).

- The more skillful a teacher is in adapting content and adjusting delivery leads to better achievement outcomes for youth (Kim, Chang, & Kim, 2011).
- The more challenges youth experienced during immigration were apparent in more difficulties with behavior for newcomer youth according to teachers (Meir, Slone, & Lavi, 2012).
- Activities for language development that are not traditional in the classroom-based are helpful (Rousseau, Armand, Laurin-Lamothe, Gauthier, & Saboundjian, 2012).

### **Relationships with Peers**

- Peer relations with peers who have other ethnicities are positively associated with achievement for newcomer youth (Barrett, Barile, Malm, & Weaver, 2012).
- Peer networks at school are more mono-cultural for newcomer youth than their peer groups out of school, which are more multicultural (Bauer, Loomis, & Akkari, 2013).
- More members of same ethnicity as newcomer youth in the school associated with more experiences of discrimination for those individuals (Brenick, Titzmann, Michel, & Silbereisen, 2012).
- Assisting youth who are new by making connections with youth who have been in the school for a long time is helpful (Dryden-Peterson, 2010).
- Newcomers receive less peer acceptance than non-newcomer peers in schools (Grünigen, Perren, Nägele, & Alsaker, 2010).
- Racially diverse, high SES schools are the best environment for newcomer youth to transition into and achieve within (Okamoto, Herda, & Hartzog, 2013).

### **Parental Involvement**

- Consistent expectations between home and school for achievement are associated with lower stress for newcomer youth (Costigan, Hua, & Su, 2010).
- There is a distancing between expectations and values of newcomer youth and their parents over school matters (Hwang, Wood, & Fujimoto, 2010).
- When parents have immigration as motive for moving the youth do better in school in host country than if parents moved for different reasons (Hagelskamp, Suárez-Orozco, & Hughes, 2010).
- Language differences and missing family members not with them are associated with learning challenges for newcomer youth in school (Herrera-Pazmiño, 2011)
- Family respect has a profound impact on school habits and outcomes for youth (Kiang, Supple, Stein, & Gonzalez, 2012).
- Parental school involvement was associated with more positive adjustment for youth (Motti-Stefanidi, Asendorpf, & Masten, 2012).
- Parents want to help their youth succeed in school but are not sure how to do it (Ixa Plata-Potter & de Guzman, 2012).
- Positive family role models make a big difference for newcomer youth in school adjustment and achievement (Roosa et al., 2012).
- More violence out of school associated with more violence in school among youth (Foster & Brooks-Gunn, 2012).

### **Personal Qualities of Youth**

- Better elementary experiences in host country associated with better secondary school experiences for youth (Baum & Flores, 2011).
- Intrinsic satisfaction with academic achievement associated with self-appraisal of control and ability (Briones & Taberero, 2012).
- Motives to succeed in school include both fear of failure and optimism about future (Calderon, Giffords, & Malekoff, 2012).
- Newcomer youth are resilient through school change (Casanova, 2012).
- Strong ethnic identity is good buffer from discrimination in school (Chhuon, 2011).
- Newcomer girls are more studious than boys (Feliciano, 2012).

### **Socioeconomic Status**

- Newcomer youth are more likely to be either in school or in the workforce than non-newcomer youth who may be out of both (Bachmeier & Bean, 2011).
- “Immigrant paradox” that newcomers with more social disadvantages outperform their non-newcomer, less socially disadvantaged peers in school (Crosnoe & López Turley, 2011).
- Sociocultural context of the school assists newcomers with adjustment (Dalhaug, Oppedal, & Røysamb, 2011)
- Financial barriers prevent some newcomer youth from achieving their best (Gonzales, 2010).
- Language and socioeconomic status for newcomers explain a great deal of variance in achievement (Han, Lee, & Waldfogel, 2012).
- School characteristics such as violence, poverty and segregation are associated with newcomer youth achievement (Suárez-Orozco, Bang, & Onaga, 2010).

### **Exclusion-Inclusion**

- Asking students what makes sense for them from their culture will help schools make changes that fit (Castro-Olivo & Merrell, 2012).
- Sense of belonging and well-being are essential for newcomer youth (Caxaj & Berman, 2010).
- Schools in immigrant communities do better on newcomer retention than schools in non-immigrant communities (Fischer, 2010).
- Schools can create images for success that newcomer youth can use for role models (Jaffe-Walter & Lee, 2011).
- Important for schools to combat exclusion and otherness experienced by newcomer youth (Johansson & Hammarén, 2011).
- In school where discrimination is high, there is lower English learning by youth (Medvedeva, 2010).
- More discrimination at school is associated with more mental health challenges for youth (Oppedal, 2011).

- Social exclusion and isolation have negative impact on youth achievement (Oxman-Martinez et al., 2012).
- Lack of school belonging is increased with perceived discrimination and stress (C. Roche & Kuperminc, 2012).
- School engagement is stronger than community engagement for newcomer youth (Stermac, Elgie, Clarke, & Dunlap, 2012).

### **School Resources for Newcomers**

- School quality is noticed by newcomer youth (Watkins & Melde, 2010).
- School pressures such as high-stakes testing and accountability filter down and effect newcomer students (Koyama & Bartlett, 2011).
- Newcomer youth have the lowest rates of school misbehavior (Peguero, 2011b).
- Academic extra curricular can be very popular for youth (Peguero, 2011a).
- Computer literacy and access are associated with improved achievement for newcomer youth (Sánchez & Salazar, 2012).
- There is a need for additional social and language support for newcomer youth during the transition (von Grünigen, Kochenderfer-Ladd, Perren, & Alsaker, 2012).

### **Community Factors Affecting Wellness**

We defined community factors to include social characteristics of the neighborhoods in which youth and their families lived that were found to be associated with challenges or opportunities. We were particularly interested in the ways in which relationships could be enhanced between all neighborhood residents in mutually beneficial ways. The factors identified in the literature included social services relationships within one's own ethnocultural community as well as relationships between ethnocultural communities and general community participation factors.

### **Social Services**

- Youth want information about social and health services but do not know where to find it (Calderon, Giffords, & Malekoff, 2012).
- There is a need for culturally-based services for newcomers that understand their realities (Dettlaff & Cardoso, 2010).
- Parents and youth are willing to use mental health resources but do not know where to find them, and when they do, they are not culturally-relevant (García, Gilchrist, Vazquez, Leite, & Raymond, 2011).
- There is differential treatment by agencies depending on how the youth came into country, what happened after arrival and how agency involvement was triggered (Mandelbaum & Steglich, 2012).
- Pre-migratory trauma matters more than arrival and post-migration experiences for wellness (Persson & Rousseau, 2012).

### **Acceptance within Ethnocultural Community**

- Community acceptance has positive effect on youth wellness (Potochnick, Perreira, & Fuligni, 2012).
- Importance of family is strong for newcomer youth (Ayón, Marsiglia, & Bermudez-Parsai, 2010).
- Feelings of exclusion within own ethnocultural community associated with stress (Beiser et al., 2012).
- Healthy ethnic identity associated with wellness for youth (Brown & Chu, 2012).
- Ethnic identity is initially associated based on traditional culture (Soto, 2012).
- If they have a confidence in who they are, they become more resilient to reactions by others from within their own community who ascribe an identity to them (Kiang & Luu, 2012).
- Interconnections within culture of origin are important for formation of healthy ethnic identity among youth (Lim, Stormshak, & Falkenstein, 2011).
- Identity development and socioeconomic status relative to others are often interrelated, from bad experiences with others about who they are, to finding a place to be with others who are like them and express identity similarly, to having confidence in identity and pride in ethnicity (Malka & Krumer-Nevo, 2012).

### **Relationships between Ethnocultural Communities**

- Healthy ethnic identity is important as counter-identity to stereotypical ones they are faced with (Estrada & Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2011).
- Factors such as race, original country, socioeconomic status and legal challenges as well as quality of community have powerful combined effect on wellbeing (Baum & Flores, 2011).
- Positive relationships between newcomers and long-term residents of the community important to wellness for both (Dryden-Peterson, 2010).
- Racial stereotypes and relative financial status play a large role in extent of stress of adjustment (Portes & Rivas, 2011).
- Ethnic difference determines reception into diverse community (Rousseau, Hassan, Moreau, & Thombs, 2011).
- More traditional dress in diverse community associated with more discriminatory experiences (Sirin & Katsiaficas, 2011).

### **Community Participation**

- Poverty related issues at community level influence degree of participation, which is greater with low to moderate income (Joo, 2011).
- Involvement in community is important and desirable, but challenging because of relational, identity and acculturation gap issues (Chan, 2011).
- Community organization by youth and confidence with experience associated with wellness for youth (Edberg et al., 2010).

## **Section Two: Group Interviews with Youth**

The purpose of the present study was to identify the positive and negative aspects of newcomer youth's experiences at home, in school and within the community, as well as what would help them in each of these settings. We conducted group interviews with newcomer youth and invited them back for a second meeting where they organized the responses from the group interview into themes using a structured conceptualization procedure. A description of the method and results for each of the research questions is presented in this section.

### **Method**

Four steps were followed in the structured conceptualization. These steps were followed according to the procedure described by Trochim (1989). The steps included: 1) obtaining responses, 2) organizing responses, 3) representing responses, and 4) interpreting responses. Youth were informed about a Saturday morning meeting through posters and word-of-mouth advertising done by Settlement Workers, Youth Leaders and agency staff. At the meeting, youth worked in groups to answer the 9 focal questions. After each small group recorded their responses on flipchart paper, the flipchart papers of each small group were posted around the room and discussed by the large group. All youth were invited to attend another meeting scheduled at a later date to independently group together the responses, by question, into themes. After the second meeting, the groupings of each participant were analyzed using multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis procedures that produced a concept map for each question. The maps were labeled and interpreted by the research team.

### **Obtaining Responses**

Poster advertisements for the study were delivered by the Youth Leaders, Settlement Workers and other agency staff to newcomer youth aged 15-17 in the local community. Each interested individual was provided with a consent form for participation, as required by the institutional ethics board at Western University, with a letter of information and parental consent to participate. On the date of the meeting, youth and their parents were invited to meet with the research team and ask questions about the study. Youth who had the appropriate consent met in one room and the parents who consented to participate in a parallel process at the same time met in a different room. The results of the parent group meeting are presented in Section Three. Following the separate youth and parent meetings there was a pizza lunch for parents and youth and following that, an additional brainstorming meeting where the youth and parents shared what they thought was important from their separate meetings. The results of the joint parent-youth meeting are presented in Section Four.

The youth answered 9 questions. The questions included: 1) "What do you like about school?", 2) "What don't you like about school?", 3) "What would help make school better?", 4) "What do you like about home?", 5) "What don't you like about home?", 6) "What would help you at home?", 7) "What do you like about your community?", 8) "What don't you like about your community?", and 9) "What would help you in your community?". The participants worked in small groups of approximately 3 youth each, with Settlement Workers, Youth Leaders and a Research Assistant as scribes. After each small group recorded their responses on flipchart paper,

the flipchart papers of each small group were posted around the room and discussed by the large group. Clarifications were made to responses that required more detail and additional responses that emerged through this process were added.

There were 12 youth participants. They ranged in age from 15-18 years and were in grades 9-12 in their first Canadian school within two different secondary schools in adjacent neighborhoods. They all lived with immediate and extended family. Each was born outside of Canada in Singapore, Syria, Columbia, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, or United Arab Emirates. They had been attending school in Canada from between 1 month and 2 years. English was a second language to all participants. Their first languages were Punjabi, Arabic, and Spanish.

### **Organizing Responses**

All but 2 of the youth who participated in the first group meeting where responses were generated attended the second meeting where each was asked to independently group together the responses made by the group at the first meeting. Excluding redundant responses there were a total of 38 for “What do you like about school?”, 33 for “What don’t you like about school?”, and 37 for “What would help make school better?”. There were 27 responses for “What do you like about home?”, 15 for “What don’t you like about home?”, and 15 for “What would help you at home?”. For “What do you like about your community?”, there were 17 responses and for “What don’t you like about your community?”, 28, while for “What would help you in your community?”, only 4. There were not enough responses for “What would help you in your community?” for the grouping.

We obtained 8 independent groupings of all responses for “What do you like about school?”, 8 for “What don’t you like about school?”, and 8 for “What would help make school better?”. There were 9 groupings for “What do you like about home?”, 9 for “What don’t you like about home?”, and 9 for “What would help you at home?”. For “What do you like about your community?”, there were 8 groupings and for “What don’t you like about your community?”, 8.

### **Representing Responses**

The Concept System (Trochim, 1987) was used to analyze the grouping data. The data were analyzed using multidimensional scaling and cluster analysis. In multidimensional scaling, the responses were organized according to how often they were grouped together by participants. These data were plotted on an X-Y point map with distances between the responses reflecting the frequency with which they were grouped together. If participants grouped particular responses together often those responses would be closer in proximity to one another on the map. Responses that were rarely grouped together would be more distant from one another on the map. A bridging index ranging from 0.00 – 1.00 was calculated for each response reflecting the degree to which that response was grouped only with those near to it on the map. A low value (under .25) on this index suggested that the response was grouped only with others nearby on the map, while a high value (over 0.75) suggested that the response was grouped with other responses nearby as well as further away on the map. Cluster Analysis was performed on the multidimensional scaling values to organize responses into clusters. At the beginning of the analysis each response was its own cluster. At each stage, two clusters were grouped together

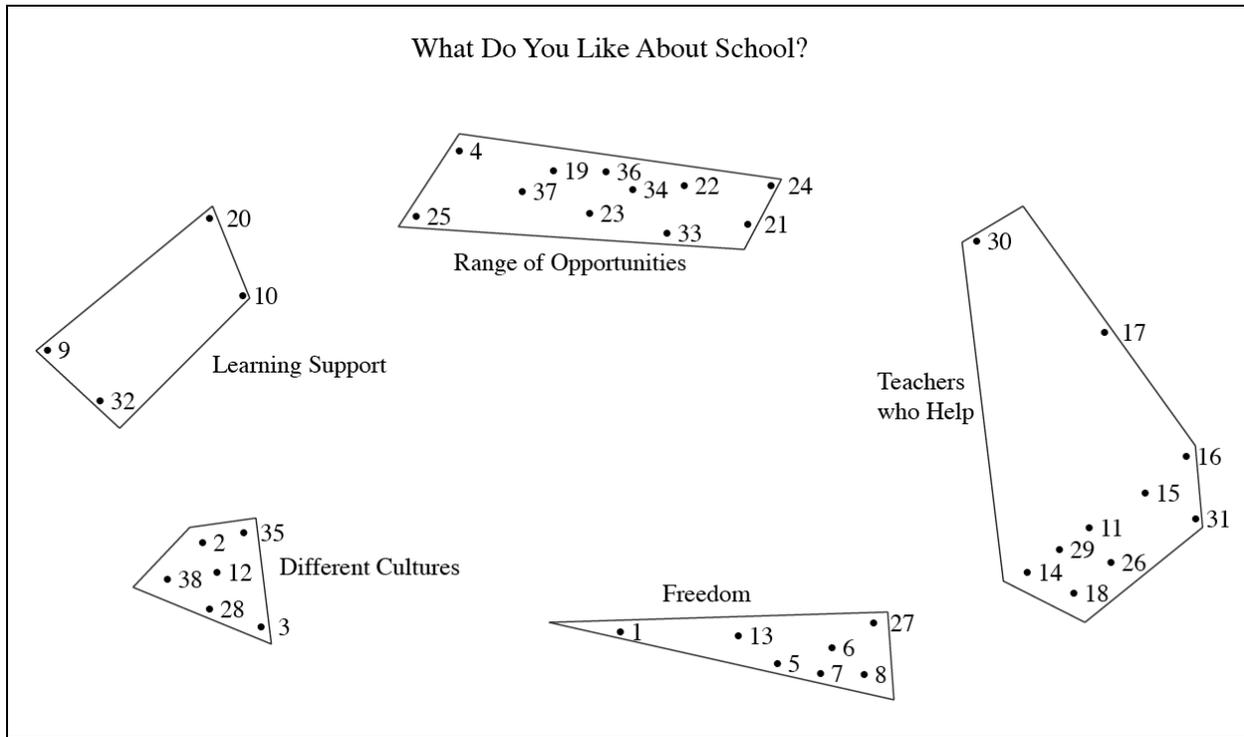
until all responses were within one cluster.

### **Interpreting Responses**

The research team reviewed the cluster solutions for each question and determined which cluster solution was most appropriate. The decision was based on qualitative and quantitative evidence. The qualitative evidence was the content of the cluster and evidence of conceptual similarity between responses within the clusters and conceptual differences between the clusters. The quantitative evidence was the bridging indices of responses within the clusters and cluster average. Lower values of responses within the cluster reflected conceptual similarities. Lower average cluster bridging indices also reflected conceptual unity of the responses within it.

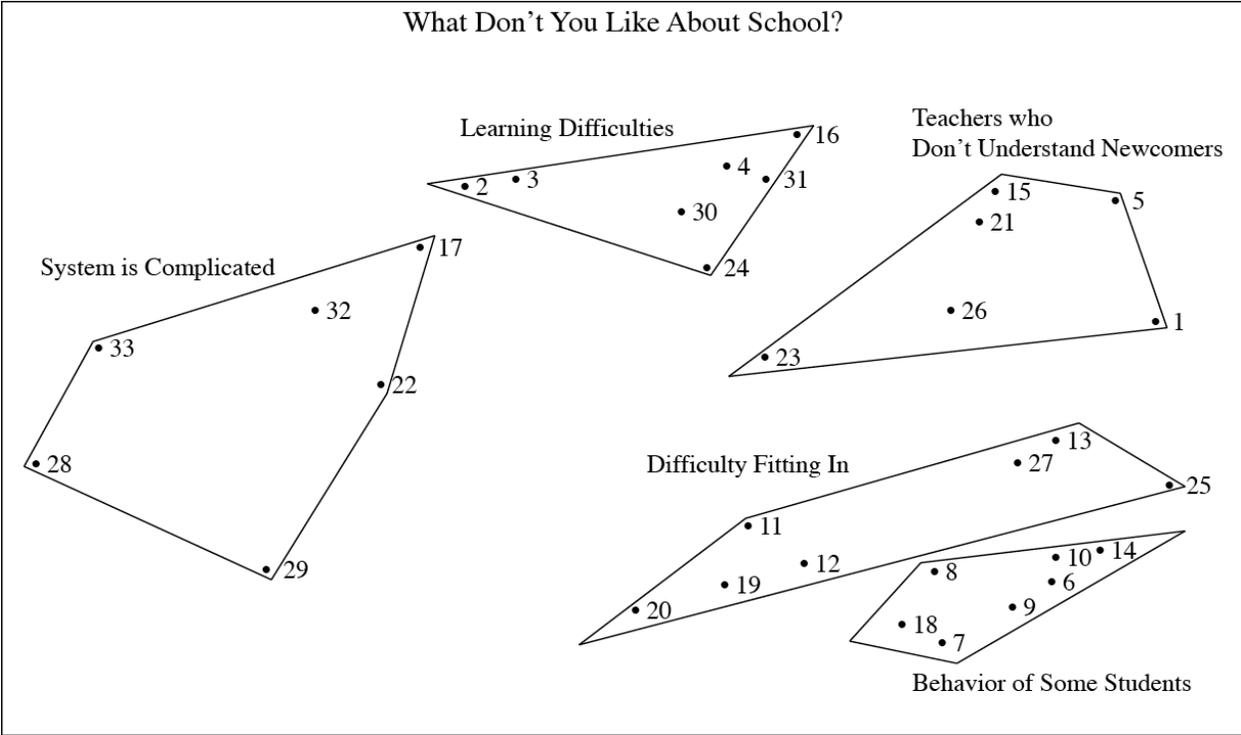
### **Results**

The concept maps and responses for each question are included here. The numbers on each map correspond with specific responses listed below that map. The numbered responses are only for identification. The response number does not indicate frequency or priority.



Cluster and Statement	Bridging Index
Freedom	0.25
1. friends	0.60
13. safe school - less violence	0.39
5. respect	0.16
7. no punishment or retaliation for freedom / respect	0.14
6. freedom	0.18
8. freedom to be themselves	0.08
27. feeling included	0.22
Teachers Who Help	0.53
11. vice principal who helps when you have problems	0.45
31. friends and teachers both help	0.56
15. parent-student meetings	0.63
16. guidance when needed	0.65
14. teachers don't hit students	0.26
18. relationships between students and teachers	0.26
26. people are kind and understanding and supportive	0.31
29. teachers are understanding and supportive	0.44
17. SWSS workers	0.99
30. homework help received	0.74

Different Cultures	0.62
2. others who speak the same language	0.51
12. mixed classes - Arabic and Spanish	0.51
38. multicultural	0.67
35. only barrier is language	0.59
3. sports like in home country	0.71
28. cultural diversity	0.74
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Range of Opportunities	0.18
4. arts programs	0.11
25. volunteer opportunities	0.44
19. more technology	0.01
36. picking right courses is stressful	0.00
37. many programs or courses	0.06
23. less homework	0.18
34. subjects are easier here	0.06
21. easy access to education	0.34
24. can choose what they want to study	0.34
22. variety in the curriculum	0.18
33. college or university preparation	0.31
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Learning Support	0.81
9. ESL classes / programs	0.89
32. hope to see integration of schools	1.00
10. no problem with English programs	0.62
20. lunchtime breaks	0.73
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Cluster and Statement	Bridging Index
Teachers who Understand Newcomers	0.40
1. teachers putting down children because of their English skills	0.49
26. split of academic learning levels (academic, applied, essential)	0.42
23. courses like history because I don't have the background	0.37
5. strict teachers	0.45
15. some teachers not qualified	0.30
21. be lectured by teachers about topics their parents lecture them about	0.37
Learning Difficulties	0.20
2. homework	0.36
3. surprise quizzes	0.22
4. too much studying	0.13
31. no help with homework difficulties	0.08
16. no follow up from teachers around homework	0.14
24. being bumped back 3 grades	0.30
30. not enough time to complete work	0.19
System is Complicated	0.71
17. not having guidance on what courses to take	0.17
32. more guidance needed	0.58
22. phone calls about missing classes when at school in different activity	0.74

33. need positive help	0.77
28. school buses	0.71
29. waking up early	1.00

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Behavior of Some Students	0.04
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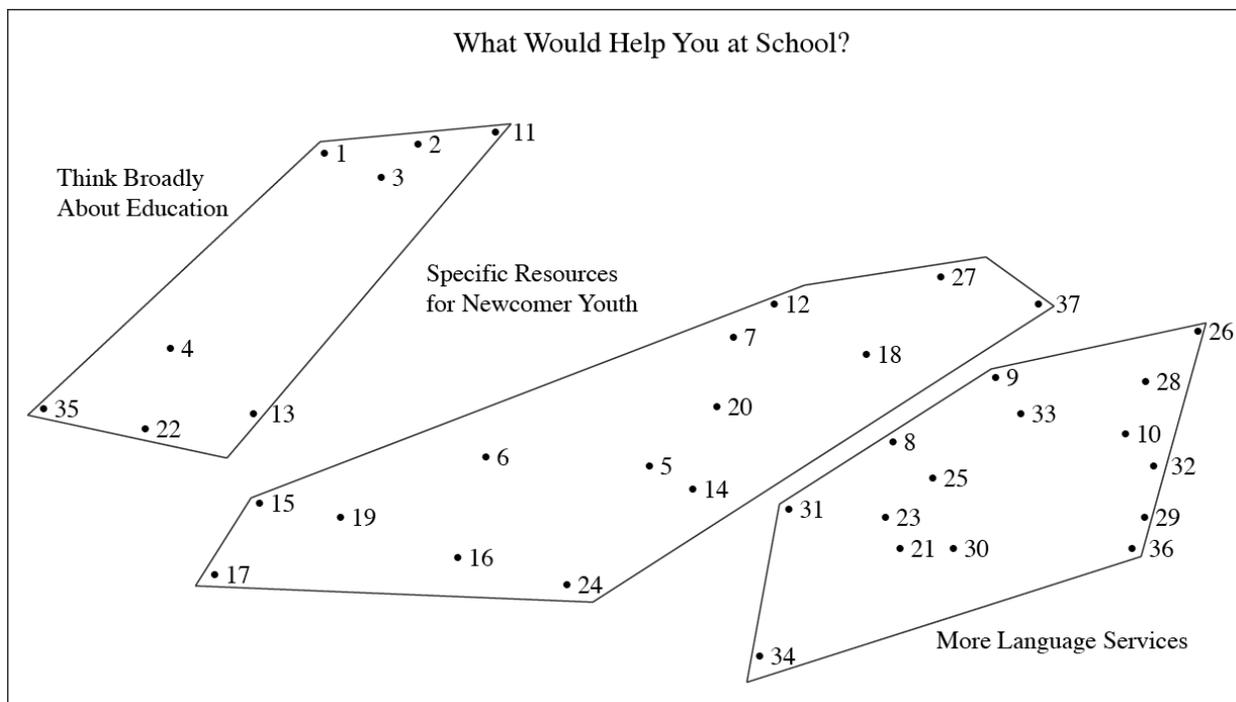
6. bullying	0.01
10. smoking	0.04
14. racial discrimination	0.12
7. drugs	0.00
18. no limits when talking about sexual topics/issues (jokes)	0.00
9. sexual relationships	0.03
8. peer pressure	0.09

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Difficulty Fitting In	0.26
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11. clothing	0.29
12. concept of a relationship	0.11
19. not all youth like to talk about relationships	0.11
20. too much freedom	0.41
13. difficulty fitting in at school in the beginning	0.30
27. feeling uncomfortable with a group you don't know	0.29
25. some students are just thrown in	0.33

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Cluster and Statement	Bridging Index
<b>Think Broadly About Education</b>	<b>0.57</b>
1. diverse food at cafeterias	0.06
3. healthy choices at cafeterias	0.36
2. cheaper food at cafeterias	0.00
11. breakfast club	0.18
4. transportation	0.98
13. encourage diversity / acceptance	0.97
22. awareness for disabilities supports	1.00
35. involving the parents	0.98
5. support from school	0.55
14. NOW program for more grades	0.50
20. choose my own courses instead of being assigned to a course	0.54
6. longer preparation time (for homework)	0.71
<b>Specific Resources for Newcomer Youth</b>	<b>0.76</b>
15. start school in the afternoon	0.71
19. allow stay in same school if they move to a new neighbourhood	0.64
17. teachers need to increase discipline	0.90
16. no more announcements during class	0.76
24. changes in ESL classes	0.76
34. being introduced to friends with same religion / language	0.95
7. more guidance for newcomer youth	0.74
12. more financial help with transportation (to school or activities)	0.76

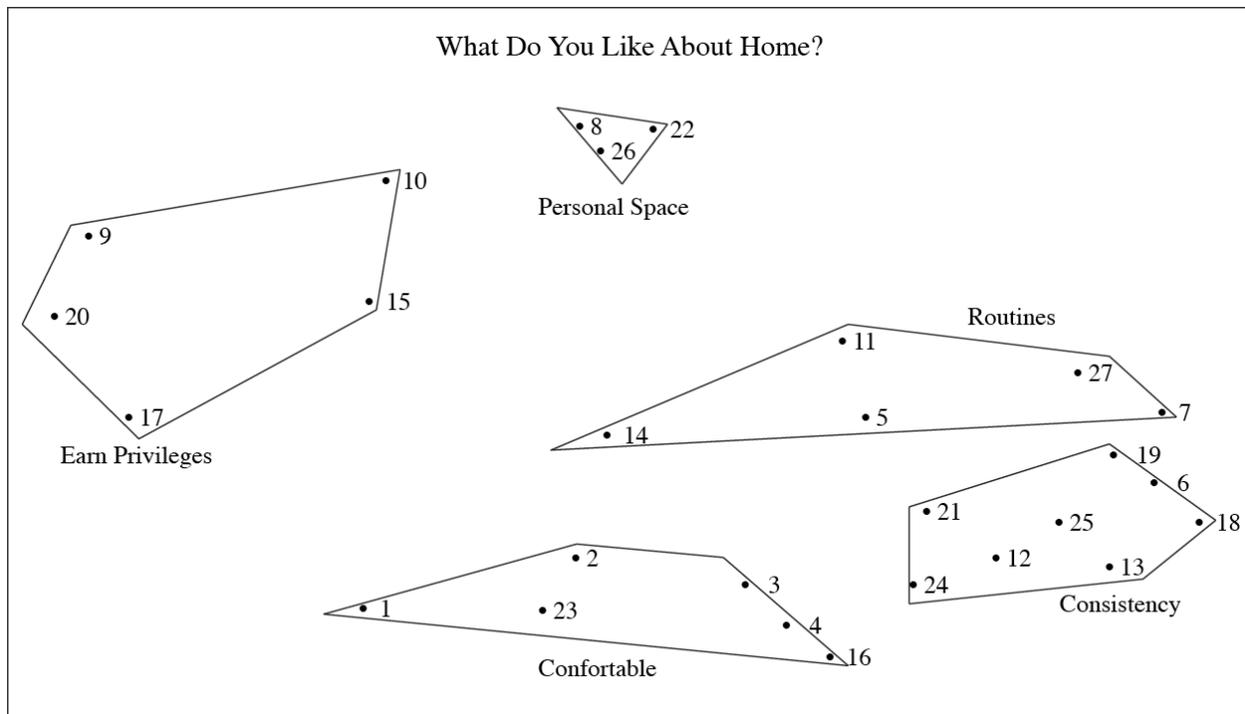
18.	financial assistance in general	0.59
27.	counsellors don't help much	0.79
37.	should be told about disabilities help available	0.74

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More Language Services	0.52
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8.	more time with school counsellors	0.43
9.	more extra-curricular activities	0.54
33.	need more tutoring for studies	0.44
10.	homework club	0.58
32.	quiet space to study when needed	0.59
26.	make then better	0.26
28.	more focus on conversation and speech	0.74
21.	being able to speak my own language	0.47
23.	need more practice in English, not subjects they already know (ie math)	0.45
30.	ESL teachers should speak English to provide an opportunity to practice	0.46
31.	teachers should be more open and understanding with students	0.50
25.	more comprehension	0.44
29.	ESL classes focus more on grammar	0.63
36.	feeling confident enough with English to make new friends	0.72

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Cluster and Statement	Bridging Index
<b>Comfortable</b>	0.45
1. security	0.88
2. self-secure	0.44
23. parental advice when unsure what to do	0.64
3. homemade meals / home cooking	0.23
4. eating same food as back home	0.22
16. speaking mother tongue in front of others, and with parents	0.31
<b>Routines</b>	0.41
5. freedom from parents	0.31
11. time management	0.57
14. setting limits	0.47
7. family time	0.27
27. playing and talking with siblings	0.42
<b>Consistency</b>	0.12
6. love and positive feelings at home	0.13
19. get along more	0.11
13. talking about your day with your parents	0.13
18. family ties	0.12
12. open communication	0.11
24. shopping with mom feels safe	0.17

21. house is always clean because mom is there	0.10
25. Skype with family back home	0.07

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Personal Space	0.01
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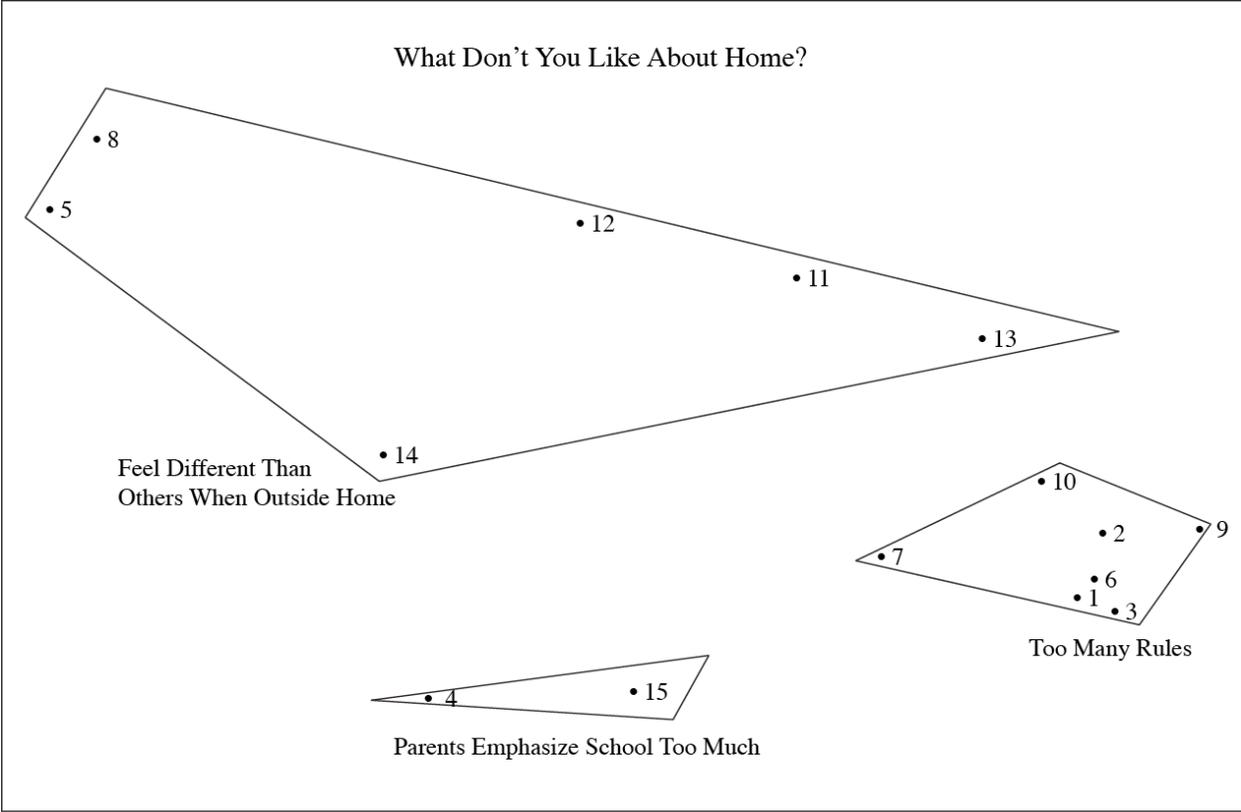
8. electronics	0.00
26. playing videogames	0.00
22. listening to music at home	0.02

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Earn Privileges	0.59
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9. CTB money	0.37
10. driving	0.32
15. sleeping over at friends' house	0.53
17. culture and language only changes outside the home	1.00
20. bigger house	0.70

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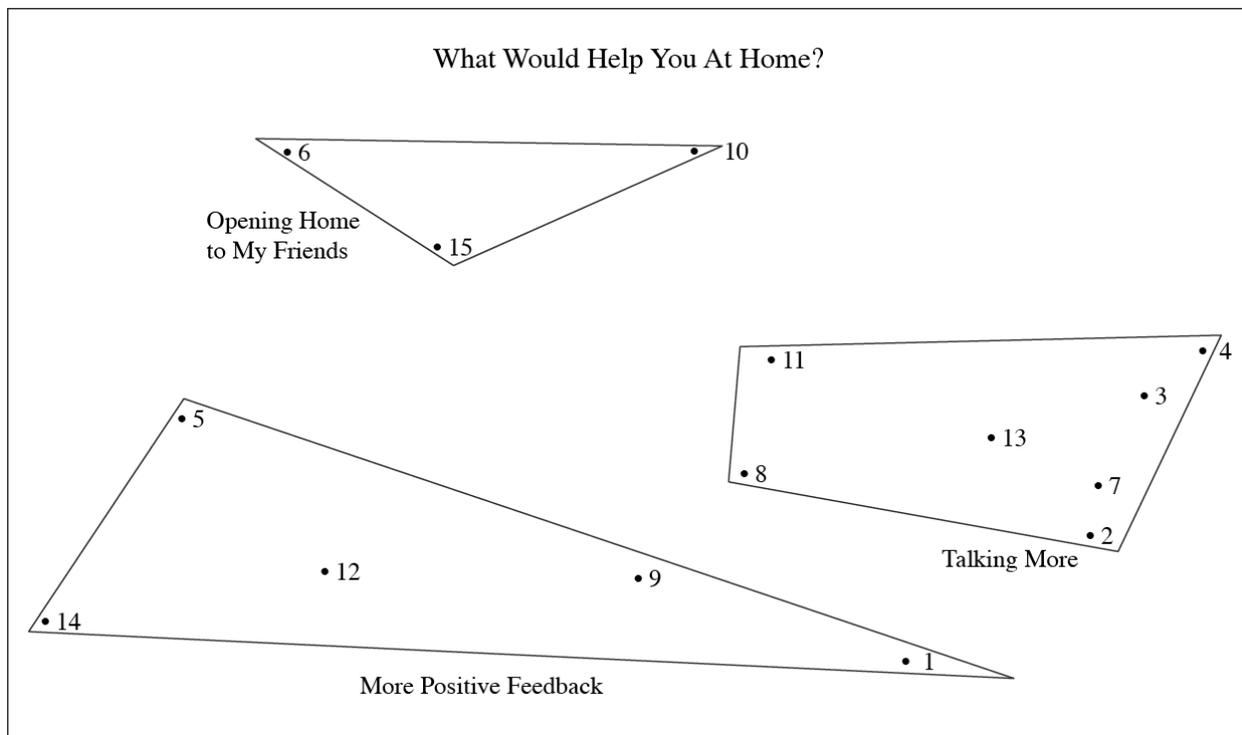


Cluster and Statement	Bridging Index
<b>Too Many Rules</b>	0.10
1. limited freedom	0.03
3. not being told what to do	0.00
6. setting limits – grounding	0.00
2. supervision	0.09
9. being told what to wear	0.15
10. rules in general	0.24
7. not having everything they want	0.20
<b>Parents Emphasize School Too Much</b>	0.59
4. house work	0.69
15. studying and doing homework	0.48
<b>Feel Different Than Others When Outside Home</b>	0.74
5. traditions (mixed feelings)	1.00
8. parents' accents	0.75
11. not having a boyfriend makes me feel like an outcast	0.63
13. going to church	0.54
12. sharing the elevator with people I don't know	0.68

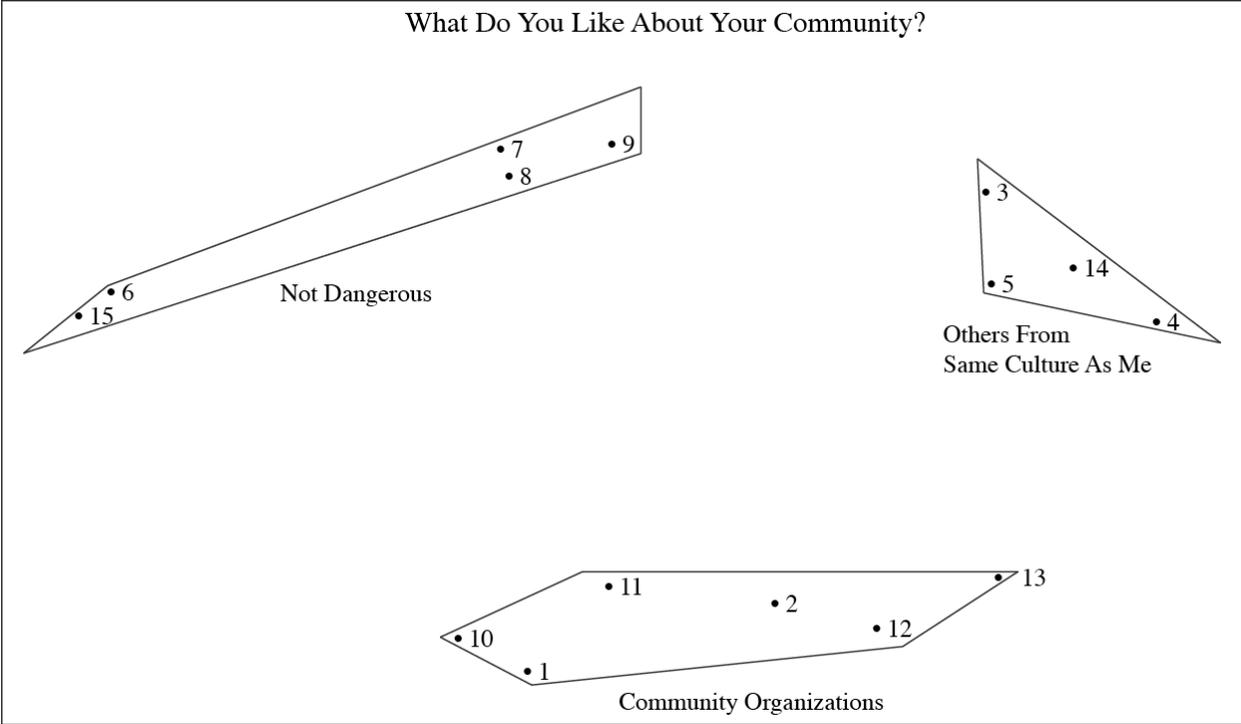
14. gets boring being at home if you don't go out

0.83

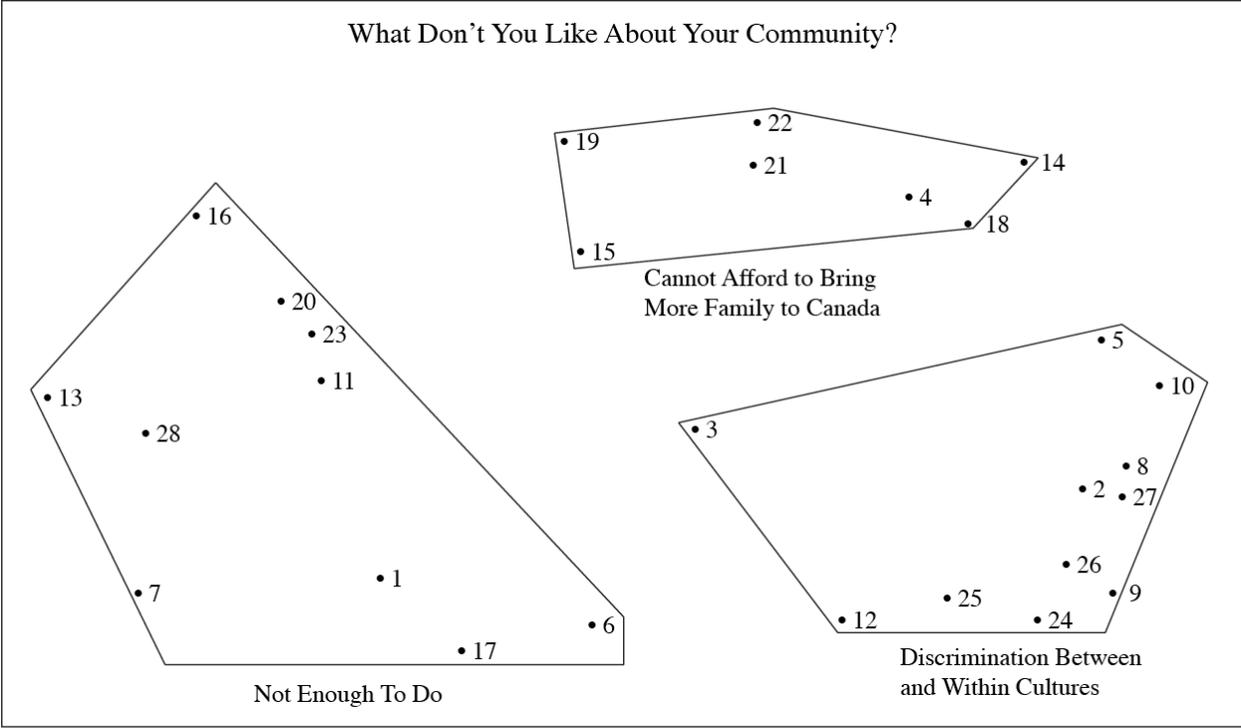
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Cluster and Statement	Bridging Index
More Positive Feedback	0.58
1. encouragement	0.48
9. love	0.23
5. family time	0.73
12. values	0.46
14. rules	1.00
Talking More	0.15
2. comfort and support from family	0.22
7. patience from parents	0.11
3. active listening	0.20
4. open discussions	0.33
8. more respect	0.05
13. more understanding	0.00
11. no judgment	0.15
Opening Home to My Friends	0.56
6. friendship	0.70
15. same interests	0.41
10. welcome their friends	0.57



Cluster and Statement	Bridging Index
Community Organizations	0.15
1. access to resources	0.00
10. everything is close (friends, malls, schools)	0.06
11. many facilities available (parks, courts)	0.16
2. libraries	0.07
12. hope to see many community activities	0.24
13. YMCA programs, e.g. YMAP	0.37
Others From Same Culture As Me	0.33
3. same cultural groups	0.54
4. cultural diversity	0.41
5. everybody gets along	0.07
14. felt welcome here when new	0.31
Not Dangerous	0.40
6. clean / neat	0.68
15. lower costs of things / raised wages	1.00
7. comfortable in neighbourhood	0.08
8. get to know your community and feel comfortable about it	0.15
9. safety	0.10



Cluster and Statement	Bridging Index
Not Enough To Do	0.63
1. smoking in public spaces	0.75
7. drugs	1.00
6. safety	0.62
17. health care is slow	0.86
11. cutting the grass	0.60
20. need for transportation	0.40
23. don't like contracts on things (e.g., internet, phone)	0.49
16. more teen or youth groups needed	1.00
13. boring	0.17
28. not too many places to go or to enjoy	0.39
Cannot Afford to Bring More Family to Canada	0.42
4. limited participation due to financial barriers	0.42
14. less employment opportunities	0.20
18. hard for parents to get jobs	0.38
15. less connections for help	0.68
19. teens try to be supportive with their parents	0.61
21. family being far away also makes it hard	0.49
22. hard to bring family members here	0.19
Discrimination Between and Within Cultures	0.26

2.	some neighbours	0.15
8.	bullying in neighbourhoods	0.09
27.	discrimination in neighbourhood	0.09
3.	living in apartment buildings is not easy	0.63
5.	language barrier	0.61
10.	discrimination	0.57
9.	same cultural groups	0.00
26.	religion and race	0.03
24.	problem with different religions makes it hard at school to study	0.03
25.	problems from country of origin sometimes follow you	0.20
12.	too culturally diverse	0.47

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### **Section Three: Group Interviews with Parents**

The purpose of the present study was to identify the positive and negative aspects of newcomer youth's experiences at home, in school and within the community, as well as what would help them in each of these settings. We conducted group interviews with the parents of newcomer youth and invited them back for a second meeting where they organized the responses from the group interview into themes. A description of the method and results for each of the research questions is presented in this section.

#### **Method**

Three steps were followed. The steps included: 1) obtaining responses, 2) organizing responses, and 3) interpreting responses. Parents of newcomer youth were informed about a Saturday morning meeting through posters and word-of-mouth advertising done by Settlement Workers, Youth Leaders and agency staff. At the meeting, parents worked in small groups to answer the 9 focal questions. After each small group recorded their responses on flipchart paper, the flipchart papers of each small group were posted around the room and discussed by the large group. All parents were invited to attend another meeting scheduled at a later date to group together the responses, by question, into themes. This was done by the parents as a large group with decisions made via consensus.

#### **Obtaining Responses**

Youth Leaders, Settlement Workers and other agency staff delivered poster advertisements for the study to newcomer youth in the local community. Interested individuals were provided with a consent form for participation, as required by the institutional ethics board at Western University, and a letter of information and consent to participate. On the date of the meeting, youth and their parents were invited to meet with the research team and ask questions about the study. Parents who agreed to participate in a group meeting to discuss the same questions as their youth met in a separate room from the youth. The results of the youth group meeting are presented in Section Two. Following the separate youth and parent meetings there was a pizza lunch for parents and youth and following that, an additional brainstorming meeting where the youth and parents shared what they thought was important from their separate meetings. The results of the joint parent-youth meeting are presented in Section Four.

The parents answered similar questions as their youth. The questions included: 1) "What do you like about your youth's school?", 2) "What don't you like about your youth's school?", 3) "What would help youth at school?", 4) "What do you want for youth at home?", 5) "What do you like about the community for youth?", 6) "What don't you like about the community for youth?", and 7) "What would help youth in the community?". The participants worked in small groups of approximately 3 youth each, with Settlement Workers and a Research Assistant as scribes. After each small group recorded their responses on flipchart paper, the flipchart papers of each small group were posted around the room and discussed by the large group. Clarifications were made to responses that required more detail and additional responses that emerged through this process were added.

There were 16 parent participants and 13 of them were female. They ranged in age from 38-47 years and from 1-5 children. Each had a youth in a local secondary school. In addition, each was born outside of Canada and relocated from Columbia, Guatemala, Iraq, India, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Libya. They had been attending school in Canada from between 1 month and 2 years. English was a second language to all participants. Their first languages were Spanish, Arabic and Punjabi.

### Organizing Responses

Excluding redundant responses there were a total of 15 for “What do you like about your youth’s school?”, 11 for “What don’t you like about your youth’s school?”, 18 for “What would help youth at school?”, 7 for “What do you want for youth at home?”, 11 for “What do you like about the community for youth?”, 4 for “What don’t you like about the community for youth?”, and 7 for “What would help youth in the community?”.

### Interpreting Responses

All of the parents who participated in the first group meeting where responses were generated attended the second meeting where they were asked to group them together into themes. Each response was printed on an 8”x11” page and for each question, the responses were posted on the wall. In response to participant feedback and suggestion the responses were grouped together. Only when there was consensus for the groupings was the final decision made. There was consensus for each of the 7 questions.

## Results

“What do you like about your youth’s school?”

Multicultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixing all immigrant children together to learn English (vs separating them by language)</li> <li>• Different cultures in the school</li> <li>• School has good atmosphere no hitting or yelling</li> <li>• Youth to go to school happily</li> <li>• Different from original country's school system</li> <li>• Supervision at break times and washrooms</li> </ul>
Extra activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activities that help youth improve their talents</li> <li>• Fieldtrips</li> <li>• Variety of activities available</li> </ul>

Communication styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers do not humiliate to discipline</li> <li>• Friendly and respectful teachers</li> <li>• Teachers are not forceful</li> </ul>
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“What don’t you like about your youth’s school?”

Discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination from within same ethnic community</li> <li>• Youth who follow tradition are picked on</li> <li>• Even when students were reprimanded problems continued</li> </ul>
No credit for courses previously completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need courses from home country accepted for university education</li> </ul>
Teachers are not involved with students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too much distance between teachers and students</li> </ul>
Workload heavy and progress slow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too much homework</li> <li>• In ESL for a very long time</li> <li>• Difficulty completing ESL program</li> </ul>

“What would help youth at school?”

Learning help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Settlement Workers</li> <li>• Tutoring circles</li> <li>• Mentoring for newcomer youth by Canadian born youth</li> <li>• Youth need to know about the system - school / courses / subjects</li> <li>• Know about existing resources that will assist youth with their learning</li> </ul>
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better communication between teachers and parents</li> <li>• Parents need to be patient and understanding</li> <li>• Parents need to help youth move forward when expectations not met</li> <li>• Reinforcing the importance and value of school</li> <li>• Parents meeting with the teachers</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents must know all that takes place in school</li> <li>• Communication about school with youth at home</li> </ul>
Home environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive environment</li> <li>• Openness to following traditions</li> <li>• Place for homework</li> <li>• Encouragement for youth</li> <li>• Healthy environment</li> </ul>

“What do you want for youth at home?”

Outside the home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be social</li> <li>• Not to be shy</li> <li>• To make friends</li> <li>• To be open with friends and with other youth</li> </ul>
Inside the home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open communication with parents (talking all the time, explaining)</li> <li>• To be close to family</li> <li>• Speak their first language</li> </ul>

“ What do you like about the community for youth?”

Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children like it</li> <li>• Swimming pool</li> <li>• Community Centre</li> <li>• Malls</li> <li>• Bus</li> <li>• School</li> <li>• Parks</li> <li>• Close proximity and good access</li> </ul>
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends</li> <li>• Safe</li> <li>• Others from same culture</li> </ul>

“ What don’t you like about the community for youth?”

Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Physical safety at night</li><li>• Hanging out</li></ul>
Drugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Worry about drugs</li></ul>

“ What would help youth in the community?”

Integration of culture, language and religion in smaller groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Youth need to learn mother language</li><li>• Meeting other students in library or community center</li></ul>
More activities with broader cross-cultural community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students meeting circles</li><li>• Information for parents about learning resources for youth</li><li>• Support groups for youth</li><li>• Volunteering opportunities for youth</li><li>• Sports teams in each neighbourhood</li></ul>

## **Section Four: Group Interviews with Youth and Parents Together**

The purpose of the present study was to identify the positive and negative aspects of newcomer youth's experiences at home, in school and within the community, as well as what would help them in each of these settings. We conducted independent group interviews with newcomer youth and their parents. We invited them back a second time where they organized the responses from the group interview into themes. A description of the method and results for each of the research questions is presented in this section.

### **Method**

Three steps were followed. The steps included: 1) obtaining responses, 2) organizing responses, and 3) interpreting responses. Newcomer youth and their parents were informed about a Saturday morning meeting through posters and word-of-mouth advertising done by Settlement Workers, Youth Leaders and agency staff. At the meeting, youth and parents worked in a large group to share with each other from their separate meetings. These were written on flipcharts for the large group and, in a second meeting, prioritized by the parents and youth who were each provided with six votes for the most important priorities for change in each of school, home and community.

### **Obtaining Responses**

Youth Leaders, Settlement Workers and other agency staff delivered poster advertisements for the study to newcomer youth in the local community. Interested individuals were provided with a consent form for participation, as required by the institutional ethics board at Western University, and a letter of information and consent to participate. On the date of the meeting, youth and their parents were invited to meet with the research team and ask questions about the study. Parents who agreed to participate in a group meeting to discuss the same questions as their youth met in a separate room from the youth. The results of the youth group meeting are presented in Section Two and the results of the parent group meeting are presented in Section Three. Following the separate youth and parent meetings there was a pizza lunch for parents and youth and following that, an additional brainstorming meeting where the youth and parents shared what they thought was important from their separate meetings. The results of the joint parent-youth meeting are presented in this section.

The parents and youth answered the questions concerning school likes and dislikes, home likes and dislikes and community likes and dislikes. In addition, they were asked to identify the actions that should be taken to improve wellbeing for youth in each of the three settings. Clarifications were made to responses that required more detail and additional responses that emerged through this process were added.

There were 16 parent participants and 13 of them were female. They ranged in age from 38-47 years and from 1-5 children. Each had a youth in a local secondary school. In addition, each was born outside of Canada and relocated from Columbia, Guatemala, Iraq, India, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Libya. They had been attending school in Canada from between 1

month and 2 years. English was a second language to all participants. Their first languages were Spanish, Arabic and Punjabi.

There were 12 youth participants. They ranged in age from 15-18 years and were in grades 9-12 in their first Canadian school within two different secondary schools in adjacent neighborhoods. They all lived with immediate and extended family. Each was born outside of Canada in Singapore, Syria, Columbia, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, or United Arab Emirates. They had been attending school in Canada from between 1 month and 2 years. English was a second language to all participants. Their first languages were Punjabi, Arabic, and Spanish.

### Organizing Responses

There were a total of 10 responses for “What do you like about (your youth’s) school?”, 11 for “What don’t you like about (your youth’s) school?”, 5 for “What do you like about (your youth’s) home life?”, 10 for “What don’t you like about (your youth’s) home life?”, 8 for “What do you like about your (youth’s) community?”, and 6 for “What don’t you like about (your) youth’s community?”. The parents and youth generated 3 responses for “What would help (your) youth at school?”, 4 for “What would help (your) youth at home?”, and 9 for “What would help (your) youth in the community?”.

### Interpreting Responses

Parents and youth who participated in the first group meeting where responses were generated attended the second meeting where they were asked to group the responses to the “what would help?” questions. Each response was listed on a flipchart and posted on the wall in a large room for each question, the responses were posted on the wall. Each participant was provided with six stickers to “vote” for the most important change to undertake across the areas.

## Results

### School

Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework club</li> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Sports</li> <li>• Place students gather not only to learn</li> <li>• Place to discuss with teachers</li> <li>• Achieve dreams; become what they want to become</li> <li>• Settlement Workers in Schools Program</li> <li>• English as a Second Language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bullying</li> <li>• Drugs</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Buying food at canteen is very expensive</li> <li>• Detention room</li> <li>• Not enough time to finish homework</li> <li>• Teachers “kill my child’s dream” by putting him down and saying “You can’t go to university”</li> <li>• Too much homework</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra costs - I have 3 children and have to pay for pizza days and fieldtrips</li> <li>• Peer pressure / copy friends to fit in</li> </ul>
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## Home

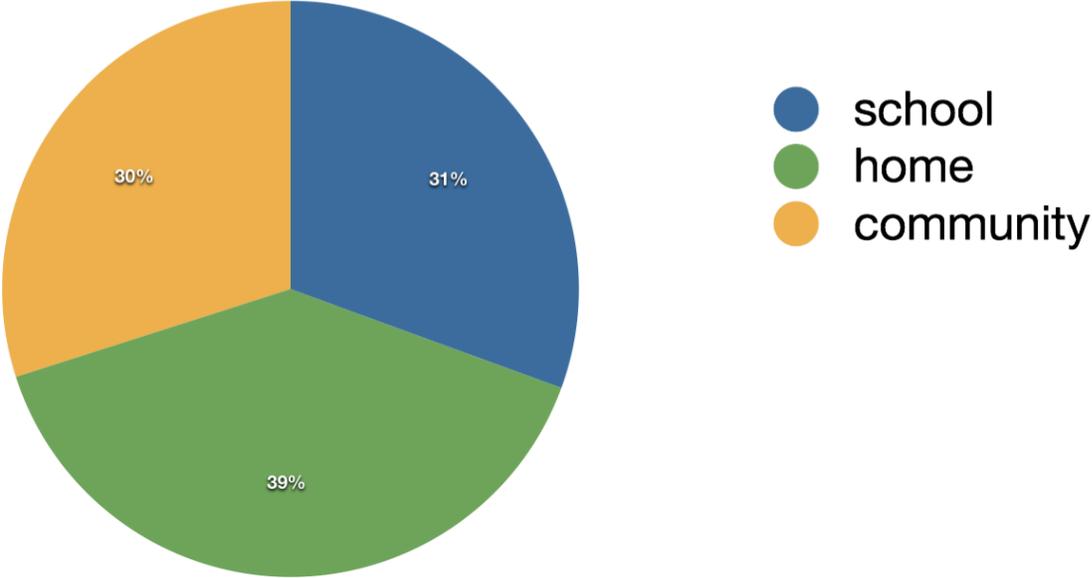
Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speak same language</li> <li>• Traditional food</li> <li>• Listen to music</li> <li>• Support from parents</li> <li>• Not overprotective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rules - cleaning, sleeping</li> <li>• Noisy - need a quiet place at home</li> <li>• Children like to change their culture</li> <li>• Parents worry a LOT</li> <li>• Difference of opinion between parents and youth</li> <li>• Parents sacrifice and worry</li> <li>• Parents want youth to respect them</li> <li>• Parents saying “I’m doing this for you”</li> <li>• Domestic violence</li> </ul>

## Community

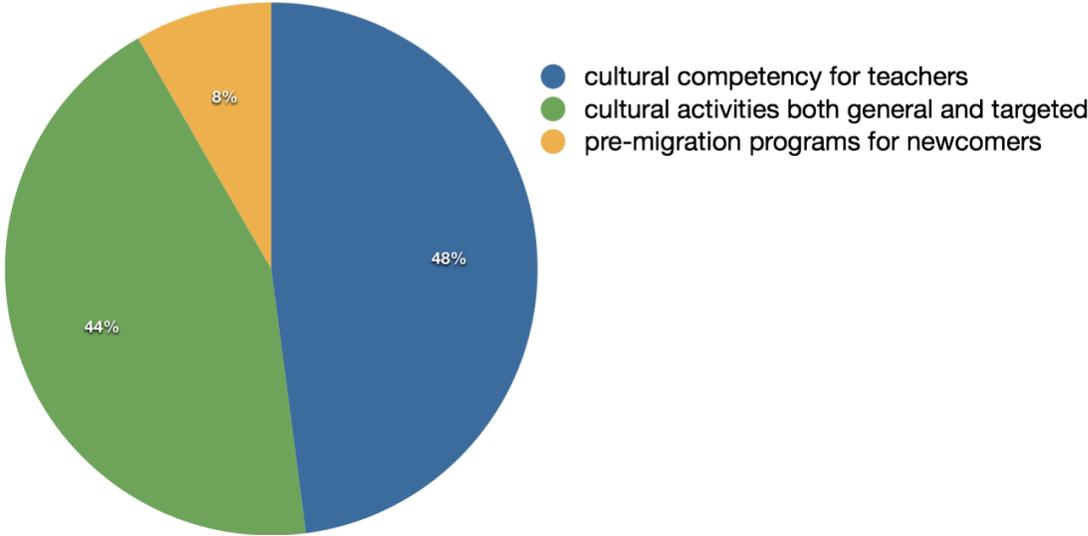
Likes	Dislikes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quiet, not noisy, tranquility</li> <li>• Freedom</li> <li>• Diverse – see different cultures</li> <li>• Access to resources at South London</li> <li>• People say “Welcome”</li> <li>• Nice people</li> <li>• Safe for girls</li> <li>• Community services</li> <li>• Seminars for youth and parents together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People question how we “are”</li> <li>• How the media shows immigrants</li> <li>• Discrimination</li> <li>• Respect for cultures</li> <li>• Fighting, bullying</li> <li>• Drugs</li> </ul>

**“What would help....?”**

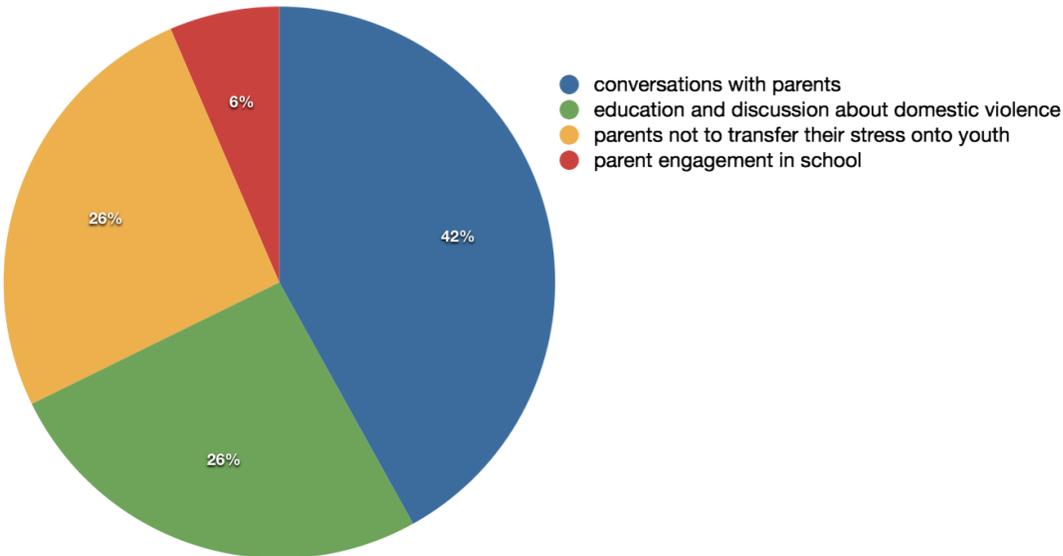
**Overall Priorities  
N=168**



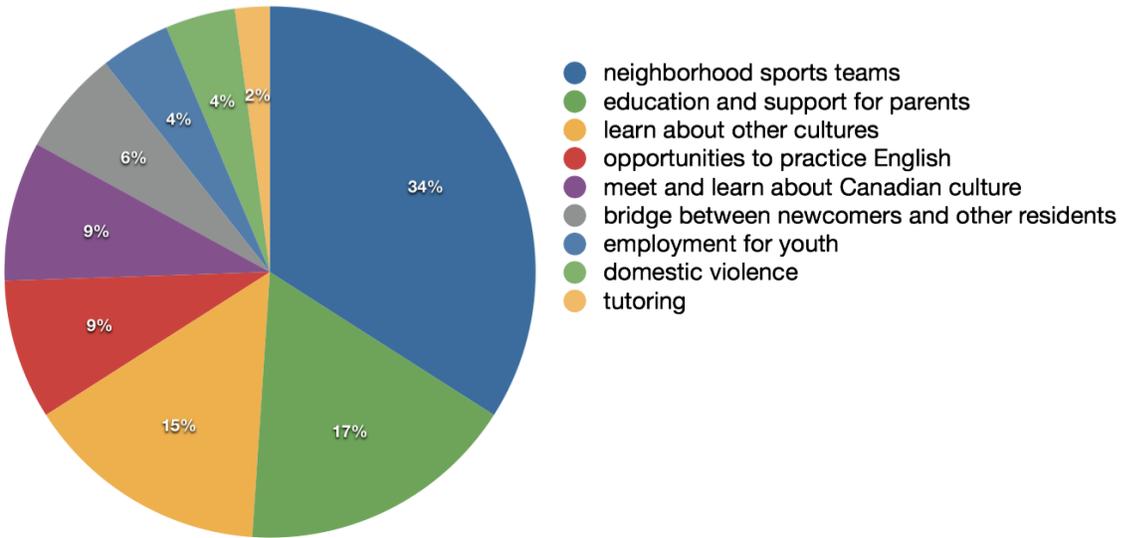
**School Priorities for Change**  
N=52



**Home Priorities for Change**  
N=66



### Community Priorities for Change N=60



## Section Five: Summary

The parent-youth group produced a summary of the issues important to both newcomer youth and their parents in the areas of school, home and community.

In school, the youth and parents noted that the ethno cultural diversity of the schools was positive and that they appreciated the efforts of the Settlement Workers in the schools as well as extracurricular activities for youth that were both academic and non-academic. They also noted that extra school expenses were very high and they had concerns about discrimination against newcomer youth in the schools because of their language and ethnicity.

Parents and youth also appreciated their home life with family with supportive parents and the retention of their culture including language. They also noted that parents worried a great deal about their youth and that as youth were in the school and community more, they began to challenge some of the traditions their parents held very strongly.

In the community, parents and youth liked the relative safety for all, and particularly for girls, as well as the neighborhood resources, such as agencies with support services and amenities such as stores that were nearby. However, the parents and youth also noted that there was some violence in the community and felt scrutinized and disrespected because they were newcomers fueled, in part, by the depictions of ethnic minorities in the media.

Changes that newcomer youth and parents would like to see were evenly spread between the areas of school, home and community. In school, they focused on the need for better cultural competency for teachers and cultural activities that were for awareness and inclusion of all cultures as well as some specifically for particular cultural groups.

In relation to changes at home, the youth and parents focused on more time to speak with parents just to share what was going on, address issues around domestic violence at home as well as ask that parents do not impose their own stress onto the youth.

In the community, parents and youth together identified the need for more neighborhood-based sports teams as well as education and support for parents through local agencies, opportunities to learn about other cultures, including “Canadian” culture in settings where they could also practice English.

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# Healthy Welcoming Communities Created by Newcomer Youth

**YOU are INVITED to a Meeting to participate  
in a Research Study about:  
NEWCOMER YOUTH, their FAMILIES and COMMUNITY**

**South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre (1119 Jalna Blvd.)**

**Saturday, June 2, 2012**

**(10:30 am - 1:30 pm)**

**We would like to know your opinion about:**

- **What is working well and,**
- **What improvements could be made at home, in schools and within the neighbourhood.**

**There will be separate meetings for (1) Newcomer Youth (2) Newcomer Youth Parents**

**To register please contact your School Settlement Worker**

**Shadya 519-697-6106 and Lissette 519-701-6549**

**Questions? Please contact Jason Brown at Western University**

**[jbrown97@uwo.ca](mailto:jbrown97@uwo.ca) Phone 519-661-2111 Ext 88617**



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