



Community Connections: From Policy to Practice

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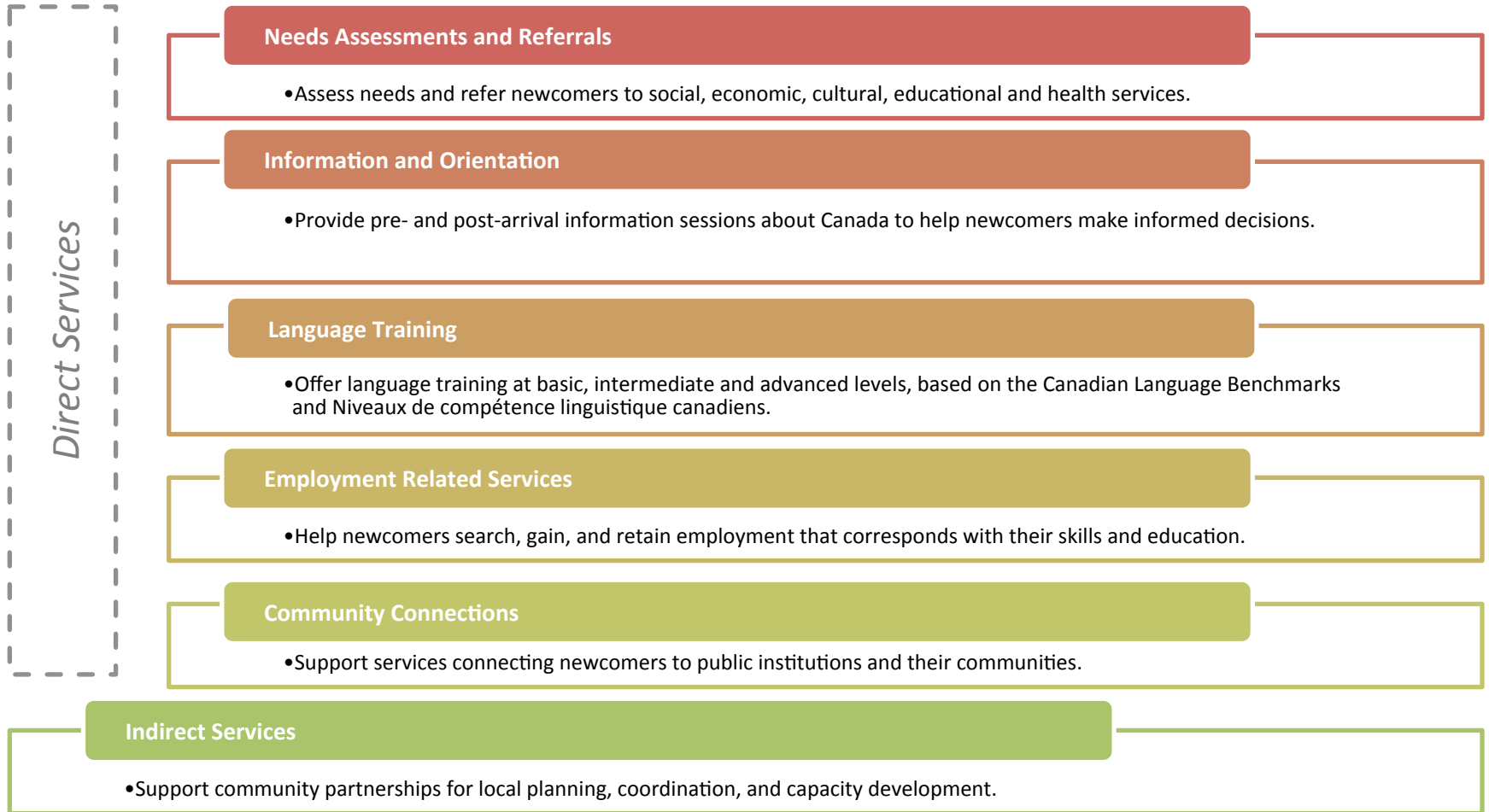
Presentation Outline

- The Settlement Program
- Key Stakeholders & Partners
- Integration is a Two-Way Street
- Characteristics of a Welcoming Community
- Community Connections: Background & Activities
- Importance of Volunteer Engagement
- Programming Examples
- Social Connections: A Shared FPT Priority
- Settlement Program Performance Measurement

IRCC's Approach to Settlement

- *Immigration and integration are areas of **shared jurisdiction** between the federal, provincial and territorial governments.*
- Canada's Settlement Program fulfills obligations under section 3.1(e) of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA)* to: "Promote the successful integration of permanent residents into Canada, while recognizing that integration involves mutual obligations for new immigrants and Canadian society."
- Settlement begins overseas and focuses on early years of immigration, prior to citizenship. Services are provided both pre- and post-arrival, through online resources, publications, in-person services, as well as through referrals to available community supports.
- Services are delivered through a network of partnerships in Canada and overseas.
 - IRCC selects these organizations through National Calls for Proposals and provides funding through contribution agreements.
 - For 2014-15, IRCC had almost 800 contribution agreements with more than 500 service providers in provinces and territories outside of Quebec.
 - Diverse organizations have a role to play in settlement delivery.
- Canada is a recognized leader in settlement yet challenges remain: Unemployment / underemployment, low language and literacy skills, and weak social and employment networks.
 - Barriers are particularly acute for vulnerable groups (e.g. refugees, youth).

Settlement Program Components



Key Stakeholders and Partners

Government Partners

- **Provinces and Territories (PTs)** fund complementary settlement services (e.g. language skills training, employment counselling services, skills development information, apprenticeship training in a skilled trade).
 - They are also responsible for education and health services where they spend considerable resources on integration related activities.
- **Municipalities** provide additional support services (e.g., housing, public transport, creation of public spaces).

Non-governmental stakeholders

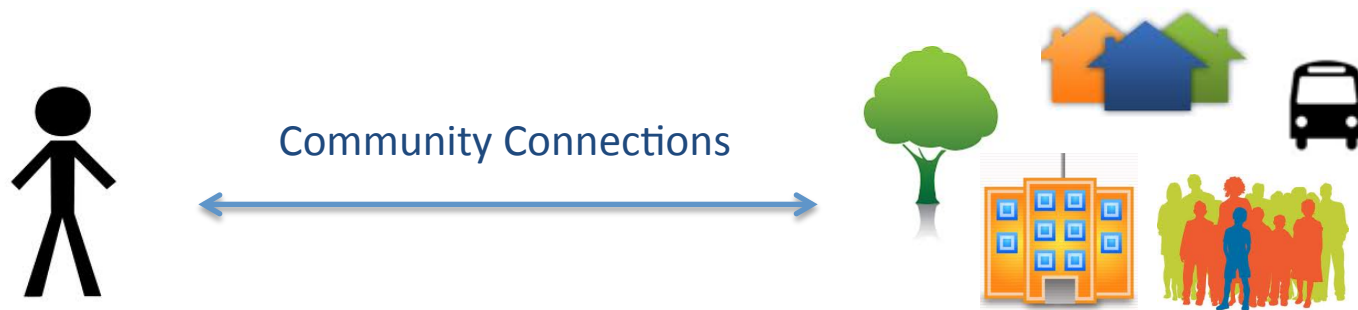
- **Service providers** deliver settlement services through contribution agreements with IRCC (e.g. non-profit organizations, public institutions, school boards, and post-secondary institutions).
- **Employers** play a critical role in fair access to jobs without discrimination
 - They provide support in qualification recognition and settlement services, such as collaborative settlement partnerships (e.g. Bridge to Work Program, Regional Immigrant Employment Councils).

Broader Partnerships

- **Partnerships** coordinate efforts in newcomer settlement and integration.
 - **Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs)** increase engagement of local stakeholders in newcomers' integration process, support community-level research and planning, and improve coordination of services.
 - **National Settlement Council** is IRCC's forum for engagement of settlement and integration stakeholders
 - Members who meet twice a year include umbrella organizations representing service providers, language sector representatives, P/T governments), and the Canadian Council for Refugees (CCR).

Integration is a Two-Way Street

IRCC recognizes that integration is a two-way process, requiring adjustment on the part of both newcomers and the communities in which they settle.



Newcomers:

- Act upon opportunities for participation
- Strive to contribute to community life within the context of Canadian laws and customs
- Help others in the community by volunteering their time

Communities:

- Openly receive newcomers and create an inclusive environment
- Strive to understand the needs of newcomers and provide access to a full range of services and programs
- Ensure newcomers are able to participate fully in all aspects of community life and Canadian society

Characteristics of a Welcoming Community

1. Presence of Newcomer-Serving Agencies that Can Successfully Meet the Needs of Newcomers
2. Social Engagement Opportunities
3. Opportunities for Use of Public Space and Recreation Facilities
4. Municipal Features and Services Sensitive to the Presence and Needs of Newcomers
5. Employment Opportunities
6. Positive Attitudes toward Immigrants, Cultural Diversity, and the Presence of Newcomers in the Community
7. Networks Within and Between Groups
8. Affordable and Suitable Housing
9. Links between Main Actors Working toward Welcoming Communities
10. Educational Opportunities
11. Safety
12. Accessible and Suitable Health Care
13. Available and Accessible Public Transit
14. Presence of Diverse Religious Organizations
15. Political Participation Opportunities
16. Positive Relationships with the Police and the Justice System
17. Favourable Media Coverage and Representation

Esses, V., Hamilton, LK, Bennett-AbuAyyash, C., Burstein, M.
Characteristics of a Welcoming Community, March 2010.

Community Connections: Background

Community Connections aims to build bridges between newcomers and communities

- This is a key component of the Settlement Program and an essential thread that influences all aspects of integration.
 - Projects are funded to support newcomers in making connections and forming networks within the various dimensions of Canadian society while also engaging communities to welcome newcomers and support their full participation.
 - This approach allows newcomers to develop a sense of belonging while enabling mainstream institutions and community members to better understand the contributions of newcomers and the challenges they face.
- Settlement Program expenditures for 2014-15 for Community Connections amounted to \$67.9M. A majority of service providers deliver some form of Community Connections programming as part of their Contribution Agreements with IRCC.

Community Connections: Activities

IRCC currently supports a range of different approaches based on client needs and local contexts in three areas of direct service delivery:

<p>Settlement Support in Public Institutions</p>	<p>Newcomers receive services in public spaces to improve access, address systemic barriers, and enhance the capacity of institutions to address the needs of newcomers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) and in-school settlement supports - Library Settlement Partnerships (LSP)
<p>Community-based Group Events & Activities</p>	<p>Newcomers participate in cross-cultural activities to develop a sense of attachment and belonging as they learn about their local community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sports and recreation events - Cultural and community events - Visits to key community sites - Neighbourhood celebrations
<p>Targeted Matching & Networking</p>	<p>Long-time Canadians and established immigrants volunteer to assist newcomers in need of settlement and integration support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conversation circles - Individual and group mentoring - Homework clubs - Youth leadership and engagement

Importance of Volunteer Engagement

- Community Connections owes its success to the support and commitment of community members.
- Relying in large part on dedicated volunteers, projects benefit from significant human, financial and in-kind resources contributed by established immigrants and long-time Canadians, local organizations, and public institutions.
- Committed engagement from the host community helps to lessen feelings of isolation and marginalization among newcomers.
- The involvement of culturally-competent volunteers from the host community also provides newcomers with access to 'bridging social capital' through more diverse networks, which translates into settlement success in other areas, such as cultural competence and labour market access.

Settlement Support in Public Institutions

IRCC-funded Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) and in-school supports include a mix of services designed to meet newcomer needs. SWIS has been successful in:

- Serving the whole family and ensuring that everyone is drawn into the settlement continuum with institutions, such as schools, functioning as a mini welcome centre.
- Reaching vulnerable populations, namely at-risk youth and families without networks of support.
- Tailoring specialized services to be culturally-appropriate and meet individual needs.
- Improving cross-cultural understanding between all parties and enhancing capacity of teachers and the school system to address opportunities and challenges.
- For example, students:
 - ✓ Know how to navigate the school and understand daily routines, including extracurricular activities, school policies and the system in general.
 - ✓ Possess greater awareness of ways to get involved in school, thereby reducing feelings of vulnerability and isolation.
 - ✓ Make friends and acquaintances, and form networks of support. Students report reduced stress/anxiety about the transition and access to broader social circles.
 - ✓ Connect with their local library, community centre and other services.

Community-based Group Events & Activities

Service providers deliver a variety of innovative programming to respond to local needs. This may include family days, field trips to important local places, cultural celebrations and performances, storytelling projects, and recreational events including The Community Cup.

- The Community Cup event started in Ottawa in 2005 as a small soccer tournament for newcomers, organized by the Catholic Centre for Immigrants.
 - The goal is to connect newcomers to established immigrants and long-time Canadians and to celebrate Ottawa as a welcoming community.
 - Over the years it has developed into a community festival with over 2,000 visitors and a team of up to 150 volunteers.
- The Community Cup welcomes, connects, and integrates newcomers to the community through sport and volunteerism.
 - The Community Cup promotes healthy living, cultural sharing, network building, civic engagement in a fun way!
 - An annual soccer tournament takes place during the last weekend of June.
- Highlights include:
 - 64 teams playing co-ed recreational soccer, starting at age 7 and up.
 - Community Tent hosting 25 Ottawa-area non-profit and community service organizations.
 - Interactive demonstrations organized by various clubs/groups to try out new sports for all abilities and find out how to get involved.
 - Citizenship Ceremony where visitors can witness how Canada welcomes newcomers.
 - Multicultural entertainment, music and food.

Targeted Matching & Networking

Facilitating meaningful opportunities for cross-cultural interaction and learning provides essential guidance and support to newcomers early in their settlement process.

- Needs-based Mentoring: Newcomers are paired with Canadian citizens or established immigrants for cross-cultural learning and assistance with a wide range of settlement issues.
- Coaching & Networking: Newcomers engage with professional and social contacts to expand their networks and make new connections to promote labour market access.
- Presentations, Workshops and Discussion Forums: Newcomers participate in facilitated sessions to acquire knowledge and skills to facilitate integration.
- Conversation Circles & Workplace Language Learning: Newcomers develop their English and/or French language skills with peers and facilitator(s) outside of the traditional classroom setting.
- Homework Clubs and After School Programs: Newcomers receive support with school work and engage in recreational and developmental projects.
- Youth Leadership and Peer Support Activities: Newcomers develop life skills and community leadership capacity, and valuable volunteer experience.

Social Connections: A Shared FPT Priority

Newcomers need support to understand their host community, form lasting social connections, and contribute to life in Canada. Social networks are critical for sharing information, language learning, finding accommodation and jobs, circulating goods and services, encouraging civic participation, and providing psychological assistance.

Helping Immigrants Succeed: A Federal-Provincial-Territorial (FPT) Action Plan

- In June 2010, FPT Deputy Ministers (DMs) tasked the FPT Settlement Working Group with developing a pan-Canadian framework for settlement, as well as collecting data on settlement outcomes.
- The Pan-Canadian Settlement Outcomes Survey was administered by BC Statistics to over 20,000 newcomers nationally in 2012. The results of the survey were used to develop a roadmap for improved outcomes.
- FPT DMs ultimately approved the roadmap and requested that the FPT Settlement Working Group focus on improving outcomes in four areas:
 1. Employment/Foreign Qualification Recognition (FQR)
 2. Official Languages for Newcomers Outside the Labour Force
 - 3. Social Connections**
 4. External Engagement

Settlement Program Performance Measurement

- A Performance Measurement Strategy (PM Strategy) was developed in 2013, and includes a revised logic model, indicators, and general evaluation approach for the Settlement Program.
- IRCC is currently implementing its PM strategy and develops tools to measure results:
 - Usage of services is tracked in a comprehensive database (iCARE) that captures a record of all services delivered to clients.
 - IRCC is developing an outcome survey that will allow reporting on the impact of settlement services for clients.
 - The survey will assess client outcomes based on expected results (increased knowledge/understanding → modified behaviour → better integration).
 - The survey will be implemented in 2015-16.
- The Settlement Program Evaluation will be completed by March 2017.
 - It will cover settlement services (direct, indirect, program development & management) over 5-year period (from 2011-12 to 2016-17) with a focus on client outcomes.

Annex A – Settlement Program Logic Model

