

CREATING WELCOMING COMMUNITIES FOR NEWCOMER YOUTH

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INTRODUCTION

Federal policies related to immigration and refugees have the greatest impact at the local level, in schools, communities, agencies, housing developments and neighborhoods (Sandercock, 2009; Stewart, 2011).

Canadian cities, from large urban to small urban centers across the country, have experienced different trends in immigration during the past decade and each have developed different educational, social, politic and economic strategies to respond to their changing demographics .

Newcomer's social and economic inclusion as well as the complexity and sustainability of immigration programs have become critical issues faced by both newcomers and local communities.

CONCLUSIONS

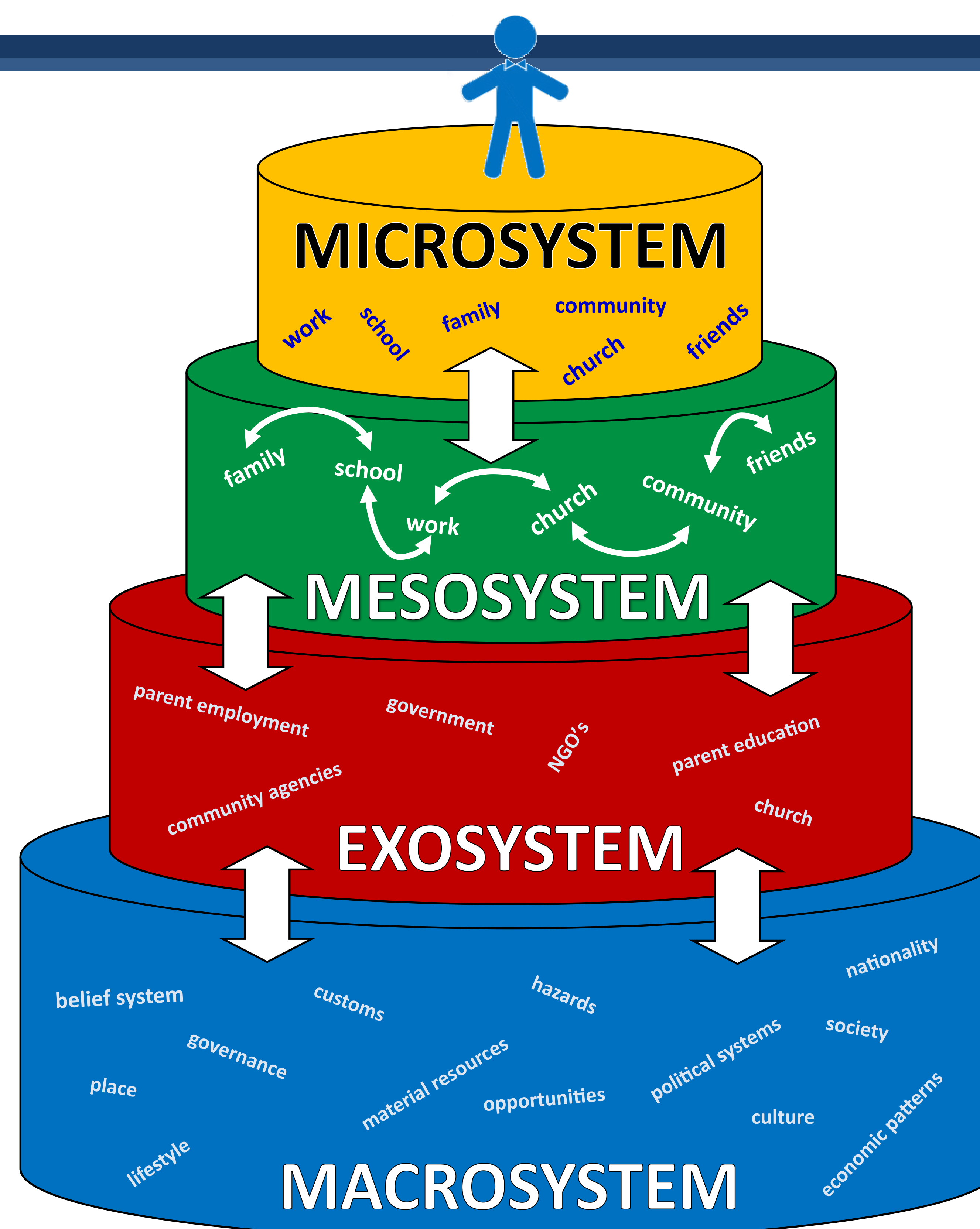
As diversity within the community continues to grow, greater civic engagement is needed between schools, community organizations, newcomer support services and governmental institutions to build supportive, cooperative partnerships that lead to a welcoming environment for all.

These shifting demographics in Canadian classrooms call for widespread comprehensive teacher and counsellor preparation programs to better prepare these professionals to play an integral role in transforming current education systems into inclusive and socially just learning communities that are culturally responsive to the unique needs of children from diverse backgrounds.

These changes that lead to inclusive learning communities built upon a foundation of community engagement create more welcoming schools, and more welcoming communities.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model



PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this research is to investigate the integration of immigrant and refugee students systemically through the comparative analysis of programs and services that support individuals and groups in the schools and the communities of four Canadian cities: Calgary, Winnipeg, Charlottetown, and St. John's. This research addresses the following questions:

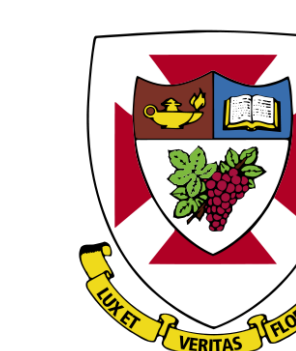
1. What are the best programs and practices of building welcoming communities for newcomer children and youth in the four cities?
2. How to improve the policy, programs, services, and support mechanisms in each city to enhance the social/cultural/economic inclusion of the newcomer students and their families?
3. What are the needs of schools and educators to provide culturally responsive career services for newcomer youth?

PARTNERS



University of Prince Edward Island

- PEI Department of Education



University of Winnipeg

- Manitoba Education
- Newcomers Employment and Education Development Services



UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

University of Calgary

- Calgary Bridge Foundation

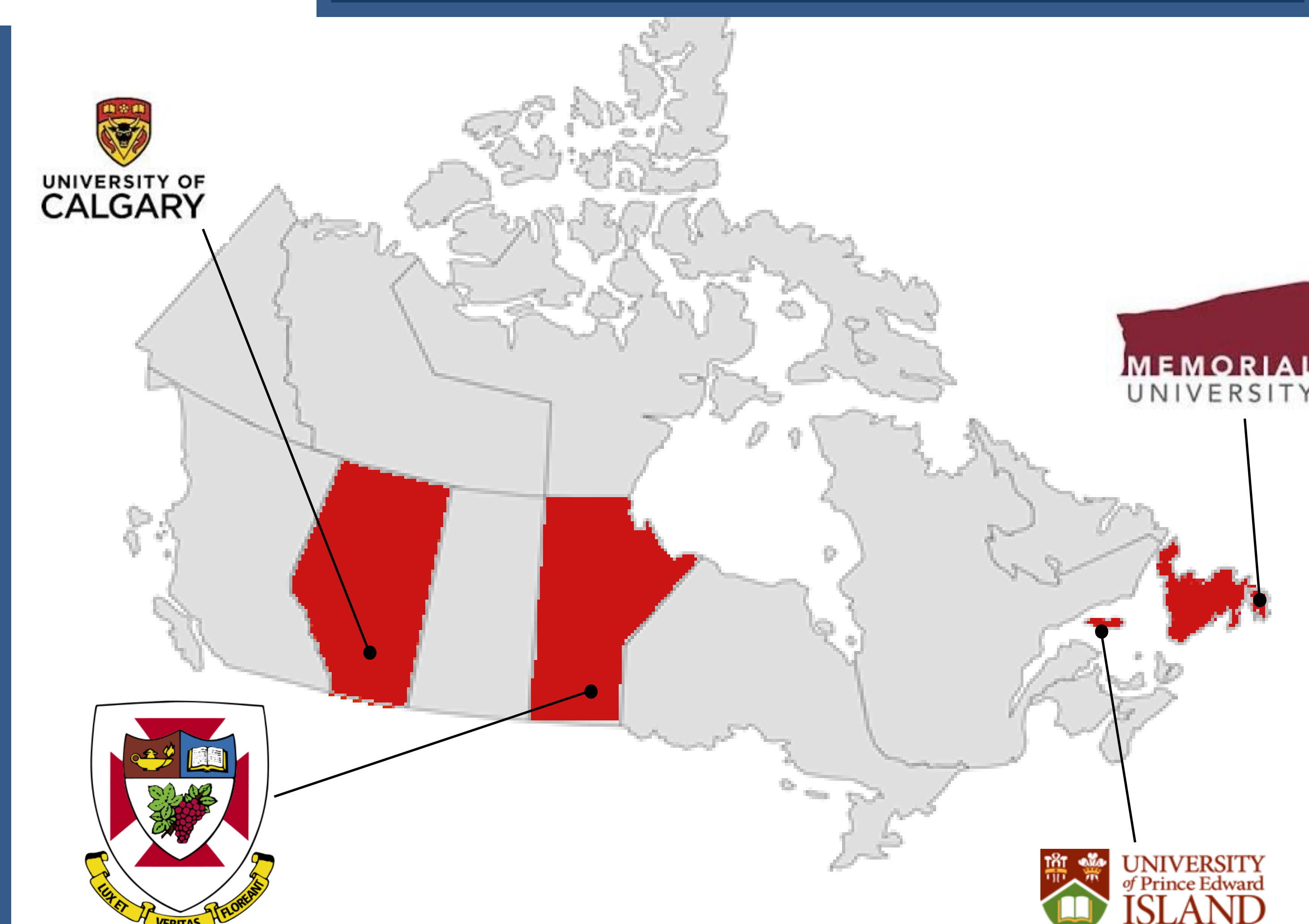


Memorial University

- Coalition of Richer Diversity

FINDINGS FROM PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

- Settlement services are centralized under one service provider in PEI and much appreciated by newcomers.
- The local community is not well informed of federal/provincial policies and motivations on immigration/refugee
- Greater efforts needed by governments to inform the local community of the benefits and impact of newcomer populations to local economy and diversity
- There is a significant disconnection between the educational system and local communities/organizations in supporting newcomers, particular refugees
- Newcomers in PEI find the community friendly but not welcoming
- Newcomers face "glass walls" and struggle for social and economic inclusion
- A wide range of actors are involved in supporting newcomers' social/economic integration but little coordination exists for these efforts
- Newcomer parents find it challenging to become involved in schools
- All youth in PEI take a career exploration course in grade 10, but culturally responsive career counselling service is mainly provided by PEIANC, not schools
- Newcomer youth's social inclusion within schools and communities is a shared concern by teachers, students, and parents
- Local community members have misconceptions and fear towards newcomers and some local businesses are reluctant to employ newcomers



FUNDING SPONSORS



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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