# Culturally Responsive Child and Family Support Services for Newcomers

## A Saskatoon Case Study

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# Background

- Saskatoon experiences a sudden, unexpected increase in cultural diversity resulting in culture shock: "a sense of confusion and uncertainty sometimes with feelings of anxiety that may affect people exposed to an alien culture or environment without adequate preparation" (Merriam-Webster, 2018).

- Increase in immigration has a significant positive impact on the province's economy (Parkouda, 2013), but community faces challenges associated with longer-term integration of Newcomer families and the sudden experience of diversity.

- External and internal challenges to Newcomer family members' ntegration calls for a systematic support system that will also support the overall wellbeing of the community.

# Research Questions:

How do mid-level leaders of Saskatoon's community service provider organizations perceive the importance of cross-cultural responsiveness in supporting the cultural integration of Newcomer families?

► **Present state of cultural responsiveness in community service delivery** : What do you perceive as your role and the best means of developing culturally responsive service delivery in Saskatoon's increasingly multicultural community?

► **Current support strategies, tools, and resources for culturally responsive child and family service delivery:** Existing needs assessment process and procedures; available supports, tools, and resources; successes and challenges

► **Future Strategies for developing cross-cultural responsiveness/ integration:** What further strategies might support the healthy integration of Newcomer families into the local community?

# Literature

▶ **Complexity in a Culturally Diverse Community** : nature and benefit of community, social capital.

▶ **Community development and strategies in a changing environment** : contingency theory, change management, system thinking, learning community.

▶ **Leadership development for facilitating community development in a changing environment** : the role of midlevel leaders.

# Methodological Processes

➤ **Qualitative research**, **interview method**, data analysis within a social constructivist framework.

➤ **Criteria used to select participants** :  2 volunteer participants with mid-level leadership experience from 4 sectors, each providing a different angle to research data.

  - Newcomer child and family support service providers

  - Community child and family support service providers

  - School-related child and family support service providers

  - Advocacy-related child and family support service providers

# Methodological Complexities

- "There is no single interpretive truth. " (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011)

- Awareness of the researcher's personal and professional background and experience.

- Focus on Newcomer child and family support services led to broader topics such as systemic community capacity building, which were beyond scope of the research.

- Importance of recognizing the efforts that have already been made to support Newcomer family members, despite the negative focus of many of the participants' responses.

# Research Results



Capacity Building for Culturally Responsive
Service Delivery for Newcomer Children and Families

Capacity building for expanding community awareness and responsiveness

Capacity building for leadership development

Capacity building for educational preparedness

Capacity building for culturally responsive resource development

Capacity building for consistent policies and procedures

**Upgraded education for front-line professionals and community service providers :**

- Post-secondary schools, universities, colleges
- Professional development
- Cross-sectoral learning exchanges and field placements

**Capacity Building for Educational Preparedness**

**Education for Newcomer family members:**

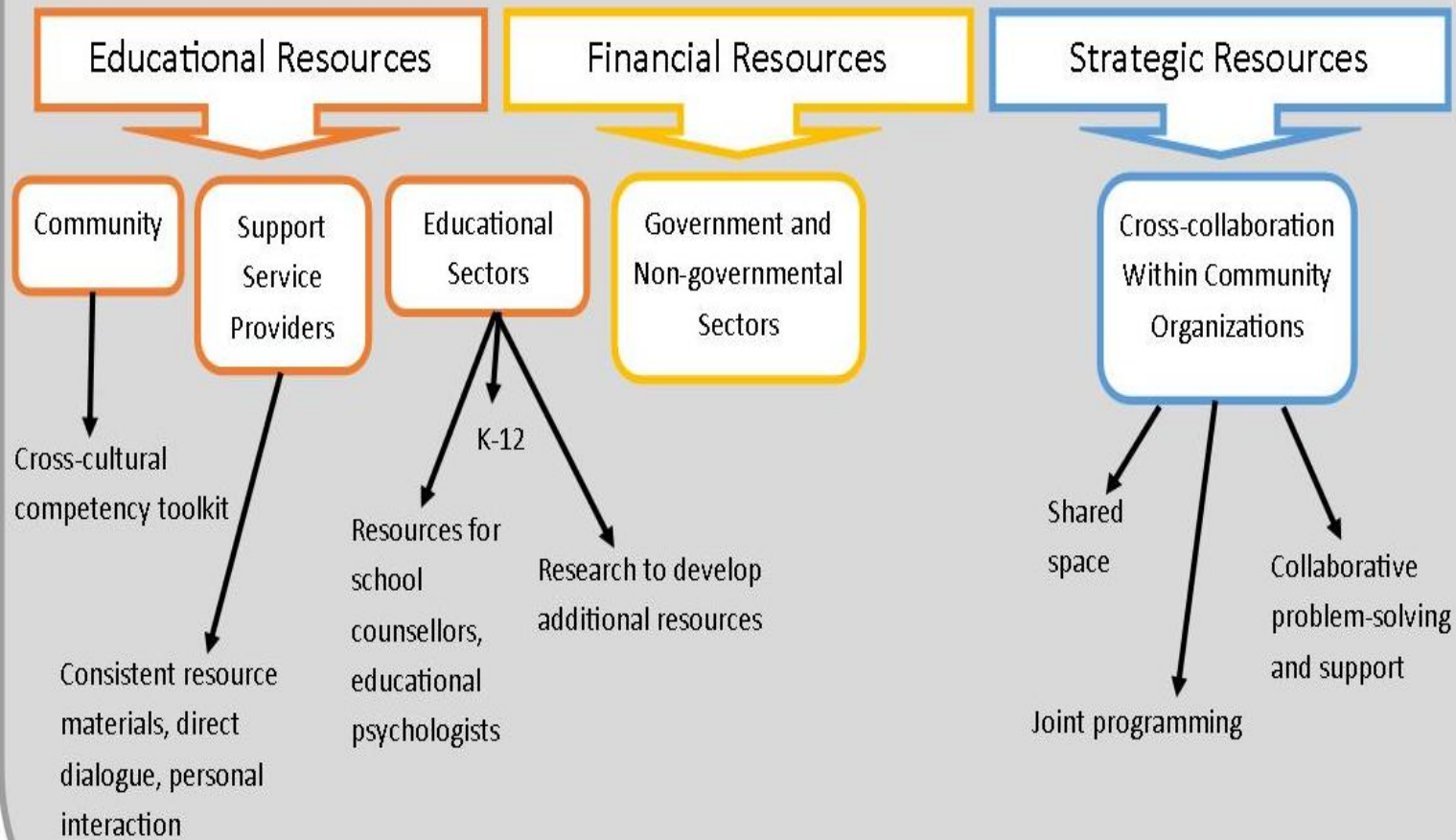- Canadian values and individual family members' rights and responsibilities

**Education for community members:**

- Informal educational workshops, lunch and learn, etc.
- Cross-learning among communities through positive community exposure (special events and celebrations)
- Cross-learning though shared resources amongst community organizations

# Areas for Future Research

▶ The leadership role (and the impact of leaders' cross-cultural awareness) in directing and managing change under conditions of a rapid increase in diversity.

▶ Effective leadership strategies based on informed decision-making to move front-line staff and professionals in the right direction and keep them engaged.

▶ Leadership support for expanding formal and informal educational resources and strategies as well progressive developments in policies and procedures.

# Thank You!