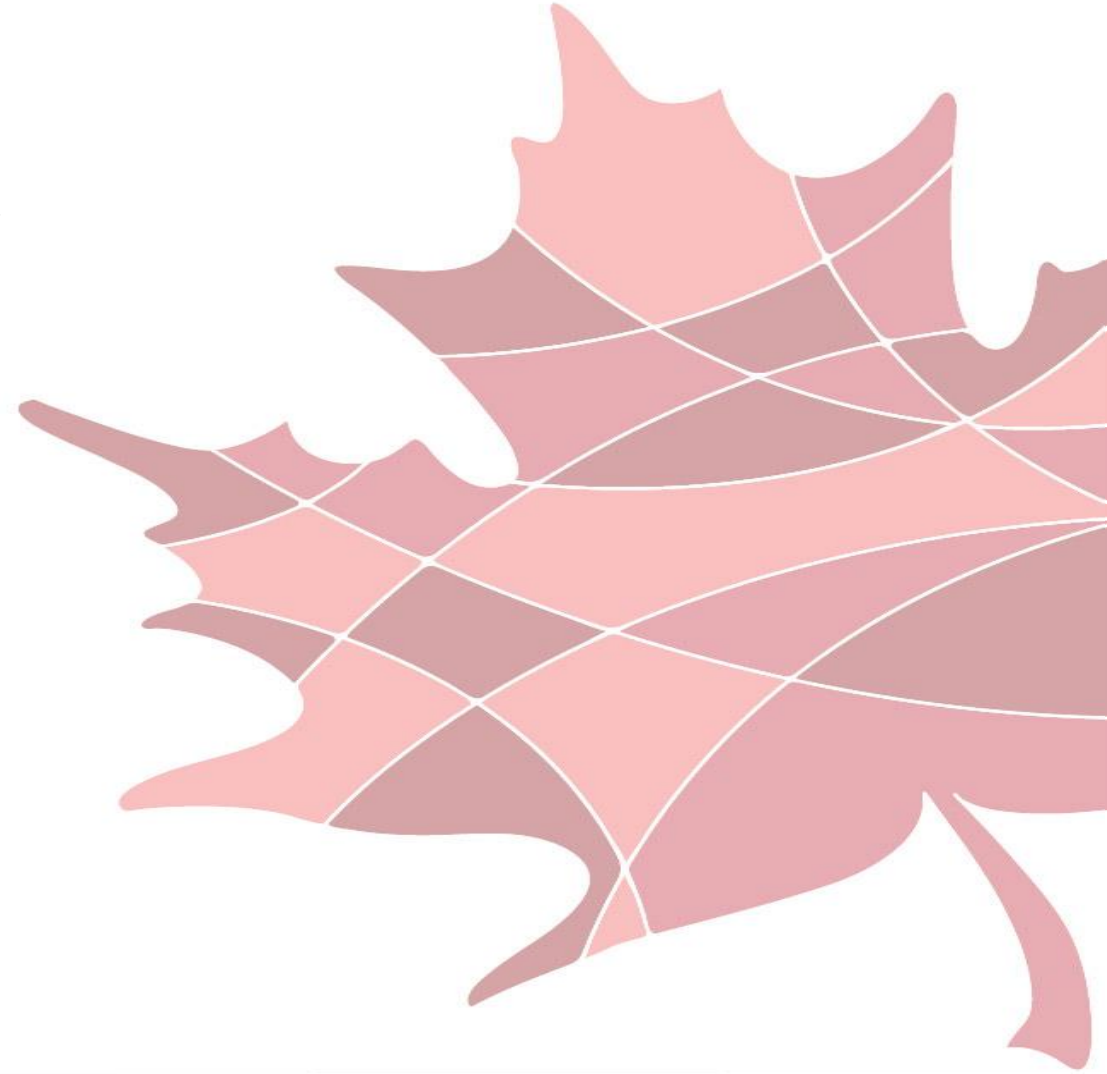# Service Delivery Improvement (SDI) Key Learnings

Settlement and Integration Policy
Fall 2022

Settlement Delivery Improvement (SDI) At A Glance

What is it?
A dedicated funding stream of over $30M each year to build evidence for what works in improving outcomes and increasing the effectiveness of the Settlement Program. First projects launched in 2018.

High-Level Snapshot:

➢ First cohort: 102 funded projects providing SDI reporting.

➢ All projects from the first cohort ended on or before March 31, 2022.

➢ Second cohort: 80 projects with all projects to end no later than March 31, 2024.

Priorities for First SDI intake

1. Language acquisition
2. Employment
3. Youth supports
4. Harnessing volunteers & supporting capacity building
5. Pay-for-performance
6. Newcomer well-being and programming to support vulnerable clients
7. Research and analysis to drive innovation &/or understand user experience

Policy Design of current SDI Process - Lessons Learned and Applied

Current SDI (2ⁿᵈ intake) designed to reflect key lessons learned from the first Intake:

More focus on key concepts with strong potential for improving the Sector

Less emphasis on base Settlement streams and more on broad sector issues.

Stronger focus on outcomes measurement and earlier identification of promising practices

via the mandatory performance measurement framework (PMF)

Enhanced focus on comparative research

In order to develop stronger evidence, all projects must feature at least a basic test and must be focused on research rather than direct service delivery.

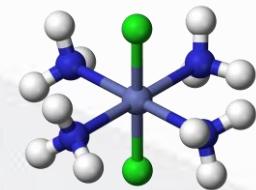**Mandatory mid-project and final third-party evaluation**

To validate project achievements and support design of CFP 2024

Key Findings from SDI

AN OVERVIEW

What do the results of completed SDI projects suggest to us for future planning?

What do we hope to learn from current SDI projects?

Centralized/Coordinated Needs & Assets Assessments & Referrals (NAARs)

Could centralized/coordinated NAARs improve some settlement outcomes?

Client-Centric: Allows for a more holistic, client-first approach to service referral and settlement planning, streamlining how clients are connected to both IRCC-funded and other community service providers (ie: housing, health, employment, community centres).

More Effective and Efficient Service Delivery: Shared data on the needs of newcomers across the community creates new opportunities to identify and address chronic and emerging needs/gaps/ opportunities, while reducing data duplication and eliminating the need for service delivery SPOs to also manage intake processes.

Ensuring Clients Receive the Appropriate Services at the Right Time: Centralized NAARs can allow for triaging of high-functioning clients to mainstream services while ensuring high-need clients receive more tailored SPO supports.

Enhanced Newcomer Integration: A focus on assets (in addition to needs), not only better connects newcomers to their community and promotes a whole of society approach to settlement but can positively influence newcomer mental health.

LINKAGES: Coordinated NAARs is also being field-tested in PNT region now, via CFP 2019 Base project.
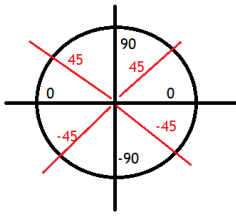
360 Degree Supports

A 360 degree approach (holistic, whole-of-person) is important to overcome barriers, particularly for newcomers experiencing multiple conditions of vulnerability.

Easier Access: Providing multiple supports to clients within a single location eases access. In particular, providing targeted supports within a community neighbourhood (i.e., a community based support worker) can be very effective.

Support for Newcomers Experiencing Vulnerability: ie, targeted 360 degree supports for the older vulnerable youth population in collaboration with teachers/school boards and employers to facilitate completing high school and the transition into the workforce and community showed good results.

Timely access (within the first 3 years) is important: Delays in access to childcare, language and employment classes results in less independence and more reliance on resource intensive direct supports over the long term rather than fostering capacity and skills to navigate on their own.

LINKAGES: Case Management approaches, Insights for Youth Programming, NAARs

Digital Technology

COVID pivots revealed that online service delivery improved access and reduced barriers for some clients.

Online and in-person services should be complementary (hybrid): Self-directed, online activities can provide excellent value due to their low cost per client but tend to be most effective with clients at higher CLB levels.

Synchronous elements (learning together) are fundamental to learner engagement and a successful online learning experience: However, E-learning tools should likely follow industry approved content rules (i.e. Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) compliant or Xapi etc).

Enhancing SPO Digital Capacity: Increased online service delivery will require digital literacy training among SPO staff (as well as consideration on how to manage/assess proposals to fund technology and platforms.)

Digital messaging as a valuable tool: Digital messaging can be an inexpensive and simple way to engage with and provide information to clients, but SPOs need to consider client preferences, data protection/privacy and process issues.

Opportunities for Centralized Digital Delivery: Certain core Settlement information could be delivered digitally, via a centralized organization that can remain up-to-date on technology and provide the support for local agencies needed to implement digital messaging successfully.

LINKAGES:

Current SDI technology stream projects.

Mental Health & Wellbeing

Well developed community connections programming is an essential aspect of well-being and successful settlement.

Recognizing Adjustment Related Stress: Many newcomers are suffering from adjustment related stress and not clinical mental health conditions. This perspective should be integrated into newcomer programming.

Strength-based approaches are effective: A client's need for attachment and contribution to their new community can be achieved by leveraging their existing assets and skills, while also promoting a whole of society approach to supporting newcomers in their settlement journey. (note alignment to NAARs)

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT:
The Refugee and Newcomers Emotional Wellness (ReNEW) Partnership for Best Practice:

This project examined mental health and emotional wellness issues and provisions across multiple front-line immigrant serving agencies in western Canada.

Outcomes Measurement and SPO Capacity Building

A recurring theme among several SDI projects is the need for coordinated capacity building and improvements in data/information management.

Consider creating a **standardized approach to sector capacity building and knowledge sharing,** with support from key organizations that have expertise in these activities.

Potential area of focus for CFP2024: prioritize collaboration and knowledge sharing between sector agencies.

SDI current cohort includes capacity building as key priority area.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT:
LIFT - Better Beginnings, Bigger Impact.

This project helped to build the capacity and professionalism of 10 SPO organizations. Findings -- Transformational change requires: change management, willingness to learn from experimentation and testing new approaches, effective measurement to improve outcomes and ensure effective allocation of resources, and a cohort approach encourages collaboration.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Projects repeatedly found that approaches with client-centred design resulted in program development that was better received/more useful for newcomer clients.

Benefits of Client-Centred Design and Collective Impact Approaches: More engagement with and collaboration between clients, stakeholders and community members in all stages of program design can generate more focused, equitable and effective programming that addresses specific client needs.

Importance of Health and Settlement Agency Collaboration: More collaboration between the health and settlement sectors is needed to deliver health and mental health services in a gender-, race-, and culture-sensitive framework.

Tailored programming for newcomer women remains a gap: Various projects that perpetuate the stereotypical gender norms and roles didn't demonstrate success -- and may continue to limit the opportunities of newcomer women at varying stages in their professional pursuits.

Importance of Tailored Programming for LGBTQ2 Communities: Where possible, service options for different LGBTQ2 communities should be tailored/unique to each unique group (ie: lesbian, gay men, trans-women, trans-men, etc.)

LINKAGES:
SDI current cohort included Capacity Building and Anti-Racism priority stream.

Collective Impact Model for Gender Equity/GBA+ and anti-racism research launched under SDI in Sept. 2022. (via RFQ)

Employment

There is a need for employers to provide a more welcoming environment for newcomers in the workplace… But most do not see this as their role.

Strong demand for employment readiness programs: There is demand in all regions for programming that provides initial skills and readiness training to newcomers. Online modular delivery can offer consistent and efficient training to newcomers across the country.

Importance of Ensuring that the Employment Supports are Appropriate for the Client: Entrepreneur programs **inappropriately targeted high-need clients**. Employment supports for low CLB clients appeared mostly ineffective, and possibly a workplace safety risk, when not supported by a wrap-around (whole of person) approach.

More research and policy work is needed to **strike the right balance** when offering language training in the workplace, particularly for low-CLB levels.

Administrative burden of mentorship programming can be high for individual SPOs.

Importance of A Strengths/Assets Approach: Interventions that shifted from a mentor-apprentice relationship to a more equitable engagement based on information exchange were preferred by newcomers and mentors.

LINKAGES: SDI current-cohort is testing approaches to increase employer engagement in newcomer settlement and integration.
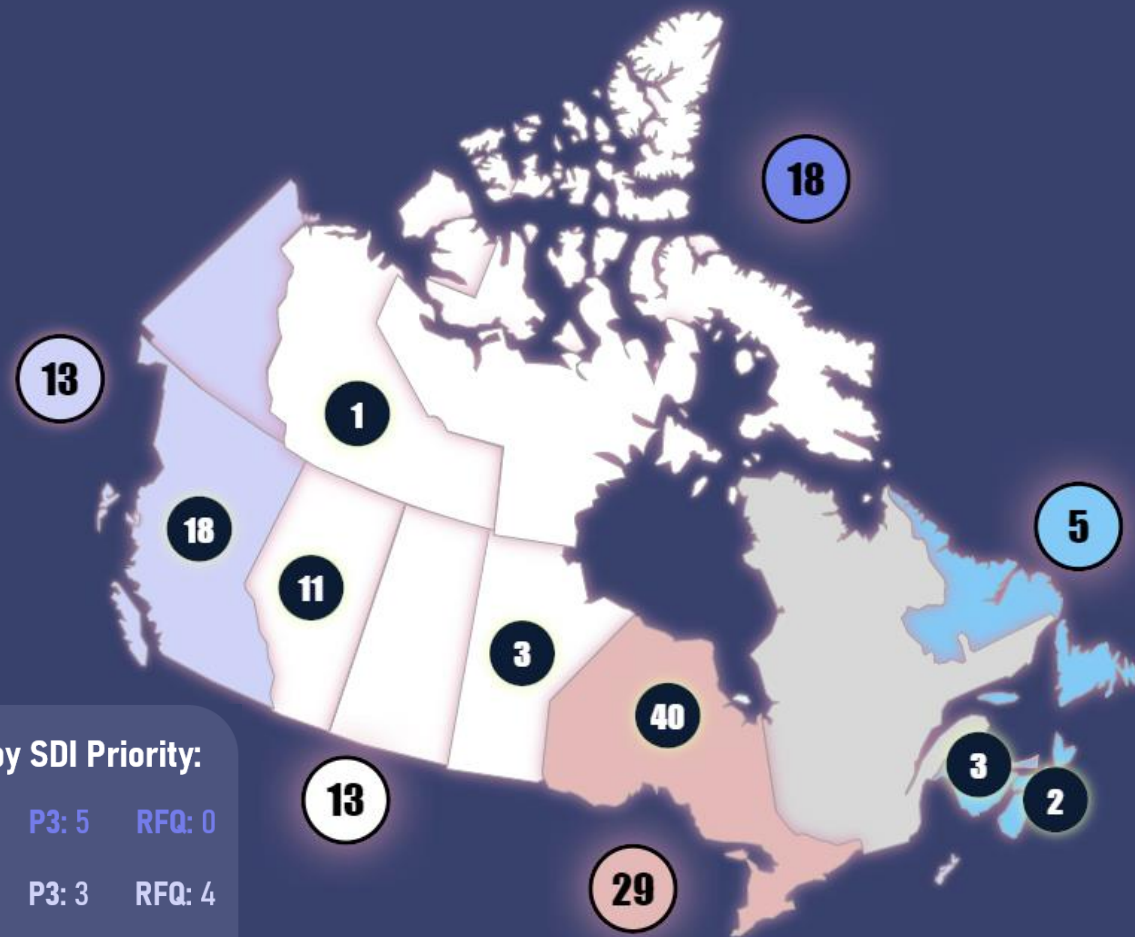
Francophone Minority Communities

Holistic (360 Degree) Services: Several projects delivered holistic, bespoke settlement services (360 degree supports) with dedicated service coordinators/case managers for newcomers with complex settlement barriers.

Capacity Building for Effective FMC service Delivery: Many Franco SPOs lack basic infrastructure and resources for running an effective volunteer program. For SPO staff, IRCC could consider applying minimum qualifications for working in the Sector

Cultural Barriers to Settlement Success: French-speaking immigrants, who cannot work due to a lack of foreign credential recognition, experience a dual barrier to settlement (education credentials acceptance issues and regulatory bodies do not necessarily operate in both official languages.

A Few Examples

from completed and ongoing SDI projects

Completed SDI project: FOCUS ON NAARS
# HIGHLIGHTED PROJECT: YMCA of Southwestern Ontario

YMCA of Southwestern Ontario – *K2 System*

- Designed a cloud-based, customized client management system that allows service providers to streamline the initial assessment and referral of newcomer clients. The system uses an advanced algorithm to align newcomer needs and assets with all available community resources.

- Client needs and assets are analyzed to make linkages to services, supports, clubs or volunteer/paid opportunities in the community. This allows the broader community (SPOs and other community supports, services or volunteer opportunities, etc.) to respond in real time and makes service delivery more effective and efficient.

Completed SDI project - FOCUS ON YOUTH: SPOTLIGHT: Burnaby School District
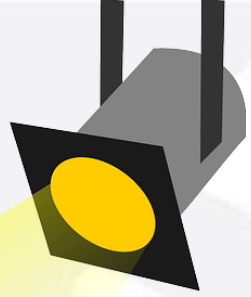
Burnaby School District – ***The Burnaby Youth Wraparound Project***

- Focus on addressing settlement service gaps with 18-24 year old vulnerable refugee/immigrant youth, who arrived recently to Canada, by providing them with comprehensive wraparound services tailored to their individual unique needs.

- The Project contains on-going wrap-around settlement support, which means it coordinates various services around newcomers in a personalized and holistic way to help them succeed. It also includes post-secondary orientation, employment counselling, volunteering opportunities and psychological support.

- The Burnaby Youth Wraparound Project special emphasis is on vulnerable at-risk immigrant and refugee youth, who are out of schools without graduation or who are currently in grade 12 without prospect of graduation and who require support in achieving their goals in education, employment, and settlement.

Completed SDI Project - ON EMPLOYMENT:
SPOTLIGHT: IEC of BC: Employment 101 / ASCEND Program:

Immigrant Employment Council of British Columbia (IECBC) –
Employment 101 / ASCEND Program

- Addresses gaps in the employment readiness of newcomers, with online content framed around real life employer and newcomer workplace experiences.

- This project tests a interactive training program in partnership with industry representatives, BC employers and immigration SPOs to facilitate labour market attachment through a standardized program.

- The program blends online and in-person learning, and focuses on supporting key essential skill competencies identified bringing an industry lens to the training. Project will create an employment readiness training model, strengthen and build SPO capacity to implement the program and leverage and build upon existing labour market programs, services and initiatives. Blend of on-line and in person training.

IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL OF BC **IEC**BC

Examples of SDI projects from Priority 1:
Leveraging Technology to Support Remote Service Delivery

A.C.C.E.S. – *Artificial Intelligence and the Settlement Sector (ON)*

This project evaluates the effectiveness of an AI-driven chatbot to:
- Improve access to relevant information and services
- Provide relevant and timely referrals to employment and other services
- Equip newcomers with customized automated e-learning assignment

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society –
Evaluated Blended Delivery of Crisis Counselling
to Vulnerable Newcomers (AB)

- A blended model tests against CCIS' in-person delivery of crisis counselling and against the fully on-line delivery during the pandemic.
- The project identifies challenges and benefits of both in-person and on-line models, determining whether a blended approach increases the number of clients accessing and benefitting from crisis counselling services

Examples of SDI Projects from Priority 2:
Increasing Employer Involvement in Settlement Services

Immigrant Employment Council of BC - *Engaging Small and Medium Enterprises: National Business Networks and Local Design Perspectives*

- Working with Small and Medium Enterprises across Canada through interactive design labs, this project co-creates and tests solutions improving access, hiring, training and retention of newcomer talent.
- Activities have deepened employer engagement and investment in the settlement process.

The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce – *Newcomer Employment Hub (MB)*

- The project tests various methods of employer engagement and capacity building for hiring and retaining newcomer employees, assessing which have the most significant impact on improving newcomer employment connections and participation in the Canadian labor market.

Examples of SDI projects from Priority 3:
Supporting Sector Resilience and Adaptability and Enhancing Anti-Racism Capacity

Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (NS)
Improving Newcomer Sense of Belonging in Atlantic Canadian Communities Through Increasing SPO Capacity in Social Research & Development and Building Evidence (NS)

- This project develops the capacity of Francophone and Anglophone IRCC funded agencies in the Atlantic Region to conduct Social R&D and outcomes measurements through a participative learning approach aimed at improving newcomer sense of belonging.

The Regional Diversity Roundtable (ON)
Building Inclusive Practices and Developing Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Program

- This project is developing the capacity of settlement service providers and employers, in the Peel Region, to include Anti-Racist Anti-Oppressive-Diversity, Equity and Inclusion competency in their service delivery and businesses.
- Through this project, RDR is developing standards, tools, and resources that would support building inclusive practices of frontline settlement staff, support sectors, and diverse newcomer communities.

14

Examples of projects from Priority 4:
Developing Models of Community-based Plans for Settlement Service Delivery and Funding

Conseil de développement économique des Territoires du Nord-Ouest's *Coordination et amelioration des services d'etablissement dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest*
- This project is developing a community based plan that considers the needs of communities and newcomers on a regional scale to:
  - Reduce perceived and existing sources of exclusion experienced by rural communities outside of Yellowknife
  - Strengthen the integration pathway for immigrants across the NWT

Catholic Cross-cultural Services *Scarborough Newcomer Settlement Collective*
- The project is developing a model for community based funding that creates a closer connection to community needs via a system for collecting timely and localized data that empowers stakeholders and funders to be more inclusive, equitable and targeted in their funding decisions.

Discussion Questions