Measuring and Promoting Welcoming Communities: Updated Characteristics and A New Set of Toolkits

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What Is A Welcoming Community?

- A welcoming community is a collective effort to design and sustain a place where immigrants feel that they belong and that supports immigrants' economic, socio-cultural, and civic-political integration

- A welcoming community has structures, processes, and practices in place to meet the needs and promote the inclusion of immigrants in all aspects of life, and actively works to ensure that these are effective

Two Toolkits

Measuring Welcoming Communities

Promoting Welcoming Communities

A Five Step Approach for Working Toward Welcoming Communities

1. Assessment of the current state of the community – Toolkit I

2. Creation of short-term and long-term goals – Toolkit I

3. Implementation (adjustment) of policies and programs that are designed to target gaps and weaknesses and work toward the goals – Toolkit II

4. Systematic research to evaluate the effectiveness of these policies and programs – Toolkit I

5. Ongoing assessment of the state of the community – Toolkit I, and feedback to Step 2

Toolkit I

Measuring Welcoming Communities

→ Characteristics of a Welcoming Community

→ Indicators for Each Characteristic

Toolkit I: Measuring Welcoming Communities – Available in Both English and French

- A **presentation deck** to facilitate conversations within a community

- **Tool 1** – A set of questions that can be used to conduct an environmental scan and identify crucial features of a community that may influence approaches to assessing and working toward a more welcoming community

- **Tool 2** – A checklist to rank order the importance of the 19 characteristics for a given community and determine which are a priority for measurement

- **Tool 3** – A checklist to choose which indicators will be used to assess selected characteristics and what comparisons will be made using these indicators

Characteristics of a Welcoming Community

- What characteristics make a community welcoming?

- Importance of each characteristic to a given community will vary somewhat

- Characteristics are likely to be mutually reinforcing and may interact in building upon or reducing the impact of each alone

- Characteristics must take into account the needs of multi-barriered immigrants (e.g., racialized women, youth, seniors, 2SLGBTQI+, refugees, immigrants with disabilities)

19 Characteristics of a Welcoming Community

Cluster A

- Access to Affordable, Adequate, and Suitable Housing

- Employment and Entrepreneurship Opportunities

- Access to Suitable Health Care, including Mental Health Care

- Positive Attitudes Toward Immigrants of All Racial, Cultural and Religious Backgrounds

- Access to Immigrant-Serving Agencies that Meet Immigrants' Needs

19 Characteristics of a Welcoming Community

Cluster B

- Access to Transportation

- Educational Opportunities

- Ongoing Commitment to Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression

- Access to Services and Supports for French-Speaking Immigrants by French Speakers

- Immigrant-Responsive Municipal Features and Services

19 Characteristics of a Welcoming Community

Cluster C

- Coordination and Collaboration Among Community Organizations and Different Levels of Government Working Toward Welcoming Communities

- Equitable Neighbourhoods

- Opportunities to Form and Join Social and Community Networks

- Immigrant-Responsive Police Services and Justice System

- Access to Inclusive Public Spaces, Facilities, and Programs

- Positive Indigenous-Immigrant Relations and Understanding

- Access to Diverse Religious and Ethnocultural Organizations

- Civic and Political Participation Opportunities

- Equitable Media Coverage, Representation, and Content

Indicators for the Characteristics

- Indicators are quantitative and qualitative measures that can be used to assess the level of each characteristic in a community

- It is essential to examine multiple indicators for each characteristic
    - Some indicators can be measured objectively
    - Some indicators will be based on perceptions
    - Both are important

Indicators for the Characteristics

- Meaningful comparisons are necessary
  - Comparisons to non-immigrants in the community
  - Comparisons to previous cohorts of immigrants in the community
  - Comparisons to other communities or to provincial/territorial averages
  - Comparisons before and after new initiatives are implemented
  - Comparisons among different groups of immigrants, including multi-barriered groups

Access to Affordable, Adequate, and Suitable Housing

- Housing affordability: percent of before tax household income (from all sources) spent on housing (aiming for less than 30%)
- Availability of subsidized, non-profit, and co-op housing
- Available housing is of adequate quality (e.g., not in need of major repairs or renovations; no infestations)
- Evidence of overcrowded housing (based on age, sex/gender, and number of household members)
- Rate of core housing need (living in an unsuitable, inadequate or unaffordable dwelling and not able to afford alternative housing in the community)
- Rate of supply and vacancy of suitable housing (e.g., availability of rentals/homes for purchase that are accessible by transit and adequate in size)
- Evidence of housing stability
- Rate of homeownership

Access to Affordable, Adequate, and Suitable Housing

- Rate of unsheltered homelessness/unhoused
- Rate of "hidden homelessness" (e.g., involuntary "doubling-up," couch surfing, sharing accommodations)
- Evidence of discrimination in acquiring and living in housing (from property managers, landlords, and/or real estate agents)
- Availability of reliable information in both official languages and other top languages of new arrivals about housing markets in Canada and tenants' rights and responsibilities
- Level of knowledge about the housing market and how to obtain housing in Canada
- Level of knowledge of rights and responsibilities as tenants and homeowners
- Level of satisfaction with:
  - information for immigrants about housing in Canada and tenants' rights and responsibilities
  - current housing situation

Toolkit II In Progress

Promoting Welcoming Communities

→ Promising Practices for Each Characteristic

Toolkit II: Promoting Welcoming Communities – Available in Both English and French

- Guidebook

- Canadian and international promising practices for each characteristic of a welcoming community
  - Name and lead organization
  - Links to the practice
  - Overview and goals
  - Key features
  - Tags: target(s) of the practice, location, size of community

Access to Affordable, Adequate, and Suitable Housing

Name of Practice/ Program	Lead Organization(s)	Link(s)	Description of Practice	Tags
Homestay Hosting Program	Association for New Canadians (ANC)	[Program Information](#)	**Overview and Goals**: • The Homestay Hosting Program provides Ukrainian refugees with a temporary home as they navigate life in Canada by connecting them with local Newfoundlanders and Labradorians who are willing to host them and provide accommodation. **Key Features**: • Host families not only provide Ukrainian refugees with housing, they also support the newcomers' integration and involvement within the local community. • Host families who participate in this program receive $1000 per month for up to five months.	Ukrainian refugees Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada Small and mid-sized communities

Access to Affordable, Adequate, and Suitable Housing

Name of Practice/ Program	Lead Organization(s)	Link(s)	Description of Practice	Tags
Welcome House	Catholic Centre for Immigrants Ottawa (CCI Ottawa)	[Program Information](#)	**Overview and Goals**: • Welcome House provides unhoused immigrants with temporary accommodations and assistance securing long-term housing as well as other settlement and integration services. **Key Features**: • The housing team assists newcomers by providing them with information about the housing market, accompanying them on viewings, assisting them in negotiations with landlords, and connecting them to housing-related services (e.g., utilities) • Once immigrants have secured long-term housing, CCI Ottawa helps with the set up and provides home visits to help build life skills and offer support.	Immigrants Ottawa, Ontario, Canada Large community

Access to Affordable, Adequate, and Suitable Housing

Name of Practice/ Program	Lead Organization(s)	Link(s)	Description of Practice	Tags
Wohnbrücke Hamburg	Lawaetz-Service GmbH	[Program Information](#)	**Overview and Goals**: • Wohnbrücke Hamburg provides refugees living in temporary public housing with access to more permanent housing by mediating between housing companies/private landlords and refugees. **Key Features**: • Refugees are paired with a local volunteer to help guide them through the process of securing long-term housing in a new society. • Volunteers receive official training and are prepared to assist refugees with the practical challenges involved in searching for housing, navigating paperwork and bureaucracy, and physically moving them into their new space. • Volunteers also serve as "cultural mediators" to help familiarize refugees with the community and city. • Wohnbrücke Hamburg consults with housing companies/private landlords to find available housing and acts as a "cultural broker" to dispel fears and prejudices they may have about refugees.	Refugees Hamburg, Germany Large community

Comments about the Toolkits

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Or google P2P Welcoming Communities

City of Saskatoon

The Potential of Municipal Public Space in Creating a Welcoming Community: Examples from the City of Saskatoon

Jasmine Calix
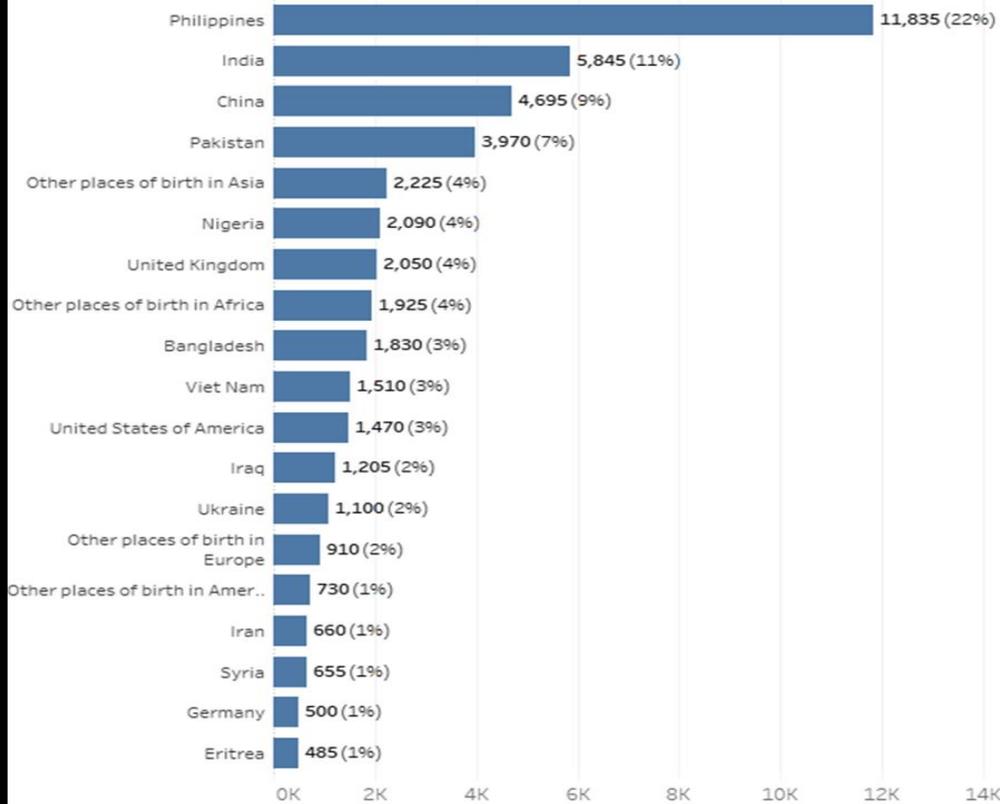Tenille Thomson
Kevin Kitchen

The future for Canada is inclusion of all people — Indigenous, settlers and recent immigrants

Doug Cuthand, Saskatoon Star Phoenix, October 7, 2023

Place of birth for the immigrant population in private households
Top 20 by population

Philippines	11,835 (22%)
India	5,845 (11%)
China	4,695 (9%)
Pakistan	3,970 (7%)
Other places of birth in Asia	2,225 (4%)
Nigeria	2,090 (4%)
United Kingdom	2,050 (4%)
Other places of birth in Africa	1,925 (4%)
Bangladesh	1,830 (3%)
Viet Nam	1,510 (3%)
United States of America	1,470 (3%)
Iraq	1,205 (2%)
Ukraine	1,100 (2%)
Other places of birth in Europe	910 (2%)
Other places of birth in Amer..	730 (1%)
Iran	660 (1%)
Syria	655 (1%)
Germany	500 (1%)
Eritrea	485 (1%)

- **There are 56,820 Immigrants in Saskatoon, which is 17.8% of the total population**

- **The Indigenous Identity Population in Saskatoon is 34,975 which is 10.9% of the total population**

City of Saskatoon

Canadian cities provide many services to residents:

- Police
- Fire
- Safe drinking water
- Garbage collection
- Roads
- Transit

City of Saskatoon

Cities are also planners, custodians, and stewards of **public space** – both indoors and outdoors:

- Libraries and community centres
- Pools and arenas
- Parks, plazas, and sports fields
- Roads and streets

City of Saskatoon

Cities can play a critical role in creating welcoming communities by applying levers unique to civic government.

Saskatoon is applying civic levers to infuse diversity into public spaces.

Addressing two of the 19 Characteristics of a Welcoming Community from the *Welcoming Communities Toolkit*:

- *Access to Inclusive Public Spaces, Facilities*, and Programs; and
- *Immigrant-Responsive Municipal Features* and Services

City of
Saskatoon

City projects to make Saskatoon a more welcoming community:

- – Welcoming Week
- – Community Spaces/indoors & outdoors
- – Public Art & Commemoration
- – Naming
- **– Systems & Policy Review**

Welcoming Week

Community Spaces: Indoors & Outdoors

Investigation of ways to make community space more available to community organizations in Saskatoon.

- **Undertaking an inventory of currently available spaces**

- **Consultations with Newcomer Community groups**

- **Environmental Scan of other municipalities**

City of
Saskatoon

Outdoor Community Spaces: *pawâtêtân' basketball court*

Public Art & Commemoration: *Pamana Mural & Shaheed Minar* (Sharing Spaces for Shared Stories)

Naming: *Streets/Buildings/Parks*

Renaming Lessons

Challenges:

- opposition
- fear of change
- anger as to why
- technicalities
- policies & systems

Overcoming Challenges:

- leadership & support
- process and staying with it
- communication
- education
- policies & systems

City of Saskatoon

Policy Review (Legacy Project)

To remedy the absence of Indigenous and Newcomer representation in civic spaces and public realm assets.

To develop new policies and practices that incorporate Indigenous and newcomer perspectives and decision-making into the design and use of public space in Saskatoon (from street names to parks to public art).

City of
Saskatoon

It is important that city spaces reflect those that live here – that all residents see themselves and feel comfortable in Saskatoon.

Saskatoon Mayor Charlie Clark

City of Saskatoon

Thank You!

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