

PROJECT WELCOME:

Engaging Local Professionals in Attracting Newcomers to Small Urban-Rural Communities

Pathways to Prosperity Conference, Montreal, November 21st, 2023



**SOUTH OKANAGAN
IMMIGRANT AND
COMMUNITY SERVICES**



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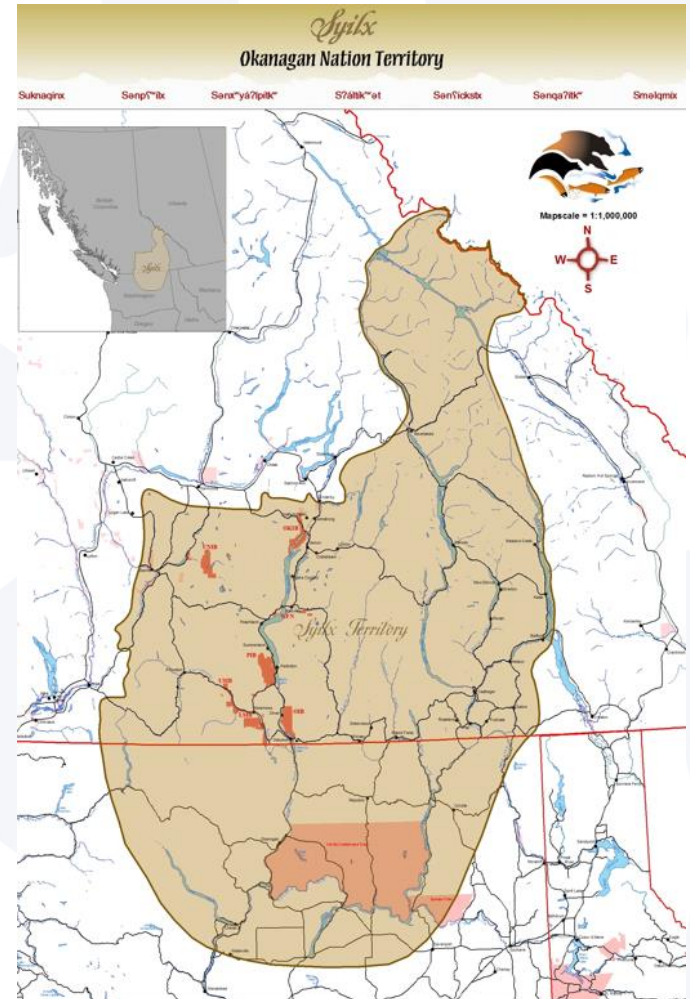
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South Okanagan-Similkameen Region

*South Okanagan-Similkameen is the traditional, ancestral and unceded territory of the **Syilx people of the Okanagan Nation**. I am grateful to the Okanagan Nation who have always cared for these lands, water, and air and continue to do so today. This land acknowledgement is just a first step on my journey of learning the truth and working towards reconciliation.*



South Okanagan Immigrant & Community Services (SOICS)

- South Okanagan-Similkameen
- 111 Countries & Territories – 89 languages spoken



Integration Services

- ▶ English Language Training
- ▶ Career Planning & Job Search
- ▶ Settlement & Application Processes
- ▶ Community Connections & Mentors
- ▶ Life Skills Workshops
- ▶ Local Immigration Partnership
- ▶ Citizenship Preparation
- ▶ OneWorld Multicultural Festival

www.soics.ca



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YOUTH CREW

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Project Welcome

- Welcome Toolkit
- Ongoing mentor recruitment (LIP, Chambers, ads, personal connections) – 53 mentors
- Registration & orientation
- Matching
- Monitoring



The flyer features a dark blue header with a teal diagonal banner on the left that says "VOLUNTEERS NEEDED". The main title "Project Welcome" is in white. Below the title is a world map with dashed orange lines connecting various locations. Several circular inset images show diverse people and scenes, including a forest path, a government building, a city street, and portraits of individuals. The text below the map is in white and teal, detailing the mentorship program's goals and benefits.

Project Welcome

BECOME A MENTOR

Share your knowledge & experience with new immigrants
Build your resume with leadership & communication skills

Project Welcome connects immigrating professionals exploring settlement options in smaller communities in Canada to the professionals who live and work there.

The Benefits of Mentoring

- Gain leadership and coaching skills
- Build a broader professional network
- Greater knowledge of the professions and business practices of other countries in an increasingly global economy
- Satisfaction from helping someone reach their fullest potential

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JVC JVS TORONTO

South Okanagan Welcome Toolkit

- Self-directed online learning content about working in South Okanagan
 - Employment outlook
 - Main industries
 - Work-life balance
 - Career growth



Mentor Engagement Strategies

- LinkedIn Group
- Lunch and learn sessions (e.g. World Refugee Day, project updates, sharing stories)
- Resource sharing (Welcome Guide, job search techniques, interview skills, etc.)
- Connecting unmatched mentors to other opportunities (regular mentoring program)
- Including all mentors in the general mentoring program (registration, criminal records checks, etc.)
- Unexpected result – LIP member engagement

Mentors' Stories



Terry's Story:

- brining a mentee from a different province
- guidance for BCPNP
- participation in all mentor events

Mentors' Stories

Susan's story:

- 3 mentees
- referring a client to services and resources in another province
- changing hiring practices



Mentors' Stories

Lara's story:

- 3 mentees
- workshops for SOICS clients
- connecting with First West Foundation
- food security



Mentors' Stories



Raj's story:

- 6 mentees
- uses communication modes convenient for mentees (e.g. WhatsApp)
- still in touch with a family of a mentee (visited them in AB, took shopping)
- resources to reconsider which city to settle in (career and educational opportunities)
- Parenting advice (how to keep children active and healthy)

