The Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: Priorities and Directions

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WELCOMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

LES COMMUNAUTÉS ACCUEILLANTES

A note introducing the reports and discussing their provenance and methodology will be added shortly. Readers should note that the study of LIP plans comprises two reports – The Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: Priorities and Directions and The Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: Promising Practices.

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Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: Newcomer Attraction, Retention and Business Development

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Scope of the Report

This domain is primarily interested in the economically driven components of Canada´s immigration program; namely skilled workers, provincial nominees, temporary foreign workers, and business immigrants—entrepreneurs, investors, and self-employed. The intention of this domain is to investigate and understand how small- and medium-sized cities and communities can better facilitate the attraction and retention of newcomers who are either destined for the labour market or involved in business development initiatives.

Newcomer attraction refers to issues that exist when small- and medium-sized communities try to recruit newcomers. *Newcomer retention* refers to the social, cultural, and economic factors that shape the ability of communities to *keep* the newcomers they receive.

To avoid overlap with other domains, this report does not address priorities and initiatives on the social and cultural integration of immigrants. Instead, this report concentrates on economic factors that are important for the attraction and retention of skilled workers and small- and medium-scale entrepreneurs. Thus, this domain does not include those initiatives that play an important role in the retention of immigrants and are concerned with health, housing, general language training plans (except for job-specific language learning), or racism (except for workplace racism, and diverse work environments). Nor does it focus on specific workplace integration initiatives, as these are the focus of another domain.

After reading several LIP strategies to acquire familiarity with their plans, an initial coding framework was constructed.[1] Ten LIPs were coded using this initial framework, which was then fine-tuned. After the coding framework was refined, the remaining seventeen LIPs were coded (Table 1, 2).

Many of the proposed strategic actions can be associated with multiple themes. For example, *including newcomers and leaders from ethno-cultural groups in the resource board of the Enterprise Facilitation Project* (Kingston LIP), was coded under *engagement in decision making*; this same action, however, can also help newcomers build their professional networks. Notwithstanding these potential multiple uses, each action has been assigned a unique code, linked to a single outcome.

Further, many strategic actions were relevant to more than one Welcoming Community Initiative's research domains. For example, *promoting collaboration among services providers in the provision of annual staff training to cover updates on relevant topics* (Etobicoke LIP). This strategic action was coded under *training employment and business service providers* but it is equally relevant for service providers in the areas of health, education, and housing.

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[1] LIPs used different terminology, and referred to proposed new initiatives as strategic action, strategic direction, best practices, etc.

Promising Practices in the Literature from 2005 to Present

Why Should We Attract Immigrants? Labour Shortage and the Problem of Immigration Concentration

There are two obvious reasons why governments and communities may be concerned about the geographic distribution of immigrants: first, the number of immigrants locating in smaller cities is insufficient to offset current or future labour shortages; and, stresses on the capacity of the larger cities to manage rapid population growth along with rapidly increasing ethno-cultural diversity. (Walton-Roberts, 2004.) To address the *problem* of concentration and to encourage regionalisation, federal and provincial governments are actively engaged in attracting more immigrants and temporary foreign workers from overseas and in encouraging secondary migration to smaller communities from large cities like Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal.

Through provincial nominee programs (PNPs), the federal government provides provinces with the flexibility to play an important role in nominating newcomers to their region. Though PNP arrivals are fixed, and subject to yearly federal and provincial discussions, there appears to be scope for increasing the proportion of PNPs relative to other categories of immigration. The federal government also encourages regionalisation by other national policies such as allowing international students to work outside Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver for a second year after graduation, and letting them work twenty hours per week during their study terms. However, it is clear that the role of the federal government is more like that of a facilitator, rather than a program administrator. (Carter, Morrish, & Amoyaw, 2008.)

For newcomer arrivals, both federal and provincial governments have to work with a relatively fixed yearly target as outlined in the annual levels plans. This upper limit on the total numbers of immigrants allowed in per year has made various provincial governments and municipal governments of second- and third-tier cities aware that they need to undertake special efforts to attract immigrants. Many newcomers are, and will continue to be, attracted to larger cities like Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal. These cities will likely continue to attract a large proportion of the overall numbers of immigrants to Canada not only because of the existence of established ethno-cultural groups, communities, and job and life-style opportunities, but also because they and their respective provincial governments are undertaking efforts to make themselves even more welcoming to newcomers. At the provincial level, Ontario is developing and adopting policies to attract and retain immigrants. For example, "The Government of Ontario instituted legislation in December of 2006 to fine regulatory bodies if they do not fairly recognise foreign credentials." (Derwing & Krahn, 2008, p. 197). Given that the cities and provinces already receiving large numbers of immigrants will probably want to maintain their current levels of immigration, it is reasonable to expect that competition over their respective shares of immigration will increase.

Competition for newcomers, however, is not limited to provinces. Though the current backlog of immigrant applicants stuck in the processing cue is substantial, some commentators have suggested that Canada will increasingly have to compete for immigrants with other major host countries like Australia, New Zealand, and the US. (Derwing & Krahn, 2008.)

Australia is a notable example of the efforts employed in many countries to attract immigrants to second- and third-tier cities. In Europe, however, the issue is not attraction per se, but rather dispersion policies that are mostly concerned with the obligation of accepting refugees and sharing the service burden. Though Canada also focuses on dispersion as a mechanism for sharing the service burden, particularly for refugees, much of the recent concern about regionalization of immigration appears to be grounded in a concern about spreading the economic benefits of immigration around to small- and medium- sized communities. (Hyndma, Schuurman & Fiedler, 2006.)

Although regionalisation policies have had some success in attracting immigrants to second- and third-tier cities, there are reasons to think that the status quo regarding the distribution of immigrants in Canada will be maintained into the future. The three major cities of Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal were the destination cities of 69 per cent of new arrivals to Canada in 2006. This number, however, was still only marginally lower than the 75 per cent in 1998. (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007.) At the same time, there are successful models of attracting immigrants away from large cities and their buoyant economies. For example, while the national level of immigration has remained stable, since the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program was introduced, the number of immigrants to Manitoba has increased by 235 per cent. (Carter, Morrish, & Amoyaw, 2008.) Now the question is can regionalisation policies be pushed down to the level of small- and medium- sized communities within provinces like Ontario?

What follows is a review of what might attract immigrants to second- and third-tier cities, the selection process, and factors that may have a negative effect on increasing the numbers of newcomers.

What is Attractive about Second- and Third-Tier Cities for Immigrants? Selection Process

According to Hyndman et al. (2006), in their study of five medium-sized cities in British Columbia, the two main motivations of economic immigrants in moving outside the Census Metropolitan Areas of Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto are the presence of family and friends and job prospects. Other important factors are housing costs, lifestyle, and education and business prospects.

Somewhat similarly, according to Derwing and Krahn (2008), the presence of friends and family is the most frequently mentioned factor that attracts newcomers to Calgary and Edmonton. Also, answering the question of the best things about living in Edmonton and Calgary, the most commonly stated factors are business opportunities (e.g., jobs and the strong economy),

educational opportunities, and the quality of life (which includes several factors such as climate and welcoming socio-cultural environment). However, there were some gender and class differences associated with attraction factors; educational resources were more frequently identified by women and refugees, and men were more likely to indicate quality-of-life attractions. (Derwing & Krahn, 2008.)

Broadly defined *lifestyle* factors are especially attractive for those who are engaged in creative processes such as scientists, university professors, artists, entertainers, actors, and designers, and those who work in knowledge-intensive industries such as legal and healthcare professionals, and financial services providers. This class of people, known as the creative class (Florida, 2002) or knowledge workers, are drawn to economic opportunities and aesthetic experiences in large North American cities. A city that has rapid economic expansion and lots of economic opportunities, especially businesses that rely on intellectual capital, also provides aesthetic experiences that are important in attracting individuals in the creative class. Furthermore, the existence of post-secondary educational institutions in destination cities is also important for this class of newcomer. Arguably, these factors help explain why "the city of Calgary is fast becoming a city that is able to attract immigrants in the same way that Toronto and Vancouver do, but Edmonton, like Halifax, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, and other second-tier Canadian cities, is not a city of destination for nearly as many immigrants." (Derwing & Krahn, 2008, p. 188.)

Hyndma et al. (2006) argue that the previously noted conditions are contingent upon the size of a community. That is, as cities grow in size, the density of lifestyle and knowledge-intensive industries and activities and opportunities increase. Though this view may under-estimate the relative importance of other conditions that attract newcomers, such as the presence of co-ethnics, family, and *ethnic economies* that supply specialized food and entertainment, the hypothesis that there is a connection between the size of a community and its ability to attract newcomers seems reasonable. (Abu-Laban, Derwing, Krahn, & Mulder, 1999; Krahn, Derwing, & Abu-Laban, 2003.) If it is reasonable, then the conundrum for smaller- and medium- sized cities is clear: making a city appealing to immigrants entails, in part, expanding population growth through immigration.

This conundrum begs the question of how to expand immigration to smaller- and medium- sized cities in the first place. Immigrants tend to not voluntarily choose to live in smaller cities initially, and prefer the features of more populated cities. However, special arrangements to encourage types of family reunification specifically to smaller- and medium- sized communities, though not normally allowed under Canada's *Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act*, may be one mechanism to further *seed* these communities with immigrants who will then constitute points of attraction for subsequent waves. (Hyndma, Schuurman, & Fiedler, 2006)

Bauder (2004), studying immigration concentrations in British Columbia, observed that newcomers who settle in Victoria, Nanaimo, or Prince George are more likely to do well in the labour market and have higher average incomes than newcomers residing in the Greater Vancouver (GV) area. On

the basis of these findings, he draws a distinction between the quality of life[2] and the quality of livelihood, arguing that the quality of life is better inside GV, and the quality of livelihood, on average, tends to be better outside. However, it is worth pointing out that his study does not control for immigration class (family reunification, business, etc.) and ethno-racial background (for example, he compares White newcomers in smaller cities with non-whites in Greater Vancouver). Bauder's analysis suggests that it is plausible that second- and third-tier cities can increase and promote the quality of livelihood in their cities, as a replacement for quality of life. In this context, the promotion of job opportunities or financial support, such as offers of tax credit, may be another way for smaller cities to attract immigrants, although the political will for such an approach may not currently exist.

The eligibility criteria of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program has made the prospect of immigrating to Manitoba extraordinarily attractive and given the province a larger share of immigration. In the Manitoba model, employers can recruit/retain immigrants if they are unable to fill the position with a Canadian citizen or permanent resident. There are also programs that facilitate the attraction/retention of young farmers and international students. Moreover, since temporary foreign workers already have in-province work experience and established relationships, their application packages for MPNP are considered to be very strong. The ability of the province of Manitoba to integrate different streams of immigration also offers family and community support and strategic recruitment initiative. (Manitoba Department of Labour and Immigration, 2006.) According to Derwin and Krahn (2008), community support is relatively unique to the Manitoba model, in that communities—a region, a town, or an ethno-cultural community—have agreed to support a given number of immigrants to the province. Though such support may not be unique insofar as privately sponsored refugees must demonstrate community support, the nature of community support for other categories of immigration is a potential advantage. Here support means guaranteed employment and some other social services. Finally, to preserve the French language and culture, the Canada/Manitoba Francophone initiative was launched in 2003. Since then, French application kits have been provided and investment has been made in promotion in France and Belgium. (CIC 2006b; Carter, Morrish, & Amoyaw, 2008.) In the case of MPNP, it is worth noting that there is a self-reinforcing integration among the streams in how they may facilitate each other; the possible integration between the *Employer Direct* stream and the *International Student* stream is a case in point.

Finally, the issue of attraction is not just about winning the competition with other provinces and host countries to gain more immigrants; the policy should also provide a better match of new arrivals with demand. In the case of Manitoba, the involvement of communities and employers and the greater control the province has over the nominations has resulted not only in a 235 per cent increase in the number of immigrants but also in a better match with employers. (Carter, Morrish, & Amoyaw, 2008.) A higher rate of immigration plus a better match increase the retention rate, and

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[2] Quality of life refers to factors like the presence of family and friends, quality of education, or the availability of a thriving arts community.

the retention rate for provincial nominees is higher in comparison to other immigrant and refugee categories. (Carter, Morrish, & Amoyaw, 2008.)

LIP Priorities for Initiatives and Plans for New Initiatives

Our analysis of LIP strategies has identified two major priorities regarding settlement needs in the areas of attraction, retention, and business development:

1- Attraction. The focus here is on identifying target source countries and domestic locations from which immigrants can be recruited and, developing and implementing marketing strategies to promote particular communities to immigrants and recent arrivals (secondary migration).

2- Retention. This area focuses on persuading and informing the host community of the benefits of increased immigration, and encouraging communities to embrace the strengths, benefits and leadership abilities that immigrants bring. It also focuses on helping newcomers to integrate economically and on promoting their achievements.

The strategic actions to address each of these priorities are divided into separate themes.

Attraction

Labour shortages and the necessity of attracting new immigrants are mentioned by many of the LIPs as a guiding principle. However, seven of the twelve LIPs in communities outside the GTA did not identify attraction as a priority to guide new initiatives, specifically the attraction of economically driven immigrants—skilled workers, business immigrants (entrepreneurs and self-employed), provincial nominees, and temporary foreign workers. In other words, while attraction has frequently been identified as a general goal of LIP activities, in very few cases have strategic actions been proposed to attract more primary immigrants. Altogether, fewer than ten per cent of new initiatives dealt with attraction, and of these initiatives, provincial nominees and temporary foreign workers are mentioned much less often than international students, skilled workers, the self-employed, and entrepreneurs.

Most LIPs emphasized attraction by reputation or through the opportunities the cities offer. As a result, a better understanding of how immigrants view and think about communities outside of the major centres of Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal is needed. Attraction by reputation also suggests that communities need to develop targeted strategies to attract specific kinds of skilled workers. To put themselves on the mental map of immigrants, they need to *brand* themselves as having economic and lifestyle opportunities in their respective communities.

Marketing Outside and Inside Canada (Secondary Migration)

Marketing a second- or third-tier city means increasing its visibility and branding it in key markets to potential newcomers and businesses. It was proposed by six LIPs that cities should apply and secure funding, and actively participate in attracting immigrants from cities in Ontario, other provinces, and abroad. The Thunder Bay LIP also suggested that a professional marketing firm should be engaged to develop a strategy to attract newcomers. Policies that are adopted and in place for retaining immigrants, such as bridging programs and job and business opportunities, can be promoted by marketing strategies to attract more newcomers. Therefore, as the LIPs strive to differentiate themselves from other potential migrant destinations, it becomes more important to understand what measures and positions resonate better with target audiences.

International Students

Three LIPs suggested encouraging international students to apply for Canadian Permanent Residency and to move to or stay in the area. The proposed strategic actions involve: finding ways to reduce barriers for those students who wish to remain, working collaboratively with universities to brand the city, and enlisting the help of major employers to enhance employment opportunities for international students.

Researching Best Practices

Rather than focusing on new initiatives, the focus of some strategic actions was on exploring, examining, and identifying best practices by stakeholders and community partners (employers, service and volunteer agencies, education sector, etc.). For example, one of the strategic actions identified by the Ottawa LIP is *to carry out research to better understand the characteristics and motivations of emigrants (out-migration), including graduating students, with a view to altering their behaviour.*

Retention

Strategic actions to promote the retention of economically driven immigrants are divided into four groups: retention initiatives that focus on newcomers; retention initiatives that focus on employers; retention initiatives that focus on service providers; and finally, retention initiatives that are linked to immigration attraction strategies. In each group, strategic actions or initiatives can be distinguished according to different themes.

Retention Initiatives Immigrants/Newcomers

Awareness of Employment/Business Opportunities and Service Availability

Nearly every LIP suggested that one of the keys to successful integration and retention is having access to information and services. More than fifteen per cent of the strategic actions fall under this theme. Some LIPs specifically mentioned employment and business services, while others talked generally about the importance of access to information and awareness of services. Employment/business information and services that newcomers need to be aware of include the local and regional job market trends, workers' rights, employment opportunities and how to access them (application process, security clearance, and examinations), immigrant-focused job fairs, educational workshops that provide labour market information, and information about credential recognition by professional associations and unions. Proposed strategies to ensure that this information and these services are accessible include the creation of a local immigration Web portal that contains a database comprising contact information of all related services, and the development of a newsletter or a wiki or blog service.

It was noted by a number of LIPs that inadequate promotion accounts for the lack of awareness of settlement services among immigrants and that improved marketing of services would constitute an important strategic action.

Engagement in Settlement Service Decision-Making

According to the Toronto East LIP, 48% of immigrants in Ontario believed that what Immigrant Services and the Adaptation Program has to offer does not meet newcomers' needs. Further, a similar percentage of newcomers identify their challenges in ways that are different from how the settlement services providers think about these challenges. Peel LIP also made a similar point, indicating that services tend to reflect the needs of previous newcomer populations and ignore the fact that current newcomer needs are more extensive and complex. Seven LIPs identified general gaps between programs that are offered and what newcomers say they need. Considering the changing profile of newcomers, and in order to reduce the seeming disconnect between those who design programs and those who make use of them, newcomers should be systematically engaged in developing programs and services.

Mentoring, Internships, and Volunteering

Most LIP plans recognized the existence of a contradiction between the aims of immigration policy and selection, and how immigrant credentials and experience are evaluated in the Canadian labour market. As a number of other commentators have noted, highly skilled and educated immigrants are recruited to enter the knowledge economy but the non-recognition of credentials prevents them from doing so.

Several LIPs noted the importance of creating more networking and mentorship opportunities. For example, the Guelph LIP noted that bridging programs may help those internationally trained professionals who require additional education or training to meet Canadian professional standards. The implementation of one-to-one occupation-specific and professional bridging programs, such as mentoring, internships, and pilot projects that involve local entrepreneurs, and temporary or volunteer placements, potentially increase the rate of acquisition and retention of a job or building and running a successful business. Such programs not only help newcomers learn workplace etiquette, acquire soft skills, and get on-the-job training, they also provide networking opportunities, which develop contacts and expand professional and social networks.

Over half (seventeen) of the LIPs proposed the creation of a database of mentors. This data base could provide information about experts in various professional fields who are interested in helping newcomers in their particular fields, provide information about which professions could accommodate volunteer opportunities, and create a mechanism to engage all relevant stakeholders such as Volunteer Toronto.

In addition, several LIPS indicated that mechanisms should be made available to help newcomers become more aware of opportunities in the voluntary sector and the benefits associated with volunteering.

Social Networking

Four LIPs recognized the lack of newcomer social capital and informal processes which results in their social exclusion in the settlement and job acquisition process. LIPS further recognized that access to professional social networks should be facilitated for newcomers because the availability of opportunities for newcomers to make professional contacts may be limited due to cultural, language, and gender barriers, or simply because they are forced to work full time in a low-paying job and do not have an opportunity to build professional social networks.

LIPs also suggested that service providers and employers could help newcomers develop their professional social networks by organizing regular events such as monthly networking meetings for immigrants and employers, or developing and encouraging the use of Web-based professional networking meeting places.

Small- and Medium-Sized Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurship is encouraged and is common among newcomers to Canada. Business immigrants are recruited to support the development of the Canadian economy and are expected to make an investment or to own or manage a business. However, immigrant entrepreneurs face a number of challenges in Canada such as access to credit and workspace. Immigrants admitted to Canada in other immigration categories often move into the self-employment sector and become entrepreneurs after experiencing challenges in the paid labour market.

Seven LIPs defined strategies to support and encourage immigrant entrepreneurs. These included mapping the pathways for starting small- and medium-sized businesses, making immigrants aware of relevant services, assisting with access to capital, reducing the obstacles that immigrants face in accessing capital and loans, providing legal support, helping immigrant entrepreneurs to develop links to larger business networks and business coalitions and reducing related membership and participation fees, holding workshops on entrepreneurship in Canada, providing information about bidding for service and supply contracts, encouraging local and immigrant-owned businesses to register on supplier lists, and having entrepreneur-oriented mentoring programs.

Workplace Training and Specialized Language

Thirteen LIPs noted that in addition to basic and everyday English, skilled workers and entrepreneurs need specialized, high-quality, language training. It was suggested that employers, employment service providers, and newcomers be brought together to clarify the workplace language requirements in different settings.

For instance, the Guelph-Wellington LIP identified the Enhanced Language Training (ELT) Program for Internationally Educated Health Professionals as a promising example of specialized language training. This government-funded program helps develop the language skills necessary to communicate within other professionals in Canada. Several LIPs identified the need for more investments in such programs.

Some of the LIP communities proposed conducting a market study of the specialized ESL courses. Other strategic actions proposed included collaborating with universities to help newcomers improve their specialized language skills by allowing them to attend courses related to their field of expertise, creating on-the-job language learning opportunities, and forming job-seeker support circles for workplace language practice.

In addition to language training, LIPS noted that some immigrants might need to learn further soft skills that are required for employment and more specific forms of training according to market requirements.

Pre-Arrival Support

Three LIPs proposed better communication and information before arrival to educate newcomers on what to expect in Canada. For example, they suggested providing prospective immigrants with welcoming packages and reference lists (preferably in immigrants' first language). They also suggested exploring possible partnerships between settlement services in Canada and organizations in the home country to provide orientation sessions.

Breaking Out of *Survival Jobs*

Some LIPs recognized that newcomers who face challenges finding employment that match their training and experience are often forced into accepting low-paying *survival jobs* during their first months or years in Canada. They also recognized that it can be difficult for newcomers to break out of these survival jobs. Four LIPs argued that in most cases the problem facing immigrants is not unemployment but underemployment, and the fact that skilled workers are stuck in low-wage jobs, with very limited opportunities for advancement. To address the problem of the so-called *glass ceiling* or *glass door*, a career-ladder approach was proposed to provide transitions out of dead-end jobs which involved ways to build skills and contacts while working full time. A strategy for mapping the pathway for accessing jobs in key sectors, like the federal government employment pathway, was suggested by Ottawa LIP.

Credential and Skill Assessments

The lack of credential recognition and the failure by Canadian employers and licensing bodies to value foreign qualifications were repeatedly cited by the LIPs as a barrier to immigrants' becoming well integrated into the labour market. Collecting and providing easy access to available material about foreign credential assessment and recognition processes, making financial support available to immigrants for accreditation, and training HR professionals were among the strategic actions proposed by the LIPs.

Retention Initiatives Concerning Employers

Newcomers as an Asset

Eight LIPs cited the fact that employers lack the tools to assess newcomer skills and aptitudes and do not fully appreciate the benefits that result from hiring newcomers. The idea that immigrants are an *asset* needs to be marketed to employers. The following are some strategic actions that were recommended by LIPs to market this idea: familiarizing employers with the benefits of hiring newcomers; recognizing and publicizing successful transitions to the Canadian workplace; celebrating newcomers' and employers' success stories; selecting employer champions; and offering diversity training for employers.

Recruitment

The complexity of recruiting immigrants is one of the recurrent themes in more than half of the LIP plans. Strategic actions that have been proposed include: developing a working relationship with local employers to help them recruit more highly skilled newcomers; engaging employers with hiring needs that meet the standards for Ontario's Provincial Nominee Program; encouraging employers to move beyond Canadian experience as a requirement and to develop HR plans specifically for the recruitment of newcomers; educating employers to use new recruiting methods

(such as online inventories of immigrants seeking work); identifying and advertising hiring methods that have shown positive results; supporting existing programs in their efforts to persuade employers to hire more immigrants and improve the matching process (programs such as Higher Immigrants Ottawa or Ottawa Job Match Network); organizing breakfast meetings with local employers; and establishing a point of first contact where employers can direct questions related to hiring and retaining immigrants. There is no unanimity among these remedies, and LIPs have variously offered these kinds of suggestions as a way of further advancing immigrant employment strategies targeting employers.

Retention Initiatives Concerning Service Providers

Training Service Providers

Nine LIPs identified training as a mechanism to enhance services provided by organizations dealing with newcomer settlement issues. Some recommendations focused on broadly defined anti-oppressive strategies. Those focused on teaching service providers about the structural barriers that face newcomers in Canada stemming from class, race, gender, and diversity training, anti-racism training, and leadership training for front-line workers, as well as conducting regular awareness sessions for various kinds of service providers.

Collaboration

Lack of collaboration among service providers is another gap that was frequently identified by the LIPs. Collaboration among service providers is encouraged through numerous strategic actions to minimize duplication and develop expertise that included working with other LIPs as partners, preparing a detailed map of what various service providers are doing, improving communication among service providers, encouraging formal partnerships between service providers, re-designing LIP website to support networking among service providers, and increasing front-line staff connections involved with business development.

Developing and Overseeing an Immigration Retention Strategy

As with the issue of newcomer attraction, many of the proposed strategic actions for retention (fifteen per cent) emphasized the need for further research, collaboration, and information sharing. That is, instead of proposing new initiatives, the focus was on further exploring best practices from other jurisdictions, or making more and better use of current structures in place: for example, identifying resources to address service gaps, creating subcommittees to work on reducing barriers and challenges faced by newcomers, developing frameworks for evaluating service delivery, or strengthening the partnership with the Welcoming Communities Initiative in order to improve the analytic and planning capacity.

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Table1- Retention- The number of strategic actions in each code

	Retention initiatives concerning newcomers									Employer		Service providers		Developing and overseeing an immigration retention strategy
	Awareness of the opportunity/ information, and service accessibility	Engagement in decision making	Social networking	Small and medium entrepreneurs	Workplace training and specialized language	Pre-arrival support	Volunteering, professional mentorship, and internship	Credential and skill assessment	Access to primary labour market	Newcomers as an asset	Recruitment, integration, and resource guide	Training service providers	Collaboration	
Bathurst-Finch	4	0	0	0	6	0	2	1	0	2	2	1	2	3
Black-Creek	3	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	2
Central South Etobicoke	3	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	3	2	5	1
Eglinton E.-Kennedy Park	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	2
Guelph Wellington	2	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0
Hamilton	3	3	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	6
Kingston	1	1	3	5	6	0	1	1	0	2	1	0	2	2
London and Middlesex	3	1	0	0	1	1	6	0	0	0	3	0	2	2
Niagara	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
North Bay	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	0	6
North York East	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	3
Northwest Scarborough	5	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	0	0	0	1	7	2
Ottawa	4	0	0	7	3	0	1	0	3	0	7	0	3	3
Peel	6	0	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	0	1	2	5	7

Sarnia-Lambton	8	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
Sault Ste. Marie	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
South Scarborough	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	2
Southwest Scarborough	2	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	2	0	1	5
Thunder Bay	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Timmins	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	1
Toronto Don Valley	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	4	2	0	4
Toronto E. Downtown	4	1	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	2	4	2	2
Toronto East	1	2	1	0	3	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	2	0
Toronto W. Downtown	3	0	0	1	6	0	1	3	0	1	1	0	8	3
Waterloo Region	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	5
Windsor Essex	3	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0
York South-Western	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Total	73	10	6	19	38	7	32	13	6	11	36	17	56	66
Percent	18.72	2.56	1.54	4.87	9.74	1.79	8.21	3.33	1.54	2.82	9.23	4.36	14.36	16.92
Number of LIPs	25	7	4	8	15	4	18	10	4	9	18	10	21	23

Table 2- Attraction -The number of strategic actions in each code

	International student PR application and employment	Marketing abroad and inside Canada	Developing and overseeing an immigration attraction strategy for the community	Other
Bathurst-Finch	0	0	0	0
Black-Creek	0	0	0	0
Central South Etobicoke	0	1	0	0
Eglinton E.-Kennedy Park	0	0	0	0
Guelph Wellington	0	0	0	0
Hamilton	0	0	0	0
Kingston	0	0	0	0
London and Middlesex	0	1	1	0
Niagara	0	0	1	0
North Bay	0	1	1	2
North York East	0	0	0	0
Northwest Scarborough	0	0	0	0
Ottawa	3	1	1	2
Peel	0	0	0	0
Sarnia-Lambton	0	0	0	0
Sault Ste. Marie	0	0	0	0

South Scarborough	0	0	0	0
Southwest Scarborough	0	0	0	0
Thunder Bay	1	11	1	4
Timmins	1	1	0	2
Toronto Don Valley	0	0	0	0
Toronto E. Downtown	0	0	0	0
Toronto East	0	0	0	0
Toronto W. Downtown	0	0	0	0
Waterloo Region	0	0	0	0
Windsor Essex	0	0	0	0
York South-Western	0	0	0	1
Total	5	16	5	11
Percent	13.51	43.24	13.51	29.73
Number of LIPs	3	6	5	5

Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: Children and Youth

Audrey Kobayashi, Susanne Cliff-Jungling, Eda Acara, Lily Hoang

WELCOMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

LES COMMUNAUTÉS ACCUEILLANTES

Scope of the Report

The Children and Youth domain (hereafter called C/Y) addresses the capacity of public institutions to respond to the socio -emotional and service needs of minority and immigrant youth. It is also concerned with enhancing the voluntary sector through training programs and youth participation programs, and identifying barriers for particular youth groups. The domain has three initial research foci:

1. The social and psychosocial conditions—racism, social marginalization, cultural conflict, identity, intergenerational relations—that shape the experiences of minority and immigrant children and youth;
2. Relations between immigrant and minority youth and long-settled non-minority children and youth; and
3. The labour market integration of minority and immigrant youth, including discriminatory barriers.

This report is based on the twenty seven LIP reports listed in Appendix A. It analyzes the reports for their inclusion of a C/Y focus with respect to our research foci. Given the focus of the LIP reports, the emphasis is on current C/Y immigrants (i.e., first generation) and less on second- and third-generation experiences.

Overview

Our domain examined the LIP reports, counted the number of times that children and youth are mentioned in the reports and then, identified the most frequently mentioned thematic areas of priorities, strategies, and best practices. Table 1 indicates a clear C/Y focus on priorities and strategies in 17 of the reports and, in 15 reports, C/Y is mentioned in the context of new initiatives and best practices. In addition, there were 12 reports that included some priorities and new initiatives directly *relevant* to C/Y without explicitly mentioning this target group. Therefore, overall, we can detect some awareness and focus of C/Y in the LIP reports. However, our analysis also reveals that there is not necessarily a clear recognition of the distinct needs of newcomer C/Y. This lack of recognition is exemplified by the fact that only four LIP reports incorporated youth groups in the LIP process.

Overall, the reviewed LIP reports show a high priority for education, health and mental health, youth unemployment, recreation, and sports as strategies to improve the newcomer C/Y experience in Ontario.

Table 1. Number of C/Y Focus Mentioned in the LIP Reports
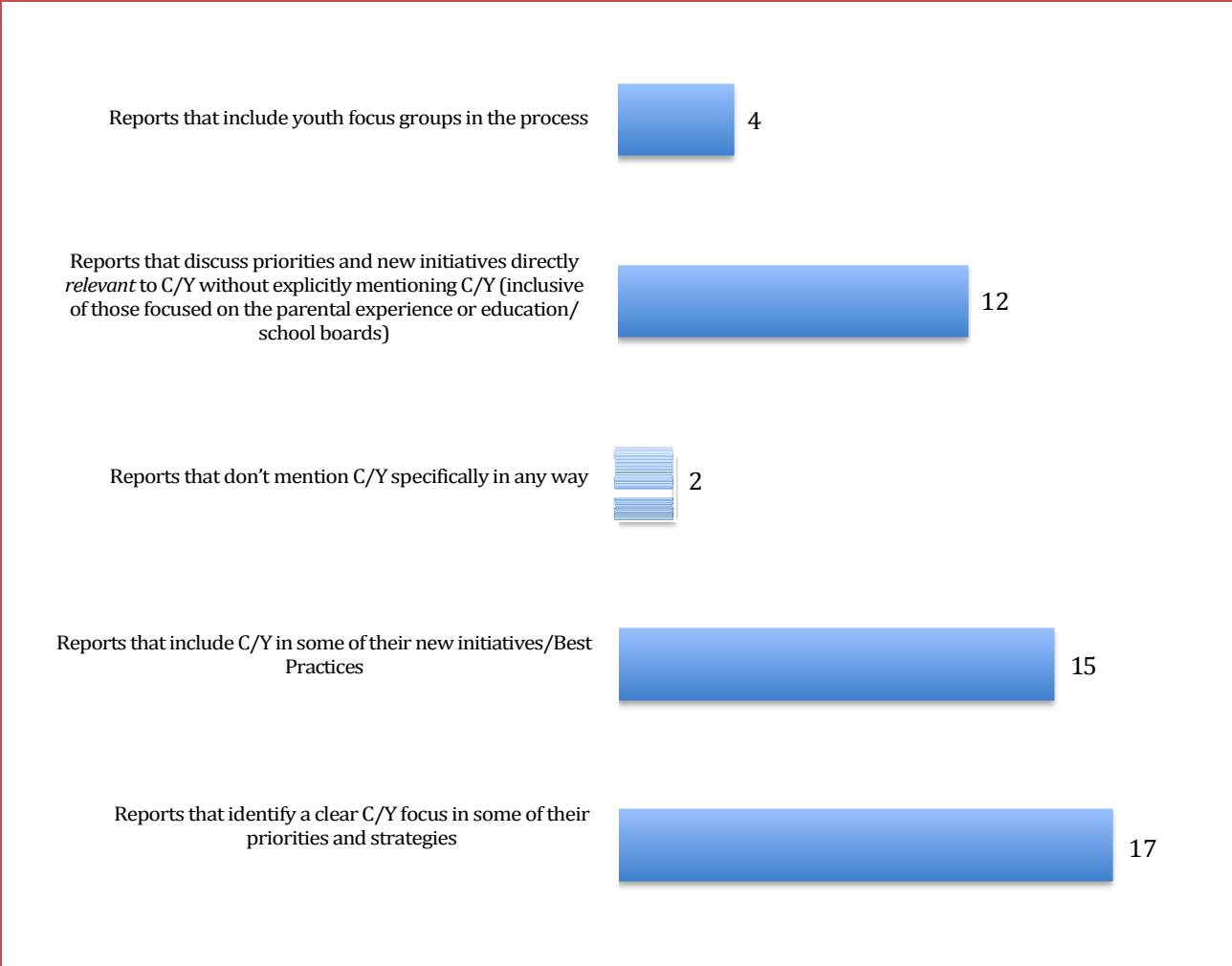
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The following consists of two parts. The first analyzes the LIP reports in regards to priorities and services as they (directly or indirectly) pertain to C/Y immigrant issues and concerns. Following this, we analyze and provide a list of promising practices with C/Y focus mentioned in the LIP reports. The second part incorporates Canadian and international scholarly work of best practices that address C/Y immigrants' issues. In all of these sections, our domain strongly argues for more systematic and integrated priorities and strategies directly addressing newcomer C/Y problems in Canada.

When reviewing the LIP reports it became clear that they vary extensively in overall scope, level of community involvement, degree of detail, as well as complexity. As such, we might assume this variation would have an impact on the capacity to clearly identify a C/Y focus within their strategies and priorities. On one end of the spectrum we find reports such as *Thunder Bay's* or *Central South Etobicoke's* where the LIP report can be viewed as one of the first steps in bringing the community together to develop priorities and strategies. On the other end of the spectrum are reports such as *Toronto West Downtown's* or *London & Middlesex's* which seem to be building on a strong history of immigrant policies and programs and a strong community network representing and involving a wide range of organizations. Though complexity in reports is not a predictor, it is not surprising that the more complex and detailed reports often tend to show a stronger overall C/Y focus regarding strategies and priorities or, at least, to raise awareness of the need for future programming that should entail a C/Y component.

1- Analysis of LIPs

Priorities and Strategies according to LIPs

Our report analyzes the priorities that are addressed by LIPs in three categories: priorities and strategies with C/Y mentioned; priorities and strategies relevant to C/Y that are mentioned in LIP reports without necessarily recognizing a C/Y focus; and lastly, potential supportive priorities to C/Y mentioned in LIP reports, which can become part of the overall suggested focus on C/Y immigrants. We begin with a discussion of overarching strategies that identify C/Y as a clear focus.

While the reviewed LIP reports show a high priority for education, health and mental health, youth unemployment, recreation, and sports as strategies to improve the newcomer C/Y experience in Ontario, there are also some general, more overarching strategies that identify C/Y as a target. What follows is a summary of these strategies. It is important to note that the following priorities are an integral part of the overall strategy but provide an integrated approach towards C/Y with no clear C/Y focus.

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- *South Scarborough LIP report* prioritizes empowering local communities for welcoming, providing support, and building neighborhood connections with the newcomer immigrant families. As mentioned earlier, such an integrated approach, which is built on the relations between local communities and immigrant families, would benefit C/Y immigrants' socialization and adaptation.

- By emphasizing the distinctiveness of C/Y immigrant experiences, *West Downtown Toronto LIP report* prioritizes needs and gaps in accordance with the diverse needs of immigrant youth, children, and families.

- *Kingston LIP report* prioritizes creating social activities for newcomer youth in order to foster welcoming feelings in newcomer C/Y in the school system and developing youth programs to reach newcomer families. Here, parents, teachers, and youth are targeted distinctly to help build corresponding need assessment.

  Half of the reports provide general strategic priorities such as health and social inclusion that contain some children and youth specific initiatives. These include:

  - Recreation and social activities for children and youth: *Kingston, SSM, Sarnia Lambton, and* in a general way *Ottawa*
  - *London* suggests that funding requests need to be made to Citizenship Immigration Canada (CIC) for youth programs, and that support networks for youth outside the schools need to be developed.
  - *Waterloo* discusses an initiative for alternative language skills training (mentioned more than once), especially when youth consider segregated ESL classes as a stigma.

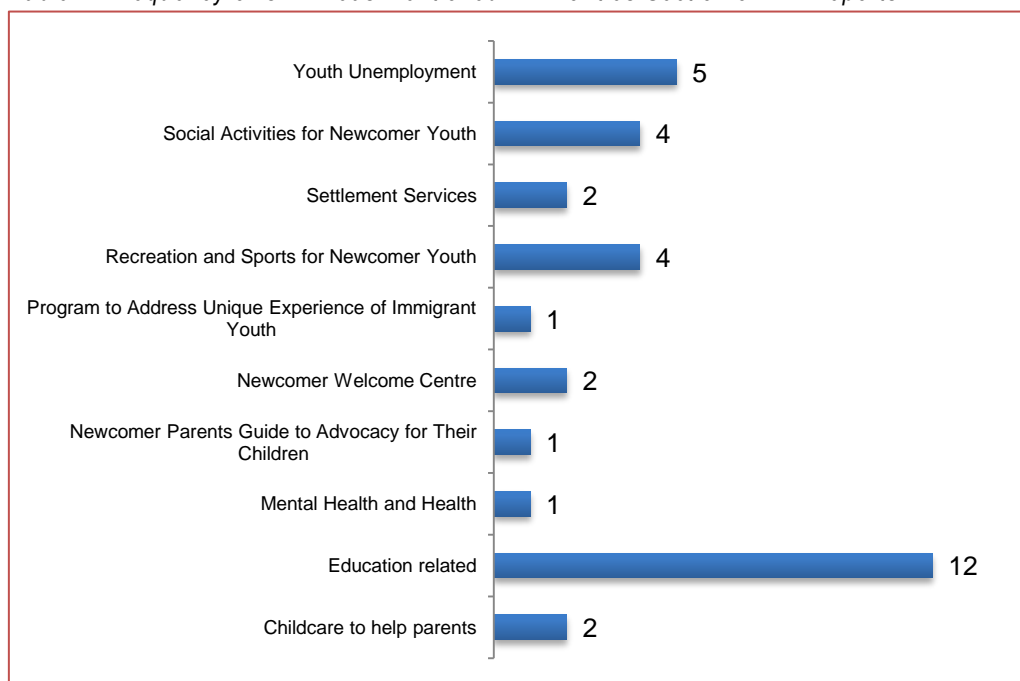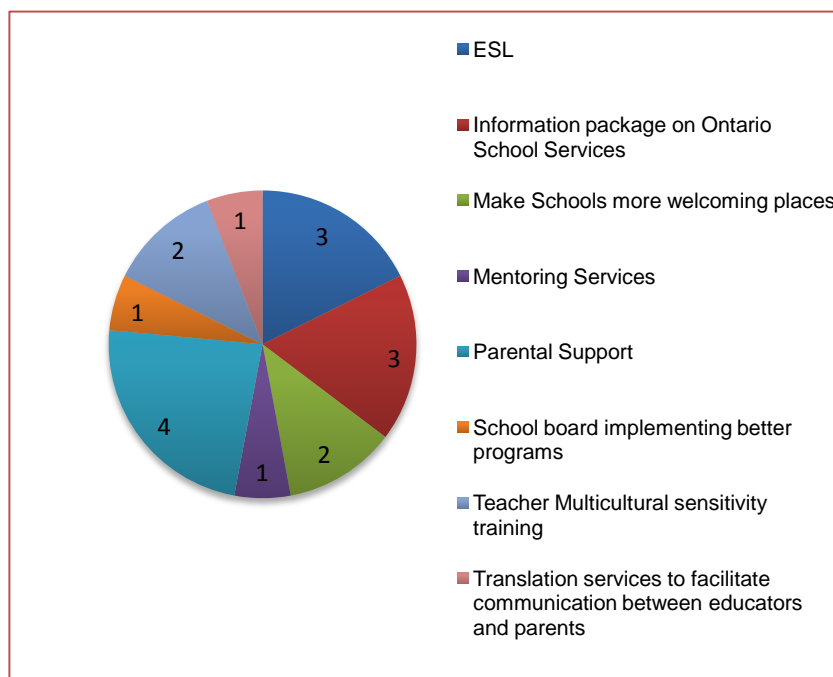*Table 2. Frequency of C/Y Areas Mentioned in Priorities Section of LIP Reports*

Table 3. Frequency of C/Y Focus on Education in the LIP Reports

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ESL — 3
Information package on Ontario School Services — 3
Make Schools more welcoming places — 2
Mentoring Services — 1
Parental Support — 4
School board implementing better programs — 1
Teacher Multicultural sensitivity training — 2
Translation services to facilitate communication between educators and parents — 1

An analysis of the LIP reports mentioning C/Y suggests, as illustrated in Table 2, that the strategic priority for many Ontario cities regarding C/Y is education related. There is also an emphasis on improving adult participation and awareness to better facilitate the students' experiences. On the one hand, priorities to enhance adult participation focus on increasing parental support, providing translation services to facilitate communication between educators and parents, and preparing information packages on Ontario school services to be provided to parents (see Table 3). On the other hand, C/Y specific priorities largely focus on improvement to ESL courses. (see Table 3). As a rationale, for example, the *Toronto East Downtown LIP report* discusses how many newcomer students feel alienated in ESL programs because of the stigma associated with being in a class segregated and separated from other students. The *North York East LIP report* finds that 70% of students believe that the ESL classes work at too slow a pace because of the different levels of English comprehension and previous educational predisposition. At the same time, 60% of newcomer youth find that regular (non-ESL) classes move too quickly for their comprehension level. In addition to discomfort with ESL programs, other needs and gaps that are mentioned by LIP reports include sustaining high school completion (retention), providing health and sex education, delivering educational services to students with learning disabilities, and integration of work language within the content of ESL classes.

After education, the second most prominent focus in LIP reports regarding C/Y tends to revolve around the importance of sports, recreation, and other social activities (see Table 2). The majority of these reports perceive social activities, sports, and recreation as a priority linked to health, mental health, and social adaptation. Research suggests that social activities are primarily important for C/Y immigrants to develop their English skills and social networks with other Canadian peers and mentors that can be useful for employment in the future (Anisef & Killbride

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2003). Lastly, LIP reports prioritize youth unemployment as a crucial focus for integration and settlement (see Table 2).

Very few reports specifically prioritize a systematic strategy to address the unique experience of immigrant newcomer C/Y. Among those, the *Blackcreek* LIP *report* notes youth as a target group requiring particular attention for the encouragement of civic, economic, and social participation and acculturation, and prioritizes employment and access to settlement services for youth. In the same report, issues such as job skill education, fostering social entrepreneurship, housing, and education are placed as specific priorities for youth newcomers. Undoubtedly, these issues also concern adult immigrants, however, the fact that the *Blackcreek* report identifies this youth focus, indicates an awareness of the specific concerns of this target group. Such awareness is further built into the coordination of support services for newcomers and proposed monitoring of the process of settlement in line with youth concerns, as emphasized by the same report (pg.8), which illustrates an effort to systematize the participation of youth in current and future strategies for settlement.

The remainder of the reports mainly target youth unemployment as a priority but only within the overall context of adult employment. This indicates a lack of a systematic or specific needs based approaches towards immigrant youth unemployment and is indicative of a wider trend emerging from our analysis of the reports, which assumes newcomer C/Y have a similar experience to adult immigrants. However, newcomer C/Y often have a very different understanding of immigration than that of their parents or other adults (Anisef and Killbride 2003), and this issue is not addressed in the majority of the LIP reports. Adult immigrants` employment is an important priority for C/Y immigrant integration because services available to adults directly affect the circumstances in which youth and children immigrants live and influence their social and economic survival and integration. For instance, family instability and economic insecurity are among the most important factors for youth leaving school to support their families, failure at school, and health problems, which all affect social and economic integration of the C/Y newcomers (Anisef and Killbride 2003). Nevertheless, research shows that newcomer youth in Canada are at a considerable disadvantage in finding work compared to Canadian born youth because of their ethnic origin, language deficiencies, family responsibilities, economic insecurity, and difficulties with school. Furthermore, lack of adaptation programs from school to work represent yet another obstacle for newcomer youth to find jobs (Anisef and Killbride 2003). For these reasons, unemployment of youth should be prioritized differently than adult immigrant unemployment and at the same time, should be systematic to target child newcomers for future employment. Therefore, LIPs might wish to integrate these aspects into their approaches towards C/Y immigrants. Another point that needs development is that C/Y are directly affected by the circumstances of their parents, so an approach is needed to connect their specific experiences with those of the older generation.

Among the strategic priorities relevant to C/Y that are mentioned in LIP reports without necessarily involving C/Y focus, health and mental health are primary foci, accounting for approximately 30% of the LIP reports analyzed (see Table 4). Notably, Ottawa speaks about the various service needs and gaps that are identified such as accessibility and cultural sensitivity of practitioners. Furthermore, the same report emphasizes that health workers must be trained in health literacy concepts and effective communication skills to enable them to better serve immigrant and refugee clients.

Children and Youth

Table 4. Priorities and Strategies Relevant to C/Y, Which are Mentioned in LIP Reports without Necessarily Involving C/Y Focus
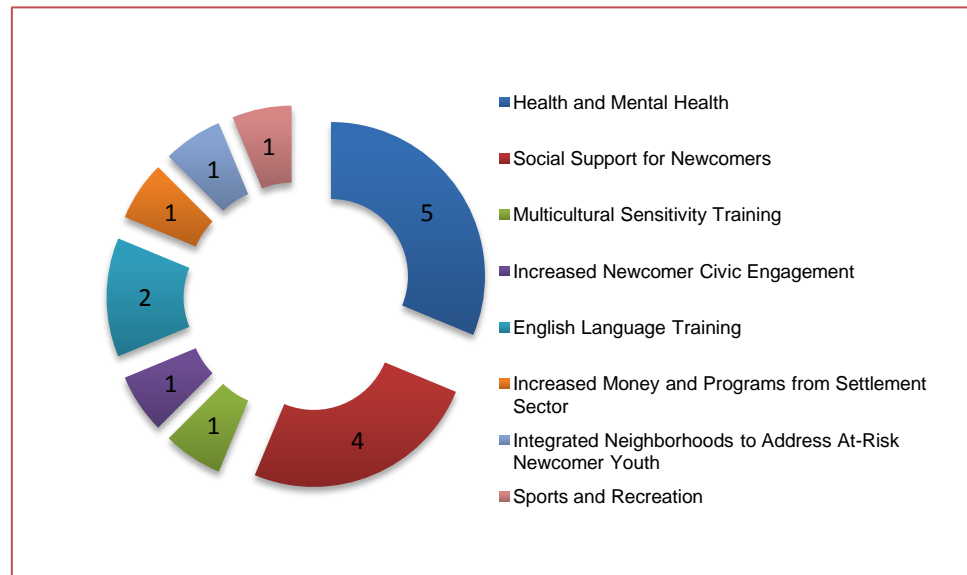
As Table 4 indicates, social support for newcomers is the second leading focus in the cluster of priorities relevant to C/Y immigrants without being clearly identified as a C/Y priority. Consequently, the LIP reports that prioritize social support for newcomers do not explicitly address the difference of C/Y immigrant experiences regarding emotional and social integration compared to other age groups. Furthermore, there are also differences in the experience among C/Y immigrants depending on gender, sexuality, the age at which they arrive, the citizenship status of their families (i.e., refugees , independent, etc.), and whether their families are employed or not (Anisef & Killbride 2003). Currently, the strategic priorities noted in LIP that are relevant to C/Y immigrants do not reflect the diversity of C/Y needs.

Noted in LIP reports without explicitly referring to C/Y concerns, we lastly consider accessible transit, making a community a more welcoming place, and media campaigns to represent *potential priorities/strategies.* These are important to include in our analysis because these strategic priorities are indeed very much relevant to C/Y and could substantially improve their daily experience in Canada. Currently, these priorities as outlined in the LIP report never seem to target the specific needs of C/Y immigrants but are left as largely vague concepts/visions from the point of view of our domain. There is therefore great promise to develop a clear focus to C/Y needs in some of these *potential priorities/strategies*. As a starting point, definitions of a welcoming place and organization of media campaigns should be developed as they pertain to C/Y immigrants' needs and experiences.

## *Services for C/Y According to LIPs*

In this section, we analyze the intended and suggested future services mentioned in the LIP reports with respect to their areas of concentration.

As Table 5 and Table 6 indicate, the analysis of proposed future services for C/Y indicates that the primary focus of Ontario cities is education. However, of the LIP reports that discuss education, the majority reposition the adult as the focal point.

Table 5. Number of Times, Specific Services with C/Y Focus Are Mentioned in LIP Reports

Table 6. Number of Times Education-Related Services with C/Y Focus are Mentioned in the LIP Reports
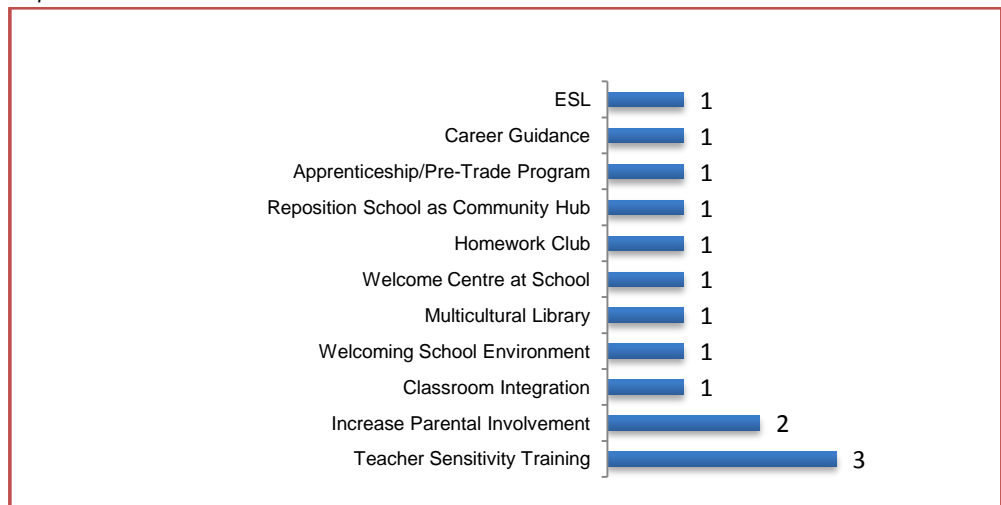
Second to education, strategic priorities in the LIP reports emphasize developing services to enhance immigrant youth employment (see Table 5). Current research argues that youth and adult immigrant employment is a structural problem where immigrants' foreign employment credentials are not fully recognized. (Anisef & Killbride 2003) Despite the significant effect of this structural obstacle on youth and adult immigrant employment, only the *Bathurst-Finch LIP report* mentions it specifically. Having said this, the majority of strategic priorities towards youth and adult unemployment mentioned in the reports have two foci: the first one is related to education that targets empowering and guiding the development of soft skills through internships and career exploration workshops. For instance, *Blackcreek LIP report* illustrates a significant attempt in prioritizing training of newcomer youth and employers simultaneously. By this, they target developing the soft skills of youth immigrants in addition to raising private sector awareness about discrimination. In this report, the same strategic priority also exists for adult newcomer employment and if satisfactory, will subsequently enhance the integration of immigrant children. The second focus concentrates on establishing a Web portal that will develop accessibility to markets in addition to assembling meetings with the private sector employers for possible collaboration in providing opportunities of employment for youth. Such resources are especially important for a generation that has a high general knowledge and use of Web-based information.

Lastly, the LIP reports suggest a priority on sports/recreation, including youth retreats and leadership programs (see Table 5). Studies have shown that sports offer a valuable venue for newcomer C/Y to bond not only with other multicultural C/Y but also with second- and later-generation Canadians (Anisef & Killbride 2003). This improves the bond not only with their home country but also with Canada and provides a strong sense of identity. Youth retreats and mentoring programs seem to be particularly effective methods for C/Y to feel welcome in Canada.

Promising Practices for C/Y

In this section, our domain provides from the LIP reports a list of promising practices for newcomer C/Y. These practices are particularly important for *directly addressing* youth and children needs regarding their education, employment, and socialization. On the other hand, these practices further build connections between immigrant parents, host communities, teachers, and immigrant or Canadian-born youth and children—an important contributing component to newcomer C/Y integration.

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East Downtown Toronto	Youth Action Network
Kingston	Youth Programs
	Drop-in Space
	Multicultural Library
	Welcome Centre for newcomer students and their parents at schools
Ottawa	Library Program (non-specific)
	Pathways to Education program
	Youth University Project
North Bay	North Bay Newcomer Network (award winning but without a C/Y focus)
North York East	Alternative Centre for Youth Employment (AYCE)
Northwest Scarborough	East Metro Youth Services
	Youthlink
	Steeles/L'Amoreaux Youth Empowerment Network
Peel	Client Centered Strategies
	Community Hubs
	HOST program
London	Child & Youth Network
	Buddy/Mentorship Program
Toronto East	Blake Bloutbee Youth Outreach Service
	Touchstone Youth Centre

2 - Promising Practices in the Literature and Importance of Holistic and Participatory Approaches to C/Y immigrants

In the majority of the LIP reports, C/Y are discussed either through the lens of education or parents. Similarly, children and youth as a research area are often studied through the lens of education or the family unit. Given that foreign-born children and children with foreign-born parents represent 20% of individuals under eighteen in Canada, and this number is expected to rise to 25% by 2016 (Hamilton, et al 2009), C/Y ought to be researched as an independent group with specialized needs that may be different from those of their parents (ibid) and may fall outside of the rubric of education (Beyer 2005). However, this should not overshadow the crucial need for cross-thematic and cross-population (among immigrant youth, between immigrant youth and their Canadian-born peers in addition to teachers, parents and community) practices. Anisef and Killbride (2003) call for integrated and holistic approaches towards C/Y issues for enhancing the social, economic, and cultural integration and settlement of the C/Y immigrants in Canada. Empowerment of LIPs to incorporate such an integrated approach to address C/Y immigrant issues in Canada is an urgent and crucial need.

Although some LIP reports discuss the importance of ESL classes for youth and children, Anisef (2005) suggests that ESL *can be a barrier to creating social networks outside of their ESL classes* (29). Instead, he argues that peer mentorship and English immersion allow children and youth to feel more integrated in both their schools and their larger Canadian communities. In the current educational system, immigrant youth are "more likely to experience fear of the future, loneliness, alienation, school difficulties including truancy, a sense of inferiority related to economic status, and relationship problems with native-born youth, teachers and others not sensitive to their needs." (Slonim-Nevo and Isralowitz 2002, 400) Rather than focus on the improvement of the existing ESL model, which many LIP reports suggest, an examination of the literature on immigrant children and education makes a strong case for immersion and peer mentoring.

Unlike some LIP reports, which suggest that there is a reciprocal relationship between traditional ethnic identities and mainstream (Canadian) identity, using a bi-dimensional model, Jessica et al (2010) and Berry et al (2006) argue that traditional ethnic identity does not need to be sacrificed in order for children and youth to adapt a mainstream, or more accurately, a Canadian identity. That is, many immigrant youths attempt to "acculturate by being involved with both their heritage culture and the national culture" (ibid, 323). This can be achieved using a variety of methods outlined in the LIPs as *Best Practices*, such as youth sports and recreation programs (see Michael 2009), after school programs such as youth drop-in centres, volunteering (see Dion 2004), and heritage language classes.

Many LIP reports address mental health and wellness; however, they do not specifically address the difficulties youth and children face. Rather than treat immigrants as a monolithic group, Khanlou (2008) suggests, "Mental health promotion initiatives directed at newcomer youth need to be individualized" (515). Because immigrants—and children and youth in particular— have a broad range of experience, their mental health needs ought to be addressed in specific and individual ways. Furthermore, for many immigrants, there is a stigma attached to mental illness. This may lead to a suppression of emotions which, in turn, may lead to an array of unhealthy behaviors (see Hamilton 2009).

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Other possible priorities, which are not mentioned in any of the analyzed LIP reports, constitute the social and political participation of youth in local politics through membership in NGOs, local governments, and voluntary services. Local environmental projects, such as youth community gardens and school gardens can be important steps in the integration of C/Y immigrants towards building community networks and social participation. Although there are successful community garden projects specifically in Kingston and Montreal,[1] these gardens do not target youth participation in particular. Projects in the US on youth community gardens show that youth and children benefited immensely from these gardens with respect to their health, building social networks, and establishing community relations. Also, local art projects such as the Graffiti for youth project in Montreal would help fostering youth networks and social participation.[2]

The existing literature on C/Y immigrants and their concerns discusses children and youth programs and *Best Practices* in first-tier cities. (Anisef & Killbride 2003) Although the programs and *Best Practices* outlined can be applicable to second- and third- tier cities in Ontario, the youth experience in smaller cities can vary in fundamental ways from that in large metropolitan areas, especially in multicultural cities like Toronto where there is a proliferation of immigrant communities and greater opportunities for children and youth to find guidance within their own ethnic enclaves. Second- and third- tier cities present a clear and obvious challenge by virtue of their smaller size and the difficulties they encounter in attracting and retaining immigrants. Therefore, programs set forth in a city like Toronto, cannot be directly transplanted to smaller cities, nor should they be expected to attain or maintain the same degree of success. Furthermore, regardless of the city size and its location, the demographics of immigrants and their status (e.g., refugees) change the concentration of C/Y concerns. (Anisef & Killbride 2003.) This is an important lesson from the literature that we would like to emphasize since services that are suggested by some of the LIP reports, especially the ones from the Toronto area, draw ideas and inspiration from ongoing private and public sector services and projects and thus aim at developing these projects into more concrete services (e.g., *Bathurst-Finch* and *Black Creek*). In this sense, proposed projects should consider the specific concerns of the youth and children immigrant populations in a particular community—their demographics as well as their place-based concerns.

The uniqueness of best practices and the possible challenges towards their incorporation in first-versus second- and third- tier cities in Ontario, necessitates the participation of newcomer youth and parents in the LIP process and, in turn, during the program design phase. The limited information provided in the LIP reports (e.g., mostly a list of organizations consulted) makes it difficult to determine to what extend relevant newcomer C/Y networks have fully participated

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[1] For more details on these projects please see: http://www.cityofkingston.ca/residents/recreation/community-gardens / and http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page? Page id=5977,68887600& dad=portal& schema=PORTAL; for youth garden projects in the US see: http://www.goodgrub.org/ , http://seattletilth.org/about/sygw and http://www.ahs.org/youth gardening/index.htm ; for school gardens see: http://www.pugetsoundschoolgardens.org/
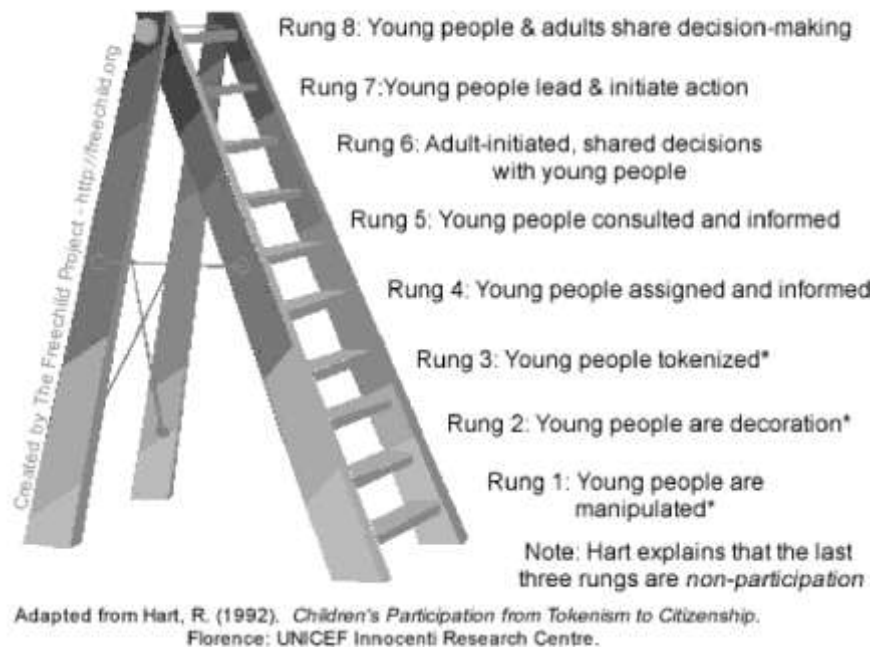
[2] For Montreal Graffiti project please see: http://ville.montreal.qc.ca/portal/page? pageid=3156,30837656& dad=portal& schema=PORTAL

during the preparation of the LIP reports. In the absence of information concerning the methods and techniques used during the process, it is hard to conclude on the quality of participation.

As a methodological suggestion for the incorporation of youth in the process of strategic plan preparation and development of new programs and services for newcomer youth, we find Robert Hart`s (1992) work on the *Ladder of Young People Participation* very useful. According to this work, illustrated as follows, Rung 7 and Rung 8 exemplify the best quality for youth participation. Similarly, Anisef and Killbride (2003) suggest that youth led projects for youth are significantly important to incorporate unique needs and participation of C/Y immigrants. In addition, participation of parents (both newcomers and Canadian born), the local community, and organizations, with school boards in managing and participating in youth programs are beneficial for encouraging and planning youth participation.

Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation

Rung 8: Young people & adults share decision-making

Rung 7: Young people lead & initiate action

Rung 6: Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people

Rung 5: Young people consulted and informed

Rung 4: Young people assigned and informed

Rung 3: Young people tokenized*

Rung 2: Young people are decoration*

Rung 1: Young people are manipulated*

Note: Hart explains that the last three rungs are *non-participation*

Created by The Freechild Project - http://freechild.org

Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship.* Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

In conclusion, the relevant research shows the importance of treating newcomer youth and children as a distinct target group with different experiences than adult newcomers. It is crucial that LIPs incorporate this perspective through means and practices of holistic approaches to C/Y immigrant issues in their upcoming processes of planning and building partnerships. Our suggestion with respect to holistic approaches encourages the participation of youth in LIP processes in addition to developing approaches to foster relations and dialogue between youth, children, parents, teachers, and the community.

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Children and Youth

Appendix A

LIP Reports Included in Analysis (Stage 1):

Guelph Wellington
Hamilton-Kingston London and Middlesex
Niagara North Bay Ottawa
Sarnia-Lambton
Sault Ste. Marie
Thunder Bay
Timmins Waterloo Windsor-Essex

<u>Toronto:</u>
Bathurst-Finch
Black Creek (Delta)
Central South Etobicoke Don Valley
Eglinton East- Kennedy Park Lawrence Heights
North York East
Northwest Scarborough
Peel
Southwest Scarborough Toronto East
Toronto East Downtown West Downtown Toronto
York South-Weston

Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: Community Civic Resources

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Introduction

Civic resources and initiatives available within the community, including municipal social services, recreational policies and programming, cultural policies, relations with the media, and the capacity of the voluntary sector, are essential features of a welcoming community in attracting newcomers and reinforcing their attachments to cities, towns and neighborhoods. Developing welcoming communities requires a collective effort on behalf of many actors to make recent immigrants and refugees feel valued and included in all aspects of the settlement and integration process. (Esses, Bennett-AbuAyyash & Burstein, 2010). Local municipalities, cities, and governance structures are key actors in these efforts and initiatives. Indeed, research shows that *Canadians see municipalities as the level of government most attuned to their needs* (Peel LIP), rendering the analysis of this lens particularly important.

The role of municipalities in supporting a welcoming community is therefore a critical one. This report discusses the role of municipal and community structures as they relate to the integration of immigrants. The report includes three substantive sections. The first of which summarizes the proposed areas of research for phase 2 research. This emerges from literature review, document analysis, and conversations with Local Immigration Partnership (LIP) leaders. The document analysis is included as section 2 of this report and provides an overview of municipal and civic roles and objectives as cited in 27 Local Immigration Partnership Plans. The focus of this analysis was to gain a better understanding of the ways in which municipal governments were noted in LIP plans and to include both an analysis of their role as well as the strategic programs, activities, and policies that were recommended. A third section includes an appendix of LIP references according to various domain themes.

SECTION ONE:
Cross-Cutting Themes and Proposed Areas for Further Analysis

In our review of literature and LIP plans, a number of cross-cutting themes emerged as deserving further analysis in phase two of research. Two of these themes relate to particular population subgroups; namely, the enhanced need to consider women and

seniors. Another three themes relate to policy or programmatic areas. These areas include housing, public transportation, and the value of sports in cultural celebration and as an integrative mechanism. The municipal and civic role in relation to these themes will be analyzed more thoroughly in phase two of the research where one promising practice for each of these themes will be analyzed. A more thorough analysis will be provided for two of these five practices.

The following includes a brief summary of these themes.

Sport as a Focus for Celebration

A number of LIP plans underline the importance of fostering integrative exchanges and creating opportunities to celebrate culture and community diversity, including newcomer contributions. To operationalize these ideas, many LIPs placed importance on how public space is used and, more particularly, on the need to create more inclusive public spaces in communities. LIP strategies also emphasized the importance of sports and recreation as a mechanism for social and cultural integration, as well as diversity and cultural awareness training. The potential for sports to serve as an integrative mechanism was noted most frequently in reference to youth well-being and integration. This said, celebrations around sport can encompass the full community and offer a mechanism for producing wider community support and awareness. The role of municipalities and civic institutions vary here from providing funding or space through partnerships and the direct provision of services.

Phase two research seeks to better understand the municipal role as it relates to each of these important themes. It is clear that there are different models of the municipal role: a role focused very clearly and strategically on economic development; a role focused essentially on supporting activities occurring in civil society; a role focused largely on social programs, including parks and recreation, health, social services; and a role as convener. Phase two research aims to look more closely at a smaller number of municipalities to determine the factors that have influenced these roles.

Immigrant Seniors

Emerging demographic and geographical realities have pushed the *seniors* lens to the forefront of the policy agenda. Seniors often lack awareness of services and events because of their lower rates of technological connectedness. In addition, weaker links with families and distance from service centres are factors that can lead to loneliness, isolation, and abuse for seniors. These concerns emerge in

LIP strategies, which outline numerous innovations for addressing seniors' needs, most commonly cited in relation to problems of senior isolation and poverty. Specific programs cited in LIP strategies relate to transportation and language supports, reducing barriers via grants, fee reductions and information awareness, as well as opportunities for socialization and instilling a deeper sense of belonging to their community.

Immigrant Women

Many of the LIP plans note the particular needs of immigrant women such as language classes and social and cultural activities for those not working outside the home and, better access to information about specific services for immigrant women. Child care is also often mentioned in terms of needed increases in affordable services. Another emerging area of interest is that of nutrition and the availability of culturally relevant affordable food for immigrant families. One new area of service needs for recent immigrants relates to recent data that suggests the gap in educational attainment between men and women has now largely disappeared and yet salary gaps between immigrant women and Canadian-born women, and between immigrant men and immigrant women, have not lessened. This suggests new service needs for highly educated immigrant women to help them attain suitable employment.

Public Transportation

Various LIP Plans referenced the need for better and more accessible public transportation, and noted various strategies for addressing these objectives, including better needs assessment, fee supports (or reductions), service coordination, and advocacy across upper levels of government for improvements to services. There is a rising need to consider issues of accessibility as processes of gentrification continue to push lower-income residents, including large numbers of recent immigrant families, out of city centres. Given the central role that public transportation plays in allowing access, the issue has emerged as a central social justice issue in many cities and communities.

Housing

Communities are increasingly concerned with housing matters as demographic and geographic changes intertwine to create various housing pressures, especially in city cores. Public housing projects have increasingly diverse populations and have responded to this by offering more information in multiple languages in order to reduce

barriers to accessing information on the part of recent immigrant populations. Processes of gentrification and intensification have increased the need to support adequate and affordable housing choices near employment and services. Municipalities and civic institutions can play a central role in service coordination and information dissemination. Another promising practice has been developed by settlement services and housing crisis services that play roles of bridging between immigrant clients and landlords thus increasing the stock of affordable housing.

SECTION TWO:

Commonly Cited Themes in Relation to the Municipal Role and the Priorities and Plans Needed to Address these Priorities.

The following section examines 27 LIP Strategic Plans to better understand how these communities have considered the nature and role of municipal and civic governance in their efforts to create welcoming communities.

We begin with a thematic discussion of the gaps identified in the plans, followed by a discussion of the priorities noted in the strategic plans. This discussion includes a summary of new and existing practices as well as any examples of promising practices identified in the strategic plans.

While LIP plans tended to under-emphasize the municipality as an active partner, there are a number of important themes and commonalities that do emerge in our review. In order to develop this discussion further, the following section is divided into two themes. The first discusses the commonly cited roles played by the municipality, while the second provides a discussion of general strategic directions, commonly cited in reference to the municipal or civic domain. The following table highlights these roles and strategic directions.

Municipalities and civic institutions were referenced in terms of playing the following roles.

Municipal Roles

- Coordinating services and fostering partnerships
- Advocacy and leveraging across other and higher levels of government
- Enabling by providing funding
- Enabling by convening

In addition, these efforts were most commonly related to the following general strategic directions.

General Strategic Directions

- Supporting integration, inclusion, and the removal of barriers to access

- Supporting information coordination and dissemination
- Supporting awareness raising, diversity, and anti-racism

The following section of this report describes each of these in more detail and cites specific examples as well as any promising practices that may have been highlighted.

The Municipal Role

Coordinating Services and Fostering Partnerships

The overall theme of better coordination comes up in almost all of the plans but many of these plans are not explicit on the role that municipalities can play in this. In many cases, the call for better coordination was of a general nature, without offering concrete models to follow. Though Strategic Plans often include resource and stakeholder considerations, a detailed description of *how* programmatic or service objectives would be carried out is often not included. In other instances, the Plans do offer particular examples in some areas but also include very general statements in others. For example, the Peel Strategy cites the general need for municipalities to support the development of coordinated services. As well, the West Downtown Strategy cites the need to coordinate services, including the ones offered by the City in order to *build on assets* and avoid service duplication. The under-emphasis of the municipal role in many strategic plans, or perhaps the under-conceptualization of this role, does not necessarily suggest an under-recognition of the municipal role as there may be a series of strategic and practical reasons for this.

In reality, service coordination and partnership building plays out in reference to a particular program or service objective. Municipalities were cited as playing a role in service coordination as this relates to employment related outcomes, information and dissemination, and integration and inclusion. These broad objectives include a number of strategies and activities involving the coordination of various actors and civic institutions, including the local health boards, school boards, public libraries, police services, employment organizations, and recreational facilities.

Several pre-existing programs from the City of Toronto are presented as contributing to LIP objectives. The City of Toronto's Neighborhood

Action Plan encourages partnership and relationship building among service providers.

As service coordination and partnership building refers to the general processes involved with building a more welcoming community, the following captures a deeper understanding of this as it relates to various other themes and programmatic objectives.

Advocacy and Leveraging Across Other Levels of Government

A number of LIP Strategic Plans noted the significant role that municipalities can play when bridging or coordinating with other local governance institutions and upper levels of governance. Often their role here was one of advocacy or leveraging assets. For example, the Hamilton Strategy cites the need to foster better collaboration and agreement among all three levels of government and recommends that the municipal government lobby for a seat on the immigration policy table at the provincial and federal levels. As well, Ottawa's Strategy is quite strategic and comprehensive in terms of citing the efficiencies to be gained by deepening its relationship with the City and with multi-levels of government, noting its unique geographical position. It identifies the City as a key partner in research, advocacy, partnership and capacity building. London Middlesex also identifies the municipality as a partner in advocacy, especially important in targeting provincial and federal governments. This was cited as particularly important for developing a better public transportation system and county-wide telecommunications. South West Scarborough highlights the need to address service and program gaps by advocating to all orders of government and proposes that the expected outcomes of this LIP efforts would be "to leverage municipal and provincial issues such as housing, health and wellness and employment to stakeholders at both the Toronto Newcomer Initiative or Inter LIP groups in order to advocate for systemic and policy changes." (72) And the Thunder Bay Strategy proposes the creation of links between cities to develop a community ambassador program.

In some cases, rather than advocating for new policies or programs, these efforts are directed at awareness raising and addressing discrimination and racism (Hamilton LIP, Kingston LIP). The City of Kingston, for example, has joined the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination.

Enabling by Providing Funding

Most often, the role of funding was cited in relation to the need to reduce barriers and increase the participation of ethno-cultural groups in cultural, recreational, or sport activities. For example, the Bathurst Finch Plan advocates that the Antibes Community Centre become a City of Toronto priority community centre that offers free, year-round sports and recreation programs for residents. The City of London is cited as having a new policy which waives the fees for the use of city-owned recreation and community centres. The London Middlesex Plan cites the need to engage other funders including the City of London and Citizenship and Immigration Ontario in order to support subsidized childcare in some neighborhoods.

In a couple of Strategic Plans, the general need for funding was cited but with no reference to a particular programmatic objective. For example, the Central South Etobicoke Plan cites the general need to seek out various sources of private, corporate, public or government funding. The City of Toronto is identified as a possible funding provider for services and supports in the West Downtown Toronto Strategy. The Timmins Economic Development Corporation (TEDC) is cited as being responsible for providing project funding.

Interestingly, the Waterloo Strategic Plan cites a different funding role, noting that the LIP must "work with municipal funders to ensure that they hold funded organizations accountable for implementing immigrant recruitment strategies." (6)

Enabling by Convening

Various Strategic Plans noted the role that municipalities play in bringing groups together for the purposes of knowledge sharing or resource leveraging. For example, the East Downtown Toronto LIP was invited to the City of Toronto/MTCU Integrated Local Labour Market Planning Meeting where attendees were interested in hearing about the research conducted by the East Downtown Toronto LIP. The City of Kingston played a role in co-hosting a focus group to develop a newcomer Web service. And Toronto East has played an active role in convening the 68 Business Improvement Areas (BIAs). There is perhaps a helpful distinction to be made here between having the municipality enable convening for the purposes of furthering its own internal objectives and having the municipality enable the coming together of community stakeholders in order to further their own

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objectives. The first of these is more commonly cited in Strategic Plans.

Commonly Cited Program and Service Objectives

While a number of municipal roles have been identified in Strategic Plans, it is also important to highlight commonalities around the general strategic objectives that are being advanced by these efforts. The following three figure prominently.

Inclusion, Integration, and Removing Barriers to Access

A dominant theme relates to the role that the municipality can play in increasing the inclusion and integration of immigrants and newcomers and in removing the barriers to accessing the programs and services that already exist. Much of this effort likely involves the need for more comprehensive partnerships and service coordination. As this objective is very broad, priorities and activities have been organized along policy sectors.

General Inclusion and Integration

- The adoption of an equity lens by all city institutions, leading to the need for greater awareness and sensitivity, representativeness, and translation/interpretation services (Ottawa LIP)
- The creation of a newcomer's club and a welcome wagon (Guelph LIP)
- The coordination of a community-based volunteer help service to enable integration (Guelph LIP)
- The implementation of outreach strategies in city-owned facilities (London)

Public Space, Facilities, and Recreational Programming

- Organizing newcomer clubs and spaces for newcomers to share their experiences, resources, etc. (Guelph LIP)
- Waiving fees for the use of city-owned recreation and community centres (various LIPs)
- The provision of *equity access cards* for all low-income families and individuals to encourage them to participate in recreational, cultural, and sports opportunities (Waterloo LIP)

- Promoting more affordable recreational programs for all groups (Don Valley LIP)
- Creating more affordable summer camps and increasing the number of spaces available (Toronto East LIP)
- Promoting greater access to the City of Kingston's P.R.O. Kids and SPARK program to newcomer families
- Supporting closer ties between YMCA, TDSB, and TCDSB in Central South Etobicoke
- Exploring ways in which the TCHC can open further community space for employment and training services and programs (Lawrence Heights LIP)
- Establishing a working group to explore the feasibility of implementing a policy designating use by non-profit cultural community organizations as a priority for the allocation of surplus city-owned spaces (London Middlesex LIP)
- Implementing outreach strategies in city-owned facilities to engage ethno-cultural groups (London Middlesex LIP)
- Coordinating available spaces and local programs and proposing to develop a collaborative structure that includes service providers, schools, city facilities and churches to help share information about space resources in the community (South Scarborough LIP)

Employment Related

- Creating volunteer models which allow for immigrants to gain Canadian work experience within City Hall (London LIP)
- Exploring ways in which the TCHC can open further community space for employment and training services and programs (Lawrence Heights LIP)

Educational

- Hiring settlement workers in local schools (London LIP)
- Supporting greater diversification, ethno-cultural programming and recreational services in the schools in order to increase participation (Ottawa LIP)
- Adapting English language classes to include *life skills* topics (West Downtown Toronto LIP)
- Improving multicultural and multilingual resources and activities in the library system (Kingston LIP)
- Providing free passes or rides to newcomers through welcome packages and expanding Municipal Assistance Program to newcomers (Kingston LIP)

- Working with unions and two school boards to train teachers to understand and meet the needs of immigrants (London Middlesex LIP)

Food and Health

- Collaborating with the City to provide incentives so grocery stores in poor neighborhoods stock and offer better and more nutritious food (Ottawa LIP)
- Creating culturally competent healthcare for newcomers (West Downtown Toronto LIP)
- Establishing partnerships between settlement service providers and the Public Health and School boards in order to organize workshops on health and education systems (Guelph/Wellington LIP)
- Collaborating with the City to reduce barriers to health care (Don Valley)
- Advocating the City of Toronto Public Health for affordable or free dental services (Don Valley)

Housing

- Work with City staff to improve affordable housing application (Waterloo)

Transportation

- Reducing fees for public transportation (North West Scarborough LIP, Waterloo LIP, Don Valley LIP)
- Actively seek newcomer involvement and feedback in Kingston Transit public planning sessions (Kingston LIP)
- Assess gaps in TTC and Wheel Trans Services (North Etobicoke LIP)

Child-Care

- Enhancing access to existing child-minding and senior care resources and advocating for more and better child-care services (South Scarborough LIP)

Police Services

- Establishing partnerships between newcomer groups and Toronto Police Services by organizing workshops for newcomers to reduce tension and stigma associated with enforcement officials (East Downtown Toronto LIP)
- Supporting the opportunities for residents and grassroots groups to interact and engage with Toronto Police Services (Lawrence Heights LIP)

Zoning

- Working with the city on behalf of the Muslim population to address zoning issues relating to the use of an existing building for a mosque (Timmins)

To be clear, the list of aforementioned priorities does not include all priorities relating to these policy domains but *only* those which were referenced *in relation* to the municipality. The Municipality was referenced in each of these program or service ideas as playing an enabling or leadership role. Specific roles vary to include coordination, funding, the removal of fees, establishing new policies and programs and adapting or deepening existing programs and services.

Promising Practices

- Two City of London programs were identified as best practices for providing meaningful engagement opportunities particularly for immigrant youth. The City of London Youth Leadership Program targets particular neighborhoods to engage youth from various cultures where there are limited numbers of youth leaders, a lack of youth from specific cultures applying for part-time/summer employment positions and/or a need for youth leaders with language specific skills. The London Youth Council also brings together youth from across the city to speak about issues that matter to young people age 13 to 24.

- City of Toronto is identified as a *sanctuary* city. Under its Don't Ask Don't Tell Policy, the City of Toronto allows non-status individuals access to services that the City pays for alone, arguing that excluding residents (regardless of status) is outside the jurisdiction of municipalities.

- The City of Toronto has played an active role in the Don Valley LIP with representation from Public Health, Community Development and Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS). The TESS centre has expanded to a new state-of-the-art employment drop-in centre with a number of new social and employment services.

- Toronto Newcomer Initiative is a city-wide LIP representing 17 Neighborhood Councils, each developing local strategies. The City-Wide table was constituted to delineate City-Wide strategy and to assist the City of Toronto in developing a *newcomer lens* to city services.

- City of Toronto Employment and Social Services Partnership to Advance Youth Employment (PAYE). This is a joint initiative between private sector employers and the City of Toronto to increase access to economic opportunities for youth and connect employers who are hiring to a pool of talented young candidates. (Identified as a possible best practice in the Don Valley Strategy).

Information Coordination and Dissemination

Information coordination and dissemination plays an important role in creating an inclusive climate for newcomers. The paths to achieving these goals were varied—at times involving broad coordination of the full range of community services, and at others, limited specifically to information about services within a municipal government.

The particular examples noted are as follows: the creation of a newcomer club and welcome wagon (Guelph LIP); creating an orientation package to be made available at public libraries and schools (Guelph LIP); developing multi-lingual and culturally sensitive information (Guelph LIP, Don Valley LIP); arranging newcomer orientation sessions (Guelph LIP); posting more signs to let immigrants know where resources can be found (Guelph LIP); launching an online information portal (Kingston LIP), partnering in the development of a coordinated and comprehensive communication strategy (London LIP); supporting the creation of a local Employers' Resource Guide for SMEs (North Bay LIP); establishing an accessible database of diversity trainers (North Bay LIP); and establishing comprehensive links between websites including municipal websites (Thunder Bay LIP).

Promising Practices

A number of promising practices were also cited.

- The Immigration Portal is often mentioned as a useful tool for information dissemination.

- In Windsor Essex, Council members were enthusiastic about the use of 2-1-1 as a repository of information for mainstream and newcomer dedicated services. 2-1-1 offers an easy to remember number that provides quick access to information and referral to community, social, health and government services and is always answered by a person who is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, either by phone or online. 2-1-1 is a shared commitment between the United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex, City of Windsor and the County of Essex.

- The Don Valley LIP project staff worked with the Toronto Employment Data Initiative based out of York University to update its statistical data and provide analysis on aspects of immigrant labor market integration to Council members. The goal is to provide this in the form of a monthly newsletter to help organizations access the quantitative data they need.

Awareness Raising, Diversity and Anti-Racism

Municipalities emerged as particularly important in terms of addressing anti-racism, promoting diversity, and general awareness raising.

Specific programmatic and service ideas include: supporting opportunities for residents and grassroots groups to interact and engage with Toronto Police Services (Lawrence Heights LIP); promoting greater diversification of the workforce (Guelph LIP, Ottawa LIP); advocating and committing to the elimination of discrimination and exclusionary practices in general (Hamilton); joining the Canadian Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (Kingston LIP); introducing or enhancing diversity training for staff in public and private institutions (London/Middlesex LIP); establishing an accessible database of diversity trainers and posting this to the Immigration Portal (North Bay LIP); enlisting the support of key community leaders to promote positive attitudes towards newcomers within their circles of influence (Ottawa LIP); adopting an equity lens by all city institutions and increasing the representation of minority groups (Ottawa LIP); creating a diversity-responsive business sector by promoting small business growth in the areas that cater to culturally diverse segments of the population such as restaurants, service-based business and retail opportunities (Sault Ste-Marie LIP); enacting a council resolution declaring the importance of being a welcoming community (already in existence in Thunder Bay); supporting greater diversification, ethno-cultural programming and recreational services in the schools in order to increase participation (Ottawa); and, advocating that municipalities sign on to the UNESCO Anti-Racism and Discrimination principles/protocol (Waterloo LIP).

SECTION 3:
Appendix of LIP References to Domain Themes

Service Coordination
Most plans highlight this, but the following plans are most notable:
Guelph
London Middlesex
Peel
Sault Ste Marie
West Downtown Toronto
Black Creek
Don Valley
Eglinton East

Information Coordination
Hamilton
London Middlesex
North East Scarborough
Sault Ste Marie
Sarnia
Black Creek
Don Valley
York South-Weston
Bathurst-Finch

Capacity-Building
Hamilton
Kingston
North York East
North Bay
Ottawa
Sarnia
South Scarborough
Thunder Bay
Timmins
Waterloo
Windsor
Don Valley
York South-Weston

Partnership, Networks and other Collaborative Governance
Kingston
London Middlesex
Ottawa

Peel
Timmins
Waterloo
West Downtown Toronto
Central South Etobicoke

Municipal Engagement
Guelph
Hamilton
Kingston
Ottawa
Peel
Waterloo

Sports as an Integrative Mechanism
Ottawa
Kingston
Toronto East
Bathurst Finch
London
Waterloo
Don Valley

Youth
East Downtown Toronto
London Middlesex
Kingston
North York East
North East Scarborough
Ottawa
Timmins
West Downtown Toronto

Seniors
East Downtown Toronto
Kingston
London Middlesex
South Scarborough
West Downtown Toronto

Women
East Downtown Toronto
Kingston

Ottawa
Sarnia
West Downtown Toronto

Public Transportation
West Downtown Toronto
Kingston
East Downtown Toronto

Food
North York East
South Scarborough
West Downtown Toronto

Housing
East Downtown Toronto
Guelph (general need, no specific service)
Hamilton
Kingston (general need, no specific service)
London Middlessex (interesting in this matter)
Northwest Scarborough
Peel
Sarnia (general need, no specific service)
South Scarborough
Timmins (general need, no specific service)
Toronto East
Waterloo
Windsor (general need, no specific service)

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Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: Education and Educational Policy

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WELCOMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

LES COMMUNAUTÉS ACCUEILLANTES

Scope of the Report: Analysis of a Selection of Ontario Local Immigration Partnerships' Strategies and Plans

The Welcoming Communities Initiative (WCI) conceptualizes a welcoming community as "a collective effort to create a place where individuals feel valued and included" and "as a location that has the capacity to meet the needs and promote inclusion of newcomers, and the machinery in place to produce and support these capacities" (Esses, Hamilton, Bennett-AbuAyyash & Burstein, 2010, p.5). Education and educational policies play an integral role in welcoming newcomers into Canadian society and communities. Educational opportunities are a key aspect of a welcoming community (Esses et al., 2010). This report analyzes the reports and strategic plans created between Fall 2009 to Winter 2011 by 27 Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) in five geographic regions in Ontario. The LIPs included in this report are: Greater Toronto Area (GTA) (e.g., Agincourt, Bathurst-Finch, Black Creek, Central South Etobicoke, Delta, Eglinton East-Kennedy Park, Lawrence Heights, Peel Region, North York East, South Scarborough, York South-Weston, Toronto East, Toronto East Downtown and Toronto West Downtown); South Central Ontario (e.g., Guelph-Wellington, Niagara Region and Hamilton); Eastern Ontario (e.g., Kingston and Ottawa); South Western Ontario (e.g., London and Middlesex, Sarnia-Lambton, Waterloo Region and Windsor-Essex); and Northern Ontario (e.g., North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay and Timmins).

In this report, we analyze the LIP strategies and plans using a welcoming community framework, as described above, and focus on their education and educational policy aspects. The first section of our report concentrates on commonly mentioned priorities identified by the LIPs for existing and new initiatives. These priorities emerged as themes in our analysis of service needs and gaps and form the organizational basis of the first section. Our report's remaining two sections are organized according to the top priorities within the area of education and educational policy. The second section of the report provides an analysis of strategies and innovations that we identify within the LIP strategic plans as ways to solve service needs and gaps. The final section of the report focuses on promising practices within the research literature and highlights promising practices.

LIP Priorities for Initiatives in Education and Educational Policy and Plans for New Initiatives

Commonly Mentioned Priorities

English language training. English language training is the LIPs' most commonly mentioned priority related to education (see Table 1). As one LIP explains, the "[l]ack of language proficiency is a critical challenge for newcomers, impacting all other challenges by impeding their ability to: obtain employment, undertake education or training, seek information and services, interact with other Canadians, understand life in Canada and generally live independently" (Toronto East Local Immigration Partnership, 2010, p. 43). It is evident that immigrants need new or improved access to English language training services in several LIP areas, as 80.7% of LIPs identified this as a priority. English language needs and gaps are often linked with employment-related initiatives. For example, the LIP in Agincourt, an area in

Table 1

Frequency of priorities in the plans of LIPs

Commonly mentioned priorities	Greater Toronto Area (GTA)													South Central Ontario			Eastern Ontario		South Western Ontario				Northern Ontario				Total % of commonly mentioned priorities
	Agincourt	Bathurst Finch	Black Creek	Central South Etobicoke	Eglinton-East/Kennedy Park	Lawrence heights	North York East	Peel	South Scarborough	South York Weston	Toronto East	Toronto East Downtown	Toronto West Down town	Guelph/Wellington	Hamilton	Niagara	Kingston	Ottawa	London and Middlesex	Sarnia Lambton	Waterloo Region	Windsor Essex	North Bay	Sault Ste. Marie	Thunder Bay	Timmins	
English language training	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	80.7
Fostering cultural competence in schools						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	65.4
Improving educational services for newcomers						X		X	X	X	X			X			X	X	X		X		X	X		X	50.0
Improving teacher training														X			X	X	X			X	X			X	23.7
French language training												X					X	X					X	X		X	23.7
Total priorities per LIP	1	1	1	1	0	3	1	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	1	1	5	5	4	2	3	3	5	3	0	5	

Northwest Scarborough, indicates that one of its priorities is "employment-sector-specific language training". Sarnia-Lambton, Peel Region, Toronto East, Toronto East Downtown, and Toronto West Downtown identify language competence and communication issues as barriers during their discussions of priorities. Other LIPs make the link between employment and language priorities, but do not explicitly identify this as a priority in their reports.

Fostering cultural competence in schools. The second most-commonly mentioned priority is the need for more cultural competence in schools. The school environment provides most of the Canadian "experience" for immigrant youths. For 65.4% of LIPs, the need for Canadians to become more culturally competent is a priority. Specifically, changes to the education system through curriculum and policy initiatives that promote cultural competence at all levels of schooling (elementary, secondary and postsecondary) are identified as a pressing need. For example, the Kingston LIP (2010) states that its area should provide support and welcome immigrants in the school system so that "newcomer youth feel welcome in the school system and receive the support they need to excel (p. 17)". Suggestions from various LIPs include developing programs or initiatives that recognize the value of immigrant skills; incorporate diversity, multiculturalism, human rights, and inclusion in the curriculum; and implement education policy related to rights and inclusion.

Improving educational services for newcomers. Half of the LIPs state that the services provided by education systems need improvement. LIPs frequently mention the need for parents, teachers and students to have more support through the school system. This LIP priority captures the following needs articulated within the various reports: more opportunities for newcomer parents to be involved in their children's schooling; support for "at-risk" students; more coordination of support and programming for immigrant and racialized youth; and removal of systemic barriers to academic and social success. The LIP reports also include the following suggestions: provide opportunities for increased involvement and programming; create peer-support mentoring programs; enhance programming to focus on improving access to post-secondary education; implement systematic and culturally sensitive assessments based on language and scholastic needs.

Improving teacher training. While 65.4% of LIPs identify the need to promote cultural competency in schools, 23.7% indicate that additional teacher training is a separate priority. These LIPs assert that teachers need more professional development on understanding multiculturalism within the classroom and on their role in promoting cultural competency. The reports stress the importance of addressing teacher training at multiple levels, identifying the need for: programming that prepares teacher candidates for diverse classes, on-the-job diversity training, and improved educational and practical experiences for foreign-trained and racialized teacher candidates. Proposed strategies focus on developing partnerships with school boards to develop and implement specialized training for teachers that will increase their awareness of diversity issues and help them address these issues. Making these programs a mandatory requirement for teacher accreditation and the hiring process is also suggested.

French language training. Services to enhance French language proficiency are identified as a priority by 23.7% of the LIPs. It is of particular concern to those LIPs geographically closest to Quebec or in Northern Ontario communities. They identify the need for adult education that tailors programming to meet the needs of daily living and employment. It is not clear if there are French-language training issues for newcomer youth. LIP reports include comments about the potential benefits of harmonizing federal and provincial language training programs so that they create a complementary and mutually supportive system of programming. Increasing newcomer awareness of language training options and ensuring that agencies have a bilingual capacity are also identified as needs.

With the exception of French language training, the priorities discussed thus far are mentioned by LIPs in all five geographic regions.

On a side note, while employment is the foremost priority in other domains (such as work place integration, and newcomer attention, retention and business development), issues related to it nonetheless relate to the education and educational policy domain, in such areas as the education and training programs offered to immigrants, and the educational and practical experiences of foreign-trained and racialized teacher candidates. Some 80.7% of LIPs in four of the five Ontario regions (GTA, South Central, Eastern, and South Western Ontario) indicate that immigrants need opportunities to build on their education and training experiences and identify a need for better employment services and programs. Please refer to the workplace integration and newcomer attention, retention, and business development domains for more detail.

Promising Practices Already Being Implemented

The extent to which promising practices are discussed in the LIP reports varies (see Table 2). Some reports explicitly state that practices are "best" or "promising" (Guelph-Wellington, Kingston, London and Middlesex, South Scarborough and Toronto East), while others only imply that practices are "best" or "promising" by advocating for an increase to the supporting program (Agincourt, Bathurst-Finch, Central South Etobicoke, Kingston, Lawrence Heights, London and Middlesex, North York East, Peel Region, Sarnia-Lambton and Toronto East Downtown). A number of reports provide literature reviews or analyses describing best practices in their own communities or elsewhere (Agincourt, Guelph-Wellington, Peel Region and Toronto East). In addition, many LIPs state in their strategic planning sections that "best or promising" practices should be identified and shared (Agincourt, Bathurst-Finch, Central South Etobicoke, Eglinton East-Kennedy Park, Hamilton, Lawrence Heights, South Scarborough, Timmins, Toronto East Downtown and Toronto West Downtown). The Kingston LIP even offers a link to its website to view additional reports that outline research on best practices around settlement issues.

English Language Training. Nine LIPs in the GTA, as well as the London and Middlesex and Windsor-Essex LIPs, made reference to the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Home Study program. The LINC program is provided by "the Government of Canada, in cooperation with provincial governments, school boards, community colleges and immigrant-serving organizations, [and] offers free language training across the country to adult permanent residents" (LINC website). The Guelph-Wellington LIP (2010) states that the "LINC Assessment Centre: provide eligibility screening based on client immigration status and linguistic assessment rating in one of 7 LINC levels or a literacy level, if appropriate, and referral

Table 2

Promising programs already being implemented

Priority	Promising Practices	Greater Toronto Area (GTA)										South Central Ontario	Eastern Ontario		South Western Ontario			Northern Ontario	
		Agincourt	Bathurst Finch	Central South	Lawrence heights	North York East	Peel	South Scarborough	Toronto East	Toronto East Downtown	Toronto West Down town	Guelph/Wellington	Kingston	Ottawa	London and Middlesex	Sarnia Lambton	Windsor	North Bay	Sault Ste. Marie
English language training	1. LINC program*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X				
	2. ESL classes offered at schools*	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X			
	3. ESL literacy program	X	X												X				
	4. Conversation circles		X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X			X	X	X	
Improving educational services for newcomers	5. Toronto District School Board							X					X		X				
Improving teacher training	6. Limited English Proficiency (LEP)														X				
French language training	7. CLIC Program												X	X	X				

Note. *Newcomers indicated dissatisfaction with several areas of the program; however, improvements are being made.

to appropriate CIC [Citizenship and Immigration Canada] funded programs in the community"
(Guelph-Wellington Local Immigration Partnership, 2010, p. 90).

Most of the LIPs recommend the increase of English learning opportunities, such as
LINC Home Study, and call for more support for the LINC program, yet do not explicitly
identify the program as a promising practice. The South Scarborough LIP states that the LINC
program is working well in the community, but adds that English as a Second Language (ESL)
classes offered at neighbourhood schools have been working very well for parents who are not
eligible for LINC classes. The Toronto East LIP (2010) states that, in relation to "navigating
services", "[v]arious initiatives are improving access: settlement workers at LINC schools and
off-site settlement services through partnerships with other agencies" (p. 37). This statement
could be interpreted as identifying a promising practice. However, the Toronto East LIP also
highlights several barriers within the program that need to be addressed and recommends that
newcomers seek language support beyond LINC. Barriers include the fact that some newcomers
and refugees are not eligible for LINC and that child care is insufficient. The Toronto East Local
Immigration Partnership (2010) states that one newcomer explained:

> LINC and ESL were not a good experience – Instructor give a lot of material for
> reading that is difficult to understand – some time playing music as part of
> learning language – we were in ESL for two years but no improvement and left it
> (p. 117).

Recently, CIC's strategic plan for settlement and language training identified an
enhanced language assessment system as a key priority. In response, "the Canada-Ontario
Immigration Agreement (COIA) Language Training Working Group has made the following
recommendations: a coordinated language assessment and referral system; language training
in/for the workplace; self-directed and alternative learning models for language training; overall
coordination of the two language training systems for newcomers in Ontario" (Toronto East
Local Immigration Partnership, 2010, p. 39). In addition, the Ontario government has funded
Specialized Language Training pilot projects, a LINC computer-based youth one-on-one tutoring
program, and a new joint provincial/federal pilot project called Centralized Language
Assessment and Referral Service (CLARS) for both LINC and ESL (Toronto East Local
Immigration Partnership, 2010). Thus, although the LINC program has been identified as
needing improvements, given these developments, it does appear to be a promising practice.

In addition to South Scarborough, other LIPs (Agincourt, Bathurst-Finch, Lawrence
Heights, London and Middlesex, North York East, Peel Region, Toronto East, Toronto East
Downtown and Toronto West Downtown) mention the need for an increase in ESL classes at
schools, in the ESL literacy program and in the LINC program. The Bathurst-Finch LIP (2010)
explains that:

> ESL or English a Second Language is a free language training program funded
> provincially by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI).
> Typically ESL programming is offered by the Toronto District School Board
> (TDBS) and generally is open to all newcomers. ESL Literacy is a program,

funded provincially by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI), for individuals who are learning English as a Second Language and who are not functionally literate in their own language for a variety of reasons (p. 11).

Several LIPs (Bathurst-Finch, Kingston, Lawrence Heights, North Bay, North York East, Peel Region, Sarnia-Lambton, South Scarborough, Toronto East, Toronto West Downtown and Windsor-Essex) identify conversation circles as a promising practice in their strategies and action plans. Bathurst-Finch, Lawrence Heights and Toronto West Downtown LIPs propose using these circles to reduce English language barriers to employment and skills training. Both Bathurst-Finch and Lawrence Heights state that conversation circles should be developed for specific professions, such as internationally trained nurses. Other LIPs state that conversation circles exist in their area or that these services should be offered or expanded so that newcomers can become proficient in English. In fact, the research conducted by the North York East LIP states that "…roughly 40% of participants emphasized the need for more conversation circles to practice[sic] and improve listening and speaking/pronunciation" (p. 30).

More related to employment, several GTA LIPs (Agincourt, Bathurst-Finch, Lawrence Heights, Sarnia-Lambton, Toronto East and Toronto West Downtown) would like to see more support and use of the following job-specific language learning programs: Enhanced Language Training, Occupation-Specific Language Training, and Specialized Language Training, in order to "help newcomers overcome English language barriers to attaining gainful employment and upward mobility in the labour market" (Lawrence Heights Local Immigration Partnership, 2010, p. 9). According to the Lawrence Heights Local Immigration Partnership (2010):

> ELT or Enhanced Language Training/OSLT or Occupation Specific Language Training provides free job-specific language training in English but also the workplace culture skills required to communicate effectively in the Canadian workplace. There are also opportunities for mentoring, job placements and other ways to help newcomers find work. This program is funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC). Participants must have a background in a specific occupation and a higher level of English competency. SLT or Specialized Language Training is a pilot project offering immigrants the opportunity to strengthen their language skills so they gain employment that reflect[sic] their qualifications or function more effectively in the job they already have. The program is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI) (p. 15).

In addition to these language learning programs, the Toronto East LIP defines "Literacy and Basic Skills" as a best practice in workplace language training. Although this element crosses over to other domains, it is worth mentioning because of its connection to language training.

Improving Educational Services for Newcomers. The Characteristics of a Welcoming Community Report (Esses et al., 2010) identifies the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) as having an exceptional integration program that constitutes a promising practice. In 2008, the

TDSB was awarded the Carl Bertelsmann Prize for its exceptional work in improving social integration and equal opportunity learning. According to Lloyd McKell, Senior Advisor to the TDSB, the overall goal of TDSB's integration initiative is to ensure equitable opportunities for school success and the identification and removal of systemic barriers to those opportunities for diverse students. To accomplish that goal, the TDSB has introduced many programs and partnerships, such as Settlement Workers in School (SWIS), to support immigrant children in their schools. The need for integration programs that address school success is stressed in many of the LIP reports; as such, this excellent integration model demonstrates how such a need can be addressed.

The LIP reports make several references to such integration programs. The Kingston LIP (2010) suggests implementing the SWIS program in its action strategy to help "newcomer youth feel welcome in the school system and receive the support they need to excel" (p. 22). The Kingston LIP also suggests providing academic support programs in schools as part of the SWIS program. This implies that the Kingston LIP considers the SWIS program a promising practice. The London and Middlesex LIP suggests that the SWIS program be implemented in all schools. In addition, for the same reasons described by the Kingston LIP, the London and Middlesex LIP suggests that implementation of the SWIS program could "promote cross-cultural peer mentoring" (p. 20) to support the needs of parents, students and teachers.

Improving Teacher Training. The London and Middlesex LIP recommends that teacher training be enhanced for teachers of multilingual classes by the adaptation of modules used in the U.S.A., such as Teaching Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, in order to support the needs of parents, teachers and students.

French Language Training. Notably, both of the LIPs in Eastern Ontario mention a promising practice that addresses the lack of French language training. Due to their proximity to Quebec, it is not surprising that this is a priority and that promising practices have been established. The Kingston LIP explicitly states that the Centre de langues internationales Charpentier (CLIC) program is a best practice for improving collaboration between language and settlement service providers. (This program is the same as the LINC program, but offers French language training.) The Ottawa LIP encourages the use of the CLIC program to enhance the quality and availability of French training as a strategic direction and action plan. Based on information provided on the CLIC website, this centre has specialized in the teaching of French and English as second languages for 35 years. In 1998, the CLIC was accredited with Public Works and Government Services Canada as a service provider of official-languages training to the federal government. CLIC also offers made-to-measure courses to meet the particular requirements of businesses and private individuals, as well as a French Immersion Program.

Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans

This section will discuss the ideas the LIPs have for solving the needs of their clients (see Table 3). During analysis, strategic directions and action strategies were combined as a whole as opposed to distinguishing between them.

English Language Training

Several LIP strategic plans identify immigrants' need for new or improved access to English language training services, and offer three overall strategies to address this need. Two strategies are suggested fairly consistently across all five geographic regions, with the exception of South Central Ontario. The first proposes to remove barriers to English language learning opportunities for newcomer youth, parents, caregivers, seniors and employees, and to increase the diversity of the English language course options to encourage informal learning. The second strategy, which did not appear in a uniform manner across all LIP areas, proposes to enhance the quality of English classes by developing common standards for program delivery and certification.

Our analysis of the new practices or extension of current practices that LIPs suggest to meet the English language learning needs of newcomers finds that a recurring element of these practices involves partnerships between LIPs and other organizations, such as child-care providers, school boards, LINC, stakeholders, local and regional ESL service providers, community partners and regional service providers. Alternatively, one LIP suggests facilitating partnerships among community agencies. The involvement of new money is also a common element in the strategies, as LIPs request funds from both federal and provincial sources (Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration). Subsidies are also requested to cover day-care expenses.

Remove barriers to English language learning opportunities for newcomer youth, caregivers, employees and women. Some 66.6% (n = 14) of the LIPs focus on strategies that work to remove barriers to English language learning opportunities for newcomer youth, parents, caregivers, seniors and employees. Some of the LIPs focus on one specific group of newcomers, others do not. The majority of LIPs target caregivers (n = 6) and youth (n = 5), but some do not identify a specific group of newcomers (n = 3). This discrepancy speaks to which groups of newcomers face the most barriers in each LIP area. Half of the LIPs target two out of five of the listed newcomer categories, while the other half target only one of the groups.

LIPs in the GTA, South Western Ontario and Sault Ste. Marie want to remove barriers for caregivers so that these newcomers can take advantage of English-language training opportunities. Common suggestions to remove these barriers include: providing child care, combining recreational and leisure activities with English language teaching, diversifying English language class scheduling, and providing family-based English classes for caregivers. London and Middlesex, Lawrence Heights, Sault Ste. Marie, Waterloo Region and Windsor-Essex call for an increase in child-care services. For example, the London and Middlesex LIP wishes to increase free child care/child-minding services by requesting more funds from Citizenship and Immigration Canada to purchase 50 seats annually or as per need from licensed day-care providers. Agincourt suggests exploring the possibility of streamlining child-minding support for all the language training programs, as well as providing day-care support or a subsidy for day-care expenses. Sault Ste. Marie wishes to offer day-care services with ESL programs to enable those with children to attend day or evening classes, whereas Waterloo Region looks at ways to partner with formal child-care providers to pilot on-site child care.

Table 3: *Frequency of common strategies/actions in the LIPs' plans*

Priorities (needs)	Strategy directions or action strategies	Greater Toronto Area (GTA)											South Central Ontario			Eastern Ontario		South Western Ontario				Northern Ontario				% of those LIPs that prioritize employment and suggest this strategy
		Agincourt	Bathurst Finch	Central South Etobicoke	Lawrence Heights	North York East	Peel	South Scarborough	South York Weston	Toronto East	Toronto East Downtown	Toronto West Down town	Guelph/Wellington	Niagara	Hamilton	Kingston	Ottawa	London and Middlesex	Sarnia Lambton	Waterloo Region	Windsor	North Bay	Sault Ste. Marie	Thunder Bay	Timmins	
English language training (Total: 21 LIPs)	Remove barriers to English Language learning opportunities for newcomer youth, parents, caregivers, seniors and employees	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X				X		X		X	X		X		X	66.6
	Increase the diversity of the English language course options to encourage informal learning	X		X	X	X		X	X		X									X	X	X	X		X	57.1
	Enhance the quality of English classes by developing common standards for program delivery and certification							X		X	X						X					X				23.8
Fostering cultural competence in schools (Total: 17 LIPs)	Promote cultural competence in school activities and programs				X	X										X	X					X	X			35.2
	Education system and personnel need to recognize the value of immigrant skills								X			X				X	X					X				29.4
	Implement education policy related to rights and inclusion														X	X	X								X	23.5

Education and Educational Policy

Priorities (needs)	Strategy directions or action strategies	Greater Toronto Area (GTA)											South Central Ontario			Eastern Ontario		South Western Ontario				Northern Ontario				% of those LIPs that prioritize employment and suggest this strategy
		Agincourt	Bathurst Finch	Central South Etobicoke	Lawrence Heights	North York East	Peel	South Scarborough	South York Weston	Toronto East	Toronto East Downtown	Toronto West Down town	Guelph/Wellington	Niagara	Hamilton	Kingston	Ottawa	London and Middlesex	Sarnia Lambton	Waterloo Region	Windsor	North Bay	Sault Ste. Marie	Thunder Bay	Timmins	
Fostering cultural competence in schools (cont.)	Incorporate diversity, multiculturalism, human rights and inclusion in the curriculum																						X			5..8
	Hire more minority teachers																X									5.8
Improving educational services for newcomers (Total: 13 LIPs)	Inform newcomers about education systems and how to access them							X	X	X	X					X	X	X				X	X			69.2
	Encourage and investigate the responsiveness of schools to newcomer students and parents and their unique needs					X										X	X									23.0
	Provide students with resources to improve academic achievement levels			X	X											X										23.0
	Create a peer-support mentoring program for high school students to help them integrate into the classroom															X		X								15.3
	Place youth in appropriate school settings through systematic and culturally sensitive assessments based on language and scholastic abilities															X	X									15.3

Priorities (needs)	Strategy directions or action strategies	Greater Toronto Area (GTA)											South Central Ontario			Eastern Ontario		South Western Ontario				Northern Ontario				% of those LIPs that prioritize employment and suggest this strategy
		Agincourt	Bathurst Finch	Central South Etobicoke	Lawrence Heights	North York East	Peel	South Scarborough	South York Weston	Toronto East	Toronto East Downtown	Toronto West Down town	Guelph/Wellington	Niagara	Hamilton	Kingston	Ottawa	London and Middlesex	Sarnia Lambton	Waterloo Region	Windsor	North Bay	Sault Ste. Marie	Thunder Bay	Timmins	
Improving educational services for newcomers (Total: 13 LIPs)	Provide youth with programs that help them access post-secondary education					X																		X		15.3
	Increase participation by minority parents and by minority ethnic associations in schools and in the larger education system																X			X						11.7
Improving teacher training (Total: 6 LIPs)	Teachers need more professional development on understanding the culture [words missing]												X			X	X	X				X		X		35.2

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In addition to addressing the need for child-care services, Bathurst-Finch wishes to provide day programs for newcomer seniors that integrate English language training and conversation practice with recreational and leisure activities. This LIP also suggests diversifying the schedule of English language classes to provide a selection of full-time, part-time, day, evening, weekday and weekend courses. Both Bathurst-Finch and Lawrence Heights suggest providing family-based English classes for caregivers.

Some LIPs focus on removing barriers to language learning opportunities for youth. These include Timmins and several in the GTA (Bathurst-Finch, Lawrence Heights, Toronto East and Toronto West Downtown). The Bathurst-Finch LIP suggests several strategies: provide recreation and leisure programs for newcomer youth that integrates English language training and conversation practice after school and during the summer; advocate for a more comprehensive language assessment process that measures not only skill level, but provides a language action plan; create a regular forum for language service providers to meet, plan, exchange ideas and collaborate on English language learning opportunities; explore the capacity and skills of English language teachers to provide English lessons requiring different skill levels; and support the organization and development of student representation from LINC and ESL learners associations. The Lawrence Heights LIP suggests running volunteer-based literacy groups, reading groups and conversation circles that allow youth to practice English in informal settings. To do this, Lawrence Heights suggests providing English classes after school and during the summer for youth under the age of 18 years. Toronto West Downtown and Toronto East LIPs also state that they need to provide more English language practice and training opportunities for youth, including combining English language services with tutoring in school subjects. Timmins seems to be in the early stages of addressing English language programs for students, and it suggests identifying best practices and forming an education committee in order to facilitate ongoing communication among school boards, colleges and universities.

The LIPs also target removing barriers for employees and women. For employees, the Kingston LIP recommends improving coordination between language and settlement services providers, increasing access to bridging programs with language learning components, and making language instruction more accessible through alternative language supports. It suggests the following specific actions: more tailored ideas, such as creating an ESL program for restaurant and other shift workers that caters to their schedules and needs; including language instruction providers in settlement working groups; and developing after-work drop-in programs for language tutoring. Agincourt wishes to explore the possibility of increasing English language learning locations in order to provide weekend and evening classes. To respond to cultural sensitivity, the South Scarborough LIP suggests offering women-only language classes.

Three other LIPs (Toronto East Downtown, Sault Ste. Marie and York South-Weston) also focus on removing barriers for newcomers, but do not identify any specific groups. The Toronto East Downtown LIP wishes to develop flexible schedules for ESL and LINC training classes that are dispersed evenly across the neighbourhood. To do this, they propose identifying all language training classes currently available, raising awareness of the need for more flexible schedules, and partnering with the Toronto District School Board, LINC and any other relevant stakeholders. Sault Ste. Marie suggests providing online ESL options for those who may not be

able to attend class. Finally, the York South-Weston LIP believes that eligibility and assistance for language classes should be extended, even after receiving citizenship.

Increase the diversity of English language course options to encourage informal learning. Another popular strategy is to increase the diversity of English language course options to encourage learning through multiple and informal formats (57.1% of LIPs). There were some differences between the strategies suggested by LIPs within and LIPs outside the GTA. We will first review the strategies suggested by the GTA LIPs, and then those strategies suggested by LIPs outside the GTA.

Central South Etobicoke, Lawrence Heights and North York East suggest increasing one or all of the following: volunteer-based literacy groups, reading groups and conversation circles. Toronto West Downtown wishes to increase informal or conversational English language practice or training and issues-specific English language training. The Toronto East LIP suggests that agencies develop non-classroom learning tools, for example, by connecting with TVO or CBC to create educational programs. In addition, the Toronto East LIP wishes to create a partnership among community agencies in order to manage an interactive online tool for English language learners. This LIP believes that conversational and reading circles are crucial to helping newcomers develop communication skills, and it suggests asking local coffee shops to offer conversation circles. The York South-Weston LIP wishes to develop flexible teaching methods to match diverse backgrounds and learning styles, while Agincourt wishes to increase access to language training programs through coordination among service providers.

Now we turn our attention to the strategies suggested by LIPs outside of the GTA. The North Bay LIP suggests several ways to enhance and expand language services: support the Near North District School Board's application for a LINC program; work with local community colleges, the Near North Employers' Council and other Northern Ontario communities to explore ways to bring the Occupational Specific Language Training (OLST) program to the North Bay area, overcoming the current "lack of economy of scale" which prohibits offering the program; and work with community partners in outlying districts to explore offering programs such as English conversation circles for clients unable to travel to North Bay. Sarnia-Lambton suggests the following strategies in order to create more diverse opportunities for ESL, English language training and occupation-specific language learning: develop partnerships between local ESL providers to increase the number of students; investigate the possibility of providing on-the-job language training for newcomers; actively market Sarnia-Lambton as an ESL destination; connect with regional ESL service providers to form potential partnerships; and investigate the use of new technologies (for example, webinars, Skype) to expand local language programs. Waterloo Region proposes developing a pilot project to offer a variety of English language services at locations close to where immigrants live. Sault Ste. Marie wishes to offer a variety of ESL classes at different language levels, so that students can be grouped according to language proficiency. Lastly, Timmins suggests pursuing the creation of free ESL classes by applying to the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration for funding and finding school boards and local colleges willing to house such classes.

On another note, several strategies propose to improve access to conversation circles, a popular promising practice in the LIP reports (61%). The Toronto West Downtown LIP (2011) wishes to expand the access to conversation circles by taking the following actions:

> o Identify and document best practices in Conversation Circles (e.g., recruiting, training, and managing volunteer ESL tutors and volunteers who lead conversation circles), and develop a "Code of Conduct" for Conversation Circles (e.g., Conversation Circles will not be cancelled to meet other agency needs)
> o Develop and seek funding to deliver new conversational English Language Practice or Training Opportunities – or a comprehensive "Conversation Circle Program," possibly including the development of common resources for Conversation Circles
> o Develop (and seek funding if needed) a pilot project for the creation of a Speakers Bureau identifying speakers who are available to conduct workshops or information sessions on key topics for English language classes
> o Develop and seek funding to deliver training for volunteer Conversation Circle Leaders and ESL tutors in the area
> o Assess whether there has been an increase in and/or improvement of Conversation Circle opportunities by comparing current opportunities to those identified in the Stage 1 Inventory Review (p. 26).

Enhance the quality of English classes by developing common standards for program delivery and certification. A number of LIPs suggest strategies to enhance the quality of English classes by developing common standards for program delivery and certification. For example, above we cite suggestions by the Toronto West Downtown LIP to support adjustments to provincially funded English language training programs to ensure that these programs are consistent with the standards of federally funded programs. The South Scarborough LIP proposes developing common standards for English classes in regards to program delivery and certification. To accomplish this, South Scarborough calls for an analysis of best practices in this area and for partnerships with the TDSB, LINC and language service providers. The Toronto East Downtown LIP seems to be at an early stage of development in regards to government-funded language training programs, as this LIP states that it wishes to promote the development of a centralized, government-funded interpretation system. North Bay suggests working with local community partners to establish a Canada Language Benchmarking (CLB) assessment office for North Bay and area. Lastly, the Ottawa LIP wishes to assess the impact of discretionary board funding decisions on the type and level of services available to support immigrant children, in particular, assessing the extent to which discretionary board decisions affect the availability of language training for immigrant students (language training comes from designated and non-designated apportionments, the latter category being susceptible to cuts based on contingencies).

Fostering Cultural Competence in Schools

Many of the strategies and actions suggested for fostering competence involve education systems and schools. These directions show the relationship between highly culturally competent

Canadians and newcomers feeling welcome and integrating successfully into the community. We see that the LIPs believe that, for their proposed strategies and actions to work, discrimination toward newcomers must be eliminated. Because this is identified as a priority less often than English language training, strategies for fostering cultural competence appear less frequently across all LIP areas. It is interesting to note that the majority of strategies to enhance cultural competence are suggested by LIPs outside the GTA. This fact prompts questions about why that is and whether it is related to a perception of higher cultural competence in some areas.

In our analysis of new practices or the extension of current practices suggested to foster cultural competence, we found that strengthening school board participation and openness is critical to the implementation process. Some LIPs state that facilitating partnerships among grassroots groups, residents and educators is also important.

Promote cultural competence in school activities and programs. LIPs in the GTA, Eastern Ontario, South Western Ontario and Northern Ontario suggest promoting cultural sensitivity in schools through activities and programs that foster and support a welcoming environment for newcomers. Bathurst-Finch suggests offering anti-racism and anti-oppression training. Lawrence Heights suggests taking a more collaborative approach to improving services and support for newcomer youth by facilitating partnerships between grassroots groups, residents and educators to discuss and promote cultural sensitivity in school activities and programs, as well as partnering with residents and grassroots groups to develop culturally sensitive and community-based orientation and information material on schools. Peel Region wishes to support training and capacity building for more effective engagement of newcomers, including providing education about anti-racist and anti-discriminatory processes. North York East states that welcoming and inclusive spaces need to be ensured for all newcomer students and their families in schools.

The remaining four strategic directions are suggested less frequently, yet are important to address if Ontario wishes to eliminate the discrimination faced by newcomers. These strategies can be seen in Table 3. Of specific interest are the following: implement education policy related to rights and inclusion; incorporate diversity, multiculturalism, human rights, and inclusion in the curriculum; and hire more minority teachers. All three of these directions have been documented extensively in education related research.

Improving Educational Services for Newcomers

A number of LIPs focus on improving the services provided by education systems, yet the strategies suggested are not consistent across all the LIPs or the LIPs' geographical regions. However, this inconsistency should not diminish their importance, as the literature shows that much needs to be done in education systems to improve newcomers' educational experiences (Anisef et al., 2010; Zinga and Davis, 2006). The most commonly mentioned strategy is informing newcomers about education systems and how to access them. Not many LIPs suggest the other six strategies, but they merit mentioning.

In our analysis of new practices or the extension of current practices that LIPs suggest to improve services provided by education systems, we found, not surprisingly, that the LIPs most often state that they need to be working with local school boards and schools. Yet there are times when the LIPs call for community service partnerships.

Inform newcomers about education systems and how to access them. Some 69.2% of the LIPs that prioritize education comment on how newcomers need to be better informed about Canada's education systems. Most of the statements are relatively broad; some focus on providing parents with orientation sessions about education systems; and a few suggest specifically that students should be provided with socio-cultural orientation to the Canadian education context.

For example, both Guelph-Wellington and Kingston wish to provide orientation to inform newcomers about education systems and how to access them. Guelph-Wellington suggests developing information in appropriate languages to inform newcomers, as well as holding workshops to impart information about education systems. The South Scarborough LIP suggests facilitating connections between parents, as well as information sharing through the school system and existing parent groups, in order for newcomer parents to be connected and supported in the community. Similarly, the Toronto East LIP proposes using schools as hubs for providing information and services. The Peel LIP encourages schools to become more responsive to newcomer students and parents and their unique needs. Toronto West Downtown advocates this as well and calls for enhanced partnerships with local schools to do the following: support relationship building with newcomer services and local schools; promote newcomer parents' understanding of school systems, early childhood education and higher education; and conduct education campaigns to foster understanding of the importance of social inclusion.

To ensure that schools cater to the needs of newcomer students and parents, the London and Middlesex LIP suggests that SWIS workers be brought into the school to work as communications officers by offering translation and communication services between families and administration. Ottawa suggests that schools be repositioned as community hubs, as a way to insert cultural and recreational services into schools in order to boost minority-community participation.

To improve newcomer students' academic achievement levels, Lawrence Heights and North York East propose that free tutoring services be provided for youth. In regards to helping youth integrate into the classroom, the Kingston LIP suggests creating a peer-support mentoring program for high school students, while the London Middlesex LIP promotes cross-cultural peer monitoring through such channels as SWIS, parents, teachers and school councils. The Kingston LIP proposes placing newcomer youth in appropriate school settings through systemic and culturally sensitive assessments based on their language and scholastic abilities. The Ottawa LIP proposes examining the measures used to assess "at risk" students, calling for more testing data, test performance scores and the monitoring of drop-out rates as a basis for assessing the effectiveness of interventions and building in accountability. Lastly, the Toronto West Downtown LIP, which sees supporting access to higher education for newcomers as a priority,

suggests implementing the Pathways to Education program, educational scholarships, leadership training and after-school programs focusing on this area.

Improve Teacher Training

Providing teachers with more professional development on understanding cultural issues is a popular strategy in some LIP reports (35.2%). Interestingly, none of these LIPs are part of the GTA, but are in every other geographical area. London and Middlesex suggests working with school boards to provide specialized training for teachers of both elementary and secondary schools. This LIP wishes to make such specialized training a requirement of teacher employment to enable teachers to meet the needs of immigrant students in the classroom. The North Bay LIP proposes strengthening the school boards' participation in implementing programs that will increase teachers' awareness of diversity issues and how to address them. The Ottawa LIP suggests expanding the number and quality of cultural competency training programs for Ottawa teachers to ensure that competency training is mandatory in teachers' colleges and is integrated into the hiring process. This LIP also wishes to engage immigrant settlement organizations in the provision of cultural competency training. Lastly, Timmins suggests developing an anti-racism strategy and action plan that involves anti-racism and diversity training for educational personnel.

French Language Training

The LIPs identify a variety of issues related to French language learning—such as capacity building to ensure agencies are bilingual, increasing newcomer awareness of language training options, and improving and extending access to interpretation services—yet only a few relate specifically to the particular interests of the education domain. For example, Timmins proposes pursuing the possibility of French as a Second Language classes free of charge courtesy of the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration and finding local colleges to house these classes. The North Bay LIP proposes working with francophone community partners in North Bay and outlying districts to explore the development of informal programs similar to English conversation circles for newcomers whose second language is French. Overall, Ottawa had the largest number of suggestions to improve the French language learning experience for newcomers: enhance the quality and availability of French language training in Ottawa; improve the planning and deployment of language training courses; harmonize federal and provincial language training programs so that they are complementary and mutually supportive; increase access and reduce wait times for immigrants seeking to obtain specialized, work-related language training; and promote special language programming for populations at risk of exclusion.

Promising Practices in the Literature

This literature review focuses on domestic and international sources from 2005 to 2011.

English Language Training

Language has been identified as the largest barrier for newcomers trying to gain access to public services, health care and employment opportunities (Agrawal, 2008; Bauder & Lusis, 2006; Gee, 2006; Wayland & Agrawal, 2008). The LIP reports call for a number of changes to English language training, including: the removal of barriers to English language learning opportunities for newcomer youth, parents, caregivers, seniors and employees; increased diversity of English language course options to encourage informal learning; enhanced quality of English classes through developing common standards for program delivery and certification; and enhanced capacity to carry out assessments and referrals for language training. Several LIP reports name specific programs such as LINC, ESL and CLARS, and, by identifying the need to improve these programs, suggest that they are seen as promising practices.

There is such a significant amount of literature on teaching English as a second language that it has a designated journal (TESOL). There has also been research that questions the current delivery of ESL in school systems. Anisef (2005) has argued that ESL, as it is currently implemented in schools, often serves to create barriers to integration and the formation of social connections outside the ESL classroom, and he links ESL experiences to school difficulties such as loneliness, disengagement and truancy. He recommends an immersion model with peer-mentoring. This recommendation supports the earlier work of Isralowitz and Slonim-Nevo (2002),who also identified ESL as contributing to difficulties within the school system. Gunderson (2007) identified the need for ESL to take students' goals into account and consider a wider variety of delivery models, as he found that some students avoided ESL in high school due to their need to focus on math and sciences. This avoidance of ESL in high school was also found in a study of immigrant youth in Toronto (Anisef, Brown, Phythian, Sweet & Walters, 2010). Other research that focuses on linguistic fluency and proficiency suggests that ESL classrooms may be too focused on written language and academic English and do not provide enough opportunity to practice spoken and conversational English (Derwing, Munro, Thomson & Rossiter, 2009; Derwing, Thomson, & Munro, 2006; Rossiter, Derwing, Manimtim & Thomson, 2010). Taken together, this research suggests that ESL needs to be reconceptualized in relation to the needs of newcomers both within and outside the school system and modifications to its delivery need to be made. The Pembina Valley Language Education for Adults program provides free education and language training to all newcomers and has adjusted delvery models to take work schedules into account by offering programming at varied times of the day and evening as well as instituting an English at Work program. This varied approach has resulted in providing clients 2-24 hours of language training each week. Examining delivery models such as the Pembina Valley Language Education for Adults in Winkler, Manitoba could provide important best practice lessons for program modifications (Esses et al., 2010; Kukushkin, 2009).

An emerging promising practice that is connected to ESL learning is the conversation circle. Conversation circles have several different formats (for example, English Café), but generally consist of native speakers (volunteer or staff) and non-native speakers of a language.

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The purpose is to provide the non-native speakers with an opportunity to practise their language skills in an informal supportive social setting. Several LIP reports speak about the formal or informal emergence of conversation circles through settlement service agencies and other programs such as the Library Settlement Services offered in Ottawa and Toronto. These circles are also appearing in university and college settings (for example, Brock University, Fanshawe College and Carleton). While there is limited research on conversation circles (see van Gilst, 2010), evidence from the LIP reports and the increasing prevalence of the circles in various settings demonstrate that they are seen as a promising practice. Conversation circles may also be helpful as a modification to ESL programming in schools, as they provide the opportunity to practice conversational English and could provide more opportunities for socialization outside the ESL classroom.

Fostering Cultural Competence in Schools

While there is a substantial amount of literature on the need for enhanced cultural competence for both teachers and students, there is significantly less on promising programs. In the United States, the American Excellence Association uses a cultural-relevance framework to foster academic engagement with minority youth (DeCuir-Gunby, Taliaferro & Greenfield, 2010). Research suggests that this approach builds cultural competence within the school. Other programs focus on building cultural competence through courses taken in pre-service programs or through in-service experience. Research has stressed the need for teachers to develop more cultural competence (e.g. Dunn, Kirova, Cooley & Ogilvie, 2009; Lowenstein, 2009; Thomas & Kearney, 2008; Tilley, 2006). A comprehensive review has identified the need for additional research, while indicating that cooperative learning shows promise as a theoretical approach to reducing prejudice and fostering cultural competence (Paluck & Green, 2009). The research also identifies the problems with multicultural training and education models for educators and students. An examination of Ontario faculties of education and Ontario schools for promising practices would be beneficial.

Peer-mentoring programs are another important promising practice, but there is limited research on this approach as a way of addressing the classroom integration needs of newcomer youth. In their documentation of a mentoring program for Chinese immigrant adolescents, Yeh, Ching, Okubo and Luthar (2007) suggest that the peer-mentoring model increased the adolescents' integration and their attachment to peers. An examination of undocumented local mentoring models would be beneficial. In addition, a systematic review of the mentoring literature at all educational levels may offer insights into the development of such programs to meet local needs.

Improving Educational Services for Newcomers

LIP suggestions to improve services within the education systems include recognition of the SWIS (Settlement Workers In Schools) program as a promising practice and call for the expansion of the program within their own communities and to other communities. The literature also mentions the SWIS program and the benefits it offers to immigrant youth (Anisef, Brown,

Phythian, Sweet & Walters, 2010). This promising practice underscores the importance of forming partnerships with education.

Another important aspect of educational services to consider is the use of integration programs and approaches to inclusive education. The Characteristics of a Welcoming Community Report (Esses et al., 2010) identifies two school boards that have been recognized as having exceptional integration programs: the Toronto District School Board has introduced many programs and partnerships to support immigrant children within their schools; and the Garden Valley School Division (Winkler, Manitoba) has placed home liaison workers in the schools and made English as an Additional Language (EAL) such a priority within its system that all teachers are considered EAL teachers and provided with the necessary training (Esses et al., 2010; Kukushkin, 2009). Initiatives that combine policy and practice to attain inclusive education are also highlighted in the report by Esses et al, with Quebec's educational integration and intercultural education policy and Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy highlighted as best practices.

Clearly, these promising and best practices rely upon strategic partnerships between education sectors and community agencies. However, as not all the LIP reports clearly identify their engagement with educational partners, it is difficult to assess which programs require modifications or which the community may not be accessing. A systematic review of the links between settlement and related agencies and educational institutions, as well as the programs that exist in the schools would be beneficial.

Improving Teacher Training

While there is a substantial amount of literature on the need for enhanced cultural competence for both teachers and students, there is significantly less literature on promising programs. Specifically, the LIP reports identify the need for more professional development on cultural understandings for teachers. The ATAPTIE program was a pilot that ran from 2002-2005 through a partnership between Queen's University, the Ottawa Carleton District School Board, and Local Agencies Serving Immigrants in Ottawa. It is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (MTCU). The primary goals of the program are to provide immigrant Canadians with international teaching experience who have been unable to become certified as teachers in Ontario with the following: (1) a degree in education; (2) an Ontario teaching certificate; (3) employment in Ontario schools. During each of the three years, a cohort of approximately 26 students entered the program.

In terms of addressing cultural competency in schools, the ATAPTIE program's main contribution is through the inclusion of increased number of diverse teachers placed in classrooms offering opportunities to enhance cultural competence in the schools in which they work. These internationally trained teachers share insights and experiences with their fellow teacher candidates and with their practicum teachers which enhances the cultural competency of those existing and future teachers. Thus, the program addresses cultural competency in schools in a multi-directional way, providing internationally trained teachers with enhanced cultural competency in Canadian contexts while also providing Canadian teachers and students with

enhanced cultural competency through interactions with internationally trained teachers. Various publications on the program provide insights into the benefits of such a program and how it can be replicated in other sites. While the current lack of available positions in the teaching professions pose certain logistic issues, the lessons learned from this promising practice and relevant and transferable.

French Language Training

The last major theme that emerges out of the LIP reports is French language training. The key suggestion here is to build the capacity of all newcomer service agencies so that they can function in both official languages. The Centre de langues internationales Charpentier (CLIC) program is seen as a best practice for improving collaboration between language and settlement service providers as well as being useful to enhance quality and availability of French language training. The literature on French language training and newcomer needs is particularly sparse, stressing the need to identify local promising practices and document them so that they can be shared with other regions.

Conclusion

Education and educational policies will continue to be important contributors to the integration of newcomer families into welcoming Canadian communities. Further consideration needs to be given to the service needs and gaps identified throughout the LIP reports, and their associated strategies, promising practices and sustainability. Sustainability is an important consideration in the development of programming, partnerships and initiatives (Fixsen, Blase, Duda, Naoom & Van Dyke, 2010). While all the LIP reports mention funding and sustainability as issues of concern, education sustainability is linked to four primary issues: (1) how to select promising practices that can and should be sustained; (2) how to implement such practices so that they produce the desired outcomes; (3) how to scale up these programs so that they are available to all students who might benefit; and (4) how to support such programs systemically so that they become part of daily functioning and can be maintained (Fixsen et al., 2010). Additionally, it is important to consider how education and educational policy considerations intersect with other aspects of newcomers' needs and priorities, as individual lives are complicated webs that require multi-level and multi-faceted approaches. Throughout the various levels of education, the development of partnerships and systemic changes that can address the complex needs of newcomer youth and their families need to be carefully designed and orchestrated so that they are sustainable on every level.

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Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: Health and Healthcare

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Executive Summary

Health inequities are emerging in sub-groups of immigrants with various social, cultural, ethnic, demographic or economic vulnerabilities. Accessing care for which newcomers are eligible is limited by the fear of jeopardizing immigration applications by seeking care, language barriers, culturally inappropriate care, and difficulties navigating the health system (Gagnon, 2002).

Given the difficulties that immigrants face in terms of health status and the use of health care, the following report reviews Local Immigrant Partnership (LIP) Strategic Plans in order to identify health priorities described by individual LIPs within these documents, the existence of gaps and shortfalls, as well as promising practices discussed in these plans. Overall, LIP plans were inconsistent in their identification of health as a priority area. Some plans did not mention health at all. Others set health within the social determinants of the health framework and clearly identified health as a priority area for newcomers, along with clear strategies to improve health and the use of health care services. Amongst this latter group of LIPS that recognized the importance of health (Bathurst-Finch, Guelph-Wellington, Kingston, Lawrence Heights, London-Middlesex, Ottawa, Toronto Don Valley, Toronto East, and Toronto West Downtown), LIPs suggested reductions in the cost of health care (i.e., reducing or removing the cost of interim health insurance before OHIP coverage begins); removal of other systemic barriers to care (i.e., language), and improved access. Other health priorities that were commonly mentioned include:

- Improve mental health services;
- Improve food security;
- Need for additional research on the composition of immigrant populations in each municipality (i.e., size, origins, religious affiliation, needs) and the efficacy of programs directed toward immigrants;
- Improve collaboration between government levels and between service agencies;
- Improve communication support and outreach between various government levels and agencies, between agencies and clients, and between government and agencies;
- Ensure cultural competency of health care providers.

Following the study of the individual LIP Strategic Plan documents, an evidence review further summarizes promising practices and describes the effectiveness of these practices relating to particular immigrant and refugee health priorities: mental health care, health literacy, access and quality of health care, and health system responsiveness.

Recognizing and appropriately treating mental health problems requires a practitioner to systematically inquire about a patient's migration experience and a follow up on identified problems in adaptation, social, and family issues. The most successful health literacy programs incorporate qualitative methodologies, collective engagement, clear educational resources, and participatory strategies. When considering quality primary health care, the Canadian Collaboration for Immigrant and Refugee Health (CCIRH) recommends the following: clinicians

should consider the patient's migrant history and the country of origin when delivering preventive care; practitioners should note that an increased risk of poor health is associated with forced migration, limited English and French language proficiency, and lower income levels; at-risk immigrants should routinely be offered vaccination (MMR, TDPP, varicella) and screening for intestinal parasites, cervical cancer, dental caries, iron deficiency, Human Papillomavirus, Tuberculosis, HIV, hepatitis B & C, and vision loss; and practitioners should address depression, diabetes, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, malaria, child and intimate partner maltreatment, and contraceptive needs on an individual basis. To improve system responsiveness, strategies that may be undertaken include reducing the time it takes to access the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP), and providing interpretation services.

It is reasonable to expect that good health is important for economic success, enabling individuals to secure employment and related social links to the broader community (Strauss and Thomas 1998). Yet, immigrant and refugee health is an area that is often overlooked in with regards to settlement. Health literacy is an important variable and programs and practitioners must take into account cultural and linguistic diversity as well as the personal experience of the patient. Effective approaches are culturally tailored, involve many collaborative partners, are multifaceted, and employ various strategies at a time.

In recent years, immigrant community health workers, also known as lay health workers or cultural brokers, have emerged to address the barriers faced by immigrants in minority groups. These workers often share the language, culture and beliefs of these sub-groups of immigrants and can help support them through a variety of formal, semi-formal or informal ways.

1. Scope of the Report

This report will identify, document and analyze examples of promising practices of welcoming communities from across Ontario specifically with respect to health. The report is based on the review of available LIP Strategic Plans and relevant literature.

The second section of this report will discuss the findings across the LIPs related to health and health care services. A summary of health priorities emphasized by the LIPs will be presented, along with a discussion of current barriers and identified areas for improvement. In addition, currently implemented promising practices in the community will be presented, as well as the priorities, new initiatives, and promising practices mentioned in conjunction with strategic directions and action plans. The third section examines promising practices found in the health literature based on an evidence review. The purpose of this evidence review is to provide a synthesis of promising practices and evidence of the effectiveness of these practices relating to particular immigrant and refugee health priorities: mental health care, health literacy, access and quality of health care, and health system responsiveness.

2. LIP Priorities for Health and Plans for New Initiatives to Address Priorities

The health of newcomers and their ability to access and use health care has been identified in many of the LIP documents as a strategic priority. In order to qualify for immigration, newcomers are typically healthier than Canadians at the time of arrival. Over time, however, the health status of newcomers declines, falling to a level equal to or less than that observed in the overall Canadian population (Pérez, 2002; Newbold, 2009; Ng, 2011). Commonly referred to as the *healthy immigrant effect*, it has been observed based on various measures of health including self-assessed health, chronic conditions, and the health utilities index.

2.1 The Health of Newcomers

"Immigrants experience many linguistic and cultural barriers to accessing health care in Canada, but we do not know enough about how these barriers affect health outcomes or the role that health literacy may play. Many health care providers have very limited understanding of immigrant's health needs including the need to improve trust and communication in addition to providing health information using clear and multiple forms of communication and increasing cultural competencies in health and social services." –Windsor LIP

Table 1 summarizes the barriers and challenges that were specifically identified by the LIPs (and elsewhere in the literature) that limit newcomers' access to health and health care[1]. Although newcomers' health and well-being is sometimes overlooked, the literature suggests that it plays a significant role with respect to successful settlement and integration. As a result, the disparity

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[1] The following discussion is not meant to provide a full background of the barriers to care faced by immigrants. Readers should consult the list of references and individual LIP documents.

in the extent to which health was discussed in the LIP documents was a surprise. As revealed in the table, some of the LIP documents reviewed did not mention health at all. Overall, these LIPs (typically, but not exclusively, in Northern Ontario) tended to emphasize integration from an economic or business point of view, with health subsumed within the category of 'social / integration services'. Other LIPs recognized health as an issue in immigrant settlement, but did not go as far as articulating priorities or strategies, choosing instead to identify barriers to health and use of health care facilities based on literature reviews or community consultations. In some cases, health services were mentioned as an example of how the strengthening of service delivery could have a positive effect on settlement success.

Table 1: Issues Relating to Health Identified in LIP Strategic Plans

	A. Language	B. Affordability and Insurance Coverage	C. Access to Health Care Services	D. Mental Health	E. Food Insecurity	F. Cultural Sensitivity/Competency	G. Social Isolation	H. Domestic Violence	I. Women's Health
Agincourt (NW Scarborough)	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Bathurst-Finch	✔	✔		✔			✔		
Delta (Black Creek)	Undefined or Overlooked								
Central South Etobicoke	Undefined or Overlooked								
Eglinton East - Kennedy Park	✔		✔	✔		✔			
Guelph Wellington	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔
Hamilton	Undefined or Overlooked								
Kingston	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔			
Lawrence Heights	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔			
London and Middlesex	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	
Niagara	Undefined or Overlooked								
North Bay	Undefined or Overlooked								
North York East	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔			
Ottawa	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔			
Peel	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔
Sarnia-Lambton	✔	✔	✔		✔		✔	✔	✔
Sault Ste. Marie	Undefined or Overlooked								
South Scarborough	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Southwest Scarborough		✔				✔			
Thunder Bay	Undefined or Overlooked								
Timmins	Undefined or Overlooked								
Toronto Don Valley	✔		✔						
Toronto East	✔		✔	✔	✔		✔	✔	✔
Toronto East Downtown	✔		✔	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔
Toronto West Downtown	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Waterloo Region	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔			
Windsor Essex	✔		✔	✔	✔	✔	✔		✔
York South-Weston	✔		✔	✔		✔			

In general, when health was mentioned in the LIPs documents, it was included within the *social determinants of health* framework, which argues that health is influenced by a broad spectrum of environmental, economic and social conditions that impact, promote, influence, or enhance the health of individuals[2]. As a result, immigrants face numerous barriers that limit their ability to access and receive health care. In documents that identified strategic priorities with regards to health, many referenced and/or recognized barriers to care in health services that immigrants typically face, including education, awareness, language, culture, gender issues, transportation, discrimination, cultural competency of providers or systemic barriers (McKeary and Newbold, 2010). The challenges faced by recent immigrants (typically defined as being in Canada for less than 5 years), youth, and refugees were also noted given their particular needs and/or vulnerabilities.

A. *Language.* Language, or more specifically the lack of functional English (French) amongst both immigrants and service providers, is consistently noted in the literature as a key barrier to health care and is one of the most significant barriers to accessing care (Harper and McCourt, 2002; Pottie et al., 2008). Clinical appointments with clients who speak English as a second language may require additional time to accommodate cultural interpretation, as well as make sure information is accessible and understandable. Language issues also extend beyond the initial consultation and impact such things as scheduling subsequent appointments and understanding instructions associated with follow-up or prescriptions, all of which would typically be conducted in English. Limited translation services are available (i.e., expensive call-lines), and the provincial health care plan typically does not cover translation costs, placing the burden of the expense on the individual or the health provider. For newcomers unable to pay for professional translation services, children or other family members may be called upon to translate, raising concerns about receiving accurate information with regard to their health, as well as a lack of confidentiality as their children have to provide personal and confidential information. The lack of affordable interpretation services means that community health care providers must

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[2] The Public Health Agency of Canada lists 12 key determinants that include: Income and Social Status; Social Support Networks; Education and Literacy; Employment/Working Conditions; Social Environments; Physical Environments, Personal Health Practices and Coping Skills; Healthy Child Development; Biology and Genetic Endowment; Health Services; Gender; and Culture (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2010).

find the funds from already stretched budgets, or clients must provide their own translation, often relying on family or friends for this purpose.

B. ***Affordability and Insurance Coverage.*** Newcomers are often ineligible for services at various points in the settlement process. The inability to access health care is a challenge that several LIPs identified as a systemic barrier. Consequently, improving access to health care regardless of immigrant status was frequently mentioned. Many of the LIPs discussed financial cost as a major obstacle that inhibits newcomers from receiving necessary treatment, including the cost of interim health insurance before OHIP coverage starts. Costs associated with accessing specialized health care, such as dental treatment, can limit or compromise care (e.g. going to unlicensed dental practices for cheaper services). Several LIPs also emphasized the need for more affordable eye and mental health treatments, in addition to acknowledging the need for all tiers of government to work together in order address these barriers and ensure equitable access to health care, especially for low-income families. Many of the documents suggested the elimination (or subsidization) of health costs associated with the 3-month waiting period before access to OHIP and improvements (or elimination) of the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP) geared toward Government Assisted Refugees as a way to address the cost barriers of health care.

C. ***Physical Access to Health Care Services.*** Physical access to health services is recognized as an important barrier to care. In some cases, it was suggested that health status and the use of health care services could be increased if the knowledge and use of health care facilities is improved. Thus, it was assumed that awareness and information on how to use the Canadian health care system would promote health. However, physical access and awareness of health facilities is only one component of increased use – the ability to get there (transport), appropriate insurance (i.e., OHIP), language ability (is a translator or interpreter needed?), and issues of cultural sensitivity with regard to gender roles are also key determinants of use as noted in the literature. Access is also limited by lack of knowledge of the health care services available and an understanding of how the health system, including insurance coverage, works.

Access to health care facilities is frequently complicated by transportation challenges, particularly when distances are large, connections are complicated, and there is 'spatial mismatch' between client and provider locations (Newbold et al., 2008), resulting in missed appointments. Alternatively, recent arrivals may not know how to ask directions (perhaps due to language). While some may be able to rely on friends or other members from the community for transportation, their availability may be unreliable. Public transportation is often the likely source of transportation, but requires not only economic resources – the ability to afford the fare – but knowledge of the transportation system, the ability to 'ask questions', and assistance from drivers.

D. ***Mental Health.*** Overall, the LIP documents spend comparably little time talking about mental health as compared to general health issues. However, there is some recognition of the need for mental health services given the general lack of mental health support options

available in the different communities. Some LIPs identified the need for increased access to a range of mental health services as being critical for newcomers, including issues associated with the stress of moving to a new country with its accompanying isolation, and assistance with post-traumatic stress and/or victims of torture or abuse. This is especially the case for refugees. Other mental health issues noted within the LIP reports included stigma, shortage/lack of mental health professionals who speak various languages, cultural differences regarding definitions of mental health and how to handle mental health issues, lack of knowledge about existing mental health services/system, and the mental health needs of youth. Loneliness and depression, which may result from isolation, were also mentioned as issues that needed to be addressed. Some of the LIPs noted that disappointment and frustration, such as the inability to gain quality employment, can contribute to poor mental health and domestic violence and suggested that culturally specific mental health support and education for families and individuals was needed.

E. **Food Insecurity.** While food insecurity was a relatively minor point, it was mentioned in the some of the LIPs as a contributor to the declining health of newcomers. As noted in the LIP documents, issues of access, distance, and affordability lead to poor nutrition, which can lead to poor health. Food insecurity was identified by small and large communities alike.

F. **Cultural Sensitivity/Competency.** For providers engaged with the refugee community, the importance of culturally competent care is even greater. Culturally competent providers know who they are caring for, the history of their clients, and are aware of the difference(s) between refugee clients and others. Many documents referred to the desire and the need to increase the representation of visible minorities and women health providers.

G. **Social Isolation.** Social isolation – a sense of being cut-off or removed from the broader community because of language, fear, poor social connections, cultural roles or other factors – potentially leads to poor mental health. Services that support the integration of newcomers into the community, through community hubs or volunteer opportunities, reduce the potential for social isolation by encouraging community engagement.

H. **Domestic Violence.** Women subject to domestic violence may not come forward for fear of reporting incidents or lack of knowledge of how to do so. This is a threat to both physical and mental health. Several LIPs (e.g., Agincourt) recognized the need for greater legal assistance for women who are affected by domestic violence and sexual harassment.

I. **Youth and Women's Health.** As stated in some of the LIP documents, many issues that specifically relate to women newcomers and youth are left out of policy agendas. For example, when language, employment, poverty, and other factors are considered through a gendered lens, it becomes apparent that women newcomers face a myriad of intersecting barriers given social status, cultural expectations, literacy, and family responsibilities. Therefore, these LIPs acknowledge the need for programs that specifically cater to women, including programs directed at improved labor market integration, social integration, and those for overcoming domestic abuse to improve the well being of newcomer and

immigrant women. Similarly, the need for youth specific programs was also suggested, but less frequently in comparison to specific programs for women.

2.2 Promising Practices Currently Implemented in the Community

Several communities have already begun to address health within the immigrant community by implementing various promising practices, including:

A. Training workshops for workers which focus on the mental health of newcomers (Toronto West Downtown)

B. Development of multilingual training and information packages for newcomers promoting health and facilitating the understanding of the Canadian health care system (South Scarborough, Lawrence Heights)

C. Inclusion of newcomers in planning for health services. Bathurst-Finch, for example, wishes to partner with residents and grassroots organizations to develop culturally competent and community-based information and outreach materials.

D. 'Community Hubs' and 'No Wrong Door' (Peel) or 'Every Door is the Right Door' (Kingston). Concepts such as 'Community Hubs' (Peel) are meant to provide a diverse range of services to meet the needs of newcomers. 'No Wrong Door' ensures that every part of the service system connects newcomers to every other part. Together, these initiatives provide a comprehensive neighborhood based network that is geared to the local population.

E. Develop partnerships/improved collaboration between providers, public health (Toronto West and Central South Etobicoke) to: (i) support communication between groups and information sharing; and (ii) integrate services across various levels of government, while recognizing that collaboration is desirable, but difficult. Many LIPs, including London-Middlesex, Peel and Windsor-Essex recognize the need for collaboration, but also note that it is difficult within the current funding environment. As such, collaboration is an aspiration. It should also be noted that the need for collaboration between agencies and units is not meant to align the health needs alone, but to cut across various settlement programs as well.

F. Use of Community Health Centers (Hamilton, Ottawa, Peel) to address all determinants of health, including health care, community programs, nutrition, child care/development, pre-post-natal care.

2.4 Priorities of New Initiatives and Promising Practices

Most of the LIPs did not discuss priorities relating to promising practices that were currently implemented in the community. Instead, they tended to describe strategic direction and action plans. With that said, there was a discrepancy in the inclusion of health across the various action plans. Of the 28 LIPs analyzed: 9 identified health as a separate priority with sector-

specific strategies; 7 identified implications on health services in cross-sector strategies; 7 did not mention health in their action strategies; and 5 excluded action strategies in their report.

It should be noted that in many cases where health is addressed in planning documents, the implementation plans did not specify cost, timelines, evaluative criteria, or assessment of the effectiveness and impact association with improvements to current practices. It is also interesting to note that while it was not a deliberate focus of certain communities at the outset of the LIP research, health strategies were subsequently integrated into their action plan because issues of immigrant health were raised during the consultation process. It is difficult to infer the level of representation of various partners such as the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) and Public Health Units in the creation of the documents and their planned outcomes.

2.4.1 Cross-Sector Strategies

While many of the LIP documents did not identify strategic goals or objectives associated with health outcomes, health was recognized within the broader context of cross-sector strategies as evidenced in Table 1. In some of the communities, both service providers and newcomers raised health concerns during the consultation process. This means that even though health services were not distinguished as a definitive priority area, health services will indirectly benefit from strategic directions that focus on improving service delivery and coordination. The following specific examples of action plans focus on client-centered needs, which highlight language training, increasing access and navigation of information and one-step service location:

A. *Communication Support and Outreach.* Some of the LIPs recognized the need for programs to address issues of healthy living and preventative health care. The creation of health literacy programs, disease prevention, health protection (i.e., vaccination, immunization), and overall health promotion (i.e., exercise, healthy food, pre-natal and healthy baby programs) would be beneficial to the health of immigrants immediately and over time. This also includes the need to promote health literacy[3], which is defined as "the degree to which individuals have the capacity to obtain, process, and understand basic health information and services needed to make appropriate health decisions" (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000). Information for immigrants regarding preventive practices and early intervention, patient safety, and disease awareness were also highlighted. Some of the LIPs suggested that adopting a single method or approach to communicating information can limit newcomer participation, and emphasized the need to develop diverse outreach strategies to connect people in the community. The Lawrence Heights LIP, for example,

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[3] Health literacy includes the ability to understand instructions on prescription drug bottles, appointment slips, medical education brochures, doctor's directions and consent forms, and the ability to negotiate complex health care systems. Health literacy is not simply the ability to read. It requires a complex group of reading, listening, analytical, and decision-making skills, and the ability to apply these skills to health situations (National Network of Libraries of Medicine, 2010)

identified the need to develop "non-verbal, visual, and/or cross-cultural educational and communication tools about health promotion and healthcare services".

B. **Need for Research.** Many LIPs realized that there is a need for further research in their community in order to understand the demographics of their immigrant populations and how this relates to health care, along with research about the health of newcomers. The LIPs acknowledge that the healthy immigrant effect varies across different subgroups of immigrants and suggest that more research is needed to determine which sub-groups are experiencing higher risks of becoming unhealthier as they continue to live in Canada. For example, not only is it important to consider sub-groups (e.g. refugees), but also how different sub-groups intersect with each other (e.g. immigrant seniors with low-income). Further research would enable communities to understand the ways in which multiple factors (e.g. senior and low income and immigrant) work together to influence health. Such research would enable more efficient or suitable/appropriate programs, including health delivery. In addition, research related to the efficacy of particular interventions is needed to determine where to effectively introduce programs and provide support.

C. **Improved Collaboration and Coordination.** LIP documents also frequently identified the need for greater communication between various service providers and between providers and clients. For the former, this includes increased cooperation. The need for improved service and government collaboration/coordination around health care and other social services was also commonly mentioned. In addition to policies that negatively impact health provision for newcomers, there is a significant lack of coordination between settlement and health services, which is reflected in a fragmented and disconnected service infrastructure. This lack of collaboration further contributes to the barriers newcomers experience when trying to access health care. Therefore, vertical collaboration (between government levels) and horizontal collaboration (between service providers on the ground) can eliminate systemic barriers and increase the provision of services for newcomers and immigrants. The literature suggests that a more collaborative approach between settlement and health services would facilitate a better understanding of the factors contributing to successful newcomer settlement and integration, and how the determinants of health such as affordable housing, employment, literacy, migration, and environment influence this process. The lack of a coordinated approach to service delivery can result in newcomers falling through the system cracks and never receiving a proper health needs assessment.

D. **Other examples.** Some cross-sector strategies identified by the LIPs speak to improvement of service provision, which includes increasing front-line service provider knowledge and awareness of programs, increasing front-line staff connections across service sectors, ensuring ongoing development and coordination of service provision to meet the changing needs and interests of newcomers.   Overall, these documents suggest that the development of cross-sector connections and partnerships between the settlement and health sector would foster better coordination and improve service provision. On the

whole, these LIPs did not go beyond the statement of basic goals. Concrete action plans, cost estimates, or evaluations were not elaborated.

2.4.2 Sector-Specific Strategies

There is broad awareness of the need for practices such as culturally competent care or cooperation, however such practices have not been specifically identified. Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans for the identification of community ideas and innovations for new solutions suggest that both community consultation and literature reviews were used. Only 9 LIPs identified health as a priority area *and* clearly articulated strategies to improve health and access to health care (Bathurst-Finch, Guelph-Wellington, Kingston, Lawrence Heights, London-Middlesex, Ottawa, Toronto Don Valley, Toronto East, and Toronto West Downtown). This set of LIPs identified plans for new initiatives to improve and increase access and the utilization of health services. Overall, these differences in plans perhaps reflect a number of parameters, including the presence of advocacy groups, universities and other major research centers, and the existence of organized and well-established service providers in the areas that had strategies. Smaller centers generally had a greater focus on the economic integration of newcomers. The following highlights key elements derived from the LIP Strategic Action Plans that identified health as a separate priority:

Table 2: Commonly Mentioned Strategies and Proposed Actions

Strategy	Proposed Actions
Reduce systemic and financial barriers to health care system for newcomers	• Settlement workers and health care social workers will identify health providers or clinics willing to provide pro bono (or reduced-cost) urgent care and emergency services to newcomers on a case-by-case basis during the three month waiting period for OHIP • Identify dentists or dental hygienists willing to provide pro bono or reduced cost service to newcomers • Eliminate the 3 month waiting period of the Ontario Health Insurance Program (OHIP) • Provide information to newcomers on the various medical options available and when to use them (i.e. walk in clinics and hospitals) • Ensure that accurate information is available about the unavailability of health coverage for the first 90 days in Canada via the Newcomers Web Portal and other communication channels
Improve newcomer access to health services and culturally appropriate information	• Promote understanding of cultural differences and increase the ability and cultural competency of all health care providers to respond to the diverse health needs of newcomers through outreach/training • Advocate for increased access to health care for non-status immigrants and refugee claimants • Provide culturally sensitive information in various languages and promote language simplification for information in agency brochures • Provide interpreters with medical training language skills in hospitals, health care clinics and social service agencies
Create space and programs to enhance health literacy that promotes healthy living and preventive health care	• Create a self-management for chronic disease prevention program specifically geared to immigrant communities • Hold health promotion workshops for newcomers • Provide safe, confidential and comfortable spaces/supportive environment and adopt a holistic approach in addressing needs of immigrants •Create free accessible designated community centres (within neighbourhood) where people of all ages can meet and spend quality time •Collaboration between health care providers, settlement organizations and ethno-cultural communities to promote health literacy, including information about social determinants, preventive practices, and early intervention
Build capacity in the community to address health needs of newcomer physical	• Educate mental health service providers about the needs of newcomers • Improve collaboration between settlement and ethno-cultural organizations and health care providers in order to help refugees access mental health services and ancillary health services • Increase the availability of short-term crisis counselling, long-term mental health supports and ongoing

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and mental health issues	programming that promotes the mental health of newcomers • Build the capacity of settlement workers to provide mental and emotional health information and referrals to their clients • Partner with residents and grassroots groups to develop culturally competent and community-based orientation and information material on mental and emotional health. • Introduce cultural training to ensure access to counselling services on a continuum: urgent to longer term on a sliding scale • Provide funding for ongoing training of trauma counsellors and increase the number of counsellors educated and trained in working with survivors of war/trauma
Build awareness in the newcomer community about health issues and the location of services that support physical and mental health	• Develop strategies, presentation, and materials to teach the communities about mental health/illness and addiction by working with people from the various ethno-cultural communities • Translate and culturally adapt existing resources for dissemination in newcomer communities • Create opportunities for mental health and counselling services to build awareness with newcomers through language classes, cultural gatherings • Hire a Social Marketer to develop a multi-media campaign to counter discrimination and stigma with regards to mental health • Offer workshops and written material to newcomers to introduce and explain the health care system and inform newcomers of how different services can be accessed
Improve service coordination and build on programs and networks that currently exist	• Develop partnerships between settlement and information services providers and the healthcare sector, reaching out to doctors, hospitals, dentists, pharmacies, and the community health centre • Utilize outreach workers/programs and build on what exists in the community (i.e., expand neighbourhood services, outreach programs) • Advocate for more medical neighbourhood based centres such as the Family Health Team • Promote harmonization between federal and provincial health services by identifying gaps in eligibility and coverage that result in inequities and complicate administrative processes • Improve coordination to effect a smooth transition between agencies providing 'special' services and the regular health care system (with appropriate support) • Train health workers in health literacy concepts and effective communication skills to enabling them to better serve immigrant and refugee clients • Develop a more effective and collaborative approach to sharing scarce interpretation and language services between agencies (i.e. support for LHIN-funded culturally competent interpretation service) • Promote partnerships between settlement agencies, healthcare providers, long-term care facilities, LHIN-funded homecare and caregiver support providers • Support development of integrated health plan for newcomers by local LHIN

2.5 Other Observation(s)/Suggestion(s):

One critical question that has come out of the analysis is whether there is a need to mainstream services or to create specialized services for immigrants. An effective and viable solution would be to 'tweak' mainstream services so that they are better able to serve immigrants. For example, there are many programs that already exist through public health units to specifically address issues regarding mental health. These could be adjusted to include more vulnerable populations, such as the refugee community.

3. Promising Practices in the Literature

3.1 Introduction

Immigration is dramatically increasing the diversity of Ontario's urban populations, with immigrants from developing countries emerging as a growing and economically important segment of the population. Whereas immigrants benefit from positive health-related behaviours and medical screening (known as the "healthy migrant effect"), considerable health disparities are emerging in sub-groups of immigrants with various social, cultural, ethnic, demographic or economic vulnerabilities. Recent evidence from a large national Canadian cohort linkage database study (DesMeules, 2005) shows disparities in mortality patterns and burden of diseases among immigrant sub-groups and refugees (Pottie, 2011).

Newcomers are known to under-utilize services. Barriers to accessing care for which they are eligible include fear of jeopardizing immigration applications by seeking care, language barriers, culturally inappropriate care, and difficulties navigating the health system (Gagnon, 2002). Optimal care is thought to be based on the core values of access, inclusion, empowerment, user-defined services, respect, cultural sensitivity, community development, collaboration, accountability, orientation towards positive change, and reliability (Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998).

The purpose of this evidence review is to provide a synthesis of promising practices and evidence of the effectiveness of these practices relating to selected immigrant and refugee health priorities: mental health care, health literacy, access and quality of health care, and health system responsiveness.

3.2 Methods

A rapid knowledge synthesis approach was used that was based on the methods (Tugwell, , 2011) and the recent series of systematic reviews from the Canadian Collaboration for Immigrant and Refugee Health (Pottie,2011). First, a draft list of health priorities for immigrants was developed using data from the WCI-LIP Health Priority Workshops in Ottawa (October, 2010), preliminary LIP Strategic Plans, and emerging evidence from recent CCIRH systematic review. Key questions were developed from these 4 sources of health priorities. This was done by identifying anchoring systematic reviews: recent, high quality systematic reviews that addressed the selected key research questions. These systematic reviews were then updated using an advanced Google Scholar search strategy. This search, conducted on March 25, 2011, included the research question, key word "review", English language articles, and search dates dating from 6 months prior to the publication of the anchoring reviews to the present. Titles and abstracts of the Google Scholar search and selected recent systematic reviews were considered based on relevancy to the research question and the quality of the reviews (use of research question, search and selection methods). Updating reviews from the first 50 hits of each Google Scholar search were selected. Selected reviews were pooled as main data sources. This report provides a synthesis of the key points and promising practices and the

quality of evidence as available for each key question from the anchoring reviews and the updating search.

3.3 Results

We identified Kirmayer et al. (2011) as our anchoring review for mental health practices and an update search identified 10 additional reviews. Simich (2009) was used as our anchoring review for health literacy approaches and an update search identified 7 more reviews. Pottie et al. (2011)) was our anchoring review for effective interventions for timely and quality care. An update search presented 6 additional reviews. Gagnon's "Responsiveness of the Canadian Health Care System Towards Newcomers" (2002) was the anchoring review for cultural competency and system responsiveness. An update search identified 3 other reviews. The key points and promising practices related to these reviews are presented below in association with the related key questions.

3.3.1 What are effective approaches for mental health care for immigrant and refugees?

In comparison to the general population, the prevalence of common mental health problems among newcomers is lower on arrival; however, the proportion of mental health disorders in newcomers increases to levels akin to that of general population with time (Kirmayer, 2011). Specific types of mental health problems are linked to the migration process. Pre-migration exposures, stressors during migration, and post-migration experiences must be considered when assessing risk for mental health disorders. Post-traumatic stress disorder, chronic pain, somatic syndromes, and other trauma-related disorders have higher rates of occurrence in refugees who have been severely exposed to violence (Kirmayer, 2011).

Newcomers are less likely than Canadian-born individuals to ask for or be referred to mental health services. This may be a result of cultural and structural barriers (e.g. the lack of linguistically accessible services, transportation difficulties, inability to take time off at work, the desire to handle problems in private, reluctance to talk to a health practitioner, and concerns about being stigmatized) which can hinder communication and mutual understanding between patients and health professionals (Kirmayer, 2011). Common challenges practitioners face when confronting immigrant and refugee mental health issues include communication difficulties due to cultural and linguistic disparities, the effects of cultural shaping on symptoms and patient behaviour throughout the medical process, understanding the effects different family structures have on acculturation and intergenerational conflict, and understanding issues related to a newcomer's ability to adapt and integrate into a new social environment (Kirmayer 2011).

In essence, the same techniques used to diagnose and treat mental health disorders in primary care for the general population can be applied to immigrants and refugees from other cultural backgrounds. Nonetheless, practitioners must pay special attention to the social and cultural context that influence communication dynamics, illness behaviour, and cultural understanding. Approaches used to address these challenges include scheduled meetings with family members, specific inquiry, and involving community organizations (Kirmayer, 2011).

Practitioners should have a list of community resources (e.g. housing places, social support grounds, ESL courses) and ethno cultural groups the list pertains to. The use of a cultural broker or trained interpreter can also improve the clinical assessment process and effectiveness of treatment. Recent systematic reviews have found that professional interpreters as opposed to ad hoc translators (e.g. friends, family members) are better at improving communication efforts throughout patient-physician encounters and can increase disclosure of psychological symptoms among refugees (Kirmayer 2011). When considering treatment interventions for youth, practitioners should try to avoid approaches that shut out family members or provoke intergenerational dissension. Also, the disclosure of sensitive family "secrets" should be handled with an understanding of the severity of the information. Collaborating with mediators in treatment discussions can strengthen therapeutic outcomes for youths who are uncertain about treatment options (Kirmayer 2011). Recognizing and appropriately treating mental health problems requires a practitioner to be able to systematically inquire about a patient's migration experience and follow-up on identified problems in adaptation, social, and family issues.

Other reviews have also supported the idea that cultural influences at the individual level are an important factor when choosing appropriate interventions (Fang, 2010; Fung 2010; Dow, 2011). As noted above, there is a growing consensus among researchers concerning the beneficial mental health outcomes brought on by collaborative community oriented mental health services with participatory components (Williams 2010; Tomasso 2010; Yohani 2010). The need to involve family members in treatment options was also evident (Ellis 2011; Fawley-King 2010). Research by Murray et al. (2010) identified that the most effective resettlement interventions tend to target homogenous groups.

3.3.2 *What are effective interventions for health literacy in immigrant populations?*

Health literacy is a strong contributor to one's health status. Barriers to health literacy that immigrants may face include lack of affordable English classes, inability to understand medical information/ask questions and communicate concerns, inability to access health care services, and lack of meaningful information. Some evidence suggests that health literacy can be improved by using simple and multiple forms of communication, using culturally and linguistically tailored community-based programs and methods, increasing immigrant's competency in health literacy and social services, and developing policies to target health literacy issues (Simich, 2009). Health literacy interventions should incorporate the social and cultural context of the newcomer and integrate participatory approaches while also addressing structural inequalities that immigrants and refugees feel are important. Building health literacy requires an appreciation of cultural values, an understanding of help-seeking beliefs and community engagement. It also requires bridging health literacy programs with existing settlement programs and allowing social services, health organizations, and community networks to exchange information and ideas (Simich, 2009).

The limited evidence available suggests three areas of good health literacy practice: oral communication between patient and clinician and oral communication training for professionals that target the low-literate groups, straightforward and comprehensible writing,

and visual tools (e.g. videos, graphics). Elder et al. (2005) describes promising health literacy promotion as follows:

> *The most promising practices combine multitasking approaches and direct inter-personal communication, usually by a health educator who is linguistically competent and culturally acceptable to the community involved*.

Evidence shows that using participatory educational methods encourage newcomers to recognize, research, and understand health issues and results in stronger health literacy skills (National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health 2007). The most successful health literacy programs incorporate qualitative methodologies, collective engagement and participatory strategies. Studies have shown the use of plain, clear language and a communication style that is accessible and engaging to target groups effectively improves health literacy (Stableford, 2007). Another effective health literacy intervention focuses on translation procedures and how the improvement of culturally insensitive materials can enhance the quality of care for patients with limited English proficiency. Best practice involves using a cultural expert to develop educational materials and help foster relationships (Garcia-Castillo, 2007). Some studies suggest closely linked graphics to text can increase attention and ability to recall health information when compared to written text alone (Austin, 1995). Visual stimulation such as theatrical presentations and videos may also be effective when used alongside other health literacy intervention strategies.

Other evidence reviews have come to similar conclusions. Strategies that show promise of increasing health literacy focus on technology (programs that increase computer competence and internet navigation skills), interpersonal communication skills such as peer interaction (Tellez, 2010), and the utilization of media (the notion of education as entertainment) (Beacom 2010). Friedman (2010) states that using various strategies in combination will likely lead to better success of literacy improvement.

Within Canada several projects relating to health literacy have been developed. . These programs use a wide variety of approaches to effectively enhance literacy. They concentrate on community development, building support networks, strengthening communication skills, providing educational resources, and on policy construction and implementation. One Canadian project used a photo novella as a tool in conjunction with other materials to promote healthy nutrition among immigrant women (Nimmon, 2007).

3.3.3   What are effective interventions for ensuring timely quality primary health care?
It has been widely recognized that inequalities exist in the health care system—especially when it comes to quality of care for immigrants and refugees. The Canadian Collaboration for Immigrant and Refugee Health (CCIRH) used an evidence-based clinical preventive approach, complementing current public health strategies, to improve the quality of immigrant and refugee health. The CCIRH recommends that practitioners should always assess immigrants for clinical preventive care by determining the patient's country of origin, sex, age, and migration history before tailoring the preventive care recommendations (Pottie, 2011).   When

disadvantaged groups are being cared for, sequencing of care using checklists can enhance the uptake as well as the delivery of preventive health care. The CCIRH recommendations—aimed at primary care practitioners—include the following: when practicing clinical preventive care, clinicians should consider the patient's migrant history (circumstances of migration) and the country of origin; when delivering preventive care, practitioners should note that an increased risk of poor health is associated with forced migration, limited English and French language proficiency, and lower income levels; at-risk immigrants should routinely be provided with vaccination (MMR, TDPP, varicella) and screened for intestinal parasites, cervical cancer, dental caries, iron deficiency, Human Papillomavirus, Tuberculosis, HIV, hepatitis B & C, and vision loss; and practitioners should address depression, diabetes, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, malaria, child and intimate partner maltreatment, and unmet contraceptive needs on an individual basis in order to properly assess and detect these health concerns (Pottie, 2011). The CCIRH also recognizes that using interpreters, cultural brokers, family members, and community support systems can facilitate the delivery of health services.

A systematic literature review conducted by Beach et al. (2006) identified strategies that may also improve health care quality or reduce disparities in care for ethnic minorities. This review found that the use of tracking/reminder systems; multifaceted interventions aimed at practitioners; provider education; structured questionnaires for patients; and bypassing providers to directly offer patients standardized services improved the quality of care for ethnic minority populations.

Research by Moss (2011) discusses the importance of training clinicians to develop effective leadership skills and its importance in playing a key role in quality health service delivery in a timely manner. The researcher notes the need for clinicians to understand the whole system of care in order to assure safe and patient-centered treatments.

3.3.4 What are effective interventions for improving cultural competency and system responsiveness of immigrant health?

Canada has responded to certain access to care needs by implementing the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP). However, Canada can do more to further improve the responsiveness of its health care system. Difficulties remain with respect to service accessibility, delays in immigration processing times, limitations on coverage benefits, and the administrative tasks encumbered by health care service providers (Gagnon, 2002). Approaches that can improve the system responsiveness include reducing the time it takes to access the IFHP program, improving health databanks to allow the examination of an immigrant's health and health care status in relation to immigration class, and providing interpretation services (Gagnon 2002).

The Canadian Council for Refugees has outlined best practice guidelines for health service delivery for newcomers (Canadian Council for Refugees 1998). In this guideline, the Canadian Council for Refugees states that "*services should be accessible to all who need them; be offered in an inclusive manner, respectful of, and sensitive to, diversity; empower clients; respond to needs as defined by users; take account of the complex, multifaceted, interrelated dimensions of settlement and integration; be delivered in a manner that fully respects the rights and dignity of*

the individual; be delivered in a manner that is culturally sensitive; promote the development of newcomer communities and newcomer participation in the wider community, and develop communities that are welcoming of newcomers; be delivered in a spirit of collaboration; be made accountable to the communities served; be oriented towards promoting positive change in the lives of newcomers and in the capacity of society to offer equality of opportunity for all; and be based on reliable, up-to-date information" (Canadian Council for Refugees 1998)*.*

An example of a "best practice" that may be of interest to Canada is the New Zealand language law and resettlement program. The New Zealand language law gives each citizen the legal right to a health services interpreter provided by the treating institution (New Zealand Ministry of Health, 2002). The New Zealand resettlement program has specific centres that provide various health services to new immigrants and refugees.

3.4   Limitations

This evidence review was conducted over a 3 week period and is meant to provide background evidence on promising practices for the Local Immigrant Partnerships (LIP) of Ontario. Not all the LIP reports were immediately available, and so our list of priorities represents a best guess approach. Due to time limitations, we used expert opinion to help begin the initial selection of systematic reviews and during the updating process we used very basic quality assessment criteria to select the newest promising reviews. Nevertheless, this synopsis of reviews provides a helpful examination of promising practices for selected immigrant health themes.

3.5   Conclusion

This review concludes that there are effective practices which can help health care providers address and respond to immigrant and refugee health concerns. Health literacy should be considered when selecting appropriate approaches and interventions, and programs and practitioners must take into account cultural and linguistic diversity as well as the personal experience of the patient. Effective approaches are culturally tailored, involve many collaborative partners, are multifaceted, and employ various strategies simultaneously.

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Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: The Social, Cultural and Political Inclusion of Immigrants

Livianna Tossutti, Victoria Esses, Douglas Hagar

WELCOMING COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

LES COMMUNAUTÉS ACCUEILLANTES

The social, cultural and political inclusion of immigrants and refugees are essential features of a welcoming community that attract newcomers and reinforce their attachments to cities, towns and neighbourhoods. A welcoming community is a place where there is "a strong desire to receive newcomers and to create an environment in which they will feel at home" (Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria, 2007 p. 65). Developing welcoming communities requires a collective effort on the part of many actors to make recent immigrants and refugees feel valued and included in all aspects of the settlement and integration process (Esses, Bennett-AbuAyyash & Burstein, 2010).

This report examines how 27 Local Immigration Partnerships (LIP) Strategic Plans addressed issues related to the social, cultural and political inclusion of newcomers in their communities. Social inclusion refers to practices that help newcomers build social ties and which remove barriers such as racism that discourage interaction between individuals and groups. Social interactions benefit new Canadians by introducing them to contacts who can share information about employment and other opportunities or who can give them indirect influence over decision-makers. Social relations are also said to reinforce an individual's identity and public recognition of his/her entitlement to resources (Lin, 2008). Cultural inclusion refers to practices that transmit information about immigrant cultures and local Canadian cultural practices and which create new recreational or cultural opportunities. Political inclusion refers to involvement in formal and informal political activities as well as civic acts such as volunteering and philanthropy. Examples of formal political involvement include voting, joining a political party or interest group and expressing an interest in or discussing politics with family and friends. Informal political activities aimed at manifesting political preferences to the public (Teorrell,

2003) would include signing a petition, participating in a boycott, attending a, meeting, rally or demonstration, or writing a letter to a newspaper.

We begin with a thematic discussion of the priorities or gaps noted in the strategic plans, followed by a summary of the new ideas and extensions of existing practices that were proposed by the LIPS to address these priorities. A brief analysis of the comparability of LIPs in northern and urban areas, as well as topics that were not prominent components of the LIP plans follows. The final section discusses examples of promising practices identified from a search of Canadian and international literature covering the 2005-2011 time period.

Priorities and plans for new initiatives to address these priorities

The issues that were most frequently identified by the LIPS can be classified into five thematic categories: racism, xenophobia and/or a lack of cultural understanding in the host community; increasing civic involvement; improving newcomer understanding of Canadian cultural norms; targeting social and cultural programs for specific immigrant subpopulations (youth, seniors, LBGTQ and women); and improving access to and the content of information about community services and events.

Racism, xenophobia and lack of cultural understanding in host community

Twenty-one LIPs identified racism, xenophobia and/or a lack of cultural understanding in host communities as issues that were mentioned by recent immigrants during interviews, focus groups and surveys. Focus groups organized by the Sault Ste. Marie LIP found that an appreciation of new cultures and cultural diversity was not strong in the community. The Toronto Don Valley

LIP noted that many immigrants viewed racism as a "fact of life"; encounters with landlords

were mentioned as examples of relationships characterized by cultural biases and a lack of

understanding (Patterns of Newcomer Service Issues, 2009, p. 25). The Sarnia-Lambton LIP

reported that negative attitudes and a lack of understanding by employers and members of the

community posed significant barriers for newcomers' ability to enter the workforce.

Several LIPs pointed out that a lack of cultural understanding was evident in the negative media

coverage of immigrants and refugees. In order to counter this negative bias, some LIPs

developed strategies to promote positive stories on immigrants and refugees by emphasizing

their positive contributions in the community.

Increasing newcomer civic involvement (volunteering, civic leadership)

Seven LIPs identified increasing newcomer civic involvement as a priority. Civic involvement is

essential to building social, cultural and political inclusion among newcomers. Volunteering in

the community leads to gratitude and recognition for volunteers and, consequently, improved life

satisfaction and health outcomes (Fischer & Schaffer, 1993; Thoits & Hewitt, 2001). For

newcomers, volunteering can be an important venue for addressing the impacts of increased

stress as well as building increased trust in the community and a more welcoming environment.

There were a number of issues related to newcomer civic involvement identified by the LIP

strategic plans. The plans noted a dearth of newcomers in leadership roles in community

organizations and newcomers' lack of awareness of volunteer and leadership positions in the

community (e.g., Waterloo LIP, p. 6). The Waterloo LIP's ideas to publicize vacant positions to

newcomers and educate them about volunteer boards and the benefits of community involvement

are discussed in greater detail later in this report.

Improving newcomer understanding of Canadian cultural norms

Seven LIPs identified challenges in understanding Canadian cultural norms related to daily life,

the financial system, workplace culture and political norms. Immigrating to a new country can be

a stressful experience because new immigrants must re-orient themselves to common norms,

practices and accepted behavior in the daily life of the host community. Recent immigrants and

refugees described difficulties learning about acceptable employment practices, common meals

as well as entertainment and cultural activities. In the North York East LIP more than 40 percent

of newcomer parents reported difficulty responding to their children's changing food interests

since moving to Canada. Their children had been asking for 'Canadian' lunches to bring to

school and many parents were unsure what to prepare (North York East LIP, p. 24-25). Recent

immigrants also expressed frustration with difficulties understanding the banking and financial

services institutions. Twenty six percent of recent immigrants in the Toronto Don Valley LIP

expressed the need for support in dealing with and understanding the Canadian financial system

(Settlement Strategy and Action Plan, 2011, p. 32).

Recent immigrants and refugees also experienced difficulties interacting with individuals within

their community because they were unaware of the interests or activities they could discuss.

Learning about the main sources of entertainment interests in the host community would help

recent immigrants interact with members of the host community. In addition to learning about

Canadian cultural norms, recent immigrants also expressed a desire to engage in cultural and

spiritual activities that encourage connections with others in the community. Examples of these cultural activities include cooking classes, dance, storytelling, singing and holiday themed activities that would encourage recent immigrants and existing members of the host community to develop social connections (North York East, p. 35). More research is required on the best methods of educating recent immigrants about Canadian cultural norms, when they can be identified.

Targeting social and cultural programs for specific immigrant subpopulations (youth, seniors, LGBTQ, women)

Five LIPs identified the importance of sensitivity to the needs of different immigrant groups within their communities, thereby rejecting a "one-size-fits all" approach. Actions to address youth social exclusion were deemed important because exclusion at a young age has been linked to increased drug use and gang involvement. Youth also deal with the stresses of growing up - being 'different' compounds the stress that youth experience as recent immigrants.

A few LIP Strategic Plans identified specific actions that are required for recent elderly newcomers who are finding it difficult to get involved in the broader community and who lack awareness of services and events as a result of their lower rates of technological connectedness (e.g., Toronto East LIP, p. 43). Weaker links with families "can lead to further issues of loneliness, isolation and abuse" for seniors (p. vi). The level of connectedness that newcomer seniors have with their families varied across ethnocultural communities. The Toronto West Downtown LIP noted that newcomer seniors from Portuguese and Chinese backgrounds were more closely connected to their families than seniors of Korean ancestry (p. vi).

Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and queer (LGBTQ) recent immigrants were also identified as a group with particular needs that should be considered when constructing plans of action. The needs of newcomer women also posed unique social challenges. The Ottawa LIP recommended that institutions charged with the responsibility of including and integrating newcomers be attentive to the special needs of women, seniors and youth when ensuring the availability of parks, pools and other public spaces for informal use by newcomers (Ottawa LIP, pp. 16, 18). The Toronto West Downtown LIP noted that "language barriers for newcomer women are sometimes connected to cultural norms and traditions which may hinder women's access to language supports because they are busy with child-rearing duties" (p. v).

Improving access to and content of information about community services and events

Three LIP Strategic Plans referred to the tendency for recent immigrants to acquire knowledge of community activities and programs primarily through informal communication channels involving friends, family and neighbours. More than 70 percent of focus group respondents in North York East LIP relied primarily on family and friends for information and advice (p. 19). One focus group respondent stated: "I didn't know about many newcomer organizations in this area until I had been here for about two years and had made friends who told me about them" (North York East LIP, p. 19). Relying primarily on informal networks for advice and information means that information about services, activities and programs can be unreliable, outdated and vague. This reliance may stem from weak language skills or from confusing language in the information communicated through media and service-location channels.

Service providers and governments must increase community connectedness when updating services or programs targeted at recent immigrants and refugees. The LIPs noted that trusted community leaders who recent immigrants and refugees rely on for information about neighbourhood services and programs should be identified and enlisted to help increase awareness in immigrant communities. It can be deduced that more research is needed on the operation of informal communication channels and methods to utilize these channels.

Analysis of new ideas, innovations, solutions, extensions of existing practices to address priorities in LIP plans

New and existing programs addressing social, cultural and political inclusion	
New programs [frequency in plans]	**Extensions of existing programs [frequency in plans]**
Social a) Support alternative networks for community building and information sharing [3 LIPs] b) Anti-racism campaigns [9 LIPs] c) Anti-racism campaigns in schools [1 LIP] d) Addressing lack of awareness/ understanding of newcomer values & norms [1 LIP] e) Targeting newcomer subgroups [5 LIPs]	**Social**
Cultural a) Cultural orientation program [1 LIP] b) Raising cultural awareness about religious practices, diet restrictions, norms and values of newcomers [1 LIP]	**Cultural** c) Expanding youth recreational programs to be more inclusive of recent immigrants [4 LIPs] d) Address financial barriers encountered by recent immigrants when accessing recreational/cultural programs [3 LIPs]

Political	Political
a) Develop classes/workshops to empower newcomers to advocate for themselves and their children [1 LIP] b) Promote political involvement before becoming a Canadian citizen [1 LIP]	c) Advocate for newcomer civic leadership and participation in community civic organizations [7 LIPs] d) Develop a youth planning committee to engage newcomer youth in planning and integration in the community [2 LIPs]

Social

The proposed interventions and innovations in social integration practices can be classified under the following general categories: supporting alternative networks for community-building and information sharing; anti-racism media campaigns; anti-racism media campaigns targeting youth; improving awareness of newcomer norms and cultural values; and targeting immigrant subgroups with different needs. Most of the promising practices identified in the strategic plans require the involvement of municipal governments, settlement agencies, ethnocultural community groups and/or youth organizations and school boards. The anti-racism innovations would require cooperation among different levels of government, ethnocultural groups, the media and educational institutions. Although most initiatives, save for those requiring media materials, would involve minimal financial costs, they would require organizational or core resources (i.e. research capacity) of a type that service provider organizations do not necessarily have.

a) **Supporting alternative networks for community-building and information sharing**

[Toronto East, South Scarborough LIPs]

The Toronto East LIP identified the importance of engaging alternative networks to spread information and increase the engagement of recent immigrants and refugees in the community. The plan noted that new arrivals tend to forge social connections with people

they are "familiar or comfortable with, typically extended family members, places of

worship, and neighbourhood gathering places such as coffee shops or local groceries" (p. 76).

Since most newcomers receive information through informal networks (community leaders,

friends, existing newcomers), the Toronto East LIP identified the potential for engagement

through these avenues and has made it a priority to conduct research on these alternative

channels and neighbourhood gathering places for recent immigrants. The LIP also noted that

immigrant communities often have leaders who act as "informal settlement counselors,

providing advice and guidance to newcomers," (p. 77). These individuals may be local

business people, elders, spiritual leaders or "simply a well-regarded 'fixer'" (p. 77). The LIP

planned to encourage settlement agencies to meet regularly with these individuals and to hold

regular community meetings with them in order to obtain feedback on program updates and

to identify needs and collaboration potential with the community. The primary actor involved

in utilizing alternative networks is the municipal government. The municipal government can

reach out to alternative networks in the community as well as stream communication

between service providers, community organizations and ethnocultural groups. New costs

involved with supporting alternative networks are low since they primarily involve booking

space for meetings and discussions. To support this practice additional research is required to

identify the key community leaders for various ethnic groups.

b) **Anti-racism media campaigns** [Ottawa, Hamilton, Sarnia, Windsor, Bathurst-Finch,

   Toronto West Downtown, Toronto East Downton, Waterloo, Timmins].

Racism, xenophobia and lack of cultural awareness were identified as major issues by a

relatively large number of LIPs. Several municipalities have made commitments to join

UNESCO's Coalition of Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination. Members are encouraged to adopt the ten Common Commitments to reduce discrimination and racism in their municipalities by informing those who experience racism about their legal rights and creating compliance mechanisms within the municipality's authority - such as an ombudsmen or anti-discrimination unit (Canadian Commission for UNESCO, p. 11). Member municipalities also pledge to create measurement and monitoring tools to gauge the level of discrimination in their communities and to set targets for reduction as well as to support measures that promote equality in housing, the labour market and services. The City of Ottawa has agreed to extend and support its 'equality/inclusion lens' to all city institutions (p. 18). The use of this lens will allow all municipal policies and programs to be gauged on their openness to members of minority and ethnocultural groups.

Some LIPs have or are developing initiatives to increase awareness about the contribution that immigrants and refugees make in the community and to address negative news coverage. The Sarnia-Lambton LIP aims to shift negative public opinion by promoting existing cultural festivals and sharing newcomer stories. The Windsor LIP seeks to change public attitudes by reframing how newcomers are portrayed in the media. It will do this by promoting newcomer success stories and the benefits of having newcomers in the community. The Bathurst-Finch LIP aims to increase awareness of diversity in the neighbourhood and to focus attention on the 'immigrant experience' in the city.

Action on this front requires cooperation from different levels of government, ethnocultural groups and the media. The municipality and ethnocultural groups can identify individuals

and issues to promote in the media. The media can be made aware of how immigrant and refugee issues are framed and should be lobbied to reframe their coverage of immigrants and refugees in news stories. The costs associated with the campaigns identified by LIPs were not specified but there would be some cost in purchasing advertising space in mainstream media outlets. The campaign to reduce racism and xenophobia must also be supported by provincial and federal campaigns with the same goal. Some LIPs required more research on the particulars of a media campaign aimed at increasing awareness about the positive contributions of immigrants in their communities and at reducing racism and xenophobia.

c) **An Anti-racism campaign that targets youth by partnering with local school boards to confront the issue** [Waterloo LIP]

Since it is important to address racism early in life, the Waterloo LIP has set a goal of developing anti-racism campaigns aimed at youth in partnership with local school boards. The LIP wishes to "ensure that immigrant children are welcomed/included and encouraged to reach their full potential," (p. 5). The Waterloo LIP notes that it would like to create "an aggressive educational campaign to promote equity in all facilities," including sports and extra-curricular activities as well as "role modeling" where it will hold regular meetings in schools "to talk about inclusiveness in sports/activities" in order to encourage multicultural participation (p. 6).

Required actors include school boards, teachers, youth organizations and ethnocultural organizations. School boards can design plans to encourage participation by ethnocultural groups in school activities. The cost associated with youth anti-racism campaigns can be

deduced as minimal since they rely mainly on planning and the collaboration of existing

actors.

d) **Addressing lack of awareness/understanding of newcomer values and norms**

[Waterloo LIP]

Lack of awareness and cultural understanding differs from racism because racism involves

beliefs about the superiority of one's racial cultural heritage over those of another race and

about policies that reinforce group differences in resources (e.g. employment, health etc.)

(Dovidio, Gaertner and Kawakami, 2010). The Waterloo LIP Strategic Plan includes a plan

to create networks of cross-cultural learning, consisting of ethnocultural organizations,

groups and individuals, who will meet and plan a strategy to educate the general public on

cultural diversity issues. Newcomer values and norms need to be researched and identified in

the communities. Since the LIP did not identify these values, this is likely the next step on

that action point. A public awareness media campaign will be required for this initiative and

could be coordinated with provincial and federal governments for maximum effectiveness if

common values and norms are identified for the same ethnocultural groups in other cities.

e) **Targeting immigrant subgroups with different needs: Youth, Seniors, Women,**

LBGTQ. [London and Middlesex, Ottawa, Toronto East, Toronto West Downtown LIPs]

Several LIPs identified specific action plans related to subgroups of recent immigrants and

refugees. Improving recent immigrant youth engagement opportunities was a major focus of

the London and Middlesex LIP Strategic Plan. The LIP created goals of enhancing youth

programs to integrate more immigrant youth, to establish mentorship opportunities, to

provide linkages for volunteer opportunities and to encourage political engagement. The

London and Middlesex plan builds on the recent establishment of the Children and Youth

Network (CYN) that places literacy, poverty, healthy-eating and increasing physical activity

as main priorities for all youth in London. The plan also builds upon the existing Networking

for an Inclusive Community (NIC) group that consists of volunteers and representatives from

newcomer service organizations (p. 9-10).

The Ottawa LIP noted the need for service provider organizations (SPOs) to partner with

ethno-specific agencies to develop programs and seek funding for language services for

elderly immigrants and for women staying at home to mind their children (Ottawa LIP, p.

16). The Toronto East LIP noted that attention should be devoted to marginalized groups

including refugees and the LGBTQ community because they frequently encounter additional

inclusion challenges and may not be included in "traditional routes" (p. 44). The Toronto

West Downtown LIP plans to hold regular meetings with the LGBTQ community and other

marginalized groups, including the disabled, in order to assess the needs and service issues

experienced by the groups in the community (p. 42).

The plans require additional research on the gaps and needs encountered by the

demographic/lifestyle groups identified by the LIPs. The Toronto West Downtown LIP

Strategic Plan includes the need to create an inventory of LGBTQ services and resources in

the community as well as host a planning session with LGBTQ service providers who would

share positive and inclusive policies and practices (p. 77). The LIP also notes that it must

develop an inventory and assess the gaps and needs for recent immigrant women (p. 76).

The required actors for these initiatives include the municipal government, settlement

agencies, mainstream community organizations and organizations representing members of

these demographic/lifestyle categories. The groups must be brought together to assess the

gaps and needs experienced by members of these sub-populations and to develop plans of

action.

Cultural

Proposed interventions in cultural integration practices included: cultural orientation programs

for recent immigrants and refugees; increasing cultural knowledge about religious practices, diet

restrictions and norms; improving the inclusiveness of youth recreational programs; and

addressing the financial barriers posed to recent immigrants when accessing recreational/cultural

services/programs. Seven LIPS mentioned expanding recreational programs to include new

programming targeted at newcomers and three referred to plans to reduce financial barriers to

accessing services. Required actors would include the local government, mainstream and

immigrant cultural, religious and sports organizations, school boards, universities, colleges and

the provincial Ministry of Education.

a) **Cultural Orientation Program** [Sault Ste. Marie LIP]

As identified in the common gaps and needs section, recent immigrants and refugees were

often unsure of Canadian cultural norms and practices. The Sault Ste. Marie LIP plans to

offer a cultural orientation program for recent immigrants and refugees. The classes will be

"designed to help them understand Canadian habits, slang, cultural events and habits that

they may not be aware of upon their arrival," in order to alleviate the "culture shock that new

immigrants can face when thrust into a new setting" (p. 24). The orientation programs would also familiarize new immigrants with the services and organizations in the area.

The actors that could be involved in this initiative include the municipal government, mainstream cultural organizations, local business groups and settlement service providers. The classes do pose some additional costs since they will need to have language instructors who are familiar with English language slang and other languages. One important element that requires more research concerns the identification of common Canadian cultural norms and practices.

b) **Raising cultural awareness in the community, specifically about religious practices, diet restrictions, and norms** [Lawrence Heights LIP]

Several LIP Strategic Plans identified a lack of cultural awareness in the host community as a priority that needs to be addressed. The Lawrence Heights LIP, for example, plans to raise cultural awareness in schools about the religious practices, diet restrictions and norms that exist in different cultures. The strategy brings together grassroots groups, residents and educators in order to discuss and promote cultural competency in school activities and programs (p. 12). Cultural competency includes learning about culturally appropriate foods and education about religious practices.

The actors required for this initiative could include local school boards, ethnocultural organizations and the provincial Ministry of Education. Existing and new research would provide information about religious practices, diet restrictions and cultural norms.

c) **Expanding youth recreational programs to be more inclusive of recent immigrants**

   [Agincourt, Bathurst-Finch, Toronto East LIPs]

Expanding existing recreational and cultural programs to be more inclusive of recent

immigrants was frequently mentioned in the LIP Strategic Plans. The Agincourt LIP wants to

create new recreational programs with a focus on content that will promote the inclusion of

immigrant youth and seniors. The Toronto East LIP noted that expanding youth recreational

programs to be more inclusive of recent immigrants would help tackle the issue of gangs and

drug use among recent immigrant youth. The Bathurst-Finch LIP wants to use art, music and

recreation programs to build community connections and fight social isolation and to support

creative mediums (digital storytelling, art exhibits) to help newcomers build confidence and

social integration.

The required actors are the municipal recreation departments, youth and sports organizations.

The development of new recreational or cultural programs will have cost implications both

for cities, school boards and other educational institutions, sports clubs and other

organizations.

d) **Address financial barriers posed to recent immigrants when accessing recreational**

   and cultural services/programs. [Kingston, Waterloo, Bathurst-Finch LIP].

The issue of access to recreational and cultural programs for low income recent immigrants

and refugees was mentioned in three LIP Strategic Plans. In the North York East LIP, 50

percent of recent immigrants identified cost as a major barrier to participating in community

or recreational activities (p. 34). The Waterloo LIP Strategic Plan proposes creating equity

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access cards for low income individuals, which would help address the financial barriers to participation in recreational programs that are reported by newcomers. The Kingston LIP already has a similar support program in place for low income individuals; the Municipal Fee Assistance Program provides discounts on transit and recreational programs for individuals of all ages. The Kingston LIP has made it a priority to promote the program and encourage newcomers to take advantage of it. Addressing financial barriers requires the municipal government as the main actor with the potential for provincial action as well. A provincial program could be developed to ensure equal or equitable access to programs by all communities.

Another innovative strategy involves offering free access to recreational programs in areas of high need. The Bathurst-Finch LIP is advocating for the Antibes Community Centre to be turned into a priority community centre that offers free year-round sports and recreation programs for residents. The centre is located in an area that has a high immigrant population and a high poverty rate. The strategy requires municipal governments to act through their recreation departments and will require additional expenditures to support individual programs and core operating costs.

Political

Proposed innovations in political integration practices centre on advocacy for civic immigrant leadership and participation in community civic organizations; developing a youth planning committee to provide young newcomers with an opportunity to participate in community planning; offering classes/workshops that empower newcomers and hone their advocacy skills;

and promoting political involvement prior to the acquisition of Canadian citizenship. Two LIPs specifically identified getting youth involved in political decisions in the community.

The required actors for these initiatives include the municipal government, business and youth groups, school boards and public libraries. Additional costs would be required for publicity materials, the rental of public spaces for meetings and the development of new content for classes on advocacy and citizenship.

a) **Advocate for civic immigrant leadership and participation in community civic organizations** [Waterloo LIP]

The Waterloo LIP identified the lack of immigrants and visible minorities in leadership positions in community civic organizations as a gap. This LIP plans to heighten immigrant awareness of vacant positions and opportunities. These opportunities for civic involvement will be widely publicized and the LIP will hire a resource person who will consult with immigrant agencies and immigrant volunteer groups, coach immigrants to serve on Canadian boards and provide leadership workshops. The LIP also plans to educate mainstream organizations and encourage them to consider filling vacant seats with qualified immigrants or possibly designating seats for immigrants (p. 6).

Required actors could include mainstream and immigrant community organizations as well as settlement agencies at the municipal level. There is potential for business organizations (e.g. Chamber of Commerce) to be involved in the strategy as well. Additional costs include

the cost of the resource person and any media campaign materials that may be developed to inform immigrants of opportunities.

b) **Develop a youth planning committee to engage newcomer youth in planning and integration in the community** [Toronto East Downtown, London and Middlesex LIP]

Encouraging newcomer youth involvement in issue identification and in the planning of community integration strategies is an important way to encourage the political inclusion of recent immigrants and refugees. The London and Middlesex LIP has a London and Middlesex Youth Council comprised of 13-24 year olds who meet to promote the interests of youth in general. The Toronto East Downtown LIP is also developing a youth planning committee in order to engage newcomer youth in planning and integration issues in the community (p. 58). The planning committee will engage all stakeholders that work with recent immigrant youth as well as organize youth leadership events.[1]

The required actors for these initiatives include organizations that provide services to newcomer youths, as well as youths from various ethnocultural backgrounds.

c) **Develop classes/workshops to assist newcomers in learning how to empower and advocate for themselves and their children** [Central South Etobicoke]

Disseminate knowledge about how to participate in the political process is an important tool for ensuring long-term immigrant inclusion in the community. The Central South Etobicoke

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[1] Participation in the planning Committees could also be considered a form of social inclusion. We have identified it as a political integration practice because activities that are aimed at influencing government are considered formal political activities (Teorrell, 2003).

LIP is developing classes/workshops on newcomer advocacy and political empowerment

entitled the "Newcomer Parents Guide to Advocacy for Themselves and their Children," (p.

19). As the details of the classes were not specified in the Strategic Plan, additional research

on content and planning may be required.

Settlement agencies and school boards could be involved in similar initiatives. The program

will have small additional costs associated with content development and space rentals for

the classes/workshops.

d) **Promote political involvement prior to the acquisition of Canadian citizenship**

[London and Middlesex LIP].

Educating newcomers about the benefits of, and strategies for, political involvement will help

create a more inclusive environment in communities. Newcomers are less knowledgeable

about the political system and participate in political activities less frequently than native-

born Canadians (p. 66). The London and Middlesex LIP stresses the importance of targeting

recent immigrant youth in order to educate and empower them to become politically active

members of the community. This would be accomplished by fostering trust in the political

system through an awareness campaign. Creating a sense of trust is important because some

immigrants may have "pre-migratory experiences [that] have created fear and distrust in

governments" (p. 69). Second, the London and Middlesex LIP suggests holding workshops,

creating political involvement toolkits and identifying ethnocultural leaders who could help

mobilize participation. Third, the LIP plans to encourage newcomers to follow current events

and will create an awareness campaign about the voting system. The LIP recommends

disseminating knowledge about the political system and other venues for political

participation prior to the acquisition of citizenship (p. 69).

The London and Middlesex LIP mentioned that it would like to explore options for

identifying measures of political and civic involvement so that progress can be gauged over

time. The required actors for this initiative could include the municipality, school boards,

universities, colleges, and youth organizations. The project would involve the additional

costs of holding classes at locations within the city as well as developing content.

Northern LIPs in comparison to urban and southern LIPs

LIP Strategic Plans for Timmins, North Bay, Thunder Bay and Sault Ste. Marie were more

focused on economic integration and service delivery issues than the plans submitted by urban

and southern Ontario LIPs. Of the areas of interest covered by this domain, social integration

was the most common area of focus for northern LIPs; 3 of the 4 identified a social integration

practice for newcomers. LIPs in large urban areas such as Toronto placed relatively more

emphasis on the social, cultural and political inclusion of recent immigrants and refugees than

LIPs in northern communities. While both the northern and urban and southern LIPs placed less

emphasis on political inclusion compared to social and cultural inclusion, just one northern LIP

identified a strategy for political integration. These differences might be accounted for by several

factors, including the fact that large urban centres have been the primary settlement areas for new

immigrants and refugees for decades (Bollman, Beshiri & Clemenson, 2007, p. 10), by the

relatively small newcomer presence in northern and rural communities and, consequently, by the

fact that less is known about immigrant and refugee issues in these latter communities (Radford, 2001).

Areas that did not receive much attention in LIP Strategic Plans

Most LIPs focused on service delivery and employment service issues

The LIP strategic plans were primarily concerned with service delivery issues and with employment services issues in particular. Five LIPs did not discuss any goals or strategies or identify any gaps or needs related to social, cultural or political inclusion. Thirteen LIPs did not discuss strategies for political inclusion, eleven did not discuss cultural inclusion strategies and five did not discuss social inclusion strategies.

Female newcomers

Just five LIP strategic plans addressed the political, cultural or social challenges facing female newcomers. With the exception of the Ottawa and Toronto West Downtown LIP plans, the discussion of the challenges and goals concerning female newcomers tended to be quite general, with a minimal discussion of measurable actions or specific issues.

Political inclusion not a high priority

Fourteen of 27 LIP Strategic Plans discussed gaps in political and civic participation or methods for encouraging participation in these activities. Of these, seven treated increasing civic involvement (volunteerism, board representation) as a priority. Just four LIPs articulated clear goals of increasing newcomer political involvement or political representation, while three others framed these goals in very broad terms.

Promising Practices in the Literature

The following presents examples of promising practices and strategies for the social, cultural and

political integration of recent immigrants and refugees, drawn from a literature review of

domestic and international sources from 2005 to the present.

Social

a) **Building social capital**

Although definitions of social capital vary, the concept refers to social relations that involve

both structural and attitudinal connections among individuals - "social networks and the

norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them" (Putnam, 2000, p. 19). Social

capital is built through widespread involvement in voluntary associations such as clubs,

groups and organizations, which in turn foster interpersonal trust and norms of reciprocity. In

other words "I will do this favour for you now without expecting anything specific back from

you, in the expectation that someone else will do something for me down the road" (p. 20).

Social capital can be a valuable resource for both communities and immigrants. Societies

with larger reservoirs of social capital tend to be more prosperous, less unequal in terms of

income disparities between the rich and poor, better-governed, healthier, and safer (Putnam,

1993; 2000).

Immigrants can benefit from "bridging social capital", or social networks comprising

individuals from dissimilar backgrounds (Putnam and Goss, 2002, pp. 11-12). "Bridging

capital introduces newcomers to the mainstream culture and society, provides an avenue for

increased employment possibilities, and facilitates access to settlement and integration

services" (Arshad, 2011), while the absence of connections between immigrants and the host community can lead to feelings of rejection for the former (Rose et al, 2002). Bonding social capital, or networks that bring together family, friends or people who share common ethnic, cultural or linguistic characteristics (Putnam and Goss, 2002), are also important as newcomers often rely on them for information about community services, organizations and events. Friends and relatives assist immigrants with settlement difficulties in the areas of housing, training/education, job search and access to help services (Kunz, 2005). Furthermore, Kazemipur has found that newcomers are more likely to seek health services based on information acquired from family or friends (2006). The Toronto LIPs referred to throughout this report also highlighted newcomers' reliance on alternative or informal networks when seeking information about services or events. Despite these positive benefits, it has been argued that bonding networks can prevent integration into mainstream society (Arshad, 2011).

One way that social capital can be encouraged in the community is by developing and promoting shared meeting spaces. SydWest Multicultural Services Inc in Sydney, Australia, helped foster networking and cohesion among immigrant groups by offering shared meeting spaces that groups can use to offer classes, programs and activities. The centre is managed "by an elected Committee made up of representatives from each of the ethnic groups who are either involved in the Centre or are living in the Blacktown [Australia] area" (Cities of Migration, 2010). The centre allows groups to have access to meeting space as well as offering classes on parenting, health and nutrition, daily life in Australia as well as

recreational and cultural classes (drama, poetry, writing). The use of a shared multicultural

meeting space facility can help increase social capital for recent immigrants of all ages.

b) Reducing discrimination and xenophobia in community

A number of cities in Canada and internationally have made commitments to reducing racism

and discrimination in their communities by adopting UNESCO's ten Common Commitments

as well as adopting other successful methods. The UNESCO plan is a commitment from

individual cities to tackle discrimination and xenophobia by developing awareness materials

and complaint mechanisms plus encouraging confidence and sensitivity in local law

enforcement and service providers. Comprehensive, multifaceted campaigns are necessary

because of the complex causes of discrimination and xenophobia in communities.

Inequalities that exist within communities can be the result of historical, social, economic,

national, local and global forces. To combat racism and discrimination within society there

are a number of tools that municipalities can employ including symbolic actions, policy

implementation actions and actions to correct inequalities (Icart, Labelle & Antonius, 2005).

Policy implementation actions refer to measurable actions that "counter the inertia of the

historical situations that produced racism in the first place, to prevent the reproduction of

inequalities" (2005, p. 58).

To address rising racism and xenophobia in Stockholm, Sweden, a multilevel governmental

strategy was developed. The City of Stockholm saw the rise of racism and xenophobia after

the 1980s when Stockholm, a relatively ethnically homogenous city, began to take in a large

number of new immigrants and refugees. Recent immigrants became segregated into isolated

physical environments that lacked public services (Icar, Labelle & Antonious, 2005). In response to increased racism and xenophobia, the Swedish federal government created a National Integration Office that developed an integration plan (1998) that used a large number of indicators for evaluating policy effectiveness and took action to reduce unemployment and raise awareness and understanding in society. Stockholm also created a municipal action plan that focused on creating a strategy to eliminate racism with the involvement of service providers and schools. The city was successful due to the development of a measurable strategy that sought to correct historical causes of inequalities and the inequalities between recent immigrants and the rest of the population. The plan was multifaceted and clearly identified the governmental units responsible for each measure.

The BCN Anti-Rumour Campaign aims to dispel myths about immigrants and reduce prejudice and discrimination through an innovative public service campaign. Developed by the Barcelona City Council, the campaign uses anti-rumour agents trained with facts about immigrants and immigration to counteract misinformation. This is an innovative strategy in that it uses ordinary people armed with facts to counteract negative stereotypes about immigrants expressed in everyday life. To develop the Anti-Rumour Campaign the planners first identified the main stereotypes about immigrants and immigration that were prevalent in the community. Then they trained anti-rumour agents to counteract these sources of bias by equipping them with accurate information and teaching them techniques for addressing misconceptions that come up in the course of day-to-day life. The Anti-Rumour Network members are connected through a dedicated website offering up-to-date information, training sessions and online guides to address key challenges. The campaign employs a variety of

additional strategies for promoting more positive attitudes toward immigrants and immigration, including a city-wide advertising campaign, humorous videos, and a comic book series, all of which have been very popular.

c) Positive media coverage of immigrants

Mass media has the power to influence public perceptions of newcomers and immigration and can be used as a gauge by immigrants to determine how welcoming a community is (Mahtani, 2008). The Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA), a community organization, sought to reframe negative media coverage of immigrants and create a more personal, human element to stories about immigrants and refugees. In one case MIRA acted quickly to reframe the media coverage of a police raid on undocumented workers at a garment factory. Rather than showing coverage of workers being hauled away in handcuffs, MIRA created a media campaign that refocused media coverage "towards the largely ignored human side of the story. This included the children and families of the estimated 7 million undocumented workers adversely affected by the current laws and 3 year backlog of naturalization applications" (Cities of Migration 2, 2009). MIRA's communication plan helps immigrant groups to proactively plan to respond to coverage on issues of importance to them. The group provides training to local groups on the information that reporters need and how the media is organized and operates. MIRA was able to reframe immigrant issues by providing "a stream of new angles including compelling stories, voices and images to build support," and by holding regular press conferences when important issues emerged (Cities of Migration 2, 2009). The coalition was able to give a voice in the press to immigrant groups who are normally unprepared to lobby for their issues in this

medium. The organization is an example of how a community organization focused on positive media coverage of immigrants and refugees can help change press coverage.

Cultural

a) **Increased participation in sports and recreational activities by newcomers**

Encouraging participation in sports and recreational facilities is important to developing communities with higher rates of interaction and social capital. Participation in sports and recreational activities by immigrants and refugees can be encouraged by targeting recreational inclusion policies at immigrants as well as by reducing financial barriers for low income immigrants. In Munich, Germany, Buntkicktgut is a street soccer league that aims to promote participation and encourage leadership for recent immigrants and refugees. To encourage autonomy and ownership the league encourages teams to organise themselves and be responsible for obtaining their own uniforms/shirts, creating a team name and building community support (Cities of Migration 2009). The league has been able to successfully integrate newcomers in sport with teams that consist of players from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

Low income immigrants and refugees face additional barriers to getting involved in sports and recreational activities due to cost. There are a number of programs in Canadian municipalities that reduce the financial barriers to participation. The City of Calgary developed the Fair Calgary policy in 2006 that aims to reduce the financial barriers to participation in recreational programs by providing subsidies to low income residents. The

City of Toronto's Welcome Policy (2011) provides subsidies on fees for recreation programs for families and individuals falling below Low Income Cut-Offs (LICO).

b) Inclusive cultural programs

The creation of recreational and cultural programs that are focused on immigrants and refugees is important for developing inclusive communities. Examples of culturally sensitive programs include the NuYu Popular Theatre Project in Vancouver as well as the Albany Park Theatre Project in Albany, New York. The NuYu Theatre Project is a youth theatre group that encourages the development of stage performances based on immigrant experiences. Participants partake in a set of group games and theatre exercises that lead to the development of scenes or plays based on their real life experiences (NuYu Theatre Project). Participants receive bus tickets, snacks and an honorarium at the completion of the program.

The Albany Park Theatre Project in Chicago is another theatre group that allows recent immigrants and refugee youth to explore their experiences as an immigrant through theatre. Participants write stories, develop scripts, create dance routines and produce musical compositions to support the performances based on their personal experiences. Participants typically work on several projects simultaneously. The Albany Park Theatre Project and NuYu Popular Theatre Project are the result of local theatre organizations developing culturally sensitive programs.

c) Local/host community culture orientation

Learning about local culture is important for immigrant integration in communities. The MY Circle Program in Vancouver is an immigrant and refugee program that helps youth integrate into their new life, link with mentors and develop connections and friendships (Get Out Youth, 2006). The program brings recently immigrated youth together with established youth. MY Circle educates Canadian-born youth about newcomer youth issues while the recently immigrated youth can develop community connections and learn about local activities and opportunities.

Political and Civic

a) Increased newcomer political involvement - increased electoral participation - increased political activism

Political inclusion is fostered by educating recent immigrants and refugees about electoral participation and other opportunities for political involvement. In Dublin, Ireland, the 'Did You Know You Can Vote?' media campaign focused on informing immigrants about their legal right to vote and practical steps for casting a vote on election day (Cities of Migration 2, 2010). City officials also trained interested community ambassadors from various ethnocultural groups to deliver election information sessions at local community centres.

The Mobilize the Immigrant Vote (MIV) is a state-level campaign in California designed to boost immigrant electoral participation (Mobilize the Immigrant Vote, 2011). The campaign which connects 112 organisations and 15 ethnic communities is spearheaded by a steering committee of representatives from five social justice and immigrant organizations: the Bay

Area Immigrant Rights Coalition (BAIRC), the Korean Resource Center (KRC), the

Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA), the Services, Immigrant

Rights & Education Network (SIREN) and the California Partnership (CAP). The

organizations reach out to grassroots groups and community organizations to encourage

increased immigrant electoral turnout. The groups seek to create issue awareness, political

empowerment and community cohesion. MIV operates between election cycles due to "their

belief that there is a mutually-reinforcing effect of electoral work on community cohesion

and empowerment, and of community cohesion and empowerment on electoral work"

(Mobilize the Immigrant Vote, 2009). The consistent operation of MIV links electoral issues

with the ongoing work of the individual organizations and helps build stronger

collaborations. MIV has been quite successful in encouraging increased civic and political

participation and the advancement of immigrant issues during California elections since

2004.

The Maytree Foundation's DiverseCity's School4Civics program in Toronto provides

political participation and activism training for immigrants and newcomers. The program was

developed as a result of the low level of representation of newcomers and visible minorities

on elected bodies. The six month long program features experienced political strategists,

campaign managers and former candidates who share practical campaign training on topics

such as campaigning, fundraising, public speaking, issue framing and campaign management

(Cities of Migration 3, 2010). All 2010 graduates of the program have been involved with a

municipal, provincial or federal campaign, either as candidates or volunteers. The

School4Civics program is a successful example of a program that can develop political
inclusion for recent immigrants.

b) Encouraging civic or volunteer involvement

Participation in civic or volunteer positions builds social engagement and networking
opportunities and helps reduce social isolation for recent immigrants and refugees. The Pillar
Nonprofit Network in London, Ontario, links newcomers with volunteering opportunities in
the community and provides information on these opportunities in a variety of languages.
The DiverseCity onBoard campaign run by the Maytree Foundation promotes diversity on
public boards, agencies and commissions as well as in voluntary organizations by linking
qualified candidates with open positions (DiverseCity, 2008). It has successfully linked over
250 candidates with positions on public or civic sector boards or agencies. The DiverseCity
onBoard campaign and Pillar Nonprofit Network are successful examples of encouraging
civic or volunteer involvement of recent immigrants.

<u>Conclusion</u>

This report has identified the most popular priorities and new ideas or extensions of existing
practices proposed by the LIPs to address the social, cultural and political inclusion of
newcomers. We found qualitative differences in the priorities identified by northern and urban
and southern communities and considerable variation in the attention paid to political and
cultural inclusion; social inclusion strategies were by far the most frequently mentioned
priorities. A search of Canadian and international literature covering the 2005-2011 time period
revealed some promising practices which appear to be transferable to small and mid-sized
centres.

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Analysis of LIP Strategic Plans: Workplace Integration

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The prospect of employment is one of the top determinants of destination choice for Canadian immigrants.(Kukushkin, 2009). A study defining the characteristics of a community viewed as welcoming to immigrants identified the top two characteristics as *Employment Opportunities* and *Fostering Social Capital*. However, while access to appropriate employment opportunities is essential to attracting newcomers, the *quality* of the work experience will affect whether they remain with the employer and in the community (Bahbahani, 2008).

Recent immigrants to Canada, on average, are better educated than native-born Canadians. In 2006, 15.8% of native-born Canadians versus 25.4% of Canadian immigrants had a bachelor's degree or higher. Even though this level of education represents a significant competitive advantage for organizations, immigrants are not always the first-choice candidates for employers. Furthermore, those immigrants who do find work get a lower return on education than their Canadian-born counterparts.

The integration of newcomers and immigrants into the workplace is essential to their well-being. Currently, 54% of immigrants who had attempted to settle but decided to leave second- or third- tier Canadian cities cited insufficient or inadequate employment as the reason (Krahn, Derwing, & Abu-Laban 2005).

This report presents an analysis of how 27 Local Immigration Partnership Strategies (LIPS) have understood and sought to address the integration of newcomers and immigrants into the workplace. Importantly, this broad analysis considers short-term as well as long-term programs and services that are aimed at attraction as well as retention and includes measures targeting both immigrants and employers at the programmatic and systemic levels. In our analysis of *workplace integration*, we include the practices, behaviours, policies, and situations that remove barriers to employment success for newcomers and immigrants as well as those which support the long-term ability of newcomers and immigrants to interact and contribute within the workplace.

We begin with a thematic discussion of the gaps and needs noted in the strategic plans and follow it with a summary of the new ideas and extensions of existing practices proposed by the LIPS to address these priorities. This analysis sought to find common themes throughout the workplace integration domain. Our discussion is organized along two dimensions—the identified strategic program and service objectives, and the type of actions

and activities required to support these objectives. Also in our discussion we cite promising practices noted in the Strategic Plans.

While there are a variety of pre-hire and hiring practices and plans identified by the LIPS reports, one of the striking gaps in the plans under consideration relates to post-employment employee engagement, retention, and advancement strategies. In our discussion we summarize the results of the LIPS reports and, in future efforts, hope to assist them with the implementation of good practices as they widen their focus to include post-employment strategies and outcomes.

1.   Commonly Mentioned Gaps and Needs

Our review of gaps and needs includes a brief discussion of those cited within LIP strategies and those identified after our analysis of the 27 LIP strategies.

An analysis of the gaps and needs noted in LIP strategies employs a similar outline to that used for analyzing program and service objectives. This is understandable, as LIP strategies are proposed in response to perceived *gaps and needs*.

Most LIP strategies were heavily weighted in favour of pre-hire proposals and demonstrated relatively little concern for the post-hire experiences of newcomers and immigrants. This is problematic not only from the point of view of immigrant well-being but also from the viewpoint of employers' capacity. For newcomers and immigrants to have successful employment, employers must also take some responsibility for creating welcoming and productive workplaces.

Strategies regarding talent management practices were scarce and this highlights a second gap—the under-recognition of lost-productivity arising from insufficient attention to post-hire (talent management) practices. Though various strategies addressed employer attitudes and awareness regarding the benefits of hiring immigrants, it was unclear whether employer attitudes and awareness were addressed through post-hire measures to ensure that newcomers felt comfortable, were able to express themselves and could contribute within the workplace. The emphasis in the reports was on hiring. This suggests that hiring was the focus of the analysis of successful employment outcomes rather than retention.

2.   Proposed Program and Service Objectives – Existing and New

The discussion of strategic and service objectives is further divided into two main target audiences—immigrants and newcomers, and service providers and other governance institutions. A summary of key themes organized by these target audiences is as follows.

Workplace Integration Components - Immigrants and Newcomers

- After-Hire Retention and Talent Management
- Information Coordination and Dissemination
- Language
- Pre-Hire Recruitment and Bridging Programs
- Recognition of Foreign Credentials, Education, and Competencies
- Skills and Education

Workplace Integration Components - Service Providers, Settlement Organizations, and Governance Institutions

- Information Coordination and Dissemination
- Institutional Capacity-Building
- Service Coordination
- Creating Welcoming Workplaces, Workplace Attitudes and Cultural Awareness

These program and service objectives are considered the general *components* of workplace integration as noted in LIP strategies.

Objectives Targeting Immigrants and Newcomers

After-Hire Talent Management

There was very little emphasis in the LIP strategies on the retention and professional development of newcomers and immigrants within the workplace. However, a number of strategies do cite a general concern with job retention, particularly the need to increase job retention and career advancement for newcomers (North York East). The East Downtown Toronto Strategy proposes to offer newcomers one-on-one assistance/support to find work and retain jobs. The Peel Strategy stands out for recognizing the need for longer-term and possibly more holistic measures. This Strategy cites the need to design employment programs that encourage engagement with newcomers on a longer-term basis in order to promote follow-up and support and it also notes the need for programs that support job retention and job advancement as part of the employment support mix.

While retention and talent management practices are not commonly cited, concerns regarding welcoming workplaces are noted in various strategies. Most notably, opportunities for socialization and language classes, workplace culture and orientation training, a welcoming workplace culture, and a diversified workforce are recognized as important elements for the successful integration of immigrant employees. Significantly, program objectives target newcomers and immigrants, as well as employers and employment organizations.

Information Coordination and Dissemination

For the purposes of this report there is a distinction between information coordination and service coordination. In many instances, information coordination is viewed as a first step to coordinating services. However, we wish to emphasize the broader role that information coordination and dissemination could play. Information coordination and dissemination are often noted in relation to outreach or improved access and accompanied by discussions of mechanisms for achieving these objectives. These include online portals, proposals for one-stop information centres, newspapers, and the use of community animators. One of the main challenges involving information coordination is insufficient research and evaluation, which requires additional support. In most instances, information coordination refers to community employment services, including language programs. In addition, the need for better information dissemination pre-arrival is also noted.

Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Communicate with grassroots organizations, faith-based groups, and other immigrant social networks to inform and direct residents to relevant community services and programs. (Bathurst Finch)
- Make use of ethno-cultural newspapers and other community publications to reach out to residents. (Bathurst Finch)
- Support the development of an online neighborhood portal/website that provides up-to-date information services, programs, and events to newcomers and other residents. (Bathurst Finch)
- Seek out collaborative funding for permanent community animators to help agencies reach out, inform, and recruit residents. (Bathurst Finch)
- Provide internationally trained immigrants (ITIs) with better access to industry/sector specific labour market information (i.e., labour trends, growing sectors, regulations, and occupations in high or low demand). (Bathurst Finch)
- Raise awareness about not-for-profit employment agencies and the free services they can provide to the private sector. (Bathurst Finch)
- Create and maintain a Central South Etobicoke LIP Web portal that provides:
  - Labour Market information for the area;
  - Web-based social networking space on topics of interests for newcomers, service providers, and employers;
  - Information on the LIP and its partner agencies; and
  - Allows for users to print information of interest and coordinate activities/events.
- Develop an extensive inventory of soft skills, skill-based and employability training in the community. (Don Valley)
- Promote and foster the inclusion of information about workers' rights in settlement and employment programs. (West Downtown Toronto)
- Advocate for governments to continue to pay for the expenses of credential assessment and for The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration to inform newcomers prior to their arrival in Canada of the credentialing process, expected costs, time frames for completion, and projected employment availability upon arrival to Canada.

Language training is perhaps one of the most commonly cited needed requirements for workplace integration. Currently, there are a wide range of language services being delivered. The language services and programs proposed by the strategies reflect an expansion of traditional language services and incorporate specialized workplace or industry language training aimed at specific groups. In addition, there are a few references to having language services delivered online or through informal, recreational or social environments to provide broader socialization opportunities.

The barriers to accessing language training services are also noted and commonly include the need for childcare and transportation supports along with fee reductions, a change in eligibility requirements, and better information dissemination. These supporting mechanisms will be addressed in more detail in a separate section.

Overall, these directions are pushing traditional boundaries to include a broader use of community spaces and forums and the use of recreation and leisure and the workplace to promote language learning.

Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Remove barriers to English language learning opportunities for immigrants, particularly youth (aged 12 to 18), parents/caregivers, and seniors. (Bathurst-Finch)
- Advocate to broaden client eligibility requirements of government-funded language classes (LINC, ESL, ESL Literacy) so that they do not exclude residents based on immigration status. (Bathurst-Finch).
- Provide recreation and leisure programs for newcomer youth and seniors that integrate English language learning and conversation practice after school and during the summer. (Bathurst-Finch)
- Provide family-based English classes for caregivers, grandparents, etc., where the child remains with the caregiver. (Bathurst-Finch)
- Increase the number of online English learning opportunities, such as LINC Home Study and online conversation circle chat-rooms available to Bathurst-Finch residents.
- Create a regular forum for language service providers to meet, plan, exchange ideas, and collaborate on English language learning opportunities. (Bathurst-Finch)

- Diversify English language classes' scheduling to provide a selection of full-time, part-time, daytime, evening, weekday, and weekend courses. (Bathurst-Finch)
- Explore the capacity and skills of English language teachers to provide different skill levels of English lessons, specialized classes (e.g., professional writing, grammar), and occupation-specific language training. (Bathurst-Finch)
- Advocate for a more comprehensive language assessment process that measures not only skill level, but also charts a pathway to achieving the client's language learning goals (e.g., a language action plan). (Bathurst-Finch)
- Support the organization and development of student representation (e.g., LINC/ESL learners' associations). (Bathurst-Finch)
- Provide childcare for parents and caregivers attending ESL, LINC, and other English language learning courses. (Bathurst-Finch)
- Develop and run conversation circles for specific professions (e.g., conversation circle for internationally trained nurses). (Bathurst-Finch, Lawrence Heights)
- Increase opportunities for residents to practice advanced conversational English, pronunciation, and writing—beyond Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) Level 8. (Bathurst-Finch)
- Explore opportunities to partner with the private sector and provide English language training in the workplace. (Bathurst-Finch)
  Support the enhancement and/or addition of ESL/LINC programming with curriculum that integrates more practical field trips in lessons, and a focus on the particular needs of prominent newcomer groups. (Central South Etobicoke)
- Support and encourage additional partnerships between agencies that provide employment and ESL/LINC language training for newcomers. (Central South Etobicoke)
- Develop Strategies to address language barriers (i.e., employment related language instruction, targeting programs to key language-barrier groups). (Don Valley)
- Work to increase the number of online English learning opportunities such as LINC Home Study, and online conversation circle chat-rooms for Lawrence Heights residents. (Lawrence Heights)
- Provide English classes after school and during the summer for youth under the age of 18 years. (Lawrence Heights)
- Run volunteer-based literacy groups, reading groups, and conversation circles, particularly for seniors, youth, and families, which allow residents to practice English in informal settings. (Lawrence Heights)

- Provide life skills workshops (e.g., financial literacy, topics in health), and integrate practical English lessons into the content of the course. (Lawrence Heights)
- Increase the number of job-specific language learning programs (e.g., ELT, OSLT, and SLT), make them more geographically accessible (Lawrence Heights Strategy, North Bay, Bathurst-Finch), and target professions in-demand in the immigrant labour force. (Lawrence Heights, Bathurst-Finch)
- Revamp/revise language training available to newcomers so that it focuses on *business* situations. (York South Weston Report)
- Strengthen the link among language assessment and foreign credential assessment by improving referrals and referral tools for service providers. (London East)
- Expand number and variety of conversation clubs, including targeting occupational and vocational vocabularies. (London East)
- Explore partnerships between employers and community colleges to develop *boot camp* language program focused on workplace terminology for job-ready newcomers. (North Bay)
- Strengthen the link among language assessment, employment assessment, and foreign credential assessment by improving referrals and referral tools for service providers in East Toronto.

LIP strategies highlight a number of different recruitment and bridging programs and note needed systematic changes to better deliver these programs. Systematic supports and changes noted include fee reductions, the need for childcare and transportation and, better information and service coordination in recruitment and bridging programs. Programmatic and service level strategies include mentoring and bridging programs and, co-op, volunteer, and internship programs aimed at providing Canadian work experience. Interestingly, however, the Don Valley LIP is working towards encouraging employers *to move beyond the Canadian work experience requirement*.

In this area of analysis, it appears traditional boundaries are expanding to include services such as soft-skills training, interview skills training, and a *women's only* program. In the Toronto area's strategies, there is greater specialization of programs being offered to address the specific needs of industry groups and women.

Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Develop a participatory toolkit for community agencies with guidelines and resources to encourage more opportunities for residents and other community members to participate in the development, delivery, and evaluation of services and programs. (Bathurst Finch)
- Work to expand mentorship programs such as paid internships, co-ops, and other opportunities for internationally trained individuals (ITIs) to network and develop professional contacts. (Bathurst Finch)
- Advocate for increased funding to increase the availability and accessibility of bridge training programs and help ITIs fulfill upgrading and the professional development requirements needed for the local labour market. (Bathurst Finch)
- Develop mentorship programs that combine workplace etiquette with on-the-job training. In collaboration with existing employment programs, incorporate soft skills training to job search programs. (Black Creek)
- Promote the maintenance of occupation-specific mentoring programs that result in positive employment performance measures such as job attainment and job retention, and/or promotion. (Central South Etobicoke)
- Promote the development of additional generalized (non-occupation specific) mentoring and/or buddy programs to assist those newcomers not meeting eligibility criteria of

foreign-trained professional programs (i.e., refugees, and family status and sponsored immigrants), to achieve positive employment measures, such as job attainment and job retention, and/or promotion. (Central South Etobicoke)

- Partner with appropriate employment-focused networks and agencies to provide their members with research findings, newcomer and employer priorities, and determine points of collaboration between the two entities, specifically on the need for the following additional programs/enhancements and mentoring programs that allow for additional leadership/volunteer opportunities. (Central South Etobicoke)

- Create employer/job development programs to meet the hiring needs of high GTA demand and Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) businesses' identification, training and documentation of soft skills required for employment. (Central South Etobicoke)

- Promote the development and integration of professional Career Ladders into employment training programs to assist newcomers with foreign-acquired skills to transition more quickly into the Canadian labour market. (Central South Etobicoke)

- Encourage settlement and employment organizations to provide employability, skills-based training on an ongoing basis. (Don Valley)

- Outreach and engage local employers and private/sector local and regional initiatives (TRIAC, TWIG, TIEDI, Toronto Board of Trade), post-secondary institutions, assessment organizations and professional bodies to promote to local employers the benefits of hiring immigrants; and, encourage them to move beyond the Canadian work experience requirements and develop human resources planning that includes processes specific to the hiring of newcomers. (Don Valley)

- Advocate for increased funding that will improve the availability and accessibility of bridge training programs and help ITIs fulfill upgrading and professional development requirement needed for the local labour market. (Lawrence Heights)

- Work to expand opportunities for paid internships, co-ops, and work placement so that ITIs can *gain Canadian work experience*. (Lawrence Heights)

- Professional regulatory bodies and membership associations must increase opportunities for foreign-trained professionals to upgrade to Ontario standards for professionals through internships, mentoring and job-shadowing opportunities. (York South Weston)

- Create a *Women-Only Employment Project* (outreach employment services targeting women, identification of part-time employment suitable for women with family responsibilities, etc.). (Toronto East, London East)

- Develop a proposal for a *Newcomer Career Ladder* (68) – equivalent to a bridging program. (London East)

- The Connector Program (social and professional networking). (North Bay)

- Develop a pilot mentorship program for internationally trained professionals. (Sarnia Lambton)
- Investigate which professions could accommodate volunteer opportunities for newcomers. (Sarnia Lambton)
- Investigate possibility of providing internships (and employer subsidies) for internationally trained professionals. (Sarnia Lambton)
- Organize immigrant-focused job fairs. (Sarnia Lambton)
- Develop low-cost newcomer strategy focusing on newcomers already in Canada who are not employed in their area of expertise. (Timmins)
- Catalogue and coordinate available employment services. (Toronto East)
- Develop a Career Ladder Proposal (possible sectors: finance, health care, retail). (Toronto East)

Recognition of Foreign Credentials, Education, and Competencies

LIP strategies propose a variety of mechanisms and strategies aimed at better aligning employment opportunities with the real skills and capacities of immigrants despite possible barriers. Employers are encouraged to look and think *beyond the box* to recognize the *real* value of the newcomer in terms of their foreign credentials, prior learning, work experiences, and competencies. In regulated and non-regulated professions, inadequate recognition of international formal credentials and experience is viewed as a major barrier to hiring and advancement for immigrant employees. Yet, employers facing skills shortages incur high costs through lost productivity because failure to recognize competencies results in underemployment and high turnover.

Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Advocate broadening client eligibility requirements of government-funded language classes (LINC, ESL, ESL Literacy) so that they do not exclude residents based on immigration status. (Bathurst Finch Strategy, Lawrence Heights)
- Enhance employment services to be more responsive to the skills, education, and needs of immigrant job seekers. (Bathurst Finch)

- Advocate for the centralization and streamlining of foreign credential recognition services for ITIs by government at the provincial level. (Bathurst Finch Strategy, Lawrence Heights, East Downtown Toronto)
- Participate in inter-LIP and related employment strategies addressing pre-arrival issues and accreditation. (Don Valley)
- Develop a more comprehensive approach to providing information about foreign credential assessment and recognition. (Don Valley)
- Have governments continue to pay for the expenses of credential assessment. The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration needs to inform newcomers prior to their arrival in Canada of the credentialing process, expected costs, time frames for completion, and projected employment availability upon arrival to Canada. (York South Weston Report)
- Facilitate the process for internationally trained professionals to obtain their accreditation and work in their field. (London East, Toronto East)

Improved coordination and collaboration between various agencies at the system level are a priority. At the program level though, a number of strategies note the need to create mentoring opportunities and, many of the references to skills and educational supports highlight training in soft-skills and workplace culture and etiquette. In addition, various sub-groups are noted for needing specific supports such as ITIs, youth, and newcomers with no education. Black Creek

notes the need to train immigrants on their rights as workers and the importance of work-life balance.

Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Strengthen partnerships between settlement and employment service providers in order to address the needs of immigrants with little or no education, training, and/or work experience. (Bathurst-Finch)
- Support innovative community plans that include employment and job skills education, foster small business development, social entrepreneurship, pathways to education and labour markets, training on workers' rights, and the importance of work-life balance for new immigrants. (Black Creek)
- Soft skills training and empowerment agency for employees and newcomers. (Black Creek)
- Develop mentorship programs that combine workplace etiquette with on-the-job training. In collaboration with existing employment programs, incorporate soft skills training to job search programs. (Black Creek)
- Promote the maintenance of occupation-specific mentoring programs that result in positive employment performance measures, such as job attainment and job retention, and/or promotion. (Central South Etobicoke)
- Promote the development of additional generalized (non-occupation specific) mentoring and/or buddy programs to assist those newcomers not meeting eligibility criteria of foreign-trained professional programs (i.e., refugees, and family status and sponsored immigrants), which will result in positive employment measures, such as job attainment and job retention, and/or promotion. (Central South Etobicoke)
- Encourage settlement and employment organizations to provide employability, skills-based training on an ongoing basis. (Central South Etobicoke)

- Work to expand mentorship programs and provide opportunities for ITIs to network and develop professional contacts. (Lawrence Heights)
- Provide youth in Lawrence Heights with more exposure to potential career paths through various means (e.g., career exploration workshops, job shadowing, internships, etc.).
- Strengthen the relationship between the Yorkdale Adult Centre and School and settlement and employment service providers in Lawrence Heights to better connect immigrants to training and vocational classes available in the neighborhood. (Lawrence Heights)
- Strengthen partnerships between settlement and employment service providers in order to address the needs of immigrants with little or no education, training, and/or work experience. (Lawrence Heights)
- Professional regulatory bodies and membership associations must increase opportunities for foreign-trained professionals to upgrade to Ontario standards for professionals through internships, mentoring, and job shadowing opportunities. (York South-Weston)

Objectives Targeting Service Providers, Settlement Organizations, and Governance Institutions

Information Coordination and Dissemination

Because information coordination and dissemination emerged as such a prominent theme in relation to workplace integration, it is necessary to distinguish between efforts that are directed at immigrants and those directed at service providers and governance institutions.

The need for better information exchange and coordination among service providers and community agencies was noted in a number of strategies. A few strategies highlighted the value of a Web portal to enable these efforts.

Beyond service coordination however, it is important to note that better information exchange also plays a role in motivating employers to hire immigrants and in marketing the bottom-line benefits of hiring immigrants (e.g., Guelph Interim Report; Ottawa LIP; Peel Strategy; and Windsor LIP). A few strategies cited the objective of *celebrating success stories* and providing employer supports in the area of information exchange.

Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Develop terms of reference for collaboration among service providers operating in the community outlining what collaboration would look like in Bathurst-Finch. (Bathurst Finch)
- Develop and maintain a current and up-to-date database of community information, services, programs, and events that is accessible to all service providers and community agencies. (Bathurst Finch)
- Hold professional development events for service providers and community agency staff to exchange ideas, receive training, review best practices and keep up-to-date on services and the community. (Bathurst Finch)
- Explore better systems of case management for settlement services, both internally and inter-organizationally, so clients can be better tracked through referral processes and follow-up can be better facilitated. (Bathurst Finch)
- Create a Web portal and a strategy to get employers to the website. (Black Creek)
- Create and maintain a Central South Etobicoke LIP Web portal that provides Labour Market information for the area, Web-based social networking space on topics of interest for newcomers, service providers, and employers, information on the LIP and its partner agencies and, allows users to print information of interest and coordinate activities/events.
- Support the capacity of the Lawrence Heights Inter-Organizational Network (LHION) Employment and Training workgroup to continue as a forum for employment service providers to coordinate, collaborate, and dialogue with each other.
- Create a one-stop shop for employers run by the City. Investigate appetite among employers for *premium service* to assist them with immigrant recruitment, workplace integration and promotion. (Ottawa)
- Investigate the feasibility of developing an online system (similar to the 311 system) to support employers wishing to hire immigrants—a means of advertising services that help employers. (Ottawa)
- Establish a point of first contact where employers can direct questions related to hiring and retaining immigrants and newcomers. (Sarnia Lambton)
- Develop a *Promising Directions/Practices* checklist (e.g., review and revise application forms for unintended bias, and insure immigrant/minority understanding of and access to documentation of credentials and competencies).
- Expand info-sharing among newcomers' employment service providers (listserv or website). (Toronto East)

- Identify success stories and best practices. (East Downtown Toronto)
- Hold periodic forums for stakeholders to recognize contributions of employers who have excelled in hiring newcomers. (East Downtown Toronto)

Institutional Capacity-Building

Institutional capacity-building is a broad category which could include many of the program and service objectives previously listed. As such, LIP strategies rarely used the term *capacity-building* in relation to workplace integration but did identify the need for deeper and systematic change.

Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Co-design and co-manage projects to enhance program efficiency and transparency. Through the Partnership Council, service providers can come together to design and manage projects targeted on specific newcomer needs. For example, applying for funding to co-manage an Employment Bridging or language program. (Eglinton East Kennedy Park)

- Support the capacity of the Lawrence Heights Inter-Organizational Network (LHION) Employment and Training workgroup to continue as a forum for employment service providers to coordinate, collaborate, and dialogue with each other. (Lawrence Heights)

Service Coordination

The need to better coordinate services in relation to the workplace domain emerged most significantly. There is much overlap between service coordination and many of the other areas noted since service coordination is understood to mean the processes involved in achieving valuable outcomes such as language, skills recognition, etc. However, despite this overlap, we chose to highlight service coordination as an outcome measure because of how many of the LIP strategies included this objective. Understood in this way, service coordination often brings forth proposals for various mechanisms or strategies to enable better service provision. Therefore, we have chosen to capture the more procedural understanding of service coordination in the discussion on networks and social capital.

There are a number of interesting mechanisms for service coordination proposed in LIP strategies. These include the following:

- Developing a terms of reference for collaboration among services providers (Bathurst Finch);
- Developing a participatory toolkit for community agencies outlining guidelines and resources to encourage more opportunities for the participation of residents and other community members in the development, delivery, and evaluation of services and programs (Bathurst Finch);
- Creating a regular forum for language service providers to meet, plan, exchange ideas, and collaborate on English language learning opportunities (Bathurst Finch);
- Advocating for the centralization and streamlining of foreign credential recognition services for ITIs by government at the provincial level (Bathurst Finch);
- Creating a Web portal and a strategy to get employers to the website (Black Creek);
- Developing a working relation between TRIEC and local employers to recruit skilled immigrants (Black Creek);
- Establishing an employment-working group (Black Creek);
- Supporting the capacity of the Lawrence Heights Inter-Organizational Network (LHION) Employment and Training workgroup to continue as a forum for employment service providers to coordinate, collaborate, and dialogue with each other (Lawrence Heights);
- Cataloguing and coordinating available employment services (London East);
- Linking CIC and MCI employment services with EO-driven local area employer outreach collaboration (London East);
- Creating a one-stop shop for employers run by the City and investigating the appetite among employers for *premium service* to assist them with immigrant recruitment, workplace integration and promotion (Ottawa); and
- Developing a community network, coordinated by the Timmins LIP, to work with employers, the future settlement agency and others to support employers in creation and communication of employment opportunities for newcomers (Timmins).

Promising Practices Cited:

Using an anti-racism, anti-oppression framework to coordinate efforts towards building healthy and sustainable communities, the LHION works together with the City, community partners, and residents. The LHION is guided by a steering committee, and has six workgroups: (1) Employment and Training; (2) Revitalization; (3) Education; (4) Food Justice; (5) Community Safety; and (6) Youth Outreach Workers (LHION, 2009). The LIP

Partnership Council is currently acting as an ad hoc workgroup of the LHION. (Lawrence Heights)

Create a one-stop shop for employers run by the City. In conjunction with this proposal, investigate the appetite among employers—may be more apt for larger employers—for a *premium service* to assist them with immigrant recruitment, workplace integration, and promotion. (Such a measure has been successful in the United States.) (Ottawa)

Welcoming Workplaces, Workplace Attitudes and, Raising Cultural Awareness in the Workplace

The longer-term concern with workplace integration extends beyond the recruitment and hiring of newcomers and immigrants to their success and wellbeing within the workplace. Welcoming workplaces are those where newcomers feel comfortable and are able to use their skills and capacities to contribute to their own success and that of the workplace. Social integration within the workplace means paying attention to how both employers and immigrants understand and relate to each other. There are many strategies proposed for creating a welcoming workplace and these include training on worker' rights, work-life balance, common civic values, empowerment, anti-discrimination and racist behaviors, and workplace attitudes.

Reflecting the need to offer employer support, there are a number of proposals for building awareness among employers on the benefits of hiring immigrants, strategies outlining how to go about this, and the importance of sharing employer successes in this area.

Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Support innovative community plans that include employment and job skills education, foster small business development and social entrepreneurship, pathways to education and labour markets, training on workers' rights, and the importance of work-life balance for new immigrants. (Black Creek)
- Stronger emphasis on socio-economic integration in the labour market through increased awareness of shared civic values in ethically diverse societies. (Black Creek)
- Soft skills training and empowerment agency for employees and newcomers. (Black Creek)

- Provide soft skills training to employers in the community, including but not limited to diversity, equity lens, and managing across cultures to increase awareness of immigrant issues. (Black Creek)
- Develop workplace workshops and training aimed at eliminating discrimination and racist behaviors. (Black Creek)
- Make employers aware of diversity and its advantages. (Black Creek)
- Ongoing outreach to members of the business community and information sessions regarding the LIPs' findings, Strategic Priorities, Annual Action Plan and the resulting outcomes which include - but are not limited to – engaging employers unfamiliar with the benefits of hiring and retaining newcomers. (Central South Etobicoke)
- Build receptivity in relevant employment sectors. (Don Valley)
- Outreach and engage local employers and private/sector local and regional initiatives (TRIAC, TWIG, TIEDI, Toronto Board of Trade), post-secondary institutions, assessment organizations, and professional bodies to promote to local employers the benefits of hiring immigrants, encourage them to move beyond the Canadian work experience requirements, and develop human resources planning which includes processes specific to the hiring of newcomers. (Don Valley)
- Raise awareness of employers about the talent and potential of the immigrant labour force. (Lawrence Heights Strategy, Bathurst Finch)
- Create and implement programs to help employers understand the multifarious benefits of having a culturally diverse workplace. This training is something that could be easily provided if CIC funded the delivery system. (York South Weston Report)
- The City of Guelph, Wellington County and community agencies need to diversify their workforce and workplaces to reflect the diversity of the community. (Guelph)
- Work collaboratively with the City of Ottawa to influence key industry sectors and make them more aware of the tools available to them and of the need to hire immigrants. (Ottawa)
- The adoption of an *equity lens* by all city institutions, as well as an increase in the representation of minority groups. (Ottawa)
- Support and build on the City of Ottawa's equity/inclusion lens so city institutions universally adopt it; promote the training of city staff in the use of the lens. (Ottawa)
- Extend the use of translation and interpretation services to improve access by immigrants, refugees, and ethno-cultural communities to the city's services. (Ottawa)
- Continue to increase the representation in key city institutions (important services, boards, leadership positions, advisory structures) through active recruitment and

talent management programs and by drawing on the help of settlement service organizations. (Ottawa)

- Teach Canadian business culture (London East) or workplace orientation and training. (East Downtown Toronto)
- Identify success stories and best practices. (East Downtown Toronto)
- Hold periodic forums for stakeholders to recognize contributions of employers who have excelled in hiring newcomers. (East Downtown Toronto)
- Clarify misconceptions and myths about immigrant employment (including hiring expert ambassadors to conduct outreach strategies for employers). (Ottawa)
- Hold events to celebrate employer champions. (Sarnia Lambton)
- Specific strategies to promote the benefits of hiring immigrants to small and medium enterprises (SME).
- Engage employers to educate and raise their awareness on the benefits of hiring newcomers. (East Downtown Toronto)

Promising Practices Cited:

Using an anti-racism and anti-oppression framework to coordinate efforts towards building healthy and sustainable communities, the LHION works together with the City, community partners, and residents. The LHION is guided by a steering committee and has six workgroups: (1) Employment and Training; (2) Revitalization; (3) Education; (4) Food Justice; (5) Community Safety; and (6) Youth Outreach Workers (LHION, 2009). The LIP Partnership Council is currently acting as an ad hoc workgroup of the LHION. (Lawrence Heights)

2. Activities Required to Support Workplace Integration Objectives

The following supporting activities or resources represent the *enabling factors or conditions* for supporting workplace integration objectives.

Enabling Activities and Conditions
- Access Supports
- Advocacy
- Better Indicators and Outcome Measures
- Funding
- Media Campaign

- Networks and Social Capital
- More Research, Planning, or Needs Assessment Needed

Access Supports

Supports are needed to increase the ability of immigrants and newcomers to access programs and services. Childcare and transportation are the two most commonly cited access supports needed.

Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Increase and provide childcare supports. (Bathurst Finch Strategy, Northwest Scarborough, Lawrence Heights)
- Provide transportation support (TTC Tokens) for clients accessing employment services. (Bathurst Finch Strategy, Lawrence Heights,)
- Advocate for family-based English classes for parents/caregivers that allow their children to remain with them during the lessons. (Lawrence Heights)
- Increase access and reduce wait times for immigrants seeking to obtain specialized, work-related language training. (Ottawa)
- Create better access to diversity training for businesses and non-profit organizations. (Sarnia Lambton)
- Create a *Women-Only Employment Project* (outreach employment services targeting women, identification of part-time employment suitable for women with family responsibilities, etc.). (Toronto East)
- Intensive support for newcomers seeking employment, including detailed interview preparation. (Peel)
- Support accreditation for newcomers by providing access to the kinds of financial supports available to other students (e.g., OSAP), thus enabling newcomers to manage the time and expense required for accreditation. (Peel)
- Advocate for broader client eligibility requirements of government-funded LINC, ESL, and ESL Literacy classes so that they do not exclude residents based on immigration status. (Lawrence Heights)

Advocacy

Advocacy was cited in relation to the need for broadening client eligibility requirements as well as foreign credential recognition and assessment. While the term advocacy was not commonly used in LIP strategies, the advocacy role is no doubt an important one for LIP as they continue to build and leverage their partnerships and provide communities with new opportunities to access upper-level governance and to use these opportunities for advocacy. The importance of leveraging these relationships emerges more strongly in the discussion that follows on networks and social capital. Though it may be difficult to separate advocacy from leveraging, we feel it is important to emphasize the multi-level nature of LIP relationships.

Specific examples as noted in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Advocate broadening client eligibility requirements of government-funded language classes (LINC, ESL, ESL Literacy) so that they do not exclude residents based on immigration status. (Bathurst Finch)
- Advocate for the centralization and streamlining of foreign credential recognition services for ITIs by government at the provincial level. (Lawrence Heights)
- Advocate for broader client eligibility requirements of government-funded LINC, ESL, and ESL Literacy classes so that they do not exclude residents based on immigration status. (Lawrence Heights)
- Governments need to continue to pay for the expenses of credential assessment. The Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration needs to inform newcomers prior to their arrival in Canada of the credentialing process, expected costs, time frames for completion, and projected employment availability upon arrival to Canada. (York South Weston Report)
- Advocate on behalf of newcomers for recognition of international professional and academic qualifications. (East Downtown Toronto)

Better Indicators and Outcome Measures

While there were few specific references to the need for better indicators and outcome measures in the LIP reports, there is a recurrent message that suggests frustration with how outcomes are currently measured and the need for research. We view this as an emerging and significant need and therefore have included reference to it here.

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Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Advocate to funders to include reporting not just on quantitative outcomes (e.g., number of clients served, quotas), but also qualitative outcomes (e.g., strengthened partnerships, resources shared, in-kind contributions, etc.) in their evaluation frameworks. (Bathurst Finch Strategy)

Funding

Although there was a high level of support for the recommendations, service providers voiced some qualifying statements and concerns about the availability of long-term funding; the confidentiality of clients' data; and consistency and accountability amongst participating agencies. Regarding funding, service providers were concerned about the *cost implication in re-designing materials, policies and staff re-training,* and any future changes in funding given the economic climate. (York South Weston Report)

LIP strategies noted the need for funding as well as the concern over not having long-term funding support. This is related to the aforementioned point concerning observable and measurable inputs and outcomes. However, there was also recognition in a number of strategies of the increased ability to leverage and advocate for funding through LIP processes.

Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Seek out collaborative funding for permanent community animators to help agencies reach out, inform, and recruit residents. (Bathurst Finch)
- Advocate for increased funding that will increase the availability and accessibility of bridge-training programs and help ITIs fulfill upgrading and professional development requirements needed for the local labour market. (Bathurst Finch, Lawrence Heights)
- Advocate for funders to include in their evaluation frameworks reporting not just on quantitative outcomes (e.g., number of clients served, quotas), but also qualitative outcomes (e.g., strengthened partnerships, resources shared, in-kind contributions, etc.). (Bathurst Finch)
- Help build relationships and trust among service providers by co-designing and co-managing projects to enhance program efficiency and transparency. Through the

Partnership Council, service providers can come together to design and manage projects targeted on specific newcomer needs. For example, this may include applying for funding to co-manage an employment-bridging program or language program. (Eglinton East Kennedy Park)

- Create and implement programs to help employers understand the multifarious benefits of having a culturally diverse workplace. This training is something that could be easily provided if CIC funded the delivery system. (South Weston Report)

Media Campaign

The use of media is increasingly important to public awareness building, advocacy, and increasing access. Campaigns can be targeted at increasing the awareness of services as well as the benefits of immigration and diversity. While the majority of LIP strategies did not note the use of a media campaign, this absence may be partly explained by the fact that a media campaign generally relates to particular program objectives. A large number of LIP Strategies included particular program and service objectives, but did not include the processes involved with achieving these objectives.

Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Collaborative campaign to increase employer use of prescreening and recruitment services offered by SPO. (West Downtown Toronto)
- Establish a Cross-Council Sub-Group to conduct an employer awareness campaign to foster and promote a reduction in employer reliance on *Canadian experience* as a hiring requirement. (West Downtown Toronto)
- Address receptivity of host community with both targeted and broad-based campaigns by business leaders who act as champions for newcomer employment. (Peel)

Networks and Social Capital

The importance of broadening or deepening various types of networks emerged as one of the most significant themes in our analysis of LIP strategies. Social resources theory is a progressive model that focuses on the resources embedded within a social network which produce upward mobility (Lin, Ensel & Vaughn, 1981). Social networks allow an individual access to greater information through social bridges and ties to other individuals. Thus, a social network is defined as a pattern of social ties or relationships that link an individual to

a defined group, network or other individuals (Siebert, Kramer, & Linden, 2001). Both the information and the resources available within the social network have the potential to increase individual performance, empowerment and motivation (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Spreitzer, 1996).

It is perhaps useful to understand this broad category as consisting of four different types of networks. These include networks among immigrants and newcomers; networks among service providers, employer organizations, and settlement agencies; networks between immigrants and employers; and networks between governance institutions including local education and health institutions. Further information on each of these social networks follows.

Networks and Social Capital Among Immigrants

Two themes emerge strongly when considering the LIP proposals in relation to immigrant networks and the workplace integration domain. Firstly, it is the use of recreation and leisure programs for learning language, cultural, and developing professional contacts. Secondly, that these programs are targeted to particular subgroups. There are many references in LIP strategies of the need to better coordinate the use and availability of public spaces in order to enable these social and informal learning opportunities.

Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Provide recreation and leisure programs for newcomer youth which integrate English language learning and conversation practice after school and during the summer. (Bathurst Finch)
- Provide day programs for newcomer seniors that integrate English language learning and conversation practice with recreational and leisure activities. (Bathurst Finch)
- Work to expand mentorship programs and other opportunities for internationally trained individuals (ITI) to network and develop professional contacts. (Bathurst Finch) (Lawrence Heights)

Networks and Social Capital between SPO's and Agencies

There is some overlap between this theme and that of *service coordination* but it is important to distinguish between the outcome of *service coordination* and the *processes*

required for achievement. Building networks and social capital between SPO's and Agencies relates to the processes that are used for a number of outcomes—only one of which may be service coordination. Outcomes could also include information coordination, employment bridging opportunities, etc. Different combinations of partnerships lead to different possibilities and the ideas are numerous, as outlined following. The credibility and legitimacy that Local Immigration Partnerships enjoy have undoubtedly afforded them a greater ability to forge a broader set of partnerships and, with this, much greater capacity for leveraging and finding commonalities.

Importantly, partnership building may occur with no clear outcome planned but rather, on the hope that new synergies and leveraging opportunities might translate into new opportunities or ways of doing things. A number of proposals describe this more open-ended objective.

Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Explore better systems of case management for settlement services, both internally and inter-organizationally, so clients can be better tracked through referral processes and follow-up can be better facilitated. (Bathurst Finch)
- Create a regular forum for language service providers to meet, plan, exchange ideas, and collaborate on English language learning opportunities. (Bathurst Finch)
- Increase engagement with the private sector, including employers, unions, regulatory bodies, and professional associations. (Bathurst Finch)
- Strengthen partnerships between settlement and employment service providers in order to address the needs of immigrants with little or no education, training, and/or work experience. (Bathurst Finch) (Lawrence Heights)
- Build strategic partnerships with community-based organizations that service newcomers to provide effective employment services and identify opportunities to collaborate. (Black Creek)
- Create and maintain a Central South Etobicoke LIP Web portal that provides Labour Market information for the area; Web-based social networking space for topics of interest for newcomers, service providers, and employers; information on the LIP and its partner agencies; and the ability for users to print information of interest and coordinate activities/events. (Central South Etobicoke)
- Partner with appropriate employment-focused networks and agencies in order to provide their members with research findings, newcomer and employer priorities, and

to determine points of collaboration between the two entities, specifically on the need for the following additional programs/enhancements: mentoring programs that allow for additional leadership/volunteer opportunities, employer/job development programs that meet the hiring needs of high GTA demand and Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) businesses, and identification, training and documentation of soft skills required for employment. (Central South Etobicoke)

- Support and encourage additional partnerships between agencies that provide employment and ESL/LINC language training for newcomers. (Central South Etobicoke)
- Establish an employment working group. (Central South Etobicoke)
- Support the capacity of the Lawrence Heights Inter-Organizational Network (LHION) Employment and Training workgroup to continue as a forum for employment service providers to coordinate, collaborate, and dialogue with each other. (Lawrence Heights)
- Work in collaboration with Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS) and City of Toronto Social Development to ensure the Lawrence Heights Employment Plan addresses the vocational needs of immigrants. (Lawrence Heights)
- Strengthen relationships between the Yorkdale Adult Centre and School and settlement and employment service providers in Lawrence Heights to better inform immigrants of training and vocational classes available in the neighborhood. (Lawrence Heights)
- Develop better connections between service providers and those employing newcomers so that the skills learned are relevant to the job and enable newcomers to be employed more quickly. (York South Weston Report)
- The Connector Program (social and professional networking). (North Bay)
- Organize monthly networking meetings for immigrants and employers. (Sarnia Lambton)
- Create links to informal employment supports through faith groups and cultural groups; and provide information and access to referrals and encourage employers in these groups to play an increased role in promoting and facilitating newcomer employment. (Peel)
- Link employment programs to employers to support job readiness efforts that relate to real jobs, and help newcomers gain information about the real employment context for available jobs. (Peel)
- Explore partnerships between employers and community colleges to develop *boot camp* language programs focused on workplace terminology for job-ready newcomers. (North Bay)

- Organize networking/support groups for employers. (Sarnia Lambton)
- Develop community networks, coordinated by the Timmins LIP, to work with employers, the future settlement agency, and others to support employers in creation and communication of employment opportunities for newcomers. (Timmins)
- Strengthen the link among language assessment, employment assessment, and foreign credential assessment by improving referrals and referral tools for service providers in East Toronto.
- Employment agencies share and coordinate schedule of workshops and speakers. (Toronto East)
- Participate in ongoing communication and consultation with local and regional labour market networks. (East Downtown Toronto)

Networks and Social Capital between Immigrants and Employers

Interestingly, there were few references in LIP strategies to networks between employers and immigrants. This is one relationship that needs attention but, it is likely that employers are not *immigrant ready* and consequently, settlement and employment agencies view themselves as the essential intermediary. The use of job fairs and other opportunities to develop professional contacts was rarely noted. However, to enable internationally trained individuals (ITIs) to network and develop professional contacts, the Bathurst Finch Strategy proposes expanding mentorship programs and other opportunities.

Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Work to expand mentorship programs and other opportunities for internationally trained individuals (ITIs) to network and develop professional contacts. (Bathurst Finch)
- Strengthen partnerships between settlement and employment service providers in order to address the needs of immigrants with little or no education, training, and/or work experience. (Bathurst Finch)
- Service providers and residents to coordinate, collaborate, and discuss service planning and delivery for Lawrence Heights. (Lawrence Heights)

Various LIP Strategies also noted the importance of developing or deepening networks among various public institutions such as upper levels of government and local schools, libraries, and health agencies.

Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Develop a terms of reference for collaboration among services providers operating in the community which sets out what collaboration would look like in Bathurst-Finch.
- Develop partnerships with schools, libraries, medical clinics, and other community institutions to connect and inform hard-to-reach residents about community services. (Bathurst Finch)
- Communicate with grassroots organizations, faith-based groups, and other immigrant social networks to inform and direct residents to relevant community services and programs. (Bathurst Finch)
- Support the capacity of the Lawrence Heights Inter-Organizational Network (LHION) Employment and Training workgroup to continue as a forum for employment service providers to coordinate, collaborate, and dialogue with each other. (Lawrence Heights)
- Work in collaboration with Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS) and City of Toronto Social Development to ensure the Lawrence Heights Employment Plan addresses the vocational needs of immigrants. (Lawrence Heights)
- Create a national program supporting the integration of professionals into their profession. The program could incorporate incentives (training for credentials) for foreign-trained professionals to work in high need areas of the country. (York South Weston Report)
- Link CIC and MCI employment services with EO-driven local area employer outreach collaboration. (London East)

More Research, Planning, or Needs Assessment Needed

LIP Strategies commonly noted the need for continual research, planning, and fine-tuning even after their original planning phase was completed. Strategies illustrated the need to see these planning processes as fluid and iterative. As needs and gaps emerged in discussions, there arose a need to research and analyze further. The capacity to carry out

these research and planning needs is challenged by funding models that do not recognize the iterative nature of these community planning processes.

Research and planning was noted in relation to a broad range of objectives.

Specific examples in the Strategies are outlined as follows.

- Conduct regular needs assessments in Bathurst-Finch to determine the needs and wants of the community. (Bathurst Finch)
- Explore the capacity and skills of English language teachers to provide different skill levels of English lessons, specialized classes (e.g., professional writing, grammar), and occupation-specific language training. (Bathurst Finch)
- Conduct research about the labour force (skills, education, experience, career goals) living in Bathurst-Finch.
- Explore the challenges the private sector has in hiring and retaining immigrants and work to make employment services more responsive to their needs. (Bathurst Finch)
- Identify private sector *champions* or best practices in immigrant mentoring, training, and/or hiring. (Bathurst Finch)
- Explore promising practices in motivating employers to hire specific segments of the labour force (i.e., youth, newcomers, new graduates, etc.). (Bathurst Finch)
- Partner with appropriate employment-focused networks and agencies in order to provide their members with research findings, newcomer and employer priorities, and determine points of collaboration between the two entities, specifically on the need for the following additional programs/enhancements: mentoring programs that allow for additional leadership/volunteer opportunities; employer/job development programs that meet the hiring needs of high GTA demand and Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) businesses; and, identification, training and documentation of soft skills required for employment. (Central South Etobicoke)
- Encourage the collection of data by agencies to determine the demand for employment/settlement workshops held during non-traditional business hours and, promote increased flexibility in programmatic scheduling. (Central South Etobicoke)
- Review existing research, public education, employment, and labour market data. (Don Valley)
- Work in partnership with TESS and other key actors to collect data about talent, skills, experience, and potential of the immigrant labour force living in Lawrence Heights. (Lawrence Heights)

- Explore the challenges employers face related to hiring and retaining immigrants and work to make employment services more responsive to their needs. (Lawrence Heights)
- Identify employer *champions* or best practices in immigrant mentoring, training, and/or hiring. (Lawrence Heights)
- Research promising practices in motivating employers to hire specific segments of the labour force (i.e., youth, newcomers, new graduates, women, etc.). (Lawrence Heights)
- Conduct a proper survey of how newcomers participate in the informal employment sector. (London East)
- Facilitate the identification of labour needs. (North Bay)
- Map the *pathways* for accessing particular occupations in key sectors (clustered according to trade, skill sets, or professional aspirations). (Ottawa)
- Map services already offered and coordinate demands on employers. (Ottawa)
- Investigate the feasibility of developing an online system (similar to the 311 system) to support employers wishing to hire immigrants (a means of advertising services that help employers). (Ottawa)
- Identify labour market skills demand. (Thunder Bay)
- Identify career opportunities that could attract immigrants; ensure the information is available and accessible and can also be used at trade shows and job fairs. (Thunder Bay)
- Develop a common training plan for service providers related to employer needs and expectations.
- Investigate whether the *Manitoba model*, which was enormously successful in attracting immigrants, can be emulated by the City of Ottawa. Ottawa will collaborate with the *Welcoming Communities Initiative* (the research initiative affiliated with OLIP), with representatives from London, Hamilton, and North Bay, and with other agencies to evaluate the idea and develop a follow-up plan. (3)

Promising Practices Cited:
With the objective of improving the city's capacity to attract and retain newcomers, Ottawa is identified as a partner of the LIP. In addition, the recruitment efforts of Manitoba are highlighted as best practices.

Investigate whether the *Manitoba model*, which showed enormous success in attracting immigrants, can be emulated by the City of Ottawa. Ottawa will collaborate with the *WCI*

(the research initiative affiliated with OLIP), with representatives from London, Hamilton, and North Bay, and with other agencies to evaluate the idea and develop a follow-up plan.

The LIPs identified many suggestions relating to employment, but the primary focus is on pre-employment and on hiring activities. To better study good practices useful to LIPs as they move forward into implementation, it is necessary to shift the focus from pre-employment and hiring to post-employment strategies and outcomes. Therefore, Phase II will focus on post-employment good practices that could be implemented via the LIPs.

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PROMISING PRACTICES IN THE LITERATURE

The intent of this section was to present an analysis of the literature identifying best practices reflected in the LIP reports. Given the number of topics and the wide range of expertise required, the task of completing the literature review is daunting and impossible in the time available. Members of the Workplace Integration Domain (WID) provided assistance with identification of key literature. Here we organize the literature found in the WID domain areas in order to simplify subsequent analysis of identifying promising practices in Stage 2 of the Promising Practices Project.

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In-depth Analysis of LIP Priorities

In-depth Analysis of LIP Priorities

LIP priorities were determined in two ways. First, the WCI domain leaders went through the LIP strategic plans that were available in the fall of 2011 and, for their domain and closely related areas, identified commonalities or concentrations where a consensus existed across the LIPs regarding desirable initiatives (reflecting some combination of need, service gaps, emerging program opportunities and potentialities). Five top priorities were determined for each domain and descriptions of these areas of focus were produced. Second, the 45 current LIPs in Ontario were asked to complete a survey in which they rated each of these descriptions in terms of how much they described a priority for their specific LIP. Ratings were made on 7 point scales ranging from 1 = not at all a priority to 7 = extremely high priority. Overall, there was considerable consensus on the importance of the selected priorities as shown below.

Newcomer Attraction, Retention and Business Development

The Attraction and Recruitment of Workers and Entrepreneurs domain is concerned with the attraction and recruitment of skilled workers, entrepreneurs, students and other migrants by federal, provincial, and municipal authorities working with local organizations. The domain is especially interested in new policy designs, processing methods and efforts by municipalities and communities to re-brand themselves in order to increase their appeal to migrants.

Priorities from the Available LIP Strategic Plans (27 plans):

Newcomer attraction
A major priority for LIPS outside Toronto was to develop strategies to attract newcomers to their communities. Few of the LIPS developed precise action plans to realize this objective, apart from emphasizing enhanced overall receptivity. The lack of precise action plans was attributed to the fact that the LIPs did not have direct access to the federal and provincial policy levers responsible for recruitment and selection; it may also have resulted from a lack of information about how immigrants make their initial settlement decision. Several LIPs cited the need to obtain a better understanding of the role played by perceptions of job availability, prior experience or residence in Canada, the existence of family and friendship ties, and the presence of co-ethnics or co-religionists. Among the ideas that were advanced was to seek the help of existing newcomer communities for strategic attraction initiatives.

Branding strategies
Related to Priority 1, a number of LIPS identified the need to develop 'branding' strategies to make newcomers more aware of the opportunities their communities had to offer. Two different 'targets' were identified: The first was a strategy targeting primary migrants coming to Canada from abroad; the second was a strategy aimed at

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secondary migrants who were already in Canada, notably Toronto and its suburbs, but dissatisfied with their employment prospects, commuting times, housing, congestion and so forth.

Mentoring programs and internships
The LIPS identified the need to promote newcomer retention through the use of local bridging programs (mentoring and internships) aimed at helping internationally trained professionals build networks and develop the soft skills required for successful labour market integration in second and third tier centres. The LIPs recognized that many recently arrived newcomers are unable to make full use of their educational credentials, occupational training and on-the-job experience.

Enhanced language training programs
LIPs identified the need for specialized, occupationally-specific, language training programs in their communities in order to facilitate newcomer recruitment and retention. Though federally selected skilled workers must demonstrate a basic competency in English or French, the spouses of selected workers, members of the family class and refugees are not required to speak either official language.   These groups form an important part of newcomer flows to smaller cities and towns. Being able to communicate in either English or French is essential for both economic and social reasons, especially in smaller centres without the presence of a co-ethnic community.

Employment and business information services
LIPs identified the need for better information about the services that are available in smaller centres to help newcomers enter the labour market or to start their own business. This was seen as a priority linked to newcomer recruitment and retention. The LIPs noted that immigrants are more likely to be self-employed than non-immigrants and that self-employment in the new economy was an important source of job creation in Canada.

Ratings by the LIPs (all 45 LIPs were surveyed; 24 provided ratings): 1- 7 scale where 1 = not at all a priority and 7 = extremely high priority

Priority	Mean Rating 1-7 scale
1. Newcomer Attraction	4.42
2. Branding Strategies	4.74
3. Mentoring Program and Internships	6.21
4. Enhanced Language Training	6.04

Programs	
5. Employment and Business Information Services	5.79

Children and Youth

The Children and Youth domain focus on the social and psycho-social conditions that shape the experiences of immigrant and minority children and youth; relations between immigrant and minority children/youth and long-settled non-minority children/youth; and discriminatory barriers that impede the transition from school to work for immigrant youth. The domain is also concerned with measures that promote voluntary sector participation and remove the barriers affecting particular youth groups.

Priorities from the Available LIP Strategic Plans (27 plans):

Improving information provided to newcomer parents about their children's educational opportunities and experiences
A LIP priority is to improve parental engagement and awareness of immigrant children and youth's educational needs and experiences in order to improve educational outcomes and transitions within the education system and to work. Strategies to achieve this include outreach coordinators, translation to facilitate teacher communication, and information pamphlets for immigrant parents about the Ontario education system and their children's educational options.

Improving educational services for immigrant children and youth
A second LIP priority is to improve educational services for immigrant children and youth, particularly ESL courses. In addition to ESL programs, other needs and gaps that are mentioned in the LIP reports include promoting high school completion, providing health and sex education, delivering educational services to students with learning disabilities, and integrating work language instruction into ESL classes.

Social integration through sports, recreation, and other social activities conducted by mainstream organizations
After education, LIP reports highlight the importance of sports, recreation, and other social activities as a priority for newcomer children and youth. The majority of reports perceive social activities, as well as sports and recreation, as priorities linked to health, mental health, and social integration. LIPs would like to see more work done to increase the accessibility of such activities for newcomer children and youth through cost reductions, culturally sensitive programming, and a general improvement of mainstream sports and recreation programs, as well as other social activities (involving local organizations, such as local soccer leagues and YMCAs).

Social integration through sports, recreation, and other social activities specifically designed for newcomer children and youth
The LIPs also suggest that it is important to improve social, sport, and recreation programs specifically designed for newcomer youth and children to enhance their civic, economic, and social participation and acculturation. This priority focuses on strategies

and new programs that are designed specifically for newcomer youth and children (rather than alterations to mainstream sports and activities as described above).

Employment readiness
Some LIPs identified youth employment as a significant issue. Of particular importance were issues related to labour market readiness and the transition from school to the workplace.

Ratings by the LIPs (all 45 LIPs were surveyed; 24 provided ratings): 1- 7 scale where 1 = not at all a priority and 7 = extremely high priority

Priority	Mean Rating 1-7 scale
1. Improving Information Provided to Newcomer Parents about their Children's Educational Opportunities and Experiences	4.67
2. Improving Educational Services for Immigrant Children and Youth	4.54
3. Social Integration through Sports, Recreation, and Other Social Activities Conducted by Mainstream Organizations	4.96
4. Social Integration through Sports, Recreation, and Other Social Activities Specifically Designed for Newcomer Children and Youth	4.17
5. Employment Readiness	4.13

Community Civic Resources

The Community Civic Resources and Initiatives domain focuses on the policies and activities of municipal governments, civil society actors, and employer associations that contribute to the formation of welcoming communities. The domain is also interested in how federal and provincial policies support and interact with local institutions and promote innovation.

Priorities from the Available LIP Strategic Plans (27 plans):

Immigrant seniors

Emerging demographic and geographical realities have pushed the "seniors" lens to the forefront of the policy agenda. Seniors often lack awareness of services and events as a result of their lower rates of technological connectedness. In addition, weaker links with families and relative distance from service centres are additional factors that can lead to loneliness, isolation and abuse for seniors. These concerns emerge in LIP strategies, which outline numerous innovations for addressing senior needs, most commonly cited in relation to problems of senior isolation and poverty. Specific programs cited in LIP strategies relate to transportation and language supports, reducing barriers via grants, fee reductions and informational awareness, as well as opportunities for socialization and instilling a deeper sense of belonging to their community.

Immigrant women

Many of the LIP plans include mention of the particular needs of immigrant women – including language classes and social and cultural activities for immigrant women who are not working outside the home. Child care is another area often mentioned in terms of needed increases in affordable services. Better access to information about specific services for immigrant women is also mentioned. Another emerging area of interest is that of nutrition and the availability of culturally relevant affordable food for immigrant families. One new area of service needs relates to recent data that suggest that for recent immigrants, the former gap in educational attainment between men and women has now largely disappeared and yet salary gaps between immigrant women and Canadian-born women, and between immigrant men and immigrant women, have not lessened. This would suggest new service needs for highly educated immigrant women in order to attain suitable employment.

Public transportation

Various LIP Plans referenced the need for better and more accessible public transportation, and noted various strategies for addressing these objectives, including better needs assessment, fee supports (or reductions), service coordination, and advocacy across upper levels of government for improvements to services. There is a rising need to consider issues of accessibility as processes of gentrification continue to push lower-income residents, including large numbers of recent immigrant families, out

of city centres. Given the central role that public transportation plays in allowing access, the issue has emerged as a central social justice issue in many cities and communities.

Sport as a focus for celebration

A number of LIP plans underline the importance of fostering integrative exchanges and creating opportunities to celebrate culture and increasing community diversity, including newcomer contributions. To operationalize these ideas, many LIPs placed importance on how public space is used and, more particularly, on the need to create more inclusive public spaces in communities. LIP strategies also emphasized the importance of sports and recreation as a mechanism for social and cultural integration, as well as diversity and cultural awareness training. The potential for sports to serve as an integrative mechanism was noted most frequently in reference to youth wellbeing and integration. This said, celebrations around sport can encompass the full community and offer a mechanism for producing wider community support and awareness. The role of municipalities and civic institutions vary here from providing funding or space through partnerships and the direct provision of services.

Housing

Communities are increasingly concerned with housing matters as demographic and geographic changes intertwine to create various housing pressures, especially in city cores. Public housing projects have increasingly diverse populations and have responded to this by offering more information in multiple languages in order to reduce barriers to accessing information on the part of recent immigrant populations. Processes of gentrification and intensification have increased the need to support adequate and affordable housing choices near employment and services. Municipalities and civic institutions can play a central role in service coordination and information dissemination.

Ratings by the LIPs (all 45 LIPs were surveyed; 24 provided ratings): 1- 7 scale where 1 = not at all a priority and 7 = extremely high priority

Priority	Mean Rating 1-7 scale
1. Immigrant Seniors	4.46
2. Immigrant Women	4.75
3. Public Transportation	5.17
4. Sport as a Focus for Celebration	4.38
5. French Language Services *	3.38*

* The low rating accorded this priority suggested that it should be replaced. Housing Services were mentioned as an alternative priority by many of the LIPs and thus Housing Services was substituted for French Language Services.

Education and Education Policy

The Education and Education Policy domain focuses on elementary, secondary, and postsecondary education. The domain is concerned with: assessing diversity policies that serve the needs of newcomer students and teachers in educational settings; examining newcomer students' educational experiences, aspirations and outcomes; understanding the post-secondary choices of immigrant and minority students; and tracking the educational and practice experiences of foreign-trained teachers.

Priorities from the Available LIP Strategic Plans (27 plans):

English language training
Improving second language learning services were a top education priority amongst the LIPs. Specifically, the LIPs identified as an educational priority the provision of services that enhance language proficiency by tailoring programming for adults to meet employment and daily living needs, They also identified as a priority the tailoring of programming for students to provide language proficiency in common English and academic English. Removing barriers and diversifying course options for English language opportunities could be managed through partnerships with community agencies. Common barriers identified within the LIP reports included providing childcare for caregivers, diversifying class scheduling, and providing family-based and informal class settings.

Fostering cultural competence in schools
Educational practices that foster high levels of cultural competence were identified as a top priority by many of the LIPs. Specifically, a pressing need identified by the LIPs was changing the education system through curriculum and policy initiatives to promote cultural competence at all levels of schooling (elementary, secondary, and postsecondary). Proposals for implementation included developing programs or initiatives that recognize the value of immigrant skills; incorporating diversity, multiculturalism, human rights, and inclusion in the curriculum; implementing education policies related to rights and inclusion; and hiring more minority teachers. It was stressed that students need educational opportunities to develop and refine cultural competence skills and that schools need to create supportive environments for all students in order to enhance their cultural competence.

Improving educational supports and coordination of educational services for newcomers
Many of the LIP reports identified the need for more coordination of educational supports and programming for immigrant and racialized youth. Specifically, they identified the need to provide newcomer families with more information about the education system and available programming, as well as removing systemic barriers to the students' academic and social success. Suggestions to address these needs included

creating peer-support mentorship programs; introducing outreach initiatives to provide families with more information about educational options; and implementing culturally-sensitive assessments.

Improving teacher training

Some of the LIPs indicated that additional teacher training was a priority. These LIPs asserted that teachers need more professional development on understanding multiculturalism within the classroom and on their role in promoting cultural competency. The various LIP reports stressed the importance of addressing teacher training at multiple levels by providing diversity training for teacher candidates, in-service diversity training for teachers, and improved educational and practice experiences for foreign-trained and racialized teacher candidates. Strategies proposed for this priority focused on developing partnerships with school boards in order to develop and implement specialized in-service training for teachers; integrating mandatory diversity training into Faculties of Education for teacher candidates; partnering with school boards and Faculties of Education to provide enhanced training opportunities for foreign-trained and racialized teacher candidates; and making diversity training a mandatory requirement teachers must possess or fulfill when hired.

French language training

The provision of services that enhance French language proficiency was identified as a priority by several LIPs. This priority tended to be expressed as a need for adult education that would involve tailored programming to meet employment and daily living needs. Within this priority area, it was suggested that improving access to these services would require enhancing availability as well as the harmonizing of federal and provincial programming to provide a complementary and mutually supportive system of programming. Increasing newcomer awareness of language training options and ensuring agencies are bilingual were identified as additional needs.

Ratings by the LIPs (all 45 LIPs were surveyed; 24 provided ratings): 1- 7 scale where 1 = not at all a priority and 7 = extremely high priority

Priority	Mean Rating 1-7 scale
1. English Language Training	5.91
2. Fostering Cultural Competence in Schools	4.87
3. Improving Educational Supports and Coordination of Educational Services for Newcomers	4.95

| 4. Improving Teacher Training | 4.35 |
| 5. French Language Training | 2.96 |

Health and Healthcare

The Health and Healthcare domain focuses on understanding how immigrant and minority health needs, including mental health and specific needs such as reproductive health, are met. The domain is interested in barriers to care and in innovative collaborative approaches between the formal health sector and immigrant serving agencies. The domain is also concerned with integrating internationally educated health professionals into the Canadian health system.

Priorities from the Available LIP Strategic Plans (27 plans):

Reducing the cost of health care
Despite the general availability of OHIP coverage and 'free' healthcare, the cost of health-related services is often a barrier. For example, the three month waiting period for OHIP coverage, coverage issues with the Interim Federal Health Program (for refugees), and the high cost of personal health insurance create barriers to care. In addition, basic dental and eye care is not covered by OHIP. Given cost issues, LIPs called for ways to reduce these costs by i) having settlement workers, health care, and social workers identify health providers or clinics willing to provide pro bono (or reduced-cost) urgent care and emergency services to newcomers on a case-by-case basis during the three month waiting period for OHIP; and (ii) eliminating the 3 month waiting period of OHIP.

Improving access to care by removing systemic barriers to care, including language barriers, and promoting cultural competency
A lack of either English or French language ability, along with cultural competency issues, were frequently cited as barriers to care. LIPs identified a need to promote the understanding of cultural differences and to enhance the ability and cultural competency of all healthcare providers to respond to the diverse health needs of newcomers through outreach/training. In addition, interpreters with medical training should be available in hospitals, health care clinics and social service agencies. LIPs also called for increased access to health care for women and refugee claimants along with culturally sensitive information in various languages and the use of simplified language in informational brochures.

Improving mental health services
LIPs identified a critical need for improved access by newcomers to a range of mental health services. Newcomers experience problems as a result of the stress of moving to a new country, isolation, and trauma associated with past torture and abuse, especially refugees. Services could be improved by (i) educating mental health service providers about newcomer needs; (ii) improving collaboration between settlement and ethnocultural organizations and health care providers in order to help refugees access mental health and ancillary health services; (iii) increasing the availability of short-term

crisis counselling, long-term mental health supports and programming to promote the mental health of newcomers; (iv) building the capacity of settlement workers to provide information and referrals for their clients; (v) partnering with residents and grassroots groups to develop culturally competent and community-based orientation and information material on mental and emotional health; and (vi) providing funding to increase the number of trauma counselors trained to work with survivors of war-related trauma.

Conducting research on the makeup of immigrant populations in each municipality (size, origins, religious affiliation, needs) and the efficacy of programs geared to immigrants
Many LIPs identified the importance of research to better understand the demographics and health of local immigrant populations and how these relate to health care needs. The LIPs were particularly concerns with sub-groups that experience greater health risks, such as refugees, as well as sub-groups that intersect, for example, immigrant seniors with low-income. Further research would enable communities to understand the ways in which multiple factors (e.g. senior and low income and immigrant) work together to influence health, and what types of interventions and delivery mechanisms might prove effective.

Enhancing health literacy among immigrants and refugees in regard to primary care, disease prevention, health protection (e.g. vaccination and immunization) and promotion (e.g. exercise, healthy food), and navigation of the health care system
LIPS identified the communication of information about the organization of the health system and how different services can be accessed as a priority.   Improved health literacy will require both passive (written material) and active (outreach) communications, adapted to the understanding of clients.

Ratings by the LIPs (all 45 LIPs were surveyed; 24 provided ratings): 1- 7 scale where 1 = not at all a priority and 7 = extremely high priority

Priority	Mean Rating 1-7 scale
1. Reducing the Cost of Health Care	5.00
2. Improving Access to Care by Removing Systemic Barriers to Care, including Language Barriers, and Promoting Cultural Competency	5.35
3. Improving Mental Health	5.61

Services	
4. Conducting Research on the Makeup of Immigrant Populations in Each Municipality (Size, Origins, Religious Affiliation, Needs) and the Efficacy of Programs Geared to Immigrants	4.91
5. Enhancing Health Literacy among Immigrants and Refugees in regard to Primary Care, Disease Prevention, Health Protection (e.g. Vaccination and Immunization) and Promotion (e.g. Exercise, Healthy Food), and Navigation of the Health Care System	5.30

Social, Cultural and Political Inclusion of Immigrants

The Optimizing Social, Cultural, and Political Inclusion domain is concerned with factors that affect the ability of Ontario cities to welcome and retain immigrants and ethnic/religious minorities. The domain is also concerned with developing strategies to promote a positive reception for these groups. Our goal is to identify policies and programs that promote a sense of belonging and attachment for immigrants and minorities, and that facilitate the mutual adaptation of immigrants, minorities, and dominant majorities.

Priorities from the Available LIP Strategic Plans (27 plans):

Reducing racism, xenophobia and lack of cultural understanding in the host community
The LIPs identified racism, xenophobia and a lack of cultural understanding in the host communities and institutions as strong priorities. They note the need for anti-racism campaigns, programs to increase cultural awareness, and diversity training. Recent immigrants frequently view racism and a lack of cultural understanding as serious problems that limit their integration into the workforce and community. Addressing the broader community's weak appreciation of new cultures and cultural diversity, and negative media coverage of immigrants and refugees, were identified as particular priorities.

Increasing newcomer civic involvement
The LIPs identified increasing newcomer political and civic involvement as a priority. They noted a dearth of newcomers in leadership roles in community organizations and newcomers' lack of awareness of volunteer and leadership positions in the community. Civic involvement is essential to building social, cultural and political inclusion for newcomers. Volunteering has community and individual-level benefits, building trust in the community and a more welcoming environment. It also bestows personal benefits for volunteers in terms of recognition, improved life satisfaction and health outcomes, and lower levels of stress.

Improving newcomer understanding of Canadian cultural norms
The LIPs identified the need to improve newcomers' understanding of Canadian cultural norms as a priority. Newcomers undergo the stressful experience of having to learn new norms, practices and accepted behavior in the host community. For example, LIP plans reported on the difficulties faced by recent immigrants and refugees in learning about Canadian employment practices, entertainment, cultural and spiritual activities, and food preferences. Recent immigrants and refugees also reported that they experience difficulties in making social connections within their communities because they are unaware of the interests or activities they can discuss with others in their communities.

Targeting social and cultural programs for immigrant youth
 The LIPs identified the need to address the unique social and cultural challenges facing immigrant youth as a priority, particularly in the area of social exclusion. Actions to address youth social exclusion were deemed important because exclusion at a young age has been linked to increased drug use and gang involvement. Youth also deal with the stresses of growing up, and being 'different' compounds the stress that youth experience as recent immigrants.

Improving access to and content of information about community services and events
The LIPs referred to the tendency for recent immigrants to learn about community activities and programs primarily through informal communication channels comprising friends, family and neighbours. This reliance on informal networks for advice and information may not be optimal because at times such connections may not be available and the information received may be unreliable and outdated. Thus, developing strategies for more effectively disseminating information about community services and events was identified as a priority.

Ratings by the LIPs (all 45 LIPs were surveyed; 24 provided ratings): 1- 7 scale where 1 = not at all a priority and 7 = extremely high priority

Priority	Mean Rating 1-7 scale
1. Reducing Racism, Xenophobia and Lack of Cultural Understanding in the Host Community	5.64
2. Increasing Newcomer Civic Involvement	5.82
3. Improving Newcomer Understanding of Canadian Cultural Norms	5.64
4. Targeting Social and Cultural Programs for Immigrant Youth	4.55
5. Improving Access to and Content of Information about Community Services and Events	6.32

Workplace Integration

The Workplace Integration domain focuses on policies and activities that promote inclusive and productive work settings for immigrants and minorities. Key interests include workplace inclusion; the acceptance of foreign credentials, education and experience; the role of social networks; language training methods; investment in immigrant talent management and career development; employer attitudes and information needs in regard to newcomers; and self-employment strategies.

Priorities from the Available LIP Strategic Plans (27 plans):

Communication training
The LIPs identified the need for improved communication skills in the workplace as an essential means to enhance employment outcomes. Communication skills were seen as transcending language skills alone. Potential remedies identified by the LIPs included programs aimed at creating intercultural communication skills among immigrants and employers. There are a variety of programs designed to deliver workplace communication training, including online programs and informal courses in recreational or social environments that offer broader socialization opportunities.

Recruitment and bridging programs
LIPs identified the need for increased bridging strategies, including mentoring, co-op programs, volunteering, and internships, as critical for enhanced immigrant recruitment and enhanced access to skilled work.   Mentoring and other programs were seen as providing immigrants with access to social networks and workplace experience, including specific workplace practices and specialized language skills. The LIPs also felt that there was a reciprocal need for employers to improve their recruitment and hiring strategies in order to access immigrant networks and the 'hidden' talent they contain. The failure to do so was seen as partially related to a lack of information on the part of employers regarding how to access immigrant talent as well as a staid employer 'culture' in regard to hiring practices.

Recognition of international credentials, education, and competencies
The LIPs identified the need to enhance employer recognition of credentials and experience acquired abroad as a key priority in both regulated and non-regulated professions. Non-recognition of credentials results in immigrant unemployment and underemployment; at the same time, employers incur productivity losses and turnover costs, as well as shortages, in high skilled sectors. LIPs identified the need to equip employers with reliable systems for assessing international credentials and recognizing prior learning and experience. This included measures to increase awareness of cultural barriers to the recognition of international credentials and experience.

More receptive organizational culture

The need by employers for assistance in adapting workplace practices to create a more receptive and welcoming workplace environment that is more conducive to identifying and eliciting immigrant talent was identified by the LIPs as a priority.   This included talent management practices that are responsive to workforce diversity and different norms pertaining to workplace behavior involving supervisors and collaborative work situations. Employer benefits from creating a more welcoming environment were judged to include higher productivity and reduced employee turnover.

Social capital and workplace networks

The LIPs identified measures that assist newcomers to better understand workplace culture, to 'fit in' more easily and to gain access to social networks both inside and outside the workplace as a priority. Being a member of rich, well-functioning on-the-job networks ensures recognition, increases the likelihood of being considered for training and promotions and contributes to enhanced employee motivation. Workplace networks are difficult for immigrant employees to access because they are not fully conversant with Canadian norms and interests. A variety of programs and broader interventions, including language instruction, recreational measures, cultural training and forms of mentoring that can be used to help establish workplace networks.

Ratings by the LIPs (all 45 LIPs were surveyed; 24 provided ratings): 1- 7 scale where 1 = not at all a priority and 7 = extremely high priority

Priority	Mean Rating 1-7 scale
1. Communication Training	5.86
2. Recruitment and Bridging Programs	6.18
3. Recognition of International Credentials, Education, and Competencies	6.14
4. More Receptive Organizational Culture	6.14
5. Social Capital and Workplace Networks	5.95