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BEST SETTLEMENT PRACTICES

SETTLEMENT SERVICES FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS IN CANADA

CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Every day hundreds of newcomers begin a new life in Canada. Some are refugees fleeing persecution, others come to join family, others again are seeking to make a better life for themselves. In all, over 200,000 people settle in Canada each year. Their backgrounds and personal histories may be widely different and each one's experience on arrival is unique. The communities across Canada into which they integrate differ too in their character and in the manner of their welcome of new members.

For many new Canadians, there are, nevertheless, certain shared experiences, as they make a home for themselves in this country. They must find somewhere to live and a job, familiarize themselves with a different society and culture, make a new network of friends and acquaintances and often learn a new language. In the process, they may experience success — but also alienation, loneliness, frustration, xenophobia and racism. Refugees often face particular challenges in adapting — because their arrival was not planned or a matter of choice, but a matter of survival. They may be deeply traumatized by their past experiences. They often arrive separated from their immediate families whom they have had to leave behind, perhaps in the country of origin, perhaps in a refugee camp.

It is the refugees and immigrants who themselves do the greatest part of the work of integration, finding a place for themselves with courage, patience, creativity and hope. In doing so they change and enrich the host society.

Newcomers are assisted in the process of settling into Canada by a wide range of individuals and organizations. Friends, family, new acquaintances, faith communities, Canadians with origins in the same part of the world, employers and officials of all kinds may offer new Canadians help as they establish their new lives.

In addition, Canada has developed over the years a broad network of organizations whose mission, in whole or in part, is to serve refugees and immigrants in their process of adjustment to Canadian society. These organizations have accumulated considerable depth and breadth of experience in newcomer settlement services. Many refugees and immigrants receive assistance from such organizations, some just briefly, others over a long period. Refugee and immigrant-serving organizations also play a key role in helping the host society to adapt to newcomers, by sensitizing institutions and the public to their realities.

The purpose of this document is to present an overview of settlement services and in particular to identify some of the elements that are generally agreed to make for successful settlement programs. These elements, or "best practices", flow out of our understanding of the nature and challenges of settlement and of the role of settlement services in the process. For this reason our "best practice guidelines" are preceded by a detailed account of the context in which settlement services are offered.

It is hoped that this document will be of interest to those in the field, not so much because the content will be new, but rather because they see themselves and their work reflected, and can use the document to explain their work to others. The process of developing the report has provided an interesting forum for the exchange of ideas and information. The document is

more particularly intended for those in the wider community wishing to understand settlement services. Those outside Canada who are interested in the Canadian experience of newcomer integration will, we hope, also find this overview informative.

2. POLICY CONTEXT

Immigration

Canada is a country of immigration, with most of its citizens themselves immigrants or descended from immigrants. About 5% of the population is made up of aboriginal people. The capacity of immigrants to integrate into Canadian society has been continually demonstrated anew in the centuries since the first arrivals of non-native peoples.

From its origins until the present day, official Canadian immigration policy has been closely tied to economic policy and the need for human resources. A hundred years ago Canada was seeking immigrants to farm the land and build the railroads; today it is actively recruiting potential immigrants with high-tech skills.

Rates of immigration have tended to be tied to the health of the economy: for example, arrivals were reduced dramatically during the 1930s, and also declined in the early to mid-1980s, both periods of economic downturn.

Throughout much of its history, Canadian immigration policy has been racist, by legislation (as in the cases of Chinese Head Tax and the "continuous journey" rule[1]) or by discriminatory application of the law (the exclusion of Blacks in the first half of the 20th century and of Jews from the 1920s to the late 1940s). Explicit racism came to an end only in the 1960s when Canada introduced a "points" system for evaluating applicants.

Among the immigrants coming to Canada have always been significant numbers of refugees fleeing persecution or disasters. For example, in the middle of the last century many Irish immigrants came to Canada to escape the Potato Famine, and at the end of the 19th century Russian Jews arrived fleeing the massacres known as pogroms. In more recent history Canada opened its doors to refugee groups such as Hungarians fleeing communism in 1956, and in 1972 to Asian Ugandans expelled by Idi Amin.

However, Canada was slow to recognize the need for an ongoing humanitarian dimension to its immigration policy. Throughout the 1930s and World War II, Canada had one of the worst records in the Western world for refusing Jewish refugees. Despite the fact that the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees was drawn up in 1951, Canada did not become a party to the Convention until 1969, and it was not incorporated into law until the 1976 Immigration Act.

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[1]   According to this rule, implemented in 1908, immigrants had to come to Canada by a "continuous journey" from their country of origin or residence. This measure was directed against Asians for whom the journey to Canada necessarily involved one or more stops en route.

Since then, Canadians have come to identify a particular role for the country in welcoming refugees. The "Boat People" of South-East Asia elicited a broad response from people across Canada, with countless local groups organizing themselves to receive refugees. On a smaller scale, thousands of refugees continue to be resettled in Canada each year— some sponsored by the government, others by private groups. Beginning in the 1980s a significant number of refugees chose Canada as a country of asylum, while the numbers resettled declined in the 1990s. As a result, since 1992 more persons have been recognized as refugees after making a claim in Canada than have been resettled here as government or privately sponsored refugees.[2]

Immigration is made up of three streams: refugees (or humanitarian), economic immigrants and family. The family class allows for the reunification in Canada of close family members, subject to a sponsor signing an undertaking of financial responsibility, usually of 10 years duration. This means that family class immigrants are not generally eligible for a series of social benefits, including social assistance, for 10 years after their arrival.

Some aspects of immigration policy are criticized for tending to inhibit the integration of newcomers. These include delays in, or barriers to, family reunification; fees that result in some newcomers arriving with a heavy debt burden; and the creation of "limbo" classes of newcomers who are allowed to remain in Canada but prevented from becoming permanent residents because they cannot meet one of the requirements of landing.

Citizenship

In 1947 Canada adopted its first Citizenship Act, creating Canadian citizenship. Current citizenship laws mean that any baby born in Canada is automatically a Canadian citizen, independent of the status of the parents. Immigrants can apply for citizenship after three years in the country. Over 80% of recently arrived immigrants become citizens. In the fifty years of Canadian citizenship, people born elsewhere have always constituted a significant proportion of citizens.[3]

By becoming citizens, newcomers become the legal equals of the Canadian-born, enjoying the same rights, including the right to vote, to serve in the government and to seek elected office.

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[2]   1995 was an exception to this rule: slightly more refugees were resettled than were granted refugee status in Canada.

[3]   According to 1996 Ccensus data, just over 13% of Canadian citizens were citizens by naturalization.

Multiculturalism

In 1971 Canada became the first country to adopt an official multiculturalism policy. This policy resulted from discussions in the 1960s which concluded that Canada is a bilingual and multicultural country. The policy was incorporated into the Multiculturalism Act of 1988, in which the Government of Canada recognizes and commits itself to the promotion of diversity.

Among the goals of multiculturalism policy are the promotion of full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in Canadian society and the elimination of barriers to such participation. There is an official commitment to help make Canadian institutions (for example hospitals and other publicly-funded organizations) reflect the multicultural reality. Multiculturalism involves not just individuals, but communities, whose development is to be encouraged.

Division of responsibilities

Immigration is a matter of shared federal-provincial jurisdiction. The degree of involvement of the provincial government in immigration issues varies from province to province, but many have significant programs and policies geared towards assisting in the integration of newcomers — individually and as communities. Municipalities, particularly the larger ones, often also play a role, insofar as they recognize the local benefits.

The Canadian response to newcomers reflects the characteristic Canadian balance of self-sufficiency, state support and voluntary community endeavour. Individuals are expected to make their own efforts to bridge the gaps between "new" and "old" Canadians. The government is expected to provide basic social services, to offer at least a minimal social safety net and to promote a healthy society. Communities are expected to organize, through volunteer effort, to respond to the priorities they identify.

3. SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION

As a country with a long and formative history of immigration, Canada has extensive experience with the process through which newcomers become an integral part of our society. Much has been said and written about this process — by historians, social scientists, policy-makers and poets. No brief summary can do justice to a subject so complex. There is not even a single word for the process. Many different terms are used, including:

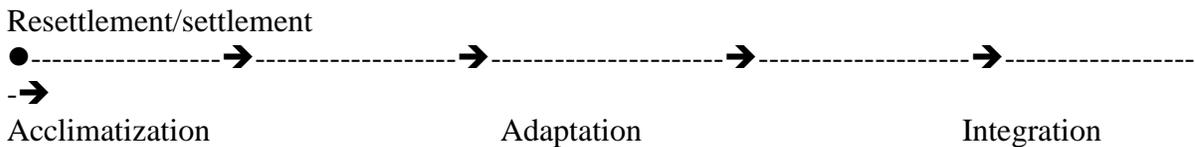* resettlement
* settlement
* adaptation
* adjustment
* integration

The (re)settlement process can be viewed as a continuum, as newcomers move from acclimatization, to adaptation, to integration (see diagram below).[4]

> **Defining Integration**
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> As early as 1952, the United Nations Economic and Social Council, recognizing its complexity, defined integration as a "gradual process by which new residents become active participants in the economic, social, civic, cultural and spiritual affairs of a new homeland. It is a dynamic process in which values are enriched through mutual acquaintance, accommodation and understanding. It is a process in which both the migrants and their compatriots find an opportunity to make their own distinctive contributions" (cited in Kage, 1962:165).
>
> It is very much this definition to which immigrant and refugee-serving agencies subscribe. I*mmigration Settlement Counselling: A Training Guide* (OCASI, 1991:8) defines settlement as "a long-term, dynamic, two-way process through which, ideally, immigrants would achieve full equality and freedom of participation in society, and society would gain access to the full human resource potential in its immigrant communities".

Chart 1. The Settlement/Integration Continuum

Resettlement/settlement

●----------------➔-----------------➔--------------------➔-----------------➔-----------------
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Acclimatization   Adaptation   Integration

As such, *settlement* generally refers to acclimatization and the early stages of adaptation, when newcomers make the basic adjustments to life in a new country, including finding somewhere to live, beginning to learn the local language, getting a job, and learning to find their way around an unfamiliar society. *Integration* is the longer term process through which newcomers become full and equal participants in all the various dimensions of society.

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[4] Adapted from a presentation by Stephen Lam, Community Programs Supervisor, Catholic Community Services of York Region, at the OCASI Professional Development Conference session on settlement indicators, October 22-23, 1997.

Within these processes, each individual newcomer's experiences are multifaceted and unique. Nevertheless we can explore the general characteristics of these processes, characteristics that we need to take into account in developing "best practices" in settlement services. Settlement and integration are:

* *Two-way*

There is necessarily a mutual adaptation of newcomers and members of the host society. The demands of adjustment tend to be focused on newcomers, who usually must make significant adaptations. Any society that receives new members is also changed in the process, whether willingly or unwillingly. However, society — people and institutions — has an active, and not merely a passive, role in the process: it has a positive responsibility to adapt itself to its new members and offer them full opportunity to contribute the resources they bring with them. This involves all of the institutions of the host society. Canada, through its official policy of multiculturalism, recognizes the legitimacy and value of the diverse cultures of its inhabitants, new, old and aboriginal.

* *Complex*

The complexity of the settlement and integration processes reflects the complexity of individual lives and of society. Experiences differ from individual to individual and from group to group. The nature and the response of the receiving community also have significant impact on the process.

* *Long-term*

Integration is a process lasting many years, if not generations. Individuals and communities may be "integrated" in some aspects of life but not in others. Issues can surface long after arrival, for example at times of significant change or crisis.

* *Both process and goal*

Although we usually talk about settlement and integration as "processes", and we recognize their long-term, ongoing nature, they can also be seen as goals. This perspective focuses on what can, and will, be achieved. Those who arrived in the past have been able to become full participants in a strengthened society. This pattern is constantly being repeated and renewed.

* *A matter of individual choice for the newcomer*

It is for the individual newcomer to choose his or her own level of participation in each area of life, just as those born here choose how and where to participate. The host society has a responsibility to ensure that newcomers can participate as they wish, free of barriers.

The spheres of settlement/integration

Settlement and *integration* are multi-dimensional concepts. We can explore these processes within four main spheres:

* the social sphere;
* the economic sphere;
* the cultural sphere;
* the political sphere;

Within each sphere, the speed and degree of integration can vary, and what happens in one sphere affects the outcome in the other spheres. For example, research has shown that those who succeed in integrating economically will more easily integrate socially and culturally.[5]

As is apparent, these complex processes are also very abstract and cannot be measured directly, but through "certain traits which we believe are indicative of, or indicators of" integration.[6] Indicators — measurable, specific, simple outcomes — are one way to assess or determine the degree of integration. The following diagram gives some examples of indicators that might be used to evaluate newcomers' and society's level of integration.[7]

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[5]   Gertrud Neuwirth in "Settlement Indicators," *INSCAN*, Vol 11 (2), Winter 1997.

[6]   Gertrud Neuwirth, "Indicators of Integration," *INSCAN*, Vol 10 (3) Winter 1997.

[7]   From presentation made by Reva Joshee, CCR conference, Edmonton, June 1997.

Chart 2. Possible Indicators of Settlement and Integration

Dimension	Short-term (settlement)	Longer term (integration)
Economic	- entering job market - financial independence	- career advancement - income parity - entry into field of prior employment
Social	- established social network - diversity within social network	- accessing institutions - engaging in efforts to change institutions
Cultural	- adaptation of various aspects of lifestyle (e.g. diet, family relationships)	- engaging in efforts to redefine cultural identity - adapting or reassessing values
Political	- citizenship - voting	- participation in political parties - participation in socio-political movements

However the use of indicators is still in the developmental stage.[8] Moreover, to measure an individual's integration is to measure it against an ideal, and we also must question who, in fact, attains this ideal. For we can talk about everyone — immigrants and non-immigrants alike — being in a process of integration all their lives. Even among Canadian-born individuals, there are those whose skills remain under-utilized, or who refrain from political participation, potentially indicators that full integration has not been achieved.

There is a far greater likelihood that indicators will hold resonance if immigrants themselves identify them. In a 1993-1994 research project sponsored by the Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA), immigrants proposed a number of indicators. Five of the top ten indicators, including the top rated one, related to employment. Other important indicators related to good mental health, language skills, the safety and well-being of the children while parents work, and a harmonious family life.

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[8]   After undertaking a survey on resettlement and integration, UNHCR (1997:19) concluded that, "On the whole, resettlement countries appear to have little in the way of established criteria for assessing whether refugees have integrated."

4. NEEDS AND CHALLENGES IN THE SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION PROCESS

There are many factors which affect an individual's life chances, and ultimately the degree to which they integrate into the different spheres of Canadian society. Some are personal, individual attributes such as their gender, age, skill level, education, and past experiences. Other factors are external and encountered in the host country, such as the bureaucratic processes associated with immigration or asylum (refugee determination, accreditation, etc.) and racism or discrimination.

While the time taken for integration varies from individual to individual, as a group refugees and others fleeing civil strife and violence have particular needs and challenges. Rates of integration depend on how quickly the needs specific to their experiences can be met and the challenges to their integration overcome.[9]

Regardless of how these persons are labelled under the Canadian Immigration Act or by international humanitarian organizations, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, they share the experiences of forced migration. They must deal with significant personal losses, often including the violent deaths of family and friends. They frequently bear the scars of traumatic experiences; many are survivors of torture. Refugees are also more likely than other immigrants to arrive without their immediate families, having been forced to separate in flight from persecution. Torn from their social support network, uprooted from cultural familiarity, possibly survivors of torture and trauma, and often fearing for the safety of those left behind, their mental health may be precarious.[10] Because of these situations, refugees often suffer depression, sleeping disorders, nightmares, fatigue, inability to concentrate, etc.

Unlike those who freely and deliberately choose to start a new life in Canada, their thoughts on arrival may be focused more on what they have left behind than on their future here. Furthermore, the external challenges, such as the refugee process for those who make a refugee claim on arrival, often leave them in a state of stress, impermanence and uncertainty until they have been able to regularize their immigration status. This insecurity further slows the integration process.

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[9] In its survey on resettlement and integration, UNHCR cites the research of Danielle Joly, who, concludes that refugees should be treated differently from other categories of immigrants because their needs are different (UNHCR, May 7, 1997).

[10] Cécile Rousseau et al.*, Politique d'immigration et santé mentale: Impact des séparations familiales prolongées sur la santé mentale des réfugiés*, 1997; Table de Cconcertation des Oorganismes dee Montréal au Service des Rréfugiés, *Mémoire aà la Commission de la culture de l'aAssemblée nationale*, Septembre 1997; CCR Refugee Family Reunification Meetings, May 1997 and September 23, 1997, Ottawa.

"What is integration like?"

Thirteen Somali women answered:[11]

- If you listen to me you can help me.
- If you come to a country where everyone has only one eye, you have to take out one of your eyes so that you can fit in. Integration is THAT painful.
- It feels as though I am getting on to a moving bus. I want to take a seat but I can't reach an empty se at because the bus is travelling too fast.
- I am at a corner of a busy street. People are passing quickly by in a huge crowd. I want to join them and go wherever they are going. But I can't jump into the crowd: the people are moving too fast.
- Time is very important in Canada. In fact I got my first watch here. Time to catch a bus, time for doctor's appointments, time for immigration appointments. I had to learn how to tell time. (by *a 60 year-old woman*)
- People think they know us when they describe what they see of us on the outside - black skin, Somali, veils. How can they think they know us when they have no idea what is happening to us inside?
- I feel chains all over my body. They are holding me back but I can't see them.
- I came to Canada to find peace. I've climbed the ladder of peace and I thought that would be all. I ran from flames but now I'm faced with hidden flames. Integration is like that.
- I can't speak English but I can read the expressions on faces. A smiling face is welcome to me but why do you give me a look that hurts so much and says "Go away"?
- We have patience with our children. We know it takes a long time to learn to walk and talk. Why do people expect newcomers to learn everything about Canadian life overnight?
- When I'm overwhelmed with everything, I pray. I pray to the ground not to be slippery, I pray to the wind not to be too strong. I pray to the snow to stay away. Sometimes it works. God is my only friend.
- Canada has lots of technology. It's frustrating when you finally reach a person, but he/she behaves like one more machine.
- I came from a place where everyone knows my name, to a place where no one knows me at all. Sometimes I hear people calling my name in the neighbourhood where I live but I find out that it's only the wind.
- A wet lion looks like a fox. I am a fox in Canada. (*by a woman who was a well-known social activist in Somalia.*)

Service providers and others have identified some key areas in the integration process that need to be addressed by newcomers *and* members of the host society in order for newcomers to achieve full participation:[12]

* Language
* Access to Employment
* Cultural orientation
* Recognition of qualifications and experience
* Racism/Discrimination
* Family reunification
* Immigration status
* Building Communities

* *Language*

Speaking the language (or languages) of the host society is clearly a fundamental key to participation in that society. Many refugees and immigrants arrive with little or no English or French. While they learn the new language they may benefit from services in their own language and services of interpretation as a bridge to the wider community. Even those who can communicate relatively well in one of Canada's official languages may find that they must improve their language skills in order to be able to work in their field. In some parts of the country, newcomers need both English and French for many jobs.

* *Access to employment*

Entry into the job market is for most newcomers one of the most important steps towards integration — offering financial independence, an opportunity to contribute and access to a network of social contacts. Employment is also a key way in which Canadian society benefits from the skills and experiences of newcomers.

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[12] This list is drawn in part from a 1996 UNHCR survey of countries of resettlement, to which the CCR contributed, and from issues identified at CCR Consultations and many of the Settlement Renewal Consultations held across Canada.

The various issues are often closely interrelated: for example, a newcomer might be having difficulty finding a job, for any or all of the following reasons: (a) she does not speak much English or French; (b) she is not familiar with Canadian employment culture; (c) her diplomas and past job experience are not recognized by employers here; (d) she faces overt racism or subtle discrimination as a person of colour; (e) in the absence of other family members it is hard to provide care for her children while she searches for a job; (f) employers are reluctant to hire her because she does not yet have permanent residence status (g) her community, which is only recently established, does not have the network of contacts that often helps people find work.

*   *Cultural orientation*

Newcomers — as individuals, families and communities — must learn their way around the culture of the host society, with its values and patterns of relationship and behaviour. The host society, in turn, needs to learn sensitivity towards, and to adapt to, the values inherent in the cultures newcomers bring with them.

*   *Recognition of qualifications and experience*

In order for newcomers to contribute acquired skills and learning, their qualifications and experience must be recognized. Educational and professional credentials are often not recognized by Canadian institutions and employers. Newcomers bring with them a whole range of other skills (for example in the arts or in community leadership); adjustments are required to enable them to contribute these skills to society.

*   *Racism/Discrimination*

Fighting racism and discrimination is a critical step in ensuring newcomers feel welcome and a part of Canadian society. Racism is a systemic problem in Canada and creates barriers for people of colour, whether newcomers or not. While there is comparatively little violent expression of racism, more subtle and institutional forms of racism are deep-rooted in Canadian society. The related problem of xenophobia affects how newcomers are treated and spoken of.

*   *Family reunification*

Bringing families together is a critical step in making newcomers feel at home in Canada. Refugees in particular often arrive separated from their spouse and/or young children; integration cannot really begin until the immediate family is reunited. Separation also has a tremendous impact on family dynamics both during separation and after being reunited: small children left behind feel abandoned, and once reunited, often resentful; spouses grow apart. Many newcomers also hope to be reunited with other relatives (parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, orphaned relatives, etc.).

*   *Immigration status*

Permanent residence status is key to giving newcomers the sense that they can build their lives here. It is also critical for access to employment, services and rights (employers hesitate to offer jobs to people with temporary status; health, social and educational services may be restricted; travel outside Canada is difficult or impossible).

*   *Building Communities*

Welcoming communities — both host and ethnocultural communities — are key to successful integration. Experience shows that when immigrants and refugees can join an established ethnocultural community, the integration process can be eased. Where no such community already exists, newcomers face the challenge of building a community here in Canada.

These areas are all being addressed on a daily basis by immigrant and refugee-serving agencies.

5. SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Settlement services are specialized services geared to facilitating the full and equitable participation of all newcomers in Canadian society. They focus on, but are not limited to, the early stages after arrival when the need is greater, and on the basis that people who access these services are better equipped to fully participate in Canadian society.

i) **History**

For the first immigrants to what is now Canada, there were of course no settlement services. Settlement referred to the establishment of new communities, often displacing the original inhabitants — the native peoples — in the process. Well into the 19th century, immigrant settlers continued to stake out new claims in the West. Settlement intensified during the late 1800s and early 1900s, as the Canadian government mounted extensive campaigns to attract immigrants to Canada.

Before the First World War, there were few organizations specializing in serving immigrants. Newcomers relied heavily on family members or others from the same ethnic community or religion to assist them with initial adjustment. Much of this help was offered informally, although support might also be available from ethnic associations, benevolent societies, religious institutions and self-help groups of various kinds, many of them relying entirely or largely on volunteers.

The Jewish community decided to form a specialized immigration organization after the First World War. It was incorporated in 1922 as the Jewish Immigrant Aid Society and given the following objectives:

1. To facilitate the lawful entry of Jewish immigrants to Canada.
2. To provide them with temporary shelter, food, clothing and such other aid as may be found necessary.
3. To guide them to their destination.
4. To prevent them from becoming public charges by helping them to obtain employment.
5. To discourage their settling in congested cities and to maintain bureaus of information regarding settlement conditions in Canada.
6. To foster British ideals among the newcomers, and to instill in them a knowledge of Canadian history and institutions.
7. To take proper measures to prevent ineligible persons from immigrating to Canada.
8. To make known to the people of Canada the many advantages of desirable immigration.

The Community Response to Immigrant and Refugee Needs

In the first decades of the 20th century the numbers of newcomers arriving each year were very high, particularly in relation to the Canadian population at the time. Many ethnic communities and religions had their representatives at the ports to receive the newcomers. The emphasis was on the immediate needs for temporary shelter and provisions, orientation and the search for employment.

In some urban neighbourhoods there were "Settlement Houses": a social response initiated in the 19th century in England and adopted in the United States. "Settlers" were educated members of the middle class who, inspired by the idea that to alleviate poverty it was necessary to know the reality from the inside, came to live in poor urban areas (often with a high proportion of immigrants). Their tools were education and advocacy for reform.

Important developments in the conception and delivery of services came after the Second World War. The arrival of significant numbers of Displaced Persons, including survivors of the Holocaust, focused attention on the needs of the traumatized. At the same time the development of the notion of the welfare state and of social work had its effect in the immigrant and refugee sector. The Jewish Immigrant Aid Society developed specialized social services and hired for the first time professional social workers.

Many new organizations were created specifically to respond to the needs of newcomers. One such was the Centre social d'aide aux immigrants (CSAI), founded in Montreal in 1947 by the religious sisters of Notre Dame du Bon Conseil. Among the services they offered were material assistance, temporary emergency housing, help finding housing and jobs, medical and legal assistance and loans to help newcomers bring their families. They early began a long tradition of "Thursday suppers" to which newcomers were invited. From the beginning CSAI had newcomers among its staff and encouraged and supported the development of community organizations as a way of responding to needs.

Another organization created at about the same time was the Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, which also arose in response to the arrival of displaced persons. Various denominations seeking to help their own integrate in Canada came together to form this organization.

Some of the organizations grew out of particular ethnic communities. This is the case with the Italian Immigrant Aid Society in Toronto. It was formed in 1952 out of two parishes that were central institutions in the Italian community of the period.[13] Direct services, in the beginning, were largely provided by women volunteers (who subsequently became organized as the Ladies Auxiliary of the Italian Aid Society).

COSTI (Centro Organizzativo Scuole Tecniche Italiane) was founded in 1961 in response to the situation of skilled tradespeople unable to use their skills. COSTI's motto, "integration through education", expresses the founders' vision. It offered training and retraining to members of the Italian community, and by the early 1970s to members of other communities also. In 1981 the Italian Immigrant Aid Society and COSTI amalgamated into the largest immigrant-serving organization in Toronto, and possibly Canada.

The inclusion of the refugee category into the 1976 Canadian Immigration Act, as well as the arrival of the "Boat People" beginning in the late 1970s, and subsequently of large numbers of refugee claimants have focused attention on the needs of refugees. Some organizations and services have developed specifically to respond to the needs of the newly defined "refugee" class.

The Canadian Government Response to Immigrant and Refugee Needs

The post-war period also saw a growth in emphasis on the concepts of citizenship and integration. The federal Department of Citizenship and Immigration, created in 1950, was given a Citizenship Branch, responsible for supporting governmental and non-governmental agencies interested in facilitating the adjustment and integration of newcomers and in developing a greater consciousness of the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship. In its support, the Citizenship Branch emphasized education (including language and citizenship classes) as the means to integration.

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[13]   The society identified the following objectives when it received its charter in 1956:
1) to assist Italian immigrants in finding employment;
2) to assist Italian immigrants from a moral point of view and to help them familiarize themselves with the languages, laws and customs of Canada;
3) to enlighten Italian immigrants in the history, constitution, legislation of their foster land of Canada with the object of making them good Canadian citizens, conscious of their rights and duties;
4) to assist in every possible way, the Italian immigrant who is a victim of an accident or of sickness.

In 1974 the federal government launched the Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) through which funding for settlement services is provided. Settlement language training was added as a permanent program in 1990 and restructured in 1992 as Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC). The HOST program, which matches Canadian volunteers with government-assisted refugees to help ease the settlement process, was made a permanent program in June 1991.

Over the last three decades provincial governments, followed by municipal governments, have created departments or divisions which also support or fund settlement programs.[14]

Continued Development

The development of services to newcomers in Canada has been characterized more by coordination than by centralization and has drawn its strength from local communities. These trends continued in the last quarter century, during which many more organizations have been created.

ii) Immigrant and refugee-serving organizations

Settlement services in Canada are primarily delivered by a network of community-based, non-profit agencies with volunteer boards of directors. Organizations vary greatly in size, ranging from those with few or no paid staff, to those with a staff numbering in the hundreds. Some organizations are new, some old, but as a network they have the combined strength of acquired experience and strong links to the communities they serve. Larger centres with many newcomers can have highly specialized organizations, while in the smaller centres the organizations must be more polyvalent. Settlement agencies, therefore, exist in a variety of configurations:

> **Who Funds Settlement Agencies?**
>
> Agency funding comes from:
>
> - Government (federal, provincial and municipal);
> - United Way;
> - Individual charitable donations and other fundraising;
> - Foundations;
> - Resources of a parent agency;
> - Fees for services (in some cases); and
> - Income-generating projects.

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[14] Under the Canada-Québec Accord, the Québec government, since 1991, has had full responsibility over programs for immigrants and supports programs similar to ISAP, LINC and HOST.

- Monoethnic: Created by and for an ethnocultural community.

- Multicultural: Created to respond to newcomer needs in a specific local area. Some organizations established by one community expand to serve many.

- Faith-based: A response of a faith community to community need.

- Specialized: Focused on a specific area of need (e.g. employment training or serving survivors of torture).

- Serving newcomers as one part of their mandate: Organizations that serve newcomers as part of a wider community response (e.g. a women's centre that serves immigrant and non-immigrant women).

The broad range of settlement services, especially second language programs, are delivered by a variety of public, private, and community-based agencies. However, community-based immigrant and refugee-serving agencies "have a proven track record as cost-efficient, effective service delivery mechanisms." [15]

Collectively, Canada's network of refugee and immigrant-serving organizations provides an important resource.

♦ They have helped to build, support and empower Canadian ethnocultural communities, and continue to work in partnership with communities.

♦ They offer education, liaison, expertise, information and support to mainstream agencies, governments, business and community organizations.

♦ They work in partnership with main-stream institutions, providing complementary expertise and resources so that appropriate services and programs can be offered to newcomers.

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[15] *OCASI Issue Update: Settlement Renewal*, November 16, 1995.

Strengths of Community-based Settlement Agencies

The strengths of refugee and immigrant-serving organizations lie in their:

- Settlement workers who are highly experienced, dedicated, knowledgeable and professional
- Long-term commitment which derives from their mission to make a positive contribution in the lives of the people served and in society.
- Roots in the community, which mean they are trusted and can quickly identify and adapt to changing needs.
- Cost-effectiveness, since they have low overheads and benefit from significant community contributions.
- Accountability, since they are governed by volunteer boards of directors representing the community as a whole.
- Community approach, which results in a welcoming environment, personalized services and broad community participation.
- Holistic approach, through which the range of needs of individuals and of the community as a whole are considered.
- Diversity of approach, resulting in the existence of a range of different organizations from which newcomers can choose the approach that best suits them.

Agency Challenges

Refugee and immigrant-serving organizations face challenges in a number of areas which limit their ability to fulfil their mission.

Funding
- Inadequate funding: Funding levels have declined over the years while demand for services has increased. Limited funding keeps salary levels low which inhibits stable staffing.

- Short-term funding: The lack of multi-year funding makes it difficult to plan ahead, and proves time-consuming as funding applications need to be renewed. Short-term project funding also results in a lack of stability in staffing.

- Complex patchwork of program-funding: Funding must be sought from a range of different funders which requires considerable administration time.

Funder/Agency Relations
- Lack of flexibility in funding: Overly specific project requirements put organizations in danger of becoming sub-contractors of the funder and limit an agency's flexibility to meet changing needs.

- Unequal power relations: Funders assuming ownership of projects curtails an agency's ability to administer projects effectively and efficiently.

Mainstream/Settlement Agency Relations
- Lack of recognition for work done: Mainstream agencies do not always acknowledge or fully understand the role of settlement services.

iii) Settlement services today

Settlement services are a kind of social service, but one where the need derives from the external situation rather than the "neediness" of the client. Newcomers are basically healthy people who require some assistance in making their way in a country where "the rules of the game" are different. They encounter problems in their adjustment, and some can go through periods of acute distress, but as a group they are remarkable for their resilience.

Clients' needs

Adapted year by year to respond to changing times, services offered today continue to be dependent on the needs of newcomer and receiving communities.

As previously noted, newcomers' needs vary depending on, for example, whether they:
- are refugees or immigrants;
- are retired and joining family or young single people headed for the job market;
- speak English or French.

In addition each newcomer community will have its own cultural issues.

The needs of the receiving community vary depending, for example, on whether the community:
- is small or large
- has mainstream services able to give appropriate services to newcomers
- is working to address racism and other forms of discrimination.

Services meet the needs

The range of services offered is not theoretically limited — it depends on the needs, the resources available and imagination. There is a constant effort to improve and adapt services, but at the same time certain services have proven effective and continue with little change for decades.

There are many different ways to conceptualize settlement services, especially as there has been no *consensual* definition of settlement services developed to date. One way to describe settlement services would be as follows:[16]

♦ **Initial settlement**, including reception & orientation to Canada: counselling, community contact, access to other services, etc.

♦ **Language instruction**, ranging from beginners to employment-related

♦ **Employment services** including orientation, job-search skills, job experience placement, employment counselling and placement, and specific skills upgrading and certificate programs

♦ **Long-term integration** through education, community development, multicultural, citizenship, anti-racism, organizational change and development.

The following diagram provides another way to distinguish the variety of services available:[17]

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[16] *A British Columbia Model for Settlement Renewal: Twelve Steps to Achieving a Renewed System*, Immigrant Integration Coordinating Committee of AMSSA, January 1996.

[17] This compilation is drawn from *Settlement Renewal: AAISA Response to the Citizenship and Immigration Consultation Kit*, January 1996:3-4; *A British Columbia Model for Settlement Renewal: Twelve Steps to Achieving a Renewed System*, Immigrant Integration Coordinating Committee (IICC) of AMSSA, January 1996; *Settlement Renewal: Response to CIC Consultation*, WCAISA, n.d.: *4; OCASI Issue Update: Settlement Renewal*, November 1995.

Chart 3.   Objectives, Beneficiaries and Types of Settlement Services

Service Objectives	Beneficiaries of Services	Specific Services
Services to help newcomers (individually and as community members) develop the skills and knowledge to participate in society (includes the package of initial settlement services).	Newcomers	- orientation sessions - information and referrals - language assessment, referral and training - employment and career counselling, placement, skills upgrading, and certification programs
	Ethnocultural Communities	- community development - citizenship programs - multicultural programs
Services to bridge between the newcomers and society	Newcomers Host society Ethnocultural Communities	- advocacy - translation and interpretation - host programs (& training) - volunteer programs (& training) - integration programs
Services of general nature specially adapted for newcomers or responding to their specialized needs	Newcomers	- family counselling - other counselling and support groups - mental health services - health programs - programs for survivors of torture and trauma
Services to help the host community in its process of adaptation to newcomers	Host Community Mainstream Service Organizations	- public education - cross-cultural and anti-racism training - programs to assist mainstream service providers to integrate newcomers - programs to assist in mainstream organizational change and development

While many types of organizations have become involved in the delivery of settlement and integration services and programs, experience has shown that non-profit, community-based agencies are the best equipped to meet the service needs of immigrants and refugees.

6. BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Within the settlement service field, there is increasingly a recognition of the need for more systematic, ongoing sharing of experiences, particularly of innovations and successes. From these successes, we derive best practices. Best practices are those that have proven their worth and deserve to be emulated.

Best practices are offered in order to:

- ♦ enhance efforts at improvement.
- ♦ share information.
- ♦ encourage debate.

The best practices represented here are by no means the last word on the subject: they represent a current understanding, which will need to be constantly updated. It is also recognized that interventions must reflect the particular realities of each unique situation. What is a best practice in one set of circumstances may be inappropriate in another.

From best practices, we can develop standards. They differ from standards — generally agreed upon minimum norms for programs — in that best practices constitute an ideal to which an organization can strive. [18]

We have articulated the best practices in the form of guidelines, emanating from twelve core values. These guidelines form a framework which can serve as the basis for analysis, evaluation, planning and information-sharing in the field of settlement services. [19]

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[18]   See "National Standards for Settlement Agencies," CCR draft discussion paper prepared by Laurel Borisenko and Virginia Sauvé, October 22, 1997.

[19]   This framework draws heavily on the conceptualization found in *Developing Standards of Practice for Settlement Services*, Bev Brawley, 1995, with input from a workshop at the CCR conference, November 1997 and from the ARAISA Professional Development Conference, September 1997.

Core values:

- **Access**
- **Inclusion**
- **Client empowerment**
- **User-defined services**
- **Holistic approach**
- **Respect for the individual**
- **Cultural sensitivity**
- **Community development**
- **Collaboration**
- **Accountability**
- **Orientation towards positive change**
- **Reliability**

Best practice guidelines:

1. **Services are accessible to all who need them.** Access is assured by:

   - providing a welcoming environment
   - offering services in the client's own language, where possible and appropriate
   - offering culturally appropriate services
   - undertaking outreach, so that services are known to those who might benefit
   - communicating effectively about the organization and its services
   - where possible, offering services irrespective of immigration status or other criteria of eligibility
   - providing an environment where women feel comfortable
   - offering childcare, where appropriate
   - having a geographically accessible site and/or addressing clients' need for transportation
   - having a physically accessible site
   - listening to and responding to concerns about accessibility

2. **Services are offered in an inclusive manner, respectful of, and sensitive to, diversity**. Inclusion is assured by:

- recognizing the diversity of needs and experiences (e.g. young, old, highly educated, those without education, singles, families)
- offering anti-racist services
- providing a non-sexist environment
- enforcing a policy of non-discrimination
- offering non-judgmental services
- respecting different perspectives within newcomer communities

3. **Clients are empowered by services.** Client empowerment is assured by:

- fostering independence in clients
- meaningful membership and participation of clients in the Board
- encouraging client involvement in all areas of the organization
- involving clients as volunteers
- recognizing, affirming and building on the resources, experiences, skills and wisdom of newcomers
- providing information and education to allow clients to make their own informed decisions
- offering programs and services leading to employment and career advancement
- offering a supportive environment (especially to those who are traumatized)
- supporting the clients' right to choose from among service providers the approach that best meets their needs

4. **Services respond to needs as defined by users.** User-defined services are assured by:

- undertaking an individual assessment for each client of needs, expectations, goals and priorities
- assessment of the needs and priorities of newcomer communities and the host society
- involving newcomers in needs assessments
- ongoing assessment of whether services continue to meet needs
- listening to clients and communities served
- responding to the particular needs of refugees (recognition of differences, changing needs)
- offering flexibility in services
- incorporating flexibility into programs, in order to allow them to adapt to changing needs
- involving users in the planning, implementation and evaluation of services
- offering users maximum control over programs

5. **Services take account of the complex, multifaceted, interrelated dimensions of settlement and integration.** A holistic approach is assured by:

- recognizing the diversity of an individual's needs (physical, social, psychological, political, spiritual)
- responding wherever possible to a variety of needs at once
- providing a range of services in one location ("one-stop")
- recognizing that integration is a long-term process
- avoiding compartmentalization
- taking into account the effects of policy decisions on individuals and communities and responding through advocacy
- recognizing the importance of the family in the lives of individuals
- providing opportunities for relaxation and fun

6. **Services are delivered in a manner that fully respects the rights and dignity of the individual.** Respect for the individual is assured by:

- confidentiality
- services free of racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination
- respecting the fundamental rights of each participant

- compliance with a Code of Ethics
- offering a professional quality of services
- recognizing the uniqueness of each person
- giving full and accurate information
- making human contact
- good monitoring, selection and training of volunteers

7. **Services are delivered in a manner that is culturally sensitive.** Culturally sensitive services are assured by:

- having staff and volunteers from the same background as the clients served
- ensuring that service providers are knowledgeable about the culture of those being served
- offering services in a culturally appropriate manner
- developing and implementing policies on cultural competency and anti-racism
- showing respect for different cultures

8. **Services promote the development of newcomer communities and newcomer participation in the wider community, and develop communities that are welcoming of newcomers.** Community development is assured by:

- giving priority to community building
- investing in the development of newcomer communities
- developing community leadership
- building bridges between communities
- eliminating barriers to newcomer participation in the community
- familiarity with the resources in the local community
- working towards changes in public attitude towards newcomers
- working through the organizations of newcomer communities
- involving volunteers in services delivered

9. **Services are delivered in a spirit of collaboration.** Collaboration is assured by:

- promoting partnerships between organizations that build on strengths of each
- good working relationships
- team-building
- communicating regularly with others and sharing information

- referral services
- coalition-building
- providing opportunities for community problem-solving
- taking account of available resources and experiences

10. **Service delivery is made accountable to the communities served.** Accountability is assured by:

- the organization's Board
- evaluation, involving the participants
- ongoing monitoring
- performance appraisals
- policy and procedure manuals (for financial management, administration and personnel)
- close connection with immigrant and refugee communities
- fiscal responsibility
- development of goals and specific measurable, realistic outcomes

11. **Services are oriented towards promoting positive change in the lives of newcomer and in the capacity of society to offer equality of opportunity for all.** An orientation towards positive change is assured by:

- advocating for improvements in policy
- recognizing and building on the possibility of change in the lives of newcomers and in society
- developing new programs and new service models
- improving services through training and research
- celebrating successes

12. **Services are based on reliable, up-to-date information.** Reliability is assured by:

- keeping information up-to-date
- using social research
- exchanging information

7. BEST PRACTICE EXAMPLES

Over its many consultations and, particularly during the workshops and discussions for the Best Practices Project, the CCR has provided a forum for agencies to showcase their successful, innovative programs. What follows are examples of programs, projects or practices that might be described as best practices. These programs have been self-selected by the agencies, but in reviewing their program design and delivery it is obvious that each encompasses many of the best practice guidelines noted above, as well as addressing a combination of needs. For the time being, we are providing a summary of these best practice programs. We are planning to make more detailed information about some of the examples — and others as they are referred to us — available on the CCR website.

The programs below are grouped very loosely under the following headings (taken from Chart 3 above):[20]

i)   Services to help newcomers develop the skills and knowledge to participate in society;
ii)   Services to bridge between newcomers and society;
iii)   Services of general nature specially adapted for newcomers or responding to their specialized needs;
iv)   Services to help the host community in its process of adaptation to newcomers.

Programs

i) SERVICES TO HELP NEWCOMERS DEVELOP THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE TO PARTICIPATE IN SOCIETY

Comprehensive Initial Assessment of Immigrant and Refugee Clients

A holistic initial assessment by a counsellor is conducted of incoming clients, as individuals or members of a family. The assessment includes the exploration and discussion of the following factors: stresses of migration, level of adaptation; grieving process; education and occupational background; knowledge of official language(s); literacy in first language; present employment, housing and financial situation; significant health issues; family dynamics (changes in roles and relationships in family, etc.); safety issues: risk of depression, suicide, abuse, etc; friends in community; awareness of and access to needed program and services; expectations and hopes for the future. The assessment takes place as a semi-structured interview, preferably during conversations with the client. It requires an experienced counsellor, sensitive to linguistic and cultural issues. The counsellor should be able to initiate with the client the exploration and reflection on these issues in a non-intrusive manner. It takes from one and up to three hours, in one or several short sessions, to explore relevant issues.

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[20]   Many of these programs defy simple labeling because they address a variety of needs among a number of different client groups, hence straddling two or more categories of service types.

The investment of time in the comprehensive initial assessment facilitates the settlement counselling process in several ways. It a) establishes a warm and yet professional relationship between client and counsellor; b) tends to normalize the situation, shifting the emphasis from the person's internal problems to problems and solutions that the person faces in a concrete and usually complex situation; c) gives the client a perspective on his /her problems, a sense of the "big picture" which relieves anxiety; d) prompts client's active participation in the problem resolution; e) appropriate interventions, assistance and referrals can be more accurately planned with client.

Creating an alliance to address newcomer needs

In a city receiving relatively few immigrants it was recognized that students in a second language class had adjustment problems that were interfering with their ability to learn. A group gathered to look for solutions. They decided not to form another service agency, but rather an alliance of interested individuals, with backgrounds in mental health, immigrant services, community development, counselling and literacy. They gave themselves the mission of providing educational support for the mental health and emotional needs of recent immigrants as they adjust to life in the city, to educate recent immigrants and the people who provide services to immigrants about the settlement and integration process immigrants often experience, and to provide such services in a community-based, supportive, culturally sensitive manner. They developed a brochure, a video and a manual for a simple model of immigrant adjustment.

Second Language Education

Establishing effective partnerships with all language service providers and advanced education institutions

The immigrant-serving organization works in collaboration with the various language service providers in the community in order to plan service delivery. Students are referred to the appropriate institution: those with advanced academic qualifications to university language programs, those requiring basic to intermediate language training or language training for non-academic purposes to community colleges or immigrant serving agency language programs, those with childcare needs to immigrant serving agency program as it also offers childcare programming. Married students where both individuals are learning English may take language training from two different types of institutions depending on their respective needs. Institutions also consider issues such as ethnic conflicts within the country of origin when placing students from these areas. All collaborating institutions agree on accreditation of staff and entrance requirements of students. The academic institutions may offer in kind support to the childcare programs offered by immigrant agency (e.g. use of pool, gym, classroom space).

Employment Programs

Newcomers' Employment Bridge Project
This employment project, launched by a coalition of agencies in one city, focuses on opening doors with potential employers. It responds to the problem of unemployment and underemployment and seeks to address a gap in services to newcomers seeking employment. Newcomers are referred to the project by participating settlement agencies. They are helped to identify their employment needs and where to get related assistance. Collectively they are marketed to employers in the region. They are assisted with making contact with employers and obtaining volunteer placements to gain Canadian work experience and matched to mentors in their field. They also receive encouragement and moral support in their job search.

Assisting clients in career planning
Centralized language assessment and career assessment service are provided to identify client need, assess current abilities, assess prior learning and education, and assist clients in establishing career goals and developing a plan to establish recognition of credentials.

ESL Employment Assistance program
The agency offers an employment/experience program aimed at assisting newcomers in making a variety of career-related decisions, including finding suitable employment, seeking retraining options, pursuing post-secondary studies, and getting vital work experience in the Canadian labour market. The combined training and work placement components total ten weeks, with additional time required for on-going follow-up and counselling. Classroom instruction encompasses employment readiness seminars, basic computer skills, TOEFL preparation and post-secondary readiness. Students are then marketed to local employers and assisted with making contact with them to secure volunteer work placements.

Maintaining effective, mutually productive partnerships with employers
The organization maintains a database of clients and employers. Private corporations and government agencies are offered assistance in meeting their equity targets. They are offered a referral service for clients with transferable skills and in-house cultural diversity training. This is considered as a long-term partnership strategy.

Community Development

Initiating and influencing institutional change while empowering communities
Three suicides within a specific cultural community led to families and communities in crisis. An immigrant-serving organization contacted bereavement crisis intervention services but no one spoke the community's language. The families were referred to a professional who spoke the language but they did not show up for their appointment. Then a meeting was organized with the affected community. They determined that they wanted training for their community. Two workshops were conducted from which two individuals were invited to participate in further training. Twelve individuals have now

been trained to be caregivers within their own communities. Indepth research was also done to determine services that are inaccessible. This response offered a two-prong solution: (1) it helped to support the existing network by identifying where they needed to change; (2) it provided the necessary resources for the community to access services.

Community Resource Program

An organization in a city with relatively few services for newcomers developed a project to empower the ethnocultural communities by providing them with information on services available in the community and how to access them, by providing culturally appropriate services to new arrivals and by promoting the conditions for community development and community-based projects. At the same time the project aims to provide education and cultural sensitivity training to mainstream service providers. Members of a number of different communities are given training and then offer services to their community, acting as Community Resource People. They are paid for the services they offer.

ii) *SERVICES OF GENERAL NATURE SPECIALLY ADAPTED FOR NEWCOMERS OR RESPONDING TO THEIR SPECIALIZED NEEDS*

General Services
Family Counselling Program

Settlement counsellors were recognizing that among their clients were immigrant families in crisis. However they lacked skills in family counselling, while existing family counselling services were inaccessible to clients for linguistic and cultural reasons. An immigrant-serving organization responded by working with a family therapy institute to develop a multiple partnership model for the delivery of linguistically and culturally appropriate family counselling services. A professional family counsellor, on staff at the immigrant-serving agency, works in conjunction with settlement workers, who have received extensive training in family counselling theory and practice. The settlement worker generally remains the principal counsellor, but receives support through bi-weekly reflective case reviews from the family counsellor who may also sometimes sit in on a session. In difficult cases, the family counsellor may become the principal consultant. This model combines the cultural skills of the settlement worker with the counselling skills of the family counsellor.

Health Programs
Public health education

An immigrant-serving organization works together with a public health agency on public health education for clients. Materials on health issues are translated into clients' languages. The issues are introduced into language training classes and a guest speaker is invited. Students are taken on site visits. The public health office provides written materials and resource personnel (i.e., health education professionals). The immigrant-serving agency provides cultural diversity training for the public health agency workers.

Specialized Services: *Programs for Immigrant Women*

Education and growth group for immigrant women

An immigrant-serving organization found that due to changes in funding criteria it would have to stop giving individual counselling to some of its clients. These women were continuing to seek these services several years after arrival in Canada because of their isolation and low level of integration. They were met individually to explain the situation and offered an opportunity to participate in a group. Eight women formed the group which met for nine weekly sessions of 3 hours each, held on Fridays since it would not matter that the family got home late as the children did not have school the next day. Day care was provided for the children. The objectives of the group sessions were (1) to create a network of mutual assistance between the participants; (2) to increase their independence; (3) to promote their integration; (4) to reduce their isolation. They used feminist and intercultural approaches and focused on 3 principal themes: plans for migration; cultural shock and the migration process. A guide has been developed presenting the approach which can be used with any group of immigrant women experiencing difficulties with adaptation.

Cultural Brokers for Minority Women and Families

A project designed to enhance perinatal care and family support within cultural minority communities has developed a practice of "cultural brokerage" that is relationship-based, holistic and oriented towards community development and advocacy. Nine women from six communities act as Multicultural Community Health Developers (MHCDs), providing culturally and linguistically relevant care and support to minority women and children perinatally and into early parenthood. A coalition of representatives from health, social, settlement, education and family service institutions work with the MHCDs to increase understanding among the institutions of cultural brokerage.

Women's Information and Support Line

A women's information and support services hotline is organized and run by volunteering women from a specific community. It seeks to address settlement issues and break isolation among women from the community who cannot access mainstream services. Services include crisis intervention, accompaniment and interpretation, information on accessing services and referrals. The twenty volunteers have all received training.

Specialized Programs: Programs for Immigrant Youth

Youth program

A one-day program introduces young people to issues of law and politics by taking a youth group to visit a prison, meet with two police officers (one man, one woman) and talk to an MP.

Assisting youth in becoming oriented to Canadian culture

The program focuses on youth who have been in Canada less than 3 years. They are divided into two groups: 11-15 years and 16-19 years. Guided group activities provide orientation to Canadian culture. There is a focus on peer relationships. Parents and the community are involved. Relationships are created with other youths, thus encouraging cultural sensitivity in both groups.

Focusing on parents and youth

In response to growing intergenerational conflict, a settlement organization established a program in which parents and youth each meet for four sessions (separately) to address issues affecting family life. The final session is a combined celebration with youth and their parents. They examine their different perceptions of issues.

Intergenerational Program

In a program to reduce the risk of adolescent maltreatment and delinquent behaviour among first generation immigrants, a skills-building and support program targets immigrant parents and adolescents simultaneously. Facilitators are drawn from mainstream Canadian and the focus ethnic group population. Program components include parallel parent-adolescent skill-building groups, parent help groups, peer support groups, cultural celebrations, recreation program and activities, ESL tutoring, drop-in resource centre, counselling, and home visits. First language facilitation was available for parents. Process and outcome evaluation procedures were built into the program design. The program was also developed as a collaborative bridging model between an immigrant-serving agency and mainstream service providers; the partnership was also evaluated.

Summer Daycamp Program

An organization runs an eight-week summer program for immigrant children, with emphasis on English language activities. This program offers children the opportunity to participate in fun and stimulating activities during their summer holidays, while allowing parents the opportunity to continue their attendance at ESL school during the summer.

iii) SERVICES TO BRIDGE BETWEEN THE NEWCOMERS AND SOCIETY

Newcomer guides

Many organizations produce booklets that direct newcomers to community resources and are regularly updated. For example, in a mid-sized city, a settlement agency has compiled a manual which gives newcomers an overview of life in their new community. The booklet helps them attain greater independence, by providing information on various aspects of life, including education, transportation, the medical system, shopping, social activities, etc.

Transportation loan support repayment service

Many government-assisted refugees arrive with a loan debt towards the federal government for their travel to Canada. Since newly arrived immigrants seeking to repay the loan often have not established a bank account, they must use money orders or cash which is risky. The immigrant-serving organization meets with the client and establishes a repayment schedule that is sensitive to the ability of client to pay. Clients bring to the agency cash, money order, or cheque (payable to agency) on scheduled payment dates. Receipts are given to clients. The money is collected and the agency then issues one cheque to the government with a listing of client contributors (names and government identification (IMM) numbers) and amounts to be credited against client account.

Staff/Volunteer Development

Conducting regular planned performance appraisals of staff

A clear job description is provided, describing the workers' tasks and duties as well as how the worker relates to the agency as a whole. Annual pre-planned performance appraisals are conducted. The appraisal includes an opportunity to establish personal and professional goals.

Planning and implementing personal and professional development

Staff development budget is set at about $300-$400 per person. Each staff member is assigned one community activity or commitment to be involved in for external exposure. Reporting on these activities is done within the division and where appropriate to all staff at the monthly staff meeting.

Offering professional development to volunteers

An immigrant-serving organization worked with other agencies in the community to provide shared training for volunteers, with a view to increasing attendance and revitalizing the training programs. This shared training has several forms, including the organization of a one-day volunteer conference on an annual basis. It has grown in popularity with eight agencies now involved and approximately 130 volunteers expected to attend the next conference. Participating agencies draw on their own resources to provide experienced presenters on a range of topics. Since all participating agencies are involved in social services but not immigrant-serving alone, the list of conference topic offered is broad and varied, giving volunteers training opportunities which no agency alone could provide. The one day conference is offered at no cost to volunteers. As one of the participating agencies is an educational institution, there is no cost for location for the event. Lunch is served at no charge. Last year the total cost per volunteer for the event was $9.00. The high attendance speaks of its interest and value to the volunteers.

Inspired by the success of this type of training event, a training conference was planned for volunteers in language learning. The third annual conference is expected to involve seven different organizations and approximately 100 volunteers. Shared training is also offered to volunteer language tutors on a monthly basis. Three organizations share in this training, which means that each organization's staffing resources are required only once every three months to host a training session. The volunteers benefit by having regular

training and by meeting other volunteers both within the organization and from other organizations.

iv) *SERVICES TO HELP THE HOST COMMUNITY IN ITS PROCESS OF ADAPTATION TO NEWCOMERS*

Media
Enhancing Media Awareness
Recognizing the importance of the media in building the public's perception, the agency makes itself available to the media through interviews and writing articles for submission. A "Salute to the Media" banquet is held, with the immigrant-serving agency paying tribute to the contribution of media in building public perception and giving awards for accuracy in reporting.

8. CONCLUSION

We have approached this document as a "work in progress". Just as settlement is an ongoing process, so are efforts to provide the best possible settlement services. The best practices offered are intended as a contribution to the dialogue on maintaining and improving standards.

We have focused our attention on the settlement services offered by refugee and immigrant-serving organizations. Important as they are for many individuals and communities, they constitute only one part of the services offered. Families, friends and ethnocultural communities informally organized also provide essential support to newcomers in the process of integration.

Settlement services, whether formal or informal, are in turn only one factor in determining the success of newcomer integration. Institutions, such as schools, hospitals, police, justice systems, media and government departments, all play a key role in either helping or hindering integration by the degree to which they adapt to the diversity of the clients served. Refugee and immigrant-serving organizations can help such institutions recognize the need for adaptation and make the necessary changes, but they can only be effective insofar as the institutions are willing.

Another key determinative factor for successful integration lies in government policy towards newcomers. Policies that give refugees and immigrants security and a sense of belonging help to promote integration. Conversely, policies that keep families separated, delay permanent status or leave communities feeling threatened make integration difficult or even impossible.

Attitudes among the general population also have a significant impact on integration: they affect newcomers' relations with their neighbours, with their colleagues at work, with their fellow students at school, and with anyone they encounter in daily life. This is why most refugee and immigrant-serving organizations count public education and anti-racism awareness-raising as essential aspects of their work. Media attacks on newcomers or xenophobic comments from a prominent person are not only very painful for refugees and immigrants: they also undermine efforts made to create a welcoming environment.

he external environment thus has a significant impact on the effectiveness of the efforts undertaken by the service-providing organizations. Within the scope of their work too, there are challenges which can affect whether they are able to implement best practice models. Levels and conditions of funding limit what can be done. Lack of coordination between organizations can lead to duplication or gaps.

As we write in early 1998, much about the future of settlement service delivery in Canada remains unclear. The consequences of the proposed devolution of funding administration from the federal to the provincial governments are yet to be seen.

This context presents an important opportunity to develop national standards for settlement services, a project recognized as a priority by the Canadian Council for Refugees. National

standards would be a tool to ensure that newcomers could be guaranteed certain minimum levels of service wherever they settled in Canada. They would help those involved in the administration or delivery of settlement services to define and focus on the essential core of services as a minimum on which to build.

Another hope for the future is the creation of a national clearing house for information on settlement services. Such a clearing house would make use of the communications potential of the Internet. An ability to exchange information on what works well and on new initiatives and to quickly find answers to questions would assist those providing settlement services to be more effective. An advantage of the Internet is of course that it allows easy communication not only from province to province within Canada but also internationally.

Provincial, regional and national associations have a key role to play in the sector's continuing efforts at self-improvement, through coordination, training, information-exchange and policy development. They also serve as a means of connection with other sectors, helping to ensure that newcomer issues are included on relevant agenda.

In the realm of immigration and refugee policy, current proposals suggest that radical reforms are likely in the future. The recently released Immigration Legislative Review report outlining the proposals will be the subject of much debate in the months to come. It is however interesting to note the emphasis given to integration as an essential element of a successful immigration program. The report identifies a series of principles to undergird the program which show some overlap with the Best Practices Guidelines: accessibility, responsiveness and accountability feature on both lists. Partnership and consultation are explored in some detail in the report, with recommendations to make them more meaningful in the future.

In the meantime, of course, settlement services will continue to be offered to newcomers and to the communities welcoming them. The Best Practices Guidelines and examples in this document will, we hope, be a useful tool to those offering the services and to others interested in understanding them.

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APPENDIX I   SHARING RESOURCES

We have approached this report as a living document, the beginning (or continuation) of a dialogue among immigrant and refugee-serving agencies and all the organizations and individuals committed to assisting the integration of newcomers to Canada.   There are additional successful programs to discuss, more solutions to share, many challenges to explore.   Many of the umbrella associations are in the process of developing or expanding projects designed to share information on settlement issues.   For example, the Ontario Council for Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) is working on a project to develop settlement indicators; the Immigrant Integration Coordination Committee (IICC) of B.C. is working on developing occupational competencies for settlement workers and has contributed to a number of projects on standards and best practices in settlement.

We invite you to continue the dialogue through ongoing discussions at conferences, workshops and on the new medium, the Internet.

Listed below, arranged by region, are links to the major immigrant and refugee umbrella organizations, from which you can link to many other organizations, agencies, and government departments and divisions.   If you have other links which you feel should be included, please contact the Canadian Council for Refugees, ccr@web.net.

NATIONAL
Canadian Council for Refugees
6839 Drolet #302
Montréal (QC) H2S 2T1
514-277-7223
Fax: 514-277-1447
Email: ccr@web.net
Website: http://www.web.net/~ccr/

Canadian Network for the Health of Survivors of Torture and Organized Violence
c/o Dr Angelica Marin-Lira
RIVO, 120, rue Duluth est
Montréal (QC) H2W 1H1
514-282-0661
Fax: 514-844-0067
Email: rivo@babylon.montreal.ca

National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women (NOIVMWC)
225-219 Argyle Ave.
Ottawa (ON) K2P 1X3
613-232-0689
Fax: 613-232-0988
Email: noivmwc@web.net

Canadian Ethnocultural Council
1100-251 Laurier Ave. W.
Ottawa (ON) K1P 5J6
613-230-3867
Fax: 613-230-8051
Email: cec@web.net
Website: http://www.web.net/~cec/

REGIONAL

Atlantic Canada
Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies
c/o Richard Campbell (president)
Canadian Red Cross, Refugee Centre
P.O. Box 39
Saint John (NB) E2L 3Y3
506-633-0398
Fax: 506-633-8994

Western Canada
Western Canadian Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies
c/o Marge Nainaar (president)
Prince Albert Multicultural Society
17-11th St. W.
Prince Albert (SK) S6V 3A8
306-922-0405
Fax: 306-764-4880

PROVINCIAL

British Columbia
Immigrant Integration Coordinating Committee (IICC), Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of B.C. (AMSSA)
385 South Boundary Road
Vancouver, (BC) V5K 4S1
604-298-5949
fax: 604-298-0747
Email: amssa@amssa.org
IICC Website: http://www.amssa.org/iicc
Occupational Competencies Project (relating to the immigrant and multicultural services subsector): http://www.amssa.org/ocp

Alberta
Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (AAISA)
c/o Fariborz Birjandian (chairperson)
Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
#30-120 -17 Ave. SW
Calgary (AB) T2S 2T2
403-262-2006
Fax: 403-262-2003

Saskatchewan
Saskatchewan Association of Immigrant Settlement and Integration Agencies (SAISIA)
c/o Michael Hanna (president)
Saskatoon Open Door Society
311-4th Ave N.
Saskatoon (SK) S7K 2L8
306-653-4464
Fax: 306-653-4404
Email: mjhsods@the.link.ca

Manitoba
International Centre
406 Edmonton Street
Winnipeg (MN) R3B 2M2
204-943-9158
Fax: 204-956-7548
Email: icentre@solutions.mb.ca
Website: http://www.icwpg.mb.ca

Ontario
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)
110 Eglington Ave. West, #200
Toronto (ON) M4R 1A3
416-322-4950
Fax: 416-322-8084
Email: ocasi1@web.net
Website: http://www.web.net/~ocasi1

Quebec
Table de concertation des organismes de Montréal au service des réfugiés
1710, rue Amherst, Suite 7
Montréal (QC) H2L 3L5
514-528-1959
Fax: 514-528-7567
Email: tcmr@babylon.montreal.qc.ca

APPENDIX II   ACRONYMS

AAISA (ay-sa)	Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies
AAP	Adjustment Assistance Program (replaced by RAP)
AMSSA	Association of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC
ARAISA	Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies
AWR	Women at risk
CCR	Canadian Council for Refugees
CEC	Canadian Ethnocultural Council
CIC	Citizenship and Immigration Canada
CLB	Canadian Language Benchmarks
CR	Convention refugee
CR1	Government-assisted refugee
CRDD	Convention Refugee Determination Division (of the IRB)
CRS	Centre for Refugee Studies (York University)
DC	Designated class
DIRB	Documentation, Information and Research Branch (of the IRB)
DROC	Deferred Removal Order Class (cancelled)
ESL/FSL	English/French as a second language
EXCOM	Executive Committee (of the UNHCR)
H & C	Humanitarian and compassionate
HDC	Humanitarian Designated Classes (what used to be called RAC)
HRD(C)	Human Resources Development (Canada)
ICCR (icker)	Inter-Church Committee for Refugees
IDP	Internally displaced person
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service (U.S.)
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRB	Immigration and Refugee Board
ISAP	Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program
LINC	Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada
MAH	Master Agreement Holder (replaced by Sponsorship Agreement Holder)
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NHQ	National Headquarters
NOIVMWC	National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada
OCASI	Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
OM	Operational Memorandum
PCDO	Post-claim determination officer
PDRCCC	Post-Determination Refugee Claimant in Canada Class
PIF	Personal Information Form - completed by refugee claimants
POE	Port of Entry
RAC	Resettlement from Abroad Class (name - now abandoned - of new class for people in refugee-like situations abroad. See HDC)
RAP	Resettlement Assistance Program (formerly AAP)
RCO	Refugee Claim Officer (employee of IRB)
RHO	Refugee Hearing Officer (at the IRB; now called RCO)

RRDR	Research Resource Division for Refugees (Carleton University)
SAH	Sponsorship Agreement Holder
SIO	Senior Immigration Officer
SMIS	Settlement Management Information System
SPO	Service-provider organization
TESL	Teaching English as a Second Language
TCMR	Table de Concertation des Organismes de Montréal au Service des Réfugiés
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TRAC	Toronto Refugee Affairs Council
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UCRCC	Undocumented Convention Refugee in Canada Class
WCAISA	Western Canadian Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies

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