



Citizenship and
Immigration Canada

Citoyenneté et
Immigration Canada



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Working to Promote Welcoming and Inclusive Communities

Presentation to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Citizenship and Immigration Canada
BUILDING A STRONGER CANADA



Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada
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Canada

Overview



- Characteristics of Welcoming Communities
- Role of Community Connections
- Community Connections Activities



Characteristics that Enable Communities to Attract and Retain Newcomers

3

Fostering of social capital

- Development of social networking opportunities for newcomers
- Opportunities for social engagement and political participation

Appropriate immigrant-serving agencies, working cooperatively

- Presence of newcomer-serving agencies that can successfully meet the needs of newcomers (including municipal services)
- Links between main actors working toward welcoming communities

Accessible and available mainstream community services and factors

- Services: educational opportunities, healthcare, public transit
- Factors: employment opportunities, affordable housing, accessible public spaces and recreational facilities, presence of diverse religious organizations, degree of safety, relationships with police and justice system

Positive Community Attitudes and Media Representation

- Positive Attitudes toward Immigrants, Cultural Diversity, and the Presence of Newcomers in the Community
- Favourable Media Coverage and Representation

Source: Victoria M. Esses (UWO) *et al.*, 2010



Community Areas of Work: Baseline Data

- FCM's Quality of Life Reporting System can be a good way to take stock of where a community is in working towards some of these characteristics, i.e.:

Characteristics of a Welcoming Community

Fostering of social capital:

- Development of social networking opportunities for newcomers
- **Opportunities for social engagement and political participation**

Accessible and available mainstream community services and factors

- Services: **educational opportunities, healthcare**, public transit
- Factors: **employment opportunities, affordable housing**, accessible public spaces and recreational facilities, presence of diverse religious organizations, **degree of safety**, relationships with police and justice system

QOLRS Indicator Categories

- Demographic and Background Information
- **Affordable, appropriate housing**
- **Civic Engagement**
- **Education**
- **Employment**
- Local Economy
- Natural Environment
- **Personal and Community Health**
- Personal Financial Security
- **Personal Safety**



How do we all get there?

Role of Community Connections

The Community Connections stream of the Settlement Program aims to:

- Work with mainstream organizations to address newcomer needs (e.g. Settlement Workers in Schools, Library Settlement Partnerships or Community Health Centres);
- Support welcoming, safe and inclusive spaces where newcomers can access information, services and other public assets (e.g. Welcome Centres).
- Enable local stakeholders to collaboratively develop plans, strategies and tools (e.g. Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs), Toolkit for Smaller Centres);
- Communicate best practices and share information and expertise;
- Connect vulnerable groups with their Canadian-born counterparts and established support networks (e.g. mentoring, connecting parents with young children to early childhood development networks, newcomer seniors to seniors networks, entrepreneurs to business networks etc.);



Welcoming Communities Initiative

- **Welcoming Communities Initiative (WCI)** – projects aim to address racism and discrimination as key barriers to settlement and integration.
- Focuses on creating connections between newcomers and Canadians with the goal of addressing racism and discrimination as key barriers to settlement and integration. Partners contribute to an array of awareness-building and outreach activities, create and offer tools and resources, or provide direct services. More than 50 projects across the country have been funded with a budget of \$16.4 million over 5 years.

Examples:

- DiverCity on Boards
- Safe Harbour
- Toolbox for Small Centres



Welcoming Communities Initiative (Con't): Toolbox for Small Centres

- 'Attracting & Retaining Immigrants A Tool Box of Ideas for Smaller Centres'
- Created by the National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies Funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada
- It contains: Canada's population picture, the importance of community consensus and how to build it, Canada's immigration laws, getting organized, important key factors like family ties, employment and housing, attracting people whether immigrants or others, and the many attributes of a welcoming community and how to develop them
- Even more importantly, it also contains the following information in both official languages:
 - handout about Differences -Cultural Norms & Values
 - practical suggestions about how to welcome a newcomer in your community
 - applicable suggestions to improve cross-cultural communications
 - useful tips for Organizing a Multicultural- Diversity Event
 - plain language handout introducing sensitive topics such as our *Learned Cultural Bias and Prejudice*
 - sensible guidelines for Multicultural Collaboration

More can be learned about the Toolbox at

<http://www.icavictoria.org/community/community-partnership-resources/toolbox-ideas>



Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs)

- Agreements between municipalities and local stakeholders to develop a comprehensive, coordinated and collaborative strategy for the settlement and integration of newcomers to their communities.
- Currently being piloted in Ontario communities.
- A total of 33 partnerships have improved access to, and coordination of, essential settlement services.
- The March 2010, Standing Committee Report on Best Practices in Settlement Services recommends that the Government of Canada continue to support and expand Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) in Ontario and explore the potential of expanding similar pilot projects to other interested provinces.



Community Connections: Outputs and Expected Outcomes

9

Outputs:

1. Mainstream institutions are engaged in the settlement and integration of newcomers in their communities.
2. Relevant community leaders and stakeholders are involved in the development of plans to create/sustain welcoming communities.
3. Best practices in creating/sustaining welcoming communities are shared and utilized by interested parties.
4. Newcomers and host communities interact with one another.

Expected Outcomes:

1. *Being*

- Newcomers recognize their personal social engagement needs and goals
- Communities understand the importance of integration and their role in the process

2. *Belonging*

- Communities are capable and willing to accept immigrants
- Newcomers are recognized by their receiving communities
- Newcomers feel they belong within the community

3. *Participating*

- Newcomers have positive community interactions and form social networks
- Canadians actively engage in the settlement process (as friends, volunteers, instructors, guest speakers, etc)

