Creating a Welcoming Prairie Community
Through Community Partnerships

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Overview

- Provincial Immigration Policy and Context
- Introduction to the Brandon Case Study
- Initiatives to Foster a Welcoming Community
- Implications for Community Development, Policy, and Research
Provincial Context

- Provincial Nominee Program
• Provincial declaration to double number of immigrants from 10,000 to 20,000 in ten years

• Trend of immigrants residing outside Winnipeg
Brandon, MB

- Population of 41,511 (2006)
- Second largest community in Manitoba
- Retail and service centre for surrounding rural and agricultural communities
- Historically, low number of immigrants to the community
Immigration Phenomena

- 2001
  - Labour shortages in both skilled and unskilled professions
  - First foreign worker recruitment campaign conducted in Mexico by Maple Leaf Foods
- by 2008
  - 1,500 international recruits employed in the community
  - Source countries: Mexico, El Salvador, Ukraine, China, Colombia, and Mauritius
  - Brandon records the highest rate of immigration growth in Manitoba
A State of Demographic Fluctuation
Welcoming Community

- According to the National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies, a welcoming community ...

  - has a strong desire to receive newcomers and to create an environment in which they will feel at home

  - ensures newcomers are able to participate fully in all aspects of community life

  - ensures newcomers have access to a full range of services, programs, and can find meaningful employment
Responding via Community Partnerships

- Establish a multi-stakeholder community or regional group
- Foster capacity and partnership building
- Develop local immigration plans
- Celebrate diversity
- Explore holistic approaches to service provision
Welcoming Community Dialogue Group

- Established in 2007
- Multi-stakeholder forum including representatives of community-serving organizations, provincial government, federal government, and industry
- Forum for community serving organizations, industry, government and researchers
• Community initiatives
  
  • Pre-arrival registrations of school-aged children
  
  • Linguistic cooperative

• Research initiatives

  • Building Capacity and Skills for a Welcoming Community
  
  • Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies

  • interviews with 200 recent immigrants and 200 long-term community residents regarding characteristics of a welcoming community and intercultural relations
Initial Findings

- Brandon is a welcoming community
  - 80% of Canadian long-term residents agreed
  - 90% of Chinese and Latin American new residents agreed
- Brandon is a good place to raise a family
  - 97% of both Canadian long-term residents and Latin American new residents agreed
  - 43% of Chinese new residents agreed
Implications Emerging from Brandon

- Community Development and Practice
  - Need for forums on rural immigration discussions
  - Need to build relationships among local stakeholders, industry, and government departments

- Policy
  - Need to share lessons learned with other jurisdictions
  - Increased attention to immigration policy related to rural and northern populations

- Academia
  - Academic immigration literature is predominantly urban focused
  - Strengthen immigration research networks focused on non-traditional immigrant receiving communities
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