

The following paper is considered open to suggestions and feedback.

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# ***Settlement: Considerations for Temporary Foreign Workers and their Families in Brandon, Manitoba***

## **Discussion Paper 3**

### ***Acknowledgments:***

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## Introduction

The Rural Development Institute (RDI) at Brandon University identified a need to bring together representatives from all levels of government, community, academia, and industry to address community challenges and knowledge gaps related to the arrival and settlement of temporary foreign workers and their families. The Temporary Foreign Worker Dialogue Group meets regularly and serves as a mechanism to better understand the temporary foreign worker process while developing an open atmosphere to share information amongst service providers, policy makers, industry, and researchers. The group chooses and discusses pertinent topics, often engaging guest speakers to target discussion and inform policy, programming, and research. This dialogue group continues to grow in interest and popularity as the value of such meetings is recognized by all involved stakeholders.

A series of discussion papers focused on topics explored during the RDI Temporary Foreign Worker Dialogue Group meetings will be produced as a tool for knowledge dissemination. The intention is to produce knowledge that is truly discussion-oriented by encouraging stakeholders' feedback throughout the writing process as well as opening the papers to discussion at each dialogue group meeting. While not claiming to be an all-inclusive review of each topic, these papers will represent an attempt to fill knowledge gaps related to temporary foreign workers and rural immigration while also advancing the importance of collaborative communication processes amongst those stakeholders in the realms of research, practice, and policy.<sup>1</sup>

An inaugural meeting was hosted by RDI in September, 2007. The meeting's goals were to create group structure and processes and establish content to encourage open and dynamic discussion responding to the need for clarity and direction for community and government stakeholders. A second meeting, held in November, 2007, focused on clarifying the expectations, roles and perspectives of key stakeholders involved in the temporary foreign worker process. A third meeting, held in January, 2008, focused on issues of settlement and sought to clarify the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in ensuring the settlement of temporary foreign workers. To ensure that the topic of settlement was thoroughly explored, the fourth meeting, held in May, 2008, focused on the experiences of the Brandon School Division and the Regional Health Authority. This paper will focus on the discussions presented at the third and fourth dialogue group meetings, combined with information gleaned from literature reviews.

The Rural Development Institute's involvement in the field of rural immigration has been relatively recent. In 2005 RDI hosted a rural immigration think tank session, engaging participants from national and international interest groups. Since that time RDI has conducted four Manitoba case studies examining impact and community change associated with the flow of immigrants into rural areas<sup>2</sup>. In light of the conclusions reached through those case studies and suggestions to consider each immigrant experience as unique in its own right, attention has shifted towards temporary foreign workers. While being categorically different from those immigrants studied in the Manitoba Case Studies, the arrival of temporary foreign workers poses unique challenges and considerations for rural communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Individual names and identifying characteristics will not be mentioned so as to present information in a broad manner, without attributions to particular individuals. This paper represents an aggregate of information focused on what is happening at the federal, provincial, and community levels, but does not intend to be all-encompassing. The information presented here is meant to prove instructive for further research and policy considerations and to facilitate collaboration and communication between communities and government.

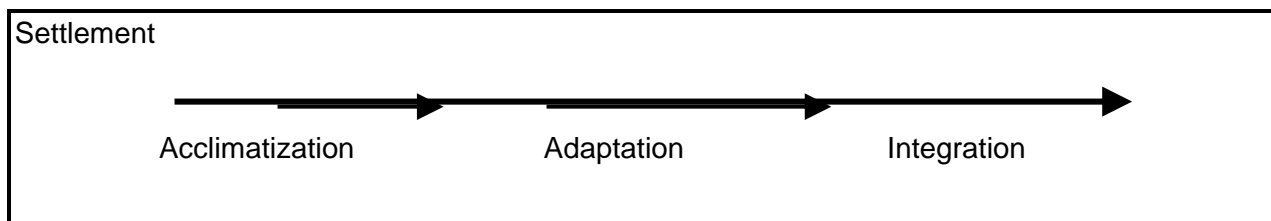
<sup>2</sup> All case studies are available online at <http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/publications.asp>.

In Brandon, Manitoba, immigration and associated community changes have recently become a topic of local interest. Economic growth, expanding operations at industries such as Maple Leaf Foods, and associated labour shortages in lower-skilled jobs have prompted employers to re-evaluate recruitment and hiring practices, extending employee searches beyond the local, provincial, and national labour pools to other countries. Jointly regulated and managed by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Human Resources and Social Development Canada, the Pilot Project for Occupations Requiring Lower Levels of Formal Training (referred to as the NOC C and D program)<sup>3</sup> offers employers an expedited process to address labour shortages, albeit on a temporary basis. In Manitoba, temporary foreign workers are offered the opportunity to apply for provincial nominee status after working in the province for six months, which fundamentally alters the foundational principles of a ‘temporary’ migration program. Therefore, temporary foreign workers are considered a source of permanent immigrants, thus contributing to the provinces annual immigration targets. In general, Manitoba’s immigration policies and documented success with the Provincial Nominee Program make it a unique case in which to study rural immigration and temporary workers.

### What is settlement?

Settlement is not something that is easily defined. It is a process that individuals go through in very unique ways, according to their personal experiences and needs. Settlement is closely linked with integration and both can be seen on a continuum involving a process that includes adjustment/acclimatization, adaptation, and integration to a new community and society [see figure 1] (Canadian Council for Refugees 1998). Settlement services should be designed to help newcomers through the process of progressing from adjustment to a new society, environment, culture, and language, adaptation to new situations and social networks, and integration into community life, including sustaining a stable livelihood and developing a sense of belonging (Lam, Jacobs, and Neuwirth 1997).

Figure 1: The Settlement / Integration Continuum:



According to the Canadian Council for Refugees (2000), settlement can be understood as

*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.*

In their training guide for settlement service providers, the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (1991) provides the following definition

*Settlement is 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. The settlement*

<sup>3</sup>This program includes those with skill levels classified as National Occupational Classification C and D (high-school diploma or on-the-job-training).

*process can be viewed as a continuum, as newcomers move from acclimatization, to adaptation, to integration.*

According to the National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies (2005), settlement is “the process of receiving and integrating newcomers” and ensuring the creation of a welcoming community.

Measuring ‘successful’ settlement is more difficult than defining settlement. There are a number of indicators for understanding successful settlement, which include economic and/or social integration; however, measuring such intangible concepts is challenging and subject to interpretation. Also, measures of success will differ amongst immigrant statuses and amongst individuals themselves. One of the most agreed upon keys to successful settlement is ensuring that newcomers have the necessary skills, knowledge, and information to become fully participating members of a community and society. Ultimately, the processes and measurements of settlement are complex and varied.

According to the literature, the following are some of the most important areas that must be considered and adequately addressed when ensuring full participation of newcomers in a community (Westman Immigrant Services 2007):

- Language;
- Access to employment;
- Cultural orientation;
- Recognition of qualifications and experience;
- Address possible racism/discrimination;
- Family reunification;
- Immigration status; and
- Building communities.

It is important to acknowledge that settlement involves two key actors – the newcomer and the host community. Both engage in periods of adjustment and adaptation, and it is the responsibility of the community to ensure successful integration by offering resources and opportunities. Settlement and integration can be a long process that requires commitment from the community and individuals. Above all else, settlement and integration must be viewed as a matter of choice on the part of the newcomer. Newcomers must be able to choose their own level of participation in a society and it is up to the community to ensure that the newcomer is free of barriers throughout the decision-making process.

### **Who is responsible for settlement services?**

In Canada, immigration is a shared responsibility between the federal and provincial governments. The nature of provincial involvement in and programs and policies on immigration varies amongst provinces. The Province of Manitoba takes an active role in identifying immigration targets and attraction and settlement strategies, working with municipal governments and communities to identify settlement needs. To ensure settlement and integration of newcomers, which includes their unhindered ability to contribute to and participate fully in Manitoban communities, the province has identified the following policy and programming priorities:

- Enhanced settlement services;
- Increased English as an Additional Language training programs;
- Labour market integration strategies; and
- Ethnocultural community and anti-racism initiatives (Amoyaw 2008).

Most often, newcomers directly receive assistance from organizations that specialize in immigrant settlement services. Settlement and immigrant service provider organizations are non-government organizations, but receive operational and program funding from government sources. Settlement service provision can be a difficult task as newcomers' needs for different services varies greatly. These organizations face many challenges such as limited funding, overburdened human resources, changing policies and programming, and service delivery gaps or redundancies.

The Canadian Council for Refugees (1998) provides a comprehensive guideline of best practices for settlement service providers, organized around the following core values. While it may be difficult for organizations to implement such core values, the list can be seen as an ideal for organizations to strive towards. These core values can assist service providers in developing a framework and standards for service provisions:

- Services that are accessible to all who need them;
- Services offered in an inclusive manner, respectful of and sensitive to diversity;
- Client empowerment and user-defined services;
- Holistic approach taking into account the complex, multifaceted, interrelated dimensions of settlement and integration;
- Respect for rights and dignity of the individual;
- Culturally sensitive service delivery;
- Services should promote the development of newcomer communities and newcomer participation in the wider community, and develop communities that are welcoming for newcomers;
- Collaboration;
- Accountability to the communities being served;
- Orientation towards promoting positive change in the lives of newcomers and in the capacity of society to offer equal opportunity for all; and
- Reliable, up-to-date information.

Further to the previous list, the Canadian Council for Refugees also suggests that all categories of immigrants and refugees have the right to the following services:

- Pre-arrival and port of entry information (including information about Canada and availability of support services);
- Initial intake and welcome (orientation to services, assessment of immediate needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and safety);
- Assessment, information, referral and follow up (identification of other needs, prioritization of needs, development of short-term and long-term plans and implementation strategies, information and referral, follow up and re-assessment of needs, evaluation);
- Orientation (practical, cultural and social);
- Facilitating access to appropriate services;
- Volunteer and peer support services;
- Supportive counselling;
- Specialized services for survivors of torture and trauma;
- Language training;
- Employment counselling and training; and
- Community capacity building.

Informally, newcomers may find that they receive needed settlement services from social networks including family and friends. They may also receive informal assistance from members

of their new community, ethnocultural organizations, and other institutions. It is important to recognize that settlement service providers are not the only source of service provision. Considering the role of institutions such as schools, housing, and health care in the settlement and integration processes is also part of the settlement and integration process.

### *Welcoming Communities*

Successful settlement is as much about integration as it is about ensuring a welcoming community that positively reacts to newcomers and includes them in community life. A welcoming community respects diversity and exudes positive attitudes towards the arrival of newcomers who come with different languages and cultures. Anti-racism initiatives and cultural diversity celebrations are critical components of a welcoming community as well as successful settlement and integration. Newcomers must not feel threatened or excluded in their new home and efforts must be taken to ensure a hospitable environment. The National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies (2005) outlines the following factors in ensuring a welcoming community:

- Respect diversity;
- Ensure accessible public services;
- Ensure a range of educational opportunities;
- Promote health and wellness for all;
- Safety;
- Invite newcomers to share leisure-time activities; and
- Acknowledge faith and spirituality.

An example of a community that has taken extra efforts to ensure that is welcoming and inclusive is Sherbrooke, Quebec (Corriveau and La Rougery 2006). The community has developed and implemented forward-looking, proactive planning and policies at the municipal level to ensure retention and inclusion of newcomers. With consultations and input from community members and immigrants, the City of Sherbrooke developed a municipal policy on welcoming and integrating immigrants to manage increasing ethnocultural diversity.

### **Settlement and Temporary Foreign Workers**

The basic settlement needs (those that are required for day-to-day living) for temporary foreign workers are not entirely different than for other immigrants. Initially upon arrival temporary foreign workers need housing, language and support services, transportation, and health care. After receiving provincial nominee status and as family reunification occurs, those needs still apply, but do change to include education and childcare. In Manitoba, temporary foreign workers are eligible for the following provincial services (Westman Immigrant Services 2007):

- Manitoba Health Insurance;
- Employment Insurance (eligible after working for one-year in Canada, with SIN number and insurable earnings in the previous year with at least 910 working hours );
- Canada Pension Plan (eligible if contributions to CPP have been made and with valid employment earnings);
- Canada Child Tax Benefit (eligible if living in Canada for 18 months with a valid work permit);
- Child Related Income Support Program (eligible with a valid Manitoba Health Registration number and if receiving Child Tax Benefit); and
- Healthy Baby Prenatal Benefit (eligible with a valid Manitoba Health Number).

Within Brandon, there has been confusion around who holds responsibility for temporary foreign workers. Little is known about who is or should be providing services for temporary foreign workers (Anderson 2007). Prior to receiving provincial nominee status, most of the needs of temporary foreign workers fall under the responsibility of the employer. Typically immigrant service provider organizations have not been mandated or funded to provide services to temporary foreign workers. While employers may provide some services to temporary foreign workers, service gaps still exist. In rural areas that receive temporary foreign workers, even less opportunities exist for service provision as service provider organizations are limited or non-existent and established ethnocultural communities are few. Combined with a temporary status, temporary foreign workers arriving in rural areas can face extreme isolation and exclusion from the community and specifically from service provision strategies and programs.

Much literature states that one of the primary factors of successful settlement is employment, and, in fact, if newcomers can integrate economically then this will lead to easier social and cultural integration. In the case of temporary foreign workers, employment is a precondition of their arrival to a community and they do not need to find employment upon arrival to Canada. Also, as outlined in the federal government's NOC C and D program, employers must ensure that a number of key settlement needs are addressed prior to the arrival of temporary foreign workers including the availability of adequate, affordable housing. Maple Leaf Foods in Brandon goes beyond their required responsibilities and assists in the provision of transportation, health care, language classes, and other immediate settlement needs. Since a number of settlement needs are addressed by their employer, the list of services required by temporary foreign workers is shorter than those immigrants coming to Canada via other streams.

Temporary foreign workers have the opportunity to apply to the Provincial Nominee Program after six months of working in the province, which is an option communicated prior to arriving in Canada. If temporary foreign workers receive provincial nominee status and if they remain with the same employer, one of the most important factors for settlement is already addressed - employment. However, their previous temporary status and the uncertainty of receiving provincial nominee status may impact other aspects of settlement and it is not known whether temporary foreign workers progress through a similar settlement continuum as other immigrants. Temporary foreign workers do not have their families with them, their status beyond the two-year work permit is not completely ensured until they receive provincial nominee status, and their choices are limited since their work permit requires that they work for one employer. Temporary foreign workers' conditions in Canada are precarious, unsettled, and temporary until they receive a more permanent status of immigration. Upon receiving provincial nominee status, temporary foreign workers may fare better than other immigrants; they have lived and worked in Manitoba for up to two years, participated in initial orientation sessions, become familiar with a community, and presumably developed social networks and relationships. Further research on the experiences of transitioning from temporary to permanent status would illustrate settlement and integration patterns as well as the unique needs that a temporary status may present.

## **Reflections on Settlement of Temporary Foreign Workers in Brandon**

### *Maple Leaf Foods*

Maple Leaf Foods is the key contributor to the influx of temporary foreign workers in Brandon. Since 2002, the plant has undergone large scale international recruitment efforts to address labour shortages. Maple Leaf Foods has been increasing their labour force to implement a full second kill and cut shift since June 2008. With the second shift in operation, the processing capacity of the plant will increase from 50,000 hogs per week to more than 86,000 per week. By the end of 2009 the Brandon plant will have the capacity to process 4.3 million hogs annually.



The increase in productivity requires an increase in labour and continued recruitment from overseas will address such shortages.

Currently there are more than 1,700 employees at the Maple Leaf Foods plant in Brandon. Approximately 60% of employees are international recruits and 300 are Aboriginal (Boeve and Annis 2008). At present there are 939 international recruits employed at plant; when compared to the total number recruited (1,050) indicates a retention rate of 89% since 2002.

It is estimated that more than half of the temporary foreign worker population has been approved for provincial nominee status, while the other half is in the process of applying. Upon receiving provincial nominee status, temporary foreign workers can initiate family reunification. More than 2,100 family member arrivals are anticipated in Brandon over the next year as applications for provincial nominee status are approved (Economic Development Brandon 2008). It is estimated that approximately 3,953 family members (children and spouses) will arrive in Brandon over the next three years. In light of these estimates, the City of Brandon can anticipate 5,692 new residents by 2011, which represents nearly 14% of the city's current population (41,511).

In Brandon, Maple Leaf Foods staffing procedures occur within three streams: 1) domestic; 2) international; and 3) salaried. To meet the company's labour needs, both domestic and international recruitment efforts are on-going. The first group of international recruits arrived to Brandon from Mexico in 2002. Since then workers have been recruited from El Salvador, Ukraine, China, Colombia, and Mauritius. It is estimated that over time there may be less need to use international labour pools to meet company needs as the current Maple Leaf Foods staffing model encompasses changing corporate needs and attrition. By 2012, it is expected that Maple Leaf Foods will only need to recruit approximately one-hundred temporary foreign workers per year as opposed to the hundreds that are currently required to meet expansion demands.

Settlement is an issue taken seriously by Maple Leaf Foods and it is in their best interest to ensure that temporary foreign workers have their needs met. Prior to arrival in Canada, Maple Leaf Foods ensures the following pre-arrival settlement and orientation procedures:

- Transportation arrangements from the airport to Brandon;
- Affordable and appropriate accommodations; and
- Housing and settlement packages (rental damage deposit; first month rent; bed and linens; groceries; cash; weather appropriate clothing).

The arrival procedure is standardized for all new groups of temporary foreign workers. This procedure has new temporary foreign workers arriving to Winnipeg International Airport on a Wednesday, where they spend their first two nights in a hotel and apply for social insurance numbers and Manitoba Health numbers. Following that, they sign rental lease agreements and participate in a daily living orientation session. When developing settlement packages for new arrivals, Maple Leaf Foods considers associated needs related to country of origin. Part of the orientation training includes teaching respect for cultural diversity in the workplace, which includes training for domestic and international Maple Leaf Foods employees; salaried and leadership staff members are required to take part in additional intensified respect and diversity training. New domestic and international staff members go through similar orientation processes; however, international workers receive specific orientation that includes daily living and adjustment/requirements of working in Canada.

Acknowledging that settlement involves both the newcomer and the community, Maple Leaf Foods has made efforts to involve the community in the process. To aid the settlement process

and increase communication in the community, six Maple Leaf Foods employees are assigned roles as Community Steering Committee (CSC) liaisons. Each liaison serves as a bridge between the company and the community, representing one of the six settlement priorities as determined by Maple Leaf Foods:

- Housing CSC representative procures housing for new recruits prior to their arrival;
- Education CSC representative assists with pre-registration of family members and assists in 'school readiness';
- Health care CSC representative communicates existing and anticipated demographic characteristics of international recruits with local health service providers;
- Transportation CSC representative works with the City of Brandon to incorporate appropriate changes to public transportation routes and times to accommodate Maple Leaf Foods employees and their shifts;
- Childcare CSC representative works to communicate the need for local 'philanthropic social responsibility' to meet childcare needs; and
- Language and support service CSC representative communicates with service providers and works to increase community preparedness.

In addition, Maple Leaf Foods Brandon employs two Human Resource Generalists, of which one is fluent in Spanish and the other is fluent in Mandarin. Also, there is a Human Resource Coordinator to assist temporary foreign workers with the paperwork they may encounter including applications to the Provincial Nominee Program. The plant has a settlement team located in Brandon that assists newcomers with pre- and post-arrival needs.

Maple Leaf Foods measures successful settlement by the extent to which their labour force needs have been addressed. Also, success is seen in merely getting new groups of temporary foreign workers into Canada. More specifically, success involves the integration of temporary foreign workers into Brandon and their workplace as well as continuing employment at the plant once provincial nominee and/or permanent residency status is obtained. Retention beyond three years currently constitutes success and anything beyond that period is viewed as a bonus. Family reunification is also viewed as a key component of success, if that is the goal of the individual. For Maple Leaf Foods, success also constitutes reaching the company's target demographic for employees, which include young workers with young families. Younger workers will have a greater possibility of a lengthy career with company with strong potential to transition into leadership roles.

### *Westman Immigrant Services*

Westman Immigrant Services is Brandon's sole immigrant service provider organization. The organization was mandated and funded to provide services only to immigrants with permanent resident status (federally immigrants or provincial nominees). Recent policy changes have given Westman Immigrant Services the ability to provide all available services to temporary foreign workers, except for English as an Additional Language (EAL) classes and employment counseling. These recent policy and program changes have been influenced by the need to support newcomers outside of typical immigration streams.

The influx of temporary foreign workers in Brandon has caused new challenges for the organization as increased demand on their resources has stretched services beyond capacity. Currently there are six employees at Westman Immigrant Services – two of which are settlement workers. The Province of Manitoba has expressed an intention to increase the staff and capacity of the organization, but there are spatial constraints and limitations to be

considered. Westman Immigrant Services is considered an important point of initial contact for newcomers.

Settlement workers typically become more involved with temporary foreign workers upon receipt of their provincial nominee status and during the process of family reunification. An objective of Westman Immigrant Services is to ensure that newcomers' needs are being sufficiently and appropriately met. An important function of the organization is to ensure that newcomers have a clear understanding of what rights and options they are entitled to including information about basic services such as food, clothing, housing and documentation. Also, the organization provides EAL classes for new immigrants, with the exception of temporary foreign workers prior to their receipt of provincial nominee status. More specifically, Westman Immigrant Services ensures that newcomers have information regarding the following:

- School registrations;
- Day care;
- Finding and consulting with a family doctor and dentist;
- Child tax benefits;
- GST;
- Family allowance;
- Banking;
- Brandon in general;
- Local transportation; and
- Community services.

From the perspective of Westman Immigrant Services, settlement success equals respect for diversity, accepting and celebrating original and Canadian cultures. A key factor in successful settlement and integration is supporting newcomers as they move along their career paths and obtain English language skills, which are critical for future employment. Coordinating services, increasing communication amongst stakeholders, and creating a point of access are viewed as key indicators of success for the organization as they assist newcomers.

### *City of Brandon*

Immigrant settlement and integration receives much attention and resources from municipal government and the City of Brandon. A common goal amongst stakeholders and involved parties is to plan proactively for anticipated changes and challenges. Communication is part of the City's role in educating and identifying changing needs in the community and the economy. Historically, demographics and labour needs have been static in Brandon and an existing concern is that recent changes and local needs will be viewed as an anomaly. The reality is that Brandon's composition and needs have changed and will likely continue to evolve over time. Effective communication and education are crucial when fostering awareness and enhancing the experience of locals and newcomers through periods of transition.

The City's role in the recent arrival of temporary foreign workers is primarily viewed as a facilitating body, ensuring communication amongst stakeholders, and bridging gaps between businesses, service providers, and community. Also, the City cooperatively assists with the issuance of Labour Market Opinions<sup>4</sup>, sharing local labour information with Human Resources and Social Development Canada/Service Canada. As part of economic growth strategies, the City supports the needs of local industry when necessary. When Maple Leaf Foods began recruiting temporary foreign workers to the Brandon plant, the City played a more active role in

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<sup>4</sup> A labour market opinion is provided by Human Resources and Social Development Canada/Service Canada on the potential impact that hiring temporary foreign workers may have on the Canadian labour market.

compiling a local settlement package. The City viewed this as an opportunity to work together to foster change in the local service delivery model for immigrants and migrants in Brandon. The City continues to advocate for increased local settlement resources.

It is in the City's interest to support the settlement process of temporary foreign workers and their families into Brandon. In general, success is seen as local growth in industry and social services. Local success entails retaining new families in southwestern Manitoba, even if they do not continue to remain employed by Maple Leaf Foods. Re-emphasizing the need for the City to remain a neutral stakeholder in the process, nurturing a balanced approach to growth, development and associated needs is of utmost importance. Fostering social cohesion through local and provincial government programming is critical.

Also, community diversity is viewed as a factor of success. Community 'readiness' will play a role in the acceptance and respect of such diversity. To ensure a welcoming community, the City is working on developing a strategic cultural plan to be presented to council. Local strategies to welcome newcomers, assistance in settlement processes, and resolving concerns are important factors when ensuring that newcomers remain in Brandon. The concern is that after a period of time if Brandon is not successful in planning and accommodating needs then newcomers will move to Winnipeg or elsewhere. Since immigration is currently a file of the Economic Development office, it is possible that in the future a local immigration office may be established.

### *Manitoba Labour and Immigration*

In 2007, Manitoba welcomed over 10,000 newcomers, which was a 9% increase from the previous year's total and comprises 4.6% of all immigrants to Canada (Manitoba Labour and Immigration 2008). Aggressive provincial immigration targets intend to double current immigrant arrivals to 20,000 per year over the next ten years. To support such arrivals, Manitoba Labour and Immigration facilitates post-arrival success of newcomers through supporting local service delivery and a comprehensive settlement strategy.

Through the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement<sup>5</sup>, signed in 1996 and renewed in 2003, the province of Manitoba has adopted a Provincial Nominee Program and agreed to take responsibility for the attraction and settlement of immigrants that will contribute to the social and economic growth and advancement of the province. Manitoba's arrangement is seen as an effective strategy that is closely engaged and aligned with residents and newcomers, enabling service delivery to occur in a more customized manner through local decision making.

As the department responsible for immigration, Manitoba Labour and Immigration ensures that provincial program officers are actively engaged in the development and implementation of settlement services. Manitoba Labour and Immigration's guiding principles for settlement services include:

- Developing common service delivery standards;
- Specializing services;
- Minimizing duplication of services;
- Fostering input from newcomers to develop new programming;
- Increasing communication among all stakeholders;
- Establishing partnerships and best practices among all stakeholders, including all levels of government;

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<sup>5</sup>For a more detailed account the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement see <http://www.ci.gc.ca/english/department/laws-policy/agreements/manitoba/can-man-2003.asp#0>

- Avoiding replication of services that already exist for Manitobans;
- Facilitating newcomer's access to provincial services;
- Remaining non-ethno specific;
- Fostering independence; and
- Facilitating a collaborative model among agencies.

Manitoba Labour and Immigration's settlement strategy model includes the following settlement priorities (see Appendix 1 for a detailed chart)<sup>6</sup>:

- Provision of pre-arrival information;
- Centralization of initial information and orientation;
- Centralization of assessments and referral;
- Settlement and community supports;
- Employment supports;
- Qualification recognition supports; and
- Creation of specialized programming.

The Province's settlement model will be further enhanced over the next two years to ensure an effective immigration settlement strategy. These changes will be based on observations and experiences of settlement in Winnipeg where centralized programming consisting of a four week, half-day orientation program assists newcomers with understanding the options, laws and customs that are part of their new society. The hope exists that in the future similar programming will be available outside of Winnipeg.

Effective communication is a critical component of settlement processes. It is important to ensure that needs are being sufficiently met and that duplication of services is avoided. Provincial programming hinges on local and community efforts to ensure success through communication, partnerships and engagements. The Province's role is viewed as a facilitator; however, settlement strategies and processes often require more direct involvement from the Province.

Language training continues to be a key objective in the settlement and integration process. The potential to build on neighbourhood programming to deliver language services is being explored; this is viewed as especially important in a large urban centre where, historically, programming occurs in the core. Efforts will be made to build on existing networks to foster community development in neighborhoods, connecting people and place. The Province is exploring the possibility of developing English at work training programs, encouraging employers to incorporate language instruction to improve workplace efficacy.

In the past, temporary foreign workers have not been eligible for all settlement services; however, they have been eligible for EAL training in the workplace, which is a co-funded program with employers. As needed, temporary foreign workers are eligible for other services; however, it is recognized that if services are completely open to temporary foreign workers the system may become quickly overloaded with demand. It is therefore necessary to work together to develop a model that works for all stakeholders and newcomers.

From a provincial perspective, successful settlement entails social and economic integration into Manitoban society. Success is evident when newcomers are gainfully employed, contributing and participating in communities. Assisting rural communities in retaining newcomers is a common goal; however, retention within Manitoba is considered success. Provincial regionalization policy reflects the initial goal of supporting communities in their pursuit to attract

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<sup>6</sup>For more information see <http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/immigrate/>

and retain immigrants, but movement to urban centres and retention within Manitoba is favorably viewed. It should be noted that the opposite phenomenon of newcomers migrating from urban to rural settings is being observed and this is also positively viewed.

## **Implications of Newcomer Arrivals for Public Services**

### *Brandon School Division*

After years of declining enrollment, the Brandon School Division is experiencing growth. The school division is now receiving, on average, five additional students per week (up from a previous average of 2 per week). Particularly noteworthy is the unprecedented enrollment of EAL students. Historically, the school division has received an average of 50 EAL students per year and most often these children have been from families working in higher skilled positions, thus bringing prior knowledge of English. Since 2005, the school division has been in a period of adjustment and transition as more EAL students arrive with lower English language proficiency. The number of schools offering EAL supports has increased from two to eight and soon all high schools in Brandon will have EAL programs. To date, the school division, of approximately 7,000 students, has enrolled 425 EAL students with 42% of those having basic to limited proficiency in English.

Pre-registration and a centralized registration process have been implemented and extra effort has been taken to establish communication with parents who may require further assistance. The early registration process establishes new students' catchment school and provides the school division with information to start early planning. For parents, the pre-registration allows for the participation of an interpreter so that the specific details of schooling can be clearly communicated. There are also additional activities being done outside the regular school day to ensure students' and parents' needs are being met. There is an EAL coalition in Brandon that involves a number of local stakeholders including Maple Leaf Foods and Westman Immigrant Services. There are pre-school services and before- and after-school programs for all students to work on homework and socialize; however, sustainable funding is needed in this area to further assist with school readiness.

When teaching EAL and developing EAL programs, new students need to be quickly integrated into hands-on learning opportunities that focus less on skill level and testing and more on functional, daily skills. Those new students with little knowledge of English are placed in language classes for half-a-day. On average, it takes students four to five years to learn English depending on their grade level and age. As school years in different countries are not always in sync, grade placement of students can often be a challenge, impacting their language development. The level of classroom instruction and focus on language development impacts how new EAL students acquire language. The largest amount of support for EAL students is and needs to be at the highest levels of schooling since these are the students who have the least amount of time to learn the language.

Immigration to the province of Manitoba is increasing faster than government resources, which is illustrated by the fact that there is only one EAL consultant in the provincial government for the entire province. The structure of provincial funding formulas for education, which is based on September 30<sup>th</sup> enrollment from the previous year, has resulted in staffing and resource shortages in the school division. The provincial funding formula works when enrollment is declining, but it does not work when numbers are increasing. Staffing and resource challenges are further exacerbated by a limited supply of EAL educators in Brandon. To alleviate some of the EAL issues, Brandon University is introducing programs, training, workshops, and professional development for EAL and many local teachers have enrolled in Spanish language

classes. In the coming years, more EAL students are expected, putting further pressure on resources.

Like many other public services in Brandon, the school division struggles with language barriers and has a need for interpretation and translation services. For example, the school division's Code of Conduct and other key documents (safety instructions, school policy) must be translated into at least 5 languages. With translation and interpretation issues of confidentiality are presented, especially when translators are not on staff and do not have knowledge of the school context. With considerations of translation and interpretation there are intersections amongst many issues such as justice, safety, health, social services, and family.

There is a strong need for the community of Brandon to be welcoming to newcomers. To ensure that challenges are addressed, the Brandon School Division needs to work with the community to ensure cultural and diversity awareness; this will translate into the classroom and on the playground. Within Brandon schools, there are various cultural fairs and celebrations that illustrate growing cultural awareness and desire to celebrate diversity. Cultural sensitivity training is provided to teachers, highlighting language and cultural barriers. The Brandon School Division is working towards increased cultural understanding through assistance from counsellors and targeted learning about new families and their unique needs.

Ideally, in five years, all schools within the Brandon School Division will boast diverse student bodies and will be welcoming, with clearly laid out programs and services. Before- and after-school programs and services would be in place, reflecting parents' work schedules. Every child would have literacy and numeracy skills and their life-long learning possibilities would be actively encouraged and realized. Through plans and programs for the future, the Brandon School Division intends to prepare students for college and university, foster language skills, and ensure the successful integration and settlement of new, diverse students.

#### *Brandon Regional Health Authority*

Language barriers are the most significant challenge for health care providers. Communicating information and procedures is difficult and slows the movement of people through the system. Limited English proficiency causes individuals to have difficulties understanding health service processes or diagnoses and simple procedures become complicated. Issues identifying next of kin, ensuring confidentiality, and dealing with sensitive health concerns (such as sexual health) are exacerbated by communication challenges. For example, when making appointments with post-partum nurses, oftentimes women wait for a time when their husband or a friend can help with translation. The sensitive nature of these appointments is an issue if others are joining the appointments and if there are cultural sensitivities. To cope with language barriers, health care providers have begun to use a phone line system (CanTalk) that accesses 150 different languages, with a 30 second response time. Health centres have had all key documents translated into Spanish, Mandarin, and Amharic and hired staff members that speak other languages.

Staffing shortages and access to adequate resources is a challenge for health care service centres and programs. There is a need for more centralized services, especially around translation. Also, funding formulas for health care are based on three-year old statistics and records, which is a great challenge. The nature of the funding formula means that the Regional Health Authority including Public Health must ensure that they have the most recent information on who is coming and when. Direct links and communication with Maple Leaf Foods is vital and sharing of resources, knowledge, and skills is of utmost importance.

During the past six to eight months the 7<sup>th</sup> Street Health Access Centre has experienced its biggest increase in demand for services. The Centre offers a number of essential services including temporary laundry services, long distance calling, internet access, and showers. Programs are growing and adjustments are being made to accommodate the changing community, while also trying to meet the needs of all clients. Their client-base is becoming increasingly diversity; after tracking clients' first language of choice approximately 15 languages were identified.

Despite the often bustling environment at the Centre, there is little interaction amongst clients in the waiting rooms. Non-immigrant clients feel they are being neglected since language barriers lengthen the process of service provision and immigrant clients require much more time with health care providers. There is a real concern at the Centre that other marginalized groups may not be getting the same level of services; while this may or may not be the case, clients are noticing the extra care that is needed for those who have limited English abilities and they see this as an impediment to their level of care.

Typically, the demand on the Adult Community Mental Health Program has been quite low and staff members work on a case-by-case basis. Increasingly, there have been more immigrant clients; however, demand for services by newcomers has not increased as dramatically as in other services. There is a concern that the Program is not meeting the needs of immigrants and that immigrants are not accessing their services. Accessing mental health programs is still stigmatized in society and many people do not understand what mental health is, which can be further exacerbated by cultural differences.

Public Health Services are also experiencing increasing demand for services such as baby clinics, sexual health, and midwifery programs. To ensure that everyone's needs are being met, Public Health is trying to attract at-risk and isolated/marginalized women to their services and advertise programs through publications. Communicable diseases have become an issue of concern for Public Health; follow-up and control is difficult and there are struggles with how to manage such disease while immigrants are in Brandon (either temporarily or not). Latent tuberculosis has been observed in the area as the stress of moving to a new country sometimes reactivates the disease. Cultural and language barriers prove to be challenging for Public Health Services, as with other services in the community.

Despite the many challenges, there have been a number of positive impacts observed by health care providers. Staff members and health care providers are becoming multi-lingual in key phrases and learning about different cultures and expectations. Also, the Spanish community has successfully established Mamas Latinas, which is a group that meets regularly and acts as a source of information for women. This group has developed from partnerships between the Regional Health Authority and Westman Immigrant Services. It is held at a local church and includes anywhere from six to sixteen mothers plus their children. Home visits and translators are also provided through the program, reaching those women who do not feel comfortable with or are not able to venture out. Sessions are on topics such as women's health, baby nutrition, feeding, policing, and anything else that participants wish to learn more about. A second key activity that has been a positive outcome is Women's Health Day. The emphasis of the day is to provide services to marginalized individuals (such as immigrants and Aboriginals) and those that are not frequent users of the health system. It is administered through partnerships between Westman Immigrant Services, the Sexuality Education Resource Centre, Public Health, Cancer Care, and other organizations. A female doctor and midwives meet with patients and provide information and examinations. In the past, 52 women have participated and 12 of which were immigrants.



## Settlement Concerns and Challenges

In Brandon, service providers have observed a general sense that recent influxes of newcomers is a temporary situation and if they are able to get through this period then things will get better. When questioning permanency and how long newcomers will remain in the area, service providers often question the long-term value in training or hiring staff with various language abilities. As temporary foreign workers receive permanent status and bring their families, it is becoming evident that this is not a temporary trend. Since temporary foreign worker programs are officially *temporary* programs, it can be difficult to get community stakeholders and local government to realize the need to plan for the future. This 'transitional' nature of the temporary foreign worker program is resulting in a more-permanent-than-intended population of newcomers in the city of Brandon. Stakeholders have begun to realize that recent population influxes and associated diversity are not temporary trends and it is becoming more apparent that all service providers must develop strategies to cope with the burgeoning population.

Housing is a major challenge and area for concern in Brandon. There is no easy solution to address the housing shortage and at this point housing availability is at a crisis point. Caused by high demand and little new supply, Brandon had the lowest vacancy rate (0.2%) in the province in 2007 (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation 2007). Homelessness is becoming an increasing concern and demand for food banks and other charitable services are on the rise. Limited availability and rising rental rates are negatively impacting Brandon residents including university students and others moving to the city seeking employment. The availability of housing has a very strong relationship with retention of newcomers and if this crisis is not addressed then there is little chance of people staying in the community. Newcomers also have challenges with understanding landlord-tenant agreements and have little knowledge of their rights as renters, which causes vulnerability. There must be greater awareness of housing concerns in Brandon and increased advocacy for newcomers' rights.

A serious concern and challenge of settling temporary foreign workers and their families is possible family breakdown because of long periods of separation. Family reunification is a goal of temporary foreign workers as they arrive in Brandon; however, two years is a long time to be separated from one's spouse and children and this may have a negative impact on family members as they begin to reunite and relocate to Canada. In some instances, when families are reunited they no longer function as a single-family unit. In cases of family breakdown, Westman Immigrant Services has provided assistance to spouses so they are able to provide food, apply for social assistance and child support, and seek legal aid. These issues require further attention as women and children are put at risk of poverty, social isolation, domestic violence, and possibly homelessness. An increased understanding of family reunification, associated needs, and challenges is timely and necessary.

One of the most cited challenges with temporary foreign worker and newcomer settlement in Brandon is that of language, which can be a crippling barrier to social service provision and access. Temporary foreign workers do receive some EAL support through their employer, but their families do not have the same learning opportunities. At the community level there are efforts to build capacity in language training; however, it is not certain whether language classes are being used in a meaningful way. A number of factors such as work schedule and families may interfere with the learning process, which may not always be a priority for newcomers. In the future, there are intentions to develop for a provincial strategy on translation that would establish a general curriculum. In the meantime, concerns about effective communication remain and it is important that the community is aware of those services that do exist.

As caseloads expand and resources become stretched beyond capacity, the needs of settlement workers and service providers must be considered and acknowledged. In many cases, settlement workers act as translators and thus the responsibility and trust placed upon them can become overwhelming. The needs of newcomers extend beyond access to tangible services and emotional needs bond the newcomer and settlement worker into an intimate relationship of trust and responsibility. This is an important relationship for newcomers, but can contribute to feelings of stress for settlement workers.

All service providers and stakeholders must collaboratively come together in partnerships, creating and delivering a community orientation and settlement strategy. Information on the characteristics and numbers of individuals and families arriving to the area and their subsequent needs must be widely communicated. Through teamwork and cooperation, information sharing and group programming will assist in service delivery. Ensuring collaboration, communication, and awareness amongst involved stakeholders is crucial when attempting to address the challenges of settling and integrating newcomers. A community that welcomes newcomers and works to ensure their full participation in society will experience the benefits of population and economic growth and increased diversity.

## **Conclusions**

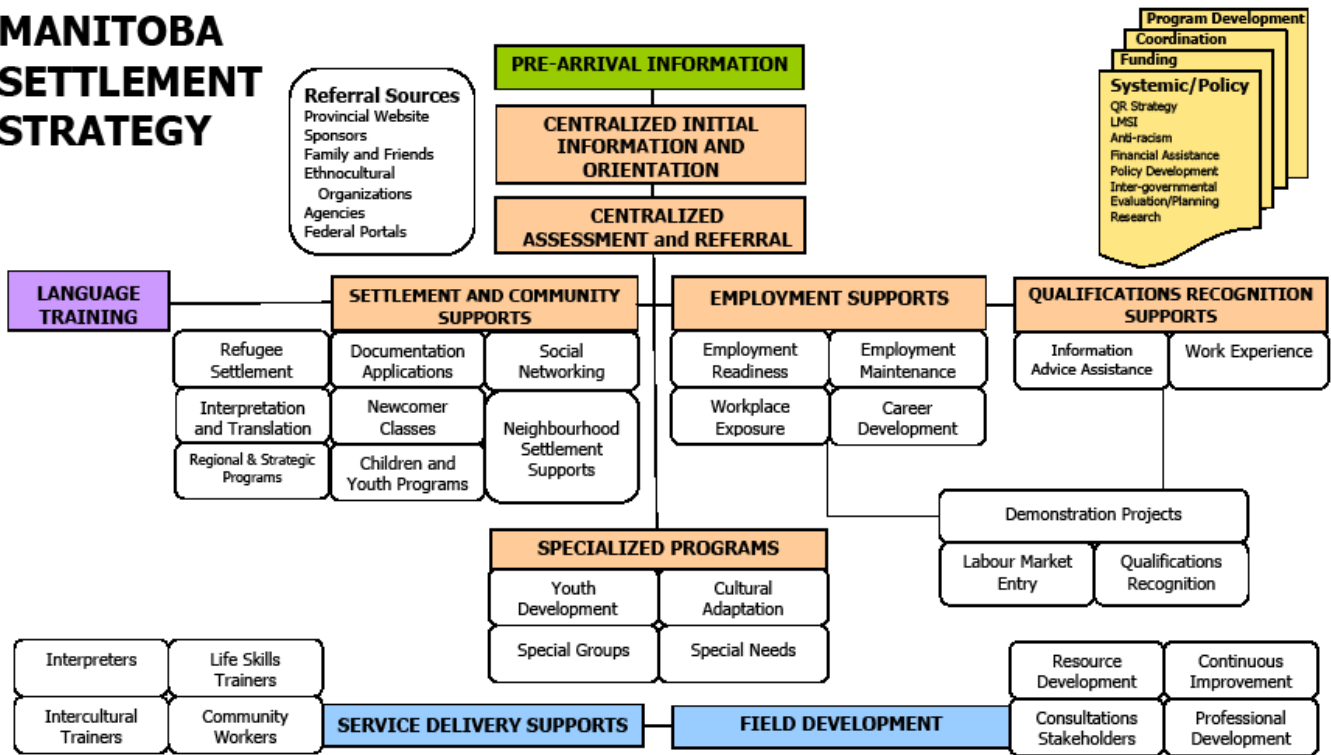
Since many of the temporary foreign workers recruited to work at Maple Leaf Foods have been informed of the opportunity to apply to the Provincial Nominee Program and become permanent immigrants, their intentions for permanency and settlement are not unlike those of provincial nominees and other permanent immigrants. Their work permits may be temporary, but many of these international workers do not view their time in Canada as temporary. The nature of their intentions and future plans suggest that their settlement needs are not unlike other immigrants. However, a question that requires further exploration is how settlement needs and priorities may differ between those who come through the temporary foreign worker program and intend to leave after their work permit expires and those temporary workers who become provincial nominees. The phenomenon of temporary to permanent is quite recent and there is little knowledge about this experience, how it impacts newcomers, and the implications for communities, provinces, and the country.

Brandon is a service provision centre for the surrounding agro-rural region and people move to the city for centralized, specialized services and employment. Therefore, the city must be ready for influxes of newcomers and must be cognizant of being, or becoming, a welcoming community for everyone. The community needs to support newcomers and build local capacity in service provision, planning, and decision-making. Temporary foreign workers arriving to work at Maple Leaf are looking for long-term immigration opportunities and they will not stay in Brandon if the community is not supportive or if they do not have access to required services or housing.

Settlement is a concern that extends beyond the experiences and circumstances of newcomer. Further collaborative and multi-stakeholder dialogue and explorations of the impacts and implications of temporary foreign worker arrivals on Brandon's public service sectors is needed. To better develop plans and procedures to ensure a welcoming community and successful settlement and integration, all involved sectors and stakeholders must have an opportunity to voice their concerns and success stories. Communication amongst all sectors and stakeholders is critical to developing settlement priorities, service provision strategies, and community programs to successfully react to the influx of newcomers that Brandon is experiencing.

## Appendix 1:

# MANITOBA SETTLEMENT STRATEGY



Settlement and Labour Market Services Branch Manitoba Labour and Immigration June 26, 2007



Source: Manitoba Labour and Immigration. (2007).

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