BRANDON UNIVERSITY

Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in

South West Region of Saskatchewan

This community report is part of the "Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in CIC's Western Region" study.

The South West Region of Saskatchewan includes the following two major urban centres together with dozens of medium to small size towns and villages, and dozens of rural municipalities consisting of farms, small acreages and small hamlets.

SASKATCHEWAN

Meadow Lake · Prince Albert · Melfort · Tisdale · Battleford · Warman · Humboldt · Kindersley · Outlook · Yorkton · Moose Jaw · Swift Current · Weyburn · Estevan

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

Data sources: 13 Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) receiving funding from governmental and non-governmental sources.

Major Urban Centres	Population 2011 Census	Permanent Resident Landings 2009-2013
Moose Jaw	33,274	667
Swift Current	15,503	646

SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Top services offered

- Information, orientation and referrals related to settlement services
- Community networking and cultural bridging services
- Language assessment and training
- Career planning and employment search and referrals
- Training in accessing and using technology
- Orientation to communities and various sectors
- Accessing and processing documents and applications

Key gaps identified

- Information on and access to settlement and integration programs
- Language training at all levels
- Career planning and employment training and searches
- International credential recognition
- Services for spouses and newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services
- Accessible and affordable transportation and driver training

Barriers to access services

- Absence of service provider agencies in smaller communities
- Paucity or absence of information on availability and eligibility for services
- Ineligibility for accessing some services
- Insufficient number eligible newcomers to make it possible to offer some services
- Lack of internet service for some newcomers to access online services
- Fees charged for some services

Top services needed

- Language training and translation/interpretation
- Career planning, job searches, and job related training
- International credential recognition
- Family support services for daily living
- Orientation and support for social networking

Services needed by newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services

- Settlement services
- Language training
- Social and cultural orientation
- Health
- Housing
- Income support

PARTNERSHIPS

- Most, but not all, organizations are involved in partnerships.
- Partnerships exist in all three functional areas (i.e., settlement, integration, and warm and welcoming communities).
- Partnerships include settlement service provider organizations as well as other non-governmental and governmental organizations in several major sectors (e.g., employment, housing, education, health, family and child support, justice, culture, recreation, religion, business, and municipal).

INTEGRATION IN COMMUNITY

- Perceptions of the ease and difficulty for newcomers to integrate vary, but generally fall within the somewhat easy to somewhat difficult range.
- Economic and community integration are facilitated or hampered by a combination of three sets of factors:
  - The extent to which newcomers are able to access settlement and integration services,
  - The aptitudes and attitudes of newcomers, and
  - The ways community members view and treat newcomers.

Introduction

This report is part of a larger project designed to better understand two aspects of settlement and integration services in Western Canada. This report provides a summary of the findings of a survey of settlement and integration services for newcomers in the South West Region of Saskatchewan.

The report has four principal foci: the factors affecting the settlement and integration of newcomers in this region; the existing and needed settlement and integration services for newcomers; the capacities of service provider organizations to offer those services and what may be required to increase those capacities; and the existing and potential partnerships in planning and providing services for improving the settlement and integration prospects of newcomers.

The information for the report was collected through interviews conducted in November and December 2014 with 13 representatives of selected settlement and integration service provider organizations and some other types of service provider organizations in the region. Although 13 interviews were conducted, the actual number of respondents to each question in this report may vary because not all interviewees responded to all questions.

Background Information

PROFILE OF SOUTH WEST REGION

The South West Region of Saskatchewan includes the following types of communities: two cities, dozens of medium to small size towns and villages, and dozens of rural municipalities consisting of small hamlets, farms, and acreages. The two cities in the region are Moose Jaw and Swift Current. According to Statistics Canada, the population of Moose Jaw in 2011 was 33,274, an increase of 3.6% from 2006. The population of Swift Current in 2011 was 15,503, an increase of 3.7% from 2006.

IMMIGRATION FLOWS TO SOUTH WEST REGION

CIC immigration statistics from 2009-2013 indicate the arrival of approximately 1500 permanent residents to this region, which constitutes approximately 3% of all immigrants destined to Saskatchewan during that period. They also indicate that of all immigrants destined to Saskatchewan during that period the majority were destined to the two major centres in the region namely, Moose Jaw (667) and Swift Current (646) immigrants.

PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES IN NUMBER OF NEWCOMERS

All respondents indicated that the number of newcomers destined for or living in the community increased in the past 5 years, and speculated that this was due to the following factors: increased employment, business and farming opportunities resulting from the rapid economic growth; promotion and recruitment efforts of the provincial government and employers through the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP); success of Saskatchewan Polytechnic in attracting international students; the arrival of an increased number of family members of principal applicants; the influx of Filipino immigrants because of the substantial and expanding size of the Filipino community in the region; the migration of newcomers from larger centres from other parts of Canada who value the quality of life and lower cost of living in smaller communities in the region.

Community Settlement

EASE OF SETTLEMENT IN COMMUNITIES

When asked for their perceptions regarding how easy it was for newcomers to settle in their communities, the majority of respondents indicated it was easy (6) or somewhat easy (4), and a small minority indicated it was somewhat difficult (1).

FACTORS AFFECTING SETTLEMENT

Respondents highlighted several factors that either facilitated or hampered settlement. Interestingly, in some cases the same factors facilitated some aspects of settlement but hampered others (e.g., size of the community). Similarly, in some cases the existence of a particular factor facilitated settlement, but its absence hampered it (e.g. adequate and affordable housing). In other words, some factors are 'Janus-like' in that they have both positive and negative characteristics or effects, and other factors are essentially 'two sides of the same coin'.

The three major sets of factors cited as facilitating or hampering settlement in various communities are what might be referred to as, economic and employment factors, services factors, and community factors.

The economic and employment factors identified by respondents as facilitating settlement are the economic boom and the resulting large number of jobs available (9).

The services factors identified by respondents as facilitating settlement in communities include: the existence of newcomer information centers and settlement serving agencies that provide services and link newcomers with other agencies in the community (schools, health, etc.) (3); the adequacy of services, amenities and activities in the larger communities (2); the promotional initiatives of such centers and agencies and the ease of locating them in smaller communities (1); and the information, orientation, and supports provided by settlement agencies, schools and religious institutions to newcomer students and families (4).

The community factors identified by respondents as facilitating settlement in communities include: the existence of ethnocultural communities (3); the spirit of receptive, and supportive and close- knit communities (3); the availability of adequate and affordable housing (4); and donations to newcomers by employers and other members of the community to help with initial settlement (1).

The major barriers respondents perceived to adversely affect settlement the most include: insufficient language skills (5); insufficient employment opportunities for some newcomers based on several factors, including being either under or over qualified and problems related to international credential recognition (5); challenges of community or social integration (1); insufficient adequate and affordable housing (2); challenges of distances between communities where newcomers live, work or services are located and challenges faced by some newcomers in accessing transportation (1); insufficient information regarding services available (1); insufficient capacity by some service providers in newcomers with various needs (1); insufficient anonymity and privacy for newcomers in need of special services or support (1); the lack of a critical mass of members from newcomers ethnocultural communities (1); and the cold weather (2).

Although respondents indicated that each of those factors constituted major barriers to settlement in communities, it is important to note that many, though by no means all, stem from the fact that many newcomers with a wide range of needs are living in smaller urban and rural communities that do not have either the various types of services or the community contexts required to meet those needs.

FACTORS AFFECTING GETTING JOBS

Of 10 respondents who commented on the degrees of ease or difficulty faced by newcomers in getting jobs, the majority indicated that it was either somewhat easy (5) or easy (3), and the minority indicated that it was either somewhat difficult (1) or very difficult (1). Some respondents also indicated that employment opportunities for newcomers tended to be concentrated in entry level jobs (especially in the service sector), which were relatively easier to obtain than other types of jobs.

The barriers for newcomers in getting jobs noted by respondents include: inadequate language skills (7); alignment of qualifications to jobs (i.e., under- or over-qualified, etc.) (1); perceptions among employers regarding the importance of Canadian training and experience (2); challenges in getting references when they have not worked for very long or for many employers (1); challenging or inappropriate accreditation standards (1); inadequate international credential recognition (2); challenges of insufficient knowledge by employers about hiring newcomers and the challenges they are likely to face after they are hired (1); challenges in finding affordable childcare (1); transportation challenges for those who cannot afford or drive vehicles (1); finding adequate affordable housing (1); culture of the workplace that either makes it difficult for newcomers either to get or to keep a job (1); insufficient number or types of jobs in some communities for which newcomers are qualified (3); and newcomers being focused primarily on certain types or levels of jobs and not others (2).

Available Settlement Services

TYPES OF NEWCOMERS SERVED

Respondents from ten service provider organizations that addressed this issue indicated their respective organizations served one or more of the following major groups: permanent residents (8); temporary foreign workers (8); refugees (7); refugee claimants (6); new and returning naturalized Canadian citizens (7); international students (4); and visitors (2).

INVENTORY OF SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Respondents identified a broad range of settlement and integration services their organizations provided newcomers. This includes: initial welcome and reception services (4); information, orientation and referral services (5); language assessment and training (4); interpretation and translation services (2); employment search and referral services (4); community networking and cultural bridging services (5); student and family support services (3); citizenship application and exam preparation services

(1); sectors orientation services (e.g., financial, labour, health, educational sectors) (4); document and application access and processing services (e.g., official documents and application forms) (2); basic technology services (e.g., computers, copiers, faxes, and internet) (3); and furniture and appliances donations coordination services (1).

In response to whether any one or more of the services they provided should be expanded, 10 respondents said yes and only 1 said no. It must be noted that whereas in some cases those responses focused only on expanding the number or scope of some services, in other cases they were also referring to their expansion in making them available to larger number of newcomers who are either eligible or ineligible for CIC funded services.

SERVICES NEEDED MOST FOR SETTLEMENT AND INTEGRATION

Respondents indicated that the services needed most for settlement and integration were those related to: reception and community integration (4); information on and access to various settlement and integration programs (3); language training at all levels (open to all and accessible at various times through the entire week during days and evenings) (6); interpreter and translation services (1); employment training and searches for lower skilled immigrants (2); international credential recognition for highly trained immigrants (1); career planning (1); accessing, completing and submitting documents and applications required for immigration, settlement, integration, and citizenship (1); information and support in finding adequate, appropriate and affordable housing (7); information and support in accessing affordable and convenient transportation (2); recreational services for children and youth (2); student and parent assistance provided by Settlement Support Worker in Schools Program (SSWIS) (1); and promoting immigrant and diversity orientation and awareness among employers and other members of their communities (3).

SERVICES NEEDED MOST BY NEWCOMERS

Respondents indicated that the services needed most by newcomers are: all settlement services currently offered (2); reception and community orientation (3); social integration services (1); language training services (6); translation and interpreter services (1); international credential recognition services (1); SSWIS services for students and their families (1); case management services for newcomers who either have special needs or are part of the 'vulnerable population' (1); information and support services for employment searches, especially for lower skilled newcomers (2); orientation to workplace culture services (1); information and support services in dealing with immigration and

citizenship matters (2); recreation services for children (1); information and support services in finding adequate and affordable housing, including rental housing and condos for seniors (6); and information and support services in accessing adequate and affordable transportation services (2).

In the case of housing and transportation respondents seemed to be alluding not only to the need to provide information and support directly to individual newcomers to meet their needs, but also to making housing and transportation more accessible and affordable for newcomers.

SERVICES NEEDED MOST BY NEWCOMERS INELIGIBLE FOR CIC FUNDED SERVICES

Respondents noted that the services needed most by newcomers ineligible for CIC funded services are those related to: settlement (5); language training (5); social and cultural integration (2); health (3); housing (3); and income support (2).

Assessment of Newcomer Needs

Representatives of four service provider organizations indicated that their organizations regularly assessed the needs of newcomers in their community either on their own and/or jointly with other service providers, representatives of six other organizations indicated they did not engage in such assessments reguarly, and two indicated that they did not engage in such assessments at all.

Responses of representatives of the organizations that assessed newcomer needs either on a regular or sporadic basis, indicated they did so to varying extents, and in different ways. Four service provider organizations assessed such needs both internally and jointly with other SPOs. Such assessments were conducted in various ways, including: discussions with clients; information contained in intake forms collected through interviews with newcomers on their needs; informal discussions with newcomers; tracking services gaps in the community reported by newcomers; discussions at monthly meetings; sharing information with service providers to assess and exchange information; and strategic assessments.

Organizational Capacities

The majority of respondents indicated that their organizations did not have sufficient capacity to provide many settlement and integration services. The major reason for this is that several respondents were from organizations mandated to provide mainstream services, rather than settlement or integration services per se. With this in mind, it is important to note that in this region there

was only one full-fledged settlement and integration service provider organization (i.e., the one in Moose Jaw).

The only three areas in which the majority of organizations indicated they had sufficient capacity was in coordinating services with other service providers (8 yes and 3 no), in communicating with stakeholders (6 yes and 5 no), and in mobilizing the community to welcome and support newcomers (6 yes and 5 no).

The areas in which the majority of respondents indicated their organizations did not have sufficient organizational capacity include meeting the reporting requirements (4 yes and 6 no), staff skills for delivering and maintaining services (3 yes and 7 no), creation of governing and strategic plans (3 yes and 6 no); and providing services in both official languages (2 yes and 9 no).

In the case of level of financial support from various sources, the respondents were evenly divided on whether they had sufficient financial resources from governmental sources to provide services (5 yes and 5 no), but very few indicated they had sufficient financial resources from non-governmental sources to provide services (2 yes and 7 no).

Partnerships

All except one of ten respondents on this issue indicated their respective organizations were involved in one or more partnerships with other organizations on initiatives related to the three categories identified in the survey questionnaire (welcoming communities, settlement, or integration). Their responses regarding their involvement in each of these areas are as follows: welcoming communities (9), settlement (8), and integration (6).

Respondents indicated that partnerships tended to involve settlement service provider organizations as well as other non-governmental and governmental organizations that either dealt with or potentially could deal with settlement and integration matters either directly or indirectly. They also indicated that organizations for which settlement service provision has not been either their sole or principal responsibility, but have been involved in partnerships include various types of local and regional mainstream service organizations in several major sectors (e.g., business, employment, economic development, housing, education, health, family and child support, justice, culture, recreation, religion, business, and municipal).

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