The Rural Immigration Experience
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The issue:
Immigration is becoming increasingly important for rural communities throughout Canada, though much must be done to ensure successful rural immigration policy and practice.

The question:
How can relevant stakeholders and rural communities ensure successful initiatives with immigrant attraction, settlement and integration?

Lessons have been informed by two initiatives:
• CRRF-RDI National Rural Think Tank 2005- Immigration and Rural Canada: Research and Practice
• Manitoba Rural Immigration Community Case Studies

The Rural Immigration Experience
consists of individual or numerous acts of immigrants moving to rural areas and the related impact on the multiple levels and associated actors engaged in the process

Spheres of the Rural Immigration Experience

COMMUNITY

PROVINCIAL

INDIVIDUAL

NATIONAL

A successful rural immigration experience requires:
• Appropriate consideration of the multilevel needs and motivations of each party
• Recognition of reciprocal relations and mutual reliance among all parties
• High level of satisfaction for all parties involved
• Contributions and decisions made at each level

Innovation in rural immigration policy and practice occurs through the active participation of communities and immigrants. Manitoba serves as an appropriate example in this regard with its Community Immigration Planning Guide, which was developed through active consultation and input from community leaders.

The Interface of Research, Policy and Practice

Opportunities in the area of immigration must be commensurate with rural needs and realities. This is best ensured through effective collaboration between actors in the realms of research, policy and practice. Such collaboration is necessary to deal with the numerous impediments and challenges to rural immigration initiatives, including community capacity, the visibility of immigration, and the dynamics of immigrant attraction and settlement within a wider “market.”

Immigration can be a viable option to communities when accompanied by:
• Appropriate action and planning
• An appropriate knowledge base
• Adequate human and material resources at local, provincial and national levels
• Linking rural communities to national and provincial decision-making on immigration policy

*The full report from the Think Tank, as well as the four community case studies, are available at www.brandonu.ca/rdi

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