



**HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA**

BEST PRACTICES IN SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

**David Tilson, MP
Chair**

MARCH 2010

40th PARLIAMENT, 3rd SESSION

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THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION

has the honour to present its

SECOND REPORT

Pursuant to its mandate under Standing Order 108(2), the Committee has studied *Best Practices in Settlement Services* and has agreed to report the following:

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BEST PRACTICES IN SETTLEMENT SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

Best practices in settlement services aims to advance the achievement of the successful settlement and the adaptation of new immigrants and refugees to Canada through an integrated service delivery model provided by well resourced settlement organizations and trained workers.¹

The above quotation from a witness who appeared before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration aptly summarizes the focus of this report: best practices in program delivery and in support to settlement organizations that advance immigrant settlement and adaptation to life in Canada.

In addition to community groups and private sector actors, all three levels of government play a role in helping immigrants to settle successfully in Canada. Municipal governments play a role in immigrant integration by, for instance, developing strategies to attract and retain immigrants, targeting city services and programs to immigrant groups, and promoting diversity and tolerance in their communities.

Under the Canada-Quebec Accord, Quebec has the rights and responsibilities for integration of newcomers to the province. Canada provides compensation to Quebec for such services, as long as they correspond to those offered by Canada in the rest of the country and as long as all permanent residents of the province, whether they were selected by Quebec or not, can have access to them. Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) spent \$226.0 million on the Canada-Quebec accord in 2008-2009² and plans to spend \$234.2 million in 2009-2010.³

Agreements with British Columbia and Manitoba enable these provinces to be responsible for the design, delivery and administration of settlement and integration programs and services. In 2008-2009, CIC gave some \$111.8 million to the Manitoba government and \$22.9 million to the British Columbian government pursuant to these agreements.⁴ While the governments of Quebec, British Columbia and Manitoba may be interested in the testimony provided to the Committee, the recommendations in this report pertain primarily to settlement services administered directly by CIC.

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- 1 Sherman Chan, Director, Settlement Services, MOSAIC, *Committee Evidence*, Meeting No. 38, December 3, 2009, 0905.
 - 2 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Financial Statements for the year ended March 31, 2009*.
 - 3 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Reports on Plans and Priorities 2009 - 2010*, Details of Transfer Payment Programs.
 - 4 Public Accounts of Canada, 2008-2009, *Transfer Payments*, p. 47.

In provinces and territories other than Quebec, British Columbia, and Manitoba, CIC manages and delivers settlement services through contribution agreements with service providers, with different forms of co-management in Ontario and Alberta. Historically, funding has been channelled through three main programs. The Immigrant Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP) “assists immigrant settlement and integration through funding to service providers to deliver direct services to immigrants such as orientation, information, translation and interpretation; referral to community resources; solution-focused counselling; and employment-related services.”⁵ Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) provides eligible adult immigrants with free basic language training on a full- or part-time basis in one of Canada’s official languages. The Host Program supports the integration of newcomers by matching them with Canadian volunteer “hosts” for friendship and mentoring. Spending on these three programs increased from \$197,518,601 in 2006-2007 to \$369,061,421 in 2008-2009.⁶ Community organizations that deliver settlement programs are called service provider organizations; they vary considerably in size, clientele, and range of programs and services offered.

CIC is moving towards a new structure for settlement program funding, intended to streamline funding, place a greater emphasis on results, and provide greater flexibility to service provider organizations.⁷ Under the new structure, service provider organizations will apply for funding to conduct programs under one or more of six broad themes: information and orientation, language and skills development, labour market participation, community connections, needs assessments and referrals, and support services. This funding structure incorporates all of the objectives of the previous program-specific settlement funding streams of LINC, ISAP and the Host Program. Each program will have to demonstrate how it contributes to one of five expected results:

- Newcomers make informed decisions about their settlement and understand life in Canada;
- Newcomers have language/skills needed to function in Canada;
- Newcomers obtain the required assistance to find employment commensurate with their skills and education;
- Newcomers receive help to establish social and professional networks so they are engaged and feel welcomed in their communities; or
- To ensure effective delivery and achieve comparable settlement outcomes across Canada.

5 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Evaluation of the Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program (ISAP)*, January 2005.

6 Public Accounts of Canada, 2006-2007, Volume II, p. 6-6 and Public Accounts of Canada, 2008-2009, Volume II, p. 6-6.

7 The new funding structure is described in *CIC’s Modernized Approach to Settlement Programming — A Brief Description*, October 5, 2009.

CIC introduced the new terms and conditions in 2008, although the new funding structure is not yet fully implemented.

Though it was not directly considered by the Committee, this new approach to settlement funding has the potential to address some of the concerns raised in the course of our study and provides a promising platform for further reform. For instance, several witnesses named integrated service delivery as a best practice, an approach to settlement programming encouraged by the new funding structure. As Neethan Shan explained: “The integrated service delivery model aims to remove the artificial barriers between traditional settlement programs. It aims to provide an opportunity for an innovative, responsive, and holistic approach to helping immigrants and refugees achieve successful settlement and adaptation.”⁸

WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOES NOT WORK

In this study, the Committee undertook to learn what works and what does not work in terms of settlement services to assist newcomers. As witnesses described the settlement programs currently being delivered, a number of themes emerged.

Settlement Programming

With regard to what works in settlement programming, witnesses talked about the importance of language training, including workplace preparation. They mentioned mentoring and the importance of receiving support tailored to specific ethno-cultural backgrounds. Witnesses also suggested that specialized support for refugees works well, although school support and trauma counselling were identified as areas for improvement. Finally, witnesses described best practices in assisting immigrants to settle in non-urban areas, arguing that immigrants and host communities win when immigrants also settle in regions.

With regard to what does not work in settlement programming, witnesses described needs that go unmet by settlement services, such as soft skills training, mental health support, family counselling, business start-up and self-employment support, and settlement services for newcomers who have obtained citizenship.

Language

Many witnesses felt that language acquisition is an important part of immigrant settlement.⁹ In the words of one witness, “There is a positive correlation between the level of understanding of the English language and easier integration, acculturation, and

8 Neethan Shan, Executive Director, Council of Agencies Serving South Asians, *Committee Evidence*, Meeting No. 41, December 10, 2009, 0910.

9 For instance, Mr. Thomas Tam, Chief Operating Officer, SUCCESS, *Committee Evidence*, Meeting no. 38, December 3, 2009, 0920; Ms. Sandy Shih, Program Manager, Langley Community Services Society, *Committee Evidence*, Meeting No. 39, December 8, 2009, 0900.

acclimatization into our community. Critical survival skills are acquired from reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This makes the transition into the community much easier.”¹⁰

Witnesses seemed satisfied with the CIC-funded language program and they discussed measures taken by their organizations in order to make language programs more successful. Ms. Adeena Niazi, for instance, highlighted her organization’s LINC classes for women, which “create a high level of comfort and an environment that is warm and friendly for refugee women”.¹¹ She further explained that “research has found that offering women-only classes is the most effective way to help women learn a language. On-site child-minding facilities and transportation assistance allow many women to benefit from the program.” Ms. Niazi also praised CIC’s Enhanced Language Training program,¹² because it helps prepare clients for employment.

Another witness talked about a new program offered by his organization called the Internet café for seniors.¹³ Through the program, seniors learn how to use the computer and the Internet and can subsequently access English instruction, even from home. Finally, a best practice mentioned by another witness was the coordination of language training programs between service provider organizations in order to ensure that a range of class levels and times is available to clients.¹⁴

Mentoring

Mentoring was identified by several witnesses as a strategy that works well to help immigrants obtain employment. One witness described the successful mentoring program at his organization:

We have developed a very successful mentoring support program which has helped many newcomers find employment in Canada. We believe that matching newcomers with a mentor from their own culture truly helps them become settled much more quickly. Mentors and mentees with similar cultural backgrounds are a success because they relate to each other and they build bonds of trust that are stronger than would otherwise be the case. This program is funded only by [the Chinese Professionals Association of

10 Salvatore Sorrento, Vice-President, English, Folk Arts Council of St. Catharines Multicultural Centre, *Committee Evidence*, Meeting No. 39, December 8, 2009, 0925.

11 Adeena Niazi, Executive Director, Afghan Women’s Counselling and Integration Community Support Organization, *Committee Evidence*, Meeting No. 41, December 10, 2009, 0920.

12 The Enhanced Language Training Initiative was launched as a pilot project in 2003-2004 “to develop and deliver higher levels of language training and job-specific language training, including labour market understanding and/or experience”. To learn more about the ELT, see Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Enhanced Language Training*, <http://www.cic.gc.ca/EnGLish/departement/partner/elt-spo.asp>.

13 Chan, 0950.

14 Sister Andrée Ménard, General Director, PROMotion-intégration-Société nouvelle (PROMIS), *Committee Evidence*, Meeting No. 39, December 8, 2009, 1025.

Canada] and other community-minded corporate partners that see these people as future employees.¹⁵

Witnesses felt that mentors are well positioned to inform immigrants about Canadian culture, help them develop a social network, and help them build social capital.¹⁶ Mr. Joe Chang also pointed out that mentoring is cost effective for funders, because it leverages community resources: “the government only needs to propagate the method, propagate the model down to the community and let the community work with these people”.¹⁷ One witness recommended a specialized program of business mentoring.¹⁸

Ethno-cultural background

A number of witnesses who appeared before the Committee represented organizations started to provide settlement services to a particular ethnic or cultural group. While most of these organizations now serve a more diverse clientele, they explained the unique role played by organizations or staff people that can relate to particular ethno-cultural groups. Mr. Neethan Shan: “Ethno-specific services and ethno-specific agencies play a very critical role in settlement. Though they're seen as serving on [sic] one particular community, those agencies are well-aware of the cultural and linguistic needs of the community.”¹⁹ Another witness explained that it is very important in immigrant settlement “to be able to access services from people who fundamentally understand your values, who look like you, in many instances, and who can speak the language of the service that you're demanding.” She added that, in such instances, clients “feel very much at home”.²⁰

Special support for refugees

Many witnesses expressed their appreciation for settlement services specific to refugees, and urged the government to continue to support them.²¹ One witness stated: “We cannot adopt a one-size-fits-all approach. Some people have spent 15 years in refugee camps. We take a completely different approach depending on whether we are dealing with an entrepreneur, immigrant investor or foreign-selected graduate.”²² This

15 Joe Chang, General Manager, Chinese Professionals Association of Canada, *Committee Evidence*, Meeting No. 41, December 10, 0905.

16 Chan, 0940.

17 Chang, 1035.

18 Tam, 0925.

19 Shan, 0910.

20 Patricia Whittaker, Program Director, Centre of Integration for African Immigrants, *Committee Evidence*, Meeting No. 39, December 8, 2009, 0910.

21 For instance, Sorrento, 0925; Ménard, 0925.

22 Moussa Guene, Coordinator, Area Employment, Regionalization, PROMIS, *Committee Evidence*, Meeting No. 39, December 8, 2009, 1005.

point was reiterated by another witness who stated, “It’s good to remember that we have two streams of immigrants coming here: refugees and other immigrants.... Their needs are completely different”.²³ More specifically, one witness explained that “refugees may require more extensive education, training, retraining, and emotional support since many of them have suffered from violence and trauma”.²⁴ Another witness indicated that refugees’ experience of recent trauma may require attention before they can attend to other things, such as looking for work.²⁵

Some best practices in school support for immigrant children were provided. For instance, representatives from PROMIS highlighted the organization’s Saturday school as a best practice; the program provides immigrant children with one-on-one support and learning in math and French.²⁶ Another example is the Langley Community Services Society, funded through the B.C. government’s early years refugee pilot project, to provide refugee children aged zero to six years with intensive early childhood development support as well as orientation and assistance in settlement.²⁷

Additional supports such as those offered by these two organizations may help make the transition to school function more smoothly for refugee children. One of the witnesses explained some of the unique barriers refugee children may face:

Many of our clients are refugees coming from refugee camps. Many of these are families whose kids have never been in a formal education system, yet when they arrive in Canada, they are placed in the education system based on age, not scholastic ability. Many of them don’t speak English, so basically this system is setting them up for failure. If a 13-year-old arrives in Canada and is placed in grade 8, let’s say, with no language skills, naturally we can see what’s going to happen.²⁸

Changing the dominant settlement pattern/ regionalization

Two witnesses talked about best practices, implemented by their organizations, in helping immigrants to settle in regions, rather than the more typical urban destinations in their provinces. As one witness explained, “at the moment, because of a lack of information and support in some areas, most new immigrants prefer to settle in urban centres where they can find support and services. That’s why we advocate for new strategies to provide more support and effective services in outlying areas to attract and retain new immigrants.”²⁹

23 Niazi, 1025.

24 Sorrento, 0925.

25 Whittaker, 0910.

26 Ménard, 0925.

27 Shih, 0905.

28 Whittaker, 0910.

29 Tam, 1010.

Witnesses described the support and services they provide in order to facilitate regionalization. Mr. Moussa Guene mentioned a program at PROMIS that accompanies interested recent immigrants (those who landed in Canada within the last five years) into different regions in Quebec and works with other organizations to assist the immigrants with finding employment,³⁰ as well as other aspects of integration, such as social integration and awareness-raising.

Mr. Thomas Tam, of SUCCESS, highlighted the successful partnership between SUCCESS, the B.C. government, and the energy sector to create an outreach office in Fort St. John in the North Peace region of B.C. The office assists new immigrants in Vancouver with finding short-term employment in their areas of expertise and also with relocation for permanent positions. Mr. Tam concluded by saying: “We are very pleased to inform you that a lot of new immigrants went to Fort St. John to get full-time employment, to settle there, and to have happy families there.”³¹

Needs unmet by settlement services

In terms of what does not work, witnesses described immigrant needs that are not adequately covered by settlement funding, such as mental health support (particularly for refugees), business and self-employment training, and family counselling. Witnesses felt services lacking that are culturally and linguistically appropriate and tailored specifically for an immigrant clientele. For instance, one witness made the point that “Sixteen per cent of new immigrants are in the business class, and there is [*sic*] a significant number of skilled immigrants who want to start their own initiatives and be self-employed as an alternative career development path. They receive very little support from the mainstream settlement programs at this time.”³² Another described the inadequacy of mainstream mental health services as follows:

Many mental health services are aimed at the general population and do not have the expertise required to work with newcomers, especially refugees. Newcomers face language barriers when trying to access mainstream services, the services are not culturally competent and newcomers often become frustrated with the service they receive. Also, some services require a formal diagnosis that many newcomers do not have because newcomers often cannot even access a family doctor for basic health needs.³³

Service provider organizations have responded to these unmet needs by offering programs funded by sources other than CIC; programs they described as best practices. For instance, Mr. Thomas Tam described a successful business development program at SUCCESS:

30 Guene, 0925.

31 Tam, 1025.

32 Ibid., 0920.

33 Niazi, written brief, p. 9.

In 2002 we received funding from Western Economic Diversification Canada so we could launch the famous Gateway to Asia project. Within this project we helped to recruit and train about 1,000 Asian traders. They are new Canadians, but they are very experienced in trading. They had businesses in China or in Asia before. We train them with a developed database, and then we help them connect with Canadian manufacturers. And we give seminars to Canadian companies on how to do business with China as well as Chinese business immigrants.

We organize “East meets West” business networking luncheons. We help them get together, and we provide translation, support. We provide presentations so that they can meet and talk about different partnerships, including exporting Canadian products to China, and also explore investment opportunities here. A lot of new immigrants are looking for investment opportunities within the local business community. In the past three years we've been helping our members, just our members, to export over \$20 million in Canadian products back to China and Korea. So this is a very famous project, and this project was named one of the best practised by the Asia Pacific Foundation last year.³⁴

The Afghan Women’s Counselling and Integration Community Support Organization also highlighted a mental health program that had worked very well; funded with support from the United Way.³⁵ Funding was soon to expire for both projects.

Family counselling was also identified as an unmet need, which if met, could contribute to immigrants’ settlement and wellbeing. Mr. Patrick Au described some of the emotional and psychological difficulties that immigrants may experience as they move through the different stages of settlement – in particular after the honeymoon phase is over and the day to day challenges of life in Canada mount. He recommended that CIC “pay more attention and be more focused on counselling services for newcomers;” an investment that he argued would lead to long-term savings in areas such as health and legal costs.³⁶

Finally, witnesses described settlement needs that go unmet because of eligibility restrictions for CIC-funded settlement programs. One witness identified temporary foreign workers and international students as target groups who should be eligible for settlement programs, saying that his organization has used its own resources to provide them urgent support and assistance.³⁷ He suggested that these groups should be included in settlement programs because some of them are eligible to apply for permanent residence through the Canadian Experience Class. The argument was also made that immigrants who have already obtained Canadian citizenship should be eligible for settlement services. Ms. Adeena Niazi explained that this is especially important for women, who “often put their needs on hold and put their families first. Unfortunately, when these women reach out

34 Tam, 0945.

35 Niazi, 1040.

36 Patrick Au, Executive Director, Chinese Family Services of Ontario, *Committee Evidence*, December 10, 2009, Meeting No. 41, 0935.

37 Tam, 0925.

for help or are ready to settle themselves, they may already be citizens and are excluded from many services”.³⁸

The Settlement Sector

Some of the testimony provided by witnesses also addressed best practices in the settlement sector. They shared stories demonstrating that collaborative initiatives have worked well, including those that leverage private sector or other sources of funding and involvement. Some witnesses reported that the participation of smaller settlement service providers has worked less well, identifying areas such as access to settlement funding and the lack of capacity to conduct monitoring and evaluation as examples of areas to be improved.

Collaborative initiatives

Collaboration was raised as a best practice a number of times during witness testimony, cited as a way of pooling resources, leveraging private sector involvement, or increasing settlement sector capacity. Some of the challenges raised by witnesses were successfully met by other witnesses working collaboratively. For instance, one witness raised concerns over the salaries in service provider organizations, saying that low salaries lead to a high rate of turnover.³⁹ In response, another witness described the consortium formed by his organization and two others, which allowed them to standardize wages and “collectively talk to governments to negotiate a wage that the government feels comfortable supporting”.⁴⁰

The benefits of collaboration go beyond setting wages, however. The consortium referenced above also works together in service delivery and planning, in data collection and reporting to the provincial government, and in training staff. It was identified as a best practice, with agencies “forgetting about competition and really working together”.⁴¹ Mr. Neethan Shan also provided an example from Ontario, where umbrella organizations work together to confront common challenges—such as issues of concern to newcomer lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities.⁴²

The example of the collaborative project in Fort St. John mentioned above is another interesting example, this time of collaboration between a service provider organization, a provincial government and the private sector. This initiative is a win-win-win situation, with employers finding workers, immigrants finding job experience and

38 Niazi, written brief, p. 9.

39 Nouredine Bouissoukrane, Acting Senior Manager, Calgary Immigrant Educational Society, *Committee Evidence*, Meeting No. 38, December 3, 2009, 0915.

40 Chan, 0935.

41 Ibid., 1005.

42 Shan, 0945.

permanent jobs, and immigrants and the host community finding the support necessary to facilitate integration. While this was presented as a best practice, it would take the full support of government and industry partners to implement in other jurisdictions with smaller organizations.

Witnesses certainly felt that CIC could facilitate collaboration. As noted by one witness: “We have seen so many pilots happening in Canada, from B.C. to Quebec to Newfoundland. We need some places where we can really centralize or have people to have a dialogue on the lessons learned from the pilots. I think the government should support all those dialogues between provinces.”⁴³ Another witness recommended more specifically that CIC invest in “collaborative networking sessions and networking kinds of things. It could be a one-time, one-off kind of small funding that would help facilitate these things. We might put millions of dollars into settlement, but even \$20,000 into a convening session would probably enhance the quality”.⁴⁴

Challenges for smaller organizations

With regard to what does not work well in the settlement sector, witnesses suggested that smaller organizations have difficulties in accessing settlement funding or may lack the capacity for certain expected activities. In the words of one witness: “For some reason, the big organizations go to settlement programs right away. They submit a proposal and somehow it's accepted. Newcomers usually come to new communities. If we try to build up more small agencies, it would really help newcomers.”⁴⁵ Another witness focused on small organizations' lack of specialized skills:

Because we're small communities, we're small agencies. We don't have the kinds of resources that larger agencies have. That's not funding; I feel we are adequately funded for the population that we service. But we don't have resources that larger agencies have for policy work, for example, or for the rigorous types of evaluation that we need to perform in order to justify our receipt of public funds: program evaluations, criteria, and performance monitoring. We don't have these kinds of specialized skills in our organization because we're small, and almost all of us are involved in direct services to our clientele.⁴⁶

She went on to suggest that smaller agencies might benefit from greater institutional support, such as access to consultants to assist with program evaluation.

43 Chan, 0940.

44 Shan, 0945.

45 Bouissoukrane, 0915.

46 Anne Marie Majtenyi, Manager, Settlement Services, Folk Arts Council of St. Catharines Multicultural Centre, *Committee Evidence*, Meeting No. 39, December 8, 2009, 1000.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

After hearing about best practices and recommendations for change to settlement programs and the settlement sector, the Committee has six recommendations. The recommendations focus first on the settlement sector, on the premise that an effective sector lays the groundwork for program improvements. Recommendations for settlement programming focus on needs that are unmet by settlement services and specialized support for refugees.

The Committee believes that best practices are already being implemented and should be widely shared as envisioned in the following quote:

Best practices are offered in order to enhance efforts at improvement, share information and experience and encourage discussion and conversation. ... Best practices constitute an ideal to which an organization or service can strive.⁴⁷

However, it would appear that sharing best practices occurs to differing extents across the country. Some regions have strong networks of settlement agencies and invest time and money into strengthening the settlement sector. For instance, sector-led initiatives spearheaded by the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants and Canadian Council for Refugees were specifically mentioned by one witness.⁴⁸

Initiatives that contribute to strengthening the settlement sector, such as activities to share best practices, are already considered eligible services under CIC settlement program funding. These forums will become even more important under the new settlement funding structure, as programs are likely to become more diverse. An initiative that would build on existing opportunities to network and share best practices while at the same time expand these opportunities would be the development of an interactive website. Such a website would allow practitioners in service provider organizations, academics, and other stakeholders, such as ethno-cultural groups, to share their knowledge and experience. Witnesses seemed to find that a web portal had potential, as indicated by the response below:

Basically, what you are proposing can be useful: a kind of technological platform or user-friendly data bank with information on integration and intake services for immigrants to Canada. ...We do that somewhat informally when we conduct our own research. At times, we feel the need to see what our colleagues in Ontario or British Columbia are doing. ...That is something we do, perhaps not in the way you described. I myself see the usefulness of your proposal. It is a comparative analysis or benchmarking process consisting in a comparison of some practices across Canada, and that is not a bad thing to be doing. The question is how to operate such a system, how to fund it, how to make it

47 Chan, 0905.

48 Majtenyi, 1020.

accessible and whether organizations need additional resources to use it. It would be unfortunate if such a system were created but was not being used.⁴⁹

As indicated, some of the implementation challenges to be addressed include sustainable funding and encouraging take up. The Committee believes that CIC is a good vehicle to develop and host such a website in collaboration with immigrant settlement networks such as the Canadian Immigrant Settlement Sector Alliance and its regional counterparts.

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada develop a proposal for an interactive website on best practices in settlement services. The aim of the proposal should be to have an operational website in fiscal year 2011-2012.

The best practices website is related to another practice the Committee would like to encourage—collaboration between settlement service providers and with other sectors in society, highlighted earlier as a best practice. Some of the benefits of collaboration have already been described. However, not previously mentioned are the benefits that working collaboratively may bring to smaller organizations, including ethno-cultural ones, such as access to settlement funding and increased capacity for monitoring and evaluation.

Two current CIC practices are encouraging in this regard and could be expanded or strengthened. First, in its new *Guide for Applications for Settlement Program Funding* CIC indicates that partnerships between service-provider organizations are encouraged, as are joint proposals. The Guide notes, “cooperating on a joint proposal allows eligible organizations to extend their networks and learn from one another. Two or more organizations may be able to take on a larger project than a single organization could alone. A joint project may make it easier to carry out, monitor and evaluate activities.”⁵⁰ However, the Committee believes that CIC should take this encouragement one step further by indicating that joint proposals will be judged favourably.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada, through Citizenship and Immigration Canada, judge joint proposals for settlement funding favourably and indicate this clearly on the application form.

The second development praised by witnesses and supported wholeheartedly by the Committee is the development of Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) under the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement (COIA). Unlike other federal-provincial

49 Nouredine Belhocine, General Manager, Maison Internationale de la Rive-Sud, *Committee Evidence*, December 8, 2009, Meeting No. 39, 1010.

50 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Guide for Applications for Settlement Program Funding*, June 2009.

immigration agreements, COIA formally acknowledged the role of municipal governments and contained a specific provision for their involvement in determining local settlement policy. As a result, the Local Immigration Partnership initiative was developed by CIC and the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, with funding provided by CIC.

The objective of LIPs is “to strengthen the role of regions and local communities in the integration of newcomers by: supporting better coordination of integration services, including settlement and language training in local communities; providing a framework to facilitate the development and implementation of sustainable local and regional solutions; and supporting the development and implementation of strategies and plans that provide community-specific solutions for achieving better outcomes for newcomers.”⁵¹

According to the call for proposals issued for LIPs, two kinds of projects were funded under the initiative: projects to establish a partnership council to increase the participation of multiple stakeholders in the planning and coordinating of the delivery of integration services, and projects to expand partnerships where they already existed.⁵² Partnership councils had to involve a wide range of community stakeholders including the municipal and/or regional government, community organizations, settlement agencies, language training providers, local associations and employers. They were required to develop a strategy to achieve these three goals: improved access to and coordination of immigrant integration services (settlement, language training, labour market integration); improved labour market outcomes for immigrants; and strengthened local awareness and capacity to successfully integrate immigrants. Media reports indicate that money for LIPs has been distributed to about 30 communities.⁵³

The Committee believes LIPs have great potential. They could bring together diverse parties who might not otherwise collaborate on immigrant settlement initiatives. The LIPs provide a vehicle to move collaboration beyond their original purpose, as envisioned by one witness: “If you broaden the Local Immigration Partnership Council across the province, for example in Ontario, they can look at these other aspects of settlement: mental health and all the other aspects, not just job search and language”.⁵⁴ Accordingly, the Committee encourages CIC to continue supporting the development of this approach in Ontario and to explore the potential of pilot projects in other interested provinces.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada continue to support and expand Local Immigration Partnerships in Ontario and

51 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs)*, Presentation to the Municipal Immigration Committee, September 21, 2009, Toronto, Ontario.

52 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Call for Proposals – Local Immigration Partnerships*, February 6, 2008.

53 Liz Monteiro, “Immigrant council hopes to fill gaps,” *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, December 16, 2009, B5.

54 Shan, 1000.

explore the potential of local immigration partnership pilot projects in other interested provinces.

With respect to settlement sector programs, the Committee's recommendations focus on needs that are unmet by settlement services and specialized support for refugees. Needs identified by witnesses as unmet by settlement services include mental health, soft skills training, business and self-employment support, family counselling, and the settlement needs of newcomer Canadian citizens. Mental health support was primarily a concern with regard to refugees and will be addressed in the following section.

With regard to "soft skills," witnesses used slightly varying definitions, although the concept generally included inter-personal communication, workplace culture and cultural awareness. According to one witness, "when you put soft skills training as part of the standard curriculum into the language training, it will really help those people to integrate into the country much faster and more easily that way".⁵⁵ Several witnesses acknowledged that soft skills can be incorporated into existing programs and urged that this be continued. In CIC's new streamlined approach to settlement, soft skills training is listed as an eligible activity. Since a number of witnesses spoke in favour of programs targeting soft skills, current programs that already incorporate soft skills, as well as programs developed under the new settlement funding structure, should be profiled on the best practices website recommended above.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that, subject to provincial jurisdiction, Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Modernized Approach to Settlement Programming should be flexible such that business and self-employment support programs can be included in the theme of "labour market participation;" and mental health and family counselling can be included in the theme of "support services".

Finally, the Committee wishes to address the issue of settlement services for immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship. On the one hand, the Committee acknowledges that immigrants may still need settlement support after residing in Canada for three years, the minimum period required for acquiring citizenship. This may be especially true for immigrant parents who prioritize their family's settlement over their own needs. However, extending eligibility for settlement services to citizens would open up settlement programs to a much larger group of eligible clientele—a situation that would be neither financially viable nor justifiable according to program priorities. The Committee believes that the following recommendation strikes the appropriate balance between the settlement needs of individuals and stewardship of public resources.

55 Chang, 10:15.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada permit greater flexibility in determining the length of time individuals are eligible for particular settlement services.

Finally, the Committee wishes to address the issue of settlement support for refugees resettled from abroad. The federal government recognizes the unique settlement challenges of these refugees in offering a specialized settlement program called the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), comprised of funding to service provider organizations and direct income support to eligible refugees for a period of one or more years. Witnesses felt that this specialized program should continue to be provided, in addition to offering programs such as school readiness/support and trauma counselling.

The Committee believes there is a sound rationale for further federal government support to resettled refugees. CIC itself acknowledged that “refugees resettled in Canada today have higher and more varied needs than previous refugee populations” and that “refugees face more difficulty integrating than other immigrants.”⁵⁶ As a result, temporary additional funding was allocated to RAP for three years, starting in 2006-2007.

While education and social services fall under provincial jurisdiction, an argument could be made for federal support to refugees in these areas for the initial settlement period, much like the current arrangement with income assistance. The burden of providing second language classes in schools and other strains on the education and health systems caused by refugees’ greater needs are carried by the provincial governments, even though the federal government is responsible for determining how many refugees are selected for resettlement and from where they come (which in turn has an impact on their settlement needs).

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends, subject to provincial jurisdiction, that the Government of Canada include trauma counselling and school support as eligible activities under the Resettlement Assistance Program.

CONCLUSION

Canada has a long history of welcoming immigrants, and much has been learned about successful settlement and adaptation, even as conditions have changed. Many immigrant settlement service provider organizations are mature and well established and others provide crucial insight into more recent immigrant communities. The situation is ripe for learning from best practices from across the country.

56 Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *Departmental Performance Report 2007-2008*, p. 37.

In the course of this study, the Committee found that CIC-administered settlement programs are valued and stakeholders seem to be satisfied. Many of the recommendations made to the Committee were to maintain or expand existing programs. It will be interesting to see if this satisfaction remains as CIC unfolds its new settlement funding structure, although the Committee sees it as a positive development.

Best practices were identified in the areas of language acquisition, mentoring, support from specific ethno-cultural communities, special support for refugees, changing the dominant settlement pattern or regionalization, and collaborative initiatives. Areas highlighted by witnesses for improvement include needs that are unmet by settlement services and challenges for small settlement agencies.

Rather than wade into program details, the Committee has chosen six strategic recommendations. The first three are aimed at furthering information sharing and collaboration to improve immigrant settlement. Specifically, the Committee recommends the creation of an interactive website to facilitate sharing best practices across the country, explicit encouragement of service provider collaboration in the funding application process of CIC, and continued support for and expansion of LIPs as a way of convening a broad group of community stakeholders and improving coordination.

Finally, the Committee makes three recommendations related to gaps in settlement programming. Specifically, greater flexibility is needed to include activities such as business and self-employment support as well as mental health and family counselling, subject to provincial jurisdiction, in CIC's Modernized Approach to Settlement Programming. Further, given that some newcomer citizens may have on-going settlement needs that would be in society's interest to address, the Committee proposes greater flexibility in determining eligibility for settlement services as a compromise solution. Third, subject to provincial jurisdiction, the Committee recommends that the federal government provide school support and trauma counselling to resettled refugees for the initial settlement period. This approach acknowledges that refugees have more acute settlement needs and that the burden of responding to these needs falls disproportionately on provincial governments.

The structure of funding for settlement services in Canada, and the responsibility granted Quebec, British Columbia, and Manitoba in particular, allows for differentiation and experimentation—a trend that will only continue with CIC's new settlement funding structure. The Committee encourages all stakeholders to continue to pursue opportunities for exchange and learning, so that Canadian society can become more effective at welcoming and integrating the more than 200,000 immigrants who settle in Canada each year.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada develop a proposal for an interactive website on best practices in settlement services. The aim of the proposal should be to have an operational website in fiscal year 2011-2012.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada, through Citizenship and Immigration Canada, judge joint proposals for settlement funding favourably and indicate this clearly on the application form.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada continue to support and expand Local Immigration Partnerships in Ontario and explore the potential of local immigration partnership pilot projects in other interested provinces.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that, subject to provincial jurisdiction, Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Modernized Approach to Settlement Programming should be flexible such that business and self-employment support programs can be included in the theme of "labour market participation;" and mental health and family counselling can be included in the theme of "support services".

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Government of Canada permit greater flexibility in determining the length of time individuals are eligible for particular settlement services.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends, subject to provincial jurisdiction, that the Government of Canada include trauma counselling and school support as eligible activities under the Resettlement Assistance Program.

APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES HEARD IN THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 40TH PARLIAMENT

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p>Calgary Immigrant Educational Society Noureddine Bouissoukrane, Acting Senior Manager</p> <p>MOSAIC Sherman Chan, Director, Settlement Services</p> <p>S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Thomas Tam, Chief Operating Officer</p>	2009/12/03	38
<p>Centre of Integration for African Immigrants Paul Mulangu, Executive Director Patricia Whittaker, Program Director</p> <p>Folk Arts Council of St. Catharines Multicultural Centre Anne Marie Majtenyi, Manager, Settlement Services Salvatore Sorrento, Vice-President, English</p> <p>Langley Community Services Society Sandy Shih, Program Manager</p> <p>Maison Internationale de la Rive-Sud Noureddine Belhocine, General Manager</p> <p>PROMIS (PROMotion-Intégration-Société nouvelle) Moussa Guene, Coordinator, Area Employment, Regionalization Andrée Ménard, General Director</p>	2009/12/08	39
<p>Afghan Women's Counselling and Integration Community Support Organization Adeena Niazi, Executive Director</p> <p>Chinese Family Services of Ontario Patrick Au, Executive Director</p> <p>Chinese Professionals Association of Canada Joe Chang, General Manager</p> <p>Council of Agencies Serving South Asians Neethan Shan, Executive Director</p>	2009/12/10	41

APPENDIX B

**LIST OF BRIEFS RECEIVED IN THE SECOND
SESSION OF THE 40TH PARLIAMENT**

Organizations and Individuals

Afghan Women's Counselling and Integration Community Support Organization

Folk Arts Council of St. Catharines Multicultural Centre

Langley Community Services Society

MOSAIC

PROMIS (PROMotion-Intégration-Société nouvelle)

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant Minutes of Proceedings of the Second Session of the 40th Parliament ([Meetings Nos 38, 39 and 41](#)) and of the Third Session of the 40th Parliament ([Meeting No 4](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

David Tilson, MP

Chair

