

SETTLEMENT & INTEGRATION

'23

REGIONAL SECTOR  
**FORUM REPORT**

OCTOBER 11-12 2023, HALIFAX, NS



Funded by:

Immigration, Refugees  
and Citizenship Canada

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Immigration, Réfugiés  
et Citoyenneté Canada

# REGIONAL SECTOR FORUM



## Organized By

Organized by the Société nationale de l'Acadie (SNA) and the Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (ARAISA), a Regional Sector Forum was held in Halifax on October 11 and 12, 2023, in partnership with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). Close to 200 people attended the event in person and online, representing both Anglophone and Francophone organizations from across the Atlantic region

## Forum Objectives

- Provide a regional opportunity to share successes, achievements, and challenges encountered by organizations and stakeholders in the settlement and integration sector, with IRCC representatives.
- Develop financial management skills, particularly in forecasting, and managing variances between forecasts and cash flow results, based on IRCC requirements and regulations.

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**Lesley Alexander**, Assistant Director, Settlement Network, and **Maryse O'Neill**, Director of Integration, Settlement Network, Atlantic, from IRCC, welcome everyone.

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## Financial Management Training

### FIRST PRESENTERS (EN/FR):

**Michael Brandt**, Director, and **Éric Brazeau**, Assistant Director, for IRCC: *Grants and Contributions Financial Management (GCFM)*

### SECOND PRESENTERS (EN/FR):

**Kathy Condy**, Senior Analyst and Liaison Officer, and **Tammy Atkins**, Operations Manager, Settlement Network, for IRCC: *Forecast of Cash Flow and Slippage*.

## Opening Session **OCTOBER 11, 2023**

**Marlene Companion**, Mi'kmaw Elder: *Traditional Mi'kmaw blessing*.

**Maryse O'Neill**, Director of Integration, Settlement Network, Atlantic, IRCC

**Carolyn Whiteway**, Executive Director, ARAISA

**Véronique Mallet**, Executive Director, SNA

# PANEL 1 WITH PRACTITIONERS

## MODERATOR

**Moncef Lakouas**

(BGC Moncton)

## PANELISTS

**Julie-Ann Vincent** (Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia)

**Bernadette Reynolds** (Immigrant and Refugee Services Association PEI)

**Monica Abdelkader** (Association for New Canadians)

**Eugenie Parent** (La Coopérative d'intégration francophone de l'Î.-P.-É.)

**David Lapierre** (Réseau Immigration Francophone de T.-N.-L.)

**Martine Rioux** (Communauté francophone accueillante du Haut-Saint-Jean)

**Kailea Pedley** (Cape Breton Partnership)

Each panelist was invited to answer three questions related to hope, challenges, and best practices within their organization:

- 1 What do you hope for? In an ideal world, what does settlement look like in your community?
- 2 What are the challenges you face?
- 3 What is one promising practice to share with other service providers? This can be something you already do, or something you would like to implement.

## 1 HOPES

- Creating a community where immigrants can integrate successfully. This requires the community to recognize the contributions of newcomers, and newcomers to feel comfortable settling permanently. The successful settlement and integration of newcomers involves recognizing that each immigrant is an individual. Newcomers can then access services necessary for their individual journeys to help achieve their individual goals.
- A community where immigration status doesn't matter. Newcomers should be able to access services without concern for status.
- To welcome Francophone immigrants throughout the region, making all services available in both English and French. Ensuring that the French language is an active part of social and public life. This is especially the case in Newfoundland and Labrador, where there is a striking lack of French. This requires greater representation in organizations and leadership roles.
- To continue working collaboratively to ensure newcomer support systems are in place. This means that there is no wrong door for clients when accessing services; this is central to developing a sense of belonging. This means providing communities with the right tools, including both settlement and non-settlement organizations. It also means that organizations need to understand one another's work.

- Decrease the time it takes to get funding, as well as shorten the back-and-forth involved in making a request.
- Focus on staff wellness. This includes ensuring job stability and knowing staff will have a job on April 1st.

## 2 CHALLENGES

- Settlement and integration require involvement from the whole community (whole of community approach). Community involvement ensures that people feel welcome and do not become isolated.
- Newcomers need to know which services are available in which languages. This means being able to refer newcomers to Anglophone and Francophone services accordingly.
- There is still a lot to be done in terms of raising awareness, building community partnerships, and engaging with people in the community. When engaging the community, it is necessary to get people involved and ensure that they remain involved.
- Understanding the ecosystem of services available in the region can help to increase awareness.
- Increased inclusion of international students and temporary workers. In particular, the community needs to understand the value of international students.
- There is a need for more staff to support program delivery; this includes roles that are crucial to service delivery but are not directly involved in these services (e.g. coordination, scheduling). The value of these roles is not sufficiently recognized by IRCC.
- Cape Breton Partnership is involved in developing cross-sectoral collaboration; partner organizations and their staff need to dedicate extra time and resources beyond their everyday work. Partners need to work internally to designate time, space, and budgets for staff to be involved in this work.
- It is also necessary to build capacity among staff, i.e. by providing tools and practical knowledge about how to work collaboratively for collective impact.
- Creating a welcoming environment for newcomers requires more than lip service to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). It requires active work in anti-oppression and anti-racism, and to embody these values. It also requires critical self-reflection on how we can make people feel welcome.
- Temporary residents often come as families. It is important to keep them interested so they can get Permanent Residence (PR) and stay in the region.
- There is a two-year window during which temporary residents can apply for PR through their employer, so it is necessary to act quickly.
- An increase in population has created an increased need for services. Many newcomers will go to Anglophone Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) if they cannot get the necessary services from a Francophone organization. For example, there is a 10-month wait for mental health services.

# 3 PROMISING PRACTICES

- Collaboration with partners is essential to service delivery because it helps to explain and promote what each SPO does. Collaboration can also help to strengthen the community and contribute to retention. Collaboration enables SPOs to share practices that work and those that don't.
- Participation at inter-organizational/networking events (such as the Regional Sector Forum) supports collaboration.
- Better promotion of pre-arrival services can facilitate better settlement.
- CFA-HSJ in NB supports Francophone newcomer integration at the community level, rather than through service delivery. This involves developing tools and resources that are shared with service providers and other community members.
- The Welcoming Francophone Community pilot project sensitizes people in the region to the importance of Francophone immigration. This involves working with newcomers in a community environment.
- CIF IPE acted in response to the housing crisis by going directly to property owners. Through this action, they were able to find housing for newcomers.
- ISANS recognizes that immigrants don't identify with categories or boxes. As such, they provide flexibility in service delivery to identify client needs and meet clients where they are. ISANS also sees the necessity of "wrap-around" services.
- When clients can select the services they require, the outcome is better for retention and economic development.
- Volunteers are crucial to the services provided by IRSA PEI.
- The DiverseCity Festival has been effective at bringing people together. In the future, IRSA PEI hopes to expand the event from 6 to 26 communities.
- The "wrap-around" approach (an integrated service delivery model, or "the warm hug") is an effective way to provide services that cover all aspects of settlement and integration.
- ANC works in and with communities that are interested in welcoming newcomers with employment skills and their families, who can contribute to growing communities in NL.
- Collaboration between service providers allows for each organization to contribute to collective interventions (e.g., Atlantic RAP SPOs during Afghan airlifts).
- Create diverse portfolios of providers in the region. Whole-COMM, a collective of 60 academics studying integration in small and medium cities, is a useful model.

# Summary of Q&As

**Q** **Newcomers have limited access to services in rural areas. How can we get an ISANS office in Western Nova Scotia (or another region with limited services)?**

**A:** New partnerships and collaborations are key to services in rural areas. Find new ways to create and share collective resources within the sector.

**Q** **Are there opportunities for newcomers to engage with both official languages? Why do they have to choose one or the other?**

**A:** The mainstream language in a region limits the ability to engage with both languages. Knowing the mainstream language (i.e. English) is necessary to access services whereas the non-mainstream language (i.e. French) is often treated as supplementary.

**A:** Connecting work is important, but it takes time and capacity. ARAISA can play a role in facilitating communication and connection.

**A:** It is important to find out what immigrants want, need, and hope for.





# PANEL 2 WITH PRACTITIONERS FOCUSING ON SPECIFIC GROUPS

## MODERATOR

**Moncef Lakouas**  
(BGC Moncton)

## PANELISTS

**Ksenia Lazoukova** (Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia)  
**Jennifer Fischer** (Halifax Regional Municipality)  
**Kimberly Offspring** (YWCA St. John's)  
**Amira Khedhri** (District scolaire francophone Sud)  
**Marlene Companion**, Mi'kmaw Elder

Each panelist was invited to answer the following questions based on their professional and personal experience:

- 1 What are the 3 specific challenges related to service delivery, for the groups you work with? What do you need to overcome these challenges?
- 2 Can you share one promising practice?

## GROUP 1 - WOMEN

### 1 CHALLENGES

- "For most women, learning English is a career challenge and so is having a lower level of English. This is something that we are juggling with because, sometimes, when women choose an English language class, they may be put on the waitlist to get into the class. They may find themselves having to choose between another program and not finish the class or go to the English class when it becomes available."
- "Another big challenge that we are experiencing is the cultural shock and the cultural differences among the women that we support. A lot of them come from traditional cultures where the woman's role is seen as that of a caregiver so, the women stay at home and take care of everyone, children, the elderly, and the sick. So it's specifically in our refugee women group, sometimes the women will go through our program, and at the end of the program, they might decide that they're not ready for employment or for example, the men in the family might support the woman whether it's a daughter or a wife in the decision to stay home to either take care of the children or to keep learning English, keep developing skills to get more meaningful jobs other than entry-level jobs."
- "A lot of our clients experience grief and trauma associated with leaving their home cultures: losing their network system, separating from their families, their friends, and so forth. Also, in this transition through immigration, women may lose confidence in who they are, they even question their identity, and cultural identity."

# PROMISING PRACTICES

- “We create and facilitate culturally informed training. Our training is designed specifically for newcomers and specifically for women. We have a big component

that is focused on Canadian workplace culture and workplace communication. We teach from the feminist perspective. Therefore, we think in terms of what are women’s rights, and we advocate for the women clients in our program. We support them in understanding that they have equal rights and deserve to have those meaningful jobs that are important to them. And we teach values, Canadian values such as diversity, equity, and inclusion.”

- “We use an individualized approach, a client-centered approach. We work one-on-one with every client, every woman to see where they are at in skill level. That includes English level, digital skills, job search, and strategy skills.”
- “We lean heavily on social learning in class. This is the favorite component for our women to learn from each other. We work a lot in small groups and big groups so that women can develop that meaningful connection with each other, develop their network, share those important stories of struggles, and successes, and have proud moments for their children, and for their careers. We lean on all our programs and refer our women

so that they can receive wrap-around support. Our programs include settlement, language, business counseling, and employment programs.”

- “Adopt a trauma-informed and strength-based approach to supporting women. We suspect trauma and grief in every client, so we support women from the perspective of their strength. We look at what they have, and we work so hard to help women develop that confidence and look at themselves from the perspective of “what do I have” because a lot of them lose that during immigration. They start feeling and expressing to us ‘My English is not good enough, my skills are not good enough, I don’t know who would hire me. I tried looking for work, but nobody’s hiring me. I don’t know what’s wrong with me.’ We work so hard to support the women and we use purposeful kindness, empathy, and compassion.”
- “In our program, we have two streams. We have the refugee stream in each cohort, and we have a skilled professional group. Our promising practice is that we reach out to the women in the refugee group to break that difference. We invited women from the refugee group to attend the portfolio presentation that the women from the professional group did. They participate and have a chance to mingle with each other to connect, to learn what the professional portfolio is, how to present it, and what goes into it. And if women are interested in creating one, we go above and beyond to meet one-on-one to create it.”

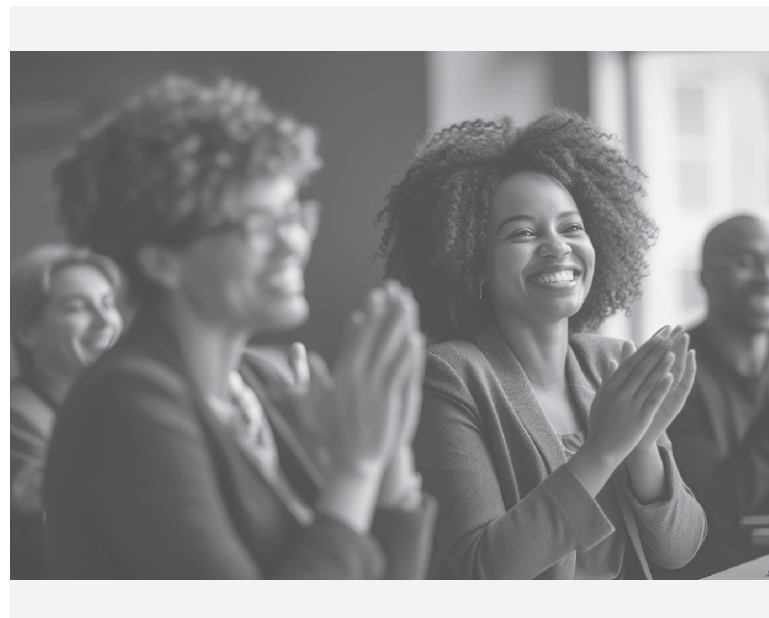
# GROUP 2 - INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY

## 1 CHALLENGES

- "I am from the Halifax Regional Municipality, specifically Parks and Recreation. One of the largest challenges is our registration process. For any of you who are from HRM or have engaged in our online registration, it's convoluted even if English is your first language. It translates into French, but it doesn't translate into other languages."
- "Newcomers might not have access to transportation other than public transit, so they need programming that takes place at one recreation center. They also might have larger families with multiple aged children and our programming doesn't necessarily offer to a wide range of ages. Even if they get into the programs they're looking for, it's not always feasible for them to attend."
- "For a lot of our workforce, English is their first language. We have some French-speaking employees but when I say employees, it's high school, young university students. These are the ages that are running the programs and camps. English is predominantly the main language. We do have some staff that are more diverse. We have something called inclusion support, so you can ask for one-on-one support to participate in our programming."
- "The affordable access program is a fantastic program. Depending on where you fall on the low-income scale, you can receive 100% or 50% coverage for all the programming for memberships, for programming. Unfortunately, as of right now, you need a notice of assessment to put in with your application and you need a copy of your child benefit form. New immigrants or even ones that may be established might not have access to these things."

## 2 PROMISING PRACTICES

- "Easier and quicker access to translation services. We want to diversify our workforce, but a quick fix right now is just being able to access translation services."
- "Connecting with ISANS, connecting with other employment agencies, and being able to advertise to our market appropriately."
- "As a promising practice, I am fortunate and excited to be part of a working group with the Halifax Immigration Partnership, specifically the Civic Engagement Working Group. We have 22 recreation centers and 3 indoor pools. Being part of the civic engagement working group over the next year we're going to look at tackling the question of how we ensure that the immigrant population is actively, regularly participating in our programs, shaping those municipal services and programs, and planning and being engaged at that level."



# GROUP 3 - YOUTH

## 1 CHALLENGES

- "We provide services to many families whose parents and children are allophones. It's difficult to help a parent who doesn't speak French or English at all when we don't speak their language, so we use translation tools, but it's not always easy."
- "Unfortunately, in the regions we operate in - our district covers half the province, so it's a very large territory - it's sometimes difficult to offer means of transportation and public transport is not available."
- "Employee retention is also challenging. 34 schools in half the province are served by our team of 11 workers, so it takes a lot of resources and flexibility."



## 2 PROMISING PRACTICES

- "The job of settlement workers will become much easier when the program is integrated into the Francophone school district since the workers will be employed by the school. This is how schools keep track of who is enrolled in the program, why they're there, what they do, and what exactly their role is. This way, schools are also involved in and help carry out the settlement worker's mission. Using this approach, we find that settlement workers are really involved in the process from the start. In the Francophone district in New Brunswick, we get about 1,000 students per year from immigrant families. That's a large number, but with the process we've put in place, starting with admitting and enrolling new families, the settlement worker at the school is aware as soon as a new family is enrolled. They can begin the process right away and follow the family through their progression within the school system."
- "We also created a document called the 'welcome profile,' which we think is good practice and which we have shared with other districts. It is with this welcome profile that we ask newcomers to fill out information about their children and their families. We can determine the needs of families as soon as we receive their profiles. We can also identify the people who would like to volunteer since we would like to offer them that opportunity. We can determine which people are facing digital literacy challenges. This is a well-established process and that starts as soon as the family contacts us regarding enrolment and ends after we offer all our services and guide them through the system. We have also developed a guide to the education system, which has been translated into 11 languages, that we share with the families."



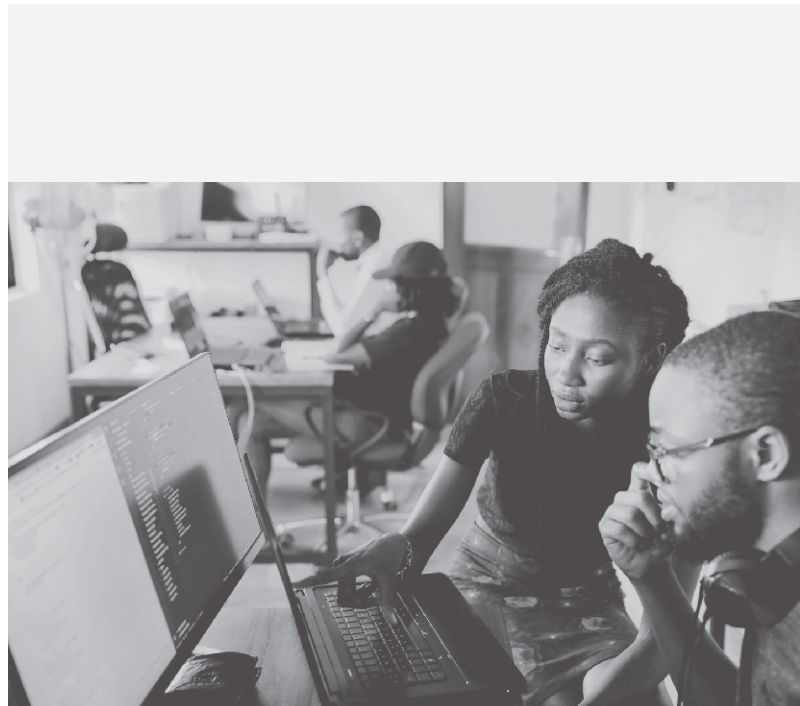
# GROUP 4 - REFUGEES

## 1 CHALLENGES

- “Refugees are a group of clients who have psychosocial issues due to trauma. We have consulted with our partners in mental health in the region of Bathurst to identify the needs of the cases we receive.”
- “Another challenge is education. Children of refugees and immigrants are enrolled in schools based solely on their age and schools do not conduct any placement tests to assess their knowledge level. Our settlement workers accompany these children in their schools to make sure they are caught up on coursework. Currently, schools do not have the means or the resources necessary to support this new group of students.”
- “The third challenge is language. Our clients are allophones, so we try to communicate with them using signs and pictures, but this can be infantilizing. These people are not 10 years old. They are 45 or 60 years old, so we are trying to address these challenges with the help of volunteers who speak their language.”

## 2 PROMISING PRACTICES

- “One promising practice is that we have a great partnership with NBCC. We have a program with them called Introduction to Essential Skills. This two-week employability program allows participants to gain a better understanding of Canadian work culture. We have had Francophone refugees take this course and they are currently employed in Canada. We have also created partnerships and paired Francophone seniors in New Brunswick with newcomers to connect them with our seniors and provide them with access to online psychological health resources.”



# GROUP 5 - LGBTQI+ NEWCOMERS

## 1 CHALLENGES

- "LGBTQI+ newcomers aren't well understood by the settlement sector. The needs of LGBTQI+ newcomers can often differ from the broader, newcomer population.
- "Another challenge that I found in our programming is that a lot of participants of our programs find that the collection of personal data for reporting or funding reporting can feel invasive and uncomfortable. As an example, we're collecting things like immigration numbers, or a legal name. Many newcomers' legal names may be different than what they're presenting at our programs and therefore it can be an uncomfortable experience to have to navigate."
- "Another challenge is client eligibility. We see a huge need for LGBTQI+ newcomer services, including for temporary residents. Whether the person coming to us asking for help is a temporary resident or permanent resident, they've all come to Canada looking for a place that accepts their identity. One thing to note is that the federal client eligibility does exclude asylum claimants. Some of these people are claiming asylum because they just needed to leave the situation they were in because of persecution based on their gender or sexual orientation. They could use our services just as much as anybody else."

A lot of them are coming from countries where maybe it's illegal to be themselves and have even faced violence or persecution based on their gender or sexual orientation. Even after arriving in Canada, challenges remain. As an example, if an LGBTQI+ newcomer is looking for housing or employment, not only are they facing the incredible difficulty that everybody is right now with finding those things, but they have the added layers of also having to find housing or employment that are positive spaces for them to work and live in. They might face additional discrimination in the process of looking for housing, in looking for employment."

- "A lot of service providers don't know that they're serving LGBTQI+ newcomers. They may or may not come out, or maybe you feel uncomfortable talking about it. Whatever the situation is, you're all serving LGBTQI+ newcomers whether you realize it or not."



## PROMISING PRACTICES

- “Some solutions are around a better understanding and serving of this population. Of course, the continued federal support and funding for doing the work that we’re doing is essential to make sure that those needs continue to be met because they are very complex.”
- “We all need to assume that LGBTQI+ newcomers are walking through our doors and accessing services and we must prepare accordingly. We need to reject the assumption that all newcomers are, you know, straight or cisgender until proven otherwise.”
- “One tangible solution could be to do some updating to the gathering of information, and information sheet that we give to our clients.”
- “It would be amazing to see a settlement sector where we don’t have to think about immigration status when we’re serving people and deciding how best to support them. To think about the collective benefit that we all can receive in our country and in our communities of supporting temporary residents because from what I’ve seen, most of them want to stay here.”
- “People in the settlement sector, and I guess in any sector, can fall into the habit of working in silos. Research shows that when organizations and sectors collaborate, it leads to better outcomes for the people that we’re serving.”
- “One thing I want to encourage you all to do is to get familiar with the services that are available to LGBTQI+ newcomers in your local areas: are there services specifically for LGBTQI+ newcomers? If not, are there LGBTQI+ organizations that you can reach out to? What services are out there that you can refer your clients to? And not just refer clients, that’s certainly important, but building relationships with other organizations in other sectors is so important.”
- “And one thing about collaboration is that it makes our own lives kind of easier in a way because we’re putting our resources together. But what I notice is that when we’re working together as teams, the people that we’re serving feel supported by a whole team. It’s nice to know that they’re not alone in navigating the challenges that they’re facing and that they have a whole team of folks supporting them, and not just from one organization - they have that support that is wrapped around. We’re all working together to support people at the same time.”

## WORDS OF WISDOM:

Marlene Companion

Peace itself comes from the community.

We must build communities of different cultures and religions, and practices of ceremony.

# OPEN SPACE DISCUSSIONS



## FACILITATORS

**Jason Doiron & Dominique Gaudet**, O Strategies, Atlantic Room

**Yannick Mainville**, SNA, Lunenburg Room

## PROCESS

To create engagement and connections between participants, the workshop was designed in two parts. Firstly, participants were guided through the *Sailboat Retrospective* methodology through the themes identified. The morning after, participants were asked to identify ideas or ways to adapt to the current context.

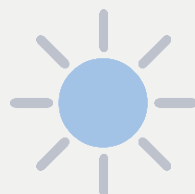
The sailboat retrospective exercise is a valuable agile methodology tool often used by teams to reflect on their work. In this exercise, the team visualizes their journey as a sailboat, with the destination representing their goal and the wind symbolizing driving forces, such as positive aspects of the project. On the other hand, rocks signify obstacles and challenges, while anchors represent things holding them back.

By collectively discussing these elements, teams can identify what went well (the wind), what challenges they face in the future (the rocks), and what factors are impeding their progress (the anchors). This exercise encourages open communication, constructive feedback, and collaboration among team members, ultimately helping to improve future projects and ensuring a smoother voyage toward their goals

*Please note that the overview provided below encompasses viewpoints expressed by individuals within discussion groups and may not necessarily represent a consensus*



**WIND**



**SUN**



**ANCHOR**



**ROCK**



# CONVERSATION HARVEST

## ATLANTIC ROOM (EN)

### 1 - RESETTLEMENT



- Engage employment sources early
- Outreach to community



- Income support needs to reflect the reality and cost of living
- Housing: affordability and availability



- Improvement in receiving startup cheques for GARs
- RAP documentation improvement
- Creating community



- Housing
- Increased secondary migration
- Increased client isolation

#### WHAT COULD WE ADJUST OR CHANGE?

- Community involvement for connections
- Volunteer opportunities to connect with new clients
- Opportunities for RAP and SPOs to share experiences of what to request in the CFP
- National or regional coordination of RAP-related requirements (e.g. hotel contracts) or at least negotiation guidelines
- Partnerships with provincial governments or municipal groups and governments
- CFP: Opportunities from knowledge of the past 5 years
- Preview of income support with current cost of living
  - Opportunities for structuring our teams, defining roles or new roles

## 2 - LANGUAGES



- AI
- Apps
- Tech at virtual options



- Waiting lists
- Still need to become bilingual
- Tech might make you insist on learning resources
- Isolation
- Unmet expectations



- Enriches the community
- The more languages the better
- Creates positives
- Source of growth
- Positive feedback
- Increasing community capacity



- Hard to close labour gaps
- Safety issues and risks
- Inaccurate information

### WHAT COULD WE ADJUST OR CHANGE?

- Setting priorities
- Flexibility
- Classes schedule
- Starting classes right away
- Employers should encourage newcomers to take ESL courses
- More frequent conversations with decision-makers
- Creating a solid proposal justifying why your organization needs more funding
- Start learning the languages within their 1st year of arrival.

# 3 - EMPLOYMENT



- Having three funders allows us to move forward, to keep going
- Together, it can pull ahead hybrid finds; better for organizations and clients!
- With a holistic lens on economic security
- Women to access the labour market
- GBV awareness: impacts and safety, allows the family to settle
- Stable funding (5 years)



- 2 jobs:
  - Survival job.
  - Upgrade skills to get a better job
- Limited Canadian experience
- Immigrants don't know of all programs (e.g., FIN program)
- Languages: Sector, specific language. Technical, region, AIP
- Employers can hold people back because of labour shortage, scarcity mindset, racism, and fear
- Equity now: employers able to support/ provide an equitable workplace
- Gender gaps:
  - Childcare shortage
  - Transportation
  - Low wages in care economies
- Lack of funding alignment (e.g., provincial): multiple funders, different goals, changing outcomes, and work of employment programs
- Credential recognition (lack of)
- Sponsorship
- Companies are scared. Employees are not supported
- Three months to get a full-time job as an international



- Employment programs make a difference



- Additional/searching for good employment for all, not just newcomers
- Nationalist, right-wing politics that brings an anti-immigration agenda
- Market-based response vs social systems of support - income support, etc.

## WHAT COULD WE ADJUST OR CHANGE?

- Raise awareness amongst companies and employers about the ease of the AIP application
- Education of employers on the benefits, needs, and wants of newcomers
- AIP is a win-win opportunity for employers to welcome newcomers and get support
- AIP: share programs with other SPOs (existing programs and new programs); sharing it with other provinces
- Expand paid internships for employers to get a risk-free understanding of the value that newcomers bring
- Reduce the application process time
- Regularization for undocumented migrants and international students
- Credentialing, fast-tracking, and federal and provincial partnerships
- Address risk with the temporary worker program and provide a pathway for citizenship

# 4 - HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION



- Good relationships with landlords
- Housing Coordinator as a full-time role
- Public/government awareness of housing shortages
- Homestays/host families
- Funders support and hotel stays
- Funding for housing
- Community support
- Transportation: provincial government is being collaborative, carpooling, and creating new routes



- Community support
- Getting newcomers in their own place (from hotels or interim)
- Seeing them settled in their new community
- Transportation:
  - Licenses transferred
  - Learning bus routes
  - Driving as an occupation



- Cost of housing
- Lack of labour to build
- Lack of transportation
- Size of accommodations
- Transportation: seasonal changes in routes, not a lot of resources rurally, car theft



- Lack of available and affordable units
- Rental increased
- Car: single arrivals
- Transportation: service centers are so backed up setting licenses/tests and lack of options in rural areas

## WHAT COULD WE ADJUST OR CHANGE?

- Housing: SPOs moving to a Social Development Model creating and investing in their own housing units
- Housing: small home communities as a model. For starters, accommodations with on-site support
- Transportation: partnering with local dealerships to subsidize vans for agencies
- Transportation: initiatives to support entrepreneurship with newcomers/ immigrants to create a ride-share small bus company



# 5 - HEALTH AND WELLNESS (client-focused)



- Pharmacies
- Internationally Educated Healthcare Worker (IEHW) recruitment
- International healthcare providers want to come to Atlantic Canada
- Mental health of internal/direct service providers



- Summer Socials
- Potluck
- Community meetings, sharing culture, and food
- Neighbour week
- EMPP: skilled refugees arriving in NS as CCAs and they arrive as PR



- Access
- Referral partners
- Mental health of international-direct service providers
- Mental/health trauma
- Cultural context of mental health
- Language barrier within the healthcare sector
- Complex needs
- Referral partners
- Lack of resources
- Lengthy process for accreditation (doctors)
- Broken System
- Interpretation



- Retention
- Long-term effects, lack of treatment, mental health
- Prevention is key
- Leaving because of no access or long wait times
- Employers: resources for mental health support for newcomer employees
- Staff leaves organizations

## WHAT COULD WE ADJUST OR CHANGE?

- Strengthen the relationship between pre-arrival and post-arrival services
- Working closely together to meet everyone's needs: employers/newcomers/settlement
- More awareness and resources for mental health

# 6 - COLLABORATION, TOOLS, AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER



- Pooled resources
- Coordination
- Asset mapping
- Technology



- Retention
- Impact
- Partnerships
- Vision
- Purpose



- Leadership turnover: losing contacts
- Competitive funding processes
- Time
- Competition
- Lack of clarity of roles (e.g. umbrellas, LIPs, RIFs, ISAs, ethnocultural, etc.)



- Governance
- Bigger pie, but smaller pieces for each

## WHAT COULD WE ADJUST OR CHANGE?

- Explore new methodologies for information sharing
- Funding PD on governance for leadership

# 7 - EQUITY



- CFP: GBA+ / ARAO lens applied
- Sector-wide
- Commitment to ensuring services we deliver are responsive to needs
- Focus on this is indeed an important part of employee retention



- Equity is part of the conversation today
- Seen as role models (sector)
- Top of agenda/on the radar
- Buy-in (or lack of) by leadership
- Champions



- (Should) create synchronous onboarding training programs within organizations
- (Should) create roles in organizations that focus on this and offer the necessary expertise to drive and innovate
- Resources: time needed to apply an equity lens
- Don't start from the same place others do (lack of framework)
- Policy analysis: how do we analyze with the framework already presented to us?
- Turnover in the sector (loss of expertise)
- Superficial commitment to EDI (tracking)



- Immigration - a big role in Canada's future - is not fully understood
- Organizations are starting EDI work but starting with not enough resources (e.g., budget of SPOs vs universities)
- We should be ahead of this and be the experts, but why? We don't have resources
- Political committees can be challenging in terms of doing this (provincial and federal)

## WHAT COULD WE ADJUST OR CHANGE?

- Opportunity: potential willingness (with funding) to create positions solely focused on equity work in organizations (champions)
- Training to support agencies looking to include GBA+, anti-racism, etc., in proposal programming
- Leveraging change makers within our organizations to move this work forward
- Outreach to law enforcement and other organizations to address issues around engagement with newcomers
- Create visuals/marketing to promote the integration of GBA+, ARAO, etc. into work with newcomers. Sensitize people to these issues
- Awards for businesses that show meaningful commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Recognition!
- Community of practice: GBA+, expert eye to review proposals, etc., and enhance capacity
- Collect best practices and share (could be better)
- Avoid duplicating efforts
- Retention: recap expertise and commitment to doing this work within organizations. We need to make jobs more appealing
- Avoid box-ticking. Need to create buy-in to this work so it's done in a real, substantive way
- Create a learning culture
- Built-in workplace equity training
- Take the opportunity to integrate GBA+, ARAO, etc. into strategic organizational policy (e.g., Strategic Plan renewal)

# 8 - SETTLEMENT



- Flexibility with budgets
- Decreasing the time to get funding approvals
- Spending less time reporting
- More collaboration between the provincial and federal government
- More outcomes and less outputs



- Committed and passionate staff
- Relationships with clients, organizations, and across the sector
- Impact diversity has in our region (cultural growth)



- Funding constraints (monetary, activity, and client eligibility)
- Not enough focus on youth
- Lack of collaboration between organizations
- Short team contracts impact staffing/ hiring and project programming
- Sustainability and effectiveness



- Health of the sector
- Inflation (e.g., housing)
- Changing nature of immigration programs

## WHAT COULD WE ADJUST OR CHANGE?

- Retain staff by offering long-term contracts
- Training sessions specific to staff retention delivered by an HR professional familiar with the sector
- More networking events, provincial and in the Atlantic (include organization on everyone's name tags)
- Newsletter from ARAISA featuring a different organization each month. Including photos of staff

# 9 - ANTI-RACISM



- Passion, collaborations, etc.
- Truth and Reconciliation work
- Having conversations and discussions about anti-racism
- Cultural sharing and exchange



- People feel welcomed and included
- Equal participation
- Working in collaboration with ethnocultural groups
- Safe spaces



- Taboo
- Lack of meaningful engagement and commitment
- Funding



- People feel like they don't belong

## WHAT COULD WE ADJUST OR CHANGE?

- Policy changes are needed!
- Simplify pathways of immigration and remove bureaucracy
- Allow settlement and integration services to be accessible regardless of immigration status
- More racialized newcomers in leadership positions, e.g., the 50/30 challenge
- Diversity audit in workplaces (not only checking the box)
- Capacity building: all ethnocultural organizations should be able to have a space to meet and greet newcomers



# 10 - HEALTH OF THE SECTOR



- Long-term (5-year) funding
- Willingness of IRCC to fund required new initiatives (e.g., HIPPY) mid-contract
- Great partnerships (within the sector and across sectors)



- Passion and dedication of our staff
- Meeting client needs, no matter what (within our scope)
- Greater awareness of high-needs populations



- Funding cycle (no carryover)
- Job security (lack of)
- Compensation
- Lack of PD funding
- Lack of capacity to take time for PD (no capacity buffer)
- No time for proper onboarding
- Staff turnover (resulting from the above items)



- Number and frequency of new humanitarian crises
- Staff/sector burnout
- Loss of long-time individuals in the sector (knowledge, sector organizational history, context)

## WHAT COULD WE ADJUST OR CHANGE?

- Reduced number of immigration targets
- Core/long-term funding
- Talent attraction retention

# CONVERSATION HARVEST

## LUNENBURG ROOM (FR)

### 1 - SETTLEMENT (Immigration) & RESETTLEMENT (Refugees)



- The number of partners and amount of expertise
- Stakeholders' commitments in the immigration sector: a mission, not a job
- The number of programs and partnerships/collaborations between organizations



- Lack of jobs, housing and opportunities in the region, limited public transport, which can cause relocation
- Communities are "closed off" instead of welcoming newcomers
- Competition amongst some service providers
- Program eligibility requirements for holders of temporary resident status



- The District scolaire francophone Sud (DSFS) program: Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)
- Collaboration between partners, IRCC, and provincial governments
- Belonging to the Acadian identity & nation
- The region's warm welcome, cultural richness, and quality of life
- Affordable housing, compared with other provinces
- Bilingualism and inclusive school systems



- Policy or political changes
- Marginally lower wages in Atlantic Canada than elsewhere in the country
- Higher cost of living
- Lack of housing
- Credential recognition
- All these challenges jeopardize retention

#### WHAT COULD WE ADJUST OR CHANGE?

- Keep clients informed of their eligibility for available services
- Propose solutions to governments to alleviate the housing crisis
- Raise awareness among community groups and employers of the potential to recruit newcomers as volunteers
- Help newcomers network
- To promote retention:
  - Raise awareness among host communities of the newcomer experience and highlight the importance of connections within the community
  - Offer an information package after the initial settlement period to help newcomers better establish themselves in the community

## 2 - OFFICIAL LANGUAGES AND EQUITY



- Cultural diversity, the vitality of official language minority communities, and the new Official Languages Act (OLA), which now covers immigration
- Ethnocultural associations



- Ethnocultural associations and the two official languages



- Unequal employment opportunities for unilingual Francophones
- Lack of a "by and for" ("par et pour") approach to settlement services
- Unequal access to French-language services in day-to-day life (e.g. health care, banks)
- Francophone immigration targets are too low to maintain demographic levels
- Lack of awareness abroad of the Francophone reality in Atlantic Canada
- Growth levels which do not compare to elsewhere in the country



- Difficulties in achieving Francophone targets (%)
- Francophone recruitment not being prioritized
- Development and maintenance of provincial and federal policies
- Lack of Francophone visibility

### WHAT COULD WE ADJUST OR CHANGE?

- Renewal of the OLA and strengthening of Francophone communities
- Restoration and maintenance of immigration targets
- Equality between all beneficiaries of IRCC programs
- Collaboration between Anglophone and Francophone service providers in focus groups on the OLA
- Increases of newcomers arriving in Atlantic Canada is the ideal time to create new services and further develop resources
- IRCC's next call for proposals
- Ongoing initiatives to support diversity (e.g. Gender-based Analysis Plus–GBA Plus)

# 3 - HOUSING, TRANSPORTATION, AND HEALTH & WELL-BEING



- Recognition of newcomers' needs
- Qualifications of staff assigned to health and well-being
- Economic context
- Government support and initiatives (e.g. affordable housing)
- Inspiration from existing models in other provinces



- Municipal involvement (e.g. the City of Dieppe in New Brunswick, which gives low-income residents free access to public transport, making it easier for them to get around during off-peak times)
- Partnerships between community organizations
- Commitment and optimism of immigration partners
- Sharing best practices between settlement centres (e.g. alternative means of transport as necessary, based on the network's reduced lines of service)



- Employment turnover rate due to the offered salary
- Scope of available resources limiting action and responsibility
- Siloed discussions
- Limited eligibility to programs for temporary residents
- Limited accessibility of health care services
- Non-recognition of credentials and diplomas
- Rental scams
- Misunderstanding or overestimating the resources and responsibilities of reception centers by some applicants



- Loss of employees in reception centers due to the salary
- Relocation to other provinces
- Transportation: the high cost of car insurance for foreigners, high demand and limited or inadequate public transport, and a temporary resident's vehicle purchase is limited to the duration of their work or residence permit
- Health: lack of mental health awareness amongst newcomers

## WHAT COULD WE ADJUST OR CHANGE?

- Increase Francophone visibility
- Strengthen client development and retention by ensuring smooth collaborations between partners:
  - Raise awareness in host communities
  - Include governments when discussing each theme (e.g. considerations: cooperative housing projects, shared funding for public transport)
  - Encourage dialogue between governments and organizations to implement action plans
- Include newcomers in these discussions

# 4 - EMPLOYABILITY



- Pre-established networks (the Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité- RDÉE Canada)
- Expertise developed with employers' support
- Community motivation within employee teams



- Quality of personalized services
- Employer satisfaction rate
- Proactivity and responsiveness to market trends
- Tools developed



- Non-recognition of credentials affecting know-how
- Collective memory is affected by employee turnover
- Current funding framework influences which services are offered



- Salary levels in rural areas
- Level of success of awareness activities aimed at employers
- Housing shortages, programs, and policies

## WHAT COULD WE ADJUST OR CHANGE?

- Increase government Francophone immigration targets
- Share more information on what makes us shine in order to symbolize this reference in the sector
- Communicate more immigration success stories to employers (to change mindsets)
- Create a professional development program in Atlantic Canada for employees in Francophone organizations (to increase retention and better meet client needs)
- Expand the criteria of the International Experience Canada (IEC) to reach a greater number of Francophone countries
- Produce tools to raise awareness on Francophone heritage in rural areas for international recruitment
- Develop a promotional matchmaking pilot program in Atlantic Canada between employers and international candidates to encourage them to choose rural areas (e.g. adapt the IEC to facilitate access to residency status)
- Create pilot projects for collaborative information exchanges regarding employment and housing searches
- Set up incentives to encourage international students to settle in Francophone environments



# 5 - COLLABORATION, TOOLS, KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER, AND SERVICE DELIVERY METHODS



- Creation of a Federal Centre for Francophone Immigration in Dieppe (NB)
- Sharing knowledge through networks and exchanges between partners
- Funding availability
- The mission and values of service providers
- Digital training and accessibility



- The development of studies, research, and expertise is encouraging
- Good connections and relationships



- Lack of willingness amongst contributors and personal interests
- Lack of human and financial resources
- Employee turnover affecting knowledge transfer
- Professional training: how do you become a development officer?
- The administrative burden and extensive reports



- Level of community acceptance
- Size of the territory and distance between communities
- Level of development of minority language communities
- Changing political priorities
- Working in silos
- Growing numbers of stakeholders and project ideas

## WHAT COULD WE ADJUST OR CHANGE?

- (Wind) Keep organizing consultation meetings accompanied by work sessions, with the aim of suggesting joint projects between key contributors
- (Sun) Develop marketing strategies to highlight successful partnerships and projects
- (Anchor) Centralize and standardize training for residential service providers; identify expertise among partners and service delivery experts
- (Rocks)
  - Encourage entrepreneurship among newcomers
  - Facilitate community integration by creating casual meeting spaces and providing opportunities to settle in (e.g. using food as a means of forming intercultural links)
  - Extend collaboration to municipal structures that are not usually involved in immigration (e.g. libraries in rural areas could offer "service days")
- Involve community networks to make immigration services more accessible

# GET IN TOUCH

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