

Family Service Association of Toronto

**Factors Affecting the Settlement and Adaptation  
Process of Canadian Adolescent Newcomers 16-19  
Years of Age**

**Research Study Report**

**Written by Rajko Seat, M.Sc.  
Principal Investigator**

Funded by  
Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), The Ontario Administration of Settlement and  
Integration Services (OASIS)

The opinions and views expressed in this study are those of the author and do not  
necessarily reflect the opinions and views of CIC, OASIS.

**Toronto, 2000**

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This report presents the results of both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the above study conducted by the Family Service Association of Toronto (FSA). The idea for this research came primarily from FSA's Community Action Team's experience in working with newcomer immigrant and refugee youth. FSA was awarded to conduct this study applying to "One Time Project" from the Ontario Region Settlement Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

FSA has been serving families, individuals and communities in Toronto for more than 80 years. Today FSA is a leading and well-known non-profit, social service agency in Canada. Its staff help more than 20,000 individuals and families in need each year. FSA provides a variety of counselling, education, intervention and community support programs to individuals and families struggling to cope with everything from depression to physical abuse, marital problems to children issues, and developmental disabilities to the challenges of growing older. FSA also works in partnership with various groups to help build the capacity of these communities to provide care and support for their members.

Family Service Association of Toronto  
355 Church Street  
Toronto, Ontario, M5B 1Z8  
Tel.: (416) 595-9230

Fax: (416) 595-0242

[www.fsatoronto.com](http://www.fsatoronto.com)

## Acknowledgments

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## Executive Summary

Working with newcomer immigrant and refugee youth, Family Service Association of Toronto (FSA) has consistently been interested in comprehensive intervention strategies with these youth, their families and relevant community resources in an effort to help and address the multiplicity of their needs and various factors affecting, limiting or impeding their settlement, adaptation, and integration process. Helping these young people to manage their new life in Canada, FSA has found that they have experienced different psychological distress, identity crisis, transitional conflicts, impaired social-emotional adjustment, minority status-related stress, school stress, experience of getting lost, uprooting, etc. FSA's experience also tells about limited awareness and sensitivity to the basic needs and various dimensions of significant factors involved in the settlement process of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth within the relevant resources of the mainstream society, including its school, health and mental health system. In order to better understand the settlement, adaptation and integration related experiences of newcomer youth and to help them to achieve their potentials, natural yearnings for self-fulfilment, and healthy tendencies toward well-being rather than maladjustment and settlement related problems, FSA applied to "One Time Project Proposals" at the OASIS (The Citizenship and Immigration Canada - Ontario Administration of Settlement and Integration Services) to conduct its study "Factors Affecting the Settlement and Adaptation Process of Canadian Adolescent Newcomers 16-19 Years of Age". The main two goals of the study were: 1) to investigate and explore the role of some of psychological factors involved in the settlement, adaptation and integration process of newcomer youth, and 2) to bring more light, knowledge and skills which would be useful and relevant to both more effective settlement service provision for newcomer immigrant and refugee youth and more sensitive adjustment of the host society, which is becoming increasingly multicultural, to these youth. Quantitative and qualitative analyses were utilized to respond to the above mentioned goals.

For the study's quantitative analysis the target population was made up of 300 newcomer immigrant and refugee male and female youth. The analysis was focused to understanding how and in what ways psychological factors define and affect the settlement process of newcomer youth. The factors researched were: newcomer immigrant and refugee youth's different types of adaptive responses to the new life situations, different types of satisfaction with the new life, and some less apparent personality characteristic. To measure the impact of these factors different instruments were administered. These were: the demographic questionnaire, the adaptation response scale, four satisfaction scales (with oneself, parents/guardians, classmates and school/teachers), the attitudes toward Canadian society scale, the settlement and adaptation outcomes scale, YSR (youth self report scale) and DHFT (draw a human figure test). Psychometric properties of the instruments administered, except DHFT, included accepted reliability. The findings from the quantitative analysis provide valuable insights into some of the core mechanisms involved in the settlement, adaptation and integration process of newcomer youth including stresses experienced, different types of the adaptation responses/reactions to the new life situations, the roles of different satisfactions in newcomer immigrant and refugee youth's life in Canada, and some of their externalizing, internalizing, and less apparent personality characteristics.

For the study's qualitative analysis a total of fourteen focus groups (twelve youth and two parent groups) was held. Approximately 80 different community-based, educational institutions and other organizations were contacted in order to recruit focus group participants and acquire space. The total number of participants in focus groups was 97 (81 newcomer youth and 16 parents). A focus group methodology has been used to ascertain the settlement and adaptation perceptions and experiences of newcomer youth 16-19 years of age and their parents in their new living environment in Canada. Participants were encouraged to provide their important experiences in relation to their settlement, adaptation and integration process, and to address their actual needs.

Youth focus groups' findings indicate a large spectrum of experiences, concerns, feelings and behaviors that affect and determine their settlement, adaptation and integration process. These findings provide more light to understand why newcomer youth may fail to form important bonds to their new living and learning environment. At the beginning of their life in Canada, newcomer youth informed about stresses related to lack of language, new environment, ESL classes, feelings of isolation, lack of friendships, lack of support, etc. Some also mentioned traumatic premigration conditions and experiences that significantly affect their life in Canada. As the settlement process of newcomer youth moves on, these youth informed about the quality of their social relationships. They are mostly engaged in the same ethnic group peer network affiliations, support and communication, having no close friends from the mainstream culture. Newcomer youth value their teachers' help, but teachers were not frequently found to be sources of support. Some participants expressed that teachers are racists, sexist, and that they do not value the potentials of their visible minority students. Some emphasized how it is important to fit in, while the others expressed their concerns that the mainstream society does not show understanding and sensitivity to their and their families needs. As a result, these youth do not acquire a sense of belonging and social support. Discussing the challenges and pressures associated with their life inside and outside their families, many specific issues were accentuated. Some newcomer youth informed about racism, prejudice and negative attitudes toward their minority groups, and discrimination in the forms of negative stereotyping, social injustices, aggressive behavior, etc. Because of differences between the family ecology of newcomer youth and their new school and social environment, they are more likely to experience discontinuity between these two very important contexts not only for their identity but also for their cognitive, emotional and social development. Additional challenges associated with newcomer youth family environment come from parental confusion, unemployment and preoccupation with their own stresses. These parental issues make their figures as weak identification models for their children in the new environment, which can put newcomer youth at risk of adapting negative and problematic values through the identification with problematic peer values, movie stars etc. One of the very clear youth focus group outcomes was the fact that newcomer youth were not well informed about the existing settlement and other relevant services. Actually, they have no or have very limited access to the service available.

Parental focus groups' findings also indicate a number of concerns, worries, stresses and uncertainties as a result of experiences and conflicts that arise between their original and dominant culture. Parents expressed the difficulties related to expectations for their children's good school and academic success. They were concerned about many school related facts such as homework, unfamiliarity with the curriculum, significant difference between the school systems in Canada and the country of origin, language related

difficulties in making better connections with schools, etc. Parents also expressed their concerns relevant to their children's development, and difficulties in controlling and disciplining them. Some parents worried that their children will become "too Canadian" and more involved in systems outside of the family that will result in neglecting and forgetting original language, original culture values, beliefs, norms, customs, etc. Also, some parents mentioned that their children tend to defy their authority. Thus, parents worried that in Canada they become less consistent in their use of discipline and/or that they become less effective in monitoring their children's activities and whereabouts. Many parents also emphasized that the mainstream culture emphasizes a belief in individualism, but that they want to socialize their children interdependence, with greater emphasis on mutual understanding, cooperation, sharing, reciprocity, etc. As parents outlined, the above mentioned concerns have significantly changed their family cohesion, making them, at the same time, uncertain about the future happenings that may concern themselves and their children.

The above mentioned study's quantitative and qualitative findings, which could be of interest to settlement service providers, schools, immigrant policy makers, funders, health professionals, etc., led us to the following key recommendations:

1. That structures and mechanisms for settlement service delivery for newcomer immigrant and refugee youth provide opportunities for interaction with their Canadian peers
2. That a more integrated holistic approach which engages the "family" unit and utilizes community resources is taken in settlement for newcomer immigrant and refugee youth
3. That school Boards be recognized as a critical component in the settlement process and more program initiatives are required within the school system to address the settlement process for both parents and youth, and school personnel
4. That funding be directed to programs and initiatives that increase and facilitate not only information, orientation, community involvement etc., of newcomer youth in their access to mainstream services but also that assist mainstream service providers to develop culturally appropriate services for youth which incorporate their cultural context
5. That more research on a longitudinal basis be conducted to further identify factors related to positive newcomer youth settlement and success in adult years.

## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	1
Need for the Research: FSA’s Conceptualization of the Settlement, Adaptation and Integration Process of Newcomer Immigrant and Refugee Youth	2
Purpose of the Research	5
<b>QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS</b>	7
Methodology	7
Data Analysis	11
<b>QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS</b>	24
Methodology	24
Summary and Analysis of Youth Focus Groups	25
Summary and Analysis of Parental Focus Groups	36
<b>RECCOMENDATIONS</b>	39
<b>REFERENCES</b>	44

## INTRODUCTION

Each year, approximately 200,000 immigrant and refugee newcomers come to Canada. Between 70,000 and 80,000 of these people (over half of the total number of those newcomers who settle in Ontario each year) come to live in Toronto (*Who's Listening, 1997*). It has been estimated that Canada receives between 25,000 and 35,000 new migrant children 19 years of age and younger every year (*Hicks et al. 1993*). The settlement, adaptation and integration process of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth is a multifaceted experience. The psychological (individual) factors, among others, are an important component of both successful and unsuccessful settlement, adaptation and integration into Canadian society.<sup>1</sup> The process itself, in many cases, is an event of extraordinary intensity and stress. Recent studies reveal that there are significant problems in the settlement, adaptation and integration process of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth, which have previously been eclipsed by the stereotype that these youth are problem-free and have perpetual academic success (*Seat, 1997, Chiu and Ring, 1998, Rivera-Sinclair, 1997, Rousseau, 1997, Goodenow and Espin, 1993, Hunang, 1989, Pawiluk et. al. 1996*).

While working with newcomer immigrant and refugee youth and their families, the Community Action Team of the Family Service Association of Toronto (FSA) also begun to note that the settlement, adaptation and integration process of these young newcomers is not problem-free. In FSA's experience with newcomer youth, it has become increasingly clear that these young people, new to Canada, frequently encounter a variety of psychological challenges and problems relevant to their settlement, adaptation and integration process. This can seriously interfere with their personal and school success and future well-being which may often lead to factors such as life disappointment, presence of low self-esteem, dysfunction, tension, deterioration of a sense of acceptance and of being a part of the mainstream society, etc.

For immigrant and refugee children and youth the experience of migration presents significant life changes in their environment, community and interpersonal affiliations. The literature on this topic points to long lists of variables such as the language fluency, age, sex, degree of identification with the host culture, amount of social interactions with the host society, etc., (*Berry et. al. 1987, Furnham and Bochner, 1986, Church, 1982*). In addition to facing typical developmental issues specific to adolescence as a time associated with

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In this study "psychological factors" are related to an individual's internal capacities and self-consistent patterns of cognitive, emotional and social functioning.

difficult process of growth and independence, immigrant and refugee newcomer youth must start a new socialization process (*Seat, 1998*).<sup>2</sup>

Throughout adolescence, youth participate in a variety of personal transitions. For newcomer youth migration brings the breakdown of the socialization process, with specific thoughts, norms and rules for behaviour that were accepted and valued within their original cultures. In addition, relationships between newcomer youth and their parents change in the new living environment, affecting not only the socialization but also psychological and behavioural well-being of newcomer youth. Also, during their settlement, adaptation and integration process newcomer youth must cope with many new demands; they must meet new academic challenges; learn new school, teacher and parent expectations; gain acceptance into new peer groups; develop new kinds of social competence, etc. At the same time, they must learn to negotiate between the various differences of two cultures, (original and new).

As newcomer immigrant and refugee youth settle, adapt and integrate into their new Canadian living environment, their cultural orientation, often referred to as “ethnic identity”, is expected to shift. Cultural orientation is the degree to which a person is oriented or connected to the members and the values of her/his original ethnic or cultural group and to the members of other groups with which they have contact (*Phinney et al., 1990*). *Erikson (1968)* pointed out that developing a consistent self-conception and identity is a task for every adolescent. Ego identity formation occurs through the process of personal exploration and the formation of a coherent set of attitudes, values, and beliefs.

*Burke (1991)* pointed out that one derives the meaning of her/his identity from traits shared with one class of people in a given society. Thus, the identity that one constructs represents a set of internalized meanings that one attributes to the self in a social position or role. According to the author, the identity process represents a continuously operating and self-adjusting feedback loop that works by adjusting behaviours to reduce discrepancy and achieve congruence between the identity portrayed or given by the environment and the identity with own set of meanings constructed by the person.

The differences in newcomer immigrant and refugee youth living environments, those involved inside and outside their families, have been documented in recent multicultural literature (*Wong, 1999, Rowe et al., 1994, Atkinson et al., 1993*), as well as in our everyday work with newcomer youth. For these youth the settlement, adaptation and integration process, including the degree of their involvement with both the culture of origin and the mainstream culture, makes the identity formation a multidimensional and complex process. As these youth are required to adapt to both their parental traditional cultural values as well as those from the host culture, the process of their identity formation is usually associated with personal confusion and ambiguity. This is especially true if these youth, due to their parent’s preoccupation with their own thoughts, struggles and stresses, do not have extensive contact with their parents and/or do not recognize them as

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*Elkin and Handel (1972)* define socialization as the process by which someone learns the ways of a given society or social group so that s/he can function within it.

positive adult role models while they are growing up in a Canadian environment. The identity formation in newcomer youth could make their settlement, integration and adaptation process painful and stressful because these youth may go through an experience of considering themselves to be a part of the mainstream culture, but realizing that others see them as another culture, and they may struggle with the mismatch between their self-identification and their perceived identification by others.

## **Need for the Research: FSA's Conceptualization of the Settlement, Adaptation and Integration Process of Newcomer Immigrant and Refugee Youth**

Throughout its work with newcomer immigrant and refugee youth, FSA has sought not only to understand the problem-solving process and strategies used by these youth in their new living environment but also to identify the various psychological factors affecting, limiting or impeding their settlement, adaptation and integration process. This study serves to better clarify our understanding of the settlement, adaptation and integration process of these youth. This approach highlights the importance of identifying and considering the components of psychological changes and challenges that newcomer youth encounter and face in their new life in Canada as the key factors in the settlement, adaptation and integration process of these youth.

Although a sizable amount of research has been done on the practice with newcomer immigrant and refugee youth in Canada; there is a negligible amount of research on the influence of different psychological factors within these youth, that operate either to increase or lessen the probability of themselves displaying problems in different spheres of their settlement, adaptation and integration process. Furthermore, FSA's experience and that of other community based agencies who serve immigrant and refugee children, youth and their families, has revealed not only the significance and influence of newcomer youth's psychological factors and changes in their new Canadian life but also the psychological component of the settlement, adaptation and integration process. This is a relatively new area in the settlement provision field and the role of these factors is not yet clear. Thus, the question related to how these psychological factors and changes interfere is not sufficiently researched.

FSA's experience in working with newcomer youth suggests that the interpersonal and intrapersonal demands and corresponding outcomes of adaptation to cultural transition and change (such as relating successfully with a new school, peers, teachers and other relevant parts of a new culture and gaining their acceptance) are not only highly salient to newcomer youth but also important in forecasting later outcomes of the settlement, adaptation and integration process. In other words, from the perspective of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth in Canada, FSA's experience shows that the migration process and cultural transition can be described as a significant life change which is discontinuous, sharp and sudden rather than gradual. For newcomer youth this change heralds the end of one and the beginning of another life style. They have to move out from their old and intimate contexts of previous life into the strange environment in which feelings of anonymity, feelings of knowing no one and being known by no one increase sharply.

In its work with these newcomer youth, FSA has realized that adaptation patterns have been found to be complex and highly differentiated. Outcomes such as peer rejection, depression, anxiety, feeling of isolation etc., may persist over many years and maintain or contribute to adaptation and integration problems of newcomer youth in many different future settings such as prolonged psychological disturbances, mental health problems, academic achievement, personality, social and emotional development. It is obvious that

adaptation, as a component of a new life, has at the same time very significant psychological impacts on each newcomer adolescent and presents significant challenges to schools, settlement, social and health service providers. Although this reality is obvious, we continue to lack the understanding of the processes underlying adaptation of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth. Through researching the types of adaptational reactions to some considerable life situations of newcomer youth, FSA has attempted to shed more light on one very specific component relevant to newcomer youth' life in Canada. We believe that adaptation of immigrant and refugee newcomer youth can be better understood in terms of a "coping framework" which includes specific types of adaptation reactions to different situations newcomer youth meet in their everyday life in a Canadian environment.

Another potentially important outcome is the degree to which newcomer youth become satisfied with different parts of their life in their new living environment, including personal satisfaction and attitudes toward the mainstream society. Working with newcomer youth, we have recognized that their personal and other kinds of satisfaction play one of the most important roles in the process of their identity development, and the settlement, adaptation and integration process. Also, within the domain of developmental psychology, it is possible to cite many authors who emphasize the importance of satisfaction, which represents the degree of subjective well-being, as the focal point not only in adolescent identity achievement but also in acquiring sex-appropriate roles, and in the establishment of a commitment to social values and norms. Some of these authors were *Rogers, 1985, Lipsitz, 1979, Adams and Looft, 1977, Erikson, 1968*. Within social psychological theory attitudes are defined as one of the most important product of socialization. They involve personal experiences and a permanent system of positive or negative valuing, and feeling and tendency to take action (pro or contra) toward different objects. Attitudes are consistent, stable and complex, consisting of almost all psychological processes and having very strong, and sometimes critical influence on an individual's behaviour and activities. They consist of cognitive, affective and behavioural components. Attitudes which an individual forms and adopts become the part of his/her personality and influence the behaviour in many ways (*Alcock et. al. 1988, Myers, 1986*). Thus presumably, newcomer youth who like their new Canadian living environment, and who are satisfied and happy young people would have a more desirable life in Canada, than those who are not satisfied and who are unhappy.

Conversely, newcomer youth's reactions such as dissatisfaction, negative attitudes toward Canadian society, avoidance, etc., may be the signs of early settlement, adaptation and integration difficulties that, in turn, may disrupt newcomer youth's future progress. FSA's experience shows that newcomer youth whose life history encompasses stress, and failures, react much easier and faster with dissatisfaction, negation and unhappiness in valuing themselves and many things around them, including social institutions and society as a whole, as compared to those whose development is relatively free of the above mentioned negative experiences. From our point of view among the very few studies that have been conducted, there has been an overarching focus on self-esteem to the neglect of other aspects of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth's subjective well-being such as satisfaction with oneself, parents/guardians, classmates, school and teachers and attitudes toward Canadian society. Neither has much attention been paid to these psychological relevant factors and attitudes nor prior study has examined and focused on the correlation of these different types of satisfaction and attitudes toward Canadian society with settlement and adaptation outcomes of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth. Thus, FSA's research elaborates and makes explicit these different satisfaction and attitudinal patterns and the quality of their interactions with the settlement and adaptation outcomes of Canadian newcomer immigrant and refugee youth.

One more potentially important outcome of newcomer youth's settlement, adaptation and integration success is related to personality functioning as one of key features of youth development. Experience strongly points out that information about some aspects of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth's settlement, adaptation and integration outcomes may best be obtained through paying attention to the internal and less apparent characteristics and structure of their personalities. Indeed, we consider personality characteristics and dynamic structure as one of the vital and most consistent predictors of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth's settlement, adaptation and integration success and their well being in the new Canadian environment. The identification of personality dimensions of newcomer youth's settlement, adaptation and integration behaviour is a necessary step toward development of more sensitive settlement services that will reflect different aetiologies for further negative outcomes and responsiveness to different and needed types of help provision and intervention.

Furthermore, from FSA's perspective research into personality determinants of newcomer youth's settlement, adaptation and integration success and evaluation of interventions designed to improve this success are critical if we are to improve the chances of desirable social and personal outcomes for newcomer immigrant and refugee youth in Canada. We need to understand which newcomer youth personality characteristics and dynamic structure are most reliably correlated with positive settlement, adaptation and integration outcomes and well being. At the same time, we need to review how personality interacts with newcomer youth life circumstances in the new Canadian environment to influence the stability of these outcomes and well-being. In addition, we need to know how personality interacts and correlates with more dynamic aspects of newcomer youth's settlement, adaptation and integration process and their well-being in order to create responsive services which in turn will offer the conditions to foster the positive directions of newcomer youth personality development. Somewhat surprisingly in today's newcomer youth's settlement field, variables relating to the personality determinants of the settlement, adaptation and integration process of newcomer youth have not received needed attention. In its research, FSA makes an effort to fill in some of the above mentioned missing information and knowledge while trying to examine some of the related personality dimensions and relations of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth settlement, adaptation and integration process. Our hope is that not only more light will be brought to some critical questions but also that the mechanisms responsible for the above mentioned dimensions would emerge as important subjects and topic in our further research attempts.

While all of the above noted concerns and problems, listed in FSA's conceptualization of the settlement, adaptation and integration process of immigrant and refugee newcomer youth, impede a through understanding of the newcomer youth field, it is not meant to be implied that the research of psychological dimensions of the settlement, adaptation and integration process of newcomer youth should be abandoned as hopeless. Indeed, substantial insight into the relation between the settlement, adaptation and integration process and newcomer youth's psychological factors can be gained from continued rigorous research. We are fully aware that our work with these youth is unfortunately a difficult one, being full of pain, confusion, feelings of depression, anxiety, isolation, marginalization, racism, discrimination, impaired social-emotional adjustment, minority status-related stress, school related stress, transitional conflicts, experience of loss and uprooting, identity crisis, etc. At the same time, we are very happy to search for the solutions that facilitate such process by designing and implementing more sensitive solutions and interventions that will promote and ensure growth, happiness, satisfaction, resiliency, etc., in newcomer immigrant and refugee youth throughout

their new life in Canada.

## **Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of FSA's research study was:

- to investigate and explore the role of some of psychological factors involved in the settlement, adaptation and integration process of newcomer youth, and
- to bring more light, knowledge and skills which would be useful and relevant to both more effective settlement service provision for newcomer immigrant and refugee youth and more sensitive adjustment of the host society, which is becoming increasingly multicultural, to these youth.

The researcher considers the analysis of the above mentioned psychological factors as a new and unavoidable way of emphasizing the importance of newcomer youth's external and intra psychic structure and its role in strengthening both the process of moving toward new self/identity and ensuring more successful settlement, adaptation and integration outcomes. It was hoped that a better understanding of the impact underlying psychological factors have on the settlement, adaptation and integration process might be gained. Effectively dealing with these factors requires recognition of their causes, dynamics and in what situations they occur, and recognition of positive behaviours which are utilized to overcome their negative influence.

The settlement, adaptation and integration process of newcomer youth is not a simple unitary entity. It has multiple facets, including psychological expression that needed to be investigated. Such an investigation can provide valuable insight into the nature of the cause and association between the settlement, adaptation and integration process and occurrence of various specific outcomes newcomer youth show in their everyday life. It would be a great resource for newcomer youth to learn useful information about themselves in their new living environment that could guide them in the development of socio-cultural competence, social values, roles and rules that govern interpersonal relationships and positive settlement, adaptation and integration outcomes. Also, by analysing these factors, we can infer critical and meaningful data with which to inform both settlement providers and policy debate relevant to newcomer immigrant and refugee youth settlement, adaptation, integration, mental health, academic success, and their integration into Canadian society more generally. It is our imperative that we, as professionals in the immigrant and refugee domain, learn more about newcomer youth development and maintenance so as to better develop and redefine empirically validated sensitive intervention and other programs relevant to newcomer youth needs.

Such knowledge could be used as a constructive base for comprehensive and more sensitive settlement service intervention with newcomer youth. In addition, such knowledge could help today's settlement service provision to be able to deepen its insight into why and with whom each form of intervention is effective. At the same time, our research strongly emphasizes the help that will be offered to the Canadian society not only in its process of adaptation to newcomers but also in moving away from offering just traditional settlement interventions. In recognizing these factors and gaining appropriate knowledge about them, relevant institutions within the mainstream society would be aware of psychological background and needs of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth in order to support and facilitate their settlement, adaptation and integration process. Our research findings could serve as an useful resource to the above

mentioned institutions to learn new skills in order to ensure that newcomer youth's expectations, interest and needs are attended to when they need help, support, care, attention, etc., during their settlement, adaptation and integration process. It is obvious that newcomer immigrant and refugee youth cannot be understood without considering the complex and enormous psychological change they inhabit. The attempts of making more comprehensive interventions need knowledge in order to recognize what specific intervention skills and ways of thinking work more effectively for newcomer youth. There is no doubt that the above mentioned attempts within the mainstream society must encompass the enormous range of personal experiences encountered by newcomer immigrant and refugee youth during their cultural transition and resettlement. We hope that our study helps in providing some of the needed solutions which are both acceptable and practical.

## QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

### Methodology

#### *Participants*

For the study's quantitative analysis the target population was made up of 300 newcomer immigrant and refugee male and female youth who were Canadian citizens, permanent residents, and those whose application for permanent residence by Citizenship and Immigration Canada was in process. Ages of the participants in this study ranged from 16 to 19 years. The sample consisted of 130 boys (43.30%) and 170 girls (56.70%). The mean age of the participants was 17.29 years ( $SD= 1.18$ ). To participate in the study, the participants had to be seven years or older when they came to Canada. Each participant in this study had to have lived in Canada for at least one year. It was assumed that during the first year of their life in Canada newcomer immigrant and refugee youth needed to solve many functional settlement related requirements (housing, school registering, orientation to new life, immediate adjustment, language, etc.). Also, we assume that during their first year in Canada newcomer youth, considering many different aspects and experiences relevant to a new life style, have started to form their attitudes toward Canadian society. The total sample in our study was divided into six different groups, each consisting of 50 participants. As it is known, immigrants and refugees come today to Canada and Toronto as well, from areas that for the previous years had been largely excluded such as Asia, South and Central America, Caribbean and Africa. Thus, the above mentioned groups in our study represent today's Toronto's and Canada's immigration trend, and were as follows: African (**AFR**), Caribbean (**CAR**), Central and South American (**CSA**), Chinese (**CHI**), Eastern European (**EUR**), and South East Asian (**SEA**).

#### *Data collection*

This study was located within the geographical boundaries of the City of Toronto. The research participants were contacted and selected by research assistants who received a short training on how to recruit participants, administer the instruments, and collect the data. Before data collection began, pilot tests were conducted to assess the general ease of administering the instruments, the clarity and conciseness of the questions, and the appropriateness of the instruments. We were aware that some questions could not have

the same level of understanding for those who were 16 years old, compared with the experience and the level of understanding of those who were 19 years old. In such questions we provided the research assistants with an additional explanation of the questions' meaning if needed. Data collection took place from November 1999 to the middle of March 2000. Before each interview began, the research assistants thoroughly described the study's purpose and instruments. They also emphasized each participant's right to withdraw from the interviewing at any time, and obtained consent forms. For participants who were younger than 18 years, a parental consent form needed to be signed, and those who were 18 years or older, needed to sign a separate consent form. All of the participants were informed that the study followed ethical standards for research and that all information collected was strictly confidential. They also were told that after all data had been collected, that the study participants would not be identified individually. An average of 90 minutes was necessary for research assistants to complete the measures for one participant. All of the interviews were conducted during after-school time (evenings, weekends, school holidays), and \$20 payment was provided as a token of appreciation for a participant's interest, help and time.

### ***Instruments***

According to FSA's experience, our attempt to investigate and explore psychological factors relevant to newcomer immigrant and refugee youth settlement, adaptation and integration process, showed that these factors brought with them different theoretical and methodological challenges and questions. This is primarily because until recently the nature of work with immigrant and refugee populations has been more focused on the organization, quality and delivery of relevant settlement services. Today, it is widely held that in order to understand the needs and create more sensitive settlement and other related services for immigrant and refugee newcomers we not only need information about the nature of services available but also information about psychological factors that determine the settlement, adaptation and integration process of service users. Thus, the need to identify and develop a new measure of psychological factors involved in the settlement, adaptation and integration process of newcomer immigrant and refugee children and youth, in their new living environment is essential.

In our study, participants were asked to complete the Demographic Questionnaire, Adaptation Response Scale, Personal Satisfaction Scale, Satisfaction with Parents/Guardians Scale, Satisfaction with Classmates Scale, Satisfaction with School/Teachers Scale, Attitude Toward Canadian Society Scale, Settlement and Adaptation Outcomes Scale, Youth Self Report (YSR) and Draw a Human Figure Test (DHFT).

We created all of the above mentioned instruments, except YSR and DHFT. The items for these instruments were derived from review of relevant psychological and research literature, consultation with immigrant, settlement, mental health and other service providers, and from our everyday experience with newcomer immigrant and refugee youth and reviews of the needs addressed for this population.<sup>3</sup> After the

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We used the definitions of adaptation provided by *Helson (1947)*, and *Matarazzo (1972)*. *Helson* defined adaptation as the diminished responsiveness to repeated or continued stimuli. *Matarazzo* provided the following definition: Adaptive behaviour refers primarily to the effectiveness with which the individual copes with, and adjusts to, the natural and social demands of his environment. It has two principal facets: a) the degree to which the individual is able to function and maintain herself/himself independently, and b) the degree to which he meets satisfactorily the culturally

derivation of items, pilot instruments were created and reviewed with representatives from different service providers, ethno-racial communities and newcomer youth in order to create the final instruments.

***The Demographic Questionnaire***, as a semi-structured instrument, it covered questions related to sex, grade, length of stay in Canada, status in Canada, reasons for migration, official language proficiency, parental marital status, parental education background, parental employment status in Canada, participants and parental level of stresses experienced at time of coming to Canada, nature of stresses experienced, possible health changes as a result of stress experienced, help seeking, use of existing settlement services, suggestions for settlement service improvement.

***The Adaptation Response Scale*** consisted of twenty-four hypothetical situations relevant to newcomer youth everyday life in Canada. Hypothetical situations were created and used in this scale in order to ensure and involve not only participants' different experiences but also a variety of their responses and strategies to deal with these situations. The situations were divided into four different areas: outside life, family life, social life and personal life.

The following situations are examples of outside life situations: *“While waiting at a red light in the car, together with two friends, and listening to songs from your home country, a pedestrian is approaching the car and through an open window is sarcastically commenting: “What a stupid noise...Is something wrong with either that CD or the car’s speakers?”*, and *“You brought old newspapers in your language of origin to your local neighbourhood centre that collects old newspapers, and a collection person is saying to you: “Oh, I am sorry but these newspapers are garbage not recyclable”*”.

The following situations are examples of family life situations: *“Your father, who was a well known professional in his field in your home country, is informed that he got a job in Canada as a security guard”* and *“Your parents/guardians are refusing to participate in your class project named “Families together” which proposes bringing ethnic and mainstream families together to share and discuss parenting issues”*.

The following situations are examples of social life situations: *“Popular Canadian media negatively portrays your original nation”* and *“You are listening to a call-in radio program in which a few immigrant activists are talking about equity and human rights in Canada, but the telephone responses from many listeners are: “If immigrants are not satisfied with human rights and democracy in Canada, why don’t they go back to their home countries?”*”.

The following situations are examples of personal life situations: *“You just realized that some of your mainstream peers from your school said a lot of untruths about you and that they made fun of you”*, and *“You are preoccupied with the dream, that you had a few days ago, in which you burned the Canadian flag and tried to hide out but were arrested”*.

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imposed demands of personal and social responsibility.

We defined settlement “as a long-term dynamic, two-way process through which, ideally, immigrants would achieve full equity and freedom of participation in society, and society would gain access to the full human resource potential in its immigrant communities”.

The possible responses/answers were divided into four different categories: physical, emotional, cognitive and passive, each consisting of three separate responses/answers, which were marked from A-L. Physical responses included: (A) I start to tremble, (B) I become red/blush, and (C) I feel my heart beats harder. Emotional responses included: (D) I get angry/upset-I swear, (E) I become sad, and (F) I feel a big tension. Cognitive responses included: (G) I will learn a lesson, (H) I am patient/calm, and (I) I can control myself. Passive responses included: (J) I don't care, (K) I will pray, and (L) I will put it off.

The number of responses was not limited, so participants could chose as many as responses/answers they feel describe their true response (reaction) to the situation.

**The Personal Satisfaction Scale** was a 20-item measure of personal satisfaction consisting of 10 positively worded items subscale and 10 negative worded items subscale. The following items are examples of positively worded subscale: *“In Canada, I am satisfied with how I am doing in school”* and *“I feel that in my new life in Canada I make full use of my whole potentials (abilities)”*. The following items are examples of negatively worded subscale: *“In Canada I feel like a stranger lost in a new city who is in need of a map for help in reaching his/her destinations”* and *“I ignore my problems and think about other things”*.

**The Satisfaction with Parents/Guardians Scale** was a 20-item measure of satisfaction with parents/guardians consisting of 10 positively worded items subscale and 10 negatively worded items subscale. The following items are examples of positively worded subscale: *“My parents/guardians are open to and allow me to be friends with my peers/classmates from other cultures/nationalities”* and *“The bond that I have with my parents/guardians has helped to make me a confident, secure, and effective (intelligent) human being”*. The following items are examples of negatively worded subscale: *“I feel that my parents/guardians and I represent two different worlds in Canada, I am changing they are remaining the same”* and *“I am afraid that my parents/guardians could desert me because of changes due to my acculturation and adaptation in Canada”*.

**The Satisfaction with Classmates Scale** was a 20-item measure of satisfaction with classmates consisting of 10 positively worded items subscale and 10 negatively worded items subscale. The following items are examples of positively worded subscale: *“I feel comfortable sharing my interests, values, beliefs and attitudes with my mainstream classmates”* and *“My mainstream classmates see me as an interesting individual”*. The following items are examples of negatively worded subscale: *“It is only wishful thinking to believe that my mainstream classmates would accept me as a real friend”* and *“I find talking about smoking, alcohol drinking, my sexual activities, risk-driving, etc., are the easiest ways to seek comfort and affirmation among my mainstream classmates”*.

**The Satisfaction with School/Teachers Scale** was a 20-item measure of satisfaction with school/teachers consisting of 10 positively worded items subscale and 10 negatively worded items subscale. The following items are examples of positively worded subscale: *“I view my school as a safe and welcoming environment”* and *“My school provides me with both a solid knowledge base and motivation to plan and strive for my continuing education”*. The following items are examples of negatively worded subscale: *“I feel that my teachers do not understand how I feel as an immigrant”*

*adolescent experiencing settlement, adaptation and other relevant changes in my life” and “I experience difficulties in identifying with my school values or following the school discipline rules”.*

***The Attitudes Toward Canadian Society Scale*** was a 20-item measure of attitudes toward Canadian society consisting of 10 positively worded items subscale and 10 negatively worded items subscale. The following items are examples of positively worded subscale: *“There is equity and justice for all in Canadian society, with plenty of opportunities”* and *“In Canadian society, values of multiculturalism and inclusion are highly recognized and practised”*. The following items are examples of negatively worded subscale: *“Canadian environment is a harmful (place) that is unpredictable and full of worry and uncertainty”* and *“There is a significant gap in Canadian society between governmental policies about immigrants and implementation and realization of these policies in real life (or local community level)”*.

***The Settlement and Adaptation Outcomes Scale*** was a 20-item measure of the settlement and adaptation outcomes consisting of 10 positively worded items subscale and 10 negatively worded items subscale. The following items are examples of positively worded subscale: *“I experience many interesting, rewarding and pleasant things that are happening to me in my new life in Canada”* and *“I feel that I am well adapted and integrated, and as a result that I have a positive and satisfying life in Canada”*. The following items are examples of negatively worded subscale: *“I am confused about what I, as an adolescent immigrant, am supposed to look like and act like in my new Canadian environment”* and *“I feel that I will always be considered as a stranger in Canada”*.

For the scales above, responses were made on a 5-point Likert-type scale anchored by (1) strongly disagree, (2) somewhat disagree, (3) neutral, (4) somewhat agree, and (5) strongly agree. Participants could use only one answer to describe their satisfaction with each item.

***Youth Self Report (YSR)*** is a well-known and researched, psychometrically sound scale comprising 112 items. This scale was developed by *Achenbach and Edelbrock, 1991*. It assesses specific youth behaviour and provides information of their functioning within a number of areas. An adolescent rates different items as 0, 1 or 2. In our study we were concerned with the participants’ responses to several items representing three global constructs which generalize from the instrument. The first construct is total behaviour problems which represents a conglomeration of behaviour problems such as social problems, thought problems and attention problems, which all together tap the adolescent’s to handle himself/herself in interpersonal context. The two remaining constructs are called internalizing symptomatology and externalizing symptomatology. The internalizing symptoms represent a conglomeration of those behaviour problems that are more internal in their nature and include behaviours such as withdrawal, somatic complaints and anxiety/depression. By contrast, the externalizing symptoms represent a cluster of behaviour problems that are overt in their nature and include behaviours such as delinquent problems and aggressive behaviour. The YSR appears to have adequate reliability with test-retest reliability coefficients ranging from .82 to .90 (*Achenbach, 1991*).

***Draw a Human Figure Test (DHFT)***, developed by *Machover, 1949*, is one of the most popular and commonly used personality techniques. In our research, we used DHFT only to provide screening in order to obtain some general information about the participants’ personality characteristics that could affect their settlement, adaptation and integration process. DHFT was not used for any other purpose. We used DHFT

because it is culture-free test whose administration is very easy. A participant was presented a blank sheet of paper, pencil and eraser and asked to draw a human figure. After finishing, s/he was presented another blank sheet of paper and asked to draw a human figure of opposite sex. Several formal scoring systems have been developed for DHFT. In our research we were focused on: 1) size of figure which is associated with the person's self-concept and relationship with his environment 2) location (placement) of figure which is associated with subjective feelings that in person's orientation system implicate certain direction, 3) distortions and omissions on the drawing, which suggest that conflicts may be related to the part distorted/missed, and 4) significant indicators, which were associated with potential serious problems of the person.

## Data Analysis

### *The Demographic Questionnaire*

The findings from the demographic questionnaire indicate many descriptive statistics of our study sample population. These are:

- 9.9% participants in our sample were in grade ten, 29.7% in grade eleven, 30.00% in grade twelve, and 30.40 in grade thirteen
- There were 34.1% landed immigrants, 2.00% refugees, 63.7% Canadian citizens (data was missing for one participant)
- Among the three main parental reasons for coming to Canada, our participants selected: (a) better way of life/Improved standard of living, (b) more security and better overall life for their children, and (c) better or more suitable jobs
- 9.00% of our participants stated that their parents did not have control of making the decision to come to Canada; while 31.00% stated some parental control, and 43.00% stated total parental control over the decision (1.00% data were missing)
- At the time of arrival to Canada, 31.30% of the participants had no skills in speaking one of the official languages in Canada, while 21.00% had poor language skills, 17.30% fair, 16.7% good, and 13.00% excellent language skills (0.70% data were missing)
- 72.7% parents of our participants were married, 13.30% divorced, 5.70% separated, 3.70% widowed (4.70% data were missing)
- 11.70% mothers of our participants had no or elementary school education, 41.70% had some high school or high school, 27.30% had some university or bachelor degree, 7.00% had master degree or higher level of education (12.30% data were missing)
- 5.30% fathers of our participants had no or elementary school education, 34.70% had some high school or high school, 26.30% had some university or bachelor degree, 12.70% had master degree

or higher level of education (21.00% data were missing)

- 25.30% mothers of our participants were unemployed, 68.00% were employed (6.70% data were missing)
- 11.70% fathers of our participants were unemployed, 69.30% were employed (19.00% data were missing).
- Our participants reported that 66.00% of their employed mothers, considering the mothers' level of education and type of jobs they performed in their countries of origin, did not have appropriate jobs in Canada. At the same time, 34.00% of our participants, whose mothers were employed, reported that their mothers had appropriate jobs in Canada.
- Our participants reported that 65.30% of their employed fathers, considering the fathers' level of education and type of jobs they performed in their countries of origin, did not have appropriate jobs in Canada. At the same time, 34.70% of our participants, whose fathers were employed, reported that their fathers had appropriate jobs in Canada.
- 46.00% of our participants had some jobs in Canada and 54.00% had no employment history in Canada.
- 6.70% participants classified their families as poor, 21.00% as low middle families, 48.30% as middle families and 7.00% as high middle families (15.00% informed "do not know" and 2.00% data were missing).
- 93.30% participants informed about some stresses at the beginning of their life in Canada (6.70% data were missing). Also they informed that their parents (89.00% of mothers and 78.7% of fathers) did experience some stresses at the beginning of their life in Canada (11.00% data were missing for mothers and 21.30% for fathers).
- 89.70% participants informed that they never asked for any kind of professional help for their problems, and that 10.30% asked for some kind of professional help for their problems.
- Our participants informed that 94.00% of their mothers never asked for any kind of professional help for their problems, and that 6.00% of their mothers asked for some kind of professional help for their problems.
- Our participants informed that 96.70% of their fathers never asked for any kind of professional help for their problems, and that 3.30% of their fathers did ask for some kind of professional help for their problems.
- 86.70% of our participants informed that they usually spoke with no one about their problems. If they did, 39.00% spoke with their parents, 14.00% with siblings, 39.30% with friends, 2% with teachers, and 1.30% with professionals.

- 48.30% of our participants informed that in their new Canadian life they felt homesick, 10.00% withdrawn, 18.70% had stereotypes about Canadians, 6.70% felt aggressive toward Canadians, 18.00% felt that they lost ability to do in school effectively, 7.00% experienced inexplicable fits of weeping, and 12.30% felt irritable.

### ***The Adaptation Response Scale***

A reliability analysis was conducted for each of the scales (Physical response, Emotional response, Cognitive response and Passive response) in order to test the reliability of the measure. The Cronbach's alpha (a) coefficient was the statistic test used to indicate how much the items in the scale are measuring the same concept. An alpha of  $\geq .70$  is considered to be a reliable coefficient and therefore the items can reliably be combined into one scale. Each of the scales resulted in a Cronbach's alpha (a) over .82 (Physical response scale:  $a = .8858$ ; Emotional response scale:  $a = .8337$ ; Cognitive response scale:  $a = .8710$ ; Passive response scale:  $a = .8289$ ).

Each scale could range from 0 to 24. Table A1 shows the mean scores for each of the four response scales.

**Table A1. Means and standard deviations for the four response scales**

<b>Scale</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>	<b>N</b>
Physical Response	3.69	4.52	0	24	300
Emotional Response	11.70	5.22	0	24	300
Cognitive Response	7.05	5.45	0	24	300
Passive Response	8.67	5.04	0	24	300

According to the mean measures, the emotional response to the new life situations was the dominant response followed by passive responses, cognitive responses, and finally physical responses. Our findings indicate that emotional responses were the most dominant type of responding (reacting) to the situations/problems offered, newcomer immigrant and refugee youth could face in the course of their new life in Canada. It underlines a possibility that newcomer youth predisposed to emotional response are more likely to believe that they are not in control of the new life situations and contingencies, and that the consequences are determined. At the same time, it brings more light to their settlement, adaptation and integration process. Emotional responses comprise, according to today's medical and psychological knowledge and practice, a higher risk of a symptom formation, stress experience, mood change, and other types of disturbances which may provoke more persistent internalizing (e.g., depression, withdrawal, anxiety) and externalizing (e.g., aggressiveness, conduct, attention-deficit hyperactivity, oppositional/defiant) disorders. Thus, our participants' dominant adaptation approach to the new life situations/problems more likely comprises a higher risk of personal states such as tension, frustration, pressure, conflict, etc. At the same time, such approach includes the possibility of affecting the participants' abilities of having a full control over the different ranges of stimulation that will lead to their successful and positive adaptational outcomes.

Table A2 shows the correlations among ratings of the four responses to the new life situations offered (outside life, family life, social life and personal life).

**Table A2. Correlations among the four response scales to the new life situations offered (outside life, family life, social life and personal life)**

	<b>Physical Response</b>	<b>Emotional Response</b>	<b>Cognitive Response</b>	<b>Passive Response</b>
Physical Response	1.000	.383**	.245**	-.169**
Emotional Response			.114*	-.292**
Cognitive Response				-.132*
Passive Response				1.000

\*\* Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table A2 shows that a significant correlation exists between all of the measures. The coefficient of correlation indicates both the direction and the strengths of linear relationships between the four scale responses. The correlation coefficients confirm that the association (either positive or negative) exists between the four types of adaptational responses to the new life situations offered (outside life, family life, social life and personal life), which newcomer immigrant and refugee youth could meet in their everyday life in Canada. Thus, the positive correlations between any two scales indicate that the participants scoring higher on one scale, tend to do so on another, while negative correlation between two scales indicate inverse association.

To determine if there was any significant differences between the means of the six sample groups in our research and the responses to the new life situations offered (outside life, family life, social life and personal life), a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. To allow for the analysis of multiple dependent measures, ANOVA was tested at  $p < .01$ . If a significant relationship resulted from the ANOVA, it was followed by post hoc tests using the Tukey's HSD (honestly significant difference) test at  $p < .05$  to examine specific nature of the groups differences and determine the multiple comparisons between the sample groups.

The one-way ANOVA suggests that only the emotional response scale to the new life situations offered (outside life, family life, social life and personal life) was significantly different for the sample groups ( $F = 8.307$   $df = 5$   $p < .000$ ). Table A3 shows the results of the post hoc test.

**Table A3. POST HOC TEST: Responses to the new life situations (outside life, family life, social life and personal life)**

		Mean Difference (between groups)
EUR	CSA	-5.24*
	CHI	-1.22

	CAR	<b>-4.48*</b>
	SEA	<b>-3.48*</b>
	AFR	-2.00
CSA	EUR	<b>5.24*</b>
	CHI	<b>4.02*</b>
	CAR	.76
	SEA	1.76
	AFR	<b>3.24*</b>
CHI	EUR	1.22
	CSA	<b>-4.02*</b>
	CAR	<b>-3.25*</b>
	SEA	-2.26
	AFR	-.78
CAR	EUR	<b>4.48*</b>
	CSA	-.76
	CHI	<b>3.26*</b>
	SEA	1.00
	AFR	2.48
SEA	EUR	<b>3.48*</b>
	CSA	-1.76
	CHI	2.26
	CAR	-1.00
	AFR	1.48
AFR	EUR	2.00
	CSA	<b>-3.24*</b>
	CHI	.78
	CAR	-2.48
	SEA	-1.48

(\* significant difference)

According to the above table, a follow-up Tukey test shows that significant differences exist between the different groups related to their emotional response to the new life situations offered (outside life, family life, social life and personal life). For example the negative coefficient of the Tukey's test (-5.24), which shows the significant difference between the EUR and CSA groups, shows that the EUR group was less likely to have an emotional response than the CSA group. It means that the participants in the EUR group were less likely to react emotionally to the new life situations offered (outside life, family life, social life and personal life) when compared with the participants from the CSA group. They were not going in the same directions and did not have the same degree of emotional responses like their peers in the CAR group. The results were essentially the same as the post hoc testing between the EUR group and the CAR and the SEA

groups. There was no difference between the EUR group and the CHI or the AFR groups. The CSA group was more likely to have an emotional response to the new life situations/problems than the CHI group and the AFR group. The CHI group was less likely to have an emotional response than the CAR group and the CAR group. Finally, the AFR group was less likely to have an emotional response than the CSA group.

***Participants’ satisfaction with different parts of their life in Canada***

As it was mentioned earlier when we spoke about the FSA approach and our context of the settlement, adaptation and integration process of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth, in this research, from the perspective of these youth, this process needs to be measured by a level of satisfaction with different parts of their new life in Canada. Often, “successful” settlement is measured in terms of economic success. The focus on newcomer immigrant and refugee youth in our research would like to emphasize satisfaction dimension as more relevant and sensitive measure of their settlement, adaptation and integration process. In our approach the satisfaction dimension of the settlement, adaptation and integration process consisted of the statements that covered elements such as happiness, comfort, security, contentment etc. As we mentioned earlier, the satisfaction measures in our study covered the following six aspects of our participants’ new life in Canada: personal, parents/guardians, classmates, school/teachers, attitudes toward Canadian society and the settlement and adaptational outcomes. The participants were asked to rate on a 5-point Likert scale whether they strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) to twenty statements pertaining to common sentiments that newcomer immigrant and refugee youth have toward these six aspects of their new life in Canada. Also, as we noted earlier, each series of statements contain positive and negative situations. Negative items were recoded for the analysis.

Reliability analysis was conducted for each set of the twenty questions pertaining to six aspects of the participants’ life in Canada. The Cronbach’s alpha for each aspect of the participants’ life suggests that the measures are reliable. The following is the Cronbach’s alpha for each measure: Personal scale  $\alpha = .7605$ ; Parent/Guardian scale  $\alpha = .7738$ ; Classmates scale  $\alpha = .8332$ ; School/Teachers scale  $\alpha = .7941$ ; Attitudes toward Canadian society scale  $\alpha = .7251$ ; and Settlement and adaptation outcomes scale  $\alpha = .8765$ .

Each scale ranged from 0 (total dissatisfaction) to 80 (total satisfaction). Table B1 shows the mean and SD scores for each of the six scales.

**Table B1. Descriptive statistics for satisfaction with life in Canada**

	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max	N
Personal Scale	52.82	9.49	25	75	300
Parents/Guardian Scale	49.25	9.83	15	73	300
Classmate Scale	53.49	11.17	15	79	300
School/Teacher Scale	48.78	9.71	5	75	300
Attitude toward Can. Society Scale	42.61	8.13	7	78	300
Settlement Outcome Scale	54.01	12.34	15	79	300

According to the mean measures of the participants' satisfaction with the six different aspects/parts of their life in Canada, it is possible to conclude that their satisfactions with these different aspects/parts of their new life in Canada are pretty high. The highest satisfaction level was indicated for the settlement and adaptational outcomes measure, followed by satisfaction with classmates, personal life, parents/guardians, school/teachers and finally attitudes toward Canadian life. Table B2 shows the correlations among the measures of satisfaction with newcomer immigrant and refugee youth's life in Canada.

**Table B2. Correlation among the measures of satisfaction with the new life in Canada scales**

	<b>Personal</b>	<b>Parent</b>	<b>Classmates</b>	<b>School/Teacher</b>	<b>Attitudes</b>	<b>Settlement Outcomes</b>
Personal	1.000	.577**	.625**	.461**	.237**	.568**
Parent/Guardians			.537**	.419**	.199**	.483**
Classmates				.520**	.194**	.696**
School/Teacher					.331**	.545**
Attitude						.188**
Settlement Outcomes						1.000

\*\* Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to these correlation measures, it is possible to conclude that the correlations (associations) between all of the satisfaction measures are significant and positive. From one side it means that all of the different satisfactions we measured play very important role in newcomer immigrant and refugee youth's life in Canada. Also, the correlation coefficients indicate positive and the same directions of the associations between the different satisfactions measured. Thus, when the satisfaction with one part of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth life in Canada goes up, all of the other measures of satisfaction also will increase and go up. As it is possible to see, the highest and strongest correlations were found between satisfaction with classmates and the settlement and adaptation outcomes (+.696), personal satisfaction and satisfaction with classmates (+.625), personal satisfaction and satisfaction with parents/guardians (+.577), etc. The lowest correlation (+.188) was found between attitudes toward Canadian society and settlement and adaptation outcomes measure.

We also measured the correlation (association) between the six different measures of the satisfaction with different aspects of life in Canada and the stress levels reported at the beginning the participants' life in Canada. In the Demographic questionnaire, our participants indicated their stress level at the beginning of their life in Canada. They were asked to rate the stress levels from 0 to 10. A rating of "0" refers to no stress at all and rating of "10" refers to experiencing high stress. Table B3 shows the correlation between the reported stresses experienced by our participants at the beginning of their new life in Canada and the different satisfactions with the new life in Canada.

**Table B3. Correlation of stress levels at the beginning of life in Canada and satisfaction with life in Canada**

	<b>Personal</b>	<b>Parents/</b>	<b>Classmates</b>	<b>School/</b>	<b>Attitudes</b>	<b>Settlement</b>
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	Guardians			Teacher s	Outcomes	
Participants Stress at Beginning of Life in Canada	-.132*	-.179*	-.089	-.067	-.058	-.093

\*\* Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* Pearson Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As shown above, all the correlations are negative and only two of them are significant. These significant correlation coefficients indicate that weak negative correlations exist between experienced stresses at the beginning of live in Canada and both personal satisfaction and satisfaction with parents/guardians. Thus, we can generally conclude that our participants were slightly more likely to have greater satisfaction with new life in Canada if they were less stressed at the beginning of their life in the new Canadian environment.

To determine if there was any significant differences between the sample groups considering the measures of the different satisfactions with the new life in Canada, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. To allow for the analysis of multiple dependent measures, ANOVA was tested at  $p < .01$ . If a significant relationship resulted from the ANOVA, it was followed by post hoc tests using the Tukey's HSD (honestly significant difference) test at  $< .05$  to examine specific differences and determine the multiple comparisons between the sample groups.

The one-way ANOVA suggests that only the satisfaction with classmates ( $F=4.70$   $df=5$ ,  $p < .000$ ) and satisfaction with settlement and adaptational outcomes ( $F=3.28$ ,  $df=5$ ,  $p < .007$ ) were significantly different for the sample groups. The post hoc tests were done for both satisfaction with classmates and settlement and adaptation outcomes. Table B4 shows the results of the post hoc test calculated for satisfaction with classmates.

**Table B4. POST HOC TEST : Satisfaction with classmates by sample groups**

		Mean Difference (between groups)
EUR	CSA	-2.14
	CHI	5.80
	CAR	2.48
	SEA	4.72
	AFR	5.98
CSA	EUR	2.14
	CHI	<b>7.94*</b>
	CAR	4.62
	SEA	<b>6.86*</b>
	AFR	<b>8.12*</b>
CHI	EUR	-5.80
	CSA	<b>-7.94*</b>

	CAR	-3.32
	SEA	-1.08
	AFR	.18
CAR	EUR	-2.48
	CSA	-4.62
	CHI	3.32
	SEA	2.24
	AFR	3.50
SEA	EUR	-4.72
	CSA	<b>-6.86*</b>
	CHI	1.08
	CAR	-2.24
	AFR	1.26
AFR	EUR	-5.98
	CSA	<b>-8.12*</b>
	CHI	-.18
	CAR	-3.50
	SEA	-1.26

(\* significant difference)

According to the above table, a follow-up Tukey test shows that the EUR and CAR groups' level of satisfaction with their classmates does not significantly differ from any of the other sample groups. Also, the Turkey's test shows that a significant difference exists between the CSA group and the CHI, SEA and AFR groups considering these participants' satisfaction with their classmates. Thus, the positive coefficients of the Tukey's test, which shows the significant difference between the above mentioned groups, indicate that the participants in the CSA group are more likely to be satisfied with their classmates than the participants in the CHI, SEA or AFR groups or that the participants from the CHI, SEA and AFR groups are less likely to be satisfied with their classmates than the participants in the CSA group. Table B5 shows the results of the post hoc test calculated for settlement and adaptation outcomes.

**Table B5. POST HOC TEST : Settlement and adaptation outcomes by sample groups**

		Mean Difference (between groups)
EUR	CSA	-4.56
	CHI	2.94
	CAR	-.90
	SEA	.56
	AFR	4.30
CSA	EUR	4.56
	CHI	<b>7.50*</b>

	CAR	3.66
	SEA	5.12
	AFR	<b>8.86*</b>
CHI	EUR	-2.94
	CSA	<b>-7.50*</b>
	CAR	-3.84
	SEA	-2.38
	AFR	1.36
CAR	EUR	.90
	CSA	-3.66
	CHI	3.84
	SEA	1.46
	AFR	5.20
SEA	EUR	-.56
	CSA	-5.12
	CHI	2.38
	CAR	-1.46
	AFR	3.74
AFR	EUR	-4.30
	CSA	<b>-8.86*</b>
	CHI	-1.36
	CAR	-5.20
	SEA	-3.74

(\* significant difference)

Table B5 shows the results of the post hoc test calculated for settlement and adaptation outcomes. According to this table, a follow-up Tukey test shows that the EUR, CAR and SEA groups do not significantly differ from any of the other sample groups when compared on their settlement and adaptation measure. Also, the Tukey's test shows that a significant difference exists between the CSA group and the CHI and AFR groups considering their settlement and adaptation outcomes. Thus, the positive coefficients of the Tukey's test, which shows that a significant difference exists between the above mentioned groups, indicate that the participants in the CSA group are more likely to be satisfied with their settlement and adaptational outcomes than the participants in the CHI and AFR groups or that the participants from the CHI and AFR groups are less likely to be satisfied with their settlement and adaptation outcomes when compared with the participants from the CSA group.

### ***Personality Characteristics As Factors that Affect the Settlement, Adaptation and Integration Process of Newcomer Immigrant and Refugee Youth***

To provide an estimate of the personality characteristics that affect the settlement, adaptation and integration process of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth, who participated in our research, we employed YSR and DHFT.

## YSR

YSR data of our participants (separately for boys and girls) were compared with the normative data of the Youth Self Report instrument. This comparison provides an estimate of how newcomer immigrant and refugee youth compare to randomly selected peers for this instrument (standardization sample). As we outlined earlier, YSR provides several subscale scores but only a total behaviour problem score, and the internalizing (e.g., anxious, depressed, withdrawal) and externalizing (e.g., delinquent problems, aggression) scores, as two indicators/dimensions of dysfunction, were used in our study.

Table C1 illustrates the mean scores for each boys and girls and the combined mean scores for both boys and girls on three measures: total behaviour problem scale, internalizing scale and externalizing scale.

**Table C1. Means and standard deviations for boys and girls on YSR**

	<b>Total behaviour problem scale</b>	<b>Internalizing scale</b>	<b>Externalizing scale</b>
Boys (N=130)			
Mean	56.74*	57.91***	57.64
SD	11.02	9.54	9.81
Exceeding 90th percentile	28 (21.5%)	27 (20.7%)	14 (10.8%)
Girls (N=170)			
Mean	53.19	54.00	48.93
SD	7.95	9.87	7.71
Exceeding 90th percentile	21 (12.4%)	35 (20.6%)	18 (10.6%)
Boys and Girls (N=300)			
Mean	55.12**	55.69**	50.87
SD	9.87	9.81	8.98
Exceeding 90th percentile	49 (16.3%)	62 (20.1%)	32 (10.7%)

\* p<.10

\*\*p<.05

\*\*\* p<.01

On the total behaviour problems scale, significant differences from the randomly selected peers for YSR (standardization sample) were found for boys and girls combined together ( $t=2.08$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and for boys alone ( $t=1.90$ ,  $p<.10$ ). For girls the significant differences from the randomly selected peers for YSR (standardization sample) were not found. Similarly, boys and girls combined together ( $t=2.35$ ,  $p<.05$ ), and boys alone ( $t=2.89$ ,  $p<.01$ ) differed from the standardized sample on the internalizing scale, while girls did not. There were no differences on the externalizing scale of YSR. When considering the characteristics that could affect the settlement, adaptation and integration process of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth in Canada, one must be aware that rates of adaptation within a population vary with the criteria of

adaptation that is established. For the data from YSR instrument, we adapted a criterion employed by Heller *et al.*, 1985. A score above 90th percentile [Total (T) score  $\geq 63$ ] was set as the criterion for adaptation difficulties. Accordingly, as Table C1 indicates, about one-fifth of the total participants in our study exceeded the 90th cut-off point percentile on the total behaviour scale, and one-sixth of the total participants in our study exceeded the 90th cut-off point percentile on the total internalizing scale. The rate for the total sample on externalizing problems scale was considerably lower, about one-tenth of the participants.

Based on these YSR findings it is possible to conclude that about 60 participants might be experienced behaviour problems such as social, thought and attention problems, which all together tap them to handle themselves in interpersonal context. Also, about 50 participants had more internalizing problems, tending to “hold in” problems. They were likely to be depressed, anxious, or withdrawn. About 30 participants had more externalizing problems, tending to “act out” feelings. They were likely to be aggressive, hostile, impulsive, etc. Also, based on the data from YSR we can say, considering internalizing and externalizing personality characteristics and problem behaviours among our participants, that the newcomer immigrant and refugee youth in this research seemed to be at a somewhat elevated risk for psychological maladjustment during their settlement process. While the increased risk was statistically significant for boys and girls combined together on the total behaviour problem measure, the increased risk did not show clear significance for boys and girls separately. Also, we have to inform that these data should be interpreted with caution, because comparisons were made with the randomly selected peers (standardization sample), but not with matched controls.

### ***DHFT***

Once, a philosopher said that “One picture is worth then thousands words”. In our research, instead of the huge specific information, relevant to each participant’s drawing, the explanation of the DHFT is very general. Our estimation and explanation of the human figure drawings are based on *Machover (1949)*, *Abt and Bellak (1950)*, and *McElhaney (1969)*.

### ***Size***

According to the above authors, the relationship between the size of the drawing and the available paper space may parallel the person’s self-concept and his/her dynamic relationship with the environment. Thus, the size is suggestive of the way the person responding to the environmental press. If the self-concept figure is small, the hypothesis may be formulated that the person feels small (inadequate) and that she/he is responding to the demands of the environment with feelings of inferiority. The frequency of small figures (considering both male and female human figure drawings, where the maximum number of drawings for each group was 100) in our sample groups was: AFR (24), CAR (20), CHI (24), CSA (22), EUR (19), and SEA (22).

If the figure is large, then the person is responding to environmental press with feelings of expansion and aggression. According to the authors, grandiosity of the drawings is also characterized for persons who have a need to see themselves as powerful and dominating figures. Within the clinical setting, the very large figures are associated with euphoric manic persons. The frequency of large figures (considering both male and

female human figure drawings, where the maximum number of drawings for each group was 100) in our sample groups was: AFR (7), CAR (5), CHI (10), CSA (8), EUR (9), and SEA (8).

### ***Location (placement)***

There are five general placement possibilities: the upper half, the lower half, the left side, the right side, and the centre of the sheet. Figures placed in the upper half are of those who feel unsure of themselves (“up in the air”). The frequency of upper half figures (considering both male and female human figure drawings, where the maximum number of drawings for each group was 100) in our sample groups was: AFR (16), CAR (18), CHI (18), CSA (23), EUR (21), and SEA (24). Those whose drawings are on the left side of the paper sheet are self-conscious or introverted. The frequency of left sided figures (considering both male and female human figure drawings, where the maximum number of drawings for each group was 100) in our sample groups was: AFR (14), CAR (18), CHI (20), CSA (17), EUR (18), and SEA (16). Those whose drawings are on the right side of the paper sheet are more oriented toward environment, contacts or are extroverted. The frequency of right sided figures (considering both male and female human figure drawings, where the maximum number of drawings for each group was 100) in our sample groups was: AFR (10), CAR (9), CHI (12), CSA (9), EUR (10), and SEA (13). Those whose drawings are placed at the bottom of the page seem to be more stable, firmly rooted, calm. The frequency of bottom placed figures (considering both male and female human figure drawings, where the maximum number of drawings for each group was 100) in our sample groups was: AFR (26), CAR (23), CHI (17), CSA (19), EUR (20), and SEA (19). Those whose are carefully centered are usually self-directed, adaptive and self centered. The frequency of carefully centered figures (considering both male and female human figure drawings, where the maximum number of drawings for each group was 100) in our sample groups was: AFR (34), CAR (32), CHI (33), CSA (32), EUR (31), and SEA (28).

### ***Distortions and Omissions***

Each distortion and omission on a human figure drawing has a certain meaning. For our purpose in this research, we were focused only on arms and hands missing, and the whole face missing or drawing a human figure from the back perspective. Their arms and hands are indicators of quality of contact and if they are hidden, the person is expressing contact difficulties. The whole face missing or drawing a human figure from the back perspective indicate the person’s significant problems in accepting reality and/or problems in dealing with everyday life demands. The frequency of arms and hands missing in our sample groups was: AFR (9), CAR (11), CHI (14), CSA (12), EUR (11), and SEA (10). The frequency of the whole face missing or drawing a human figure from the back perspective in our sample groups was: AFR (4), CAR (3), CHI (9), CSA (7), EUR (2), and SEA (8).

### ***Significant Indicators***

We focused on any of the indicators that could support the impression of current and potential serious problems of the person such as inappropriate thinking, bizarre characteristics manifested in drawing, tendency to label and to describe the different parts of the drawings, transparency, aggressiveness, hostility, etc. In the whole sample we found 14 drawings that indicate some type of seriousness, including the possibility of progressing toward more seriousness.

However, in spite of our attempt to focus on a more general approach to “data” from DHFT, this information has limited meaning. We are aware how risky it is to come to any definite conclusion, especially when mentioning personality characteristics, on the basis of simply considering one data/score in isolation from others. It is only trends and patterns that really count. Single items only raise suspicion and only repeated deficiencies provide the basis for more definite conclusions. Thus, the data from DHFT, as a technique with no certain validity and reliability scores, should be supported by other relevant test findings.

## QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

### Methodology

A total of fourteen focus groups (twelve youth groups and two parent groups) were held. Twelve youth focus groups were organized with: Somali, the former USSR, Afghanistan, Bosnian/Croatian, Serbian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Chinese (Hong Kong), Finnish, Hungarian, Cambodian and Spanish speaking youth. Two parent focus groups were organized with Chinese and Serbian parents. The total number of participants in focus groups was 97 (81 newcomer youth and 16 parents).

Approximately 80 different community-based, educational institutions and organizations were contacted in order to recruit focus group participants and acquire space. Following is a list of the community organizations that have been instrumental in the process of recruiting participants, and organizing the focus groups. They were: Cecil Community Centre, Jane-Finch Community and Family Centre, Catholic Cross-Cultural Services Scarborough, Polish Immigrant and Community Services, Hungarian Canadian Community Service, St. Sava Serbian Orthodox Church, Somali Immigrant Aid Organization, Suomi-Koti Toronto Finnish-Canadian Seniors Centre, Toronto Public Library - Agincourt Branch, OCASI, Vietnamese Association of Toronto, and The Eastview Neighbourhood Community Centre.

A focus group methodology has been used to ascertain the settlement and adaptation perceptions and experiences of Canadian immigrant youth 16-19 years of age in their new living environment in Canada. Each participant was provided \$25 payment at the end of the focus group as a token of appreciation for their interest, help and time. The participants were encouraged to provide their personal experiences in relation to their settlement, adaptation and integration process, and to address their actual needs. The focus group size was a maximum eight participants in the group. The participants began by filling out a consent form. After the forms were collected, the participants and the facilitator introduced themselves. The focus group participants also were informed that the idea of the groups was really to talk together and share personal thoughts and experiences in about an hour and a half to two hours. The maintenance of confidentiality during discussion was emphasized.

In order to get important information from everyone, the participants were asked to give enough detail so the others could understand their points. Also, everyone was asked to share her/his points with the group and to be considerate of others' viewpoints. In so doing, the facilitator: 1) conducted the focus groups in a pleasant atmosphere, and 2) structured questions in a manner that encouraged talking/discussion and probed experiences given by asking for examples, e.g. “What do you think of when you say “I find no support”...What does a supporting behavior look like?”

For youth focus groups five key questions were chosen to cover some of the most important aspects of the settlement, adaptation and integration process of immigrant youth such as: 1) personal experiences and major difficulties when they first arrived in Canada, and current personal experiences and major difficulties, 2) differences between style of life inside and outside of the family, confusion in values, conflict over desire to adapt Canadian values, friendships, 3) help needed and the types of help asked or given from different sources (family members, schools, churches, members from the same ethnic groups, community organizations, institutional service providers, etc.), 4) immigrant youth service improvement and suggestions, from the personal experience and perspective, of any kind of help for those immigrant newcomer youth who recently moved or will move to Canada to help them better settle in, and 5) other areas of the settlement, adaptation and integration process that have not been covered.

For parental focus groups seven key questions were chosen to cover some of the most important parental aspects and experiences relevant to their and their children's settlement, adaptation and integration process such as: 1) parental personal experiences and major difficulties when they first arrived in Canada, and current parental personal experiences and major difficulties, 2) the ways parents maintain their children's original culture and children's need to adopt the dominant culture values, beliefs, behaviors, etc, 3) the ways parents see their change or remain the same in their new living environment, 4) the ways parents communicate with their children, 5) the ways parents control and discipline their children, 6) parental help needed and the types of help asked or given from different sources (family members, schools, churches, members from the same ethnic groups, community organizations, institutional service providers, etc.), and 7) parental suggestions for immigrant youth and family service improvement.

## **Summary and Analysis of Youth Focus Groups**

### *a) English language difficulties*

#### **Findings:**

At the beginning of the participants' life in Canada, English language difficulties and the concerns associated with this were emphasized as the first and the major difficulty for almost all participants in all groups. The participants related that the beginning of their life in Canada was a stressful life experience. One participant mentioned that he did not like to talk about that painful experience in his life. Another mentioned that the presence of some Chinese students in his school was a good opportunity for him to use them as a specific camouflage which helped him to deal with the feelings of isolation and the belief that everyone in his school was looking at him. One girl stated that she could not really remember when she started to feel less sad and scared. Also, one participant mentioned that he felt abandoned and ignored as a student and sat in the back row of his classroom.

#### **Conclusion:**

With no English language skills, the participants felt withdrawn, fearful, confused, guilty, depressed, isolated, marginalized etc. In their schools, they could not speak to other children, they could not express their feelings, they could not understand their teachers and their instructions, etc.

## ***b) ESL programs***

### **Findings:**

The participants explained that the opportunity of attending ESL programs at their schools was helpful, but not in all ways. Some participants stated that they had really responsive ESL teachers who not only provided them with intensive language instruction but also employed valuable teaching methods and materials. Some other participants stated that the ESL programs were simply not sensitive to their needs and demands. One participant mentioned that at ESL classes she became easily distracted because she was not able to meet the teacher's expectations for vocabulary, sentence patterns, grammatical structures, phrases, etc. Another participant mentioned that he needed the opposite of what his ESL teacher introduced as a promising way to learn English. He mentioned that the teacher's style was to increase a newcomer student's English language proficiency by fostering the student's independence. In addition, he commented that after he left the ESL programs, approached the teacher with his concerns and emphasized that in his opinion newcomer students depend on an ESL teacher, the teacher responded that such an approach would not guarantee successful ESL teaching. For one participant, going to ESL classes seemed like sheep going to a sheepfold.

### **Conclusion:**

According to some of the participants, ESL teachers were not flexible or employed techniques of teaching that were both difficult to understand and not interesting. Also, all of the participants saw ESL programs as something which automatically separates and excludes newcomer students from others in the school. When the question was put to the participants regarding how other students look at ESL, they responded that other students usually make fun of such programs and look at those who go to ESL differently. Thus, it is possible to assume that when newcomer students are relegated to ESL programs, it is not "cool" to go there, and at the same time, they become cloaked in stereotypical traits from other peers. It seems that in perceiving ESL programs in their schools, our focus group participants used the other students' attitudes and views at ESL programs as something unpopular and stereotypical.

## ***c) The same ethnic group peer network affiliations, support and communication***

### **Findings:**

The same ethnic group peer network affiliations, support and communication were something that almost all participants valued as one of the most effective ways of getting help in dealing with issues relevant to their settlement, adaptation and integration process. Almost all of the participants indicated that their friends and close friends were from the same culture and those who spoke the same language. The participants mentioned that friends from their countries helped them to feel accepted and valued. They not only could speak with their friends from the same culture but could also share ideas, go to the movies/sport arenas/musical concerts, go out, etc. The participants also explained that their close friends from the same culture can understand how they felt about some situations in their lives, and could provide needed help and support. Many participants explained that at the time of arrival, in their schools these students were used by teachers as instrumental in helping with translation and in communicating with teachers and other students in the classrooms. It was emphasized as one of the most significant supports at the beginning of the participants' life and learning in Canada. The participants mentioned that they communicated with their

mainstream classmates and peers, as well as those from other ethno-racial groups. The communications with mainstream peers were indicated as more functionally based (working together in curriculum projects, school sport teams, etc.). Only three participants mentioned that they have mainstream youth as close friends. More than one third participants mentioned that they had friends from other immigrant groups. These participants explained that they met their friends from other immigrant groups at the ESL classes, or that shared the same religion, or came from neighbour countries, etc. The majority of our participants agreed that they were not members of the most popular crowds in their schools. They emphasized that being a member of the popular crowd is associated with the greatest popularity in the school. Some of the participants explained that they established their own ethnic crowds in their schools. Also, they explained that they would like to see other immigrant students to be organized in such ways.

### **Conclusion:**

It is possible to conclude that for our participants, as probably for other immigrant youth, peers from the same culture, who speak the same language, have been used as one of the most useful resources in meeting many different settlement, adaptation and integration relevant needs. Trust, support, intimacy, interactive relationships, mutual understanding, positive self-feelings and feelings of spontaneity with friends from the same culture have been mentioned as the most important factors that fulfill and increase the participants' social needs, functioning and involvement, personal satisfaction, security, self-esteem and the development of personal marketable skills such as pride, feelings of acceptance, belonging, attachment etc. Also, according to our participants, it is possible to list some additional benefits of having close friends from one's own culture, who speak the same language, such as facilitating cross-cultural communication and working against isolation, testing of personal beliefs and ideas, fostering understanding of the participants' needs and experiences in order to protect them from unresponsive, unreasonable or harmful aspects of the new living and educational environment. According to the above noted comments, it is possible to anticipate that the participants prefer peers from the same culture who speak the same language not only as close friends but also as sources of emotional support, encouragement and elaboration of personal feelings, thoughts, experiences and behavior. Thus, it seems to be one of the specific characteristics relevant to the settlement and adaptation process of immigrant youth which, at the same time, increases the protection of these youth from jeopardizing their global feelings and attitudes of self-worth and places them at lower risk for adverse effects in their new living environment. Also, we have found that ethnicity is an important factor in group/crowd formation for immigrant students (for example Chinese, Serbian, Vietnamese and other immigrant youth groups in schools). The communications between our focus group participants and their peers from the mainstream society are limited. Our participants, as probably many other immigrant youth and their Canadian peers partially socialize. On the other hand, the contacts and communications between immigrant youth from different ethno-racial groups in their schools, are in many cases more open and based on the emphatic assumptions of the same experiences in Canada, and better mutual understanding. In some ways the quality of such communication has been increased by the same religion and/or geographical proximity of the two countries of origin.

### ***d) Teachers and newcomer youth challenges associated with them***

#### **Findings:**

More than a half of the participants in our focus groups positively valued their teachers. These participants

explained that their teachers helped them and provided very valuable support. Valuing support from their teachers, some participants explained that the opportunity of having a teacher from the same culture, who spoke the same language, was crucial and very beneficial at the beginning of their life in Canada. Also, these participants explained that they could openly communicate with their teachers and that teachers provided mutual support such as understanding, advice giving, curriculum explanation and help, etc. On the other hand, teachers were portrayed as racist, sexist, and not responsive people, those who are indolent toward the needs of immigrant students etc. Approximately one fourth of the participants did not find their teachers to be sources of support. Five participants complained that teachers very often asked them to go to the school's office. When asked if they learned why the teachers asked them to go to the office and what the teachers did not like in their behaviors, the participants responded that they did not see any reason to go to the office and that teachers had a different approach toward immigrant youth. These youth also provided information about their problems in relationships with their parents. The other participants, those who belong to visible minority groups, pointed out that their teachers were jealous and did not like black students to achieve their full academic potentials. These participants who are in grades 12 and 13 reported that teachers suggested to them that they choose college but not university, as a part of their continuing education if they were interested in pursuing their education. These participants who were not satisfied with their teachers related that teachers did not care if immigrant students understood what was being taught. They also felt that their teachers provided them with poorer feedback, without being aware if immigrant students understand their expectations. Also, some of the participants expressed concerns that in their grade curriculums they could not recognize anything relevant to their experiences. Thus, one participant mentioned: "Sometimes I am not getting curriculum context. It has always been hard for me to capture and understand parallels between my grade curriculum and examples from everyday life, teachers used, such as a father who is returning from business trip, a family which during its vacation visits ancient sightseeing, backyard spring activities etc. My family receives welfare. We do not travel anywhere even to see our family members back home. My parents rent a small apartment and they do not own a house. I would like to see what grade curriculum examples belong to such way of life in Canada!" Another participant asked: "Why do not we study more things and problems that relate to my life and life of other immigrant peers?"

### **Conclusion:**

According to our participants, the ability of their schools and teachers to appropriately and creatively respond to the challenges posed by them has been both positive and, at the same time, hampered by some factors. The findings of our focus group discussion related to the interactions between newcomer immigrant and refugee youth and their teachers emphasize a variety of variables which influence the type of interactions shared by these youth and their teachers. These are related to teachers and youth themselves, and also to different situational factors. Thus, it is possible to see that some of our participants valued their teachers as positive and supportive personalities, who showed understanding for many of their needs. On the other side, some participants negatively portrayed their teachers. In spite of the fact that in some of these participants, who negatively portrayed their teachers, we could recognize that they tend to have a pattern of conflict with and problems accepting people who have authority, some questions are still remain open. One of them is: "How can we expect an effective, congenial education place, if the students of different races in their schools feel polarized and that their teachers underestimate their ability to complete their academic goals successfully". According to the above noted comments from our participants, we can say that good teachers are those people who are fully comfortable working and providing teaching opportunities across lines of

race, social class, religion, ethnic background, etc. At the same time, the current education system should be more flexible and responsive, ensuring the development of innovative and comprehensive programs, and interventions which will balance the need for settlement, adaptation and integration of newcomer youth with deep respect for a variety of their personal experiences, and their socialization, interests, and personality/identity development, as well. Thus, there would be a less chance for a newcomer immigrant and refugee student to approach some school and curriculum related situations in very painful personal way, assuming for example: “I am dumber than other students in my class,..My teacher does not ask me questions because I am dumber., etc.”

#### *e) Feelings of belonging (fitting in) to the mainstream society*

##### **Findings:**

Two thirds of the participants strongly agreed that young people like them should possess strong feelings of belonging (fitting in) to the mainstream society. They describe “belonging” as an opportunity to feel part of the society and community where they live. Also, they see it as a promising pathway toward their future personal achievement and progress. Those who did not recognize the importance of feelings of belonging explained that in Canadian society power and money open all doors, thus it does not matter if someone feels that she/he fits in. These participants emphasized that the value of feelings of belonging without power and money has no appropriate meaning. Also, we noticed that some participants expressed their radical orientation toward keeping themselves from fitting in. As a main reason for such an approach they mentioned that nobody cares about them in Canadian society. These participants felt that nobody paid attention to their needs, and because of that there was no reason to feel part of Canadian society. At the same time, these participants welcomed the opportunity to live in Canada and expressed their willingness to respond toward their citizen duties, but personally they did not see the adaptation of Canadian values as an important part of their life in Canada. They consider themselves as people who would not like to feel fit in. Additionally, one very specific experience relevant to feelings of belonging to the larger society was explained by Serbian participants. These participants emphasized their unique feeling which significantly affected their settlement, adaptation and integration process. They emphasized how they liked Canada, as their new country, but were also completely confused and disappointed about the fact that Canada took part in dropping bombs over their homeland. Serbian participants expressed that they could not believe Canada would take part in the bombardment and destroying of Yugoslavia, their home country, and killing innocent children and civilians. These participants explained how much, during 79 days of bombardment, they were uncertain about the destiny of their grandparents, family members and friends. Some of the statements mentioned and questions asked by some participants were: “We young people cannot understand what the point is of promoting human welfare on the one hand while dropping bombs and killing innocent kids and civilians, at the same time, on the other hand...Is this double standard what will help us to build tomorrow’s society? Is our life fact or fiction?...Why did innocent kids and civilians have to die?, etc.”

##### **Conclusion:**

It seems that not all of our participants share the same thoughts about conforming and accepting the values and norms of the larger society. For some of our participants, this puts one culture against another and assumes an inverse relationship between the culture of origin and host culture (orientation toward high

involvement in the culture of origin and no acceptance of host culture). It seems that the extent to which the participants from different cultures approach the dimensions of life in their new Canadian environment ranges from strong mainstreamed feelings to a strong monocultural orientation. At the same time, if these youth do not adopt the mainstream society's values and behaviors, they may not fit in. Therefore, they may experience stress that may lead to feelings of alienation, emotional and other psychological difficulties because they are angry and feel that the larger society is not offering support, acceptance and hope of progress. However, those who are open toward and adopt Canadian culture, beliefs, values and behaviors are likely to have better personal feelings and social outcomes because they are more comfortable in the adopted culture and therefore will not face the higher risk of experiencing as much isolation related stresses. Also, the above mentioned experiences, statements and questions, Serbian participants raised, can be considered as a specific kind of personal and cognitive confusion. At the same time, these contrasting thoughts and confusion have revealed the essence of emotional injury, showing painful obsessions and a lasting impact from the significant and terrible happenings in their home country. It is also possible to assume that for these participants the bombardment triggered the trauma and pain they experienced previously during the war in the former Yugoslavia.

#### *f) Traumatic premigration conditions and experiences*

##### **Findings:**

Traumatic premigration conditions and experiences were emphasized as being significant in the settlement and adaptation process of participants who were exposed to war in their home countries (Afghanistan, the former Yugoslavia, Somalia). These participants explained that during the war in their home countries, they not only witnessed firsthand casualties and injuries to members of their own families or neighbours but also experienced consequences of ethnic cleansing, extremely dangerous situations, cruelty, combat, killing, pain, extreme threat, constant artillery and gunfire, separation, forced isolation, etc.

##### **Conclusion:**

According to the experiences mentioned, it is possible to conclude that these participants have been affected psychologically by war and suffered many traumas, being embedded in a climate of deadly hatred between ethnic groups in their home countries, quite frequently involving former neighbours and other members from the same village or city. Based on some of the psychological disturbances which have been mentioned, it is possible to assume how the experiences related to exposure to war have affected the settlement, adaptation and integration process of these participants. It was possible to recognize some of the PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorders) related symptoms, concentration problems, nightmares, sleep disturbance, etc. Also, the observation of aggressive actions and acting out in the behavior of some participants, who were exposed to war in their home countries, can be linked to their war related premigration experiences. Furthermore, the influence of unresolved previously experienced war traumas may have impact on future development and health of these participants, as well as on their academic achievements. Thus, premigratory war experiences and exposure to aggression, brutality, terror, disempowerment etc., comprise greater additional risk factors specific to youth that may increase the likelihood of serious settlement and adaptive consequences and increased mental health problems in their new Canadian living environment.

#### *g) Prejudice and discriminatory behaviours*

## **Findings:**

Prejudice and discriminatory behaviors, that peers shown toward some of the participants, were also emphasized as one of the important and painful obstacles in their settlement, adaptation and integration process. Some participants mentioned: “We recall frequently hearing of us Asians being referred to as “chiks” or “gooks”. One participant mentioned: “One of the most popular students in my class refused to speak with me. Later, when he moved, one student told me that he did consider myself as a dirty Cambodian immigrant. One Chinese participant mentioned: “I experienced some students pulled back the corners of their eyes in mocking mimicry of me.” Also, one Somali participant stated: “I never want to show how some discriminatory acts and insults cut, because that would even more emphasize the difference between me and my classmates.” All of the Somali participants agreed with the feeling of another participant who said: “It is like when I walk outside, I feel I will be looked and treated differently...It is just seeing reality...I am not looking for it, nor I am supersensitive to being treated as a black Somali person, but it is there.” The participants in the Serbian group explained how greatly some of them, and other students from their community as well, suffered from the recent Kosovo crisis and NATO’s bombardment of their home country. They mentioned that in Canadian popular media during the Kosovo crisis, as well as during the wars in the former Yugoslavia, Serbs have been very negatively described. The media portrayed Serbs as atrocious criminals, barbarians, evil, mad, etc. As a result of such presentations, Serbian students explained some unexpected and very profound consequences including hatred, painful and discriminatory acts (hate, rejection, teasing, exclusion, harassment, bullying, shunning, provocation, vulgar name calling, verbal aggression, unpopularity, etc.) experienced by and against Serbian students in their schools. Some peers either directly or indirectly discriminated against their Serbian classmates by saying to them: “You Serbs kill people we don’t like to be friendly with you”, “I hate Serbs”, “Serbs are bad guys and criminals”, “Go home Serbs!”, “If Serbs are people, why do they act like beasts?”, “Serbs are equal to Nazis”, etc.

## **Conclusion:**

It is possible to anticipate that both youth who have demonstrated the hatred and discriminatory acts toward their peers and those who have been targets of various forms of hate and discrimination, etc., are at increased risk, respectively, for incarceration, depression, behavior problems, violent behavior and many other negative developmental outcomes. Nondiscrimination against newcomer youth and particularly the current status of some youth from certain ethnic communities should remain one of the pressing issues not only for schools and their boards but also for many other relevant institutions within the larger society. We have to be concerned that some populations of immigrant youth in Canada have been reluctant to acknowledge their original culture and heritage, and that ethnic origin for these youth may be associated with a profound loss of ethnic identity and pride. In order to prevent such feelings and discriminative and hatred acts we have to work together to identify and address a range of issues resulting from the above mentioned peer and societal prejudice, and discrimination. It will offer the media and mainstream society an opportunity to go beyond identification of bias toward these innocent youth’s heritage and origin. The identification of the negative presentation of some ethnic groups in the media, of the discrimination of some ethnic youth, and peer and societal prejudice, will provide the groundwork for the development of specific approach to help these newcomer youth to grow equally and healthy in their Canadian environment. In our focus groups, we also noticed that some participants used the other ethnic communities and their cultures in order to make fun of them, diminishing their values. Also, these participants showed negative actions toward other participants in the same group, mostly trying to provide answers on their behalf and/or excluding them from

the conversation. Thus, it was possible to recognize that some participants in some youth group are at high risk of being victims of intentional inflicts and attempts to emotionally injure or discomfort them, which all together looks as a form of bullying behavior.

#### *h) Age of the participants when they came to Canada*

##### **Findings:**

Age of the participants when they came to Canada was considered as one of the most important factors that significantly affects their settlement and adaptation process. The participants expressed that it was much harder to adapt to a new life in Canada for all of those who came to Canada as youth because they already started to go to school in their home countries and established strong friendships with peers there. Some of the participants mentioned that it also was hard for them to adapt to a new curriculum in their schools and find new friends. One participant, who came two years ago from Kazakhstan, explained that he did not have friends in Canada and that all of his friends are back home. The another participant from the Hungarian community explained that instead of his thirty months presence in Canada, he felt still homesickness. He mentioned that his older brother could not adapt to Canada and returned home to Hungary. This participant also mentioned that he visited Hungary three times during summers and that all of his close friends lived there. He would like to finish his high school in Canada and go to the university in his home country. Also, some participants mentioned: “We want to call ourselves Canadians, but we are not allowed. Our names are strange by origins so therefore we are strangers.”

##### **Conclusion:**

According to the above noted facts it is possible to conclude that newcomer youth, who recently immigrated to Canada, feel in their new Canadian environment isolated, shy, uncertain, passive etc, experiencing, at the same time, certain adaptation problems. Some of these youth still feel as strangers and are not comfortable to communicate and interact with peers in their schools and neighbourhoods. Based on the above mentioned facts and experiences, it is possible to assume that the quality of newcomer youth’s communications and relationships with other peers, especially those from the mainstream society, are not relaxed, smooth, open. Rather these communications are characterized in some cases as minimized and without involving understanding, support and attentiveness. The above mentioned common experiences of these newcomer immigrant and refugee youth show how powerful have been previous separation experiences and how, at the same time, these experiences have been affecting the quality of life in new living environments, thus contaminating an opportunity for their successful and healthy start in Canada.

#### *i) Participants’ life styles inside and outside of their families*

##### **Findings:**

We were told about the participants’ different life styles inside and outside of their families. All of the participants explained that inside their families they were required to be more traditionally oriented toward their first language, original cultural values, religious beliefs etc. They explained that their parents were strongly concerned with preventing them from not becoming alienated from their original cultures, beliefs and values. For example, the participants from the Afghan focus group, as Muslims, explained problems in adjusting and maintaining required prayer activities with the school program and other daily duties. Some

girls also explained that they have problems letting their parents know that some of the parental views were very traditional and not valued in Canada such as protecting them from socializing with other youth and peers, or asking them to stay at home until marriage, or wearing traditional clothes and following some traditional behaviors, etc. Outside the families, the participants explained that they were required to learn new culture and language and to incorporate more of Canadian values and beliefs instead of resisting the new culture. For almost one third of the participants these gaps between the requirements inside and outside of their families created some personal confusion and/or relationship problems with their parents. As they become more mainstream oriented, tensions raised with their parents, who were described by participants as rigid and in some cases far from accepting and understanding the mainstream culture. Also, these participants explained that their family climate sometimes did not enable the free expression of their feelings and emotions. The participants who believed that their parents rejected the values of the mainstream culture, explained more problems and tension because they felt obliged to adapt their parents' cultural identity at home and the mainstream's society norms and values at school and other places outside the family. The majority of participants agreed that they should keep their original values and culture, but were confused at what level. One third of the participants explained that their parents positively changed and learned that they should view their children using a new approach. These parents were described as people who changed their previous perceptions and who adopted elements from their new environmental and larger societal context. Almost all participants agreed that they needed more parental understanding, family support and encouragement in their new life in Canada.

### **Conclusion:**

From the participants' point of view, using both their inside/outside family and cross-cultural settings, it is possible to conclude that the formation of their self-concept (a person's self-perceptions formed through experience with interpretations of one's environment) is influenced by evaluations by parents from one side, and by the relevant parts of larger society's structure from the other side such as peers, school, teachers, media, etc. Also, it is possible to conclude that during their settlement, adaptation and integration process, the participants seek more opportunities not only for better understanding and more positive interactions with their parents but also for emotional stability, support and encouragement.

### ***j) Good school and academic success was seen by parents as the only way to get ahead***

#### **Findings:**

Many of the participants explained that in Canada their parents put their hopes for the future in their children, and that a good school and academic success was seen by parents as the only way to get ahead. These participants mentioned that it was not rare for their parents to object to the time the participants wished and planned to spend on non-academic activities. For example sport and team activities, going out, visiting friends, etc., provoked tension because parents saw such activities as not contributing to their goals for their children. These participants also explained that their parents were concerned about school programs and believed that the stronger control over their children would ensure the children's' school success.

#### **Conclusion:**

According to the participants, the parental framework of assessing their children's attributes toward school

and the responsibility for the children's school outcomes may be problematic in some cases. This, first of all, because some participants showed a different approach toward their school outcomes than the standards and measures of what their parents stated they should do at home/school. Also, they showed a sense for more personal responsibility regarding their academic school success which basically was different from the parental assumed predictors of academic achievement.

*k) Parents were seen as weak identification models in their children eyes*

**Findings:**

Parents were seen as weak identification models in their children eyes. More than a half of the participants in our groups explained that they view their family climate in Canadian environment changed and less stable comparing to the conditions in their home countries. They saw their parents as stressed and confused in some ways. Some participants mentioned that their parents were always on the depressed side because they were so wrapped up in their own problems, overwhelmed with unemployment, underemployment, relationship problems with spouse, children, etc. These participants saw their parents in the new Canadian environment as people experiencing increasing disappointments, frustrations, tension, lack of control over their lives and life changes, deterioration of their sense of well-being, etc. Some participants explained that for their parents life did not make sense in the new environment and they felt helpless, confused, isolated, marginalized, etc., and that parental identity was shaken by their experience of being uprooted, and of being lost between "there" (home country) and "here" (life in Canada).

**Conclusion:**

According to the perceptions, it is possible to assume that some significant changes in the participant's personality development, especially their identification process and identity development could occur. From the discipline of psychology, it is known that identification, as a psychological process, is essential to both the process of socialization and personality development. Instead of the fact that the evolution of independence from parents is an important developmental task during adolescence, especially late adolescence, adolescents desperately need their parental figures to serve as positive identification models, and to achieve trust, encouragement, security, support, etc. Adolescents need their parental figures to use them to test their new experiences, approaches, roles, etc. Newcomer immigrant youth need strong parental figures as identification models to help them in acquiring many of the specific identity, socialization and other skills required by the new living environment and mainstream society. During adolescence, as during each stage of childhood, parental figures are critical in determining how children will resolve many personal problems and crisis and how they will cope with later problems and crisis. A lack of seeing parental figures as strong identification models by newcomer youth in their new environments may result not only in feelings of personal disappointment but also in newcomer youth's attempts to search for a new identification model/models. In such attempts, newcomer immigrant youth try to replace weak parental figures and they identify with other models, which consequently may cause many negative outcomes. In addition to that, adolescent peer pressure, which develops much of its values from the media's interpretation and presentation, may force problematic and sometime delinquent behavior and/or sexual activities at an early age. A media's and scriptwriter's values have the potential to become newcomer adolescent's major source of information about the cultural values in Canadian society. Newcomer youth can easily identify with characters viewed on a television screen who are in most cases flamboyant, glamorous and successful.

These characters enjoy violence, abuse, sex and other problematic behaviors on a frequent and often causal basis. When such media exposure is combined with peer pressure to be cool, and when parents were seen as weak identification models and helpless or reluctant to discuss the important issues functionally, seriously and sensitively with their teenage children, a confused outcome such as negative behavioral outcomes, aggressive behavior, feelings of inferiority, academic and personal problems, delinquent activities, teenage pregnancy etc., is an inevitable result.

***l) Participants were not well informed about the existing settlement and other relevant services***

**Findings:**

Our participants were not well informed about the existing settlement and other relevant services for newcomers. The majority of participants mentioned the settlement related support, which they and their parents received, only from their existing family members, if those members exist in Canada. A few of them mentioned support from churches and culturally sensitive settlement service providers. The help received from churches and community services was primarily related to ESL training for parents. Also, a few participants mentioned that their parents had problems but needed to work hard and overtime hours in order to ensure enough money for rent and food. Thus, the parents did not have a chance and/or time to ask and benefit from such services. The majority of the participants explained that they never used any kind of settlement services available and that their parents did not appear as users of mainstream family and mental health services. In many cases this appeared because of lack of information and/or because of language, culture and stigma.

**Conclusion:**

During the focus group discussion, it was possible to observe and hear from some participants about their personal problems which have significant connotations to their well-being and mental health. Also, some of them mentioned significant mental health problems of their parents. All of these participants mentioned that it was strange and unusual for them and their parents to seek for example counselling of any kind.

***m) English language proficiency and importance of having friends***

**Findings:**

All participants in all groups mentioned English language proficiency as one of the fundamental factors to participate in Canadian society which can significantly facilitate the settlement, adaptation and integration process of all Canadian newly arrived immigrant youth. The participants also mentioned that newcomer's youth ability to speak English language, at the time of their arrival, not only would facilitate their successful peer interactions and success in school but also to reduce and/or prevent negative and painful feelings of isolation, marginalization, etc. The importance of having friends also was emphasized for those who are newly arrived youth. Almost all of the participants mentioned their experience when they arrive to Canada as a painful one. Also, they explained that they knew how those who recently came, regardless from which country they came, felt. When asked: "Do they in their school provide any support to them?", the answer in almost all cases was no. As a reason, our participant mentioned that they could not speak their language, or that they did not know would the newcomers trust them, etc.

## **Conclusion:**

It is possible to see that our participants provided very limited suggestions regarding what, from their perspective, would help newly arrived Canadian youth. Some associations could help in trying to provide some answers to the question: “Why?” One answer could be associated with the fact that newcomer youth are simply not enough aware about many changes they face during their settlement, adaptation and integration process. The other answer could be associated with the fact that because of not getting responsive help for many of their unique settlement, adaptation and integration related needs, newcomer youth are pessimistic that something significant would happen in the near future and radically improve the existing services in order to meet the above mentioned newcomer youth needs. The third answer could be associated with the fact that often, many teachers, health professionals, settlement workers, counsellors, and other relevant persons, due to inexperience or/and ignorance of psychological distress and changes experienced by newcomer youth, grossly underestimate or minimize suffering, conditions and the personal and behavioral problems of these youth. Thus, these youth do not experience enough support to seek help from many different parties within the larger society, and consequently are resistant to such personal experiences using denial in approaching their current experiences related to their settlement education and integration process. Also, some of the answers could be associated with the facts of stigma, cultural issues and willingness to openly speak of personal experiences, being passive, etc.

### ***n) Newcomer youth like Canada’s entertainment life***

#### **Findings:**

Newcomer youth like Canada’s entertainment life. Many of our participants mentioned that they like entertainment life in Canada. They said that such opportunities are presented more in Canada than in their home countries. For example, the participants from Finnish focus group, explained that there were not any significant differences between their life in Finland and in Canada. They emphasized many similarities between the two countries such as democratically elected governments, life standard, weather conditions, natural beauties and resources, etc. At the same time they emphasized that they would like to stay in Canada because Canada offers more fun and an opportunity to enjoy many popular musical groups, sport and movie stars in live. Also, they emphasized one very important difference. According to participants, their peers and other youth in Finland started to drink alcohol earlier and that the alcohol use played very important role among youth in Finland.

## **Summary and Analysis of Parental Focus Groups**

### ***a) At the beginning of their life in Canada parents felt excited, later uncertain***

#### **Findings:**

Almost all participants explained that during a few first months of their life in Canada, they felt very positive, enthusiastic, excited, and with great expectations about future and life. The parents described themselves as euphoric, optimistic and overwhelmed with positive plans and better quality of life. One parent mentioned that for her the first six months in Canada were like a honeymoon period. Three parents who escaped directly from war-affected zones in the former Yugoslavia, explained that at the beginning of their life in Canada they felt very thankful. These parents explained that during the war, for them, it was very hard to

deal everyday's life threatening situations for them, their children and other family members and friends. When they came to Canada, these parents explained that not only did their life start to be a normal again but also that they were full of hope. After the first few months, the participants explained that their life in Canada changed. They became preoccupied and frustrated with employment and underemployment, language problems, status, personal and identity change, relationships with their children and family problems due to change, acculturation and the integration process, relationships with the larger society, etc. Realising and trying to elaborate on the separation from their home country and friends, parents explained that they felt uncertain, guilty, shame, depressed, confused, etc. Also, parents emphasized that they needed to adapt to new roles and search for new strength and resources in order to survive.

### **Conclusion:**

It is possible to conclude that moving to Canada, including pre- and postmigration experiences of our participants, is a complex and multifaceted experience. It acts to disassemble the individual's structure and previously formed pictures about oneself, bringing, at the same time, many personal questions, a state of confusion, emotional disorganization, which, all together, in many cases tests the sense of identity and personal stability. Also, during the discussions, it was possible to see that our participants tried to compare their old self (for example, questions such as: "Who they were in their home countries? What they had and enjoyed?, What they knew?, etc.), with their new self in Canada (for example, questions such as: "Who they are now? What they have?, What they know?, etc). Based on the parental migration experiences provided, it is possible to separate a few phases of their settlement, adaptation and integration process into the larger Canadian culture and society. The first phase is a phase of slight euphoria. The second one is a phase of grievance. The third one is a phase of protest, and the fourth one is a phase of constructive, rational and conscious attempts to deal with many different questions related to the settlement, adaptation and integration process. In the fourth phase, from our point of view, we would like to emphasize that for those immigrant newcomers, whose predominant prevailing mechanism of approaching new life challenges is submissive acceptance of everything, are at a higher risk to achieve negative settlement, adaptation and integration outcomes.

*b) Parents would like to see their children keep the original cultural values, beliefs and norms*

### **Findings:**

The majority of parents felt that their children should keep their original heritage. They accept the reality of their new environment in Canada, but believed that the strong connection with original culture and values would protect their children from many uncertainty in Canada. One parent mentioned that they do not know where their children will be in the future. They can decide to live back home, and it is important therefore for them to learn Chinese heritage and language. The other participant mentioned that there is no sense of drinking ice water and eating dim sum at the same time. Chinese drink tea with dim sum. Another parent mentioned that he strongly expected his child to keep the Chinese language and traditions. This parent, during Chinese New Year, organized a reunion dinner with other family members arranging Chinese traditional food for the dinner. Also, one participant mentioned that he is not satisfied that his children's Serbian language skills did not improve. He emphasized that he always asked his children to speak and communicate with other Serbian peers in their original language, but he said that it is very hard. The another participant explained that it is important for her children to learn and know the original language because

they have a lot of extended family members and friends in Yugoslavia, and she wanted her children to be in touch with these people. These parents with strong feelings that their children needed to learn their original cultural values and language were not completely satisfied with the reality that their children do not show too much interest in achieving their parental expectations. From the other side, some parents explained that they would like to give their children the chance to decide what they want to learn about their original culture. One parent mentioned that he explained to his children the values of Chinese culture and tradition, but that he did not like to force his children to learn Chinese. Another participant mentioned that he celebrated every Canadian holiday and that when he was in China had a western orientation. He would like to see his children to adapt Canadian values, but also if it will be useful for them, to be aware of their heritage.

### **Conclusion:**

According to the above mentioned comments it is possible to conclude that immigrant parents would like to see their children to keep their traditional cultural values and heritage. At the same time, instead of the fact that the parents were aware their children live in the new living environment, parents were not aware about all of the issues their children face trying to fill the gaps between their life styles and requirements inside and outside of the families.

### ***c) Parents mentioned concerns about their children's education***

#### **Findings:**

Some parents were concerned about the issues that affected their children in school. One Chinese parent emphasized that his child did not adjust well in Canadian environment and that, as a visible minority student, was the subject of bullying in the school from other children. Also, Serbian parents emphasized the difficulties of their children who, during the Kosovo crisis, were discriminated against from their peers and did experience problems such as rejection, shunning, provocation, vulgar name calling, hate, unpopularity, etc. These parents explained that they went to the school but instead of facts the school staff were upset with the parental concerns, in parents' views, nothing was done to punish such negative peer behaviors. Also, the majority of participants explained that they were concerned with fact that there was no homework for their children. The parents believed that their children should have a lot of homework. Also, the parents believed that the curriculum and the school programs were more conceptualized in their home countries and that children in their home countries learned more than Canadian children. One parent mentioned that he was confused that his child's academic results were described as good if the child had no homework and/or school related after-school duties. Another parent explained her belief that the studying was not the first priority for her child in Canada. This mother mentioned that for her son enjoying life and being satisfied with his aspirations such as driving his own car and going out with his peers, were his first priorities. One participant mentioned that when asked his daughter about her teachers she had nothing to provide him with. One Chinese participant mentioned that her daughter experienced some school and peer friendship related problems. The participants mentioned that the school social worker and teacher were naive and assumed that the parental style was insensitive and silly. Instead, according to the participant, the school had to understand the personality and the cultural differences of her child. In the participants view, the school did not like to focus on core issues, but tried to modify the child's behavior.

### **Conclusion:**

According to the above mentioned experiences, it is possible to conclude that immigrant parents have to be more engaged with their children's schools. School boards and immigrant parents have to learn from each other. On the one hand, parents need to learn more about Canadian school system and find the ways how to suggest the ways of improving it. On the other side, the school system should help parents not only to recognize how the current school system helps immigrant children to meet their parents' aspirations and expectations but also to help parents to value and positively think about the school system and organization in Canada.

### ***d) Parents were concerned about communication and discipline strategies with their children***

#### **Findings:**

The parents explained the difficulties in communicating with their children and trying to keep them following established home rules. Some parents mentioned that their children were not open in their communication with them and that they could not recognize what their children had in their minds. The parents explained that these things happened because their children felt very strong support from the larger society in order to be independent and make personal decisions. The another parental reason, due to their language problems, was connected to the fact that some parents used their children to facilitate the parental communication with the larger society, and children felt more control over their parents. The parents explained their concern that their children were too young to make some decisions and that they always needed the parental support. Also, the parents explained the difficulties in controlling and disciplining their children in order to keep them responsible. The issue of sleep over was emphasized. Some parents accepted "sleep over" as one of Canadian cultural patterns. Some absolutely prohibited their children to go to a "sleep over" because they were concerned about safety issues. Some parents only allowed their male children to go to a "sleep over". The parents also were concerned about their children's coming home late. Some parents established a curfew for their children, and the others hoped their children will learn to be frank with their parents.

### **Conclusion:**

According to the above mentioned parental concerns, it is possible to conclude that the communication between parents and their children and the ways parents discipline their children are complex. In some cases, communication between parents and their children may be diminished if they feel that there is nothing left to talk about. Also, as children learn more about Canadian society, they may object to the forms of discipline used by parents. For example, whereas physical punishment of a child was seen in the original culture as useful and acceptable, this is not the case in Canada. Thus, parents may be seen as abusive by the mainstream representatives. As children learn about their rights, they may report their parents to the authorities. Such issue can provoke much confusion and communication problems between children and their parents, because parents may see their children as betraying them. In addition to that, in families where parents do not acquire English language skills and where children become interpreters of the outside world for their parents, it could give children a source of power over their parents. Another communication problem between immigrant children and their parents could arise when children do not improve or lose their first language and parents do not acquire English language.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This study's quantitative and qualitative findings provide clear evidence that the settlement, adaptation and integration process of newcomer youth is multidimensional. The components identified constitute the basic process of newcomer youth development in their new living environment, and underline both positive and negative settlement and developmental outcomes. It is our strong belief that the recommendations, coming from the study's findings, would serve as a helpful resource not only to the mainstream society's more devotion to the needs of newcomer youth but also its willingness to design effective and sustained programs for these youth. These recommendations are:

***1. That structures and mechanisms for settlement service delivery for newcomer immigrant and refugee youth provide opportunities for interaction with their Canadian peers.***

The newcomer immigrant and refugee youth who took part in the research do not have “mainstream” youth as close friends. These youth usually become accustomed to and comfortable with a more solitary social and community life at the beginning of their life in Canada and continue this way of life by not developing larger or deeper social networks with their mainstream peers. As we saw, the first stage of their life in Canada has significantly influenced the further stages of their settlement, adaptation and integration process. Being mostly passive (because of language problems, feelings of isolation, etc.) at the beginning, newcomer youth remain with limited perceptions about the ways on how to improve their status and social competence. Thus, support among existing structures and mechanisms for settlement service delivery is very important not only for their settlement, adaptation and integration process but also for their psychological well-being. Within the existing settlement service delivery support could be achieved through the creation of new youth-oriented policies and practices that will foster coherent and integrated service and program initiatives. For example, within the “HOST” program, more initiatives in order to bring newcomer immigrant and refugee youth and their mainstream peers should be planned and realized in order to facilitate newcomer youth's acceptance. Such initiatives could be realized within both school and community-based programs. They should be focused on a variety of opportunities that foster understanding and mutual support, experience sharing, promoting of Canadian youth welfare, etc.

***2. That a more integrated holistic approach which engages the “family” unit and utilizes community resources is taken in settlement for the newcomer immigrant and refugee youth.<sup>4</sup>***

Families of our participants have been significantly affected during their settlement, adaptation, and integration process. This process involves many changes at both individual and entire family dynamic levels. We learned about many different migration related stresses, and negative outcomes that have resulted from such stressful experiences. We noticed that for almost all of our participants and their families it is unusual to seek help from related existing services or professionals of any kind. In addition, many parents are confused about different things that happen to themselves and their children in Canada. They are also confused about the nature of the problems and issues their children face, and how appropriately help and respond to these problems/issues. Indeed, parents are in deep need for their own personal struggles. Also, our findings show that many parents are traditionally oriented and confident that such ways of parenting are

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Family Service Association of Toronto defines “family” as: “A group consisting of two or more people, whether living together or apart, related by blood, marriage, adoption or commitment to care for one another”.

<sup>4</sup>Factors Affecting the Settlement and Adaptation Process of Canadian Adolescent Newcomers 16-19 Years of Age

only and the best possible solutions for the better future of their children. From the other side, we learned that such parental confusion and personal issues do not provide needed support for many crucial needs of their children, which in turn put them at higher risk for different kinds of negative developmental, academic and settlement outcomes. We also learned that some of the newcomer youth themselves experience considerable personal problems which require appropriate help and intervention. One very notable finding from our research is that among our participants emotional reactions were dominant as a pattern in reacting to many different problematic situations that they could meet in their everyday life in Canada. Such reactions are close to negative mood states such as distress, impulsivity, feelings of guilty, sorrow, anger, aggression, etc., which if appear constantly tend to develop into a cumulative, self-fulfilling cycle of deviance and certain mental health problems.

Based on our research findings it is clear that newcomer youth and their families in Canada need specific support in order to strengthen and maximize their capacities and resources to achieve successful settlement, adaptation and integration outcomes. As it is obvious from our findings the arrival to Canada did not mean the stop of suffering for those who experienced premigration stresses and traumas. At the same time, the arrival brings many changes to newcomers, which has been already well documented for many years. Thus, the core of this recommendation is that federal government should allocate/transfer financial support to local community-based agencies that serve families in order to make room and respond to many urgent needs and pressures newcomer families face in their new life in Canada. For example, ESL programs, that currently take the largest funding, should not be considered as the greatest need of newcomers in Canada. We agree that ESL programs are one of newcomers' vital needs, but in order to meet other intrinsic newcomer needs, the current funding strategy should be restructured. Family-centred, needs-based, flexible, well-managed and multi-faceted community-based initiatives and programs for newcomer youth and their families is necessary. The basic assumption of these initiatives and programs is that by improving early assistance for newcomer families there would be more positive relationships and climate within these families. This does not mean the traditional approach and provision of individual and/or family counselling services. Basically, it means community-based approach that will engage newcomer youth and their families to reduce the duration and extremity of their confusion, crisis, problems, etc. Local community-based agencies who serve families should play a crucial part in the settlement, adaptation and integration process. They should be financially supported to develop programs and initiatives that encourage, support and facilitate newcomers' engagement and participation to positively and optimistically embrace the challenges of new life.

***3. That school Boards be recognized as a crucial component in the settlement process and more program initiatives are required within the school system to address the settlement process for both parents and youth, and school personnel.***

For many years, school and school boards have played one of the very important roles in trying to ensure the successful settlement, adaptation and integration process of newcomer immigrant youth. Schools play the crucial role in fostering the intellectual, emotional, social and moral development of all children and youth. At the same time, schools contribute larger number of talented immigrant children and youth to the mainstream of Canadian life. Our findings indicate that from one side school boards (schools and teachers) provide enjoyable, supporting, meaningful language and other learning opportunities for newcomer immigrant and refugee youth. We also learned that while school boards have showed their commitment and

professionalism in contributing to positive settlement, adaptation and integration outcomes, the door still remains open for many practical improvements. In order to help parents to better deal with their experiences caused by a collision of cultures and values, school boards should take much active steps in developing strong and functional relationships with parents of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth. There is a great need for parents to be more familiar with teaching methods and teaching philosophy in Canada. Parents need help in resolving their confusion and expectations from their children. Thus, school boards should offer an opportunity for immigrant parents to learn about teaching methods and philosophy. For them, school boards should acknowledge the benefits of such methods and philosophy, including curriculum, role of teachers, relationships between teachers and students and relationships between students themselves.

School boards should also search for the opportunities to make curriculum reflective to immigrant student experiences. Teachers themselves should be aware about newcomer students' experiences and curriculum preferences. It could stimulate discussion on different experiences and examples relevant to newcomer immigrant and refugee youth. In so doing, these youth will be encouraged to see the connection between their own experiences, schools, teachers, curriculum, etc. Also, the benefits and values of ESL programs need to be acknowledged at the entire school level. It could help all students, especially those from the mainstream society, not only to critically analyse their stereotype and rigid views at those who attend ESL classes but also to recognize that it is the first step in helping newcomer students to make progress and become editable participants in their schools. English has to be learned to enable these students to be more effective and able to achieve their full potentials. In ensuring implementation of these priorities we do recognize instrumental help from settlement workers within school boards. These workers can be active catalyst in building bridges between newcomer immigrant and refugee youth, and their parents with their schools and teachers.

***4. That funding be directed to programs and initiatives that increase and facilitate not only information, orientation, community involvement etc., of newcomer youth in their access to mainstream services but also that assist mainstream service providers to develop services for these youth which incorporate their cultural context.***

We learned that newcomer immigrant and refugee experienced many specific problems at the beginning of their life in Canada and that they have very limited access to many relevant services that are available within the mainstream society. It is clear that they need more help and support to benefit from their community involvement, which at the same time represents, along with their families and schools, an important pathway through which the socialization process occurs. These youth and their parents desperately need more information not only about service available but also how and why to use such services. It means that more relevant programs and initiatives are needed to improve their access to service available in order to meet many different needs that would result in positive settlement, adaptation and integration outcomes. In so doing, newcomer youth and their families will have an opportunity to make a proactive shift that is empowering and will help them to better maintain themselves. Also, it would be very beneficial to include as many as possible resources within the mainstream society to help newcomers, including youth, to achieve good start and quality of life in their new Canadian environment. Thus, funding initiatives that will accelerate, attract and mobilize different mainstream organizations would be welcomed and helpful in finding answers to the following questions: a) What cultural and social factors they need to maximise a sense of belonging within newcomers? b) How they can achieve positive images of diversity in the community and celebrate this diversity?, c) How they can contribute to newcomer employment needs?, d) How they can help in

suppressing feelings of isolation, marginalization, etc., and all social ills that entails?, etc.

***5. That more research on a longitudinal basis be conducted to further identify factors related to positive newcomer youth settlement and success in adult years.***

This recommendation is closely related to the general theoretical framework for any discipline. The framework emphasizes that in any discipline its area of practice, its body of knowledge and its scientific basis need to be developed. Our research pointed out that the settlement, adaptation and integration process of Canadian newcomer youth has to be viewed from the socialization and developmental perspective. Thus, new research, preferably longitudinal and action oriented research, is needed to explore the specific elements of newcomer immigrant and refugee youth settlement, adaptation and integration process. Sharpening sensitivity on a range of structural and functional factors related to the settlement experience of newcomer youth and their families that influence both newcomer youth's basic adaptation capacities and perceptions of life in new Canadian environment will not only explore the enormity of many so vital determinant of their settlement process but will also provide needed knowledge base to improve the progress of the settlement service provision.

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