

# **African Community Services of Peel**

An enquiry into the delivery of ISAP settlement services to the  
Black/African Community in Peel/Halton region.

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The views and interpretations expressed in these study are those of the author, and not necessarily the views and interpretations of OASIS, CIC.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report titled “An enquiry into the delivery of ISAP settlement services to the Black/African community in Peel/Halton region” is an interpretive inquiry into apparent gaps in the provision of and access to settlement services for the Black/African community in the Peel/Halton region. The African Community Services of Peel has over time been approached by newcomers who claim to have been frustrated while trying to access settlement services. In addition, between July and October 1998, 106 black/African newcomers were referred to the African Community Services of Peel (ACSP) by other agencies that given their service mandate should have met the settlement needs of the newcomers. In an attempt to understand these apparent gaps, the Immigration Settlement and Adjustment Program commissioned an exploration of the pertinent issues with the aim to document the settlement needs of the black/African newcomers in the Peel/Halton region, document the capacity of settlement agencies in Peel/Halton region to meet the need of Black/African newcomers and lastly, to suggest a service delivery model that would better serve Black/African newcomers.

The study was conducted between July 1999 and March 2000. Participants of the study consisted of landed immigrants who have been in the country for less than five years and refugees; sixteen Language Instruction for New Comers (LINC) agencies and 6 settlement agencies which receive funding from the Immigration Settlement and Adjustment Program (ISAP). Data collection was two dimensional: one dimension involved service seekers and consisted of case file analysis to determine

the kinds of issues to address; survey questionnaire to document needs; and, focus group discussions to further understand these needs. Participants were recruited through key community people, language learning centers and agencies that serve newcomers, and the networking sampling technique. The other dimension involved service providers and consisted of filling out a key informant questionnaire by ISAP funded settlement and LINC agencies.

Data analysis was both quantitative and qualitative. Findings from all the different data collection techniques have been integrated and reported in one narrative.

The first portion of the report gives a brief context of the study. In the context section there is an overview of the history of Black people in Canada; black/African population in Canada; immigrants and settlement services in general and in particular, settlement services for black/African newcomers in the Peel/Halton region. The second portion of the report explains the techniques and rationale of field data collection. The third portion consists of the findings. The findings section is in two parts. The first part is an analysis of data from service seekers and the second section is an analysis of data from service providers. Each section ends with a brief discussion. The fourth portion provides observations and recommendations for a service delivery model that would better serve the Black/African community. The fifth portion outlines the limitation of the study. This is followed by references and appendices.

The study has identified universal and community specific settlement needs of the black/African community in Peel. While the need for settlement services for black/African newcomers to Peel are the same as for other newcomers, what is crucial and specific is the cultural and linguistic sensitivity and appropriateness with which those needs should be met. The study points to specific barriers to access to ISAP settlement services for the black/African community arising from traditional prejudices and systemic discriminatory practices within organizations supposedly delivering those services, lack of

resources for this specific community, lack of knowledge of the community's service needs and general apathy towards the community. The barriers relate to service providers' knowledge of community specific needs as well as the manner in which any available services are delivered. Several key informants from ISAP funded settlement agencies were not aware of the community specific needs of the black/African community. Furthermore, service consumers indicated they have faced frustration, discrimination, victimization, insensitivity to their culture, needs and circumstances; hostility, language issues and all other kinds of communication barriers in their attempts to access settlement services. However, settlement agencies indicated the need to "reach out more to the black/African community."

The study findings point to several observations:

- 1) Black/African newcomers are frustrated with service delivery.
- 2) Only few service providers are able to identify the needs of black/African newcomers. Moreover, most of the community-specific needs are not identified.
- 3) Most service providers cannot articulate ways and means of overcoming challenges that they have experienced serving the Black/African community.
- 4) Few agencies responded to the questionnaire. The low response to the questionnaire could be an indication of the level of commitment the agencies have in serving the black/African newcomers. Very few agencies returned the questionnaire and only about four filled out the questionnaire in full.
- 5) Consumers who participated in the study indicated they prefer to work with somebody who is culturally and linguistically sensitive to their needs.
- 6) There already is coordination of human service delivery in Peel/Halton, therefore, the lack of access to settlement services by black/African newcomers is not due to lack of coordination but rather, due to unavailability of and lack of access to those services.

7) Consequently, there are few, if any, ISAP settlement services for black/African newcomers to Peel. Those few services are not accessible to black/African newcomers because of the barriers listed in this report or rather, black/African newcomers face barriers in accessing those services.

Based on the above observations, we recommend:

- 1) That there should be culturally and linguistically sensitive ISAP settlement services that specifically address the needs of black/African newcomers through a well established settlement service agency. This agency would also act as a clearing house of information related to community-specific needs of black/Africans as well as act as a referral point for other agencies who find it hard to articulate the needs of black/African newcomers and to formulate ways of overcoming service delivery challenges. Current ISAP funded agencies have not demonstrated ability and to some extent, willingness, to meet the settlement needs of black/African newcomers in Peel.
- 2) That while the black/African community may not fall within the ten largest communities in Peel in terms of numbers, ( but representing 18% of total visible minority population in Peel) there are crucial dimensions to be considered for this specific community. The socio-dynamics of this community demonstrate that it has, probably, the greatest need for settlement, intervention and preventive services. It is, therefore, crucial that services to this community be included as a primary focus by all stakeholders. The needs and issues facing this community call for an integrated as opposed to an anecdotal settlement service delivery approach with a corresponding allocation of resources.
- 3) Historically, funding resource allocations have been based on demographic data of who is settling where, with resources often being allocated to the ten most populous language groups. This system has favored communities with high immigration statistics as numbers are translated into needs and therefore, into resources. Immigration policies that determine who gets to immigrate therefore, also determine who

gets what funding resources and as such, a policy at the federal level may, inadvertently, determine whether one immigrant youth, woman or child has access to a service while others from a less populous community may not. This is how small newcomer communities which will, for reasons of government policy, not make the top-ten list, continue to be marginalized in the allocation of resources even though they may be the least established communities and therefore have the most settlement needs. Moreover, communities with a long history of settlement may have well established networks and resources that assist in the settlement process. This is usually not the case in emerging communities. It is therefore, strongly recommended that community need be included as a compelling factor in the allocation of resources.

4) That funding agents work with the black/African community in determining how best their settlement needs could be met. Currently, every settlement agency in Peel claims to serve the black community even when it is evident that those services are not being provided or if they are provided, they are not accessible.

5) That decisions on how best the settlement needs of black/African newcomers should be met be made with collaboration and input from the community.

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## CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

### Historical Background

Black people begun settling in Canada in the 1600s. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries many Black people settled in Canada after fleeing slavery, terrorism and colonial oppression (Abucar, 1988; Alexander & Glaze, 1996; Clairmont & Magill, 1970; McClain, 1979; Torczykner, 1997; Walker, 1980; Walker, 1985). In recent times asylum seekers are fleeing regional wars, civil strife, complex social problems and 'natural disasters' (Kasozi, 1986).

Between 1628 and 1783 vast majority of Black people in Canada were slaves, many arriving from the Southern colonies or the Caribbean. There was mass emigration from the United States after the American Revolution of 1776. In later years, fugitive slaves escaped from the Southern United States traveling along the 'underground railroad' and settled, at Oro, in the first major Black community in Ontario. Oro was established in 1819 by war veterans of the war of 1812. Other settlements were established in Wilberforce (Lucan) and Dawn (located in what is now Dresden, Ontario). Many of the immigrants from the United States settled in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Upper Canada and Quebec. As a result of this settlement, several Black communities were establishment. Another major emigration occurred in 1796 when many Black people fled from colonial subjugation in the West Indies. Around this time too, there was exodus of a large majority of previously settled Blacks and the newcomers to Sierra Leone, West Africa (Alexander & Glaze, 1996; McClain, 1979; Torczykner, 1997; Walker, 1980; Walker, 1985).

Voluntary emigration of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century established more settlements in Ontario, Nova

Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec; and in the British Columbia in 1858. In early 20<sup>th</sup> century more Blacks were recruited to work in certain economic sectors such as agriculture, natural resources, construction and industry. This led to Blacks settling in the Prairie regions: Winnipeg, Edmonton and Calgary.

Women from the Caribbean (mainly from Guadeloupe and the English-speaking Caribbean) were recruited under the Canada Domestic Scheme. Later “annual entry of hundreds of women (aged between 18 and 35, single and with at least a Grade 8 education) came to Canada under the Household Service Workers Scheme”. Most men were recruited to work in “coal mines in Nova Scotia because of the segregated workforce and the belief that Blacks could withstand heat better than whites” (, p.9). Up until 1976 there was overt restriction of the category of Blacks who came to Canada and of where they settled. It is noteworthy that the history of Black settlement in Canada is wrought with racial discrimination, oppression, marginalization and segregation (Abucar, 1988; Alexander & Glaze, 1996; Clairmont & Magill, 1970; McClain, 1979; Torczyner, 1997; Walker, 1980; Walker, 1985). Torczyner (1997, p.8) for instance observes that, “even as Blacks were settling in the Prairie regions, local governments, including those in Winnipeg, Edmonton and Calgary, were petitioning their federal counterparts to ban further entry, as well as to legally segregate Blacks already in Canada” resulting to severe restrictions by immigration authorities.

The end of explicit racism in 1960s led to the liberalized of immigration policies by 1967. Subsequently, in 1971 Canada adopted a multicultural policy, which became an Act of Law in 1988. The government of Canada, therefore, committed it self to the recognition and promotion of diversity. Subsequently, a point system of assessment replaced the work schemes that were based on the need for cheap labour. Consequently, the Black population of Canada became more diverse in terms of language, culture, country of origin and area of settlement in Canada (Torczyner, 1997).

## **The Black Population in Canada in the Context of this Study:**

The following data will provide a wider context against which to understand the findings of this study. This data is based on the 1991 census, which utilized the Employment Equity Definition in defining a Black person. Torczyner (1997) argues that the Employment Equity Definition criteria has been instrumental in the estimates that have included people who may otherwise be missed by the ethnic origin/ancestry criteria. The former takes into account information pertaining to ethnic origin/ancestry, mother tongue (first language learned and still understood), religion and place of birth.

Black population of Canada is predominantly located in Ontario (61.7%) and Quebec (25.2%) compared to 37 and 25 per cent respectively of the Canadian population. 98.9% reside in the cities (that is, in the country's 25 Census Metropolitan Areas - CMAs) as compared to 61.9% of Canadian population. Majority of Blacks are immigrants and live in Toronto (47.8%) or Montreal (20.1%). (7 in 10 Black immigrants were born in the Caribbean; 1 in 4 Blacks were born in Africa and in Central America. Less than 2% were born in the US. Also, Blacks from Africa have significantly increased between 1981-1990 [see also Kasozi, 1996]).

In 1991, 31.5% of the Black population lived in poverty with over-representation of women and children in single-parent families. Although Blacks with university degrees are less likely to be poor, Blacks with a bachelor's degree have the same percentage of poor people as Canadians who do not have a university. Only 7% of all Canadians with a bachelor's degree were poor in 1991 compared to 17% of all Canadians without a university degree. Other pertinent observations are:

- Blacks have almost identical educational attainments as non-Blacks;
- A small percentage of the Black population is supported by public transfer payments- welfare, disability, etc;

- Blacks have lower income than non-Blacks;
- Blacks are less likely to be self-employed or supported by investments than non-Blacks;
- Blacks are less likely to be in senior management positions;
- There is a high birth rate in the Black community (see also Peel Health Department, 1998).

In effect, Torczyner (1997) posits that the Black community has some specific needs that need to be addressed. To address these needs Torczyner, (1997, p.42) suggests to:

- Advocate for services which are culturally sensitive to the unique demographic make up of Black families;
- Advocate for changes in public policy (i.e immigration, daycare) which would better respond to the needs of Black families;
- Develop support systems for families;
- Respond to children and their mothers who are threatened by poverty and live in single parent families;
- Build support for working families;

### **Immigrants and Settlement Services**

This study focuses on two categories of newcomers: refugees and those with landed immigrant status who have been in Canada for less than five years. Most refugees come to Canada to seek safety from war and strife. Some of the refugees have experienced betrayal, torture and all kinds of inhuman treatment.

When they arrive in Canada, they may be overcome with anxiety and consequently find it hard to trust individuals and governments. They may be emotionally disturbed and physically ill (Cole & Olivia, 1992). Other immigrants choose to make Canada their home. Their primary motivation could be purely socio-economic.

Settlement services are a range of services that assist newcomers after arrival and in the laying of a suitable foundation for the long term goal of becoming an informed participant in Canadian society. The long term goal is to “contribute, free of barriers, to every dimension of Canadian life-economic, cultural and political” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada). A few decades ago (1950s) these services were funded by the Federal Government. In Ontario, this responsibility is under the Settlement Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Canada as well as with the provincial government through newcomer settlement programs. The delivery of these services is mainly done through community-based non-profit agencies with volunteer board of directors (Canadian Council for Refugees, 1998). Some of the agencies are ethno-specific, that is, they target specific cultural group. Others are service specific, that is, they provide specific services such as language or target a group with special need such as those who have lost hearing ability. Many other agencies target all newcomers, not any specific cultural group.

As already noted, the needs of immigrants differ given their individual circumstances (culture, language, religion, education background, personality, lack of or presence of contact people or family in the new country and so forth) and the characteristics of the host country (includes physical infrastructure, available social programs, attitude of residents to newcomers in general and in particular, host attitude to the group of the newcomer (Canadian Council of Refugees, 1998; Cole and Olivia, 1992; Canadian Task on Mental Health Issues Affecting Immigrants and Refugees, 1988; Social Planning Council of Peel, 1993).

Despite all the differences that newcomers bring, there are some commonalities in their settlement

needs and in how they experience the delivery of these services. The needs of any newcomer broadly consist of reception and orientation to the new country, information, community contact, access to other services; language skills for all kinds of interpersonal communication; employment services such as job search skills, volunteer experience, employment counseling, specific skills upgrading and certificate programs; and, long-term integration that is characterized by the informed participation in the new society (SPCP, 1993; Doyle and Visano, 1987; Canadian Council of Refugees, 1998; Reitz, 1995).

Often newcomers encounter many problems in trying to access settlement services. Problems can range from communication barriers due to lack of language skills, lack of knowledge of existing services to blatant racism and prejudice (George & Michalski, 1996; Mwarigha, 1997). Of course some of these problems are specific to certain communities (Black/African, Chinese, Vietnamese) or categories of newcomers (men, refugee, children, women). These categories can further be subdivided to reflect the “complexity of individual lives and of society” (CCR, 1998). A number of studies have been conducted to determine the nature of these needs.

Ho-Lau (1992) cites employment, language skills and information as some needs of the Chinese immigrants in Metropolitan Toronto. Jacob (1994) outlines some needs of Salvadoran refugees as language, emotional counseling and child care. Somali refugees in Toronto have need for employment, job skill upgrading, language proficiency, social connection and information on where to find social services (Opuku-Dapaah, 1995). Kasozi’s (1986) study of 250 African immigrants in Toronto added an interesting dimension to the language problem. 28% of the participants in Kasozi’s study were told that they speak English in non-comprehensible ways. This figure is unaffected by the length of residence in Canada. That is, a barrier to integration was perceived as long as participants felt that her or his accent was different from what is approved by ‘mainstream’ Canadians. Indeed language was very crucial to the integration of these

participants: 28.2 % cited language problems as the major reason for losing or leaving a job. Another interesting finding in Kasozi's study was that foreign names may interfere with successful integration. Slightly over 60% of the participants affirmed that foreign names invoke negative reactions.

Nguyen, T.C., (1991) documented the needs of the Vietnamese community in Toronto as counseling, financial, social connection, (emotional, family and adolescent-related), language, employment, housing, culturally appropriate child care and legal help. Language skills and employment were identified as the greatest needs for immigrants in Sudbury (Palkovits & Tilleczeck, 1995). And in the lower mainland and Fraser valley in British Columbia, employment, housing, health, counseling (family matters and adolescent-related) and English language training (Immigrant Services Society of B.C., 1993). A study on Caribbean Youth in Toronto by Barwick, et al., 1996, documented the need for youth-related counseling, family re-unification, community connection, financial support and acceptance.

Reitz's (1995) review of the literature on "aspects of ethno-racial access, utilization and delivery of social services" provides data from Western Welfare Societies such as Canada, the U.S., Britain and Australia. Data from these countries show that barriers experienced by immigrants from agrarian, non-capitalistic, and newly industrialized societies to industrialized countries are similar. These barriers are related to language; lack of information about services; cultural patterns of help-seeking; lack of cultural sensitivity by service providers; finances and lack of service availability. Of course the expression and severity of the barriers vary according to type of service, nature of service (depending on location), and minority group. Doyle and Visano's (1987) research outlined the following as impediments, in the social and health delivery systems for members of diverse cultural and racial groups in Metropolitan Toronto: (1) language barrier; (2) lack of knowledge of programs and services; (3) Linguistic and cultural factors that complicate delivery patterns; (4) lack of communication between ethno-specific and mainstream settlement

service organizations.

### **Settlement Services for Black/African Newcomers in Peel/Halton:**

Newcomers in Peel have often expressed certain difficulties in trying to access settlement services (SPCP, 1993; Peel Health Department, 1998; Peel Human Services, 1997). In view of this, service providers have over time centered their discussions around the accessibility and effectiveness of settlement and other social services. It is notable, that the improvement of human services is a high priority in the Peel region. In the 1990s, for instance, there was a move to improve through coordinating the planning, managing and delivery of various services such as hospital, mental health, children's services, long-term care and so forth. The areas of concern addressed were prioritizing, funding, planning, access and assessment, community involvement and accountability (Peel Human Services Redesign Project Steering Committee (1997). It is against this background of coordinated planning and delivery of human services that the findings of this current study should be understood.

Some services are primarily for the settlement of newcomers. For instance, the Immigration Settlement Adaptation Program (ISAP) funded agencies are mandated to: provide reception at ports of entry and at final destination in Canada; provide counseling, interpretation, translation, escort; provide information pertaining to housing, health, employment, job placement, further education, language instruction, skills upgrading; and, generally assist the newcomer in finding their way in their new surroundings. In our study we targeted those organizations that provide services under ISAP.

Considering that the African Community Services of Peel is the only settlement service agency for the black/African community in Peel ( other black oriented organizations in Peel have different focuses) and



considering that it does not get on-going ISAP settlement funding, there are as such, no ISAP settlement services that target the black/African community in Peel. The aim of this study was, therefore, in part, to find out what services are provided by ISAP funded agencies to the black/African community and the challenges faced by these agencies in providing services to this community. Such challenges are apparent given the frustration, anger, disillusionment and prolonged settlement and integration spans for black/African newcomers in the Peel/Halton region. In addition, the African Community Services of Peel (ACSP) has had experiences where Black/African newcomers are referred to the agency by settlement agencies who are mandated to meet the needs of the newcomers. For instance, between July and October 1999, 106 black/African newcomers were referred to ACSP by agencies who in the opinion of ACSP staff should have been able to meet the settlement needs of the newcomers.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In order to conduct the inquiry, we documented the views of those who seek settlement services and those who provide these services. We used the following methods:

1. Case file analysis
2. Demographic profile
3. Semi-structured survey
4. Focus group discussions
5. In-depth key-informant interviews

## **Case file analysis**

We sampled at random 100 case files of ACSP clients and analyzed them. Analysis consisted of determining the gender, age-group, immigration status, country of origin, how the client found out about ACSP and the service (s) provided by ACSP (see Appendix zzz). The purpose of conducting this analysis was two-fold:

1. To understand demographics and needs of ACSP clients.
2. To apply this knowledge in designing appropriate research instruments.

## **Survey**

The survey questionnaire was in two sections. Section one documented information pertaining to the gender, age, year of arrival to Canada, immigration status, country of origin and level of education. Section two required the participant to outline or list the kind of settlement needs they needed in order to integrate into Canadian society; whether they knew where to find these services; what services they had used or were currently using; challenges, difficulties or problems they had faced with regards to using settlement services in the Peel/Halton region and to suggest how these difficulties may be overcome. Finally participants were required to indicate on a scale of one to ten, one being the least and ten the highest, how far they felt integrated into Canadian society.

Invitations to participate in the survey, letter of introduction by ACSP Executive Director and sample of questionnaire were distributed to newcomer settlement agencies in the Peel/Halton region,

language training centers, employment centers and other service providers. We requested these organizations to interest their black/African clients who satisfy participating category to fill out the questionnaire. The research coordinator then recruited five research assistants to distribute the questionnaire to the various black/African communities in the Peel/Halton region. Networking technique was also used to reach members of the community. Whenever we interviewed individuals, we requested participants to recommend other prospective participants who we then contacted. By this networking technique we were able to reach out to many diverse members of the community. Other questionnaires were filled out by mailing out questionnaires to individuals and by approaching newcomers at random in malls and community centers. By use of these various methods, we filled out 158 questionnaires.

### **Focus groups**

When we approached people to fill out the questionnaire we also asked if they were interested in participating in focus groups. Majority preferred filling out the questionnaire. They found it difficult to commit time to focus groups due to barriers such as childcare costs, transportation problems, conflicting schedules with other responsibilities, weather conditions etc. Nevertheless, through extensive outreach four focus groups for women and youth were held.

We followed a loosely structured focus group protocol to guide the focus group discussion. Also participants were given an opportunity to raise issues of concern and to discuss these issues.

The purpose of the focus group discussions was to obtain data by use of a different method other than the case file analysis or the survey. More importantly, focus groups allowed us to probe deeper into issues that were raised in the surveys or themes that arose from the case file analysis. For instance, we were able to gather more information from the point of view of service recipients, pertaining to the availability,

accessibility and adequacy of settlement services provided to black/African community.

### **In-depth Interviews**

Key informant questionnaires were designed to obtain information from the point of view of service providers, pertaining to the availability, accessibility and adequacy of settlement services they provided to the black/African community. To document this information, we distributed key informant questionnaires to sixteen LINC co-ordinators of sixteen LINC service providers and to 6 ISAP service providers in the Peel/Halton region. This distribution was followed by telephone calls to the Executive Directors or ISAP coordinators of those organizations to confirm they had received the questionnaire. Only nine agencies filled out the questionnaire.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Service Seeker Data**

The findings are categorized as demand, availability and access.

#### **Demand**

Demand was documented using the case file analysis, focus groups and questionnaire (see Appendices for samples of the instruments that were used for this purpose). The following data was obtained from quantitative and qualitative analysis of the responses from the survey; and qualitative analysis of focus group discussions. Below is a description of the distribution of participant needs by gender, age-group, the year of arrival in Canada, immigration status, the region of origin and the level of education.

Tables show the needs and the number and percentage of people with the need. The total population is 154 (assuming no missing data). Percentage is calculated from the total population.

## **Needs by gender**

The need for health services, social assistance, transportation, child care and legal help was not as significant as the more immediate need for housing and employment. However, there is a significant difference between the number of women and men who need child care. 6.0% of women need child care while only 1.3 % of the men need child care. Housing and employment are the most significant needs for women (38% for housing and 48.7% for employment). As well, the need for housing and employment is significant for men (20.7% for housing and 38.7% for employment). It appears that more women than men are in need of housing and employment. Another significant need is for further education or upgrading of skills. 21.3% of the women would like to upgrade their skills while 19.3% of the men would like to pursue further education or to upgrade their skills. Immigration services and language training (ESL) are also significant. 13.3% women need immigration services and 14.7% need ESL. 10.7% men need immigration. Their need for ESL is not as great. Only 8.7% compared to 13.3 % women need ESL. More women than men know where to find settlement-related information.

**Table 1: Needs by gender (N=154)**

Needs	Female		Male	
	#	%	#	%
Health	9	6.0%	11	7.3%
Housing	57	38%	31	20.7%

Employment		73	48.7%	58	38.7%
Social Assistance		13	8.7%	7	4.7%
Transportation		17	11.3%	8	5.3%
Child Care		9	6.0%	2	1.3%
Immigration		20	13.3%	16	10.7%
ESL		22	14.7%	13	8.7%
Legal Help		8	5.3%	7	4.7%
Further Education		32	21.3%	29	19.3%
Information	Yes	67	44.7%	42	28%
	No	14	9.3%	12	8.0%
	Some	5	3.3%	10	6.7%

### Needs by age-group

Health, social assistance, transportation, child care, immigration and legal help are only significant in the 30-39 age group. Housing, employment and further education are significant in all the age groups. In particular, there is a greater need for further education in the 30-39 (11.1%) age group than in any other age group. This is closely followed by the 20-24 (10.5%) age group. Majority of the participants in all age groups know where to find settlement-related information.

**Table 2: Needs by age-group (N=154)**

		<20		20-24		25-29		30-39		40-49		>50	
Needs		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Health		0	0.0	5	3.3	4	2.6	7	4.6	2	1.3	2	1.3
Housing		6	3.9	13	8.5	13	8.5	22	14.4	4	2.6	10	6.5
Employment		11	7.2	27	17.6	25	16.3	46	30.1	17	11.1	8	5.2
Social Assistance		0	0.0	2	1.3	3	2.0	7	4.6	2	1.3	6	3.9
Transportation		1	0.7	3	2.0	5	3.3	10	6.5	4	2.6	3	2.0
Child Care		0	0.0	0	0	2	1.3	7	4.6	2	1.3	0	0.0
Immigration		0	0.0	6	3.9	5	3.3	12	7.8	7	4.6	6	3.9
ESL		4	2.6	7	4.6	5	3.3	11	7.2	5	3.3	3	2.0
Legal Help		0	0.0	1	0.7	4	2.6	7	4.6	3	2.0	0	0.0
Further Education		8	5.2	16	10.5	10	6.5	17	11.1	8	5.2	3	2.0
Information	Yes	8	5.2	23	15	22	14.4	37	24.2	13	8.5	9	5.9
	No	1	0.7	3	2.0	6	3.9	9	5.9	3	2.0	4	2.6
	Some	3	2.0	3	2.0	2	1.3	3	2.0	3	2.0	1	0.7

### **Needs by Year of Arrival in Canada**

One criteria for selection of participants was that landed immigrants must have been in Canada for

less than five years. There was not time-limit for refugees. Those who arrived in Canada in the last four years have more needs than those who arrived earlier. The needs for housing (40.5%), employment (59.7%), social assistance (21.0%), transportation (13.3%), immigration (16.8%), ESL (15.4%), legal help (8.4%), further education (21.5%) are significant. Interestingly too, compared to those who arrived between 1985 and 1995, more people who arrived between 1996-2000 know where to find settlement related information. It is important to note that those who have been in the country for less than five years are refugees. The significance of this finding is that refugees are in greater need of information than landed immigrants. Also compared to other groups, a larger percentage of this category (refugees) does not know where to find settlement-related information.

**Table 3: Needs by year of arrival in Canada** (N=154)

	1985-1990	1991-1995	1996-2000
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Needs	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Health	1	0.7	6	4.2	12	8.4	
Housing	6	4.2	19	13.3	57	40.5	
Employment	7	4.9	32	22.3	86	59.7	
Social Assistance	1	0.7	7	4.9	30	21	
Transportation	1	0.7	6	4.2	19	13.3	
Child Care	1	0.7	3	2.1	5	3.5	
Immigration	1	0.7	11	7.7	24	16.8	
ESL	1	0.7	10	7.0	22	15.4	
Legal Help	1	0.7	3	2.1	12	8.4	
Further Education	4	4.8	25	17.5	31	21.5	
Information	Yes	8	5.6	29	20.3	67	46.5
	No	1	0.7	2	1.4	22	15.4
	Some	0	0.0	6	4.2	9	6.3

### **Needs by Immigration Status**

A large number of landed immigrants and refugees indicated housing (32.7% for landed immigrants and 27.3 for refugees) and employment (44.7% for landed immigrants and 43.3 for refugees) as a need. Further education was also indicated as a great need: 16.7% landed immigrant and 24.0% refugees. Many of these refugees are not eligible for Ontario Student Loan Program and, therefore, find it almost impossible

to further their education. They are essentially in ‘limbo’. More refugees (16.0%) than landed immigrants (8.7%) need immigration services. Almost an equal number of landed immigrants (9.3%) and refugees (8.7%) need transportation (transportation was described by participants as free bus tickets and subway tokens). More refugees (7.3%) than landed immigrants (3.3%) need legal help. More landed immigrants (41.3%) tend to have settlement-related information compared to refugees (32.0%).

**Table 4: Needs by immigration status (N=154)**

Needs	Landed Immigrant		Refugee	
	#	%	#	%
Health	6	4.0	13	8.7
Housing	49	32.7	41	27.3
Employment	67	44.7	65	43.3
Social Assistance	8	5.3	11	7.3
Transportation	14	9.3	13	8.7
Child Care	8	5.3	3	2.0
Immigration	13	8.7	24	16.0
ESL	14	9.3	20	13.3
Legal Help	5	3.3	11	7.3

<b>Further Education</b>		<b>25</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>24.0</b>
<b>Information</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>41.3</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>32.0</b>
	<b>No</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10.0</b>
	<b>Some</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6.0</b>

### **Needs by Region of Origin**

Housing is a significant need for newcomers originating in the west (10.6%), in the north (21.9%), in the central (12.6%) Africa and in the Diaspora (7.6%). The most significant need is employment: west (19.9%), north (32.5%), south (7.9%), central (16.6%) and diaspora (7.3%). ESL is significant for newcomers from the north (11.9%) and Central (8.6%). North Africa mainly comprises of newcomers whose languages are neither English nor French (Canada's two official languages). These newcomers mainly speak Arabic, Somali and Amharic. Many newcomers from central Africa speak French but have to learn English in order to communicate effectively in Ontario where English is spoken by the majority.

**Table 6: Needs by Region of Origin (N=154)**

		East		West		North		South		Central		Dias-pora	
Needs		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Health		0	0.0	4	2.6	8	5.3	1	0.7	2	1.3	5	3.3
Housing		3	2.0	16	10.6	33	21.9	8	5.3	19	12.6	12	7.6
Employment		6	4.0	30	19.9	49	32.5	12	7.9	25	16.6	11	7.3
Social Assistance		0	0.0	2	1.3	12	7.9	2	1.3	4	2.6	0	0.0
Transportation		2	1.3	10	6.6	9	6.0	1	0.7	3	2.0	2	1.3
Child Care		0	0.0	2	1.3	5	3.3	1	0.7	3	2.0	0	0.0
Immigration		0	0.0	5	3.3	17	11.3	1	0.7	11	7.3	3	2.0
ESL		0	0.0	3	2.0	18	11.9	1	0.7	13	8.6	0	0.0
Legal Help		1	0.7	3	2.0	7	4.6	1	0.7	3	2.0	1	0.7
Further Education		0	0.0	14	9.3	26	17.2	2	1.3	16	10.6	4	2.6
Information	Yes	6	4.0	22	14.6	40	26.5	9	6.0	21	13.9	13	8.6
	No	1	0.7	7	4.6	9	6.0	2	1.3	6	4.0	0	0.0
	Some	0	0.0	2	1.3	9	6.0	1	0.7	3	2.0	0	0.0

### **Needs by Level of Education**

The need for housing is significant among all groups except among the undergraduates (3.9%) and the graduates (2.6%). Similarly, the need for employment is significant among all other groups except among those with less than grade 9 (5.8%) schooling and graduates (5.2%). Torczyner (1997) did observe that black/African undergraduates' level of poverty is similar to that of Canadians who have not had a university degree. Social assistance is significant among those with less than grade 9 and grade 9-12 level of education. Most of those with less than grade 9 level of education (4.5%), grade 9-12 (7.8%) and grade 12 (4.5%) need ESL. The need for further education is prevalent among the grade 9-12 (11.7%), grade 12 (8.4%) and trade certificate (7.1%). An interesting observation is that among those who know where to find settlement-related information, only a few have an undergraduate degree (5.2%) and graduate degree (5.8%). This is significantly small compared with less than grade 9 level of education (7.1%), grade 9-12 (14.3%), grade 12 (14.3%), trade certificate (9.7%) and college diploma (16.9%).

**Table 7: Needs by level of education** (N=154)

		<Grade 9		Grade 9-12		Grade 12		Trade Certificate		College Diploma		Under-graduate		Graduate	
Needs		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Health		2	1.3	8	5.2	4	2.6	3	1.9	3	1.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
Housing		11	7.1	23	14.9	14	9.1	14	9.1	20	13.0	6	3.9	4	2.6
Employment		9	5.8	33	21.4	23	14.9	21	13.6	30	19.5	11	7.1	8	5.2
Social Assistance		5	3.2	8	5.2	0	0.0	3	1.9	3	1.9	0	0.0	1	0.6
Transportation		2	1.3	5	3.2	5	3.2	6	3.9	4	2.6	3	1.9	2	1.3
Child Care		0	0.0	2	1.3	3	1.9	1	0.6	2	1.3	2	1.3	1	0.6
Immigration		5	3.2	11	7.1	7	4.5	5	3.2	7	4.5	2	1.3	0	0.0
ESL		7	4.5	12	7.8	7	4.5	2	1.3	6	3.9	1	0.6	0	0.0
Legal Help		1	0.6	4	2.6	2	1.3	3	1.9	6	3.9	0	0.0	0	0.0
Further Education		6	3.9	18	11.7	13	8.4	11	7.1	9	5.8	3	1.9	2	1.3
Information	Yes	11	7.1	22	14.3	22	14.3	15	9.7	26	16.9	8	5.2	9	5.8
	No	3	1.9	10	6.5	3	1.9	2	1.3	4	2.6	4	2.6	0	0.0
	Some	1	0.6	4	2.6	2	1.3	5	3.2	1	0.6	1	0.6	1	0.6

## **Discussion**

Based on data from case-file analysis, focus groups and survey, the needs of the Black/African community in Peel/Halton region may be grouped as follows:

### **Universal needs.**

Universal needs are required by every newcomer. In this study these needs were very prominent. The need for employment, housing and further education were significant in all categories of gender, age, immigration status, level of education, year of arrival in Canada. It is not surprising that these three are major needs for they comprise the basic settlement for any newcomer.

The search for employment is the most frustrating endeavor. One of the major concerns was that the Human Resources departments are sometimes very crowded and it is often difficult to find free computer time. The wait time for a free computer can sometimes amount to hours. Even when one finds a computer, it is not always the case that they can effectively use it and the Human Resources staff are not always willing to help. In cases where one fiddles with it and is able to locate a job posting, there is often very little time, between the time the newcomer sees the job posting and the deadline for sending applications, in which to prepare a resume and a covering letter. Again many participants expressed frustration when trying to get help from the staff at the Human Resources in preparing a resume and covering letter. Participants claimed that the staff is not willing to help and, therefore, this decreases the chances for successful job application. Some participants also have experienced a situation where they have been invited to an interview in an area of the city not plied by public transportation and in the absence of personal means of transportation, access and associated costs becomes an issue.

The need for housing cannot be met unless one secures a job. Consequently many participants who are unemployed also have the need for affordable accommodation. One refugee newcomer was daunted by the fact that she was unable to convince prospective landlords and landladies that she could be a trusted tenant. This newcomer was therefore denied the chance to rent a suitable apartment. Of course the ultimate reality is that most landlords and landladies require to see employment contracts before they can rent. It means that those without employment are unlikely to find suitable accommodation. For most participants, the only way out of this dilemma is to upgrade their skills either by furthering their education or taking course in language, computer and other skills. Further education therefore featured as a very significant need.

### **Community-specific needs.**

These needs are population specific and are reflected by the demographics of the Black/African population. The demographics of our sample, for instance, shows that the black/African population is very young. 45.8 % (71 out of 153 who indicated their age) are less than 29 years. 77.4 % (120 out of 153 who indicated their age) are less than 39 years. A similar observation is made by Torczyner (1997)<sup>1</sup>. Torcsyner (Ibid.) observes that the Black community in Canada is characterized by a young population. 64.2% are younger than age of 35. In comparison, only slightly more than half of the total Canadian population (53.2%) falls into this age group.

Because this population consists mainly of young people, their characteristic needs are guidance, counseling, advocacy, further education, employment, child care, transportation and youth oriented resources.



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<sup>1</sup>Torcsyner's figures are based on 1991 Census.

Further, this population is mainly composed of women of child rearing age. 77 out of a total of 86 women are below 49 years old. Compare with figure of 52.1% for the entire Black population in Canada (Torczyner,1997). Torczyner also observes that children are the next largest group to women. Men make up 47.9% of the Black population. Women also tend to head households in single-parent families. The economic effect is that women continue to earn less than men therefore resulting to greater economic disparity between Blacks and other Canadians. More importantly, children in these house-holds lack male role models. These age patterns and gender ratios have socio-economic implications for the black community.

Other significant needs are Immigration, ESL and legal help. Immigration is especially significant among refugees. Unlike landed immigrants who have some rights such as eligibility for the Ontario Student Loans Program; provincial medical insurance (note that although health was not a significant need among other groups, it was for refugees - 8.7%); work in Ontario, child care subsidy and so forth, refugees have the challenge of convincing the immigration board of their legitimacy. Refugees, therefore consult a lot with immigration officials. They also need legal assistance in interpreting the implications of the information they exchange with immigration officials. Legal assistance and immigration also featured as needs for all those who require family reunification, child custody, marital abuse and so forth.

Many newcomers who have communication difficulties with social workers and immigration officials need advocacy. Some of these communication barriers are due to difficulties with the spoken language, others are due to do with unfamiliarity with the 'hidden codes' or unspoken language, others result from 'a clash in attitude' between the service seeker and the service provider. Such clashes emanate from negative reactions to immigrants' 'foreign names' and 'accents'. A similar experience was noted for African immigrants in Toronto (see Kasozi, 1986). With regard to the communication difficulties, participants prefer

to talk with someone who understands their background. Subsequently, they prefer to talk with someone they can confide in without fear of victimization or ridicule. In fact, a common suggestion on how to overcome some of the barriers was that government workers should receive 'cultural and linguistic sensitivity training' so they can be in a position to understand the plight of newcomers.

Those threatened with marriage break up or already experiencing divorce and separation said they needed someone who can listen and who can offer practical advice. One of the participants at our women's focus group was experiencing severe marital problems. This young woman was under constant physical abuse from her husband. She had been in Canada for less than three months and did not know where to go. Moreover, she was in fear that if her husband, who sponsored her to Canada, found out that she was planning to leave he would harm her. This young woman was overcome with anxiety to the point where she was considering suicide. A member of the community advised her to seek help from the African Community Services of Peel where she is currently receiving counseling and is being educated on her rights and options in the matter. She has also been connected with other woman abuse services in the community. Since then, the woman has also received assistance with other settlement issues and is considering going back to school.

Counseling for adolescents and youth who are at risk of dropping out of school or running away from home also featured as a great need. Also, there were no funded settlement services, whatsoever, for black/African seniors who did not speak English although the African Community Services of Peel has tried to meet the needs of these seniors through a volunteer seniors' program.

## **Service Provider Data: Analysis and Discussion**

### **Supply and Accessibility**

We contacted twenty two ISAP funded agencies ( LINC and ISAP “A”) and communicated our intention to mail out key informant questionnaires to them. We then called to confirm receipt of the questionnaires and those who had not received them got copies faxed to them. All agencies confirmed they had received the questionnaire (see sample questionnaire in Appendices). The following observations were made:

1. Only nine agencies filled out the questionnaires.
2. When asked to indicate who they serve, all the nine agencies indicated that they serve all newcomers.
3. The number of Black/African clients that have accessed services in these organizations in the last two years range from none to 1,600. The figures in between were far apart: zero, two, three, six, nine, fifteen and four hundred. The percentage of Black/African newcomers that access these organizations was also disparate: 0%, 1%, 3%, 5%, 30%.
4. Seven agencies out of nine provided a list of the needs of black/African Canadians that includes literacy, housing, employment, counseling (adolescent, parenting, marital, financial), advocacy with federal, provincial and local government technical services and family reunification.
5. Only two of the nine agencies listed most of the needs that were highlighted by participants of this study. The rest listed a few (one to three) needs: housing and employment; counseling; language training; language, housing and financial support; literacy, employment and technical services.
6. Two agencies out of nine did not list any service.

***Response to the question: “What settlement services are commonly provided by your agency to the Black immigrant community”, was as follows:***

1. A range of services are offered by three agencies out of nine. These services were given as youth support group, employment workshop, housing, one-on-one group support; completion of forms, housing information, parenting activities, English language classes; information and referral, job search, advocacy, family reunification and upgrading.

2. Language instruction was listed by three agencies out nine
3. Three agencies did not offer services to Black/African newcomers.

***When asked what they do when unable to provide services to Black/African newcomers:***

1. Five out of nine said they refer clients to other agencies.
2. Four out of nine indicated N/A (non applicable) or did not answer this question.

***When asked how they would rate, within a range of possibilities (above average, average, limited, not yet developed), the present capacity of their agency to meet the settlement needs of the Black/Africa community:***

1. Two agencies out of nine indicated “above average” capacity. An interesting observation is that one of these agencies has a 0% clientele from the Black/African community and only 2 individuals of the Black/African community have accessed services in the last two years in this agency. The other agency has 1% clientele from the Black/African community and has served six to ten individuals from this community in the last two years.
2. One agency out of nine indicated “average” capacity. This agency has served about 400 Black/African individuals in the last two years and has a 5% clientele from the Black/Africa community. An interesting observation is that this agency when responding to the challenges stated, “ we have no funding to serve new immigrants or those who have been in Canada for extended period and not eligible for ISAP services. Most of Black clients speak English and some speak French, Somalian”.
3. Four agencies out of nine indicated “limited” capacity. One of the agencies with limited capacity has a 30% Black/Africa clientele and in the last two years served 1,600 individuals from this community. Two of these agencies are ‘multicultural’, the third is ethno-specific and the fourth is an institute that offers a range of skills upgrading programs.
4. One agency out of nine indicated “not yet developed” and another agency did not answer the question.

***When asked what challenges the agency faces with regard to meeting the settlement needs of the Black/African community:***

1. An agency that served fifteen individuals in the last two years and has a clientele of 1% had the following response: “none. There is no settlement worker to work with afro/black [sic] clients. So anyone who is free will assist them”.
2. An agency that has 30% Black/African clientele and served 1,600 Black/African individuals had the following response: “we do not get settlement funding aimed at Black clients who speak English who are mostly from the Caribbean. We also do not have large populations of any one African Language group. We therefore cannot claim a worker in any specific African Language”.
3. An agency that served 400 individuals in the last two years and has a 5% Black clientele had the following response: “we have no funding to serve new immigrants or those who have been in Canada for extended period and not eligible for ISAP services. Most of Black clients speak English and some speak French, Somalian”.
4. An agency that offers language services and has served two individuals in the last two years had the following response: “we do not have any settlement counselors so we refer immigrants ... . We do not feel involved with settlement issues beyond language learning”.
5. Three agencies out of nine indicated “none” or “not applicable”.
6. Two out of nine did not respond to the question.

***On the question of what they would need to help them overcome the challenges they face in providing services to the***

***black/African community:***

- 1) Two of the four agencies that listed challenges made the following suggestions as to how to overcome these challenges:
  - Seek funding
  - Hire additional Black counselor
  - Explore needs
  - Reach out to Black community
  - Find a way to attract afro/black [sic] clients
- 2) One of the four agencies did not respond to the question.
- 3) Another agency had the following response: “I don’t think, considering the number of Black/African immigrants accessing our program, that we need to consider overcoming challenges”. This particular agency refers clients to other agencies and “does not feel involved with settlement issues beyond language learning”.

***On the question, “in what ways can the African Community Services of Peel facilitate your delivery of settlement services to Black/African newcomers to Peel/Halton?”***

- 1) Seven of the nine agencies gave the responses below.
  - a) “They could expand services and promotion to be a major referral intake site for African clients all over Peel. If clients did not wish to travel to ACS of Peel innovative solutions could be looked at for example one day visits by a worker with the needed language”.
  - b) “We would welcome any dialogue that would benefit us in providing LINC classes or referral information to Black/African newcomers”.
  - c) “African Community Service of Peel would facilitate us with referral if clients are deaf, hard of hearing or deafened (hearing loss in general). We also could offer education, training, re: our services and hearing loss issues”.
  - d) “Hand out our program schedule to people who need to improve their English speaking skills”.

- e) “Partnership; refer new immigrants; refer clients needing housing help; refer abused Black women; training opportunities”.
- f) “Come in and talk about the needs and how to assist the clients. Also the difference in need of the African and other Black people”.
- g) “By providing us with a list of agencies that can assist us in helping Black/African newcomers”.

2) Two agencies did not answer the question.

***On the question, “what service delivery model would you recommend for the delivery of settlement services to Black/African newcomers to Peel/Halton?”***

- 1. Five agencies did not answer the question
- 2. Four agencies gave the following comments:
  - a) “Multi-purpose agency offering services to all immigrants facing linguistic, cultural and other barriers”.
  - b) “Exposure of deaf culture if clients are deaf - often in their countries they don’t have formal education”.
  - c) “I do not feel qualified to comment”.
  - d) “I am not sure of the meaning of this question”.

The data points to a number of gaps in service provision to the black/African community. The responses highlight organizational, attitudinal and systemic barriers that hinder the capacity of those agencies to serve the settlement needs of black/African newcomers. These barriers impact on outreach as well as the capacity of the agency to assess and meet the needs of this community. Examples of these barriers are demonstrated by the following observations:

- 1) A number of agencies do not outreach to the Black/African community as demonstrated by the comments the agencies provided as listed below:
  - a. One agency responded as follows: “I don’t think, considering the number of Black/African immigrants accessing our program, that we need to consider overcoming challenges”.
  - b. Another agency observed, “we also do not have large populations of any one African Language



group. We therefore cannot claim a worker in any specific African Language”.

- c. One key informant when asked to suggest a service delivery model for the delivery of services to Black/African newcomers said, “I don’t feel qualified to comment”.
- 2) Others were not familiar with the needs of this community and, therefore, felt distanced from it. Considering that the black/African newcomer community represents 18% of all visible minorities in Peel ( Social Planning Council of Peel Study, 2000) this is a significant number of newcomers and given such high figures, it would be expected that more people than is currently the case are accessing settlement services. Findings from this study show that, most agencies have served less than ten clients in the last two years and that the black/African community is, therefore, not getting ISAP services in Peel. However, these agencies have also acknowledged the need for culturally and linguistically appropriate settlement service to this specific community.
- 3) The study demonstrated that agencies were not familiar with the socio-dynamics of the black/African community. The black/African community in Peel is not homogenous or monolithic. For example, continental African newcomers have official language capacity issues that may be different from those of from the Caribbean black community. Furthermore, the Caribbean black community has a longer history of migration to Canada than continental African newcomers and as such may have different settlement needs.
- 4) Agencies’ internal cultures and well as the cultural and linguistic sensitivity of the settlement counselor are crucial in the delivery of settlement services to the black community especially at the initial phase of settlement. Responses such as, “there is no settlement worker to serve afro/black clients,” “we do not get settlement funding aimed at black clients,” “...we cannot claim a worker in any specific African language,” “...often in their countries they do not have formal education,” “I do not feel qualified to comment,” or inaccurate comments such as, “most of black clients speak English and some speak French, Somalian,” spoke to agencies’ attitudes about the black community and the provision of settlement services it. Undoubtedly, these attitudes impact on outreach, access and service delivery.
- 5) Other agencies recognized the need for culturally and linguistically specific settlement services to the black/African community. However, responses indicated either:
  - a) a willingness to provide those services in their respective agencies as in “seek ways to attract afro/black clients,” “hire black counselor,” “seek funding,” etc.

- b) refer those clients elsewhere, “I do not think considering the number of black/African immigrants accessing our services that we need to consider overcoming those challenges,”
- c) envisioned a partnership with African Community Services of Peel where ACSP would facilitate their referrals, hand out their program materials, go in and talk to them about the needs or provide them with a list of other agencies who provide services to black/African newcomers.
- 6) Data from the study also points to a provision of services to the black/African community that is haphazard, anecdotal and belabored. Few agencies had a black/African settlement counselor even though they indicated they serve the African community. Among those who had a counselor, it was evident that the reasons for hiring that specific person was dictated by the need to attract settlement dollars than the desire to meet the settlement needs of the community. For example, there is an urgent need for services to the emerging Ghanaian community and agencies are now fighting to claim a Ghanaian counselor on their staff. Furthermore, responses such as,” we cannot claim a worker in any African language,” or “ we do not have a worker for afro/black clients. So anyone who is free will serve them,” etc. all speak to the anecdotal manner in which services are provided to black/African clients and the frustrations those clients must experience when they try to access those services.
- 6) Agencies who responded did not seem to be aware of the different settlement needs between black/African and black/Caribbean newcomers. Most were unfamiliar with pre-migration issues that impact on settlement such as language, religion, culture, the historical implications of “race” (discrimination, racism and prejudice), personal circumstances such as those encountered by refugees as well as the different forms of social organization and societal structuring that pertain to newcomers’ countries of origin. The inability to appreciate these issues challenges an agency’s ability to provide culturally sensitive programming.

### **Consumers/clients identified Needs:**

According to data from the case file analysis, survey and focus groups, black/African newcomers identified the following service needs:

Further education, health, housing, employment, financial assistance, transportation, childcare,

immigration, language training, interpretation and translation, legal help, family reunification, advocacy, counseling (emotional, financial, adolescent-related, marital issues), general settlement information.

However, in this study:

a) only two agencies listed the needs of Black/African newcomers as expressed by the participants of the study.

b) most agencies in the Peel/Halton region were not very familiar with most of these issues of the Black/African newcomer.

c) others either did not see any needs at all or underestimated these needs.

d) one agency that offers language programs, for instance, observed that, “we do not feel involved with settlement issues beyond language learning”. This is an underestimation of the impact that unmet social, political and emotional needs can have on language learning.

e) another observation is that the Agency that has served the most Black/Africans in the last two years, 1,600, claimed not to have a large population of any African language on which to base a request for language-specific worker. One would expect that from such a large population of clients, there is at least one dominant African language. This agency did not respond to the question, “What would your agency need to overcome these challenges?”, and yet listed as a challenge, the fact that no funding is provided to target black/African clients who speak English and who are mostly from the Caribbean”.

### **Service Seeker suggestions on how to meet those needs:**

Data from case file analysis, survey and focus groups indicate suggestions on how service seekers felt their needs could be met: Some of these suggestions were:

- “Refer newcomers to appropriate resources,” for instance, a church or a community or any other group where one can feel that they truly belong. This is a demonstration of the way a black/African newcomer feels the need to connect with someone who “understands them” r. However, findings from this study indicate that most ISAP service providers felt they did not know how to connect with the wider black/African community. Moreover, they were not aware of the networks through which they could outreach the African community.
- “Workers need to be more respectful and understanding.”
- “Give more time to newcomer to explain and understand their needs.”
- “Some people treat me as if I am a child and this makes me feel very disrespected”
- “Provide training in computer skills, job search skills and training in particular trades”.
- “Do something about staff at Human Resource centers. Staff is not willing to teach newcomers how to use computers. These workers need to be more helpful”.
- “Provide transit tickets to newcomers who cannot afford transportation to immigration, Human Resource centers, to shelters, to attend job interviews (interview locations are sometimes too far) and so forth”.
- “Provide more services in the French language”
- “Train government workers in cultural sensitivity. They tend not to listen, misguide, misunderstand and are very impatient with immigrants”. For instance, one respondent is in despair because she has been trying family reunification and the immigration department has complicated her case by disputing the birth date and parentage of her daughter. In view of this she has been asked to provide a DNA test to prove parentage. Further, her social worker has been demanding that her

husband, who was deported back to Africa some years ago, pay family support. Although she has been laid off from her job and cannot feed or clothe her children, this participant has been denied financial support from the government. The social worker does not accept that this participant's former husband cannot pay family support.

- “Provide more services for seniors, especially for interpretation, recreational services, education etc.”
- “Guide immigrants on available opportunities for volunteer work in order to gain the Canadian experience that is required for waged positions”. One participant was able to obtain Canadian experience as result of a volunteer placement that was arranged through an employment workshop that she attended at African Community Services. Because of this arrangement, she was able to get subsidized daycare which helped a great deal because she had the ‘mental and physical space’ to plan and organize her job search.
- ”Provide childcare”. One participant expressed a lot of despair because she has no one to take care of her son so she can attend job search workshops or register in skill-upgrading programs. There seems to be no way out of the circle of poverty when there is no childcare.
- ”Outreach by settlement services should consist of a change in attitude: re: insensitive workers”.
- ”Provide more culturally sensitive services in agencies that serve immigrants so they can help resolve some of these cultural barriers”.

## **LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

There were four main limitations in this study:

1. The first limitation is related to definition of Black/African. It is possible that some people did not respond to the survey because they do not perceive themselves as Black/African. This problem of definition emanates from individual perception of who they are. As noted by Torczyner (1997), ethnic origin/ancestry labeling may leave out people who by socio-structural definitions are Black or who “in all likelihood are Black”. In the 1981 census, for instance, responses to ethnic origin/ancestry question put the estimate of the Black/African population in Canada at 224,620. The 1991 census estimate based on several other criteria other than ethnic origin/ancestry using identification from a variety of information such as language first spoken and still understood, religion and place of birth counted individuals as Black even though they had not indicated so. In this approach, “the decisions in the assignment process are based on the likelihood that a particular response or combination of responses emanates from a person who is Black” (Torczyner, p.11) This approach gave an estimate of about 504, 290 (note, this count does not include refugees).

2. We are not clear why the response was so low although we sensed suspicion, hostility and general apathy to our requests that they complete the questionnaire.

3. The third limitation is to do with time. We felt that the time-frame for a research study of this magnitude was short.

4. Most of our participants without proficiency in English had challenges completing the survey questionnaire. Many of these were French and Arabic speaking African. However, we were able to recruit community volunteers to assist with translation and interpretation whenever it was necessary to do so. Coordination of such volunteer services within the time frame we had, was a challenge we had to deal with.

## **OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations are made on the basis of the following observations.

1) Black/African newcomers are frustrated with service delivery. They have also identified several unmet

universal and community-specific needs the most urgent of which are housing, employment, health and social services, child care, information on immigration and skills upgrading.

2) Only few service providers are able to identify the needs of Black/African newcomers. Moreover, most of the community-specific needs are not identified.

3) Most service providers cannot articulate ways and means of overcoming challenges that they have experienced serving the Black/African community.

4) The poor response to the questionnaire could be an indication of the level of commitment the agencies have in serving the Black/African newcomers. Very few agencies returned the questionnaire and only about four filled out the questionnaire in full.

5) Consumers who participated in the study indicated they prefer to work with somebody who is culturally and linguistically sensitive to their needs.

6) There already is coordination of human service delivery in Peel/Halton, therefore, the lack of access to settlement services by Black/African newcomers is not due to lack of coordination but rather, due to unavailability of those services.

7) Consequently, there are few, if any, ISAP settlement services for black/African newcomers to Peel. Those few services are not accessible to black/African newcomers because of the barriers listed in this report or rather, black/African newcomers face barriers in accessing those services.

Some of the suggestions given by participating agencies on how to better serve the Black/ African community echo observations made by several community researchers. For instance, Doyle and Visano's (1987, p.12) observation regarding access to health and social services for members of diverse cultural and racial groups in Metropolitan Toronto is that "a collective response on the part of service organization is

required, rather than isolated solutions, if access for minority groups is to be fully achieved". In this study, several agencies preferred to work collaboratively with another agency that was more familiar with the needs of the Black/African community.

Based on the findings from this study, we propose recommendations as follows:

1) That there should be culturally and linguistically sensitive ISAP settlement services that specifically address the needs of black/African newcomers through a well established settlement service agency. This agency would also act as a clearing house of information related to community-specific needs of black/Africans as well as act as a referral point for other agencies who find it hard to articulate the needs of black/African newcomers and to formulate ways of overcoming service delivery challenges. Current ISAP funded agencies have not demonstrated ability and to some extent, willingness, to meet the settlement needs of black/African newcomers in Peel. Literature on community services also underscores the value of such an ethno-specific agency.

In Kasozi's (1994, p.6) view, these organizations are "a part of the country's social work delivery system and are not parallel to it". Bridgman (1993, p.i) in a study of family delivery systems to Canadians, found that ethno-racial family service agencies were "providing culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate accessible services to ethno-racial clients". And based on findings from a study on the "dynamics of Black communities in Canada", Torczyner's (1997, p.42) advocates for services which are "culturally sensitive to the unique demographic make up of Black families". As already mentioned, findings from our study strengthen the arguments for a settlement service agency that is funded to primarily provide culturally and linguistically appropriate settlement services to newcomers of the Black/African community without compromising their ability to integrate with other Canadians.



2) That while the black/African community may not fall within the ten largest communities in Peel in terms of numbers, ( but representing 18% of total visible minority population in Peel) there are crucial dimensions to be considered for this specific community. The socio-dynamics of this community demonstrate that it has, probably, the greatest need for settlement services, intervention and preventive services. It is, therefore, crucial that services to this community be included as a primary focus by all stakeholders. The needs and issues facing this community call for an integrated as opposed to an anecdotal settlement service delivery approach with a corresponding allocation of resources.

3) Historically, funding resource allocations have been based on demographic data of who is settling where, with resources often being allocated to the ten most populous language groups. This system has favored communities with high immigration statistics as numbers are translated into needs and therefore, into resources. Immigration policies that determine who gets to immigrate therefore, also determine who gets what settlement funding dollars and as such, a policy at the federal level may, inadvertently, determine whether one immigrant youth/woman or child has access to a service while others from a less populous community may not. This is how small newcomer communities which will, for reasons of government policy, not make the top-ten list, continue to be marginalized in the allocation of resources even though they may be the least established communities and therefore have the most settlement needs. Moreover, communities with a long history of settlement may have well established networks and resources that assist in the settlement process. This is usually not the case in emerging communities. It is therefore, strongly recommended that community need be included as a compelling factor in the allocation of resources.

4) That funding agents work with the black/African community in determining how best the settlement needs of the community could be met. Currently, every settlement agency in Peel claims to serve the black community even when it is evident that those services are not being provided or if they are provided, they

are not accessible.

5) That decisions on how best the settlement needs of black/African newcomers should be met be made with the community. Currently, those decisions are not being made with collaboration with or input from the black/African community.

## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1:**  
**CRITERIA FOR CASE FILE ANALYSIS:**  
**ACSP'S CLIENT FILES**

## Criteria for Case File Analysis

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**1. Gender:** Male Female

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**2. Age Group:**

Less than 20 20-24 25-29 30-39 40-49 50 and over

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**3. Year of Arrival in Canada:**

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**4. Immigration Status:** Landed Immigrant Conventional Refugee

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**5. Country of Origin:**

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**6. Referral:** Yes No

**7. If Yes, by who?** (Please write name of referring agency)

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**8. Reason for the visit(s): (Needs)**

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**9. Services provided by ACSP:**

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**Appendix 11:**  
**NEWCOMER SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

Dear Participant:

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out about your experiences, views, suggestions and comments with/on settlement services in the Peel/Halton region. The aim of the study is to inquire into access of settlement services by Black/African newcomers in Peel/Halton region. **Note:** all your answers will be treated with utmost confidentiality. **(You are not required to include your name in the questionnaire).**

Thank you so much for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Wanja Kithinji, Research Coordinator

## Participant Questionnaire

### SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

<b>Gender:</b>	Male	Female					
<b>Age Group:</b>	Less than 20	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50 and over	
<b>Year of Arrival in Canada:</b>							
<b>Immigration Status:</b>	Landed Immigrant	Conventional Refugee					
<b>Country of Origin:</b>							
<b>Level of Education:</b>	Less than Grade 9	Grade 9-13	Grade 13	Trade Certificate	College Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Post-Graduate Degree

### SECTION B: SETTLEMENT ISSUES

3. What settlement services do you need to help you settle and integrate into Canadian Society.





**Appendix III:**  
**KEY INFORMANT QUESTIONNAIRE**

**AFRICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES OF PEEL**  
**A SURVEY OF SETTLEMENT SERVICES IN PEEL**  
**(with respect to Black/African immigrants in Peel)**

Name of Agency:
Target Groups:
Services Provided:
Which agencies (if any) tend to refer Black immigrants to your agency?

Approximately how many clients from the Black immigrant community (Africans and Caribbean) have accessed your services over the past 2 years?

Approximately what % of your clientele is from the Black immigrant community?

What are the major needs of your Black immigrant community clients?

What settlement services are commonly provided by your agency to the Black immigrant community?

What does your agency do if/when it is unable to provide services to a Black immigrant or clients?

. To which agencies (if any) do you most often refer Black immigrants?

. How would you rate the present capacity of your agency to meet the settlement needs of the Black immigrant community?

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. What challenges does your Agency currently face with regard to meeting the settlement needs of the Black immigrant community?

. What would your agency need to overcome these challenges?

. In what ways can the African Community Services of Peel facilitate your delivery of settlement services to Black/African newcomers to Peel/Halton

. What service delivery model would you recommend for the delivery of settlement services to Black/African newcomers to Peel/Halton?

Thank you.

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